



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



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Thomas the Tank Engine ran excursions for thousands of children of all ages June 3, 4 and 5, 2005 on the Branson Scenic Railway in Branson, Missouri. BSR's regular passenger consist was used for the excursions with their locomotives on one end and the manned Thomas on the other. After they went out a few miles, they would run backwards back to the station with Thomas blowing his distinctive whistle at crossings. These 'Day Out with Thomas' excursions are partially sponsored by Amtrak. *(Ken Ziegenbein photo)*

2005 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

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BOARD '06 - Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769 (501-664-0232)
BOARD '07 - Fred Fillers, 29009 Bandy Rd, Little Rock AR 72223-9720 (501-821-2026), cffillers@aol.com
BOARD '08 - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (479-331-2030), shay473@cei.net
BOARD '09 - Douglas Harley, 840 Horseshoe Mountain Rd, Paris AR 72855-5543 (479)-963-2800, dharley2@cswnet.com

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 meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be on **SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2005** at our usual place, Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, 4401 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock. Time will be 2 p.m. The program will be presented by DARYL CONNOR, Hobby Shack owner, and will be on Central Florida Phosphate Mining: Bone Valley Railroading.

Our Vice-President and program director Mark Silverberg lined up the following programs for the rest of the year: **SEPTEMBER 3 (Saturday)** - Annual picnic and outing at Peter Smykla's Paperton Junction Southern in Pine Bluff; **OCTOBER 9 (Sunday)** - Robin Thomas on his trip to Cass, Virginia; **NOVEMBER 13 (Sunday)** - Outing at the newly renovated Bald Knob, Arkansas depot, now home to Arkansas Traveler Hobbies; **DECEMBER** - Annual Christmas party, date to be announced.

NEWS, ETC - You will notice a story in this issue about a train ride in Korea in 1952 by the late Earl Harris of Illinois, a former Railroad Club member. He wrote this story around 1988 and I just now 're-found' that file amongst my stacks of other stories. Also in this issue is a story written by Larry A. Dunkeson of New Mexico regarding his fathers' growing up in the Ozarks next to the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad. Mr. Dunkeson isn't a railfan per se and it's interesting to see how 'the other half' regard trains. He used sources on the railroad's history familiar with us all, such as the books by Gene Hull and James Fair, Jr. He was referenced to me by a library in Missouri, who called me and gave me Mr. Dunkeson's phone number. If you want to write him regarding this story, his address is: 805 Tramway Ln NE, Albuquerque NM 87122-1408.

EMAIL FROM SON OF A ROCK ISLAND AGENT - I received the following email July 9, 2005. Maybe somebody can help him with the Howe, Oklahoma RI derailment question:

Arkansas Railroader - Little Rock Chapter NRHS

“Hi Ken: I hope you don't mind my sending this email to you personally. My son, Richard Anderton, of Bedford, TX recently visited my hometown of Little Rock, and furnished me with your great website, especially concerning the demolition of the old Choctaw freight terminal for the Clinton Library complex in 2001. I think this was a tragedy to destroy such an old building with historical value, which indicates lack of judgment and responsibility on the part of some officials. My late Father, James A. Anderton, worked for almost 40 years as a ticket agent in the Rock Island passenger depot in Little Rock - he died in 1965. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any photos of either the freight or passenger depots as indicated in a link on your website. But it is fortunate that the Spaghetti Warehouse Co. was able to renovate the old R. I. passenger depot where my Dad worked so that it was not also demolished.

Ken, I recall as a child in LR across the driveway from the RI Pass. depot, was a very old 2 story red brick building, which in the 1930's was Headquarters. for the RI Superintendent. My Dad told me many years ago that it was a plantation mansion from the Civil War era, and that there was allegedly a tunnel in those days from the old mansion to City Park (now Mc Arthur Park), but I do not recall the purpose of the tunnel. Have you ever heard of this tunnel? I understand that this historical building was also demolished= terrible! In addition to my Father, my Grandfather, Wiley W. Anderton worked for the Choctaw Oklahoma.& Gulf RR (later merged with RI RR) in Okla. as a locomotive engineer from approx. 1903 until his death on his train in 1905 due to a derailment near Poteau/Howe, Okla. He is buried in Sayre, OK. I have tried unsuccessfully for several years to locate any records of the above RR accident in OK.

It appears that LR has really developed, especially along the Arkansas River front. My wife and I are unable to travel due to health problems, but if possible, will try to get to LR sometime next year to visit the old sites, RI depot, Roselawn Cemetary, etc. I graduated from old LR Sr. High School on Park St. in 1939, and attended our 50th reunion there in 1989. Elizabeth and Roy Bilheimer were instrumental in organizing the reunion = we had over 600 persons attend. Roy died in 2003 I believe.

