



# ARKANSAS RAILROADER

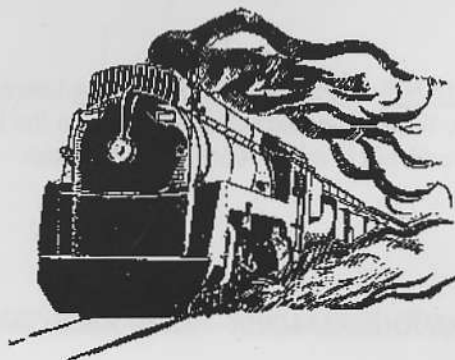


Little Rock Chapter  
NRHS

VOLUME 35 NUMBER 6 JUNE 2004



Southern Pacific #2808 in Los Angeles, California, March 31, 1946. *(Peter Smykla, Jr collection)*



### 2004 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

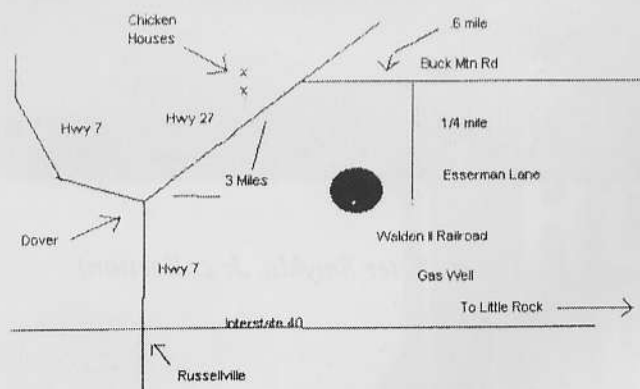
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**BOARD '05** - Leonard Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)  
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**BOARD '07** - Fred Fillers, 29009 Bandy Rd, Little Rock AR 72223-9720 (501-821-2026), ccfillers@aol.com  
**BOARD '08** - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (479-331-2030), shay473@cei.net

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

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

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

**NEXT MEETING** of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be on **SATURDAY, JUNE 12** (note...**NO meeting on Sunday, June 13**). We are going to Ron Esserman's Walden Too Railroad in Dover, Arkansas for a picnic and train rides. Ron said it will be on SATURDAY, JUNE 12 and we should arrive anytime after 9 a.m. He'll have soup, salad, sodas and sweets. You can bring your own deserts. We can eat on a flat car in 'air conditioning' if you want, plus there's the refurbished cabooses to view and maybe eat in. We'll have train rides on the Walden Too. Ticks are included at no extra fare, so bring some insect repellent and maybe suntan lotion. A photo of the cabooses and a map is below. Ron's phone number is: 479-331-2030, his email: [cabooses25552@cei.net](mailto:cabooses25552@cei.net)



**FRIENDLY LETTER FROM GERMANY** – I received the following letter from Dieter Winkler of Germany, which I thought I'd share with our readers. Mr. Winkler found our newsletter on the Internet and would like to correspond with fellow steam train enthusiasts. His address is on the bottom of the letter.

DÖ,den 20.02.2004

Dear Steam Trainfriends,

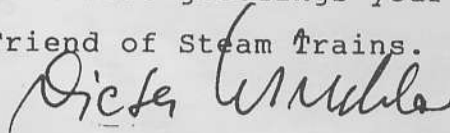
it is certain for you a surprise to get a letter from Germany. But I`m already always a friend of the USA, mainly from your Country. And it is my wish more to learn and to know about your wonderful Country with your very nice Historic old Steam Trains. And now I have my question on you! Can you me please a small Information, a Prospect and Postcard send. I`ll be very happy! When you have interest, than I can more Postcards from my Country Germany send. Also we have beautiful Steam Trains.

Maybe can I once your Country visit to see your wonderful Steam Trains.

Dear Friends of Steam locomotives I do say many Thank that you have read my letter and I hope again some from you to hear and I hope to get a answer. Thanks!

God bless you and America!

With best greetings your  
Friend of Steam Trains.



DIETER WINKLER  
GIVORSER STREET 15  
04720 - DÖBELN/SAXONY  
GERMANY



Mr. Winkler sent the above photograph of a steam train in Germany. I don't know when or where it was taken.

### WANTED : FOR SALE OR TRADE

The following is for those who want to find certain railroad-related items, information, or want to sell or trade such items with other railfans. We reserve the right to refuse listings if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas Railroad Club is not responsible for misleading ads.

