



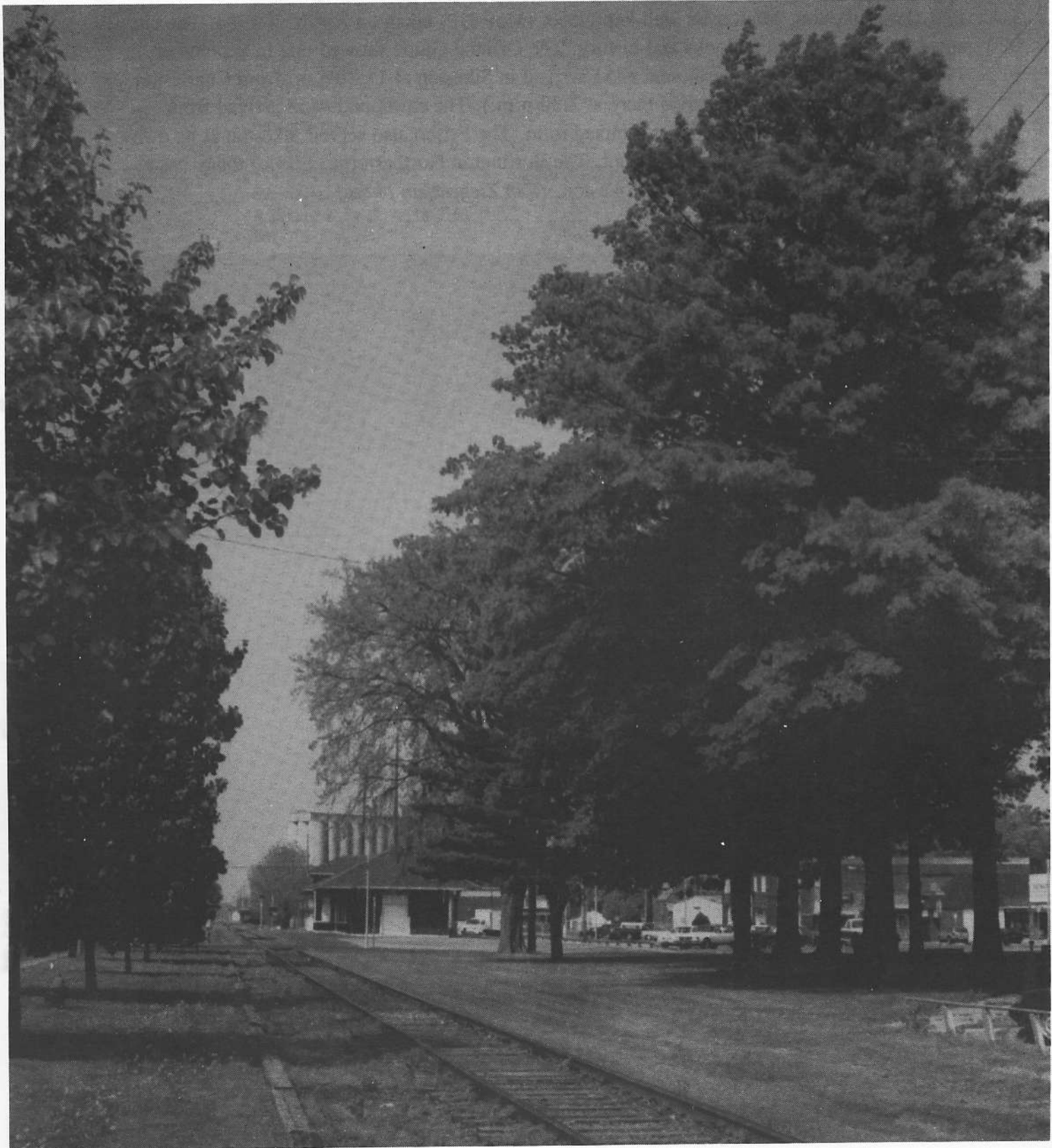
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
N.R.H.S.

ARKANSAS RAILROADER



VOLUME 25 NUMBER 6

JUNE 1994



COVER: Beautiful city park in Sikeston, Missouri with Union Pacific tracks skirting the south side, taken on Monday, April 25, 1994. These former Missouri Pacific tracks have been taken up a few miles east of town and are only used about once a week today in Sikeston. The tracks are straight and flat as far as the eye can see. (*Ken Ziegenbein photo*)

