

Little Rock Chapter
NRHS

ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB



VOLUME 33 NUMBER 4 APRIL 2002



Who would have dreamed that nearly 30 years after this picture was taken, I would be Manager (District) in charge of Wichita (Union Station) and all other active rail passenger stations in the state of Kansas for Amtrak. The *Texas Rocket* had long been discontinued (shown in this April 1948 shot), but service between Chicago, Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston would still be provided by the *Lone Star* via Amtrak. (John A. Mills photo and story)



ATSF #170 near Cajon Pass, California in 1947. *(Peter Smykla, Jr collection)*



Frisco 4-6-2 #1018, date, location and photographer unknown. *(Peter Smykla, Jr collection)*

2002 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

PRESIDENT - Fred Fillers, 29009 Bandy Rd, Little Rock AR 72223-9720 (501-821-2026)
VICE-PRESIDENT - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (501-331-2030)
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BOARD '03 - Robin Thomas, 10980 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72212-1412
BOARD '04 - Stanley Wozencraft, 108 N Palm St, Little Rock AR 72205-3827 (501-664-3301)
BOARD '05 - Leonard Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)
BOARD '06 - Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769 (501-664-0232)

NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train enthusiasts that was formed in 1969. We are also the Little Rock Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. We meet on the second Sundays of most months at 2 p.m. Anyone interested in trains is welcome!

Dues to join the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB are currently \$20 a year, which includes the monthly *Arkansas Railroader* newsletter. If you'd like to join the NRHS through our club (thus being a member of the Little Rock Chapter NRHS and national NRHS), you must pay \$20 a year more, bringing the total to \$40 a year for both. Dues are always payable on January 1st of each year, but you may pay at any time (membership will extend through the following year).

To join or renew, send your name, address and phone number plus dues to the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB, PO BOX 9151, NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119. Call 501-758-1340 for information. The newsletter editor's email address is: trains@trainweather.com The *Arkansas Railroader* is put on the Web monthly, and that address is: <http://www.trainweather.com>

The next meeting/program of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2002 at our usual site, Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, 4401 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock. Time will be 2 p.m. The program will be given by **TOM SHOOK**, who will talk on Gas Electrics - History from Duddlebugs to the 1st Diesel. He will use a combination of an overhead projector and movies. Should be quite interesting. (Unfortunately, your editor will be in Texas at the time).

FUTURE PROGRAMS include a speaker from the Little Rock Port Authority. The annual outing to Dover to ride Ron Esserman's backyard Walden Too Railroad may be in June.

TRAIN EXCURSION ON THE OUCH APRIL 27! - VP Ron Esserman said an excursion on the Ouachita Railroad will be held for our club Saturday, April 27, 2002. We will leave at 10 a.m. and stop for BBQ at about noon. The OUCH RR will provide the cold drinks, but you will need to purchase the BBQ. We need a head count by the middle of April to notify the barbecue people about the number of diners. A directional map to get to the OUCH office is elsewhere in this newsletter - basically you take Hwy 167 to El Dorado, go around the east side of town on Hwy 167, then turn right on Hwy 82 (toward Camden), take the Southfield Road/South West Ave exit, go north toward El Dorado until you reach the railroad tracks, turn left before crossing the tracks on the dirt road until you reach the Ouachita Railroad office (you can see the building as soon as you make the turn). We will leave from their office. Their phone number is: 870-863-7044 if you get lost.

As most know, this line is the former Rock Island line between El Dorado and Lille, Louisiana - definitely a "rare-

mileage" trip. We will board at OUCH's office in El Dorado and probably go to Lillie and back. **YOU MUST BE A PAID MEMBER OF THE CLUB TO RIDE THIS TRIP.** SPACE IS SEVERELY LIMITED.

Please call or write Ron Esserman at 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754, 501-331-2030, email: shay473@cei.net. It's free except for the barbecue.

JAMES E. FULLERTON, member from Junction City, Arkansas, located on the OUCH line, wrote the following letter and send in the following photos of the October 28, 2000 excursion run for the Rock Island Club. He will be riding this time.

"I was born and raised in Junction City and grew up watching trains on the Rock Island. I've loved the railroad as long as I can remember. Anyway, I took these pictures of the excursion on the OUCH RR on October 28, 2000. I didn't know anything about it. The train seldom runs on Saturday. I always watch it when I'm home. I made these pictures when they made the northbound trip back.

I found out later that is was the Rock Island railroad club. I don't know the name of any of the people on board. They were made in Junction City. My wife and I will make the April run. I can hardly wait."



