



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
N.R.H.S.

# ARKANSAS RAILROADER



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*Missouri Pacific engineer Claude C. Yarbrough at the throttle of a MoPac PA1 of the 8000 series. Notice the "dapperly" dress of Mr. Yarbrough. Photo was probably taken in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Read John Mills' story about Mr. Yarbrough and other topics inside. (John A. Mills collection)*



*Engineer C. C. Yarbrough on the side of a MoPac PA1. John Mills' sister-in-law, a manicurist/beauty operator (still working at age 75) did Mr. Yarbrough's fingernails once a week, usually on Saturday. When not on duty he always dressed in a business suit and full accessories. With a full head of silvery hair, many mistook him for a minister, senator or high official of the railroad. In the steam days, he did not wear the bib-overalls, he wore pin-striped suits and usually covered his head with a straw hat, panama hat or other brim-type hat. He also owned the first automobile Mr. Mills rode in that had automatic gear shifting. It was a 1941 Oldsmobile as black as L. W. Baldwin's MoPac steam engines were required to be as long as he was president of the railroad. (John A. Mills collection)*

# MY HERO

by: John A. Mills

Our youthful environment often determines our heroes. Most of my early upbringing was centered around church activities. At least ten locomotive engineers and many other railroad men, including my father, attended our church who had great influence on my early life. Mother would be considered a "religious fanatic" by today's standards. Attending movies was not one of my regular sources of entertainment. I did get to see "Broadway Limited" and Cecil B. DeMilles "Union Pacific" after much pleading.

My father began his railroading at Hoxie, Arkansas in 1925, my brother in 1940 and mine began at North Little Rock in 1942 as a messenger on the Missouri Pacific. This forty-six year career in transportation ended on November 30, 1994 after twenty-two years in management positions at Amtrak.

Work schedules of the locomotive engineers prevented regular church attending. However, two or three would always be there to share their railroading "tales" after church with each other and a "young eager nuisance" also always ready to hear their experiences.

One man in particular became "My Hero" and on my tenth birthday I received a "Box Camera" and the first picture I took was of MoPac Pacific 6619 at Union Station in Little Rock with Mr. Claude C. Yarbrough at the throttle. Many years later, on March 13, 1974, I was able to tape record Mr. Yarbrough's voice as he repeated to me several of his stories.

The occasion was the inaugural run of Amtrak's *Inter-American* somewhere between Little Rock and Texarkana. Governor Dale Bumpers who later served six terms as U.S. Senator from Arkansas had that same evening, March 13, 1974, given an address at a Little Rock hotel. He gave "plaudits" to this writer as the "catalyst" who was greatly responsible for events which had resulted in rail passenger service being re-established on that date through Arkansas. After Arkansas had been left off the original "Railpax" map and was not included in the May 1, 1971 startup, I had determined that the last regular scheduled passenger service in Arkansas had not taken place on April 30, 1971.

As District Supervisor for Amtrak on this new route I was privileged to have guests on the inaugural trip. My hero, C. C. Yarbrough was my guest from Little Rock to Texarkana. He by then was eighty-six (86) years old, having retired at the mandatory age of seventy. With two EMD-E8's powering the train, Mr. Yarbrough would have been right at home at the throttle.

But back in one of the coaches on the eleven-car train Mr. Yarbrough, my wife, son and a few close friends were having a conversation and my tape recorder was "ON."

Here is a portion of that conversation: JAM=John A. Mills-writer

CCY=Claude C. Yarbrough-locomotive engineer, retired

**JAM** - Tell us about the time they called you to run a special train from Little Rock to Texarkana with three cars off the Memphis connecting train that had missed the "SHINES" (reference to the Sunshine Specials - crack MoPac passenger trains) due to the Memphis connection No. 201 being over an hour late arriving Little Rock.

**CCY** - (With laughter Ha-Ha-Ha) Well, that happened.

**JAM** - Tell us what the engine was, how many cars you had and how long it took you to get to Texarkana.

**CCY** - Well, we left there behind No. 1 with three cars (one coach and one sleeper for train No. 1 going to Fort Worth and one sleeper for train No. 21 going to Houston) and one of those little 6400s (4-6-2 Pacific Class with 60-inch drivers) that I just like telling you about. It had a 10,000 gallon water tank on it and they told me leaving Little Rock, "now No. 1 was right on time and I want you to catch No. 1 by the time it gets to Texarkana."

**JAM** - OK, and you had to stop at Gurdon for water, didn't you?

**CCY** - Supposed to but no. I didn't make it.

**JAM** - You just went on through Gurdon, making no stops for anything in route.

**CCY** - When I left Little Rock my next stop was Texarkana and when No. 1 headed in on one track, I headed in on the track next to No. 1 and No. 21 was still in the station over on another track. I had two cars for train No. 1 and one car for train No. 21.

**JAM** - And No. 1's schedule was three hours.

**CCY** - And his schedule was three hours, with two regular stops, one at Gurdon and one at Hope.  
(President Clinton's home town)

**JAM** - And how late behind him were you when you departed Little Rock?

**CCY** - One hour.

**JAM** - You mean, you went from Little Rock to Texarkana in two hours, 145 miles. (With 60-inch drivers, speed average greater than driver size indicates even higher operating speeds were attainable, in this case 72.5 mph . Maximum speeds a locomotive is permitted is usually partly determined by size of drivers and other factors.)

**CCY** - Yes, sir.

**JAM** - What year was this?

**CCY** - Oh, let me see. I can't remember right off hand. When you get to be 86 you don't recall dates quickly anymore. It was before CTC (Centralized Traffic Control) had been installed on much of the railroad. It must have been the mid to late 1930s.

**JAM** - Well, how fast did you run, Mr. Yarbrough?

**CCY** - (Snickering with a not-guilty laughter) "JUST AS FAST AS IT WOULD TURN A WHEEL." I meant to catch that train ahead of me. I caught him, too."

The conversation continued with several other stories, including when he went to work on the railroad in August 1906 watching engines at a gravel pit at Arkadelphia. The pay was one dollar and fifty cents (\$1.50) per twelve (12) hour night shift. "The sorriest job I ever had on the railroad."

He was an engineer over forty years, but never in a major derailment, but had many horrifying experiences. A main rod breaking at 80 mph on a 5300-class Mountain type locomotive, wiping out the left side of the engine and nearly derailing on each revolution of the main driver. He also tells humorous stories, including the first time he encountered an oil-burning locomotive as a fireman. He remembers climbing into the cab looking for the coal pile and a shovel and finding neither. He also recalled the first stoker equipped locomotive he ever operated. "I thought I'd died and gone to heaven."

To hear one working man describing another fellow worker as, "He was the kind of a man a man should be" left a lasting impression with me. This was a reference to the train conductor working a local from Gurdon to El Dorado who taught him how to fire his first oil burning locomotive. This conductor later fell off a train while reaching for train orders and was killed. Many of the stories of railroaders back then seemed to focus on beer joints, pool halls, gambling houses and not too virtuous living at the other end of their division. Rule "G" violations were a major problem during his era and sometimes officials seemed to "turn their hearts and plug their ears."

Reading a few years ago a story about the "Madam Queen" (poppet valve equipped 4-6-2 Pacific class #6001), my hero C. C. Yarbrough's name came up. It seems his fireman, Mr. Glover, who later became regular engineer on Amtrak's Nos 21 and 22, recalls a trip he had with C..C.Y. It was said Mr. Yarbrough "chewed a complete cigar" never lighting it from Little Rock to Texarkana, covering the same 145 miles in less than three (3) hours, including five (5) stops, this taking place in the late 1940s. By this time rail weight had increased from 90 lbs per yard to 112 lbs per yard, CTC was in place over the entire division and the 6001 was roller bearing equipped, as well as many of the cars on the train. These improvements make the earlier described trip in the 1930s even more impressive.

I never knew or saw Mr. Yarbrough "chew or smoke" a cigar. However, I had another "hero" who I never saw when he didn't have a cigar in his mouth, "chewing" it. He was, of course, Mr. Charles Luna, former UTU President and also an incorporator and member of Amtrak's Board of Directors for many years. His stories about his long tenure with Amtrak is another story for another time. Being referred to as "Charles Angel" was an honor and I am very proud of the relationship I had with both gentlemen. Both



were "My Heros."

*(John Mills is a former member of the Arkansas Railroad Club who moved to Topeka, Kansas in 1975 and continues to be active in passenger train and Amtrak advocacy groups, such as NARP. He remembers attending the first meeting of the "pre-chartered" club at Worthen Bank in the mid 1960s with Jack See, Mike Adams, Tom Shook, Gene Hull and others. His interest in Arkansas railroading continues, and I hope he writes more stories. His address, in case any wish to contact him, is 2825 Burnett Rd, Topeka KS 66614-2228.)*

The following article was published in the March 30, 1947 *Arkansas Democrat* in its Sunday Magazine and was sent in by Mr. Mills. It is interesting reading, and I've included it in its entirety, using a smaller newspaper font to save space.