BELOW: Sikeston, Missouri's well-kept depot (MoP-UP) taken on April 25, 1994. The city apparently cares about its looks and history. The Official Guide showed that in September, 1929, Missouri Pacific's westbound #451 arrived in Sikeston at 11:20 a.m. from Charleston on its way to Poplar Bluff (arrival there at 2:30 p.m.). The eastbound #452 arrived from Poplar Bluff at 8:50 a.m. This was a mixed train. The Frisco also served Sikeston at its own station 3/8th of a mile west of this depot. The Burlington Northern (ne. Frisco) today has a very active north/south line through Sikeston. (*Ken Ziegenbein photo*)



1994 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

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<u>BOARD</u> -	Robin Thomas '95 10980 Rivercrest Dr #26 Little Rock AR 72212-1412 501-225-1952	<u>BOARD</u> -	Peter Smykla '96 2800 West 37th Pine Bluff AR 71603 501-535-4724
<u>BOARD</u> -	Tom Shircliff '97 129 Jessica Dr Sherwood AR 72120-3429 501-834-4914	<u>BOARD</u> -	John Hodkin, Jr. '98 506 Gordon St N Little Rock AR R 72117 501-945-2128

NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held on **SUNDAY, JUNE 12** at our usual place, Twin City Bank on Main Street in North Little Rock. Time will be 2 p.m. The program will be given by **PAUL MOON** on Switzerland's narrow gauge and is entitled "Narrow Gauge to Matterhorn." Notice that this is a change in programs. David Johnston's program on the GM&O will now be given in August.

Future programs include Dick Davis's report on the Atlanta NRHS convention (July) and Bill Springer will give a program on SP steam and the Pacific Electric in September.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS- New members this month include:

KENNETH BARNES, PO Box 250541, Little Rock AR 72225.
DON OTTENS, 3208 Arch St, Benton AR 72015-2010



NEW PHONE NUMBER - GENE AND NAOMI HULL have a new phone number. It is: 501-945-7386.

SHOW & SALE NEWS - Apparently, the club netted about \$600 at this year's show and sale.

ARGENTA DEPOT HELP - Board member JOHN HODKIN, JR has asked for help in a work detail to clear some of the trees and brush from the old Rock Island Argenta depot in North Little Rock. This depot is one of only a few of Rock Island's remaining depots, and it sits by itself, next to a once-active rail yard. There are no longer any tracks close to the depot. Our club (mainly Dick Davis and John) is investigating the possibility of doing something to renovate this old building. If you'd like to help John clean out the trees, call him at 501-945-2128.

SHOWSALE MAILING LIST HELP WANTED - For the past few years, I (Ken Ziegenbein) have been keeping a mailing list of Show and Sale vendors and potential customers on my computer. I would like for someone else to take this over, as it is a big task to keep the lists up to date. It's a big enough task just to keep our club's membership list updated, and adding the hundreds of names on our Show & Sale list is becoming too time consuming. Do I have the time to do this? Yes. Do I want to anymore? NO. If you'd like to keep this list updated, and be able to print labels (you'll get help with the actual mailouts), please let me know. Write to me at PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119 or phone me at 501-758-1340. THANKS A LOT!!

SPRING NRHS BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING - It was held April 17 in St. Louis with 97 attending (this is the same board that met in Little Rock last year). Among some of the things discussed: a new chapter was formed, the Carolina Clinchfield Chapter; the financial reporting problems discussed at previous meetings was resolved; in 1993, 6 chapters marked 25 years in NRHS, in 1994 5 more will mark 25 years, including the Little Rock chapter

Our own NRHS Director, DICK DAVIS, attended the event. He said that they had a lot of fun. They were given a tour of the new Metrolink commuter rail system and shown a history of Union Station, celebrating 100 years this year. It was suggested at the meeting that anyone having railroad paper or photo items they've collected consider giving them to their nearest NRHS chapter or to the national chapter's library at some point. Let your family know your wishes regarding those railroad items, otherwise someone not rail-oriented might throw out precious things should you die.

1994 CALENDAR SALE!! - Our 1994 calendars are only \$5 each. We still have a few left. Order yours from our club address. Postage is included.

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

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



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

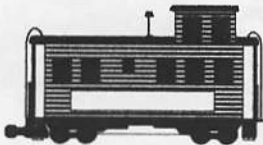
Send your entries to Photos, Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. They will be returned after the calendar is printed. We only have a few, so far.

PLAQUE PRESENTED - On May 11, L.T. WALKER presented a plaque to the city of Hazen, honoring the deceased mayor of Hazen, Kathryn Orlicek, for her help in preserving the Rock Island depot and track there in the early 1980s. A copy of this plaque is located elsewhere in this newsletter.

NEWS UPDATED through May 18, probably mailed the week of May 30-June 3. Deadline for the July newsletter is JUNE 12.