**FOR SALE** - A Fairmont engine. I think it is a ROC model. Email or write Don Ottens, [Djottens@wmconnect.com](mailto:Djottens@wmconnect.com), Don Ottens, 3208 Arch Street, Benton, AR 72015, 501-840-1194.

**FOR TRADE** - KCS Employees Timetables from the early 1970's including:

**KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN LINES TIMETABLE No 5 ALL SUBDIVISIONS**, Effective March 22, 1970, (Kansas City Southern Railway Co), (Arkansas Western Railway Company), ( F.S.V.B. RAILWAY).

**KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN LINES TIMETABLE No 47 ALL SUBDIVISIONS**, (LOUISIANA & ARKANDSAS RAILWAY), EFFECTIVE MARCH 22, 1970.

**KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY JOINT TIMETABLE No 95, AND MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY**, BETWEEN C.S.JCT & G.C.L. JCT EFFECTIVE MARCH 22, 1970.

**DE QUEEN & EASTERN RAILROAD - TEXAS OKLAHOMA & EASTERN RAILROAD**, TIMETABLE No. 5 EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 5, 1985.

Also **DE QUEEN & EASTERN - TEXAS OKLAHOMA & EASTERN RULEBOOKS**, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 5, 1985.

Will trade for Employees Timetables off of Arkansas Railroad and other lines such as Cotton Belt, Rock Island, Missouri Pacific etc. Contact Philip L. Moseley, P.O.Box 664, Guthrie, Oklahoma, 73044-0664, (405) 282-2577. My email: [pmoseley1@cox.net](mailto:pmoseley1@cox.net).



This photo was taken April 30, 2004 and shows what's left of the old Missouri Pacific grade (bern) in North Little Rock, just south of the Junction Bridge. The city is leveling it. Union Pacific gave the city this line and bridge officially on December 28, 2001.

*(Ken Ziegenbein photo)*

**A&M WASHOUT**

(Chester, Arkansas, April 24, 2004) - Early this morning, engineer Craig Marheineke was bringing the Ft. Smith Turn northbound with 35 loads and 12 empties. On board Alco C-420 number 46 with 5 trailing locomotives, Marheineke became concerned about the possibility of washouts ahead due to several nights of heavy rainfall. Just two nights before, he had encountered a mud slide and hit a large tree at milepost 387. Damage caused by this accident can still be seen on the short hood of locomotive 44. As torrential rainfall obstructed his view ahead, Marheineke brought the train to a stop at milepost 366 to inspect the Woolsey bridge for damage. Once determined to be structurally sound, Marheineke eased his train ahead over the bridge where the water was rushing approximately three feet below the deck. As he moved the train ahead at 15 mph, he noticed water levels ahead rising up to track level. Concerned for the safety of the train and crew, Marheineke stopped abruptly at milepost 364.7, where the tracks disappeared beneath the water as far around the curve as he could see. Realizing the potential hazard of rising water around him, he began to ease the train backwards as rushing water was removing ballast from under his locomotive. Marheineke moved the train back approximately one-quarter mile to locate the train on higher ground where the rails were above water. At this time, the six locomotives and 47 cars are stranded at this location near West Fork, Arkansas and will remain there until significant track and ballast repairs can be made. Repairs may take several weeks. Engineer Marheineke is thankful that his train did not derail and his crew survived a scary ordeal. (Update-April 28: It was reported today that repairs have been made but that there were numerous slow orders on the line) - Thanks to Club member Mike Sypult for the story and photographs.



**LEFT**-Engineer Craig Marheineke stands in front of stranded Ft. Smith turn on Saturday, April 24. **RIGHT**- The curve at milepost 364 where the Ft. Smith turn's progress was halted. Ballast and roadbed washed away by floodwaters.



**LEFT** - Small trestle at milepost 364 and damage from massive flooding. **RIGHT** - A&M mainline dangling after washout at Winslow, Arkansas April 24, 2004. (Photos courtesy of Mike Sypult)

## 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.

**ARKANSAS – BNSF** - To abandon and discontinue service over a 4.50-mile line of railroad between milepost 397.78 in Hoxie, and milepost 402.28, in Walport, and the 2.20-mile Walnut Ridge Industrial Spur, a total distance of 6.70 miles, in Lawrence County, AR. Effective on May 26, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB 6 (Sub-No. 411X, decided April 19, served April 26, 2004)