Our esteemed, honored and exalted leaders - VP Ron Esserman (left) and President Fred Fillers (right), taken at the February 2002 club meeting. *(John Jones photo)*

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP ROSTER will be delayed for another month or so because I'm trying to resolve the changes in telephone area codes just announced this year. I want these new area codes to be as accurate as possible in the printed roster of our club.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS! - The Arkansas Railroad Club welcomes the following new members this month: **J.C. KOEHLER**, 1015 Koehler Rd., Sherwood AR 72120, 501-835-5425; **PAUL THOMAS**, 1919 North Georgia #12, Little

Rock AR 72207; **DAVID ROBINSON**, PO Box 4464, State University AR 72467; **NICK MACCHIAROLO** (rejoined), 1113 Brookwood, El Dorado AR 71730, 870-862-8698; **RICKY SHUTTLEWORTH**, PO Box 1216, Mountain View AR 72560, 870-269-4612; **JOE BERG** (rejoined), 5603 Dale Rd, Benton AR 72015.

If any of you know of someone who'd like to join, just write to us and I'll send you some extra newsletters to give them and application forms.

EDWARD W. NOEL

Longtime member Edward W. Noel died February 13, 2002. His address was: 1606 Wodland Park Rd, Bryant AR 72022

FROM STEPHEN R. STRAUSS, member from the state of Washington (regarding the photos in the March *Railroader* on pages 3 and 4): "I received my March issue of *Arkansas Railroader*. On page 4, I recognized the Saline County courthouse from the sheriff's funeral procession scene at the end of the 1973 film White Lightning. The photo next to it shows the now-demolished MoPac Benton station. In 1978 I scratchbuilt an HO scale model of this station for the Arkansas Valley Model Railroad Club. Unfortunately, it was stolen when the layout facility on River Road was burglarized in August 1980."

MINUTES - FEBRUARY 10TH 2002 (Submitted by Fern Fillers)

The meeting was called to order by President Fred Fillers @ 2:00 P.M.

Peter Smykla, Jr. reported that he is working on getting his railroad running again. Ron Esserman and several others volunteered to help him clean it up.

Tom Shook volunteered to take over the duties of NRHS representative until the board could convene and elect a permanent one. No report was sent last year to the NRHS, so Tom will take care of sending it.

It was noted that the Pine Bluff show and sale falls on the same weekend as Bart Jennings program. (April 6th). Bart will also have another show the 1st weekend in November. This will be on FarmRail's lines in Oklahoma.

Bill Bailey talked about the museum in Pine Bluff and thanked us for the pictures the club has contributed. John Jones has salvaged and very nicely mounted a number board from a Cotton Belt locomotive, which Bill brought to show us.

Under the heading of old business, the fact was discussed that no one seems to be interested in putting on our show and sale. Fred commented that this event is a great way of contacting people who are interested in railroading and could increase membership in our club. Fred also commented that our special events are well attended, but some of our regular members are sometimes absent from them.

Fred opened for discussion the article John Hodkin wrote in the *Railroader* about increasing attendance. Fred appointed John as unofficial membership chairman, and he graciously agreed. We have an aging membership, so the thrust of the discussion was how we can stir up interest in younger people, and reach those who would be interested in coming to the meetings.

Ken suggested an ad in the paper that will go all over the state.

Several of the members noted that they have found interest when they talk to people around them about the club. The suggestion was, "Talk it up!"

Jackie Roach talked about the interest small children have in trains. She suggested presenting train history in schools or museums, etc. Also reaching African-Americans for membership.

Under the heading of new business, Ron talked about a trip on Bill Robin's Ouachita Railroad out of El Dorado. Robin Thomas made the motion to "set it up". Leonard Thalmueller has ridden it, and said it was a great trip!

The meeting was adjourned.

A terrific program was given by Peter Smykla, Jr., called, "Island Railroading". He showed many slides of railroads in Cuba, among other places.

NEW MEMBERS WANTED - Ask a friend to join the Arkansas Railroad Club. If you need extra copies of newsletters to share, let me know and I'll mail you some. Also, any ideas to get new members, let us know. I'll send them free newsletter samples.

TRAINWATCHING WEBSITE - A group of Arkansas Railroad Club members have been going to Union Station Sunday mornings (sometimes I come dressed in a suit, ready to go to church at 11) to photograph trains. Sometimes trains pass through once every 15 minutes, other times less. I've been putting small-sized web photos of this activity, along with other current rail photography around the state (including the Little Rock & Western west of Perry), on the following webpage: <http://www.trainweather.com/sunday.html> Check it out often.

To: Anyone who reads the Railroader, but doesn't attend the meetings:

The Arkansas Railroad Club: A woman's point of view.