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

GREENWOOD CABOOSE - (Greenwood) - A BN caboose, donated to the Greenwood Ben Geren Park years ago, has been moved and remodeled for the city. It's now on the Highway 10 Spur on land owned by Gene and Jan Winford, called Winford Junction. The Missouri Pacific used to run through this west Arkansas town outside of Fort Smith and the caboose sits on the old right-of-way. A sign outside the caboose says "Welcome to Greenwood, Not Just a Whistle Stop." Greenwood takes pride in its railroad heritage. (*Greenwood Democrat, Greenwood, April 27, 1994*)



MIDWEST LIME SERVICE RESUMES - (Batesville) - Langley Puckett of the Missouri and Northern Arkansas Railroad said that the line north of Batesville crossing Highway 167 is once again being used by trains after years of non-use. He cautioned motorists not used to seeing trains on the line to be careful. (*Batesville Guard, April 14*)

CROSSING ACCIDENTS THIS MONTH - WALNUT RIDGE, April 7. A tractor-trailer hauling steel pipes was hit by a southbound Union Pacific train after the truck pulled onto the tracks. Pieces of steel damaged 12 cars parked nearby. The driver of the truck was injured. The truck was demolished. (*Jonesboro Sun, April 8*)

FORDYCE & PRINCETON FREE RIDES - (Fordyce) - The F&P Railroad once again offered free train rides to the people attending the Fordyce On The Cotton Belt festival in Fordyce April 23. These rides are very popular and surely help public relations for the railroad. The F&P is a subsidiary of the Georgia-Pacific Corp and is the old route of the Rock Island. (*Fordyce News-Advocate, April 20*)

OZARK DEPOT - (Ozark) - A 80/20 grant has been applied for to renovate the old Missouri Pacific depot in Ozark. The city council voted to come up with the 20 percent. Land around the depot would be landscaped. (*Ozark Spectator, April 28 by Cathy Jones*)

CROSSING RULES IN ARKANSAS - Captain Paul Curtis of the Arkansas State Police says the following rules regarding grade crossings apply in Arkansas: 1) Drivers should stop their vehicles within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of the railroad; 2) you



must stop whenever a crossing light or device signals you to; 3) you must stop if a train is within 1500 feet of the crossing and putting out an audible signal of its approach; 4) no person shall drive through or under any crossing gate or barrier at a crossing while it is closed; 5) all school buses, vehicles carrying passengers for hire or vehicles carrying explosives or flammable liquids are required to STOP at ALL crossings at ALL times.

A&M'S NEW DEPOT - (Springdale) - On Monday, April 18, the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad opened its new passenger station, a reproduction of the original batton-board Springdale station built in the 1880s. Richard Davies, president of Arkansas Parks and Tourism, said this was probably the first train depot built in the state in 75 or 80 years. The Arkansas & Missouri Railroad operates the Ozark Scenic Railway, a passenger excursion through the Boston Mountains, aboard restored turn-of-the-century coaches. It runs from Springdale to Van Buren over the old Frisco (see *Excursions/Events* section for details)

OUACHITA SCENIC RAILWAY OUT - (Hot Springs) - The Ouachita Scenic Railroad will not run excursions around Hot Springs this year like it did last year. An inability to agree on trackage rights with the Arkansas Midland Railroad is the reason. Steve Phipps, the president of the OSR, said he had a lease ready this year for a steam locomotive, an agreement to develop a history park complex and more passenger cars. Last year, 17,000 rode this tourist line (the only year it was in operation). (*The Sentinel-Record, Hot Springs, April 19*)

He is the happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home.

-Goethe

MAYFLOWER CROSSING BACK IN NEWS - (Mayflower) - For over 20 years, residents of Mayflower have wanted a road crossing between Main Street and Hwy 365 over the Union Pacific tracks, which consists of two tracks. The UP (MoP) refused, and the case went to the Arkansas Supreme Court in early April. UP contends the crossing would be unsafe. Mayflower residents say it is essential for city growth. (Ed. note...there should be LESS crossings, not more due to stupid motorists breaking laws and running around crossing gates, getting killed or injured and then SUING THE RAILROAD. I assure you that the first accident at this proposed crossing would result in just such a case). (*Log Cabin Democrat, Conway, April 10 by Bob Buchanan*)

FORT SMITH CROSSING - The Fort Smith Railroad and the City of Fort Smith filed suit in late March, the city wanting to build a new crossing over the FSR (MoP) and the FSR saying no way until a crossing protection survey is done. The city wants to extend South 92nd Street 900 feet to connect with Zero Street, forcing it to cross the railroad. FSR said the Federal Railroad Administration has mandated that grade crossings be reduced nationwide and that to open a new crossing, the city would have to close two others. (Editor's note again...don't people contemplating building new crossings know anything about the law? Don't they have any idea of crossing safety? Where have they been when Operation Lifesaver was in town?) (*Southwest Times Record, Fort Smith, March 29 by Dave Hughes*)