Thank you for your Info. in your website, and RR photos, they are excellent! Should you know of a source of records for the above RR accident in 1905 in OK please advise me. My Email address is janderton39@gbronline.com (James W. Anderton, Dallas, TX, 7/9/05). “

RAILROAD HISTORY HELP WANTED FOR STATE CAPITOL DISPLAY - DAVID WARE, State Capitol Historian, Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, wants Arkansas railroad memorabilia, photos, stories, etc., for a State Capitol display on Arkansas Railroad history. This display will be done in the Spring of 2006 from mid-January through May. If you have anything to loan please contact him either by phone (501-683-3187) or preferably email him at: david.ware@sos.arkansas.gov

The Arkansas Railroad Club's official coordinator for this project is Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769, 501-664-0232. If you have any questions about what to donate and how secure the site will be, or other questions, contact Jim.

MEMBER NEWS - Longtime member **CAROLE SUE SCHAFFER**, retired July 8, 2005 after 32 years, 11 months and 1½ weeks of employment. Her retirement party was July 9. Congratulations Carole Sue! Carol's address is: 14009 Heinke Rd, Benton, AR 72103-2426. *** **NAOMI HULL'S** older sister, Alma Yaerger, died July 2 at Arkansas Heart Hospital after a triple by-pass and valve replacement. She was 86. To write Naomi, send the card or letter to Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington Ave #31, North Little Rock AR 72114-6455. *** Fred Fillers told us at the July 10 meeting that longtime and charter member **STANLEY WOZENCRAFT** has been ill. We've noticed that he hasn't been at a meeting since January of this year and were concerned about his welfare. Write to Stan at: 108 N Palm St, Little Rock AR 72205-3827, 501-664-3301.

BRIEF NOTE - Our Secretary Jackie Roach asked about the feasibility of starting a committee to search for a youth, boy or girl, to possibly attend the annual NRHS RailCamp in Pennsylvania. It was voted to do so at the July 10 meeting. No details on who will be on the committee at this time. This camp is held during the summer months.

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.

HOBBY SHOPS IN ARKANSAS - Last month I put a table in the newsletter listing many hobby shops in Arkansas that you might use when ordering any commercial books or commercial railroad stuff that you see listed in these Want Ads. Here, in plain text form, are those hobby shops: **ONE TRACK MIND**, 10524 Helm Dr, Mabelvale, AR 72103, 501-455-5050, onetrackmindtrains@hotmail.com, <http://www.arkansasweb.com/onetrackmind/> ** **ARKANSAS TRAVELER HOBBIES**, 400 East Market Street, Bald Knob, AR 72010, 501-Railfan (724-5326) ** **MICKEY'S MODEL WORKS**, Village Mall, 759 Hwy 62 E Ste 77, Mountain Home, AR 72653, 870-424-5765 ** **HOBBY SHOP DELUXE**, 119 North Front St, Dardanelle AR 72834, 479-229-5126, hsd@cox-internet.com ** **HOBBY SHACK**, 1200 John Harden Dr, Jacksonville, AR 72076, 501-982-6836 ** **TRACTIVE EFFORT HOBBIES**, 3061 N. Market Ave. #7, Fayetteville, AR 72703, (479) 571-8722 ** **EUREKA SPRINGS MODEL RAILROAD COMPANY**, 127 Spring St., Eureka Springs, AR 72632 479-253-2525, <http://www.railroadtrain.com/>

FOR SALE - Tom Duggan has MOPAC Employee Timetables for sale 1940-50s. All divisions except Texas. Tom Duggan ,479-756-1901.

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.

FLORIDA - FLORIDA EAST COAST - to abandon a 9.8-mile line of railroad known as the Titusville Branch, extending from milepost TB 0.0 in Titusville to milepost TB 9.8 in Aurantia, in Brevard County, FL. effective on July 16, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-70 (Sub-No. 5X, decided June 6, served June 16, 2005)

NEW MEXICO - BNSF - To abandon a 36.90-mile line of railroad between milepost 0.00 near French, and milepost 36.90 near York Canyon, in Colfax County, NM. Effective on July 21, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 428X, decided June 14, served June 21, 2005)

ARIZONA - SAN PEDRO RAILROAD OPERATING COMPANY, LLC - To abandon approximately 76.2 miles of railroad in Cochise County, AZ, as follows: (1) the Bisbee Branch, between milepost 1085.0 at Bisbee Junction and milepost 1090.6 at Bisbee, a distance of 5.6 miles; and (2) the Douglas Branch (a) between milepost 1097.3 near Paul Spur and milepost 1106.5 near Douglas, a distance of 9.2 miles, (b) between milepost 1055.8 near Charleston and milepost 1097.3 near Paul Spur, a distance of 41.5 miles, and (c) between milepost 1040.15 near Curtiss and milepost 1055.8 near Charleston, a distance of 19.9 miles. A final decision will be issued by September 23, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-441 (Sub-No. 4X, decided June 16, served June 24, 2005)