## VETERAN ENGINEERS FIND NEW DIESELS OF THE MISSOURI PACIFIC A FAR CRY FROM "OLD 101" AS THEY TAKE OVER NEW MOUNTS.

By: Marvin Balding, Democrat staff writer-photographer

It's a familiar sight these days on the Missouri Pacific Lines to hear veteran railroad men who grew up in the shadow of steam locomotives enthusiastically discussing the intrinsic merits of the latest thing in railroading - diesel locomotives, model 1947.

Men with years of railroading experience somewhat darkened by coal dust and cinders eagerly watch and learn about the "cleaner, safer and smoother riding" diesel electric locomotives which recently "took over" as the motive power of the railroad's fastest passenger trains.

Thirteen of the latest type engines are to be placed in regular passenger service by April 1. This number will bring the Missouri Pacific's diesel strength to 102 units. All these are used for passenger and freight service and switching operations. It takes one or more units to draw a train down the rails.

Ordinarily two units are used to pull a train but more units can be added for a heavier load. There are two 12-cylinder engines in each unit, and one engine alone can develop 1,000 horsepower. The length of the sizeable blue and white monster that now pulls the Sunshine Special is about 105 feet and it

weighs 220 tons.

Although these facts may not mean much to the lady nine coaches back, we'll tell you the four diesel engines up front drink up two gallons of fuel oil each mile traveled and the train carries a load of 12,000 gallons; thus we see that fuel stops are infrequent.

Typical of veteran railroad men making a jump from steam to diesel electric is C. C. Yarbrough, 315 Denison, who has put in 40 years of service for the Missouri Pacific. He marvels at the many automatic devices on the mammoth engine which make it simple to operate. He also has a ready appreciation for the comfortable, soft seats in the all-sealed cab. There's a swivel seat for the engineer and another for the fireman.

The cab also features such finery as windshield wipers, sun visors, crank-up-and-down glass windows on the sides, rear-view mirror and a cluster of dials, buttons, switches and signal lights.

Mr. Yarbrough was one of the first of the railroad's engineers to change over from the steam type locomotive in passenger service. He was instructed in his new diesel duties by J. J. Friebolt, road foreman of engines. Friebolt is no newcomer

to railroading, having been with the same line for 33 years.

A sign on the instrument panel warns the engineer not to exceed 98 miles an hour. Present schedules call for no increase in the 75-mile-an-hour top speed for passenger trains, although the road has big plans for running trains 95 miles an hour after new, streamlined coaches are placed in service next fall.

Each engine has a lubricating system that uses 80 gallons of oil. There won't be many changes of oil, though, because the stuff is good for 30,000 miles. Railroaders warn never to underestimate the power of a woman, nor of this locomotive. Generally speaking it can pull two and one-half times more weight than a steam-type engine can. It has a tractive effort (drawbar pull) of 98,000 pounds.

If you're still with us, we'll mention in passing that in the engine cab is the well-known "dead man control" feature - a foot pedal the engineers must keep depressed constantly while the train is moving. If his foot comes off the pedal, brakes are applied automatically, and the train stops.

Relieved of coal-shoveling duties, the fireman sits in a chair at

the left side of the cab and maintains watch over a number of signal lights which flash on to indicate that something has gone wrong with the giant engines behind. An overheated engine causes a red light to flash; insufficient oil pressure lights a yellow globe and so on. If necessary, one engine can be turned off and the train will still roll merrily along.

To cut off the steam heat from the entire train the fireman merely presses a button labeled "Train Line Shut Off." Since the train is steam heated, the engine is equipped with a plant to fulfill that purpose. The steam heating plant has an automatic pilot light, automatic fuel feed and other last-word devices applauded by railroad people but given little thought by passengers. Soot can be removed from the engine exhausts by pressing another button labeled "Soot Blower."

But the prize button of all is the one employed at the beginning of the journey. To start the four engines the fireman merely has to press a

button to put each one into action. Attached directly to the diesel engines are the huge generators which produce electricity that moves the train. Current is controlled by the engineer's eight-step throttle.

A valued safety device is the Mars headlight, located above the main headlight, and which flashes bright rays in an arc-like motion to warn of the train's approach. In case of derailment or other serious trouble the Mars light automatically will flash a red light to stop trains that are approaching.

Mr. Yarbrough contrasts his new locomotive with the first one he ever operated by declaring, "There's a whale of a difference between them." His first run made as an engineer was in 1918 from Paragould to Lexa, Arkansas, on a freight train that made 20 miles an hour. He began running passenger trains in 1927.

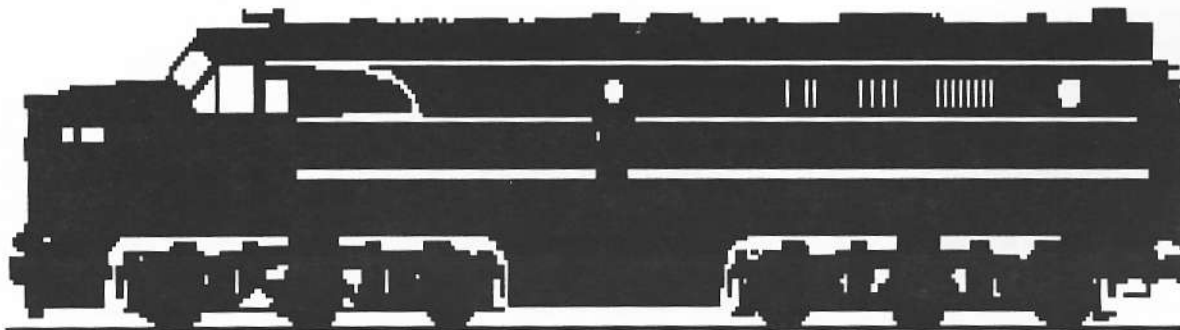
"This new engine is the last word in speed, power, safety and comfort," he emphasized. Train

crewmembers will benefit by these features fully as much as the paying customers, he pointed out recently as he prepared to make a run to Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Unlike many railroaders, Mr. Yarbrough doesn't get sentimental about his divorce from the old-fashioned iron horses. He doesn't miss the smell of coal or oil smoke, the heat of the roaring fire box, the sound of the staccato exhaust and piercing whistle, or the feel of the throttle under a full head of steam.

His mind's eye no longer sees giant drive wheels spinning under the power of shuttling piston rods. Today, as he climbs into his glistening cab, flips the brake lever, opens the throttle one notch and glides out of the station, he anticipates new adventures attuned to "more speed, power and comfort" in his \$250,000 push-button locomotive.

(John Mills added the following comments about the article: *"In the article it mentions increasing speed of the passenger trains to 95 mph after the arrival of the new streamlined coaches from the then current 75 mph. However, this did not happen because of the ICC Speed Limit regulation passed later in 1947. Under that regulation, speed was increased only to 79 mph for passenger trains. Higher speeds could only be attained where cab signals or automatic train stop equipment was in place. This 79 mph speed limit is still in place today in most areas of passenger train operation. It is my opinion that with improved braking and other safety improvements, this could be increased without sacrifice to safety to at least 85 mph."*)