DEPOT TO BE RESTORED - (Piggott) - On April 11, the city of Piggott in northeast Arkansas voted to seek federal funds to help pay for relocation and restoration of the historic Cotton Belt Piggott depot. The depot would be returned to its former location on what is now a city-owned parking lot immediately west of the railroad tracks near Main Street. The



depot, owned by the city, was moved 25 years ago and is now located near Pfeiffer Farm Supply. To get the funds, the depot must be moved as close to its original site as possible. The depot is 20 feet, 4" by 47 feet. (*Piggott Times, April 13 by Dick Clifford*)

WIN ONE, LOSE ONE - (Nashville) - On Sunday morning, March 20, the 1924 Missouri Pacific depot in Nashville was reduced to rubble by a wrecking crew to make room for rail spurs for the Pilgrims Pride feed mill expansion. (*Nashville News, March 21*)



A COUNTY LANDMARK COMES DOWN

.... The Missouri-Pacific Railroad depot, built in 1924, was reduced to rubble, Sunday morning, to make way for rail spurs for the Pilgrims Pride feed mill expansion. Above, a tractor's metal arm makes short work of the tinder-dry roof.

NEW SHORT LINE? - (Glenwood) - The ICC has temporarily granted the Caddo, Antoine and Little River Railroad the authority to operate over 50 miles of former UP (MoP) track between Norman and 4 miles north of Gurdon. Arkansas Midland had operated the entire 54-mile stretch of line from Gurdon to Norman for two years after buying it from the UP, but petitioned the ICC for an embargo on the line last December. Shippers on the line, including Bean Lumber Company in Glenwood, Genstar at Caddo Gap, Barksdale Lumber of Amity, Gifford Hill of Antoine and International Paper near Gurdon, petitioned the ICC to keep the line open. An investment group to purchase the line was formed, headed by Arkansas Railroad Club member Bill Robbins of Dardanelle, owner of the D&R shortline. The companies and investment group want the ICC to allow them to purchase the entire 54-mile line, including the money-making 4 miles serving International Paper near Gurdon, The ICC may only allow them to buy the 50 miles north of that point, however, letting Arkansas



Midland keep the International Paper business. They could also rule to let the AM sell the 50 miles for scrap. In one case where politicians can do good, Senator Pryor, Senator Bumpers and Governor Tucker all worked to keep the line open. (*Glenwood Herald, April 14 by Mike McCoy*)

KIAMICHI RAILROAD NEWS - The railroad was cleaning out their Hugo, Oklahoma yard a little by selling 67 boxcars late last winter. As of April 1994, the Kiamichi's locomotives included the following: 4 GP38M's, 5 GP9's, 2 GP9M's, 7 GP7's, 1 F3A, 5 GP38's (leased). Their railcars included: 70 boxcars, 40 woodracks, 60 pole cars, 4 ballast cars, 39 woodracks (leased), 30 wood chip hoppers (leased), 10 ballast cars (leased), 10 air dump cars (leased), and 125 covered hoppers (leased).

Kiamichi's carloads in 1993 totaled 40,372, up from 35,366 in 1992; 33,472 in 1991; 35, 125 in 1990; and 39,459 in 1989. Coal traffic was 14,735 loads, up from 1992 but down from its 18,581 high in 1989. (*Kiamichi Korner, April 1994*)

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

HILL COUNTRY FLYER TO EXPAND - (Austin, Texas) - Sixteen miles of track will be renovated so that the steam train called the Hill Country Flyer can come into downtown Austin next to the convention center. The Texas Department of Transportation has a grant of nearly \$1 million for the track upgrading. The train now leaves on the west side of Austin on its trip to Burnet but within 18 months can come into the downtown area. The train is pulled by ex-Southern Pacific steam engine #786, built in 1916 and renovated by the Austin Steam Train Association a few years ago. (*Austin American-Statesman, April 29 via James Fair*)

TRACK SEX - (New York, where else?) - A "Dear Ann Landers" letter on April 17 said that a homeless couple was injured when a train plowed into them as they were having sex on a mattress on the tracks of a New York subway station. They were not injured, but they have filed a suit against the transit authority for carelessness. They said that homeless people are allowed to have sex too. (*thanks to Jonathan Royce*)

NAFTA GOOD FOR COMPANY - (Paducah, Kentucky) - The North American Free Trade Agreement has turned out to be good for VMV Enterprises (rebuilders of locomotives) of Paducah, Kentucky. Mexico's national railroad, FMN, will have 160 of its locomotives rebuilt at VMV over the next ten years worth almost \$200 million. (Perhaps the PA's will show up???) (*The Gateway Railletter, May 1994*)