I have been attending the RR club almost from its beginning, and I think it's the greatest club that I have ever known about. I am interested in preserving history and artifacts, but I'm afraid I don't get excited when I hear the "clickity-clack" of wheels on rails. That doesn't mean I haven't enjoyed being a part of the club. Our club is made up of members of diverse interests and talents. Each one brings his own contribution, which makes our club unique and special. We have writers, whose newspaper articles and books have saved information about the railroads that might otherwise have been lost. We have members who have built their own railroads and been very generous about inviting others to enjoy the fruits of their labors. There has been much hard work expended by our members on restoring the 819 in Pine Bluff. Our members have owned their own and been presidents of working short line railroads. The interest of our membership over the years has run the gamut of every conceivable area of railroading. They have collected information on everything possible. The dedication of the editor of this publication is a constant source of pride for us.

Although we don't have a museum to store our artifacts, our club has made a great contribution to preserving railroad lore.

The other thing about our club that is great is the character of the members. There has been very little politicking, we have all gotten along remarkably well. No one wants to run things or gets bent out of shape when he doesn't get his way.

We are mourning the loss of one of our most faithful members, who is now in a nursing home, who always knew when someone was sick, and kept up with everything that was going on. She (Naomi Hull) can never be replaced, but there are others out there who can make a contribution and we welcome them to come and bring their interests and ideas.

Fern Fillers

WANTED : FOR SALE OR TRADE

The following is for those who want to find certain railroad-related items, information, or want to sell or trade such items with other

railfans. We reserve the right to refuse listings if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas Railroad Club is not responsible

for misleading ads.

WANTED - Pre-World War II photos of railroad activity around Felsenthal, Arkansas, once a branch line terminal on the Missouri Pacific. Also any logging railroads or railroads around Arkansas City, now almost a ghost town but once a thriving river port and sawmill town. These are wanted for my own photo collection. Send information to Russ Harrison, 726 Lakeshore Dr, Monroe LA 71203.

WANTED - Railroad items bought and sold, but no toy/model trains. All items must be in good condition. I'll buy china, posters, brochures, etc. I have worked with the Milwaukee Road (4th generation railroader), C&NW and C&O Historical Societies, the National Railroad Museum, and the Mid-Continent Railroad Museum at North Freedom, Wisconsin. My wife and I are knowledgeable about the value of railroad items, and I've been dealing with railroad

artifacts over 20 years as a hobby and now that I'm retired I'm collecting and buying full time. I'll help identify, evaluate and write appraisal/tax donation letters about your railroad artifacts. We can purchase items from you or your organization that you are not longer interested in retaining. If interested, contact Larry Bunce, Railroad Relics, 201 N Kerch St, Brooklyn WI 53521, 608-455-4233, email: rrrellmb@chorus.net

RAILROAD ABANDONMENT PROPOSALS

The address of the Surface Transportation Board is: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, Washington DC 20423. The STB phone number for abandonment procedures (Office of Public Services) is: 202-565-1592. If you contact them, it would be handy to use the Docket Numbers. Their Web address is: <http://www.stb.dot.gov> if you'd like the complete listings.

These abandonment proposals have been printed in the Federal Register or have come directly from the Surface Transportation Board. They will go in effect unless one of the following occurs: 1) an offer of financial assistance is received; 2) a request for public use of the land is received (for instance, rails-to-trails); 3) petitions to reopen the case is filed. Railroads, before they can file these "notices of exemption under CFR 1152 Subpart F," must certify that 1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; 2) any overhead traffic can be routed over other lines; 3) no formal complaint filed by a user is pending and; 4) environmental reports, historic reports, transmittal letter, newspaper publication, and notice to governmental agencies have been met. Even though approval is granted for the railroads to abandon, it may be months or years before track is actually taken up.

WEST VIRGINIA - CSX - To abandon approximately 10.5 miles of railroad between milepost BUG-0.0 at Cowen and milepost BUG-10.5 at Bolair, in Webster County, WV. Effective on March 13, 2002. (STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 603X), decided February 4, served February 11, 2002)

MINNESOTA - UNION PACIFIC - To abandon a 1.83-mile rail line over the Trimont Industrial Lead from milepost 140.57 to milepost 142.4 near Trimont, in Martin County, MN. Effective on April 2, 2002. (STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 186X), decided February 21, served March 1, 2002)

MINNESOTA - DULUTH, MISSABE AND IRON RANGE RAILWAY CO - To abandon and discontinue service over a 0.63-mile line of railroad known as the Virginia Branch, extending from milepost B5.5 to milepost B6.1, in St. Louis County, MN. Effective on April 5, 2002. (STB Docket No. AB-101 (Sub-No. 15X), decided February 25, served March 6, 2002)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