**WASHINGTON – BNSF** - To abandon and discontinue service over a 5.80-mile line of railroad between milepost 3.27 in Quadlock and milepost 9.07 in Olympia, in Thurston County, WA. Effective on May 26, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 410X, decided April 19, served April 26, 2004)

**MISSISSIPPI – MISSISSIPPI TENNESSEE HOLDINGS, LLC./MISSISSIPPI TENNESSEE RAILROAD LLC.** - To abandon and MTR seeks to discontinue service over a line of railroad extending from milepost 324.2 near New Albany and the end of the line at milepost 281.0 near Houston, MS, a distance of 43.2 miles in Union, Pontotoc and Chickasaw Counties, MS. The line includes stations located at Pontotoc, Houlka and Houston, MS. A final decision will be issued by July 26, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-868X; 869X, decided April 19, served April 27, 2004.

**NORTH CAROLINA – NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY CO.** - To abandon a 7.3-mile line of railroad between milepost NS-82.7 at Mackeys, and milepost NS-90.0 at Plymouth, in Washington County, NC. The line segment includes the stations of Mackeys and Plymouth. A final decision will be issued by July 26, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 248X), decided April 19, served April 27, 2004)

**MISSOURI – KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY CO.** - To abandon approximately 1.3 miles of its line of railroad known as the Second Street Track located in Kansas City, Jackson County, MO. The line consists of two segments: (1) The first segment extends from milepost 0+/-, located in an unused rail yard, to milepost +5188'+/-, at the crossing of the Second Street Track and a Union Pacific Railroad Company line, a distance of approximately 0.98 miles; and (2) the second segment branches off northwest from the first segment between Main Street and Grand Avenue at milepost 0-W of that line, and continues west to approximately milepost 0+1518'-W at the east end of railroad bridge B-1-W. A final decision will be issued by July 27, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-103 (Sub-No. 17X, decided April 20, served April 28, 2004)

**KANSAS – BNSF** - To abandon and discontinue service over a 39.95-mile line of railroad between milepost 167.78 near Superior, NE, and milepost 127.83 near Reynolds, NE, in Jefferson, Thayer and Nuckolls Counties, NE, and Republic County, KS. The line includes the stations of Hardy, Byron, Chester, Hubbell, and Reynolds. A final decision will be issued by July 27, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 409X, decided April 19, served April 28, 2004)

## ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

## GENERAL RAIL NEWS

### ALASKA RR RIDERSHIP FELL

*(Fairbanks, Alaska, April 14, 2004)* – Ridership on the Alaska rails fell to a 13-year low last year, according to data released by the Alaska Railroad in mid-April. In its annual report, the Alaska Railroad said it "enjoyed seven percent growth in overall ridership over the last year," referring to 2003. However, the

actual number of people who rode the rails last year was 448,214, said railroad spokesman Tim Thompson. That's down 8.5 percent from 2002's total of 489,894. The increase cited in the annual report only takes into account trips booked through the railroad. It doesn't count the charter trains run by tour companies and other groups, Thompson said.

The biggest decrease was in the number of cruise-ship passengers, according to the railroad's figures. Princess Cruises, Holland America and Royal Caribbean each own their own railroad cars that they use to carry passengers to and from the various land-based attractions they offer in their tour packages. The railroad uses its

locomotives to pull the cars, which are staffed and operated by cruise company employees, Thompson said. The number of passengers riding those cars last year dropped sharply to 278,940 from 315,126 the year before, according to the railroad's records.

Part of that may be because of a delay in Princess Cruises putting its new ship, the *Island Princess*, into service, said Julie Benson, a spokeswoman for the cruise company. Because of the delays, Princess canceled six planned sailings last year, Benson said. Benson added, however, that Princess has seen an increase in the number of passengers opting for a ride on the railroad as part of its 2004 Alaska tour packages.

Meanwhile, the Alaska Railroad Corp. said it made a \$14.5 million profit last year on revenue that rose more than 20 percent to \$127 million.

#### RAIL FREIGHT TRAFFIC UP IN MARCH

U.S. rail carload traffic rose 3.7 percent (rose 60,142 carloads) in March 2004 compared to March 2003. U.S. intermodal rail traffic, which consists of trailers and containers on flat cars and is not included in carload figures, was up 9.3 percent (rose 87,678 trailers and containers) in March 2004 compared with March 2003. Coal traffic in March was up 2.7 percent (17,165 carloads) compared with March 2003, while carloads of crushed stone and gravel, used in road construction among many other purposes, were up 12.8 percent (11,653 carloads). Grain volume was up 11.1 percent (11,495 carloads) in March. Motor vehicles and equipment had the biggest decline in March 2004, with carloads down 3.3 percent (4,455 carloads).