PENNSYLVANIA - PITTSBURG & SHAWMUT RAILROAD, LLC - To abandon a line of railroad between milepost 22.0 south of Brookville in Jefferson County, PA, and milepost 62.0 in Mahoning in Armstrong County, PA, a distance of

approximately 40.0 miles. The line includes the stations of Norman, Knoxdale, East Br., Coulter, Sprankle Mills, Mauk, Dora, Ringgold, Timblin, McWilliams, Putneyville, Oakland, Colwell, Reddco, Reedy, and Mahoning. A final decision will be issued by September 27, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-976X, decided June 23, served June 29, 2005)

CONNECTICUT - CONNECTICUT SOUTHERN RAILROAD, INC. - To abandon a 942-foot long stub-ended line of railroad extending from milepost 9.4 (Station 5673+42 on the north side of Colonial Drive) to the end of the line at milepost 9.6 (Station 5664+00), in Manchester, Hartford County, CT. Effective on July 29, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-979X, decided June 22, served June 29, 2005)

PENNSYLVANIA - BUFFALO & PITTSBURGH RAILROAD, INC. - To discontinue service over a 40.0-mile portion of a line operated by BPRR between milepost 22.0 south of Brookville in Jefferson County, PA, and milepost 62.0 in Mahoning in Armstrong County, PA. effective on July 29, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-369 (Sub-No. 5X, decided June 23, served June 29, 2005)

RHODE ISLAND - PROVIDENCE AND WORCESTER RAILROAD COMPANY - To abandon approximately 4.79 miles of its lines of railroad, in Providence County, RI. The lines proposed for abandonment include: (1) a portion of P&W's branch line, known as the East Providence Branch (EP Branch), extending from the switch at milepost 5.53 near Dunnellen Road south to the end of the track at milepost 9.84 near Whipple Avenue in East Providence, a distance of approximately 4.31 miles; and (2) a portion of P&W's branch line, known as the East Junction Branch (EJ Branch), extending from milepost 0.48 at the north side of Dexter Road south to its connection with the EP Branch at milepost 0.0 north of Waterman Avenue in East Providence, a distance of approximately 0.48 miles. A final decision will be issued by October 4, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-254 (Sub-No. 8X, decided June 29, served July 6, 2005)



DANGEROUS/COSTLY HIGHWAY DEATHS - On April 21, 2005, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta announced that, while the fatality rate on the nation's highways dropped in 2004 and alcohol-related crashes were down, the problem of highway deaths is a "national epidemic" and cost society \$230.6 billion a year, about \$820 per person. *(I'm glad that this has been acknowledged by someone in government - seems railroads have always taken the brunt of bad publicity as far as deaths and accidents are concerned. However, I'm not so pleased with Mr. Mineta's stance on Amtrak, saying that 'Nobody rides long distance trains.' I ride and I'm NOT nobody.)*

DURANGO & SILVERTON SECURITY - Each morning, rail officials check the 47-mile track between Durango and Silverton for problems and have done so for years. But what's happened over in London (*the subway bombings July 7*) has caused them to be extra careful on their inspections, said Jeff Jackson, senior vice president and chief operating officer. "It's safe to say we'll have a heightened awareness out there given recent events."



AND NOT A CENT FOR AMTRAK - On June 24, 2005, Arkansas Senators Mark Pryor and Blanche Lincoln and Congressmen Marion Berry, John Boozman and Mike Ross announced \$1.5 million in Airport Improvement Program funding to help small, local service airports in Arkansas upgrade their facilities. The Delegation members said the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grants are intended to help with the construction and rehabilitation of runways, taxiways, and aircraft parking aprons for area airports. Some of the funding will also assist in airport development planning.

MASS TRANSIT SECURITY FUNDS - The U. S. Senate will likely restore cuts to rail security funds that they had made in June after the London subway bombings that occurred July 7. At a minimum, the Senate will restore the \$50 million cut, G. William Hoagland, top budget aide to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tennessee, said July 8. Despite the March 2004 bombing of Madrid's subway system, U.S. officials have been consumed with preventing a repeat of the airliner hijackings that produced the September 11 terrorist attacks. President Bush proposed bundling rail, transit and bus security grants into one \$600 million program that would also fund security improvements at ports and other critical facilities such as chemical plants. Many lawmakers say that the Transportation Security Administration focuses too much on security for air travelers at the expense of surface transportation.

The White House budget proposal for the TSA contained \$4.7 billion for aviation security and just \$32 million for railroads, subways, buses and other forms of surface transportation.

ACTIVITIES OF OTHER RAIL GROUPS

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.

A TRAIN RIDE RECALLED

by the late Earl Harris of Illinois, written around 1988

The Date: late October 1952.

