



ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB



Little Rock Chapter
NRHS

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Iowa Traction 60, Clear Lake, Iowa, June 20, 1995. (Photo by Peter Smykla, Jr)

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NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

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

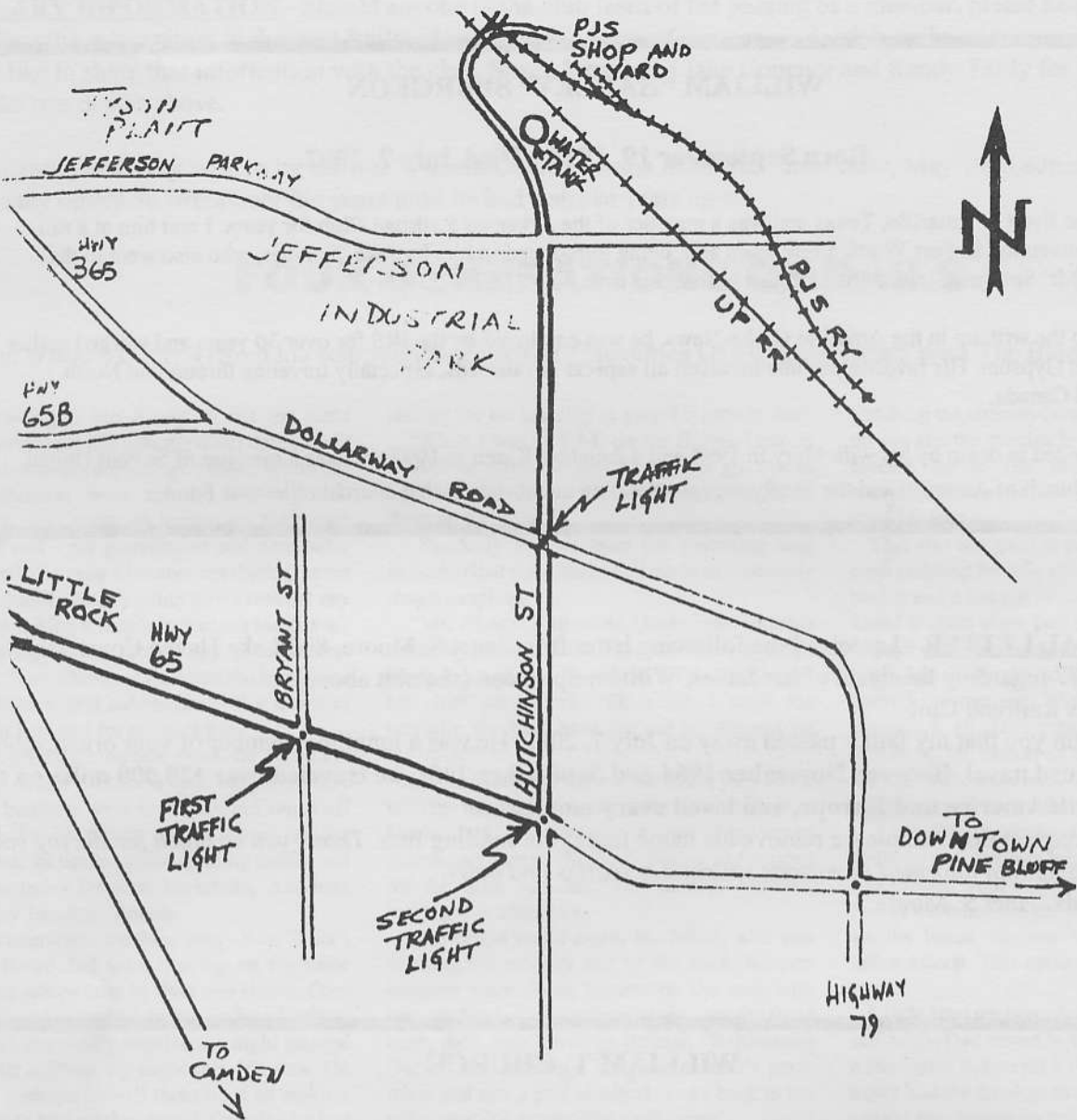
Dues to join the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB are currently \$20 a year, which includes the monthly *Arkansas Railroader* newsletter. If you'd like to join the NRHS through our club (thus being a member of the Little Rock Chapter NRHS and national NRHS), you must pay \$20 a year more, bringing the total to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

