

ARKANSAS RAILROADER

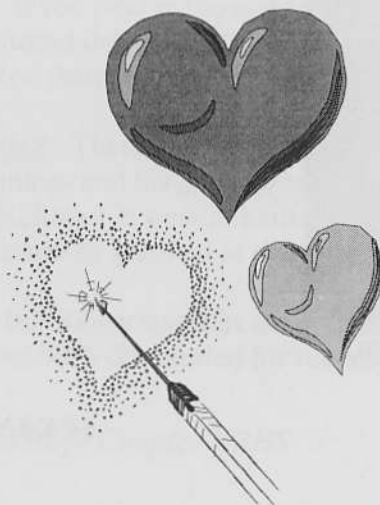


Little Rock Chapter
NRHS

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 2 FEBRUARY 2000

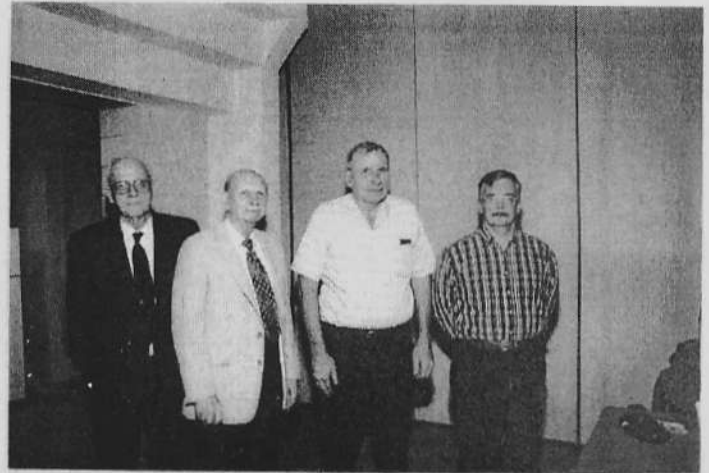


For a brief period, Rock Island's Choctaw Rocket operated on a schedule which caused it to arrive in Memphis at 11:45 a.m. and depart at 1:45 p.m. with only a 2-hour layover for turning. In August 1948 I was able to catch #51 just after it passed HH Tower headed west toward Oklahoma City and Amarillo. The power was a 1200HP TA No. 602. Following is Mail-Baggage 703, "Jim Crow" coach #350-Amarillo, Coach 206-McAlester, Coach 205-Shawnee, Sleeper (8s-5bdr)-Seminole and Diner-Parlor-Observation 431-Little Rock. I attended college near Oklahoma City in 1948 (spring semester) and used the Choctaw Rocket before it went on this schedule. It departed Little Rock at 10:23 p.m. at that time. I did not get too many Rock Island pictures during this era, for which I am very sorry. Much of their passenger activity was at night resulting in fewer pictures than of MoPac action. (John A. Mills photo)



The pictures on this page were taken by club photographer John Jones at our December 18, 1999 Christmas party.

2



TOP - Board of Director's Chairman Robin Thomas (right) presented the Arkansas Railroad Club's annual "Railroad Person of the Year" award to PETER SMYKLA, JR "For dedication to the hobby by preserving railroad equipment and sharing it with club members and other enthusiasts." **BOTTOM** - BOD Chairman Robin Thomas presents an award to our secretary CAROLE SUE SCHAFER for her 5 years of dedicated work as the club's secretary. She turned the secretary's job over to Sharon Doyal this year.

TOP - Officers of the Arkansas Railroad Club, Little Rock Chapter NHRS, for 2000, left to right: WALTER WALKER, Treasurer; KEN ZIEGENBEIN, *Arkansas Railroader* editor (not an officer) since 1981; JOHN HODKIN, JR, President; SHARON DOYAL, secretary; and JIM WAKEFIELD, Vice-President. Not shown - NHRS Director Jim Bennett, Photographer John Jones, Trip Advertising David P. Hoge (these are not officer positions). **BOTTOM** - Board of Directors for 2000, left to right: TOM SHOOK (2001), GENE HULL (2000), RON ESSERMAN (2004), and ROBIN THOMAS (Chairman - 2003). Not shown - BILL BAILEY (2002).



Outgoing club president LEONARD THALMUELLER, left, is presented an award by 2000 president JOHN HODKIN, JR for his two-year reign as president.



2000 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

PRESIDENT - John Hodkin, Jr., 506 Gordon St, N Little Rock AR 72117-4713 (501-945-2128)
VICE-PRESIDENT - Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769 (501-664-0232)
TREASURER - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826)
SECRETARY - Sharon Doyal, HC72 Box 41A, Clinton AR 72031 (501-745-7938)
EDITOR - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340)
NRHS DIRECTOR - Jim Bennett, 1002 South Leslie St, Stuttgart AR 72160 (870)-673-6753)
PHOTOGRAPHER - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729)
TRIP ADVERTISING - David P. Hoge, 3721 Idlewild, N Little Rock AR 72116 (501-771-1025)
BOARD '00 - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington #31, North Little Rock AR 72114-6455 (501-945-7386)
BOARD '01 - Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr. Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)
BOARD '02 - Bill Bailey, 8318 Reymere Dr, Little Rock AR 72227-3944 (501-224-6828)
BOARD '03 - Robin Thomas, 10980 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72212-1412 (Chairman)
BOARD '04 - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (501-331-2030)

NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train enthusiasts (prototype trains, not model trains) 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.

Dues to join the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB are currently \$20 a year, which includes the monthly 16-24 page 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 \$17 a year more, bringing the total to \$37 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, 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: ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com The Arkansas Railroader is put on the Web monthly, and that address is: <http://www.trainweather.com>

The next meeting is Sunday, February 13, 2000 at 2 p.m. at Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church on Woodlawn Street in Little Rock. The program will be given by PETER SMYKLA, JR and be his world-wide rail-related travels of 1999. These are always quite interesting. Come and bring a friend. Bill Bailey will also bring some of his collection of insulators. He said that he now has one from the original Union Pacific transcontinental railroad as well as one from the Central Pacific. Bill will give a program on insulators and rail'road telegraphs in March.

2000 DUES ARE DUE - If you haven't already paid (and many of you have paid), your 2000 dues are now due. All NRHS chapters collect dues on January 1. If you paid in the middle of the year, I put you as paid through December 2000. Then you should renew every year around the first of the year from now on. Look at your label for 2000DEC to see if you're paid up (hopefully I've gotten them all up to date). Thanks.

UPCOMING (?) NEARBY EXCURSIONS - There may be another rail trip on the Kiamichi Railroad next December (or October) run by Barton Jennings and his group from Tennessee. Next October is also the 100th anniversary of the DeQueen and Eastern Railroad in west Arkansas and it would be nice to get some sort of trip on that line as well, but nothing has been discussed or planned at this point.

COTTON BELT 819 NEWS reported by Bill Bailey was that the FRA inspection was well underway in early January and that the steam engine was about 90% dismantled for the inspection. Bill also said that they are still in

need of the history of the building that houses the 819 and the Arkansas Railroad Museum. If you know anything about this building's history, contact Bill at 8318 Reymere Dr, Little Rock AR 72227, 501-224-6828)

SHOW AND SALE for next year will be held June 3 at Fisher Armory in North Little Rock, where we had it in years past. Table rental will be \$30 for the first table, \$25 for the second and \$20 for three or more. Admission will stay at \$3, under 12 free. For more information, contact Walter Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227, 501-225-0826.

MORE ON THE MOPAC TEST TRAIN (October, 1999 *Railroader*) from Mike Adams: "Enjoyed John Mills' contribution concerning the TEST TRAIN. He states, however, that it was an Allied Equipment Company train. The test train was the American Steel Foundries Service Laboratory and consisted of two ASFX Boxcars, numbers 1940 and 1941 plus other equipment as outlined in my previous letter....I have in my possession a brochure issued by ASF concerning these runs. There were 72 on the Missouri Pacific instead of 17 as I said earlier and many more ran off on the New York Central and the Milwaukee. The trucks were eventually put on the market as "ASF Ride Control Freight Car Trucks (A-3).

From March 15, 1948 until January 8, 1953 I worked in the office of the General Car Foreman in the North Little Rock Back Shops. The late Carter W. Reddick was assistant General Car Foreman and had a part to play in these test runs. He never tired of telling me about the trips and just plain scared he was looking through the glass floor at the trucks "working" at 90 mph." (*Mike Adams, December 10, 1999*)

2000 CHRISTMAS PARTY will be held on December 16, 2000, in case you want to start planning now. It will be at the same place as last Christmas.

DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH NEWSLETTER is February 13.

Minutes for the January 9, 2000 Arkansas Railroad Club Monthly Meeting President, John Hodkin Presiding

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P. M. It was announced by John Hodkin, that the Arkansas Railroad Club had it's 30th Birthday in December. John asked all the founding members that were present to please stand and be recognized. He thanked the members for having the foresight to form this organization. He then introduced himself to the club members. He asked to have any guest or new members to introduce themselves. Allen Gentry was introduced as a guest. He then told a little bit about himself.

We did not have any minutes from December, since the meeting was our Christmas Dinner. Peter Smykla, Jr was awarded the Arkansas Railroad Club Historian of the Year.

John then asked for a Treasurer's report from Walter Walker. "The club ended the year solvent. We did not make any money this year. We spent money. We had another book published, and have not recovered the money from that book as yet. We ended with a positive cash balance. The Board of Directors approved a budget for the upcoming year." John asked the members present if there were any questions. With none being asked, the treasurer's report will be filed for the auditor.