KCS INTERMODAL RAMP TO REOPEN

(Sallisaw, Oklahoma - Benefits Fort Smith, Arkansas) - Kansas City Southern announced that it will reopen its intermodal ramp at Sallisaw, Oklahoma on March 18. Plant manager of Hiram Walker in Fort Smith Brian Hastings welcomed the news. "This is certainly great news for us. It will mean a lot of opportunities by being able to move our products in and out of our Fort Smith plant more cheaply," Hastings said. Hastings said when Kansas City Southern closed the Sallisaw truck-rail ramp Oct. 27, 1999, having to make other arrangements to transport its products cost Hiram Walker as much as \$1 million a year.

Doniele Kane, Kansas City Southern director of corporate communications, said the facility will be fully operational March 18 with improved customer service. Kane said market conditions forced Kansas City Southern to close the ramp in 1999. The reopened ramp will primarily serve the local manufacturing base with the movement of inbound and outbound products, Kane said. Kane said shippers are switching to containers because containers and double-stack service can reduce product damage. *(Southwest Times Record, March 12, 2002)*

TWO DERAILMENTS IN MARCH

Ricky Shuttleworth from Mountain View said that the Missouri & Northern Arkansas at Guion, Arkansas had a derailment on March 5, 2002 near Guion. There were a total of six cars that derailed, five of them off the tracks. Three contained coal and 2 had soy bean meal.

The picture on the next page shows a BNSF derailment that occurred the night of March 9th south of Hoxie.



GENERAL RAIL NEWS

TRUCKING, RAILROAD UNIONS CONSIDER MERGER

The Teamsters Union and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers said on February 27, 2002, they were considering a merger that would create "a seamless transportation union" of rail-trucking industry workers and give the BLE increased bargaining muscle. The BLE, the country's oldest labor union, said its governing body took a step toward merging or affiliating with the Teamsters Union by authorizing its top three leaders to explore the possibilities of a combination. "There is still a long way to go, but this is a first step in the right direction," said BLE President Don Hahs. A merger would help

the BLE, whose 38,000 active members in the railroad industry are mostly locomotive engineers, gain more influence in bargaining and in lobbying by connecting with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, whose 1.4 million members include long-haul truckers, union officials said.

373 DIE IN TRAIN FIRE IN EGYPT

On February 20, 2002, 373 passengers died in a burning train outside of Cairo on their way to a holiday. The train burned 7 of the 11 cars. The train continued moving for over 2 miles even after the fire started. There were 1,200 onboard. *(Via Dan Barr)*

END OF AN ERA

After 103 years of continuous passenger train service, the last passenger train pulled out of the Santa Fe Fort Worth, Texas depot on February 26. Amtrak now stops at the new Intermodal Transportation Center, a short walk away. The Heartland Flyer left at 5:25 p.m. and was the last train out. It was the oldest Texas depot in continuous service from the day it opened in 1899 until February 26, 2002. *(See photo on the next page)*



After 103 years of continuous service to passenger trains, the Fort Worth Santa Fe depot saw its last train February 26, 2002, as the Heartland Flyer left at 5:25 p.m. It opened in 1899. Amtrak now uses the new Intermodal Transportation Center a short walk north. *(Ken Ziegenbein photo)*

AMTRAK NEWS

AMTRAK VIEWS

MAYOR JOHN ROBERT SMITH, the new Amtrak Board leader, said recently: "First of all, let's look at that \$25 billion (Amtrak received) over 30 years. During that same time, we've invested \$750 billion in the airline industry and in the highways of this country. In fact, we spend more in this country on de-icing the roads and collecting the road kill off of those highways in one year than we spend on the entire national passenger rail system. That's a shame. That can't go forward. I'm glad that Gil and the Amtrak Reform Council agree that there must be significant operation and capital funding, but let's look at the scorecard for Amtrak.

Over the past five years, we have grown revenue by almost 40%, ridership is up by 20%. During that whole time we saw operational subsidies cut by almost 80%. Amtrak has been doing its job. So now it is

time for Congress and the administration to do their job. We've done ours. They need to do their job. And we need \$1.2 billion. I'll tell you what we're going to do with that, and that was made very clear by George Warrington. \$840 million of that \$1.2 billion is for capital. \$200 million is for running the national long-distance train network that we have that I believe in, that Mr. Carmichael believes in, and \$100-almost-70 million of it is to fund the excess railroad retirement, which is really a pass-through to Amtrak.

