

ARKANSAS RAILROADER



Little Rock Chapter
NRHS

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 7 JULY 2001



Missouri Pacific train No. 219 departs Little Rock for Hot Springs in May 1949, powered by E7 A&B #7015 at now closed 10th Street crossing. *(More on this train on the next page - photo by John A. Mills)*

MORE ON THE COVER PHOTO and MoPac train No. 219 from John A. Mills: Train No. 219 and train No. 220, the eastbound counterpart, were never named the Hot Springs Special. The Hot Springs Special was discontinued in August 1948 and operated between St. Louis and Hot Springs, and was numbered Nos 17 and 18

I have researched all my old MoPac public timetables and Official Railway Guides and cannot find Nos 219 and 220 ever having an official name listed in conjunction with these trains. Up until late 1953 these trains carried a full Parlor Observation car between Memphis and Hot Springs. It was replaced according to the December 27, 1953 MoPac timetable with a Parlor-Café-Coach which operated until June 1957. It then operated with a grill coach as provision for food service.

No. 219 may have been referred to as the Hot Springs Limited and No. 220 the Memphis Limited for a period, but I have not been able to confirm this, officially. The Rock Island's train No. 45 and 50 which ran for many years between Memphis and Hot Springs was named the Hot Springs Limited and for a short period ran as part of the Choctaw Route between Memphis and Little Rock.

2001 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 - Tammy Hodkin, 506 Gordon St., N Little Rock AR 72117-4713 (501-945-2128)

EDITOR - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340)

NRHS DIRECTOR - David P. Hoge, 3721 Idlewild, N Little Rock AR 72116 (501-771-1025)

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)

HISTORIAN - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington Ave #31, N Little Rock AR 72114 (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

BOARD '04 - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (501-331-2030)

BOARD '05 - Leonard Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)

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.

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 \$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 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:

ken@trainweather.com The Arkansas Railroader is put on the Web monthly, and that address is:
<http://www.trainweather.com>

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held SUNDAY, JULY 8 at our usual location, Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, 4401 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock. Time will be 2 p.m. There was no program set at press time, but we'll have some rail related presentation, so come and enjoy the fellowship.

Minutes of previous meetings will be forthcoming.

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 1.63 miles between m.p. CMA 0.00 at Stollings and m.p. CMA 1.63 at Fort Branch, West Virginia. Effective June 26, 2001. (STB Docket No. AB-55, Sub No. 589X, decided May 18, served May 25, 2001)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

AIRPORT TO RAILYARD

(*Kansas City*) - The FAA's 1998 decision to allow the old Richards-Gebaur airport in south Kansas City to become an intermodal center for KCS Railway was upheld by a federal court on June 11.

PIONEER SELLS SHORTLINE

(*Alabama*) - Pioneer Railcorp announced June 11 that it would sell Alabama & Florida Railway's line between Georgiana, Alabama to Andalusia, Alabama, a distance of 33.9 miles. The line was sold to the Three Notch Railroad (TNR), owned by the Gulf & Ohio Railway in Knoxville.

TOUGHER MERGER STANDARDS

The Surface Transportation Board issued new merger rules June 11 saying that railroads must now show increased competition with new mergers and added safeguards against deterioration of service.

CUMBRES & TOLTEC NEWS

The US Department of Commerce approved an \$800,000 grant to the Cumbres & Toltec Narrow Gauge Railroad for track upgrades on the 64-mile line. The line was built in 1880 as the San Juan extension of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad and once served mining camps in the San Juan Mountains. Now it is a tourist line.

NEW CROSSING SYSTEM

Nestor Traffic Systems announced June 12, 2001 that it was awarded a contract by the state of Florida to install and demonstrate a grade crossing warning system at two south Florida crossings. The Advanced Warning Alerts for Railroad Engineers (AWARE) system uses a video camera at crossings and sends the signal to the cabs of approaching trains so the engineer can see if any vehicles are on the crossing well ahead of time.