John asked for a report from the Board of Directors. The report was given by Board Chairman, Robin Thomas. "The board is looking at several things. We approved the budget for this year. We are looking

at some possible excursions on the Kiamichi, T.O.&E, D. Q. & E. The Show and Sale is going on as usual. We may be looking into someone else running it next year. That's about it, if the Board of Director's Secretary wants to add some more." The secretary, John Hodkin did not have anything further to add.

N.R.H.S. news was reported by Gene Hull. There was no new news. John Hodkin reported that there was a real nice article in the N.R.H.S. News Bulletin by Gene Hull. This article was previously published in the Arkansas Railroader. The article is a timely one since the KCS RR has purchased the Panamanian RR. The first locomotives will be shipped out of Houston, Texas in the next month or two. The locomotives have already been painted and are headed to Houston, Texas. John is a member of a rail news listserv group, called *RailSpot*. They have been talking about this. Member Bart Jennings gave a plug to Gene Hull's story on the *Panama RR* on *RailSpot*. A discussion ensued about the types of locomotives and the gauge of the rail and locomotives used on the Panamanian RR.

Bill Bailey gave a report on the Cotton Belt 819. The format of the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society's newsletter will be changed. They will be putting a lot more historical pictures in their newsletter. If anyone has any photos of Cotton Belt people, places or activities, that they would like to share please contact the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society. They

are still looking for information about the building in Pine Bluff where Engine #819 is housed. They would like to know who the builder was and the building date. If you have any information, please contact them in Pine Bluff. They plan to erect a building plate on the building. 819 is about 90% dismantled. The Federal inspector who is responsible for accrediting the engine came by the shop and stayed for about 3 hours in, on and around the locomotive. He had nothing but praise. They had followed the regulations by the letter and had their documentation. These are the items that they really look for. They are looking forward to getting the locomotive back together and they haven't found any problems of any large nature and are optimistic that the engine will be able to run again. They don't know who will operate it, but they do have engineers that are certified on it.

Bill Bailey also mentioned his hobby of collecting insulators. In 1975 a book called *Making Tracks* was published. It is the story of the Transcontinental Railroad. It has some real unique pictures. It shows the Insulators used on the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroads. He has recently acquired an insulator off the Central Pacific Railroad. The next train club meeting he will bring them to show.

Naomi Hull had nothing to report about the health, etc. of club members.

Old Business was then discussed. The only

old business of date is the Show and Sale. The Show and Sale will be June 3, 2000 this year. The Show and Sale has been moved back to Fisher Armory. We have received a lot of complaints about the parking in Little Rock so therefore it is to our best interest to move back to the armory. The table rates will be raised this year. First table is \$30.00 now, the second table is \$25.00 and the third table is \$20.00. Admission is still \$3.00 and there is no fee to park. That is one of the reasons the table rates have been raised.

New business was discussed. Robin Thomas had mentioned trips. There is going to be one coming up on the Kiamichi RR. Just like the one that Bart Jennings ran a couple of years ago. If every thing goes as planned the trip will be run December 9-10, 2000. They will run out of Ashdown, AR to Hope, AR., back to Ashdown and then to Hugo, OK in one day. The next day they will run to Antlers, OK back to Hugo, OK and to the west end as far as they go. The trip three years ago was very enjoyable. The riders were veteran railfans. This will be a trip that is highly recommended. Bart already has 50 people who want to ride, and this is before a cost of the trip has even been figured out.

This year's Christmas party has already been set for December 16, 2000.

Possible trip in September-October on the D. Q. & E. Bart Jennings is working on getting this arranged for us. This year is the D. Q. & E.'s 100th Anniversary. This may possibly be a two day trip.

Another possible trip is on Amtrak. If this comes together, you will be notified about this trip this fall.

Some of the members may have received a card in the mail from the Butler Center of Arkansas Study of History. If you did not, they are honoring Gene Hull with a reception and exhibit for his donation of Arkansas Photographs. Thursday, January 20, 2000. 5:00-6:30 P.M. at the Darragh Auditorium, Main Library at 100 Rock street in Little Rock. Everyone please try to come and support Gene. Gene mentioned the fact there are no railroad negatives in the collection.

Texas State RR is having a Railfan weekend. Ron Esserman left some forms for this event at the desk.

John asked if there were any other new business. Stanley Wozencraft mentioned that in the paper there was an article about an excursion train being run out of Hot Springs, AR. John said that he would ask John Jones give a report on this. Mr. Wozencraft also mentioned that the obituary for Mr. Reynolds, the president for the El Dorado and Wesson RR was in the paper.

John Jones gave his report on the Union Pacific RR. The Jenks shop on December 29, 1999 the last SD-40-2 rebuilt, which is life extension, they did 116 locomotives in the month of December. They have been doing these life extensions since 1991, they are over with. GP38-2 will start this month. No. 3544 was the last unit out of Jenks shop.(SD-40) On January 1, 2000 approximately 2:11 A.M. left out of Little Rock at Fairfax Crossing North bound to Dexter, MO. This was their validation train. It went to Popular Bluff. Amtrak verified from St. Louis, MO to Popular Bluff, MO. The Amtrak train traveled 40 MPH, this caused the train to be approximately 2 hours late. Amtrak left the Little Rock station approximately 2 hours and 55 minutes late due to waiting on the validation train leaving Longview, TX. Once the TX validation train came through, Amtrak left the station right behind it. On January 3, 2000, the first unit out of Jenks shop was UP 9459 C41-8. On December 31, 1999 at 11:35 P.M. central time. All up trains were shut down. They had 531 trains on UP rail, every thing was shut down from coast to coast due to the central location of the UP headquarters. There were 16 trains in the North Little Rock area. 43 of the trains were NLR service trains.

The White River Railroad: Mr. Jones went to the news conference on Friday afternoon January 7, 2000 in Hot Springs, AR. The RR will be called Hot Springs White River Scenic RR. They are bringing the train out of northern AR down probably within the next

week/week in a half. They maybe getting one of the cars from Pine Bluff, AR. They are talking about trying to bring the train down by itself. They will try to run it behind Amtrak all the way through, since is directional traffic. Start up is scheduled for February 1, 2000. About 4 days a week. The only problem Mr. Jones sees with their schedule is that the train will be running during the horse racing season. He feels that they will have to put in some other scheduled times as well. This will not be a final move for the White River RR. If it is feasible, they will run a train in Hot Springs as well as their operation in Flippin, AR. Mr. Jones also let us know that he has a list of all the number changes for UP RR, (122 pages) if anyone wanted to look at it during break. And one final note from Mr. Jones, his son was made Commander of his unit in the 189 Division of Parachute packing/Cargo Packing unit at the Little Rock Air Force Base January 1, 2000.

Vice-president, Jim Wakefield, made a request for people to sign up for programs. February will be given by Mr. Peter Smykla, Jr. Mr. Wakefield needs 9 more programs, so please give a program. September will be our annual ride on the Paperton Junction Southern RR in Pine Bluff, AR. We may also have a picnic and excursion at Mr. Ron Essermann's RR in Dover, AR. sometime during the year. Mr. Bill Bailey will do the March program.

Mr. Wakefield asked the members to vote on the 8mm movies that we wished to see. He had brought a selection of movies. Southern Railway trip behind 4501 from Memphis, TN to Corinth, TN in 1966. Footage from the Scott and Bearskin Lake 19 74-1976. Mid-continent Museum in Wisconsin 1968 & 1971; Northern Ouachita Valley* #1; D&R #9.

The members voted to see the Southern Railway trip and the Scott and Bearskin RR. A motion was made to adjourn with a second. The meeting adjourned, and the members enjoyed Mr. Wakefield's program.

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.

FOR SALE- The Arkansas Railroad Club's reprint of Gene Hull's classic *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas*, over 400 pages, hardbound, foil stamped, limited run, 6"x9" book. You can order from White River Productions, Inc., 24632 Anchor Ave, Bucklin MO 64631 or call 877-787-2467. Cost is \$24.95 plus \$5 shipping (or you can

pick one up at a club meeting and save the postage).

FOR SALE- The Arkansas Railroad Club's hardbound, 120-page book called *Railroad Stations and Trains through Arkansas and the Southwest*. It was written by Clifton Hull with help from Tom Shook, among other club members. Kevin EuDaly of White River Productions did the graphic design and artwork. You can order from White River Productions, 24632 Anchor Ave, Bucklin MO 64631. Cost is \$29.95 plus \$4.50 postage and handling (total of \$34.45 if you're having it mailed). MasterCard or

Visa accepted. You can call White River Productions at 877-787-2467.

FOR SALE - James R. Fair's book *The Louisiana & Arkansas Railway*. This 176-page clothbound book has 80 black and white illustrations and covers the Louisiana & Arkansas Railway from its beginning to the modern era. You can now order directly from Mr. Fair. He'll even autograph it for you. Cost directly from him is only \$34. His address is: James R. Fair, 2804 Northwood Rd, Austin, TX 78703-1630. Call 512-451-6194 or 512-471-3689.

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.