There's where the money is. It's justified. We're hearing from Congress that they intend to fund it and that they intend to actively engage in the reauthorization of Amtrak and the development of these interconnecting high-speed rail corridors, which is the future for this country."

JON OWENS, Region V National Association of Railroad Passengers laughs as he states, "I hear the following question

almost everywhere I go. How come the folks in Europe and Japan have better rail service than we do?" Jon's answer was an eye opener as it was something that never meant anything to me until now. He states, "After World War 2, Europe and Japan had to rebuild their infrastructures as the war had totally destroyed what had existed. We through various War reconstruction plans such as the Marshall Plan literally rebuilt their rail, air and roadways. In rebuilding their rails, we virtually let ours go, as our view at the time (during the late 40's and the 50's and 60's) was that our rails were functioning up to and beyond that of the rest of the world. The Europeans and Japanese simply took the foundations that we made for them and expanded them to what they have today." "Why they have expanded on the foundations laid by us, our own rail transportation network has stagnated and started shrinking. We have regressed by

taking up rails. If some of the rails taken up were still in place today, our task for rail reform would be much easier."

AN AMTRAK SENATE BILL

Under the Hollings bill introduced in the Senate the week of March 4th:

1) The Northeast Corridor would get \$1.31 billion annually, all for capital projects including expected growth. The bill anticipates that operating expenses would be covered by ticket sales.

2) \$1.55 billion annually would go to the development of other high-speed corridors across the country.

3) Long-distance trains would receive \$580 million annually, with \$360 million reserved for operating expenses.

4) State-supported routes and short-distance routes would receive \$270 million annually.

5) There would be a \$1.3 billion authorization for rail security, including life-safety upgrades in the rail tunnels in Baltimore and New York, plus preliminary design work for tunnels to replace the 125-year-old ones leading into Baltimore from the south.

6) Hollings would make the Northeast Corridor a separate financial unit under Amtrak, ordering that operating profits be spent on the corridor and not go to subsidize

long-distance service. The bill would fully fund billions of dollars in deferred maintenance and capital needs on the corridor.

Long-distance trains would receive a separate, \$580 million annual budget.

7) His proposal is more than nine times greater than Amtrak's current federal budget and almost four times larger than the amount Amtrak says it will need in fiscal 2003 to avoid a major cutback in passenger trains. A Hollings aide said the senator understands that finding money in a tight budget climate would be a problem, but he mainly wants to begin the debate over whether the country wants a robust passenger train system.

The aide said the bill is the first of a two-step process, first deciding on the shape of a passenger train system and then deciding how to fund it. This is the same process that President Dwight D. Eisenhower used in starting the interstate highway system, she said.

ANOTHER AMTRAK HEARING

March 7, 2002 - Today U.S. Senator Patty Murray held a hearing on the future of Amtrak before the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, which Murray chairs.

Murray's main points:

* Murray wants Amtrak to succeed.

* Amtrak must use real financial analysis.

Amtrak currently ignores depreciation, something companies are prohibited by law

from ignoring in their financial statement.

* Myth: The Northeast Corridor is "profitable."

* Fact: It is not. There are NO profitable Amtrak routes.

* Amtrak and the Bush Administration have made short-term decisions (like leasing Pennsylvania Station in New York) that have provided immediate cash but have weakened Amtrak's long term health.

* Amtrak is not on track for self-sufficiency. In fact, for 2001, Amtrak's total loss approached \$1.1 billion its highest level in history. When revenue and ridership increase, but losses increase even faster, we are not looking at a formula for self-sufficiency.

* It was foolish for some Members of Congress to insist that Amtrak become the only self-sufficient national railroad in the world. That requirement appears only to have succeeded in pushing Amtrak into making short-term financial decisions that have undermined its long-term financial condition.

* Amtrak's Future

Whether we are able to provide \$1.2 billion for next year or just half that amount, I don't intend to subsidize just a regional rail system that protects the status quo for certain states that have put up none of their own funding but throws most of the other states out of the national rail network.

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

UP 3985 2002 STEAM EXCURSION - JUNE 15, 2002 - CHICAGO TO MILWAUKEE (sponsored by the Chicago Chapter NRHS and 20th Century Railroad Club, <http://www.chicagonrhs.com>). Costs are: Coach \$169; Dome \$259. Go to their website for more details.

UP 3985 2002 STEAM EXCURSION - JUNE 22, 23, 2002 - ST PAUL TO KANSAS CITY with an overnight stop in Des Moines (sponsored by the Camerail Club, 6307 Seward Street, Omaha NE 68104-4761, camerail_club_excursion@yahoo.com) They are not taking reservations by phone. You must email them for more information. (Both these excursions are listed on the Union Pacific website.)