For the first three months of 2004, U.S. rail carloadings totaled 4,297,662 cars, up 3.1 percent (129,825 carloads) from a year ago, the highest quarterly increase since the first quarter of 1997. In the first quarter of 2004, carloads of coal were up 2.4 percent (38,717 carloads), crushed stone and gravel was up 12.6 percent (27,510 carloads), and grain was up 9.6 percent (26,544 carloads). All told, 13 of the 19 commodity categories tracked by the AAR saw carload gains in the first

three months of 2004 compared with the first three months of 2003.

U.S. intermodal traffic in 2004 through March totaled 2,585,045 trailers or containers, up 7.3 percent (175,593 units), with trailers up 14.1 percent (86,563 units) and containers up 5.0 percent (89,030 units). Total volume through 13 weeks was estimated at 385.0 billion ton-miles, up 4.5 percent from last year. (*Association of American Railroads*)

#### BNSF EMPLOYEE SPIES STOLEN BNSF PROPERTY ON EBAY

A BNSF employee was startled to see their hardhat with the BNSF logo, a radio safety belt, and some of their newer hand-held radios -- base unit, chargers, mikes and extra batteries to boot -- on an EBAY auction in April.

"Ironically, the seller's address was in Amarillo, Texas, where I worked as roadmaster before moving to Fort Worth," says Dale Green, the BNSF employee. "I knew Rick Stalder, senior special agent in Amarillo, would probably be interested in what I found. But I knew to call the Resource Protection Solutions Call Center number first," says Green. Immediately, Green forwarded the information and pictures to Resource Protection Solutions and Agent Stalder. The first step was to obtain a search warrant to recover the BNSF property.

"The serial numbers on the radios pictured on the Internet weren't visible, so we couldn't yet confirm them as ours," says Stalder. "However, the obvious BNSF logo on the hardhat was enough to get a search warrant." As things progressed, the hardhat was the least of the seller's problems.

"eBAY was very cooperative in giving us information on the seller, who wasn't cooperative at first. But a search warrant was obtained quickly through the Amarillo district attorney's office, and we were soon knocking on their door." Upon entering the home, officers found not only the BNSF property, but bags of narcotics as well. "When we plugged in the radios, they were set on our pre-programmed frequencies, so we knew they were ours," says Stalder. "The hardhat was already packaged and ready

for pick up. We beat UPS by only 15 minutes."

Though the investigation isn't over, BNSF recovered all stolen property worth about \$2,700, and the criminals are awaiting prosecution. "A lot of people might not realize that a single felony act, such as stealing the hardhat, is punishable by up to two years in the penitentiary in Texas. These guys, along with yet unidentified co-conspirators, are charged with three counts," says Stalder. (*BNSF Today, April 23*)

#### FRISCO RR DATA TO BE PUT ON WEB

(*Springfield, Missouri*) —The Springfield-Greene County Library will digitize the Louis Greisemer Frisco railroad collection. A nearly \$25,000 Library Services Technology Act grant through the Missouri State Library has provided the funding to digitize and make available to the public Louis Griesemer's collection of Frisco images, artifacts and data on the library's Web site. The collection includes personnel cards, community files, depot floor plans, postcards, advertising, issues of the company's *All Aboard* magazine and thousands of photographs of depots, rolling stock, tunnels, railroad yards, water towers and bridges. Griesemer bought the collection two years ago and has been working with the local history department to help preserve this important historical information. He gave the library the personnel record cards and loaned some of the Frisco memorabilia for display and decor at the Library Station, the transportation-themed facility at 2525 N. Kansas Expressway, and now has given library staff access to the complete collection for digitizing.

"This collection represents the advance of the railroad, which signaled a new era in American history as well as the history of the Ozarks," said Planning and Development Coordinator Carol Grimes, who wrote the grant. "It also tells a lot about the people who worked and lived the railroad life." It's a big project and won't be uploaded to the Web site until later this year, but when it debuts, the local history connected with the Frisco will be ready to be viewed by train buffs

all over the world through the magic of the Web. (*Springfield News & Leader, April 28, 2004*)

#### OLDSMOBILE R.I.P.

Although not directly related to railroads, the last Oldsmobile rolled off the assembly line in Lansing, Michigan on April 29, 2004. It's the end of the line for the oldest automotive brand name in the United States (one of the automobiles that aided the demise of the passenger train). The car, an Alero, will have signatures of plant employees inside the hood and will be displayed at the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum in Lansing for about four months.