KENTUCKY - NORFOLK SOUTHERN - To abandon it's line between m.p. 0.7-LL at Lawrenceburg and m.p. 3.5-LL at Tyrone, Kentucky, a distance of 2.8 miles. Effective January 27, 2000. (STB Docket No. AB-290, Sub No. 192X, decided December 16, served December 27, 1999)

SOUTH DAKOTA - SOO LINE RAILROAD - To abandon 8.1 miles of line between m.p. 228.2 west of Claire City and m.p. 236.3 at the end of the line near Veblen, South Dakota. Effective February 10, 2000. (STB Docket No. AB-57, Sub No. 50X, decided January 3, served January 11, 2000)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

HOT SPRINGS EXCURSIONS

The White River Scenic Railroad announced January 7 that it will start an excursion train at Hot Springs on or before February 1, 2000. The new train will be known as the Hot Springs/White River Scenic Railroad. It will be a "feasibility study" to determine if the Hot Springs market will support an excursion train. A dinner train may be added later. The regular White River Scenic trains in north Arkansas along the White River will continue during their regular season as always.

The train will depart from the Hot Springs Transportation Depot at 100 Broadway Terrace, traveling south toward Lake Catherine before returning to the depot. Rides will last about an hour and a half. It will run twice on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays departing at 1 and 3 p.m. Ticket prices are \$19.95 for first class, \$11.95 adult coach and \$6.75 for children. You can get tickets by calling the Transportation Depot at 888-824-1022.

Sean Reed, Vice President - Operations, is looking for help in running the train - such as hosts, ticket sales, possibly some help running the train, etc. If interested, contact him at PO Box 160, Cotter AR 72626, 870-435-6000, ext 14 or fax him at 870-435-2062. The web site is <http://www.trainfun.com>

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

TRAINS HALT

Amtrak and most freight trains stopped before midnight, December 31, 1999 to insure that signals and switches worked O.K. after the date changed to 2000. Although not worried about any Y2K problems, they still decided not to take any chances on some irregularities. According to John Jones,

Union Pacific halted 531 trains. Amtrak offered free champaign and snacks on many of its trains while they were stopped.

Operation Lifesaver Facts - According to Mike Furtney, spokesman for Union Pacific, train speeds have little impact on public safety. "When you get in front of a train,

you're just as dead at 20 mph as you are when a train is traveling at 60 mph." He also said that a majority of train/vehicle collisions occur when train speeds are less than 35 mph.

Also, according to an article in the January 10, 2000 Los Angeles Times, train engineers

face about seven fatalities at crossing in the span of their careers.

PANAMA CANAL RAILROAD (KCS?)

Although the U.S. turned over the Panama Canal to Panama as of January 1, 2000, it looks as if the American railroad Kansas City Southern will run the trains along the canal. KCS and its partners will start rebuilding a 47-mile segment of the Panama Canal rail line early in 2000 and be finished by mid 2001. Then KCS will operate the Panama Canal Railway Co. KCS president Michael R. Haverty said "The railroad was in such a dilapidated condition that we didn't really pay for the concession. We guaranteed the Panamanian government that we'd have a viable railroad up and running. In exchange, the government would receive a small percentage of the profits."

Once completed, the KCS will operate three sets of trains on the line hauling 40 containers. Mi-Jack Products, based in Illinois, will operate the intermodal terminals at both ends of the line and unload the containers from ships. Trains will run 24 hours a day, up to 60 mph and are expected to generate \$35 million a year. Construction costs were estimated at \$70 million. (*Kansas City Star, December 14, 1999*)

17 CALVES KILLED

(*Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin*) - A Wisconsin Central freight hit and killed 17 500-pound

calves which had escaped their farm and were lined up on WC's tracks just north of Fond Du Lac. This occurred January 9, a Sunday. (*Duluth News-Tribune*)

ANOTHER MERGER?

BNSF and Canadian National announced on December 20, 1999, plans to merge their lines, making it the nation's largest railroad. The deal costs \$19 billion with the new line having 67,000 employees and 50,000 miles of track. The merger process will take at least a year and a half to get approval, however. The new company would be called "North American Railways." Shippers were skeptical, however, since problems arose with recent mergers, such as UP/SP and Conrail/NS/CSX.

All other major railroads in the U.S. were against the merger, mainly because of fear it could possible trigger final mergers among North American railroads, where there would be only two major carriers in the U.S. and Canada. The UTU also opposed the merger officially on January 11. Never before has there been so much opposition to a merger this early in the process. (*Dallas Morning News, December 21, 1999 via Dan Barr, Fort Worth Star-Telegram via Jerry Nunn, and CNN Financial News, December 20, 1999*)

(*Editor's Opinion: What ever happened to good old American competition? Wasn't this*

country built on private businesses competing with each other? Why do the railroads think they're an exception to this tried and true business approach? A case in point is in the following story.)

FORMER CONRAIL SHIPPERS ANGRY

About 300 angry shippers lined up at the Convention Center in Philadelphia January 11 to protest the quality of rail service they said they have endured since Conrail was broken up and given to CSX and Norfolk Southern early in 1999. Speakers at this meeting, set up by shippers councils, painted a picture of how rail mergers and the Conrail takeover have caused trouble for shippers. Computer systems didn't mesh, causing cars to be misrouted or even returned to the shipper fully loaded. (*Philadelphia Inquirer, January 12, 2000*)

AGE OF STEAM DONATION

BNSF donated a rare Santa Fe engine to the Ago of Steam Museum in Dallas on December 18, 1999. Donated was Santa Fe EMD FP-45 No. 97 in warbonnet colors. It was originally used for Santa Fe passenger service on the *Super Chief* and was one of only 9 built for the Santa Fe in 1967. The FP-45s are 72 feet long, have 20 cylinders, and have a 13,000 cubic inch, 3,600 horsepower engine.

AMTRAK NEWS

Y2K OK

Amtrak didn't have any Year 2000 problems New Years Eve, even though it stopped all its train before midnight just to test switches and signals. Amtrak says it was operating 49 trains over the midnight hour, more that the 45 planes that were flying.

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS - April 8, 2000 - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Railroadians Show and Sale sponsored by the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society, PO Box 2044, Pine Bluff AR 71613, 870-535-8819. Railroad stuff, model trains, door prizes, modular layouts, see engines 819 and 336 as well as other real railroad equipment. Admission is \$2, under 12 free.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS - June 3, 2000 - Arkansas Railroad Club's annual Show and Sale, Fisher Armory, off Pershing Street, North Little Rock. Table rental is \$30 for first table, \$25 for second and \$20 for three or more. Admission will be \$3, under 12 free. For information, contact Walter Walker, 8423 Linda Lane, Little Rock AR 72227, 501-225-0826

JACKSONVILLE, ARKANSAS - November 4, 2000 - Second annual Arkansas Valley Model Railroad Club's Train Show, Jacksonville Community Center, Jacksonville, Arkansas, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$3, kids 12 and under free. For table reservations, contact Jerry Fussell, 412 W 51st St, North Little Rock AR 72118, 501-758-2590.

WORLDWIDE - Trains Unlimited Tours is again offering rail journeys worldwide (Russia - including a last Trans-Siberian all-steam trip for \$16,000, Africa, Mexico,

South America, U.S., Canada, Peru, Alaska, Argentina, Copper Canyon. For a brochure and more information call 800-359-4870 or write Trains Unlimited Tours, PO Box 1997,

Portola CA 96122.

SOME NEW YEAR'S WISHES AND PRAYERS:

Forwarded via email from Mike Asbury

May your hair, your teeth, your face-lift, your abs and your stocks not fall; and may your blood pressure, your triglycerides, your cholesterol, your white blood count and your mortgage interest not rise.

May you wake up on January 1st, finding that the world has not come to an end, the lights work, the water faucets flow, and the sky has not fallen. (Wasn't that a lot of worry for nothing?)

May you go to the bank on Monday morning, January 3rd and find your account is in order, your money is still there and any mistakes are in your favor. May you ponder on January 4th; How did this ultramodern civilization of ours manage to get itself traumatized by a possible slip of a blip on a chip made out of sand.

May God give you the strength to go through a year of presidential campaigning, and may some of the promises made be kept.

May what you see in the mirror delight you, and what others see in you delight them. May someone love you enough to forgive your faults, be blind to your blemishes, and tell the world about your virtues.

May you remember to say "I Love You" at least once a day to your spouse, your child, your parent; but not to your secretary, your nurse, your masseuse, your hairdresser or your tennis instructor.

And may we live in a world at peace and the awareness of God's love in every sunset, every flower's unfolding petals, every baby's smile, every lover's kiss, and every wonderful, astonishing, miraculous beat of our heart.



The Kansas and Colorado Pacific Railway Company

12. The Interstate Railway Company:

(a) The St. Louis and Emporia Railroad Company was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Kansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, February 2, 1881.

(b) The Interstate Railroad Company was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Kansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, May 29, 1885.

By articles of consolidation filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, July 3, 1890, these two companies were consolidated under the name of The Interstate Railway Company.

Sometime prior to this consolidation and while the line was under construction, the majority of the capital stock of the two companies passed into the control of The Missouri Pacific Railway Company (1880); also the contracts for their construction passed into the hands of one contractor. These conditions resulted in some confusion as to the ownership of the different parcels by the two companies, the right of way having been acquired in the name of either company without regard for continuity. The ownership of each company, however, was finally apportioned as follows:

Interstate Railroad Company

Termini: From H.B. connection with the L. & S. Division of The Missouri Pacific Railway Company at Monteith Junction to Missouri-Kansas state line, opened for operation May 17, 1886, 15.61 miles;

From Linn-Anderson County Line (Kansas) to the line between Ranges 19 and 20 at Sections 1 and 6, Township 23 South (Anderson County), opened for operation September 22, 1886, 10.53 miles;

From H.B. connection at Interstate Junction, 2.96 miles west of LeRoy, to end of track at Madison, opened for operation January 16, 1888, 27.12 miles.