AMTRAK NEWS

REDUCING ASSISTANCE NEEDS

According to Amtrak, it has reduced its federal operating assistance from \$318 million in FY1999 to \$59 in FY 2000. In the first six months of this year, Amtrak served 11.3 million passengers, up 7 percent from a year earlier. Ticket revenue was up 12.2 percent to \$564 million. (*Amtrak press release via Daryl Stout*)

From the May 11, 2001 *Kansas City Star* comes the following quote from a letter to the editor: *The Star doesn't mention federal expenditures for other transportation modes (it had written an editorial complaining about how much Amtrak has cost over the last 30 years). It never asks "When is Interstate 70 going to turn a profit? Or "What is our return on investment for the air traffic control system? The only transportation spending that seems to regularly send the Star into fits of fiscal self-righteousness is Amtrak funding. — The Federal government spent \$31 billion on highways last year alone, while Amtrak only cost \$23 billion in it's 30 year history.*

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

ARKANSAS - JACKSONVILLE - October 13 - The Third Annual Arkansas Valley Model Railroad Club Train Show at the Jacksonville Community Center. Admission is \$3 and it opens at 10 a.m.

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 \$17 for the national NRHS dues if you want to join the NRHS through our chapter).

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.



This "bovine Pullman" sat beside the Greater Little Rock Stock Yards in the summer of 1962. (Gene Hull photo)

THE MISSOURI PACIFIC BOVINE PASSENGERS

by: Gene Hull

In the early 1900s, at Argenta a large livestock auction barn was built on the north side of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern mainline and east of the spindly Main Street viaduct completed in 1907 to eliminate the dangerous at-grade crossing. The old viaduct became inadequate to handle the increasing automobile traffic in 1914 and during the next 13 years was frequently out of service. Traffic had to detour on Pike Avenue. The present steel-concrete viaduct was completed in 1927. The large livestock barn was sort of belittled by the new elevated roadway rising above its roofline.

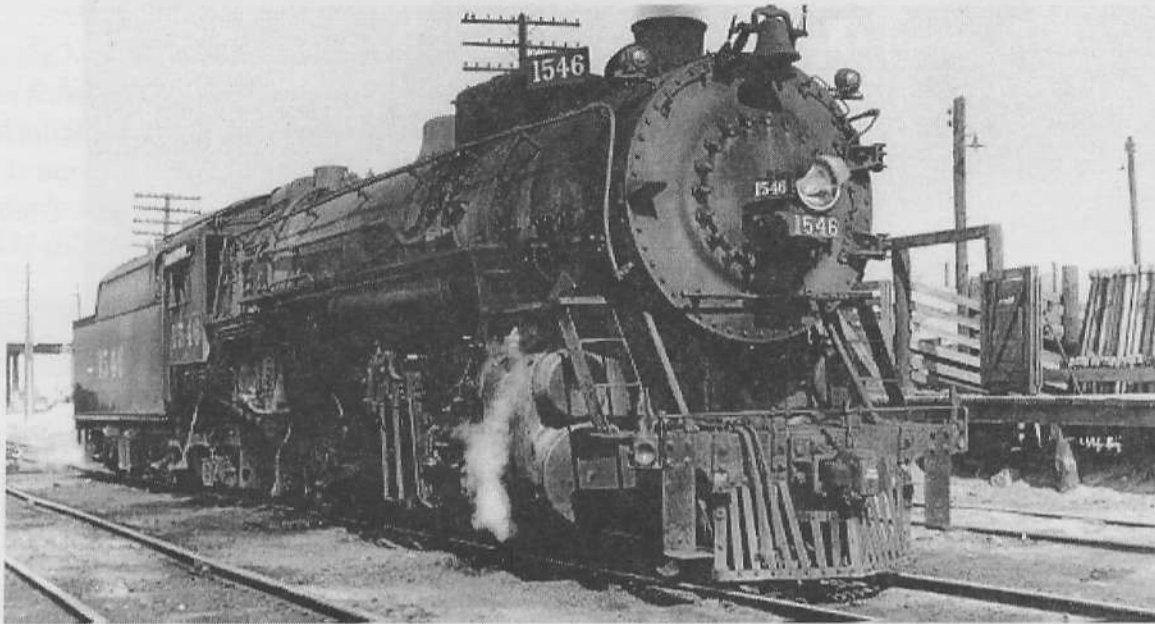
I remember many exciting Saturday afternoons at the barn-of-many-odors. For a ten-year-old boy this was prime entertainment. My dad and I sat two or three hours at a time on elevated bleachers of 1" x 12" board seats with no backs. Numbness crept unnoticed up to the waist, but this was only a minor inconvenience for a kid mesmerized by the melodious, rhythmic chant of the auctioneer with a wide-brimmed Stetson pushed back on his head.