\$300 MILLION LOCOMOTIVE ORDER - Union Pacific announced on March 25, 1994 that it has ordered 140 new GE AC traction locomotives worth \$300 million. These will be 4,400 horsepower engines, possibly convertible to 6,000 hp later. They will feature GE's comfort cab, including a computerized order display eliminating the need for radio track warrants at some future date. (*UP news release via The Gateway Railletter*)

NEW LUXURY EXPRESS MAY BEGIN - The renovated eleven cars of the *American-European Express* that used to run between New York and Chicago have been sold to Mittelthrugau Travel (MT) of Switzerland. They plan to start another luxury train service in



the United States called the *American-Orient Express* in 1995, set to run between southern and southwestern states, including charter trips to **BRANSON**, Missouri. MT currently runs the famous *Orient Express* in Europe. (*Compuserve's TrainNet via The Gateway Railletter*)

SCENIC TOURIST LINES OUT WEST - Here is a list of several tourist lines in the west, along with their addresses and phone numbers. The list came from the *Washington Times*. I forgot who sent it in:

CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD, PO Box 789, Chama NM 87520, 505-756-2151

DURANGO & SILVERTON NARROW-GAUGE RAILROAD, 479 Main Ave, Durango CO 81301, 303-247-2733

GEORGETOWN LOOP RAILROAD, PO Box 217, Georgetown CO 80444, 303-569-2403

GRAND CANYON RAILWAY, 518 E Bill Williams Ave, Williams AZ 86046, 602-635-4000

MOUNT HOOD RAILROAD, 110 Railroad Ave, Hood River OR 97031, 503-386-3556

VERDE RIVER CANYON EXCURSION, PO Box 103, Clarkdale AZ 86324, 602-639-0010

VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE RAILROAD, PO Box 467, Virginia City, NV 89440, 702-847-0380

WYOMING/COLORADO SCENIC RAILROAD, PO Box 1653, Laramie WY 82070, 307-742-9162

GRIZZARD TO DONATE RAIL STUFF - (Atlanta, Georgia) - Syndicated columnist Lewis Grizzard, who died in April, has donated all his railroad memorabilia to the Atlanta Chapter NRHS. (*The Tifton Gazette, Tifton, Georgia via Ellen Brown*)

SP TRIPLES OPERATING INCOME - Remember the days in the 80s when Southern Pacific kept loosing money and carloads? Well, 1994's first quarter operating income increased to \$62.3 million, triple the \$20.9 million in 1993. Revenues were \$748.2 million. Carloadings were up 13.6%. SP's workforce was 18,882 on March 31, down 3,203 from a year earlier. (*SP Update, April 28, via Jim Johnson - remember him?*)

DEPOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY? - Apparently, there is a national Railroad Station Historical Society. It is to meet in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania June 3. Their address is Dr. Arthur Baker, 69 Woodberry Rd, New Hartford NY 13413. (*via The Green Block, Central New York Chapter*)

LARGEST RAIL YARD - The Guinness Book of Records lists UP's Bailey Yard at North Platte, Nebraska as the largest yard in the world, having 825 switches, over 260 miles of track, and handling over 100 trains per day, consisting of over 9,000 cars. (*Highball, Old Dominion Chapter*)



AMTRAK NEWS

WRECK OF THE SILVER METEOR - (Smithfield, North Carolina) - About 4:45 a.m. on Monday, May 16, Amtrak's southbound *Silver Meteor* derailed 18 of its 19 cars 25 miles southeast of Raleigh, North Carolina near Smithfield. The train hit a trailer full of cat litter that had shifted on its flat-bed car while a CSX freight was passing on a parallel track. The container was jutting into the path of the 70 mph passenger train. The engineer of the



Amtrak train, Brooks Woodward, was killed and 350 people were injured, most slightly. There were 438 people aboard.

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

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

SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS - Ozark Scenic Railway, through next Fall - Passenger trips on the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad between Springdale and Van Buren over the former Frisco line - shorter trips also available as is one from Van Buren to Winslow - for the latest schedules and fares, call the A&M in Springdale at 501-751-8600, 1-800-687-8600 or 800-452-9582. Write to Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, 107 N Commercial St, Springdale AR 72764 or if getting on in Van Buren, the Old Frisco Depot, 813 Main St., Van Buren AR 72956. Credit cards accepted.

BELTON, MISSOURI - Short weekend trips out of Belton behind famous Rock Island "E-unit #630 through the Summer and early fall - contact the Smoky Hill Railway, 502 Walnut Street, Belton MO 64012-2516 for times and prices.