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

The next activity of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2002** (*NOTE DATE CHANGE*) and will be our annual get-together at Peter Smykla, Jr.'s Paperton Junction Southern in Pine Bluff, beginning about 9 a.m. There may or may not be a short excursion on the line using Peter's Alco, but Ron Esserman will bring a hand car which might be run. Bring a lunch and drink. A map to Peter's place is on the next page.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE will be working to have a slate of potential officers ready by the October meeting. If you are interested in being an officer of the Arkansas Railroad Club, let President Fred Fillers know.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY will be Saturday, December 14 at the usual site, the University Park Adult Leisure Center, 6401 West 12th Street, Little Rock (west of University Drive). Plan now to attend and plan on not having any conflicts.



INSTRUCTIONS TO PETER SMYKLA'S PAPER TON JUNCTION SOUTHERN: Take Highway 65 from Little Rock to Pine Bluff. Second traffic light is Hutchinson Street. Turn left and follow Hutchinson north through the Jefferson Industrial Park, past water tower and across the UP track. Turn right 100 feet past UP track as you cross Paperton Junction Southern track, shop and yard on right.

S RATTROADER

WILLIAM "HARLEY" SPURGEON

Born September 19, 1919 - Died July 7, 2002

Mr. Spurgeon lived in Amarillo, Texas and was a member of the Arkansas Railroad Club for years. I met him at a rail-passenger convention in Fort Worth a few years ago, being introduced to him by Jake Commer, who also went to that convention. Mr. Spurgeon joined the club just before that time.

According to the writeup in the Amarillo Globe-News, he was employed by the IRS for over 30 years and worked earlier for American Gypsum. His favorite pastime involved all aspects of railroads, especially traveling throughout North America and Canada.

He was preceded in death by his wife Mary in 1994 and a daughter Karen in 1997. He was a member of St Paul United Methodist Church of Amarillo and the family suggests sending memorials to that church's Elevator Fund.

INSPIRATIONAL LETTER - I received the following letter from Janet S. Moore, 802 Lake Haven Court, Highland Village, TX 75077 regarding the death of her father, William Spurgeon (see obit above):

"Dear Arkansas Railroad Club:

I regret to inform you that my father passed away on July 7, 2002. He was a longtime member of your organization and supporter of railroad travel. **Between November 1964 and September 2001, he traveled over 120,000 miles on trains throughout North America and Europe, and loved every moment.**

At this time, I request that you please remove his name from your mailing lists. *Thank you so much for the joy you added to his life by keeping him informed of various railroad activities and news.*

Warmest regards, Janet S. Moore."

WILLIAM T. CHURCH

Born: January 10, 1919 - Died: August 1, 2002

Bill Church was a long-time member of the Arkansas Railroad Club up until his death. He wrote several stories about his experiences as conductor for the Missouri Pacific and I believe Cotton Belt as well as writing stories about his many adventures in the Persian Gulf. He was a conductor from 1941 until his retirement in 1979.

Mr. Church served in the U.S. Army from November 1941 to October 1945 and served 33 months in Iran with the 711th Railroad Engineers. He was a member of the Illmo Masonic Lodge (Illinois); AF and AM in Scott City, Missouri; United Transportation Union, Disabled American Veterans; Arkansas Railroad Club; Military Railway Veterans; and the Persian Gulf Veterans Association.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Pauline.

Memorials may be made to Central Baptist Church, 5200 Failway Avenue, North Little Rock AR 72116.

OBITUARY INFORMATION - Should anyone in the club learn of the passing of a member, please keep me informed so I can place the information in the next *Railroader*. So often I learn of someone's death months or even a year after it occurs and I'd like to share that information with the club. Special thanks to Jake Commer and Randy Tardy for informing me about the two deaths above.

The following is a story written by the late William Church for the *Arkansas Railroader*, May 1990 edition, and is similar to the many others he wrote over the years until he had a stroke years ago:

FOUR GENERATIONS OF RAILS

by: *William Church* (from his self-published booklet "Memories Of My Love Affair With The Blue And Gold")

Railroading is just a way of life for some people, but for me it is a family affair dating back to the link-and-pin days of the 1860s. While our first generation were mostly home guard-railroader, who chose to remain on their own streak of rust - my grandfather and namesake, Bill Church, became a boomer conductor, never until his middle years putting down roots at any place, but raising a family in various locations.

"We moved so often," my grandmother quipped, "that whenever I entered the hen house the chickens would automatically lay down to have their legs tied for the next trip."