It was in the spring of 1930 that I was with Dad at the auction barn when he bought a mule that had a bold US brand burned on her right hip. She was a discharged cavalry veteran of the U.S. Army during World War I. She did light plow-duty on our five-acre "farm" on Baseline Road south of Little Rock until she

"gave up the ghost" in front of the barn one night. It sure takes a lot of digging to bury a mule.

The Great Depression came in 1929, Dad was laid off as a locomotive fireman for the Missouri Pacific and our old mule helped provide us with plenty of food from our farm until Dad went back to work in 1934, just before our mule, "Uncle Sam," died.

As the depression days began to pass, the railroad took a vigorous interest in agriculture. The Mo.P. had various departments to promote farming. The national beef processing plants (slaughter houses), especially at Kansas City and Omaha, were busy supplying beef for a hungry nation.



The 1500-class Mikado were part of the Mo.Pac. stable of work horses in the 1940s. To the right of the smokebox is another "ghost" of the railroad - a stock loading chute. (Photo in Mo.Pac. yard at North Little Rock, Arkansas, 1947 by Gene Hull)

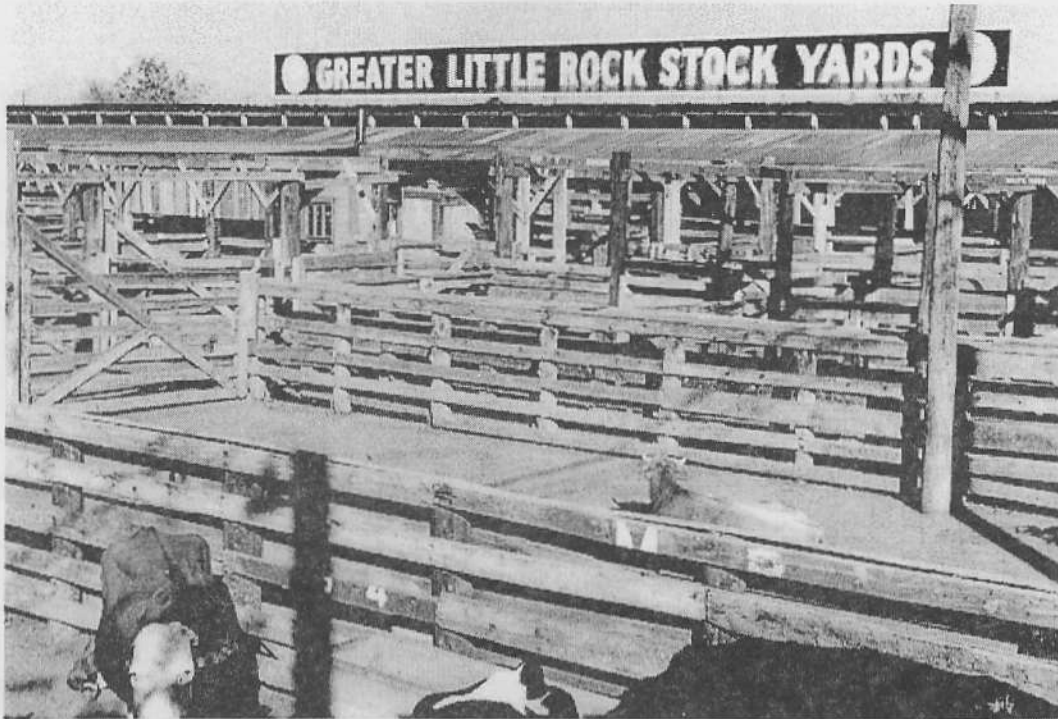
The big auction barn was adjacent to the Mo.P. giving direct access to Kansas City. North Little Rock was in the center of a beef growing area. As a natural evolution, a large livestock industry took root there. It was a new social and economic aspect of lift for the city and the railroad.

The Missouri Pacific conceived the idea of a large stockyard for receiving and shipping livestock. The idea was greeted enthusiastically by the people of Little Rock and North Little Rock. There would be 13 receiving pens, each 8 x 16 feet; 24 classification pens 16 x 6 feet for cows and calves; 88 pens 8 x 16 for hogs and sheep; two pens for vaccination and dipping; four large cattle pens 16 x 32 feet; and six large pens 16 x 32 feet for hogs. The entire stockyard measured 125 x 282 feet, almost as large as a football field. Also, there was a frame administration building 66 x 42 feet.