# CRICKET

by: W. M. "Mike" Adams cw 1999

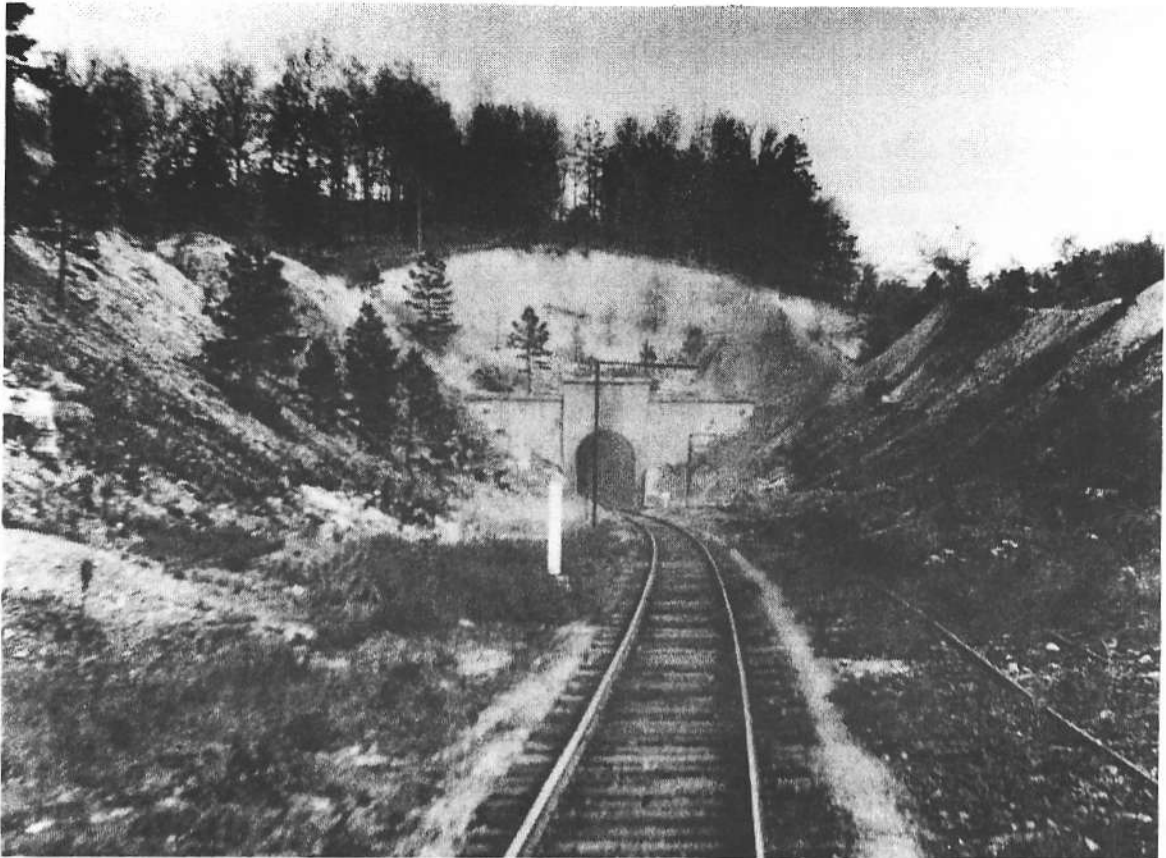
Here is a Decoy Duck stuffed with Oysters  
The Duck is mere Fiction; The Oysters are Facts.  
*Cy Warman 1899*

"TRAINS ON THE PADDLE!" No leather lunged Nantucket whaler man every roared out more gleefully. The depot idlers all turned their attention to the concrete framed tunnel mouth a scant half mile eastward. Sure enough the semaphore had raised to guard the tunnel. One of the all knowing Leatherman lads ran across the main tracks so he could look right down the tunnel bore to the small circle of light another half mile beyond. He was just in time for he had no more stopped and looked until he squalled, "HE'S IN THE RAT HOLE!" One knowing bystander shifted his cud of twist and opined it must be the "red ball." Another, even more railroady, nailed it down, "h'its 260 alright. I heard Mr. Potter say 260 was by Bergman right on the dot and had a heavy train and was being double-headed." All were looking down the tunnel's mouth and suddenly all yelled in unison, "HE'S OUTA THE RAT HOLE!"

Running the allowed 30 per and fighting a one percent ascending grade the two big engines erupted out of the ground pouring great clouds of smoke and steam out to stain the tunnel portal even more. The exhaust had that lilting off beat cadence thrown out by a pair of steam engines double-heading but with a subtle difference this bright morning deep in the Ozark Mountains of North Arkansas. The lead engine was a passenger engine, the 6454, a big Pacific (4-6-2) and with 73 inch drivers. The train engine was a Mikado (2-8-2) freight engine, the 1229, with 63 inch drivers. Up the hill they came, bellowing for the road crossing in advance of the yellow depot. This crossing, the only one in Cricket, saw perhaps a dozen cars a day. It was protected by the well known cross-buck sign and below it a sign required, at that time, by Arkansas law. It was a large square board reading - in large letters - HAZARDOUS STOP ARKANSAS LAW. Coming down from Missouri on the passenger you always knew you were in Arkansas when you saw one of these signs. I looked for them and knew I was back in God's country as Dad always called it.

As the engines pounded by the depot the idlers turned into workers. They knew from long association that many things can go wrong and they joined Mr. Potter with their eyes, ears and noses, yes noses, glued to the fast moving freight. The conductor and rear brakeman were on the rear platform of the caboose and welcomed the score or more grimy hands waving a HIGHBALL and hollering ALL DARK! Mr. Potter went into his office and OSeD the train to the DS and dropped the train order signal to the stop position behind it. As you might have figured out by now, Mr. Potter was the agent/operator and Mr. Missouri Pacific around Cricket. The denizens of the town were rail wise. They had grown up with the railroad and Cricket had been a "rail town" from the beginning.

*Arkansas Railroader*



*In 1935 the RFC ran a group over the White River Division. The late John W. Barringer accompanied this group and made many photographs, mostly from the rear of the train. Here we have the north or west portal of Cricket Tunnel in all its glory. On the left you have the "tattle tale" and the crossing whistle post. It was lettered "XW" on the other or approaching side. The little white sign at the right side of the track near the portal says, among other things, NO TRESPASSING! The wooden platform used to inspect the tunnel by the M of W sits to the right. The semaphore signal is just about alongside the photographer. The track was some left over by past activity. Raw gulch up to right. Some smoke still drifting out of tunnel. (John Barringer photo, Joe Collias collection)*

The next thing due to run would be the south local which would meet, or was supposed to meet, the redball at the siding just north of Crest Tunnel, known on the timetables and train orders as "XD Crest." Mr. Potter satisfied the townsmen that the meet would be made as advertised so they settled back to greet the local - no big deal. He might have a few packages in the "trap" car next to the caboose and they would willingly carry these into the freight house end of the depot. Mr. Potter advised them the local would go to Myrtle and meet the work train and that would be the next thing north. The local, this was Number 297, kinda slid out of town down the hill and into the tunnel. The natives settled back for a little whittling and chewing to wait for the work train. The fastest and most exciting time of the day was the arrival and departure of the daily local passenger trains - to tell the truth the only passenger trains. The south train, Number 221 was due at 2:51 p.m. They met the north train, Number 222, at Bergman and it was due in Cricket at 3:57



p.m. These White River trains at that time consisted of a combination RPO-Baggage car, a combination Baggage car - Coach (better known as the smoker) and an ordinary chair car. No such thing as grill car or diner. The power was furnished by a pair of little 6500 class Pacifics (4-6-2). They were fine, handsome little locomotives with a very sharp exhaust that was bounced off those rocks and rills of North Arkansas with seeming delight.

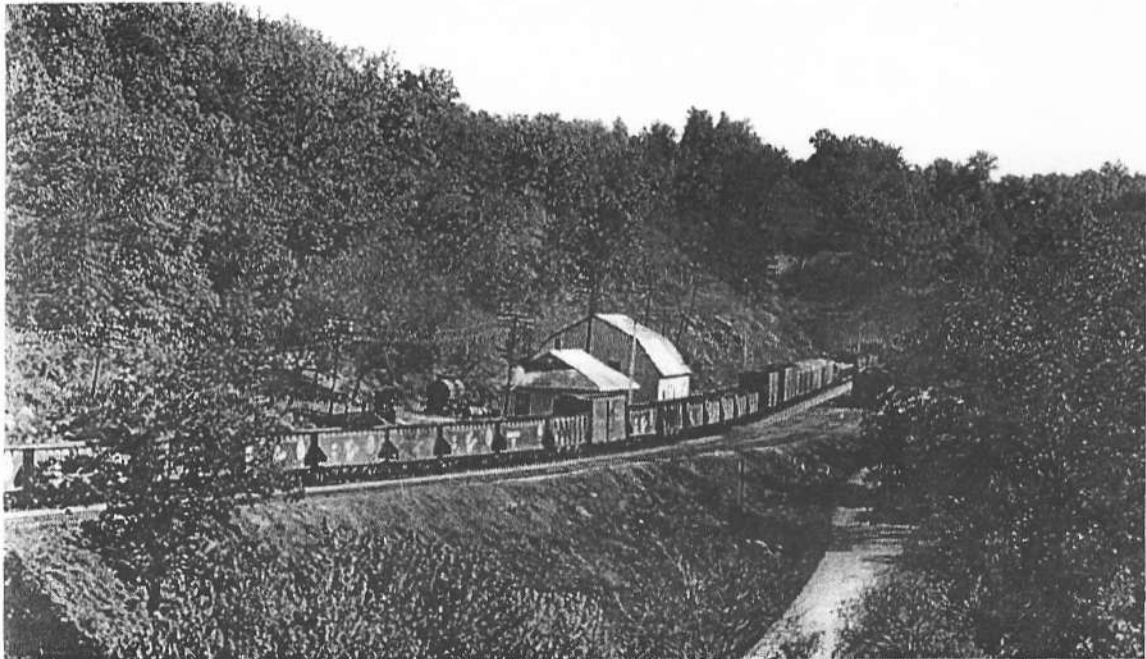


*It is unfortunate indeed that this picture is so dim. It just about covers the most important features of Cricket. House track switch coming in on left (north). Main line and siding and several yard tracks with the little 0-4-0 sharp right and bridge gang strung up and down. The portal of the tunnel is hidden by the section tool house against the hillside to left. The semaphore signal is just to left of cars on down on an extension of the siding. You can barely see the raw hillside to the right where tons and tons of rock was dug out. That work was complete and this gang is putting in the last of the new steel bridges. (Picture by Barringer 1935. Collection of Bill Hoss)*

Seemed like just about all the able bodied men in that part of the county showed up when the passenger trains were due. Of course the Cricket citizens showed their superior knowledge by wrestling the baggage trucks into position and helping Mr. Potter unload a few sacks of mail (more than a few when catalogues were due), some empty cream cans coming back from the big creameries at Carthage or Springfield and a little railroad baggage and perhaps some railway express. But Sunday was the BIG day. Sunday brought out all the women (and children) in all their finery and everybody met the trains. You never knew who you might see that you knew from some other place or some other time. Now these passenger train engine crews seemed to be extra careful on Sunday. On Sunday when they came in they would not be working heavy steam except coming north and that just sedate chugging. They kept the engines from "popping off" and just did their best not to sully the ladies "go to meeting clothes." These simple hill people were not exactly loaded down with the better things of life and their finery was probably homemade and

just about all they had. The crews helped all they could to keep things that way. These people were poor and simple but the railroad brought a little of the outside world into their life.