But in grandpa's middle years, he found the company doctor's exam a little tougher, while younger boomers were crowding old times off the road. So he finally settled down on the Cotton Belt for his last years, running freight and passenger trains between Jonesboro, Arkansas and Valley Junction, Illinois.

Shortly afterwards his three sons - Roy, "Fats", and my future dad went braking on the same road, to be joined later by their two sisters, Cora and Flora, who worked in the railroad office. Aunt Cora eventually married the night general yardmaster at Illmo, my uncle Jack Vittitow. On one run, grandpa had all three boys as brakies, which made him mighty proud. One day he had engineer Nichols and fireman Penny, he coined the phrase, "Church and six cents." The general yardmaster at Jonesboro had asked the call boy who was the crew on No. 16, and grandpa piped up the answer that became a classic.

One night my ancestor was called for a drag out of Illmo, an undesirable run, and when he reported for duty he found that Uncle Jack's "snakes" (railroad lingo for switchmen because of the large "S" in their union's name) were celebrating pay day in their usual alcoholic manner and fouled up the Illmo yard. The old man thereupon gave his son-in-law a tongue

lashing for his inability to keep his men in line.

"When I was G.Y.M. on the Bonne Terre in 1890," he stormed, "my men never got out of hand like this. Every pay day I kept my eyes on them all day long."

Suddenly a band from the switching lead indicated that some snake had made an especially rough coupling.

"Mr. Church," drawled Uncle Jack with his usual dry humor, "I don't have to watch my men work. I can always hear them." Then turning to his chief yard clerk: "Give Mr. Church his waybills, the boys have just put his caboose on the train."

The old conductor dashed out of the yard office with the laughter of the clerks in his ears. True to Uncle Jack's statement, a pay day happy switchman named 'Snakey' Moore had topped off the drag with the "Old Man's" caboose, leaving it in shambles.

One bright starlit night, my father, who was working the smokey end of the crew, his two brothers were doing honors on the rear with grandfather keeping a close watch over the three boys, their train crawling through "Rattlesnake Curve" on Crowley's Ridge at a snail's pace, when dad saw a pair of wheels sway back in the train, emitting sparks like a pin-wheel.

Dad waited for someone to emerge from the caboose and walk over the top of the train to release the airbrake that was sticking. Uncle "Fats," who was working the swing, evidently wasn't on the job, neither was grandpa or Uncle Roy as the train went into the other leg of the curve, the sticking brake pulled the train down slower.

"Guess I'll drop off myself and get that brake," Dad told the engineer.

Unloading from the engine, he let the train drag past him. Finding the sticking brake, he released it then waited for the caboose to come by him.

Catching the crummy he was still wondering why no one saw the sticking brake coming around the reverse curve. His unspoken question was answered when he saw his dad and brothers sound asleep.

This was too good to pass up. Dad must have been grinning broadly as he saw the family lunch basket and a hot pot of coffee on the stove. Dad found a clean dope pail in one of the bunkers, filled it with clean cotton waste, and emptied the lunch into it. He drank his fill of the coffee and poured the rest out. The three rear men slept through it all. Dad then jerked out his lamp, picked up the bucket of lunch and walked over the top of the train back to the engine where the head end crew enjoyed the "Old Man's" lunch.

Later, at Jonesboro, Dad noticed a marked coolness between the brothers and their Dad. It was evident from their actions they thought that two of them had caught the other one asleep and ate the lunch. No one would admit they had fallen asleep. This coolness soon broke up the crew.

A little later my two uncles went on the boomer trail while Dad stayed on the Cotton Belt and was a conductor before his 21st birthday. Dad said he never had the courage to tell his dad that he had caught him asleep on the job and made off with his lunch. (Author's note: R. W. Church retired from the Cotton Belt with fifty-one years of service.)

(Editor's note - I noticed also in this May 1990 *Railroader* that the advertisement for our 10th annual Show & Sale included two addresses to get more information - they belonged to William T. Church - Retired conductor - and Eakles A. Hille - retired engineer - both now deceased and missed)

TOPEKA ROCK ISLAND EMBLEM - Herman Page, editor of the "Sparks", Topeka Chapter NRHS, wrote the following letter:

"I saw a copy of the Arkansas Railroader (June 2002) with the color photo of Rock Island logo and depot site in Topeka at 1st and Kansas Avenue. Unfortunately, it is no more! The site now has an office building and grading covered up and/or destroyed the logo - as of last winter. There had been talk of trying to save the pieces, but it didn't happen. The first we knew was when the site was graded and building began. I wish some of us could have acted sooner!"