The GREATER LITTLE ROCK STOCK YARDS was completed in late January 1938. Mounted on the roof of the long, covered center runway was an identifying sign with a bright red Missouri Pacific "Buzzsaw" emblem. The entire arrangement of pens had concrete floors with a network of drains (a modern environmentalist's nightmare). The pens were built of yellow pine fences with sturdy white oak posts. About one acre was under a shed with galvanized metal roof.

Thus was introduced \$2 million-a-year new era of livestock production and distribution. It also was an

incentive for the raising of better quality livestock by the local stockmen and farmer. It was a year-round competitive market.



In 1962, twenty-four years after construction, the Mo.P. stock yard was in decline. It had about as many "passengers" as the Union Station. (Gene Hull photo)


To celebrate the opening of the facility there was a parade with appropriate pageantry. This began at 10:00 a.m. 1 February 1938 on Main Street in Little Rock and crossed Main Street bridge and proceeded up Main Street in North Little Rock to the stockyard.. The program began there at 11:30 a.m.

All city officials, except fire and police departments, and schools were closed for the day. Mayor Leo McLaughlin of Hot Springs and Mayor Ross Lawhon of North Little Rock were to ride bucking horses. On a well-decorated truck was the Missouri Pacific Shops Band playing continuously during the parade. All this was well calculated public relations by the railroad.

Also in the parade were trucks of commission companies (cattle buyers), which had established offices in the administration building. Afterward, there were political speeches of course.

As a fitting climax several hundred head of cattle, hogs and sheep were unloaded for a very spirited auction. Livestock auctions were held here for many years. Slatted, open-air stockcars filled the track adjacent to the pens for loading and unloading.

The railroad experienced a great deal of trouble with transporting the trains of livestock. About every 12 hours they had to be unloaded for feed and water. Trucks began to syphon off the business. Railroad stock trains began to decline and the stockyard disappeared.

It sure was exciting while it lasted. 

Arkansas Railroader

MISSOURI PACIFIC LINES - A CORPORATE HISTORY - Part 24 (Gene Hull)

Purchased Lines

who also provided for the construction of the line, which was completed October 31, 1904. The latter company also operated the line as a subsidiary corporation until formally purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910. After this transaction the organization of the Farmerville and Southern Railroad Company was no longer maintained and ceased to exist.

Termini: From H.B. connection with Monroe Branch at Litro, Louisiana, to end of track at Farmerville, Louisiana. Mileage 22.59

~~On the 22nd day of September 1909 the above described line was purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910.~~

19. Garland Western Railway Company:

Incorporated by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Arkansas, April 15, 1903, under the general railroad laws of that State. This company was organized, its stock owned by, and its line of road built with money furnished by the Iron Mountain Company, and that company operated the property by virtue of stock ownership until formally purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910. Construction was completed in 1908. After the formal transfer of the property the organization was no longer maintained and ceased to exist.

Termini: From H.B. of east leg wye connection 1.17 miles east of Hot Springs depot to end of track at Oak Lawn race track (known as "Garland Spur"). Mileage 1.51

~~On the 22nd day of September 1909 the above described line was purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910.~~

20. Gurdon and Fort Smith Railroad:

Incorporated by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Arkansas, June 11, 1900, under the general railroad laws of that State. The company was organized and stock owned by the Grayson-McLeod Lumber Company. The Iron Mountain Company acquired a majority of the capital stock in 1903 and completed the construction of the line from Antoine to Caddo Gap, June 30, 1907. The road was operated by the Iron Mountain until formally purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor, February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910. The organization of the G. & Ft.S. R.R. was no longer maintained and ceased to exist.

Termini: From H.B. at G. & Ft.S. connection 0.60 mile east of Antoine to a point 1484 feet south of south H.B. of house track at Caddo Gap (joining the rails of the G. & Ft.S.N. Ry.), 33.87 miles; and from crossing of main line of St.L.L.M. & S. Ry. 0.6 mile north of center of Gurdon depot to connection with main line (known as "Gurdon Spur"), 1.24 miles; a total mileage of 35.11

~~On the 22nd day of September 1909 the above described line was purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910.~~

Note:- Mileage of main line is shown on map as 34.38, due to remeasurement of 1914 (See Chapter V., "Other Mileage Changes").

Purchased Lines

21. Gurdon and Fort Smith Northern Railway Company:

Incorporated under the general railroad laws of Arkansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State, March 17, 1905. The company was organized and stock owned by the Iron Mountain Company, who also constructed the line and operated the same until formally purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, executed and acknowledged on behalf of the grantor February 2, 1910, and on behalf of the grantee February 9, 1910. The organization was thereafter no longer maintained and ceased to exist. Construction was completed January 1, 1908.