Just where or is Cricket? How big a place was or is it? What highways or byways ran into it? At the time of which I write, many, many years ago, I could answer these queries by saying: Over in the next hollow, not very much and none. During the building of the White River Division of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern (nee Missouri Pacific) the line from the north entered Arkansas near the head of a long valley traced out by Turkey Creek. Turkey Creek emptied into the White River a mile above what was to become Branson. About a mile south of the state line a towering ridge dictated a tunnel. This was the Crest Tunnel which has been mentioned and which we will now more or less dismiss. Three miles or so farther on, another ridge was encountered and here was surveyed a half mile tunnel which was designated Tunnel B. The only town or village nearby was a small settlement called Omaha located about a mile to the northeast on top of the ridge. This ridge was the route of an old wagon road many, many years



*The late Wayne Leeman was probably more interested in the train than the "town" when he snapped this in October 1958. This long years after the stirring events of the story but does pretty well cover downtown Cricket. The stock pens are barely visible behind the depot building. East of the depot is the can warehouse. Seems to be an oil unloading spot on the house track at this time. The train is hanging down and around Treasure Hill toward the tunnel portal. Some of the old Leatherman buildings barely visible behind the depot and east of the pens. The paved road in lower right runs down to the canning factory and Cricket Landing. (Joe Collias collection)*

old leading from north central Arkansas to Missouri, mainly Springfield. This old wagon road is now paved and pampered and known from far to the north to many , many miles to the south as

US Highway 65. Today we know it for carrying outlanders by the thousands to the new hub of the world, namely Branson.

Omaha apparently had a post office and soon everyone was referring to Tunnel B as the Omaha Tunnel. Construction crews poured into these hills to start digging until soon several hundred men were working in this area. A number of large mess halls were built and many, many tents erected all over the area. Tunnel B was started in mid-May 1903. Troubles by the score were encountered before it was "holed out" on October 22, 1904 with many months left before track would be laid through and a connection made with the line being built up from the south. The line started at MP 288.10 just north of Batesville in 1901.

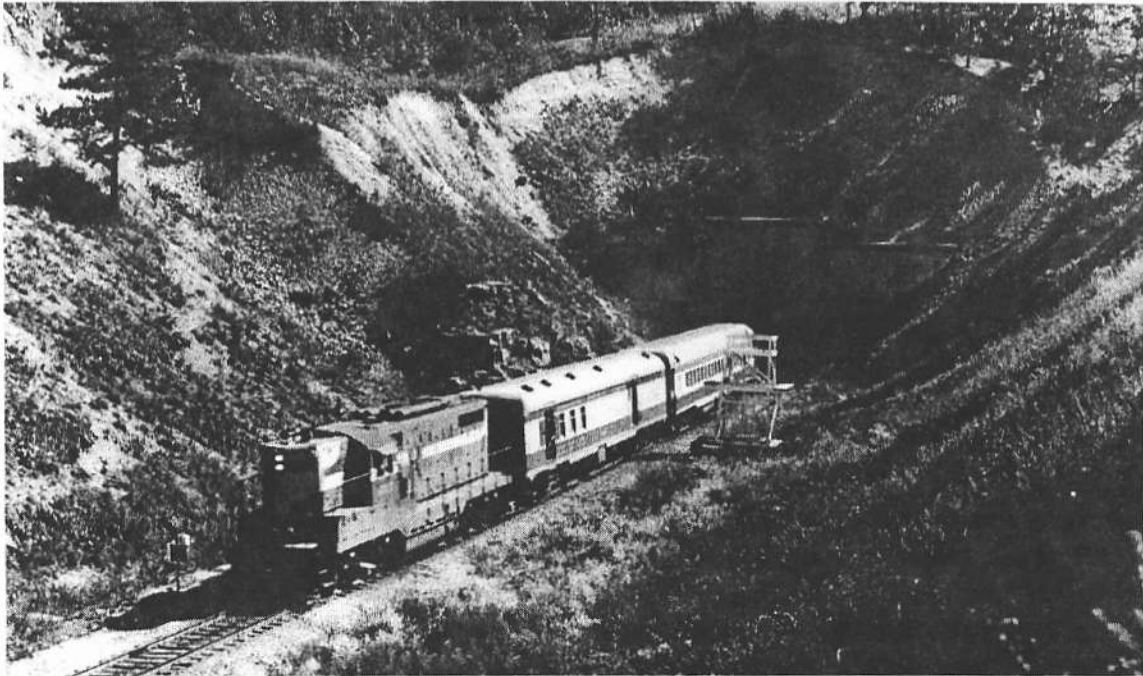
When operating timetable Number Two was issued in February 1906, the name Omaha was dispensed with and the name of this station/yard was changed to "CRICKET." Not everybody was pleased and one editor opined that "Cricket was little better than no name at all." Where the name came from is readily evident. This area, this hollow, was the head of a creek that emptied into the White River and known, for reasons unknown, as "Cricket Creek." Apparently the tent city of this construction camp, and that is all it really was, extended down the hollow and along Cricket Creek for some distance. The construction people must have started calling the area Cricket, prompting the railroad to do likewise. Anyway, it became Cricket and is still Cricket to this day, although there is very little left to remind one of what existed here at one time. That is railroad wise. Actually Cricket Creek Landing is a popular "putting in" place on Table Rock Lake, which, when built, ran up the creek for some distance.

At the time of which I write (many years ago), Cricket was still more or less a construction camp. There was a Western Union line gang stationed here with fancy green living equipment - all old passenger cars. There was a large company bridge gang complete with a work train of air operated dump cars. The company had taken over from a bankrupt construction outfit that had run into difficulties and folded. They were filling in one of the last of the wooden bridges., Number 137, a 44 panel frame trestle. It was found that several low bluffs caused the dirt to slide out and across Walnut Creek and the construction company just couldn't dig enough dirt to stop the slides. The Missouri Pacific eventually had to build a series of concrete retaining walls to contain the dirt and get the troublesome bridge filled in. This was near the end of a program of filling-in trestles that had started in 1915. At times there were as many as five work trains working between Cotter and Crane. Work had also started on construction of four steel and concrete bridges to span the longest hollows.

One might ask how I came to apparently know so much about Cricket, Bridge 137, the half mile tunnel, the good folks of Cricket and other vexing questions. Well, this is very easy: I was there! Well part of the time anyway. The aforementioned depot agent, Mr. Potter, had been the first trick train dispatcher at Cotter and later Aurora and my Dad worked across the desk from him distributing cars, handling crews and making reports, etc. This was the so-called "depression-era" and one fateful day a brain (St. Louis?) figured out all this work could be moved from Aurora to Nevada, Missouri. Just the work, not the men. Mr. Potter finally took the agency at

Cricket while Dad eventually wound up at Carthage, the Junction. This Junction is where the White River Division encountered the Joplin Division and ended. Now the Potters had two sons, Ted-Junior and Richard. Junior was just a few months younger than me while Richard had come along a couple of years later. We had been almost inseparable playmates since we moved to Cotter from Batesville a decade earlier. Just about every school holiday found me clutching a trip pass and boarding Train 221 headed for Cricket and adventure - I thought the entire spectrum was around Cricket - well maybe on down to Self and Myrtle.

At this time, some three decades after the roaring tent camp strung up and down Cricket hollow, found it was gone. In what you might call the city limits of Cricket there was the railroad section foreman's house. This was just across the tracks from the depot. There was a house, part I think, of one of the old mess halls, that was occupied by the Leatherman clan. It was east of the road and northeast of the depot perched rather precariously on the hillside. Across and behind the depot was the general mercantile store owned and operated by Mr. Leatherman and his brood. This was a fairly large family. I never knew just how many but the two youngest, a boy and a girl, were about our age. There was a large warehouse on the house track and east of the depot built to store cans and material for a large canning factory on down the hollow. There were "shotgun houses" and cabins down the hollow mostly occupied by section men. This was just about all - no rent houses, no places to buy. NO place to bring a family. The nearest school was at Omaha a hard uphill mile.