#### LASTA CANCELS SP 745 KANSAS CITY TRIP

In an announcement in early May, the Louisiana Steam Train Association said: "Sadly due to monetary and other constraints we are unable to go to Kansas City for the Bicentennial." They

had earlier put out a PROPOSED schedule to run the restored Southern Pacific steam engine #745 from Louisiana through Arkansas and then to Kansas City on the KCS. Apparently they were short of money and didn't get KCS's approval for the move.

Their current 'schedule' is as follows: Fall 2004: We propose to have the engine Blessed in front of St. Louis Cathedral on the River Walk of the French Quarter. Time will be posted later. Fall 2004: We will be in Audubon Park for the city to experience the train. Fall 2004: Tour around Louisiana. Their website: [www.lasta.org](http://www.lasta.org)

#### A BEAR OF A PROBLEM!

(Montana) – BNSF is again having grizzly bear problems near Glacier Park in Montana. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad is doing everything possible to remove every kernel of the 2,800 tons of corn spilled recently when 28 grain cars derailed from train G-SIOPAS1-15, a railway spokesman said Friday. The

derailment occurred in the Middle Fork Flathead River corridor, an area used by grizzly bears moving into and out of Glacier National Park. In the same area, during the late 1980s, grain and corn spills were not entirely cleaned up and attracted grizzly bears, with eight of them subsequently killed by passing trains.

After the wrecked freight cars were removed, rail-mounted vacuum machines were brought in. But the cleanup is expected to continue through May because of the sheer volume of grain. Portable generators have been brought in to power lighting systems that illuminate the spill area at night. A propane cannon sounds off every 15 minutes as a noise deterrent for bears. In the fringe areas of the spill, "critter getters" have been set up. The devices transmit loud noises if they are activated by motion sensors.

## AMTRAK NEWS

## EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

To join/renew membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club (Little Rock Chapter National Railway Historical Society), fill out the form below. **Annual dues are \$20** for local dues (plus \$20 for the national NRHS dues if you want to join the NRHS through our chapter, a total of \$40 for both local and national dues). Send to: Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

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





*Contract to build the bridge across the Arkansas River at Little Rock awarded 21 March 1899 by Little Rock Bridge Company to McGehee, Kahmann & Co. of Kansas City. The caisson for the first pier reached bedrock 25 September 1899. The last iron pin in the superstructure driven 7 Nov. 1899. The deed of ownership transferred to Choctaw & Memphis R.R. on 23 July 1900.*

*The first through passenger train Memphis to Weatherford, Indian Territory, crossed the bridge and departed from the temporary station at Little Rock 10 December 1899 at 4:37 a.m. This train was No. 1, the CHOCTAW FLYER, with conductor Harry McDonald.*

*(Photo taken 23 May, 1970 by Gene Hull)*

## **ROCK ISLAND FORT RENO TO LITTLE ROCK**

**by: Gene Hull**

In 1882, the CHOCTAW, OKLAHOMA & GULF (predecessor of the Rock Island west from Memphis) was composed of two segments - 31 miles between Fort Reno, Oklahoma Territory, and Oklahoma City plus 64 miles from South McAlester, Indian Territory eastward to Wister.

The area now known as Oklahoma also was composed of two segments. The principal segment, west of the Arkansas border was called Indian Territory, reservations set aside by the U. S. Government for various Indian tribes.

Within Indian Territory there was an area which some of the tribes had sold to the U. S. Government, and it was called Oklahoma Territory. The eastern boundary extended southward from a point about midway between Tulsa and Stillwater to the Canadian River. The line ran up the river to about the present western boundary of Oklahoma City, then south to Red River. Everything westward to the Texas Panhandle was Oklahoma Territory.

In 1892, plans were made to unite the two divisions and by November 1895 trains were running between Fort Reno and Wister. Just six miles east of Wister, the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf built southward through Howe, Indian Territory on its way from Missouri to Texarkana, Arkansas-Texas. Rails soon closed this six-mile gap and the CO&G had an outlet to Kansas City.

On 25 October 1898, the Little Rock & Memphis was bought by the Choctaw & Memphis, giving life to old plans to lay rails westward from the terminal at Little Rock. That same year the CO&G laid rails 45 miles westward from Fort Reno to Weatherford, Oklahoma Territory. The road was 269 miles long, but there was no direct outlet for the company's growing supply of coal from its many mines.