ARIZONA - WILLIAMS - AUGUST 19-26, 2002 - The Grand Canyon Chapter, NRHS, is hosting the 2002 NRHS national convention in Williams, Arizona from August 19 through the 26th, 2002. Activities include steam and Alco trips on the Grand Canyon Railway. Registration is \$40 (tentatively). Contact Canyon Rails 2002, PO Box 391, Willams AZ 86046 or go to their website: <http://www.canyonrails2002.com>

To join/renew membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club (Little Rock Chapter National Railway Historical Society), fill out the form below. **Annual dues are \$20** for local dues (plus **\$20** for the national NRHS dues if you want to join the NRHS through our chapter, a total of \$40 for both local and national dues).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Send check, made out to the Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. Call 501-758-1340 for more information or visit us on the web at <http://www.trainweather.com> and click on *Arkansas Railroader*. Our email is trains@trainweather.com.





Experimental engine with a high-pressure third cylinder and a watertube firebox. No railroads wanted it because of high maintenance cost of the extra cylinder, and the watertube firebox. (Gene Hull collection)

VAUCLAIN'S FOLLY

by: Gene Hull

Big Sam VaucLain didn't make many mistakes, at least we didn't hear about them.

The Baldwin Locomotive Works was begun in 1831 by Matthias Baldwin, and is the oldest locomotive manufacturing plant in America. The second man of importance at the plant was Samuel M. VaucLain, who joined the firm 1 July 1883. On 11 February 1886 he was appointed general superintendent, and on 19 May 1919 VaucLain became president, upon the resignation of Alva B. Johnson.

Big Sam was a practical machinist, engineer and locomotive builder. He had long been enthusiastic about the compound use of steam. In the simple operation of a locomotive, steam from the boiler was admitted to the cylinders where it expanded and exerted pressure upon the pistons to move the locomotive, then it was exhausted through the smokestack to the atmosphere. The noise at the

stack was the sound of steam expanding, which indicated it still was capable of performing work. Sam said this was a waste of steam. Surely there must be some way of using more of the expansive force of steam, thereby producing a saving of fuel and water, and creating a more efficient locomotive.

He devised a method of compounding the use of steam. Steam from the boiler was admitted to one cylinder, then it was exhausted to the other cylinder, where it continued to expand and perform work before exhausting to the atmosphere.

This was a different application of an old idea. A Frenchman Alfred G. deGlehn, had used this principle in a high speed, four-cylinder balanced compound engine for the French Northern Railway. The Great Northern Railway in Britain also had used compound engines. Of course, the

most famous were the articulated locomotives designed by another Frenchman Anatole Mallet.

Vauclain's belief in steam compounding led to his securing a U.S. Patent in October 1889. This was for a four-cylinder compound engine he designed and built as a 4-4-0 No. 82 for the Baltimore & Ohio. The engine proved to be very economical in its use of fuel and water, and the efficiency of design in both freight and passenger service led to its use on many railroads in the U.S. and foreign countries.

The compound locomotive had pretty well reached its end by 1904. The invention and development of the superheater eliminated the need to use steam twice. As the temperature of steam increased, its expansive power increased in direct proportion. A smaller amount of steam was required to fill a cylinder to produce the same tractive power.

Vauclain refused to surrender. His belief in "twice used" steam still held firm. He would attempt to reverse many railroad officials' preference for superheated steam. This tenacity proved to be a mistake.

Railroad officials were always looking for a locomotive that would move more tons of freight. Bigger and stronger was better. Locomotive builders tried to give them what they wanted. Vauclain would show these "hot steam" boys how the cow ate the cabbage.

Vauclain's new engine would be number 60,000 on the list of engines built by Baldwin. He would give his engine the number 60000.

He incorporated two ideas in its design. Of course, he would compound the use of steam, and he would use three cylinders instead of the usual two. This idea of a third cylinder dated back to the early 1840's, and was used extensively in Great Britain. It found no favor among those darned revolutionary yankees in America. The three cylinders were placed in a horizontal row, with

one on each side in the usual position, and the third one was located under the smokebox and between the frames. This middle cylinder received steam directly from the boiler at full pressure. This steam then was exhausted to the other cylinders for additional expansion.

The main rods from the outside low-pressure cylinders were attached to the third set of driving wheels. The rod from the high-pressure cylinder was fastened to a crank formed in the axle of the second drivers. A slight bow was formed in the axle of the front drivers to clear this center rod.