Termini: From a point 1484 feet south of south H.B. of house track at Caddo Gap (joining the rails of the G. & Ft.S. R.R.) to end of track at Womble.
Mileage 5.74

~~Company organized by deed of August 10, 1908.~~

22. Herrin Railway:

Incorporated by articles of incorporation filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Illinois, May 23, 1903, under the general railroad laws of that State. The company was organized, its stock owned and its line of road constructed by the Iron Mountain Company, who also operated the line by virtue of stock ownership until formally purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, and executed and acknowledged February 2, 1910. After this conveyance the organization of the Herrin Railway was no longer maintained and ceased to exist. Construction completed February 1, 1904.

Termini: From H.B. connection with East and West Branch 343 feet east of center of depot at Bush to a connection with the tracks of the Big Muddy Coal & Iron Co. (Shaft No. 7) on "Herrin South Spur," 0.13 mile east of "C.B. Connection". Mileage 7.72

~~Company organized by deed of August 10, 1908.~~

23. Herrin and Johnston City Railway Company:

Incorporated under the general railroad laws of Illinois by articles of incorporation filed in the office of the Secretary of State, September 22, 1905. The company was organized and its stock owned by the Iron Mountain Company, who also constructed the line, completing same July 1, 1907, and operated the property until formally purchased by deed dated September 1, 1909, and executed and acknowledged February 2, 1910. After this conveyance the organization of the Herrin & Johnston City Ry.Co. was no longer maintained and ceased to exist.

Termini: From H.B. connection with Herrin Branch at Chalk Junction 0.47 mile south of "C.B. Connection" to end of track just north of connection to Holland Mine near Johnston City, Illinois. Mileage 3.86

~~Company organized by deed of August 10, 1908.~~

Purchased Lines

24. Kansas and Arkansas Valley Railway:

This company was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Arkansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State, November 27, 1885, and amended articles filed March 13, 1890. The company was also incorporated under the general railroad laws of Kansas by articles of association filed in the office of the Secretary of State, November 21, 1889. An act of Congress, approved June 1, 1886 (U.S. Stats. at Large, Volume 24, p. 73), granted a right of way, with the right to maintain a telegraph and telephone line, through the Indian Territory from a point at or near Ft. Smith, Arkansas, in a northwesterly direction to a point on the northern boundary line of the Territory between the Arkansas River in Cowley County and the Caney River in Chautauqua County, Kansas, with the right to construct a branch from the main line to a point in or near Coffeyville, Kansas.

An act of Congress, approved March 15, 1890 (U.S. Stats. at Large, Volume 26, p. 21), granted the company permission to construct a railway, wagon and foot bridge over the Arkansas River at or near Fort Smith, Arkansas.

An act of Congress, approved February-24, 1891 (U.S. Stats. at Large, Volume 26, p. 783), authorized this company to construct additional lines of railway: (1) From Wagoner westwardly and northwestwardly through or near Guthrie and through or near the Fort Supply military reservation to the western boundary line of the Territory; (2) from the most suitable point on the line thus described in a southwesterly direction through or near Oklahoma City and through or near the Fort Reno military reservation to a point on the western boundary line of the Territory south of the Canadian River; and (3) from the most practicable point on the main line at or near Fort Gibson thence in a southwesterly direction through the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw or Chickasaw countries, either or all of them, to a point on the southern boundary line of the Territory. None of the three franchises mentioned in this paragraph were ever utilized by this company.

Although chartered to build its line to Coffeyville, Kansas, it was found necessary to form a separate corporation for that part of the line in the State of Kansas, as the laws of that State do not grant to foreign corporations the right to exercise eminent domain within the State. Accordingly the directors of this company organized and incorporated

The Kansas and Arkansas Valley Railroad Company under the general railroad laws of Kansas and filed their articles of association in the office of the Secretary of State of Kansas, November 13, 1888. By indenture dated January 10, 1890, the railroad, property and franchises of this company were conveyed to the Kansas & Arkansas Valley Railway.

The line of railroad of the Kansas & Arkansas Valley Railway, including also that of the Railroad Company, was constructed by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Company, in payment of which the latter company acquired the capital stock of the K. & A.V. Ry.