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 - 11x14 frames for photographs for the Arkansas Railroad Museum in Pine Bluff. Also needed is a black and white photo of the Cotton Belt depot in North Little Rock and the Operations Manual or Wiring Diagram for a U28B GE/ALCO locomotive. Contact Bill Bailey, 8318 Reymere Dr, Little Rock AR 72227, 501-224-6828.

WANTED - I have a 14x22-inch original India Ink drawing by national artist Emmett Watson which illustrated a story in RAILROAD MAGAZINE around July 1933. The story was titled "Rusted Rails." and the drawing has written on it: "ON THAT ENGINE QUICK," roared Robin, "WE'RE GOING DOWN WITH THE LOAD OF ORE IN SPITE OF 'EM!" I need a copy of the story "Rusted Rails." REWARD. (The drawing is a Colorado snow scene). P. B. Wooldridge, PO Box 716, Lewisville AR 71845-0716.

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 - WEST TEXAS & LUBBOCK RAILROAD COMPANY, INC. - To abandon a 1.1-mile line of railroad from milepost 1.1, at University Avenue, eastward to milepost 0.0, at the interchange with The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company near North Avenue U, in the City of Lubbock, Lubbock County, TX. Effective on August 16, 2002. (STB Docket No. AB-473 (Sub-No. 1X, decided July 10, served July 17, 2002)

WEST VIRGINIA - CSX - To discontinue service over approximately 15.12 miles of railroad at Jarrolds Valley Junction between milepost CLP 0.0 and the end of track near Clear Creek at milepost CLP 15.12, in Raleigh County, WV. Effective on August 20, 2002. (STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 620X, decided July 12, served July 19, 2002)

IOWA - CHICAGO CENTRAL & PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY - To abandon a segment of the Marion-Louisa Industry Lead, extending from milepost ZA 225.7 to milepost ZA 229.5, a distance of approximately 3.8 miles in

Linn County, IA. A final decision will be issued by October 25, 2002. (STB Docket No. AB-314 (Sub-No. 2X, decided July 18, served July 26, 2002)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

From Don Ross, via email: "I will apologize now before I begin.....Three pastors were discussing their problems with railroads. The first said that every time he preached, the Frisco came blasting thru town and it just really messed up his sermon. The second said his problem was similar except that it was the Santa Fe. The third then said he had a different problem. He was upset about the Nickle Plate that came down the aisle."

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

SHORT LINES TAKE UP SLACK

In an article in the May 26, 2002 Houston Chronicle, it was stated that short line railroads continue to grow as the larger rail lines abandon track or sell it to the smaller operators. The number of short line railroads has grown from 200 in 1980 to 550 today according to the American Short Line Railroad Association. (*Via Dan Barr*)

SUBWAY CARS SUNK TO CREATE HABITAT

(*Charleston, South Carolina*) - On July 17, 2002, 50 obsolete subway cars were sunk into South Carolina's Comanche Reef, about 35 miles off the coast of Charleston. The Comanche reef is one of 42 artificial reefs in South Carolina created to attract fish -- and fishermen -- to the state's sandy-bottomed shores. The subway cars, which once teemed with people underground in New York City, soon will host a different sort of creature. Within six months to a year, the cars -- 50 feet long and 9 feet wide and tall -- will be covered with sponges, algae and corals, making an excellent hangout for snapper, grouper and other fish. The fish will attract anglers, who generate millions of tourist dollars for South Carolina.

New York City cleaned and donated the cars, which have been replaced by shiny new high-tech trains. As the cars hit bottom Wednesday, they became part of a veritable underwater landfill: Since 1973, South Carolina has sunk anything from Army tanks to bridge parts to shrimp trawlers to create the reefs. The Comanche Reef is named for the Coast Guard cutter that was its only inhabitant. One hundred more subway cars will be added to other reefs in South Carolina. In all, New York City has 1,300 subway cars to get rid of. The reefs offer an inexpensive disposal option. (*The Charlotte Observer, July 18, 2002*)

AMTRAK NEWS

ESSENTIAL AIR PROGRAM

With all the talk and debate about Amtrak subsidies, direct subsidies to airlines also occur along with the indirect and hidden subsidies given via the Air Traffic Control system. The direct subsidies is called the "Essential Air Program" and runs \$20 to \$40 million a year. The Essential Air Service program (Payments to Air Carriers) was created as a transition program in 1978 following airline deregulation. Its purpose was to ensure continued inexpensive air service to the small communities the airlines previously had been mandated to serve. The program currently spends about \$26 million annually to subsidize commuter service to roughly 70 communities in 27 contiguous states, Hawaii, and about 30 communities in Alaska. Communities eligible for the subsidy must be more than 70 miles from a medium to large airport, although some exceptions are made. The program represents one of the few discretionary accounts for which Congress has increased spending each year.