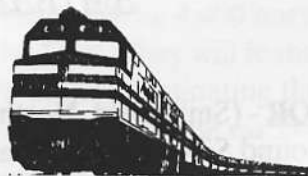
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO - The Santa Fe Southern operates the former Santa Fe branch from Santa Fe to Lamy, New Mexico and operates a freight train open to passengers on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Call 505-989-8600 for information. (*The Gateway Railletter, May 1994*)

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

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI - July 16 & 17, 1994 - The Great American Train Show, Bartle Hall, noon - 5 p.m. - For more information, contact GATS LTD, PO Box 1745, Lombard IL 60148 or call the Great American Train Show at 708-834-0652.

PADUCAH, KENTUCKY - August 11-14, 1994 - Illinois Central Railroad Historical Society's 15th annual convention and show. The dealer show will be August 13, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. - There will be tours of rail locations around Paducah August 12 and a banquet will be held at 7 p.m. August 13. - Tables are \$20 - For more information or to order tables, contact Mark L. Miller, 1204A West Central, Marion IL 62959-1022 or call 618-997-5788.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI - September 3-4-5, 1994 - Union Station Centennial will have Union Pacific's "City of St. Louis" on display, featuring UP's rebuilt E-units and cars. ~~1994~~



GAUGE CHANGES ON THE MEMPHIS AND LITTLE ROCK

James R. Fair

There is much in the railroad literature about changing of a track gauge - either up, as in the case of converting narrow to standard gauge, or down, in standardizing broad gauge. In the usual case, a railroad would undertake only one of these conversions. But in Arkansas the Memphis and Little Rock line had to undergo two of them! This railroad had more than its share of hard luck in many other ways - and had to endure this double expense because of unusual circumstances.

A recent article in the popular press by John Stover has brought to mind the gauge problems of the Memphis and Little Rock (M&LR) as well as of other early railroads of the region. The story begins with the building of the Pacific Railroad of Missouri and the decision of its chief engineer, James Kirkwood, to use the gauge of 5'-6". He made this decision not only because some other railroads west of the Mississippi were using it but also because the wider spacing of the rails would provide easier movement of cars and more spacious interiors of the cars. When the Cairo and Fulton line was chartered, to cut across Arkansas diagonally from northeast to southwest, its gauge was chosen as 5'-6", in fact, its Missouri portion was required by law to use that gauge. Later, the St. Louis and Iron mountain, building south from St. Louis, would influence the need for connections with the same gauge.

While this was happening, the already-established railroads of the southeastern United States were almost all using a gauge of 5'-0". When the M&LR was chartered in 1853, it would appear that interchange with the C & F at Huntersville, across the Arkansas River from Little Rock, was considered more important than interchange at Memphis. At the time, however, no direct connection with the Memphis lines was envisioned; the Mississippi River was in the way!

It was not until April 10, 1871, that the M&LR was finally completed between Hopefield, opposite Memphis on the Mississippi River, and Huntersville. By this time, construction of the Cairo and Fulton was underway and for some reason the first rails laid north out of Huntersville were spaced at 4'-8 1/2', or "standard" gauge. Before the rails had reached the Little Red River, however, and the C & F gauge was changed to 5'-0" as a compromise with the line building south from the Cairo vicinity. This was the same gauge as the lines serving Memphis. The M&LR

clearly had to make a gauge change. To support this idea more firmly, the railroad decided to build inclines at Hopefield and Memphis so that freight and passenger trains could be ferried across the Mississippi. By late 1871 important developments were taking place with the Memphis and Little Rock. An order for ten 4-4-0 type locomotives had been placed with Baldwin Locomotive Works; these locomotives would have a five foot gauge. New rolling stock was also on order: 100 new freight cars and nine new passenger cars. Progress was going forward on the construction of the inclines, and a transfer boat was being sought. A contract was signed with a construction firm to raise the level of the roadbed of the flood-prone eastern end between Hopefield and Madison. And the gauge of the entire line would be changed from 5'-6" to 5'-0" early in 1872.

The gauge was changed on Saturday and Sunday, January 13 and 14, 1872. The first rail was moved at 8:25 am, at Hopefield, just after the westbound passenger train departed on the 13th. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported,

With great energy the change of gauge on the Memphis railroad was completed yesterday evening. . . . The new rolling stock, consisting of new engines and cars of every kind, was put on the road yesterday, but unfortunately the westward-bound train, which left Hopefield yesterday morning, run [sic] off the track twenty-four miles out, and the consequence is that no train was expected last night, and none will leave this morning [the 15th].

In its annual report, the railroad provided a bit more detail:

On Saturday, January 13th, 1872, the last passenger train on the five and one-half feet [sic] gauge left Hopefield about 8 a.m., followed by a construction train to distribute men and material, and the work of changing was commenced on each section immediately after the passage of the last train.