Purchased Lines

On January 1, 1890, the property of the K. & A.V. Ry., from Van Buren to the Kansas-Indian Territory line, and its Fort Smith Branch, were leased to the L.R. & Ft.S. Ry. for forty years (See page 82), which in turn was leased to the Iron Mountain Company. This lease did not include the Railroad Company (in Kansas), that part of the line not yet having been acquired by the Railway. This line, however, was operated by the Iron Mountain Company by virtue of stock ownership of the K. & A.V. Ry., its owner. No formal lease was made, but an annual rental charge was set up on the books of the companies. Thus the Iron Mountain Company operated the entire line from Van Buren to Coffeyville and the Fort Smith Branch.

By deed dated September 1, 1909, and executed and acknowledged February 2, 1910, all the property, rights and franchises of this company were sold to the St.Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Company.

Subsequently, by deed dated September 1, 1909, and executed and acknowledged February 9, 1910, the Iron Mountain conveyed that part of the line in Kansas formerly belonging to The K. & A.V. Railroad Company, to The Missouri Pacific Railway Company (See page 50).

The organization of the K. & A.V. Ry. is still maintained for purposes of litigation.

Construction

By the K. & A.V. Ry.:

From	To	Date Completed	Miles
Van Buren	Wagoner	8-13-88	83.04
Fort Smith Tracks		4-25-89	1.12
Verdigris River	Kansas-Indian Terr.Line	11-21-89	34.87
Wagoner	Verdigris River	11-26-89	44.51
Fort Smith Bridge		1- 1-90	0.61
Cherokee Jct.	N.Conn. Ft.Smith Bridge	4- 9-90	4.08
			<u>168.23</u>

By The K. & A.V. R.R. Co.:

Kansas-Indian Terr.Line	Coffeyville	11-21-89	2.21
West leg of wye at Coffeyville		"	.20
			<u>2.41</u>

Total mileage of K. & A.V. Ry. 170.64

Termini: (a) From St.L. & S.F. crossing at Van Buren to H.B. connection with main line "K. & A.V. Junction" at Coffeyville, 164.63 miles; (b) west leg of wye at Coffeyville, 0.20 mile; (c) from west H.B. connection with main line at Cherokee (now Greenwood) Jct. to Oklahoma-Arkansas state line at Ft.Smith, 4.32 miles; (d) thence to old Arkansas-Indian Territory

Purchased Lines

line (joining the rails of Greenwood Branch - See page 71), 1.17 miles; (e) from H.B. connection with main line on N. Wye to old Arkansas-Indian Territory line, 0.06 mile; (f) east leg of wye at Greenwood Junction, 0.18 mile; (g) south leg of wye to Arkansas-Oklahoma line, 0.08 mile. Total 170.64

~~Colors on accompanying map: In Arkansas, Brown; in Oklahoma, Carmine; in Kansas, Violet - Nos. (a) 153, 149 and 53; (b) 54; (c) 150; (d) 154; (e) 155; (f) 151 and 152; (g) 156.~~

25. Little Rock and Hot Springs Western Railroad Company:

The Little Rock, Hot Springs and Texas Railway was incorporated under the general railroad laws of Arkansas by articles of organization filed in the office of the Secretary of State, December 11, 1893. This company was authorized to construct a railroad from Little Rock to Hot Springs, Arkansas, through the Counties of Pulaski, Saline and Garland. They graded the line from Benton to Hot Springs and constructed about four miles of railroad, from Benton west to a point near the Saline River, which was completed about 1897.

On February 26, 1896, Thomas Johnson and Hans Hansen filed a suit in the United States Circuit Court for the Western Division of the Eastern District of Arkansas, for the recovery of a certain indebtedness due them, and on May 28, 1898, the court rendered a decree for the sale of the road. The property, rights and franchises were sold on January 24, 1899, to S.W. Fordyce and deed by Charles T. Coleman, Special Master in Chancery, to Thomas H. West, assignee, as Trustee of the purchaser.

Fordyce and his associates reorganized the company under the provisions of Sections 6185, 6186 and 6187, Sandels & Hills Digest of the Statutes of Arkansas, and filed their articles of organization in the office of the Secretary of State, July 19, 1899, taking the name

Little Rock and Hot Springs Western Railroad Company. This company then proceeded to complete the construction of the line from the end of track near the Saline River to Hot Springs and from Benton to a connection with the C.O. & G. R.R. near the southern limits of Little Rock, completed in 1899; a total mileage (including that portion built by L.R.H.S. & T. Ry.) of 53.87

The Iron Mountain Company acquired a majority of the capital stock in September, 1901, and immediately, on September 20, 1901, the L.R. & H.S.W. R.R. Co. executed a lease to the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Co. covering that portion of the line from a point 50 feet north of the intersection of south right of way line of the L.R. & H.S.W. R.R. with the north right of way line of the C.O. & G. R.R. at Benton to the C.O. & G. connection at Little Rock.