The Essential Air Service program was authorized by Congress for a ten--year period, expected to end in 1988. Fourteen years after its intended sunset date, however, the program remains. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the subsidies these airlines enjoy range from \$4 to nearly \$404 per passenger.

Some of the locations receiving this subsidized service include communities such as the resort town of Hot Springs,

Arkansas, which back in 1997 received \$373,739, and Lewiston, Montana, which received \$439,972. While Alaska has the most cities subsidized by this program (airlines serving 30 cities will share the subsidy in 1997), other states enjoy far higher per-airport or per-airline subsidies. Airlines serving five cities in Nebraska, for example, will receive \$2 million in 1997.

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

TENNESSEE - JACKSON - OCTOBER 19, 2002 - GM&O Historical Society's Fall show will include vendors from many states and is expected to be their largest show ever. 2002 is their 30th year as a society. If you'd like to rent a table (\$22), contact GM&O Show, George Morton Googe, 227 W Baltimore St, Jackson TN 38301.

RARE MILEAGE PASSENGER TRAIN TRIP IN OKLAHOMA/TEXAS - OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 3, 2002 - THE OKLAHOMAN LIMITED PASSENGER TRAIN - HANDLED BY BARTON JENNINGS - FOUR DAYS, FOUR RAILROADS, 550+ TOTAL MILES OF WESTERN RAILROADING. Read on for the details:

Trips operate out of CLINTON and ALTUS, OKLAHOMA, and WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS. Come ride with the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum and High Iron on our yearly rare mileage train ride, this year covering four separate railroads over four days. We will cover more than 550 miles (365 of them unique) of railroad in western Texas and Oklahoma. The railroads include Farmrail, Grainbelt, Hollis & Eastern, and the Wichita, Tillman & Jackson. **These will be the first public trips in nearly 50 years over much of this mileage.** Tickets are available for one day or for all four. Come join us on this once-in-a-lifetime event. Seating for this trip is very limited, early reservations are recommended.

Tickets available now for the following trips:

Thursday, October 31: Wichita Falls, Texas, to Altus, Oklahoma. \$130

Friday, November 1: Altus, Oklahoma, to Clinton, Oklahoma. \$130

Saturday, November 2: Roundtrip Clinton to Enid, Oklahoma. \$95

Sunday, November 3: Roundtrip Clinton to Frederick, Oklahoma. \$85

TICKET ORDER FORM:

Please fill out the following information and include with a stamped self addressed envelope. Mail along with a check or money order made out to: SARM/High Rail Oklahoman Limited, P.O. Box 5870, Knoxville, TN 37928.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

TICKETS NEEDED:

Thursday - Wichita Falls to Altus _____ @ \$130 = _____

Friday - Altus to Clinton _____ @ \$130 = _____

Saturday - Clinton/Enid Roundtrip _____ @ \$95 = _____

Sunday - Clinton/Frederick Roundtrip _____ @ \$85 = _____

Total _____

Order today, tickets are very limited for this one-time event. Remember, 1st class tickets are only available through High Iron at "www.highirontravel.com". Coach tickets are only available with this form. All tickets are sold first come-first serve so don't delay.



This is a view of the original Baring Cross bridge for the Cairo & Fulton railroad early in 1890. Note railing along the top of the wood trusses. (Gene Hull collection)

A BARING CROSS WAGON BRIDGE

by: **Gene Hull**

What - You didn't know the Baring Cross was a wagon bridge? A wagon and a train could cross the bridge at the same time - if the horse didn't run away, that is.

No, I did NOT make the picture shown here, even though that rumor has been heard.

The story of the Cairo & Fulton bridge over the Arkansas River at Little Rock, Arkansas has been told several times, but the vehicular use of the structure is not so well known.

On 21 December 1873, the swing span was closed and Matilda Anderson, wife of J. F. Anderson, a skilled mechanic in charge of construction, walked across the bridge to the north end, being the first person to cross the Arkansas River at Little Rock on a bridge.