Big Sam Vauclain decided to design his engine with a 4-10-2 wheel arrangement. This was the same as 16 engines built the previous year (1925) by Schenectady Locomotive Works for the Southern Pacific. He also decided to use a high-pressure boiler generating steam at a pressure of 350 pounds per square inch. A special firebox was designed, because the pressure could cause leaks around the staybolts connecting a normal firebox to the boiler.

The usual firebox was equipped with a series of horizontal tubes about 1 3/4 inches in diameter extending from the front of the firebox through the boiler, where they were surrounded by water. Heat from the firebox passed through the tubes to produce steam in the boiler.

Sam made up his mind to try an idea from another foreign country. Herr Brotan, an Austrian, invented a boiler in 1870 in which he placed two rows of vertical tubes along each side inside the firebox. Water from the boiler was circulated through the tubes to produce steam. The firebox was not attached to the boiler with staybolts, as in the standard design. Sam made a few improvements and got a U.S. patent on it.

In March 1926 Sam's new baby was born. Number 60000 rolled out of the Baldwin shop, and it made a few trial runs around the plant yard. Everything worked fine. Then it was sent to the

Pennsylvania Railroad at Altoona, Pa. This railroad had built the Altoona Locomotive Test Plant in 1904 as an exhibit for the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition at St. Louis. Later the plant was brought to Altoona, where it was placed in a special building.

Sam's new engine was subjected to the most thorough, exacting tests possible to check its performance. The 60000 produced the highest horsepower the plant could measure. It broke several performance records.

After graduating from the test plant, the 60000 was put to work on the Pennsy between Harrisburg and Morrisville. At a faster than normal speed, and pulling 14 percent heavier loads of freight than contemporary engines, the 60000 still used less fuel.

There were challenges to be met farther afield. The engine went to the Baltimore & Ohio, then on to Chicago over the Erie. With admiral performance, she traveled the rails of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Santa Fe, and then the Southern Pacific. Admiring crowds came to see her on display at Portland, Oregon. Heading east over the Great Northern, Sam's pride and joy returned home to the Baldwin plant at Eddystone. She had performed just as well as Sam believed she would.

In anticipation of filling many orders from many railroads Vauclain assembled all necessary parts and was ready for quick assembly.

Sam Vauclain, the genius and master engineer, had forgotten or had not thought of, a crucial factor - a maddening characteristic of mechanics and inspectors at railroad roundhouses across America.

Anything out of sight, or out of reach, on a locomotive did not warrant inspection or maintenance on a frequent basis.

Sam goofed!

No orders came from the railroads. The supply of parts was gathering dust. Sam began to make enquiries. Master mechanics all across the country had the same sad song - maintenance cost would be too high. Especially on that third cylinder hidden between the frames under the boiler. Without frequent care, this would be a constant source of trouble. This proved to be true in the actual performance of the Missouri Pacific's experimental three-cylinder Pacific number 6000, which was modified at North Little Rock in the fall of 1942, when the inside cylinder was removed.

The unusual design of the watertube boiler also was of some concern. The cost of maintenance could be very high.