The line from the point above-mentioned at Benton to the end of track at north line of Benton Street at Hot Springs, was operated as a subsidiary line by the Iron Mountain Company by virtue of stock ownership until formally purchased by deed dated September 9, 1909, executed and acknowledged February 2, 1910; the mileage of the portion thus acquired being 31.09

Booneville's Rock Island Depot – an obituary by Bill Pollard

Railroad stations in Arkansas are an endangered species. The loss due to fire of the historic Booneville station on Monday night, May 28, 2001, serves as yet another reminder that, unless we take action, our heritage is vanishing. The Rock Island station in Booneville was arguably the most unique of all the surviving train stations in Arkansas, both because of its unusual architecture and because of its original history as a railroad eating house.

In the days before all through passenger trains had dining cars, the railroads made contracts to have food provided at specific stations, and passenger trains would make a brief meal stop to allow passengers to detrain and eat. The Harvey Houses, the most famous of these trackside dining rooms, were operated by the Fred Harvey Company throughout the Southwest, providing elegant dining and quality food for hungry travelers along the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. Because of the success of the Harvey Houses, other railroads such as the Rock Island moved quickly to develop their own system of railroad eating houses.

The John J. Grier Hotel Company obtained the franchise to operate eating houses along the Rock Island, and numerous restaurants, lunch rooms, and hotels were built beginning in 1907. During the latter part of 1910, a new Grier eating house opened in Booneville, a unique Spanish mission style structure designed by the Rock Island's architectural engineer in Chicago, A.T. Hawk. The east end of the structure contained an elaborate dining room seating 50, while the west end contained a lunch room which would seat 34 patrons in revolving chairs along the counter. A kitchen, bake shop, ice box and commissary rooms were located in a rear addition to the building.

A wide porch surrounded three sides of the new structure, with the porch roof supported by columns built of granite boulders. The main entrance from trackside was through a bay which contained the cashier's stand, with a sliding door separating the dining room from the lunch room. The walls of the dining room were finished to resemble Caen stone. Four sets of French style windows opened onto the trackside veranda to provide additional light and ventilation. An unusual arched ceiling was subdivided by cross beams, and at each end of the building a large oil painting extended across the upper part of the wall for the width of the building. Tables, chairs, and sideboards were constructed of Arkansas gum grown in the Booneville vicinity and shipped to Grand Rapids, Michigan for manufacture into furniture. The floor was varnished white maple, and a dark oak finish with stenciled designs accented the lunch room. Both the dining room and lunch room were equipped with the finest Burley German china, Gorham silver, and special order Irish table linens.

Because of the demand for faster train schedules, railroads began adding dining cars to their premier trains to eliminate the delay caused by stopping at trackside eating houses for meals. As dining cars were added to the Rock Island passenger trains through Booneville, the Booneville dining room was closed in favor of lunch counter service about 1925, and the lunch counter itself was closed in September 1936. In 1944, the Rock Island began remodeling the old eating house, converting it into Booneville's new passenger station, which opened on January 5, 1945. Following this shift of railroad operations into the former eating house, the original Booneville depot - a two story wood structure located west of the eating house - was dismantled.

In 1953, the Rock Island began operating the "Budd Car," a self propelled passenger car containing locomotive, railway post office and coach, all in one car. These cars, operating between Memphis, Little Rock, Booneville, Oklahoma City and Amarillo, picked up box lunches

at Booneville. The conductor would take orders from passengers while the car was still an hour or more away, then deliver the orders to one of the down-line station agents who would telegraph Booneville with the sandwich orders for the day. When the train reached Booneville, the box lunches were ready and were loaded aboard the car for passengers to eat en route.