*My story does not cover diesels in any way but this is the only picture I can find that shows the north portal of the Cricket Tunnel in later years, 1958 to be exact. Wayne Leeman of St. Louis took this picture in October of that year and this is Train 232 with Engine 4317 and usual consist of RPO-Baggage and Deluxe Coach. The train was pulled off March 21, 1960. So far as I know the Branson Scenic Railway/Missouri and Northern Arkansas are still operating a passenger train here from time to time. My sisters and I rode it on its first trip as guests of the M&NA and it ran from Branson down to Bergman and return. (Leeman photo, Joe Collias collection)*

*Arkansas Railroader*



I spent my first night at Cricket and maybe a couple more sleeping in the depot. Mr. Potter had just moved what belongings he could in the "colored" waiting room, the back of the telegraph office and some in the freight room. The bedroom was the waiting room in the northwest corner of the depot. There were no colored folks around, probably none in Boone County, so I don't think anyone was put out there. The company, however, under existing laws, had to maintain this waiting room. They finally found a nice "foreman's" bunk car and sent it down to Cricket. As built it was partitioned off into three rooms and served the Potters well and good during the rest of their stay at Cricket. It was put "first out" on the first track south of the siding and about as close to the depot as could be managed. The company did build another privy across the tracks to match the one on the hillside north of the depot.

There was only one hitch. One day Mrs. Potter caught her heel in this step erected at the center door of the car and fell, breaking her leg. The company then sent a wheel car up from Cotter. This bunch carefully jacked up the "rolling palace," took the trucks out and let it down on some stout timbers. They then fashioned nice front and end steps, proof against high heels. Made the car a little steadier when a pair of 1200's were blasting by on the main stem, but while the Potter boys had learned to sleep regardless of train movements, I was keenly aware of every train that went by even through the smallest hours of the night.

The work train to which I have referred was manned by a crew from Cotter outfitted with a 400 class 2-8-0 freight engine and an old side-door caboose. There were at least two dozen air-dump cars on hand and they usually handled half of them at a time. They would take them down to the bridge, dump their loads of dirt and rocks, and ease on off the bridge to the south and go to Myrtle. All this fill material was dug by steam shovels out of the mountain south of the main line - marked today by a gapping side hill gulch. Myrtle was their source of water as the tank at Cricket had been taken out of service (eliminated the pumper by golly!). Myrtle also had a bridge gang on hand getting ready to re-build some of the wooden trestles with steel and concrete. Part of the Cricket crew stayed on the bridge fixing any damage caused by the dumping of some fair sized rocks. This had to be done before the work train was allowed to return to Cricket. The northward local freight, Number 296, usually made it to Cricket before the first trip of the work train but on one day it was quite late and was given a meet at Myrtle with the work outfit. Mr. Potter made arrangements for us to ride the work train down to Myrtle and ride Number 296 back to Cricket. What I mean to say is you couldn't send off and buy any more adventure than this!

For some years prior to the Potters moving to Cricket, I had been noticing when riding the passenger train down to Yellville a little 0-4-0 switch engine. This little streamer was sitting forlornly on a track not too far east of the depot. I had no idea what it was doing there - it wasn't lettered or numbered for Missouri Pacific. About the second thing I did on my first trip to Cricket was to hike right down and look this little engine over. It was getting to be in pretty sad shape. The bell and all of the copper lubrication tubing had been removed. This allegedly had been done by local moonshiners and it was claimed that all the white-lightening made around there for a long time had a faint tinge of petroleum. The boys and I did our best to fix up this old engine. We made seats and managed to disconnect the throttle and reverse levers so we could move them.

# Filling White River Bridges

**O**UR railroad has virtually completed a program whereby forty-seven timber bridges, containing nearly 9,000,000 feet of timber, board measure, have been eliminated on a ninety-six mile stretch on the White River Division through the Ozark Mountain region of Missouri and Arkansas. The

bridges, which had a combined length of 3.8 miles, and the highest of which was 122 feet, have been replaced by consolidated earth embankments, the most desirable type of roadbed, with its freedom from fire hazard and timber decay. It was the inevitable approach of this natural timber deterioration that led to the decision to largely do away with the bridges.

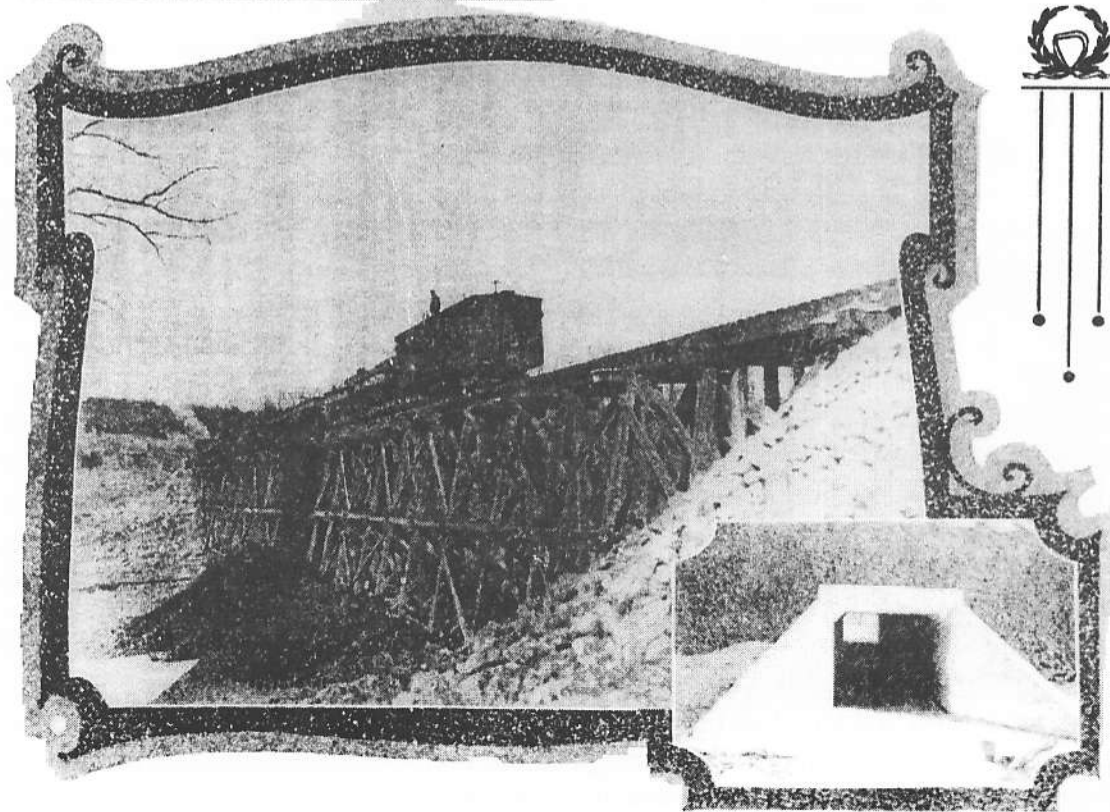
Construction of the White River Division, the 269-mile connecting link between the Missouri Pacific at Carthage, Mo., and the main line

## Consolidated Earth Embankments Replacing 47 Wooden Structures Containing Almost Nine Million Feet of Timber, on 96-Mile Stretch

south, at Diaz, Ark., was begun in 1901, and the last section was completed in 1906. The division provides a short route, through the picturesquely beautiful Ozarks, from the northwesterly to the south-easterly lines of the system.