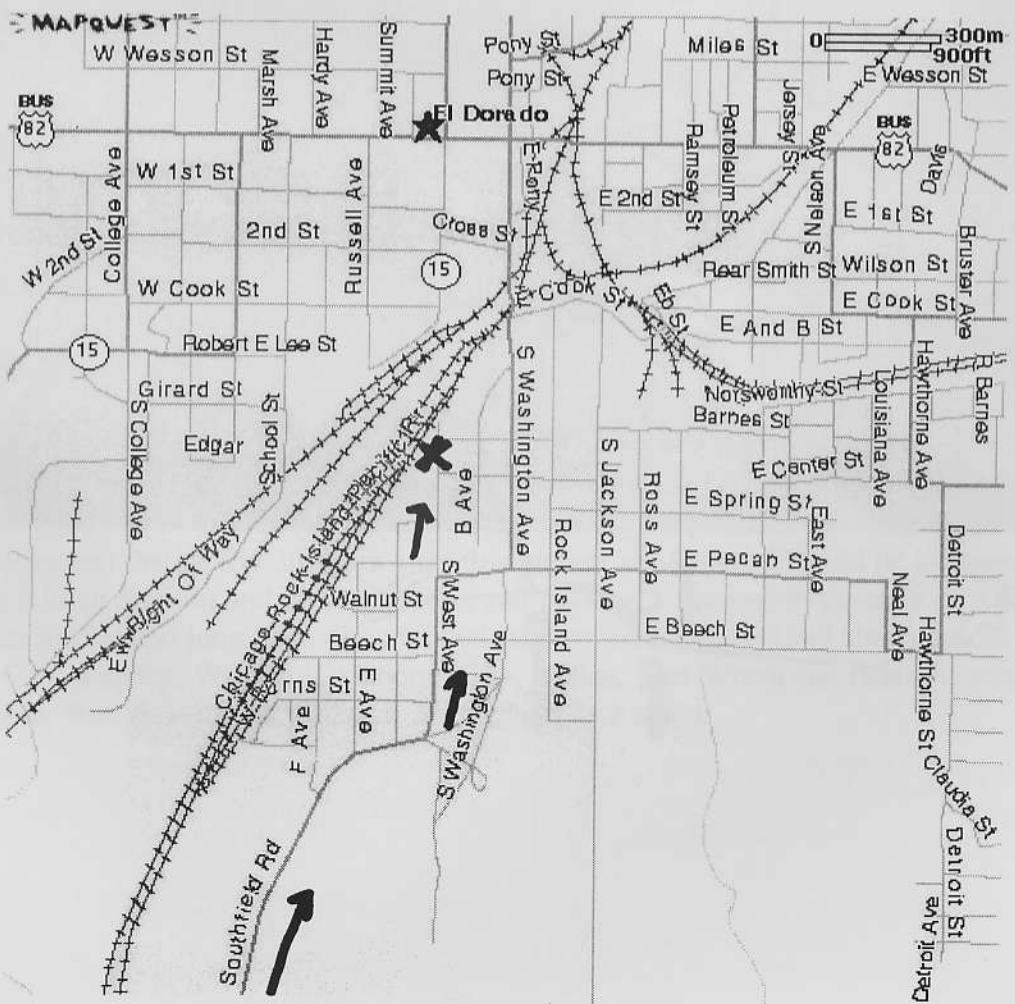
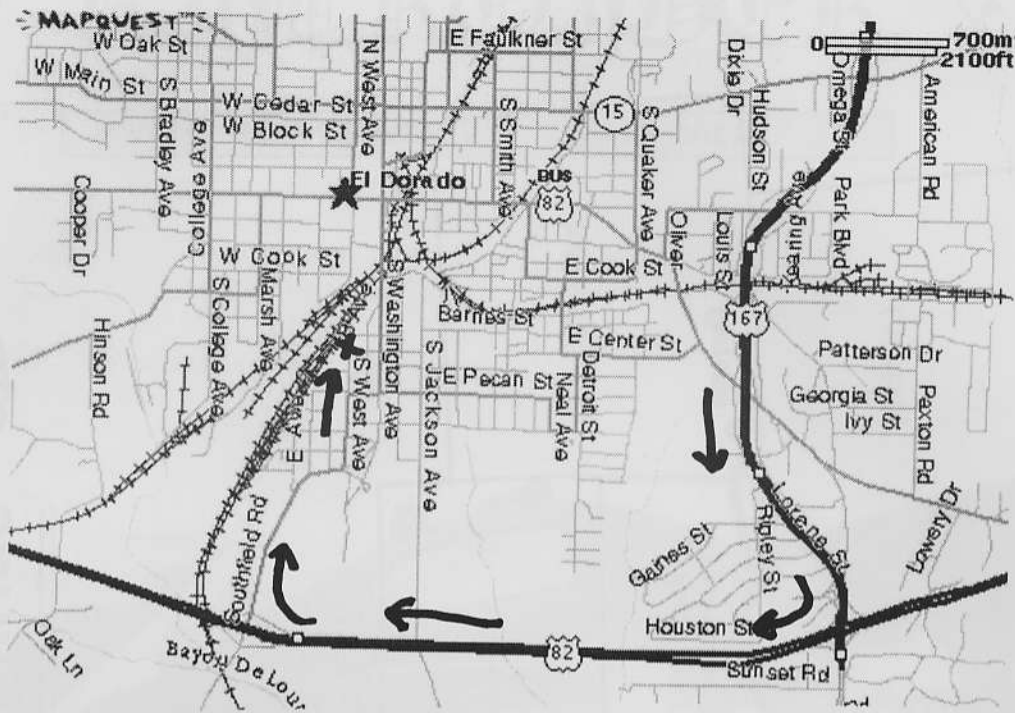
Thanks, but no, thanks!

The 60000 was a good engine, her performance had proved that. But, it would need regular maintenance. She sat in storage until September 1933. Sam surrendered his dream. His engine was donated to the Franklin Institute Transportation at Philadelphia. She sits there today, glistening like new, and can be moved a few feet by opening the throttle, which activates an electric motor.

Confined, and forever silent, Number 60000 is an example of America's steam locomotive era.

Was she really Vauclain's folly, or a monument to human obstinance?

OUCH RR





Steam Locomotive No. 3985

Spring Tour 2002