Unfortunately, the once mighty Rock Island Railroad was destined to fulfill the phrase from one of Willie Nelson's mournful songs "...the railroads are dying...." The unique Budd cars, operating on the longest route in the nation for this type of equipment, were discontinued in August 1964. On November 10, 1967, the night passenger trains were discontinued, ending a tradition of passenger train service to Booneville which had started in 1899. Tracks which had once carried the *Choctaw Rocket*, first streamlined diesel passenger train to ever serve Arkansas, were allowed to deteriorate until freight trains were forced to creep along at 15 or 20 miles per hour. Finally, at 3:15am on March 30, 1980, the last Rock Island freight train slowly pulled away from the Booneville depot, bound for El Reno, Oklahoma, and oblivion.

The Rock Island tracks were dismantled in 1985, a traumatic failure to preserve an important component of our transportation system; a failure that is still distressing to anyone concerned with the industrial development of western Arkansas. Through all of these changes, the Booneville depot survived, albeit neglected. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program nominated Booneville's Rock Island depot to the National Register of Historic Places in the early 1990s, and in 1993 produced a comprehensive study, Back on Track – A Guide to New Uses for Old Depots. This study featured extensive architectural surveys of the Booneville depot, and proposed a renovation of the structure into the City Hall, Chamber of Commerce office and a large public meeting room. According to the architect performing the study, "if this structure is restored, the citizens of Booneville will have an architectural treasure."

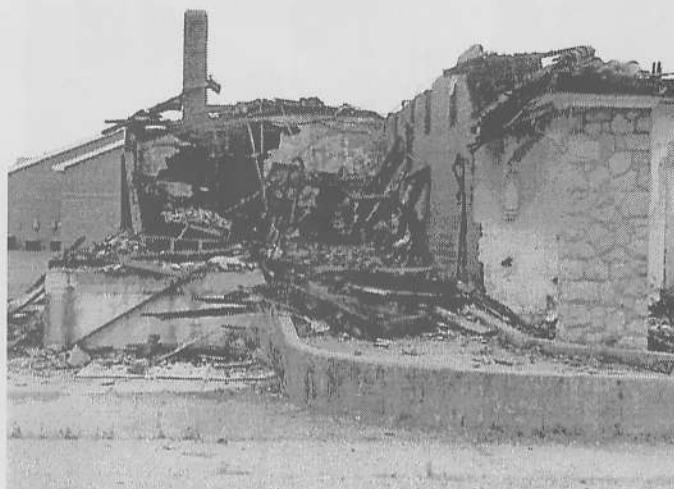
In the introduction to Back on Track, it is noted that depots were rapidly disappearing. "In many cases it is because of neglect: though the railroads built the depots to last, many have been abandoned for decades and the elements and lack of care have taken their toll. Vandalism is another factor in the deterioration of railroad depots. In other cases, the structures have been demolished by the railroad companies or other owners of the buildings. The continued loss of these buildings, which represent a time of booming growth when progress roared into Arkansas on twin steel rails, is a tragedy. This guide to renovating and reusing historic railroad depots seeks to help end that tragedy in Arkansas and elsewhere."

Time ran out for the 91-year old Booneville depot when fire consumed the last tangible evidence of a railroad that had once fueled much of the economic growth in the city of Booneville. Due to Booneville's position as a division point where train crews ended their runs, the town enjoyed the economic benefits of a large railroad payroll beginning in the early days of the twentieth century and continuing into the 1950s or later. The Rock Island payroll brought business growth, just as the presence of the railroad brought industrial development. Now, twenty one years after the untimely demise of the Rock Island Railroad, it seems that even the memory of Booneville's historical ties with the railroad are disappearing, along with the depot.

Dr. Bill Pollard, a Conway dentist, has written numerous articles on the history of the Rock Island Railroad in Arkansas. He also serves as a consultant for Amtrak's Texas Eagle passenger train route through Arkansas.

These photos are of the 91-year old Rock Island depot in Booneville, Arkansas that burned the night of May 28, 2001, Memorial Day. It wasn't put out until early morning of May 29. The depot was a 1900 Spanish Mission-style depot that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. There was talk for years about doing something with the building, but nothing was ever accomplished. It had been a Rock Island crew base until the Rock went bankrupt in 1980.

According to the editor of the *Booneville Democrat*, Glenn M. Parrish (who I talked to), arson is suspected since there were two other fires on the same block that night. The photos were taken by me on Wednesday, June 6, 2001. (Ken Ziegenbein)





The last three pictures show the remaining crossing signals that used to protect two tracks of the Rock Island (tracks taken up over 15 years ago) at Belville, Arkansas and the Little Rock & Western locomotive shops at Perry. Taken on June 6, 2001.