Naturally construction of such a line over a rough mountainous cross-drainage country, traversed by swift, twisting streams that sometimes become torrents, presented many difficulties. This was especially true between Crane, Mo., and Cotter, Ark., a distance of ninety-six miles, in which the White River is crossed twice, the James once, and smaller streams several times. A satisfactory grade line of one per cent, with moderate curvature, was finally secured between Crane and Cotter, after the problems presented

*(Continued on page 112)*

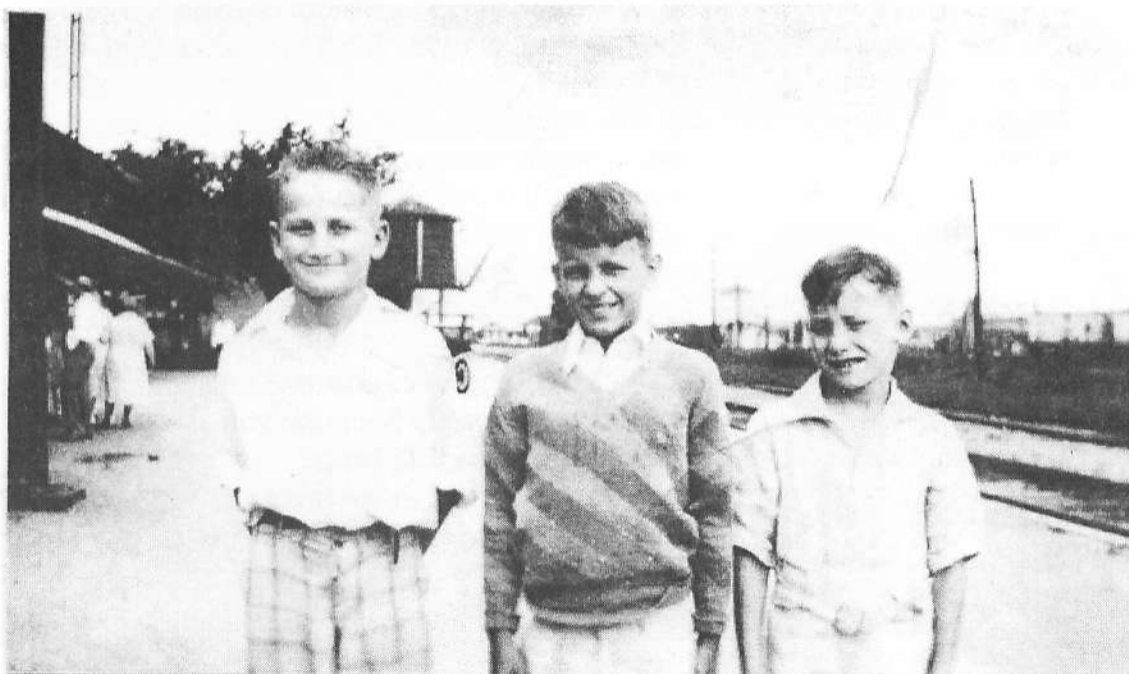


Above: One of the bridges. At right: typical

*From the May 1925 Missouri Pacific Lines Magazine, photo taken near Bergman, Arkansas. (Mike Adams collection)*

The crews saved their fulfilled train orders and gave them to us. We carried them in our overall bibs and swelled up in front of the locals. Nothing like being an important railroad man!

Then on one trip down, fate dealt us a low blow. This was the day we found the length of old fire hose, made mostly of rubber. We built a good fire in the firebox of the old goat and tossed the rubber hose in. "HOLY SMOKE". What we didn't notice was the rather stiff breeze blowing up the track. What was worse we didn't notice that the wife of the Western Union gang foreman and her two daughters had put out a good washing. Mostly their pretty things. I had always felt this lady a bit aloof. She forbade her daughters, about our ages, to mingle with us and I always sorta believed she thought we did this "on purpose." We had to carry many buckets of water from the work train water car to put out the fire. We then had to carry more water to fill up the nice ladies wash tubs. Now we were getting to be pretty good sized boys but Mrs. Potter (Dixie) switched all three of us! From then on we found other things to do like bream fishing in the lake south of the tunnel, even if it did entail a hard climb over the ridge. You had to climb the hill. The first thing you learned at Cricket was, DON'T GO IN THE TUNNEL. We didn't.



### NOT GUILTY, YOUR HONOR!

*(L to R) Junior Potter, Mike Adams, Richard Potter. On passenger station platform on Mo Pac at Aurora, Missouri ca 1930. We were facing east and waiting on "Booster Special" from Nevada to Branson. To right background (north) is main line of the Frisco. The depot is hidden and is now gone but the Mo Pac depot is still in service and has been rejuvenated as a museum by the city of Aurora.*

*We were innocent of any wrong doing (at this time). I have lost track of Richard but Junior died several years ago. Junior spent most of his life railroading but Richard was in other business. (Mrs. W. B. Adams photo, collection of W. M. Adams)*

Enough is enough and I will bring this epistle to a close. Don't try to find Cricket today as it was in the time of which I write. When the Potters moved I was never on the ground at Cricket again for many years. I made many trips through on the train as long as there was passenger service. The little passenger was pulled off March 21, 1960. Mr. Potter was again able to bid in on dispatchers jobs and eventually stayed at Nevada. The little engine was scrapped during World War II. The semaphore signals gave way to color light - indication by light only. In March 1992 I made a trip from Newport to Branson and return via "hy-rail" in the careful hands of then Superintendent Jerry Lang. We were accompanied by Richard Allin and Pat Hays. I picked up the signal foundations going north and the foundation of the old pump house. The south portal of the tunnel is still the elemental rock. We moved slowly through the tunnel with the spotlight on and marveled at all the concrete and steel it had taken to conquer this remote Ozark ridge. The only track left at Cricket was the south end of the former siding. The station sign was leaning close to the foundation of the old train order signal. The road is paved from Highway 65 down to the railroad and on to the lake but believe me, there is nothing left of old Cricket except a multitude of memories.

On what was to turn out to be my last trip visiting the Potters at Cricket I found Junior spending several hours a day with his Dad learning telegraphy. Junior went on to be a dispatcher like his father. Richard and I finally decided to leave a calling card - we buried a treasure. We went down towards the tunnel and drew an elaborate map and high up on the north side of the hill above the track we buried a cigar box full of secret treasure. I am sure what remains of the "chest" is still there and as far as I am concerned it is still a secret for I can't begin to remember what precious things we laid to rest.

Our childhood, I guess.

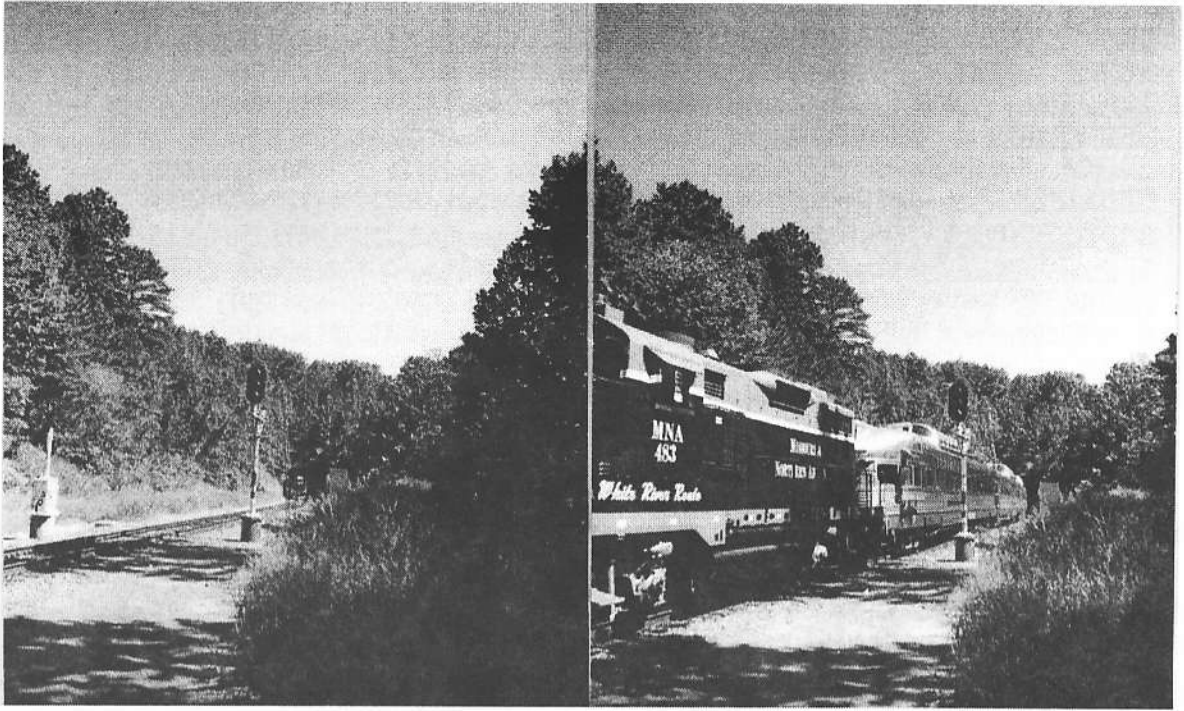
If you find the Duck Wholesome, and the  
Oysters hurt you, it is probably because you  
had a hand in the making of this bit of  
History, and in the creation of these facts.

*Cy Warman 1899*

XXX

(The photos on the following pages were taken by editor Ken Ziegenbein on September 5, 1993 and show the Branson Scenic Railway's excursion train from Branson through the Cricket tunnel. This train still runs several times a day in May 1999.)





*Arkansas Railroader*

### 1999 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

PRESIDENT - Leonard L. Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)  
VICE-PRESIDENT - John Hodkin, Jr., 506 Gordon St, N Little Rock AR 72117 (501-945-2128)  
TREASURER - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826)  
SECRETARY - Carole Sue Schafer, 103 Thayer St, Little Rock AR 72205-5951 (501-371-0034)  
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 '99 - Stanley Wozencraft, 108 N Palm, Little Rock AR 72205 (501-664-3301)  
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

## NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

JUNE MEETING PLACE will be at Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, 4401 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock (see map insert). The July meeting will be at Southwest Hospital and the August meeting at the refurbished Argenta (Rock Island) depot in North Little Rock. We will try each one one time then vote on which one to make our permanent meeting place, since due to a new security system, we cannot use the Mercantile Bank anymore.