Attention was directed toward the Little Rock & Memphis. The purchase of the LR&M left only 162 miles between Little Rock and Howe, Indian Territory, the eastern terminal of the CO&G. This would create a railroad 563 miles long, a trunk line along the 35th parallel of longitude, the nationally desired rail route to the Pacific Ocean.

This purchase for \$325,000 created a flurry of construction. Right-of-way was secured and survey crews soon were busy locating the alinement. Other crews also were working to improve the existing road between Little Rock and Memphis.

On 1 November 1898, grading work westward began near Ferguson's Mill, a short distance west of the Union Station (St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern) at Little Rock. McCarthy & Reichardt had a contract for the first 65 miles.

At the same time Jay Gould showed up. (A monkey wrench in the machinery?) The St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern began surveying and grading in front of Union Station on an alinement roughly parallel to the Choctaw & Memphis (controlled by the CO&G).

The CO&G asked for a court injunction to settle the conflict. A convoluted hearing produced a judgement in favor of the Choctaw and the Iron Mountain ceased work.

Jay Gould went elsewhere.

The Choctaw began grading work in earnest at both ends, beginning 1 December 1898. On 19 April, 1899, Mr. W. E. Noble, boss track layer for the firm of McCabe & Steen of St. Louis under the contract of Choctaw Construction Company, laid the first rail at Howe, I. T, working toward Little Rock, 166 miles to the east.



*The fine passenger station at East Second & McLean Streets in Little Rock was not complete in time for the first passenger train. It was ready for full use during the first week of Aug. 1900.*

*It was built of pressed brick and ornamental terra cotta and was 55' x 160'. There was a covered concrete platform, 15 feet wide, along the tracks on the east side. On the west side (shown above) was a brick paved drive with ample room for omnibuses and express wagons. (Author's 1956 Bel Air Chevy in foreground). The earth embankment at the end of the station is the approach to the Second Street viaduct spanning the tracks. (Photo taken in June 1960 by Gene Hull)*

At the east end an enormous amount of rock had to be blasted away between Little Rock and Ross Hollow, 25 miles west of town. It was two months before rails could be laid.

A Roberts Track Laying machine was put in use at Howe. This was one of the most wonderful inventions of modern railroad building. The 120 men using it could do as much work at 250 men laying rails by hand.

The work train was made up with the machine on the front car followed by six flat cars containing spikes, bolts, fish plates and rail for one mile of track. Next came the engine and cars of cross-ties.

A continuous trough extended from the rear of the train to the front of the machine car, ending a rail-length ahead. A revolving rod with teeth lay in the trough and carried crossties to a pair of Negro workers, dropping them into place. A similar trough with rollers on the opposite side of the train conveyed rails and tie plates to the front. Track layers placed rails end to end and bolted them together. As the train moves forward a 40-man crew, in charge of Foreman W. J. Hilton, drove spikes. A 500-man crew followed, straightening the track and placing ballast. This machine was not used at Little Rock, because hand labor was used on the seven-mile belt loop track (from near Union Station, through present Biddle and to the iron bridge across the Arkansas River).

Track laying crews from east and west worked toward each other. On Thursday, 12 October 1899 at quitting time they were a half-mile apart about 22 miles west of Ferguson's Mill near Little Rock. A curve prevented the crews from seeing each other. At Little Rock, local railroad officials and newspaper representatives were invited to the laying of the last rail on Friday, 13 October.

At 6:40 a.m. Friday, a work train, consisting of engine No. 14, a work car, two flat cars and a caboose, in charge of conductor Will Faucette, left Ferguson's Mill. It reached the end of track at 8:30 a.m. The train from the west sat a half-mile away at the other end of track.

A place was chosen for the rails to join - a wood trestle about 25' long, spanning a dry creek bed. Fitzgerald's crew from Little Rock had 700 feet of track to lay by hand. Nobel's crew from the west had about 1,500 feet, but they had the track laying machine.

At 9:00 a.m. only 250 feet separated the two crews. At 9:25 a.m., the last crosstie was dropped in place. The last rail was ready - almost. It was about eight feet too long! It had to be cut off and new holes were drilled for fishplate bolts.

The bolts were tightened.

At exactly 9:44 a.m. Friday, 13 October 1899, the Choctaw & Memphis Railroad was complete from Memphis, Tennessee 563 miles westward to Weatherford, Oklahoma Territory. 