Total mileage of Interstate Railroad Company 53.26

~~Color on accompanying map - Green; Nos. 65, 67 and 69.~~

The St. Louis and Emporia Railroad Co.

Termini: From Missouri-Kansas state line to Linn-Anderson County Line, opened for operation May 17, 1886, 27.91 miles;

From line between Ranges 19 and 20 at Sections 1 and 6, Township 23 South (Anderson County), to H.B. connection at St.L. & E. Junction 0.89 mile south of LeRoy, opened for operation March 1, 1887, 20.26 miles.

Total mileage of The St.L. & E. R.R. Co. 48.17

~~Color on accompanying map - Brown; Nos. 66 and 68.~~

The Kansas and Colorado Pacific Railway Company

Total mileage of both companies when consolidated as The Interstate Railway Company 101.43

The Interstate Railway Company was consolidated with others forming The K. & C.P. Ry.Co., December 27, 1890, and January 10, 1891.

The "K.& C.P. Consolidation"

Under the general railroad laws of Kansas and by articles of consolidation filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, December 27, 1890, and January 10, 1891, the companies whose histories precede were consolidated under the name "THE KANSAS AND COLORADO PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY," with mileage as follows:

	<u>Miles</u>
1. The Council Grove, Osage City and Ottawa Railway Company	69.53
2. Topeka, Salina and Western Railroad Company	51.73
3. The Missouri Pacific Railway Company in Kansas	19.42
4. The Kansas and Colorado Railroad Company	136.02
5. Denver, Memphis and Atlantic Railway	412.53
6. The Council Grove, Smoky Valley and Western Railway Company	27.30
7. Kansas, Nebraska and Dakota Railway Company	131.00
8. Salina, Sterling and El Paso Railroad Company	40.10
9. The Wichita and Colorado Railway Company	46.47
10. The Verdigris Valley, Independence and Western Railroad Company .	80.63
11. The Grouse Creek Railway Company	25.07
12. The Interstate Railway Company	101.43
Total	1141.23

Purchased Lines13. The Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company:

(a) The St. Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita Railroad Company was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Kansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, February 23, 1880. This company purchased the roadbed of the Ft. Scott, Humboldt & Western Railroad Company from Fort Scott to Humboldt, only a part of which it afterwards used, and constructed the line of road from Fort Scott to the Kansas-Indian Territory line, and completed the McPherson Branch from Newton to McPherson, construction of which had been commenced by the E. McP.N. & S.E. Ry.Co. (See (b) below). A spur 2.40 miles in length was also built from Gilfillan Jct., on its main line, to the Gilfillan Stone Quarries, which spur was abandoned after the purchase of this line by The K. & C.P. Ry.Co. ~~(See Ho. 14, page 26)~~. The dates of construction of the various sections, as near as can be ascertained, follow:

The Kansas and Colorado Pacific Railway Company

From	To	Date Completed	Miles
Fort Scott	Uniontown	6- 6-81	14.88
Uniontown	Eureka	7-22-81	78.64
Eureka	Eldorado	(About) 1882	33.17
Gilfillan Junct.	Quarry	" "	2.40
Eldorado	Wichita	" 1883	30.69
Wichita	Argonia	" 1884	39.08
Argonia	Anthony	5- 1-85	17.21
Anthony	Indian Terr.Line	3-27-87	30.78
Newton	Elyria	9-23-86	23.10
Elyria	McPherson	11- 4-86	7.55
Total			277.50

Termini: From Ft.S.W.& W. connection 0.26 mile west of center of Fort Scott depot to a point 0.30 mile west of center of Kiowa depot, 243.50 miles; and from a point 3,701 feet south of A.T.& S.F. crossing at Newton, Kansas, to end of track at McPherson, 30.65 miles - a total of 274.15 miles, the present length of line. This total, it will be noted, does not include the Gilfillan Spur, 2.40 miles, nor the track between Kiowa and the State Line, taken up in 1909, 0.95 mile ~~(See No. 14, page 28).~~

~~Color on accompanying map - Violet; Nos. 60 and 61.~~

(b) The Ellsworth, McPherson, Newton and Southeastern Railway Company was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Kansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, May 10, 1884. It constructed the line of road from Eldorado to Newton, completed in October, 1885.

Mileage 31.75

Termini: From H.B. at McPherson Branch Junction, 0.54 mile west of Eldorado, to a point 3,701 feet south of A.T. & S.F. crossing at Newton, Kansas.

~~Color on accompanying map - Carmine; No. 62.~~

The St.Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita Railroad Company having acquired more than two-thirds of the capital stock of the Ellsworth, McPherson, Newton and Southeastern Railway Company, entered into an agreement with that company, which was filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, October 29, 1885, whereby the two companies were consolidated under the name of the former company and this company completed the McPherson Branch as shown in the foregoing table, which made the total mileage of the consolidated company 309.25

On May 25, 1886, the Union Trust Co. of New York filed a suit in the District Court of Harvey County, Kansas, against the St.Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita Railroad Company and John F. Dillon and George J. Gould as defendants, for foreclosure of a mortgage dated October 1, 1880, which suit was transferred to the U.S. Circuit Court for the District of Kansas. On January 18, 1887, a decree of foreclosure of said mortgage was entered by the Court and Joseph H. Richards appointed Receiver; Richards commenced the operation of the property on

The Kansas and Colorado Pacific Railway Company

January 20, 1887. On June 28, 1887, pursuant to the decree above-mentioned, Hiram P. Dillon, Master in Chancery, sold and conveyed to the Union Trust Co. of New York, as Trustee, the lines of railway and franchises recently belonging to the St. Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita Railway Company.

The Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Kansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, July 20, 1887, and on August 1, 1887, the Union Trust Co. of New York, as Trustee, conveyed the railroad and telegraph lines formerly belonging to the St. Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita R.R. Co. to The Ft. Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company.

To cure an informality in the foreclosure proceedings above-mentioned, a supplemental bill was filed in this case November 20, 1889, and the Court, on December 23, 1889, made an order setting aside the sale of the mortgaged property previously made and further ordered that the same be re-appraised, advertised and sold. On January 20, 1890, John S. Stanton, Philip Goodhart and John H. Small filed an intervening petition as stockholders of the St. L. Ft. S. and W. R.R. Co., claiming to hold and represent over 9,000 shares of stock of said company and objecting to the proposed re-sale of the road, and praying, among other things, that the original sale be held valid and the defendant company be required to execute its release and conveyance of the property so sold. The proceedings for re-sale of the mortgaged property were allowed by the Court to go on subject to objections by the intervenors, to be determined when the time should come for approval of the Master's report of the sale. The second sale by the Master was made on February 3, 1890, and the property was purchased by the Union Trust Co. of New York. Master's report of sale was filed April 18, 1890, and sale was confirmed by decree of the Court, November 6, 1890; deed of Hiram P. Dillon, Master in Chancery, to Union Trust Co. of New York, dated February 2, 1891. This decree also required conveyance by the Union Trust Co. of New York to The Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company, and by said company to the Union Trust Co. of New York and to John F. Dillon and George J. Gould, Trustees, by way of further assurance and for the protection of holders of bonds under the first and second mortgages of The Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company, which conveyances were made accordingly. The decree further required The Missouri Pacific Railway Company to deliver stock in The Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company to such stockholders of the St. Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita Railroad Company as should within sixty days deposit their stock with the Mercantile Trust Company of New York and pay to the said Trust Company or to The Missouri Pacific Railway Company the sum of \$10.00 per share of stock so deposited. Only two persons, holding respectively 3 and 127 shares, deposited their certificates and paid the required assessment. The Union Trust Co. of New York conveyed the property to The Ft. Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company by deed dated March 3, 1891.

By deed of conveyance dated July 1, 1891, The Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railway Company sold all its railroad and other property, rights, privileges and franchises to The Kansas and Colorado Pacific Railway Company.

The Kansas and Colorado Pacific Railway Company

14. Mileage Changes Made by The K. & C.P. Ry.Co.:

(a) In 1901 a connection was made between the end of track of D.M.& A. Ry. and N. & M. Ry. Co. of Kansas (~~Color, Violet, no. 48 a~~), adding 0.55
~~See No. 5, page 19.~~

(b) In 1903 this company built what is known as the "Yates Center Detour," from H.B. on main line at North Junction to H.B. on main line at South Junction (~~Color, Green, No. 52~~), adding to mileage 8.43

Total additions 8.98

(c) Gilfillan Spur, from Gilfillan Junction to Stone Quarry, abandoned in 1909 (~~See No. 14, page 23~~), deducting from total mileage 2.40

(d) End of track from a point 0.30 mile west of Kiowa depot to Kansas-Oklahoma line, taken up in 1909 (~~See No. 13, page 21~~), deducting from total mileage 0.95

Total deductions 3.35

Net additions 5.63

Total mileage when consolidated with other companies forming The Missouri Pacific Railway Company in 1909 1456.11

The K. & C.P. Ry.Co. also leased, on July 1, 1891, the line of the Pueblo and State Line Railroad Company, 152.12 miles (See page 48), making the total mileage owned and leased, 1608.23

The lines of this company were operated by The Missouri Pacific Railway Company (1880) from the time of its incorporation to the date of the consolidation of 1909, by virtue of ownership of 225,035 shares out of a total of 254,672 shares outstanding, and without formal lease.

The company was consolidated with others forming The Missouri Pacific Railway Company on August 9, 1909 (~~See page 43~~).