The meeting will be held SUNDAY, JUNE 13 at 2 p.m. The program will be some of Dr. Raymond Mayer's rail slides that he donated to the club, and other rail slides. Some of the slides are of former Southern Rail Excursions. John Hodkin will do the showing.

Also, the July meeting will be changed to the third Sunday instead of the second to accommodate our speaker, former club President Bart Jennings. His world rail travels are always interesting to hear about. And remember the annual train excursion on Peter Smykla's railroad in Pine Bluff in September (exact date and information in future newsletters).

SHOW AND SALE - Remember the date for our 19th annual Show and Sale - Saturday, June 19, at Robinson Center, Little Rock, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is \$3 adults, children free. Table rentals are \$25 for one, \$20 each for two or more, \$15 each for 3 or more. Send money for table rentals to Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 or call 501-225-0826.

REMINDER that you can buy Gene Hull's reprinted *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas* at one of our club meetings and save the postage. Also, you can buy this book at Lorentzen, Wordsworth Books and at local hobby shops.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS - GENE HULL (6/08); JAMES HOLLEY (6/10); GEORGE WALKER (6/12); RUSS HAMILTON (6/19); DAVID P. HOGE (6/23); DAVID A NARRACONG, SR (6/23); NAOMI HULL (6/25); DANIEL D. CARTER (6/26); CURTIS A. TERRY (6/28); THOMAS L. WILBORN (6/30); JOHN A. RODGERS (6/30)

DEADLINE FOR THE JULY NEWSLETTER will be June 15.

SUGGESTION by Gene Hull: Gene thinks it would be a nice project for someone to write about the history of St.

Louis' Union Station. Anyone willing to take the plunge? If you do, please include pictures.

NEW FEATURE - I will start to publish the minutes of our meetings, submitted electronically by our secretary Carole Sue Schafer as she has time. This means that not every newsletter will have the minutes, and some may have two meetings included. Since a majority of our members can't attend meetings (in fact, we have members in 28 states), I thought it would be informative to have these short minutes published, as all other NRHS newsletters do. Any comments?

## MINUTES OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

April 11, 1999

The Arkansas Railroad Club met Sunday, April 11, 1999 at 2:00 PM at the Mercantile Bank with President Leonard Thalmueller presiding. Guests were introduced. Minutes were approved as presented.

The treasurer's report was filed for audit. Walter Walker reported the club's assets include \$14,000 worth of "*Shortline Railroads of Arkansas*" books. The books were available for sale at the Pine Bluff Show held April 10. Walter also reported the Show and Sale dealer packets have been mailed and reservations are being accepted. Flyers are printed and ready for distribution. Ads are on the Internet, and will be in *Trains* and *Model Railroader* magazines.

Chairman Robin Thomas announced a Board of Directors meeting will be held prior to the regular May meeting. John Hodkin made a motion we move the May meeting to the third Sunday (May 16) to avoid a conflict with Mother's Day. Motion carried. No news from NRHS.

John C. Jones reported on various activities occurring with Union Pacific, the White River RR and the LR Western. Bill Bailey reported the Pine Bluff Show and Sale was successful-853 tickets; 62 tables; 22 dealers and 4 modelers. Darrell Stout read a poem he has written, "*No One Asks the Engineer*", which will appear in the May *Railroader*.

Leonard has talked with personal at the Bank and we are losing our meeting place because the bank is changing its security system. A guard will no longer be present in the building. The May meeting will be the last one to be held at the bank. Leonard asked for suggestion for places to contact about future meetings. Naomi announced Polly Church has moved to a nursing home in Russellville.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM.

Following a short break, we watched a promotional 16mm film of the 1976 Freedom Train.

Carole Sue Schafer, Secretary

**WANTED: FOR SALE OR TRADE**

The following is for those who want to find certain railroad-related items, information, or want to sell or trade such items with other railfans. We reserve the right to refuse

listings if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas Railroad Club is not responsible for misleading ads.

**WANTED** - The Delta Heritage Museum, in the old Missouri Pacific depot in Helena, Arkansas, wants someone to give them a history of the railroads of the area (also see



the ad of their other wants elsewhere). If you can help, call 870-338-4350 or send items to the Delta Cultural Center, PO Box 509, Helena AR 72342, ATTN: Kimberly J. Williams or Katie Harrington. Their email address: [kim@dah.state.ar.us](mailto:kim@dah.state.ar.us)

**WANTED** - TN&O Railroad of New Orleans logos. If you have a copy of this logo, please send to Mrs. Stephen A. Harmon, 600 Earnheart Rd, Batesville AR 72501. Her husband worked 41 years for various railroads, including the TN&O, Rock Island and Missouri Pacific, and her son has collected the logos of each, except the TN&O.

**WANTED** - Photos, information on the Cotton Belt Hospital in Texarkana. Contact Wanza Good, 1501 Quintana Rd, Morro Bay CA 93442. Her phone number is 805-772-6770, email [wanza@altavista.net](mailto:wanza@altavista.net)

**FOR LEASE** - Alco locomotives of the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad. If you'd like to rent one or more, contact the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, 306 East Emma Ave, Springdale AR 72764, 501-751-8600 or 800-687-8600, email: [arkmo@ipa.net](mailto:arkmo@ipa.net).

**WANTED** - Membership in the Arkansas & Missouri Fan Club, sponsored by the railroad itself. You get a membership card, monthly newsletter, A&M baseball cap, 10 percent off excursion tickets and a certificate. Dues are \$29 for individual, \$39 family. For information call 501-751-8600 or email at [arkmo@ipa.net](mailto:arkmo@ipa.net)

**FOR SALE** - The Incomplete All-Time ALCO Diesel roster. It lists about every

diesel manufactured by American Locomotive Company and its many partners and subsidiaries from 1925 to 1984. It is more than 500 pages long and details the ownership history of more than 10,000 locomotives. For ease of handling, the material is broken into 5 volumes, each of which is available separately. The roster contains more detailed information in one place than any other source available.

Volume 2-A 65979 to 75996; Volume 2-B 75997 to 79000; Volume 2-C 79001 to 82000; Volume 2-D 82001 to 84911; Volume 2-E 3362-01 to 6128-05.

Normally \$25 each, they are only \$20 each if you mention the Arkansas Railroad Club. All 5 together normally is \$100, but again if you mention the Arkansas Railroad Club the price is only \$85. Postage for one is \$3.50, 2 is \$5.00, 3 or more \$6.00. Send orders to: Barton Jennings, PO Box 32424, Knoxville TN 37930-2424.

**HELP WANTED** - The Historic Pullman Foundation is asking for help in rebuilding the historic Pullman Clock Tower and Factory complex near Chicago. This tower was deliberately set on fire December 1, 1998, but engineers say the structure can be saved and rebuilt. They need your help in doing so. They are asking your help by writing the President, Congress, the Illinois Governor and state legislature, urging them to give the needed historic-preservation money. For more information, contact the Historic Pullman Foundation, 11111 S Forrestville Ave, Chicago IL 60628 or call 773-785-8181.

**FOR SALE** - PULLMAN CHINA, limited edition reproduction of the Indian Tree

Pattern, made by the original manufacturer, Syracuse China. Cost for 5-piece basic place setting \$79; full place setting, which includes the basic plus breakfast and bread & butter plates \$109; coffee mug \$8.95. Postage is \$18 for the first place setting, \$10 for each additional setting. Postage cost per mug \$6.50. Order from Washington DC Chapter NRHS - Pullman China, c/o Henry Bielstein, 13425 Reid Circle, Ft Washington MD 20744-6522.