On Tuesday morning, January 16th, regular trains left Hopefield and went through to Huntersville, the result being the loss of only one regular train from Memphis and three from Little Rock, the latter being so arranged in consequence of position of new and old rolling stock.

We are under obligations to the Memphis and Louisville, Memphis and Charleston, and



Mississippi and Tennessee Railroads for men and tools, and to the Little Rock and Fort Smith, and Cairo and Fulton Railroads, for tools to assist us in above work.

The new equipment had arrived at Hopefield, some of it before the first of the year. And so it was that brand new equipment was involved in an accident on its first run! The M&LR report indicates that some of the older freight and passenger equipment had been given new trucks in advance, and that consideration was being given to rehabilitating one or two of the existing eight locomotives, all said to be completely worn out. Any equipment changed in Little Rock was, of course, stranded there as was the new rolling stock confined to the Hopefield yards. At any rate, operations of the 5'-0" gauge commenced in January 1872.

In October 1872 the inclines for the Mississippi River crossing were complete, and the transfer of trains began. The M&LR made arrangements to use the Memphis and Louisville (Louisville and Nashville, or L&N) passenger depot in Memphis. Arrangements were also made to use the Iron Mountain passenger station in Little Rock when the bridge across the river there was operational. In another year or so the so-called Baring Cross Bridge was completed and the first train crossed it on December 21, 1873. The *Gazette* for January 6, 1874, announced that M&LR passenger trains would begin using the Little Rock depot, and that the M&LR was building a freight station to the west of the passenger station, and freight trains of the M&LR would begin crossing the river in about 30 days. In June 1874 the M&LR instituted through sleeping car service between the Little Rock "union depot" and Louisville, Kentucky, with interchange to the L&N in Memphis.

Thus, operations with the new gauge brought opportunities for new business amidst other hardships for the M&LR. The 1870s might have been outstanding economically for the railroad if it were not for the national panic of 1873 and yellow fever epidemics in Memphis during 1873, 1878 and 1879. There was still another problem at the tail-end of the decade: with the Jay Gould group taking over the St. Louis, Iron Mountain And Southern, as the Cairo and Fulton had now become, the group decided to change its gauge from 5'-0" to 4'-8 1/2"; the latter was fast becoming a standard for the United States, except in the southeastern part of the country. On June 28, 1879, the Iron Mountain made its gauge change. Over 3,000 men were involved for the 700 miles from St. Louis to Texarkana. Another report gave the headcount at 5,000 including those needed for changing quickly some 300 cars and 50 locomotives. This operation began at 5:00 am and was essentially completed by noontime.

This left the M&LR with a problem at the Little Rock end. A hoist was installed at the junction with the Iron Mountain at Baring Cross, a short distance north of

the Arkansas River bridge. Replacement wheels of the proper gauge could be provided for traffic in either direction. This effort was applied primarily to passenger trains and freight cars destined for the M&LR freight house, and probably required the M&LR to maintain a 4'-8 1/2" gauge switch engine on the Little Rock side of the river.

Railroads of the South felt mounting pressure to change their gauge to the "standard" (4'-8 1/2" or 4'-9"), and on February 2, 1886, representatives of all the broad gauge railroads of the south met in Atlanta to discuss plans for standardization. They settled on the dates of May 31 and June 1, 1886, for a massive changeover. The M&LR was forced to go along with this plan, and on May 30, 1886, a force of 1,100 men moved one of the rails closer to the other by 3-1/2 inches. By nightfall, the regular passenger train was able to move over the new alignment. For this gauge change, new rolling stock was not required, but the wheels of many engines and cars had to be shifted on their axles - or to be supported by new wheel sets.

This change permitted retirement of the hoist operation at Baring Cross. The Memphis and Little Rock now had gauge compatibility at both ends. However, all was not promising for the M&LR; the Gould group completed its own line between Little Rock and Memphis with operations beginning in May 1888. In the previous September the M&LR was sold through foreclosure proceedings to the Little Rock and Memphis (LR&M). The new organization, continuing to suffer from the Gould competition, went into receivership in June 1893, and a short time later the LR&M was forced to move out of the union station and terminate its westbound trains at Argenta. Stories go that the connection with the Iron Mountain was removed late one evening, stranding the next arriving train at the Argenta depot. But by this time the LR&M was faring so badly that the bridge and station tolls may have been the real culprits. At any rate, this ends the problems with track gauges; everything was now standardized.