ANOTHER LAST STEAM ENGINE STORY

by: J. CARY NETTLES

When I read about the last steam engine on the Norman, Arkansas Subdivision of the Missouri Pacific in the November 1995 issue of the *ARKANSAS RAILROADER* I made a note that some day I should write about the last steam engine on the Louisiana-Arkansas Division. I am at somewhat of a disadvantage here because I am neither a railroader nor a historian but I will do the best I can to remember the story.

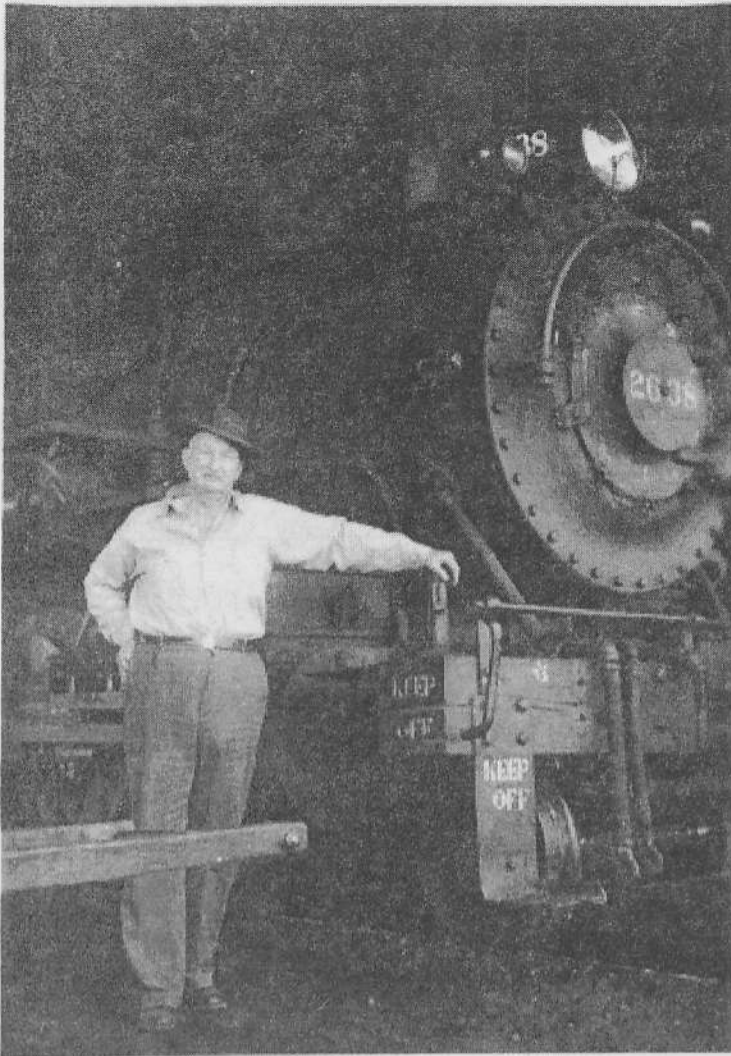
My farther Elbert Nettles was an old time engineer who as best as I can figure hired out on the Iron Mountain Railroad about 1906. At he time of this story he had the oldest seniority on the division and as a result could hold any job that he desired. Around the mid forties Dad decided that the Farmerville local was the job that he wanted and he kept it as his regular run until he retired in the fifties. The Farmerville local ran from Monroe LA. crossed the Ouachita River at Sterlington, then made it's way north through Litro LA and then to Huttig AR. From Huttig it returned to Litro and branched off to Farmerville. From Farmerville it returned to Litro and then back to Monroe.

If you follow all this you will realize that the crew must have spent a lot of time turning the train around. Like the Norman story, there was a weight limit on the bridge at Sterlington. There were two light ten-wheeler engines Nos. 2638 and 2650 (I am not sure about that last number) assigned exclusively to this local run. Dad ran those engines for so long that they got to be known by the roundhouse crew as Mr. Nettles' engines and they received lots of TLC because if something was not just right they would hear about it. Incidentally, just by coincidence Dad and those engines were about the same age.

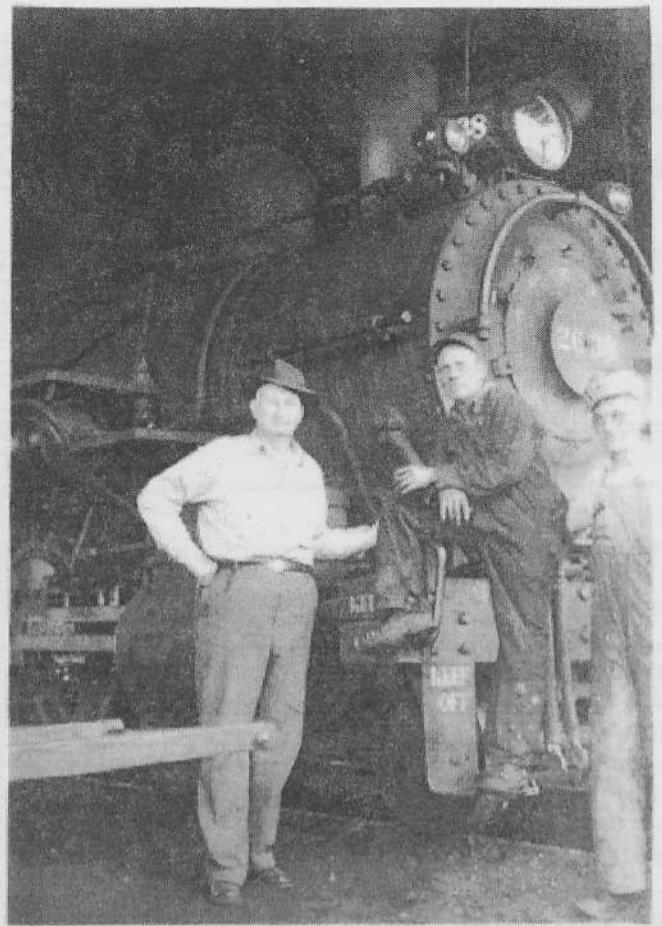
Sometime about 1954 the MoPac built a new bridge for the main line where it crossed the Ouachita River at Riverton LA and moved the old bridge to Sterlington to increase the weight limit which would permit diesel operation across the river and that put an end to the lonesome whistle of the little antique steam engine making its way through the pine trees and hills of north Louisiana and south Arkansas.

As a sort of a postscript to this story, the little steamers did not give up easily. I happened to visit Dad just after the first diesel was assigned to Monroe for local use and I asked Dad how he and the diesels were getting along and he told me that they had not used the diesel yet because there was something wrong with it. He said that every time they tried to change speed the engine would drop it's load. I took a look at Dad's instruction manual (which by the way I still have serial number 633 for engines 501 to 508) and discovered the load regulator. I explained to Dad what this device was and that it operated to allow the engine to come up to the proper RPM for each speed selected. He took off for the roundhouse and in about an hour he returned with a big smile as he was one up on the Master Mechanic. He had showed him how to run that diesel.

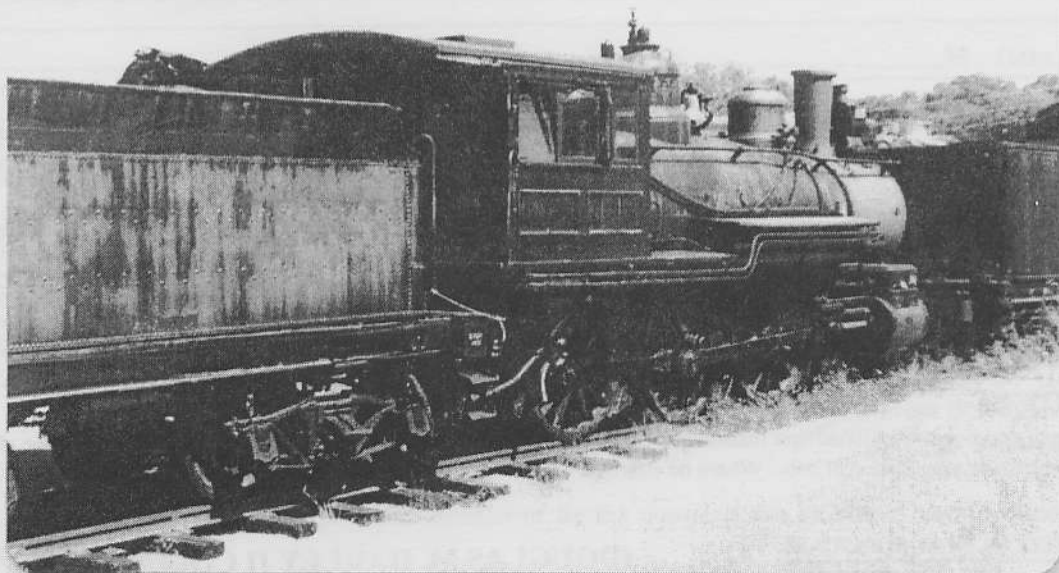
My uncle R. L. 'Shorty' Reese, who was also an old time MoPac engineer, told me many years later that "Dad's" engine had gone to the Museum of Transportation at St Louis MO. I was at the museum in 1982 and did find a look alike engine only to find out later that the engine that I saw was a 2700 series. Maybe some of the historians in the club can add to this story.



MoPac engineer Elbert Nettles with "his" engine, July 1947, in Monroe, Louisiana. *(J Cary Nettles collection)*



Engineer Nettles with Monroe, Louisiana roundhouse crew, 1947. *(J Cary Nettles collection)*



Was this Dad's engine at the St. Louis Museum of Transport? No...it's only a look-alike 2700-series engine. *(September 1982 photo by J Cary Nettles)*

REPORT OF JOINT CHECKING OF CARS
IN SERVICE WITH ORGANIZED PARTIES

Car (Name or Number) Cromwell 1
 Name of Organization U.S. Army Men - Main 2336
 Covered by Transportation Request No. WQ 3977815-826-821
 Starting Point F + Riley Date 6/20 1941
 Destination Oklahoma City Date 6/21 1941
 Routed UP-MKT

ITEM	BEGINNING OF TRIP	END OF TRIP	SHORTAGE
Sheets.....	250	250	
Slips.....	200	200	
Towels.....	300	300	
White Coats.....	8	8	None
Car Bags.....	8	8	
Blankets.....	52	52	
Pillows.....	52	52	

REPORT OF DAMAGE

(If any, and how caused—accidental or deliberate)

None

I certify that a checking of linen and equipment, and inspection of car for physical damage, was made with representative of The Pullman Company at the beginning and termination of trip. Shortages of linen and equipment, and damage to car, as shown ^{were} ~~were not~~ due to action of party in my charge, while in the performance of duty.

Ft. Riley to K. City - John H. F. Tessel
D. W. Bush SIGNATURE - OFFICER IN CHARGE
 (Verified by) J. H. [Signature] PULLMAN REPRESENTATIVE
Wash DISTRICT

INSTRUCTIONS: Checking of linen and equipment listed and inspection of car for damage will be made jointly by representative in charge of party and Pullman representative, at the beginning and termination of trip. Where no shortage or damage exists insert word "NONE" under heading "SHORTAGE" and "REPORT OF DAMAGE."

THIS REPORT TO BE PREPARED IN QUADRUPPLICATE.

ORIGINAL, RETAINED BY OFFICER IN CHARGE.
 2 COPIES TO SUPT. OF CAR SERVICE EMPLOYES, CHICAGO.
 QUADRUPPLICATE, RETAINED BY PULLMAN CONDUCTOR.

(DOUGLAS M. HARLEY II COLLECTION)

CERTIFICATE OF PULLMAN ACCOMMODATIONS FURNISHED
ON TRANSPORTATION REQUEST

17

THE PULLMAN COMPANY

U.S. Army WmB 5722
NAME OF ORGANIZATION

Date 10/3/44 19__

Leaving Funston, Kans At 12:15 P M
STATION TIME

Date 10/3/44 19__

Arriving Fort Smith, Ark. At _____ M
STATION TIME

Date _____ 19__

Cars Vacated _____ M

No. of Officers furnished accommodations 36

No. of Enlisted Men furnished accommodations 0

Total No. of Officers and Enlisted Men 36

SPACE OCCUPIED

CAR	LOWERS	UPPERS	VALUE	CAR	LOWERS	UPPERS	VALUE
<u>Gannett Peak</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>49⁹⁰</u>				
<u>Palouse Falls</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55⁵⁵</u>				

ADDITIONAL OCCUPANCY

At _____ From _____ M To _____ M Date _____ 19__

At _____ From _____ M To _____ M Date _____ 19__

I certify that the accommodations as above noted were furnished in exchange for U. S. War Department Transportation Request
WQ 15-234-911 at { STANDARD } RATES.
TOURIST

John F. Fissel
SIGNATURE OF OFFICER IN CHARGE

I certify that the count of passengers and number of berths occupied are as stated herein, accommodations being furnished
at { STANDARD } RATES.
TOURIST

M. A. Hilgen, AO
(PULLMAN EMPLOYEE IN CHARGE)

CENTS	1	2	3	4	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	Changed Accom. *	
	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95			
DOLLARS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9					Section No. <i>Inc</i> *
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90					
THE PULLMAN COMPANY														
PASSENGER'S CASH FARE CHECK														
CAR	<i>Palouse Falls Spl</i>												Roomette *	
LINE														
FROM	<i>Funston, Ks</i>												Duplex Single Room *	
TO	<i>Camp Cheffe</i>													
	No. Passengers <i>36</i>												Bedroom *	
	Date <i>10/3/44</i>													
	Amount Collected <i>\$ 55.53</i>												Compartment *	
	Conductor <i>M.A. Hilgers Kc</i>													

Wg 15-734-911

PROPERTY TAKEN INTO CAR WILL BE AT OWNER'S RISK

GZ 65423

CENTS	1	2	3	4	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	Changed Accom. *	
	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95			
DOLLARS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9					Section No. <i>Inc</i> *
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90					
THE PULLMAN COMPANY														
PASSENGER'S CASH FARE CHECK														
CAR	<i>Gannett Peak Spl</i>												Roomette *	
LINE														
FROM	<i>Funston, Ks</i>												Duplex Single Room *	
TO	<i>Camp Cheffe</i>													
	No. Passengers <i>17</i>												Bedroom *	
	Date <i>10/3/44</i>													
	Amount Collected <i>\$ 49.90</i>												Compartment *	
	Conductor <i>M.A. Hilgers Kc</i>													

Wg 15-734-911

PROPERTY TAKEN INTO CAR WILL BE AT OWNER'S RISK

GZ 65424

(The Pullman Accommodations Certificates on the previous two pages and the Pullman Company Fare Checks above are from the collection of Douglas M. Harley, II



The following story talks about RPO cars and I thought it'd be interesting to print some RPO facts taken from a handout gotten by John Jones at the recent "Celebrate the Century Express" US Post Office special train that ran across the country last spring and summer.

- 1) RPO's first operated in England in 1838, in the U.S. in 1864 (between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa)
- 2) Use of RPO cars decreased rapidly in the 1940s and 1950s. The Washington, DC to New York line was the last operational RPO route, which was taken off June 30, 1977.
- 3) RPOs operated on passenger trains, mixed trains, interurban trains, streetcars and boats.
- 4) RPOs traveled from 8 miles to 1,131 miles.
- 5) RPOs operated more than 7,500 cars from 1864 to 1977.

The following article was submitted by Thomas Duggan, editor of the Arkansas-Boston Mountain Chapter's *Scrambler*. He sent it in after reading Gene Hull's story on the last RPO in Arkansas (October 1999 *Arkansas Railroader*). In his letter that came with the story, he states that Gene's story had a couple of minor errors he wanted to correct: "The last RPO to operate in Arkansas was the Kansas City-Texarkana RPO (on the KCS) that made its last run through Northwest Arkansas on January 12, 1968, not October 14, 1967 when the last RPOs left the Missouri Pacific. The mail was suspended from mail cranes, not a rack. And the last RPO to operate in the United States was on June 30, 1977." (Gene's story said that the Post Office planned to eliminate RPOs on 162 passenger trains nationwide by the end of 1967, but the story said nothing about the actual last RPO to run in the country, even though MOST RPO service ended in 1967.)

The Last Railway Post

Office in Arkansas

By Tom Duggan

A cool and damp fog permeated the darkness of the May 1954 night. The bare lights of the Kansas City Southern Railway station at Siloam Springs, Arkansas shone with a halo as muffled sounds were heard. Soon four men emerged from the fog. They listened for the air horn of the overnight southbound *Flying Crow* passenger train scheduled to arrive at 3:00 A.M. The yellowish headlight grew brighter and soon the sound of the E7 diesel locomotives broke the silence of the once sleepy night.

Each of the four men carried a small valise with special compartments for clothing, routing books and timetables, and a loaded .38 caliber pistol. The men walked purposefully down the platform and boarded the first car immediately behind the engines. With practiced skill they hoisted themselves up using guardrails as the car lacked steps. Once in the brightly-lit car they exchanged information with four men who were leaving the car to rejoin their families in Siloam Springs. A steel-wheeled cart rumbled up to the car doorway as bags were swapped. The site of this nocturnal activity was a 71-foot steel mail-baggage-express car. Bold letters proclaimed on two lines that the car was a "U.S. Mail Railway Post Office".

The players in the early morning drama were railway mail clerks employed by the Postal Transportation Service of the Post Office Department. Their job was to sort, pick up and distribute mail along the 488-mile Kansas City-Texarkana Railway Post Office (RPO) route. Siloam Springs was 228 miles south of Kansas City. On March 4, 1894 the Kansas City to Siloam Springs RPO route began. By 1904 there were Siloam Springs - Shreveport, Louisiana and Kansas City-Port Arthur, Texas RPO runs. Siloam Springs soon became an important crew change point for the railway mail clerks. The colony of Siloam Springs RPO clerks numbered about 35, all men, and existed until Kansas City-Texarkana RPO service ended on January 12, 1968,

RPO clerks were unlike other mail clerks. They were highly trained individuals who had to know the proper routing for any piece of mail in the car. Inside the thirty-foot long mail apartment were 408 small cases for first class letters, 106 rack mounted pouches for newspapers and printed mail and fifteen pouches for registered mail. The RPO clerks had to know the exact routing for mail to each of the more than 6,500 post offices located in the six states for which the Kansas City- Texarkana RPO sorted mail. The RPO clerks were tested every six months on their knowledge of distribution in one of the six states. Arkansas was one of the smaller states as it had only 877 postal offices in 1954. Texas, on the other hand, had 1,329 post offices in 1954 and required two separate examinations. The passing grade on the distribution exams was set at 98%. The exams were timed and mail clerks had to make more than 30 routing decisions a minute. Senior employees with a certain amount of service time were excused from taking the examinations. The clerks also had to know the best routing for mail outside the six states. For example, a clerk would have to know that Territory of Hawaii mail went to San Francisco on a certain train for final dispatch by sea or air. The twice-yearly examinations also covered postal

laws and regulations in detail. For example, the clerk had to know the procedures for stowing baby chicks or handling materials for blind people.