**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 816-695-4433.

**FOR SALE** - James R. Fair's new 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.

**TEXAS - RIO VALLEY SWITCHING COMPANY** - To abandon an 8.808-mile line known as the Rio Hondo Line, from m.p. 0.316 near San Benito to m.p. 9.19 at Rio Hondo, Texas. Includes the station of Rio Hondo. Final decision by August 2, 1999. (STB Docket No. AB-561X, no Sub No, decided April 27, served May 4, 1999)

**TEXAS - SOUTHEASTERN INTERNATIONAL CORP.** - To abandon its entire 11.76 mile line extending from m.p. 42.24 in Wharton to m.p. 54.0 near Lane City, Texas. Final decision by August 2, 1999. (STB Docket No. AB-462, Sub No. 2X, decided April 22, served May 4, 1999)

## ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

*It was in 1984 that then-Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton rang a locomotive bell to dedicate the \$40 million Downing B. Jenks Shop in North Little Rock. (UP Update)*

### DICK DAVIDSON TALKS

*(Little Rock) - At a talk given to the Rotary Club on April 27, Union Pacific CEO Dick Davidson read some interesting railroad statistics. For instance, UP is up to*

*18.7 mph for their average train speed. For every one mph improvement, it means they free up the equivalent of 200 locomotives. He used to be superintendent of the Missouri Pacific in North Little Rock.*

### INTERMODAL RAMP DEDICATED

*(Crossett) - The Arkansas & Louisiana-Missouri Railroad's Intermodal ramp was officially dedicated April 13 in Crossett,*

*Arkansas. The structure was financed by Georgia-Pacific. It will save thousands of dollars in transportation costs to industries in the area. Partners in the project include KCS Railway, BNSF, GST, NS, IC, Intermodal Services and J. B. Hunt. (Ashley News Observer, April 14 via Russell Tedder)*

## GENERAL RAIL NEWS

*It was in May 1952 when diesel ownership for U.S. railroads, expressed in power units, exceeded ownership of steam locomotives. - UP Update*

### MERGER BREAKS DOWN

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers broke off talks with the United Transportation Union on May 10. They were to merge into one large rail union. However, the situation is far from final or resolved.

### ROYAL GORGE TRAINS RESUME

The Canon City & Royal Gorge Railroad will start running passenger trains on the Royal Gorge route for the first time in 32 years. They will take tourists along a 24-mile route, including the famous "hanging bridge," which supports the track over the Arkansas River. *(Salt Lake Tribune, May*

*11)*

### STEAM TRAIN TO DALLAS

The Tarantula Railroad ran a steam special from Fort Worth to Dallas for the first time in early May. If all goes as planned, they will start making routine trips in 2000. *(Dallas Morning News, May 5 via Dan Barr)*

### ICE COLD EXPRESS

The first RoadRailer-based refrigerated express railway service will begin on BNSF between Chicago and San Bernardino, California on June 7. Each train will have 65 cars and will run one train each week in each direction. Eastbound trains will carry fruits and vegetables, the westbounds will carry frozen foods and beauty products. *(Memphis Business Journal, May 3)*

### NEW FREIGHT CARS

Economics Planning Associates says that U.S. railroads will purchase 72,750 freight cars in 1999, including 23,000 covered hoppers, 13,750 gondolas, 12,500 flatcars, 12,000 tank cars and 7,500 open hoppers.

### 343 MPH

In Tokyo, Japan, a MAGLEV experimental train set a record speed of 343 mph in April 13.

### KATY TRAIL OPENS

*(Dallas) - The opening of the Katy Trail north of Dallas along the abandoned MKT right of way will be held May 20 with a 5k run and barbecue. This pedestrian trail is one of many opened across the nation using abandoned railbeds. (Dallas Morning News, May 15 via Randy Tardy)*

**GOLDEN SPIKE TOWER**

(North Platte, Nebraska) - The city of North Platte plans to build a \$3 million, 15-story Golden Spike Tower shaped like a railroad spike. The view from the top will show the world's largest and busiest rail

switching yard owned by Union Pacific (Bailey Yard). This yard has 300 miles of track, 10,000 freight cars and is the size of 2,800 football fields. The tower will be clad in gold-enameled metal. One motel owner

in North Platte said the tower would make travelers think "we have visitors from outer space." (*Houston Chronicle*, April 25, 1999 via Dan Barr)

## AMTRAK NEWS

**LOAN PAYOFF EARLY**

(Austin, Texas) - Amtrak will pay back it's \$5.6 million loan to the state of Texas early, in mid May instead of the end of July, as previously scheduled. The loan was made two years ago to help keep the *Texas Eagle* running. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, who was instrumental in keeping the train on, was to be on hand. (*Longview News Journal*, May 15, 1999)

**NEW CAR STANDARDS**

After the tragic crossing accident in Illinois in March involving the *City of New Orleans*, the U.S. Transportation Department issued new rules for new passenger cars, making them heavier and more fire resistant. Older cars can get

waivers. Despite this accident, train crashes are as rare as they are dramatic. Only 22 passengers died in train crashes during the four-year period from 1995 to 1998, although train passengers traveled more than 55 billion miles. There were only 266 injuries. According to government figures, train travel is far safer than automobile travel. In 1997, 1.4 passenger car occupants died per 100 million miles traveled, while from 1995 to 1998 the fatality rate for train passengers was 0.089 deaths per 100 million miles. (*Via the Internet*)

**OKLAHOMA SERVICE**

The new Oklahoma train, slated to begin revenue operation June 15 (with June 14 being the press train) will be named by Oklahoma children. The schedule of the

new daily train is: Leave Oklahoma City 8:25A, Norman 8:54A, Purcell 9:17A, Pauls Valley 9:45A, Ardmore 10:44A, Gainesville 11:28A, Fort Worth 1:00P. The northbound leaves Fort Worth 5:25P, Gainesville 6:45P, Ardmore 7:33P, Pauls Valley 8:29P, Purcell 8:57P, Norman 9:21P, Oklahoma City 10:00P. These times may change, so check.

**DISPLAY SUPERLINERS**

Amtrak was to have a four-car Superliner display at Little Rock's Riverfest the last weekend in May. Tours of the train were planned. Special VIP dinners will be held on board the cars in the evenings.

## EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

**NATIONWIDE** - 18 months, 1999-2000 - The U.S. Postal Service will operate the *Celebrate The Century Express* specially outfitted four-car train throughout 1999 through the summer of 2000. It will host tours, including railroad organizations such as ourselves, at each of its stops. It's purpose is to celebrate the rich history of the 20th Century documented by stamps and trains, through the 1940s. It will consist of an Amtrak Genesis P42 engine painted yellow with stamps on it, an Amfleet car #21044, a restored RPO car of the Southern Railway (#36), a carbon steel baggage car (#1252) and a historic railroad business car. It was scheduled to start in Tampa, Florida March 11. The nearest it will come to Little Rock will be on April

30-May 2 when it will be in Memphis, at least on its first two legs. For more information, call the USPS, Janice Yu, at 202-268-4604. Their web site is: <http://www.usps.com/ctc>

**VARIOUS PLACES** - Various times of year - Trains Unlimited offers many railfan tours across the country and the world. To get a colorful brochure, call 530-836-1745 or write Trains Unlimited, PO Box 1997, Portola CA 96122.

**OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE** - Various days - Arkansas Railroad Club member Bart Jennings and the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum will operate Secret City Scenic Excursion Trains at the East

Tennessee Technology Park near Oak Ridge on various dates. New this year will be a former Southern Railway dining car. The trips will run through the park and along the Poplar Creek watershed. Days of excursions: March 19, 20; April 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25; May 15, 16, 29, 30; September 4, 5, 25, 26; October 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31; November 20, 21; December 18, 19. Cost is \$10 coach, \$15 dining car. Caboose is rentable for up to 10 people for \$125. Note that the October 23 trip, the Nashville & Eastern will be covered from Nashville to Cookeville.

Information on the trips: Send a stamped, addressed envelope to SARM, PO Box 5870, Knoxville TN 37928. Use this address to join or volunteer, also.

**ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM**

[ ] Membership renewal [ ] New Member [ ] Change of Address

Send membership renewal, application, change of address, etc. to: **Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151 North Little Rock AR 72119.** Phone: 501-758-1340; Fax: 501-758-4301. e-mail: [ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com](mailto:ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Your birthday (optional - no year needed) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (last) \_\_\_\_\_ (first) \_\_\_\_\_ (init) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues information:

Membership: **\$20.00** per year, Arkansas Railroad Club only; **\$37.00** per year if you join or renew National Railway Historical Society membership through our Club. Dues are payable/due by January 1 of each year. If we don't have your dues by March 1, you will be dropped from the membership rolls.

Membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club entitles you to a membership card and the monthly *ARKANSAS RAILROADER* newsletter. Meetings are held monthly, except December, on the second Sunday of the month. Interesting programs are presented each month and refreshments (cookies, sandwiches) are served. We are a non-profit organization and member of the NRHS. Officers are listed in each newsletter.

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# WANTED

## RAILROAD MEMORABILIA

*The Delta Cultural Center, located in Helena, Arkansas, will soon begin a major renovation project. The museum is searching for railroad memorabilia to be housed in the DCC's restored 1912 train depot.*

- \*items containing full-color logos of the major Delta railroads (MoPac, Cotton Belt, Frisco, Rock Island, etc.)*
- \*maps detailing railroad lines through the Delta*
- \*original train schedules or railroad passes*
- \*color or colorized postcards depicting trains or depots*
- \*original advertisements for the railroads*
- \*any items for train interiors that depict logos*

*If you have these or other items relating to the history of railroads in the Arkansas Delta, please contact Katie Harrington at the Delta Cultural Center at (870) 338-4350.*



*The Delta Cultural Center is an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage*