

ARKANSAS RAILROADER  
The Arkansas Railroad Club Newsletter  
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STEAM MOVIES WILL BE FEATURED AT THE MAY MEETING. . . The regular meeting of the club will be Sunday afternoon, May 10, 1970, at 2:30, Room 305, Missouri Pacific Union Station, Third and Victory, Little Rock, Arkansas.

The program will include movies of the live steam meet held last month at Austin Barr's. The film is a production of Johnny Gray, rail photographer extraordinaire, who is also official picture-taker for the Arkansas Highway Department. On a previous occasion with live steam, Johnny worked with such dedication, he attempted aerial photography--without a plane. His presentations are always excellent.

More than a dozen members of the club attended that live steam meet along with several dozen live-steamers, railroaders, and just folks. Austin has a very fine railroad and we appreciate very much the opportunity to see it in action.

BYLAWS TO BE PRESENTED. . . President Jim Wilson and the officers and directors of the club have been working drawing up bylaws for the club. These should be ready for the members to discuss and vote on by May 10. Therefore, we are hopeful for a very large attendance at Sunday's meeting.

BEGINNINGS OF THE MISSOURI PACIFIC'S LOUISIANA DIVISION--Part II  
by John Baskin Harper

About 1879 the LRMR&T extended the old MO&RR from Collins 31.93 miles westward to Warren. No further use was made of the old MO&RR survey to Fulton, though the StLIM&S did consider extending the line to the Arkansas coal fields in the 1880's. However, construction of a LR&FS branch into the coal fields terminated this extension. In later years the Warren & Ouachita Valley and several other logging railroads made use of the old surveys and limited grubbing the MO&RR and LRMR&T had completed west of Warren.

On March 21, 1876, Thomas Allen, president of the StLIM&S, was authorized by the StLIM&S board of directors to contract with the LRMR&T for the use by the LRMR&T of certain tracks and depots of the StLIM&S at Little Rock. Rights-of-way over lands owned by the StLIM&S were authorized at the same time. At this point the LRMR&T's northern terminal was still at Pine Bluff. The extension from Pine Bluff north 43.11 miles to the west line of Main Street in Little Rock was completed in 1880. To complete the connection with the StLIM&S, the StLIM&S constructed in 1880 0.82 miles of track from a junction with the StLIM&S main line just south of the Baring Cross bridge east along the Arkansas River riverfront to the north end of the LRMR&T tracks at Main Street.

In 1883 the LRMR&T constructed a 4.87 mile branch line from Varner northward to Cummins Landing on the Arkansas River. Called the Varner Branch, the function of this line is not known. It was abandoned by the StLIM&S in 1894.

The first 20 miles of the "Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Co" had been opened for business in 1870 from the connection with the StLIM&S at Argenta northwest to Preston. In 1879 the LR&FS was completed to Van Buren and to Fort Smith. Completion of the LRMR&T to Little Rock produced a natural Arkansas Valley railroad system. Both lines were quick to recognize this and efforts were soon made to consolidate operations as much as possible.

One of the most interesting aspects of the consolidation efforts was the appointment in October, 1882, of Mr. Henry Wood as the General Manager of both the LRMR&T and the LR&FS. Mr. Wood had been previously employed by the Denver and Rio Grande.

However, the most important project was the construction of a bridge across the Arkansas River at Little Rock to join the rails of the LR&FS, on the north side of the river, to those of the LRMR&T, on the south side. To accomplish this, the "Little Rock Junction Railway" was incorporated on December 8, 1883. The LRJct was not technically a subsidiary of the LR&FS or the LRMR&T since its 25,931 shares of stock were owned by 76 stockholders not, apparently, including the LR&FS or the LRMR&T. Nonetheless, many of the stockholders of the LRJct were apparently also stockholders of either the LR&FS or the LRMR&T, and since the LRJct could only be used by the LR&FS or the LRMR&T, it was for practical purposes a subsidiary of the two roads. Rights to bridge the Arkansas River were owned by the LR&FS which sold the rights to the LRJct, also on December 8, 1883. The LRJct then constructed the bridge and approach tracks from a connection with the LR&FS on the township line at the center of Main Street of Argenta south 0.59 mile across the river to a connection with the LRMR&T near the south end of the old East Little Rock freight depot. (Joint Little Rock freight and passenger depots were constructed at Markham and Commerce on lots the LR&FS sold to the LRJct for that purpose.) The connection from the LR&FS junction with the StLIM&S at Argenta to the LRJct tracks at the center of Main Street, Argenta, 0.70 miles, was apparently completed by the LR&FS in 1884. At any rate, the LRJct bridge (also known in later years as the Rock Street Bridge) was opened for operation on December 9, 1884. Though strengthened over the years as locomotive and freight cars became heavier, the original structure remained in service for over 85 years. It was finally closed for operation at 7:01 A.M. February 19, 1970. Louisiana Division trains now operate over a temporary bridge south of the Baring Cross bridge, on the Arkansas Division main line, while the old LRJct bridge is replaced by a new structure. The LRJct bridge had to be modified by the Corps of Engineers, at taxpayers expense, to render it suitable for navigation in the present Arkansas River navigation project, and the Missouri Pacific decided to add enough money to the project so that all of the old 1884 bridge remaining can be replaced by an entirely new superstructure.

Another interesting, little known, and long since abandoned part of the consolidated operations was the freight car "transfer ferry" operation between Arkansas City, Arkansas and Huntington, Mississippi. Connection was made at Huntington with the "Louisville, New Orleans and Texas Railway", later part of the "Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co." The Y&MV is now part of the Illinois Central. Again, the ferry operation is another hazy part of the LRMR&T's history. The transfer

ferry was constructed at Jeffersonville, Indiana, in November, 1885, and was named the "Marian". It was originally owned one third each by the LR&FS, LRMR&T, and LNO&T. One third ownership of the "Marian" was acquired by the StLIM&S in 1887 when it purchased the LRMR&T (The LR&FS's third was, of course, controlled by the StLIM&S, too.) In 1887 the "Marian" was reported in service between Arkansas City and Huntington but by 1894 it was reported in service between Bird's Point, Missouri, on the StLIM&S (and the SSW) and Cairo, Illinois, on the Illinois Central. This indicates the ferry service from Arkansas City to Huntington was terminated by 1894, probably because the StLIM&S completed its line from McGehee to Alexandria, Louisiana, in 1890.

Another steamboat, the "J.A.Woodson" (which had been built at Jeffersonville in 1881) was owned one half each by the LRMR&T and LR&FS. The "J.A.Woodson" was apparently not a ferry. Neither is its original purpose known. In 1889 it was reported in service on the Arkansas River under ownership of the StLIM&S and the LR&FS. By 1894 it had been transferred to the White River and was operating above Batesville under ownership of the "Woodson Transportation Company", a wholly owned subsidiary of the StLIM&S.

Use of the ferry at Arkansas City in conjunction with the LNO&T connection at Huntington enabled the LR&FS, LRMR&T, and the LNO&T to advertise a through route from Fort Smith to New Orleans. It was promoted as the "Arkansas Valley Route" and was operated independently of the StLIM&S. Operation of the independent route, the plans of the StLIM&S to build down the Mississippi River valley toward Alexandria, and the StLIM&S's prior interest in the LRMR&T combined to stir the StLIM&S's interest in the line. The degree to which the StLIM&S had continued to try to gain control is not known exactly, but on November 26, 1886, the StLIM&S board of directors approved a contract with J.A. Redfield (for whom the town of Redfield, Ark. is named) under which Redfield was to undertake to purchase controlling securities of the LRMR&T for the purpose of turning the securities over to the StLIM&S. A decree of foreclosure had been rendered on the LRMR&T on November 15, 1886, as a result of bills filed in circuit court by the trustees on June 26, 1885. As a result the property was sold on January 28, 1887 to Jay Gould and the action was confirmed by the court on January 31, 1887. A dispute among the StLIM&S directors continued for several months afterward (see minutes of May 4, 1887) with Mr. Redfield based on disagreement on exactly the mileage the StLIM&S had purchased. However the StLIM&S did not maintain the organization of the LRMR&T after February 1, 1887, and that date is considered the date the LRMR&T was absorbed by the StLIM&S.

Operation over the LRJct was continued by the StLIM&S, of course. The LRJct itself was leased to the StLIM&S for 50 years dating from January 1, 1890, and the lease was assumed by the MoP RR in 1917. As the years went by the StLIM&S and the MoP RR bought LRJct stock as it was available until they acquired 100% of the issued stock. On April 21, 1921, the property of the LRJct was sold to and deeded to the MoP RR, and the LRJct ceased to exist.