Once the clerk had sorted the mail for a particular point he would wrap it in twine and then add a paper slip containing his name, date and train number. The slip would enable postal officials to immediately detect any routing mistakes. The Siloam Springs clerks worked to avoid mis-sent mail because it would create a demerit on their personnel record. The mail sorting took place in a dusty environment while standing on the floor of a car that swayed back and forth. The location right behind the engine, for security reasons, exposed the Siloam Springs clerks to soot and cinder in the steam engine days that ended in the early 1950s. The later diesel engines emitted clouds of hot exhaust that caused most clerks to wear masks. Heavy gloves and coveralls were mandatory as the heavy dirty mailbags had to be shifted around constantly during the trip. Mailbags holding unprocessed mail were usually stored up to the ceiling and good physical condition was a necessity for the demanding work. Clerks always wore goggles when picking up mail on the fly. The passage of the train sometimes caused dangerous rock ballast chips to fly up through the open car door.

On each trip one clerk was designated Clerk In Charge. He usually attended to registered mail as it required extensive record keeping. There were also detailed Post Office reports that had to be prepared. The Clerk in Charge also supervised the loading of mail in storage behind the RPO apartment. The railroads charged for storage mail on a linear foot basis and the clerks worked diligently to remove storage mail. For security purposes the mail storage area had only a two-foot high doorway through which bags of unworked mail were inserted. The Clerk in Charge was fully qualified to process mail and would pitch in to help fellow clerks whenever possible.

The RPO also picked up and dropped off mail at many places where the train did not make a station stop. For example, the two overnight trains did not stop at Westville, OK. The RPO clerks would prepare a pouch of mail for Westville and surrounding areas. When the RPO car approached the Westville mail crane a clerk would simultaneously kick off a pouch of mail while pushing the catcher arm to collect pouched mail attached to the mail crane by twine. The Westville pouches contained both local mail and mail that came by truck from Muskogee, Oklahoma. At each mail crane a postal employee waited to collect the sacks thrown off the RPO.

The night passenger trains did not make many station stops so the clerks were kept very busy kicking off and catching mail. There were 46 mail cranes between Kansas City and De Queen, Arkansas including the Northwest Arkansas towns of Sulphur Springs, Gravette, Decatur and Gentry. Night visibility was a problem and the engineer often failed to sound the one blast indicating a pickup was to take place. The clerks learned to gauge their location based on time, train speed and the curve of the track. Sometimes the clerks were sleepy and this in turn led to humorous incidents. One Siloam Springs clerk recalled a night when a tired clerk pushed a pouch of mail off only to realize the train was crossing a river. In another instance a new postal employee secured the mail to be plucked from the mail crane with too much twine. When the RPO clerk extended the catcher arm the twine failed to break and the mail crane was ripped from the ties and brought into the RPO car. On yet another night a clerk prepared to push out the catcher arm as the train slowed for Watts, Oklahoma where the engine crew changed. He thought

he saw the dim kerosene lamp that marked a mail crane ready for pickup. He swung the catcher arm out. There was a huge noise as the catcher arm smashed back and knocked the clerk to the floor of the car. The unhurt clerk had mistaken the marker lamp of a locomotive parked on a siding for that of the mail crane.

At regular station stops mail would be left with railroad employees who stored it for pickup by the local post office. An RPO clerk would also empty the station mailbox and take the contents aboard for sorting.

Texarkana, the end of the RPO run, was a major railway mail terminal. The Siloam Springs clerks worked mail destined for the 18 daily RPOs that connected at Texarkana. At Christmas and other holidays the mail volume swelled and an additional clerk was added to the crowded car as the men labored to process all mail before completing their shift. Failing to process all the mail by the end of a run was called "getting stuck" and every clerk wanted to avoid this embarrassment.

The clerks from Siloam Springs (1950 population of 3,000) were white males as the city in the 1920s once had a sign that some years earlier proclaimed "No Mosquitoes and No Negroes". However, many of the RPO substitute clerks were African Americans from Kansas City. Because Siloam Springs had no lodging for African American RPO clerks, they had to detrain at Sallisaw, Oklahoma for lodging. During holidays it was not uncommon to find the RPO crew consisting of one white Clerk in Charge and three African Americans. A small number of women were employed as RPO clerks following World War II. However no females ever worked on the Kansas City-Texarkana RPO run.

The clerks enjoyed a number of advantages due to the specialized nature of their work. The RPO clerks were paid one grade higher than regular postal sorting clerks. They received a daily allowance for lodging and food while away from home. By staying in cheap hotels and economizing it was possible to make extra money from the daily allowance. The clerks normally worked two days at a time. They would work from Siloam Springs to Texarkana (6 $\frac{2}{3}$ hours), take a room and then work the next night from Texarkana to Kansas City (12 hours) where they would take another room. They would then work their way back to Siloam Springs (5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours) on the night train. One permanent substitute clerk recalled working for twenty-one days without a break. His wife met the train at Siloam Springs and exchanged clean laundry for dirty.

The clerks received three days off for every four days worked. The clerks received extra time off as they had to spend much time learning the constant changes in mail distribution schemes. By the mid 1950s the Post Office was starting to reduce the number of RPO runs while increasing distribution by trucks and aircraft. The "black book" of Postal Laws and Regulations also needed constant updating and memorization. The clerks also had special Post Office maps that depicted the various mail routes on a state by state basis. Many clerks also carried practice cases used to prepare for the twice-yearly exams. The clerk would flip pieces of pre-printed paper representing first-class letters into little labeled boxes in the practice case. On the reverse was the correct distribution so the clerk could check his answers for accuracy.

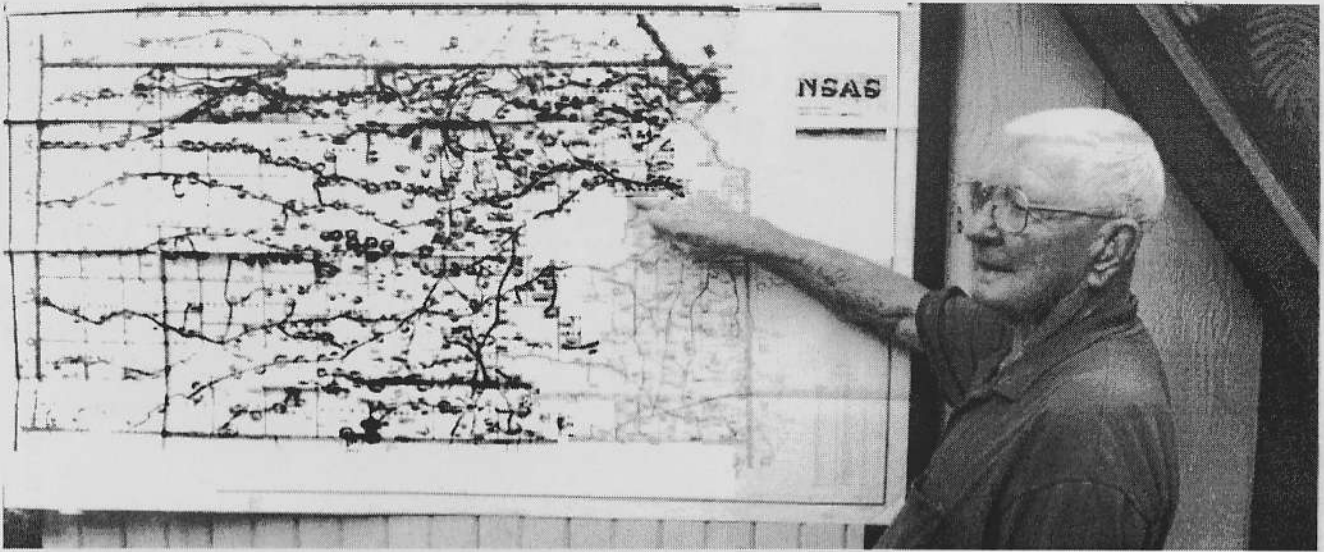
In 1954 Siloam Springs was a stop for six daily passenger trains. On January 1, 1958 service was reduced to four trains including the premier Kansas City-New Orleans *Southern Belle* and the now unnamed Kansas City-Port Arthur/New Orleans overnight train. The Kansas City Southern remained optimistic about passenger service much longer than other railroads. Passenger traffic remained strong aided by a policy of low fares. In 1965 Kansas City Southern put ten new Pullman-built passenger cars into service. They were the last passenger cars built for an American railroad prior to the creation of Amtrak.

In early 1967 Kansas City Southern management said it was reasonably optimistic about the passenger business in spite of increasing losses. It also mentioned its expectation that the profitable RPO business would continue until at least 1971. However in July 1967 the Post Office announced plans to discontinue all RPO service on the Kansas City Southern. In 1965 and 1966 the RPO revenues exceeded \$1.5 million a year and helped to offset the passenger train losses. The RPO revenue was the major factor in keeping passenger service losses at acceptable levels. In December 1967 the KCS filed to discontinue all passenger service. The last RPO car operated through Siloam Springs on January 12, 1968. By this time scores of RPO routes had been abolished and the work of the Siloam Springs RPO clerks was easy. There were virtually no connections with other RPOs and some of the mail was in closed pouches that were not worked by the RPO clerks.

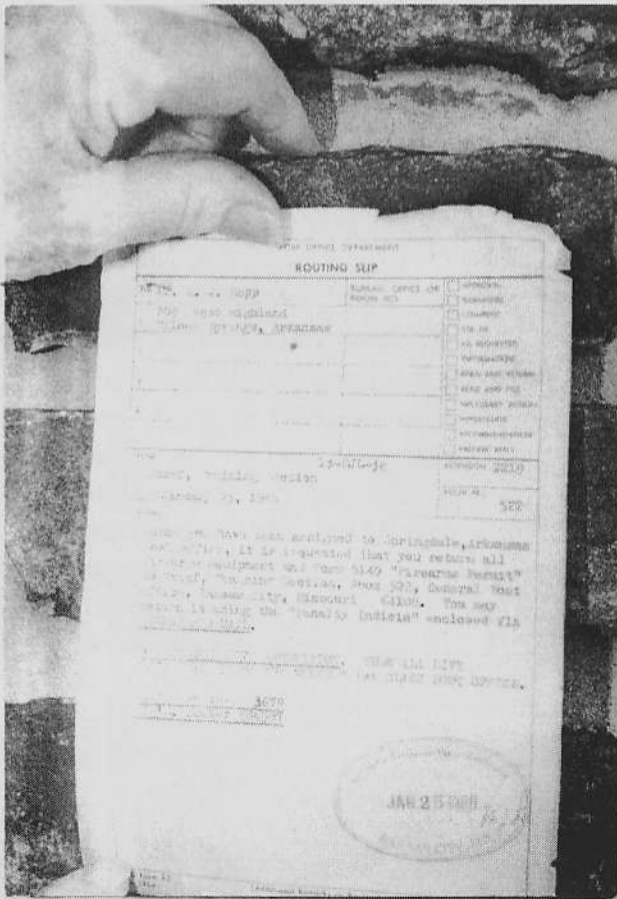
The Siloam Springs RPO service was remarkable in that it lasted so long. By 1968 there were only 46 RPO routes in operation compared to the peak of 1,550 routes in 1925. The concept of having men sort mail on trains was expensive and no longer meshed with the needs of a changing country. However much of the area served by the Kansas City-Texarkana RPO still lacked good roads and airline service. These factors and the Kansas City Southern's pro-passenger train attitude likely prolonged the life of the RPO route. The introduction of ZIP Codes in 1963 and the establishment of large regional sorting facilities enabled the Post Office to move on with its RPO elimination policy. The RPO concept was slow to die. The last RPO to operate was the Washington-New York route which ceased operations on June 30, 1977. This marked the end of 113 years of RPO history.

When the Kansas City Southern Railway lost the RPO business, nearly all of the RPO cars were gutted and converted to other purposes. However, Charles Pitcher of Independence, MO. purchased one RPO car, Number 30, for \$2,500 in 1973. The 1931 vintage six-wheel truck car was intact and had been rebuilt in 1965. It was then stored for many years in the Kansas City area. About five years ago it was carefully cleaned and moved to the Midland Railway at Baldwin City, Kansas. It is on public display and may be ridden. The car is in mint condition. Even the letter case labels are intact and on the letter cases one can find the names of towns in Northwest Arkansas. Several times a year retired RPO clerks from the Kansas City area visit the car and show the public how mail was handled in the days of RPO service.

The author wishes to thank retired RPO clerks A.J. Rapp, Henry Dilbeck and Vester. V. Sanders, all of Siloam Springs, for their willingness to share their memories of the RPO days. It was a pleasure to meet the men and to share their important and interesting memories of a time and place that is now part of postal history.



A. J. Rapp, retired Siloam Springs, Arkansas RPO clerk, shows a 1959 Kansas postal map used to help clerks remember the proper destination of mail. (Photo taken July 31, 1998 by Tom Duggan)



Shortly after RPO service ended at Siloam Springs (January 12, 1968), A. J. Rapp received this notice requesting return of his .38 cold revolver. Note that live ammo was not to be sent by mail! (Photo by Tom Duggan, July 31, 1998)

Form 2000
Revised March 1960

EXAMINATION STATEMENT

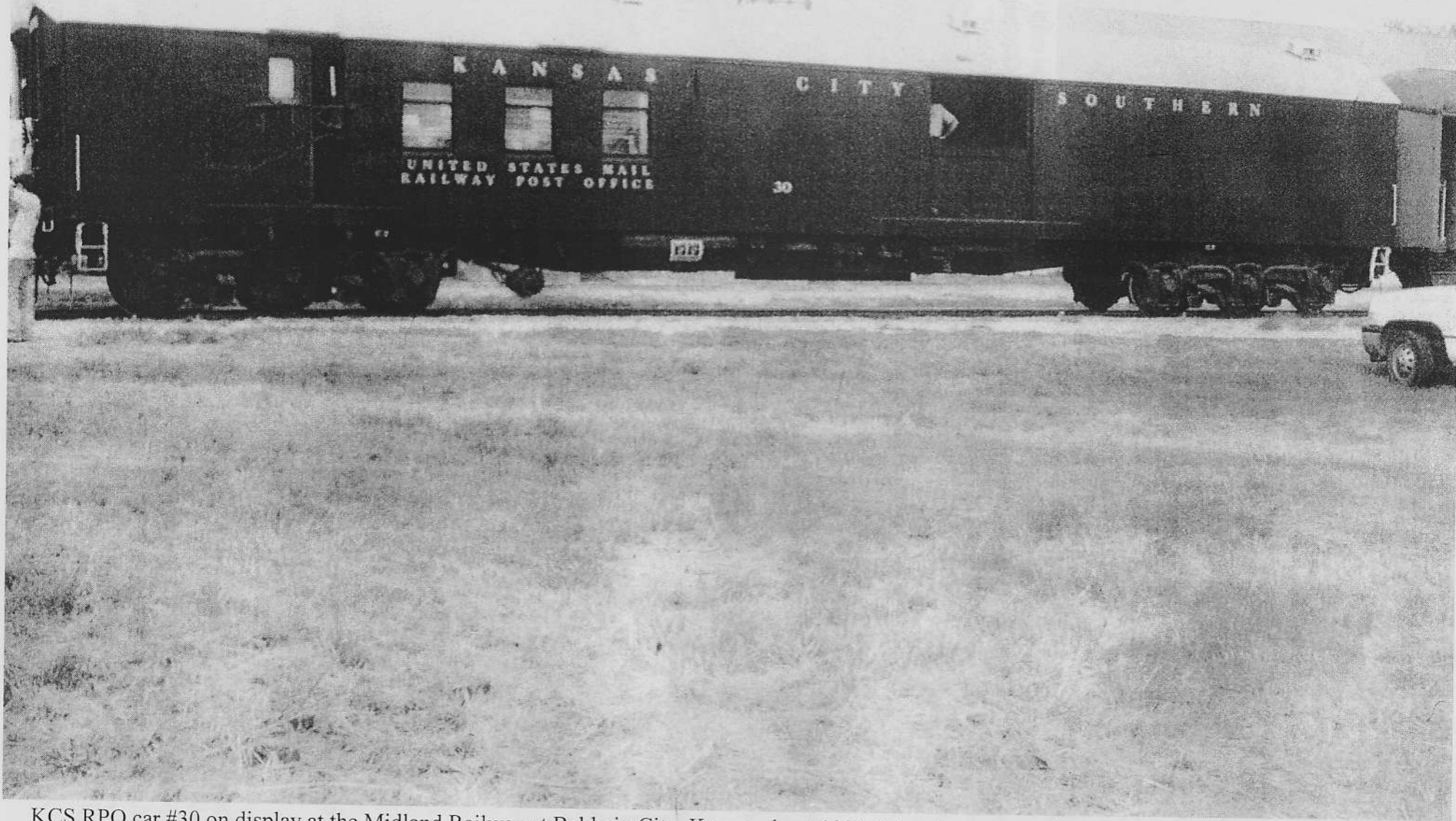
Name Vester V. Sanders
SS & Tex R.P.O.
 Statement of Reg Examination
 on Texas A by Rts
 Examined by H. W. NEWBOLD
 Date due 5-25-52
 Date examined 5-24-52

No. of Cards	Handled	728	Percent correct	99.86	POINTS
	Correct	727	Time	20"	30
	Incorrect	1	Cards per minute	36 (12g)	
	Unknown	0	Number of separations	55	

EXAMINATION ON	BOOKS	ANSWERS	PERCENT	POINTS
Junctions	20	19	95	
Spans	20	20	100	10
P. L. and R. E.	20	20	100	10
Total cards				50

Reference good
 Schedule good
 Book of Instructions part I short #193
 part II short #7 Ch 11
 Registry Receipts
 Certificate No. 22492
 Badge No. 64526
 Key - L. A. No. 128370
 Registry No.
 Approval No. 7345
 Points 7345
 Remarks good Not good
 THIS CARD TO BE RETURNED FOR FURTHER REFERENCE OR DEPOSIT ONLY
 EXAMINATIONS ASSIGNED
 Texas A Date 11-24-52
 Date

1952 Texas examination results of Vester V. Sanders, a RPO clerk from Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Minimum passing grade was 98%. (Photo taken by Tom Duggan, July 31, 1998)



KCS RPO car #30 on display at the Midland Railway at Baldwin City, Kansas about 1994. It has been restored to mint condition with even the letter case labels intact where one can find the names of towns in Northwest Arkansas. *(Tom Duggan collection)*