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In Memory

- of -

Mayor Kathryn Orlicek



- For -

Her Work in Preserving

- The -

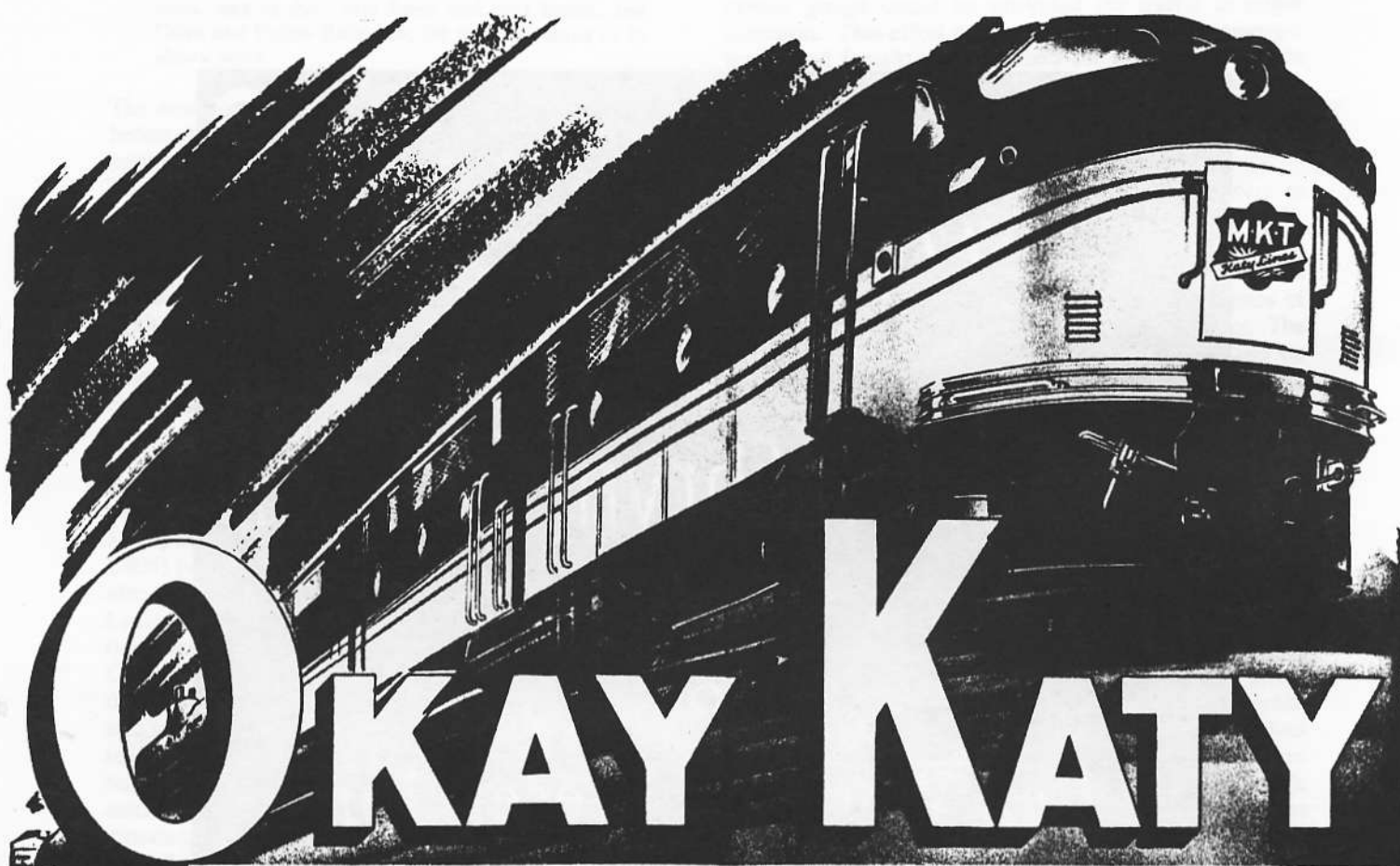
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Arkansas Railroad Club

March 13, 1994





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MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS RAILROAD SYSTEM

UPCOMING CLUB & AREA RAIL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

<u>JUNE 12</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank.	<u>JUNE 19</u> - Possible bus to see/ride behind 1522 West Plains, MO to Jonesboro, AR.
<u>JULY 10</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank.	<u>AUGUST 14</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank.
<u>SEPTEMBER 11</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank.	<u>OCTOBER 9</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank.

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



Looking east from the city park in downtown Sikeston, Missouri along the former Missouri Pacific tracks. The tracks only go a few more miles east, being taken up before reaching Charleston. (Ken Ziegenbein photo)

The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization that meets on the second Sunday of the month. This month we will meet on Sunday, JUNE 12 at the Twin City Bank Building on Main Street in North Little Rock. We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Programs are presented.

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

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

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

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



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

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