This was not the first bridge across the Arkansas River. That honor goes to the Missouri, Kansas & Texas (Katy) Railroad. Their bridge at the Three Forks area north of Muskogee, Indiana Territory, was completed across the Arkansas on 7 December 1871. The construction engine crossed on 8 December and the first train rolled across 25 December 1871, two years ahead of the Baring Cross bridge.

When plans were drawn for the Baring Cross bridge provision was made for vehicular traffic by adding a roadway on the top of the bridge trusses. It was decided to postpone this roadway feature until a later date.

The Little Rock end of the bridge ended in a notch in an abrupt ridge of hard shale. The top of the ridge provided access for wagons and pedestrians using the roadway. Beyond the north end of the bridge there were several hundred feet of low, swampland between the riverbank and the higher ground where the settlement called Baring Cross and the terminal facilities of the railroad were located. A great amount of embankment was required in this area.

It was about 1 September 1877 when the vehicle roadway was completed. It went into regular service on 9 September. It was a very important adjunct to the commercial trade between Little rock and Baring Cross-Argenta.

The wagon roadway was seventeen feet wide and built of three-inch thick pine planks laid diagonally and protected by high railing on both sides. Along one side of the roadway was a six-foot wide pedestrian walk. The roadway was 1,730 feet long, contained 300,000 board feet of lumber and cost about \$10,000.

At the north end the road turned 90 degrees to the right onto an incline built on piling to reach the ground 650 feet east of the bridge. The walkway stopped at the end of the bridge and reached the ground by a series of steps.

The construction was under the supervision of W. P. Homan, superintendent of the northern division of the Cairo & Fulton. Charles Hazelwood was foreman of the mechanical crew of between 25 and 45 workers. The work began on 2 July 1877.

A few comments were heard about the bridge being too heavy and was in danger of collapsing in a wind storm. Competent engineers estimated that the roadway, crowded with wagons, the walkway filled with pedestrians and the railroad part of the bridge crowded with heavy locomotives the bridge would be taxed to one-fifth of its ultimate strength. Also, fortunately Little Rock was out of the line of tornadoes! There has been quite a change in the weather!

On 11 September 1877 the following notice appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette*:

**BARING CROSS BRIDGE
COMPANY**

Little Rock, Sept. 6, 1877

NOTICE - the Public are notified that the Baring cross Bridge is now ready for the passage of Pedestrians, Teams, Stock, etc., and until further notice the following will be the Rates of Toll charged, the Bridge Company reserving the right to alter the same at pleasure. The bridge will be open day and night.

RATES OF TOLL

Footmen single passage	5 cents
or ten tickets for	25 cents
Horse and rider, one passage	5 cents
Team, one animal	10 cents
Team, two animals	15 cents
Team, three or four animals	20 cents
Team, six animals	25 cents
Horses, mules or cattle, per head	3 cents
Sheep and hogs	2 cents

R. A. EDGERTON
President

Later, in 1890, the old bridge had completed its life span. Engineers inspected the structure and announced it was weak and unsafe. The roadway was removed and the wood trusses were replaced with steel. Wood flooring was placed on the deck. Wagons and pedestrians shared the bridge with trains on the same level.

Just a mile downstream from the Baring Cross bridge was the Junction bridge, built by the Little Rock & Ft. Smith and Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas railroads, opened 10 November 1884.

Flooring was added to the bridge deck for pedestrians and wagon traffic as well as trains. By 1890 this was causing serious delays for everyone. Finally it was necessary to provide relief from the congestion on both bridges. This led to the construction of the "Free Bridge" (no toll) from the foot of Main Street in Little Rock to Washington Avenue in Argenta. It was completed 5 July 1887.

Thus, the missing details of the wagon road on the original Baring Cross bridge can be added to the history of the bridge. 🚂

7.50 ✓



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MISSOURI PACIFIC

Arkansas Rai.



Vacant Missouri Pacific depot at Plumerville, Arkansas about 1960. Gene Hull photo.

DEPOTS IN ARKANSAS - PLUMERVILLE (Missouri Pacific)

by: Gene Hull

This substantial brick station served the relatively small farming community around Plumerville in Conway County. Two named trains of Mo. Pac. called here daily - RAINBOW SPECIAL and SOUTHERNER - in the 1940s on the Van Buren Subdivision. 🚂