The Place: somewhere 120 miles south of Pusan, Korea.

Gentle Reader, there is no need to dig out the steel helmet, flak vest or dig a fox hole before you read further. It is only my account of my first (and last) South Korean train ride. I'm no hero, braggart or complainer in this story in any way. Some rail fans may find some interest in my story.

We had arrived this late and beautiful October afternoon by rather a varied route. We disembarked off the coast of South Korea by way of a troop ship, scrambling down its side by means of a landing net into a waiting landing craft.

After a few miserable hours in these devices, we made a practice landing, spent a night sleeping on the beach in pup tents, ate K-rations cold, washed our faces and shaved, using our steel helmets to hold sea water. Anyway, my outfit, the 8th Calvary Regiment Headquarters Company, 3rd Bn. (Infantry), after a 15 minute march the second day we landed, we found ourselves viewing a small rail yard somewhere in South Korea.

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A small steam locomotive, coal fired, sat at the head end of a string of nondescript passenger cars. I wish I could recall the wheel arrangement of the locomotive. I feel it was a 2-6-0 or a 4-6-0 one could find in use on the U. S. A. branch lines of the 1920s and early 30s. The coaches coupled behind the locomotive were of about the same caliber as the locomotive.

I got a hint of things to come as I noted the generator under these cars were missing generator belts. When I mentioned the lack of belts, someone told me the cars were without lights because of guerilla attacks from time to time. I later learned this was correct. Also, many so-called guerillas were no more than bandits.

As far as I ever knew, my outfit had no more than empty weapons and bayonets in the event of an attack. Anyway, "my lot was not to wonder why, but only to do and die." The last lines in the quote above I quote from the famous poem, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

After a head count and a few more military formalities, we were assigned a coach and allowed to board our assigned cars. Another surprise awaited us as we entered the cars. Our seats were of the slatted wood type on a steel frame, and I recall they lacked armrests at the ends of the seats.

With tired bodies after our march, we were glad to sit, remove our field packs and smoke. Our train finally got the "go ahead" from someone somewhere and we began to move. A short time later we discovered the vertical slatted seat backs ended just about the middle of the average sized G. I.'s back. This, of course, brought on low back pain after 30 minutes or so of being seated in these devices called seats.

The rays of a late October sun vanished after boarding the train. Since this section of South Korea was in the "warm" zone, heat or lack of same should be of little import. Wrong! After sunset our coach became chilly. After an hour or so it became cold. At this time we had our field packets on and glad we did. The only heat we had was body heat, cigarettes, cigars and our lighters. Fortunately there were no broken windows in our car. I feel sure (with our luck) if it had been raining the roof would have leaked like the proverbial sieve.

A visit to the rest rooms would have found them to be innocent of water at any temperature, I feel sure. Meanwhile we would dine on our cold K-rations when we felt the need. Our trusty canteen provided water if we desired. All the while our train rolled on through the night toward Pusan. Oddly enough I can't recall if the ride was rough or smooth. I suppose the fatigue, cold and low back pain made the ride quality of secondary importance to me.

At each station along the way, signals were passed to the train crew by means of what appeared to be a flaming wad of cotton waste (or cloth) mounted on a long rod or pole. At the few stops we made, the natives were alongside our coaches with fruit and vegetables plus ashtrays made from artillery shells or beer cans. Since we'd been forewarned not to eat any fruits or vegetables in Korea or Japan, everyone in our car passed on buying these offerings. This was due to the fact Koreans and Japanese fertilized their crops with human excrement.

Seems as if this 'fertilizer' added a parasite to the vegetables grown in the earth or of a fruit that had laid on the ground. Once inside the human stomach the parasite lived on creating health problems. One could also acquire parasites by letting bare to touch the ground. After two days of dry Army rations, the fruit and vegetables were tempting. I lit a cigarette instead.

After 120 miles (approximately) and over four hours of train riding we finally arrived at our pre-assigned Camp. We unloaded rather quickly and no regrets on my part. The ride was over. In an hour or so the plain cotton mattresses and the flat pillows seemed almost luxurious to me.

I'm reflecting on this experience, many G.I.'s were transported in open Army trucks or 40 & 8 railroad freight cars. Of course we could have marched on foot. We should count our blessings.

When we left South Korea two months later, we were transported by U. S. Army trucks to dockside in Pusan Harbor. We climbed stairways to our troop ship on this occasion. This troop ship and others would transport us back to Hokkaido, Japan and our home camp.◆



Missouri & North Arkansas No. 62 at Harrison, Arkansas. (*David Briggs collection*)

MISSOURI AND NORTH ARKANSAS

The Railroad That Almost Wasn't

by: Larry A. Dunkeson

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the most prophetic words about this railroad:

*"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: it might have been"*

The Missouri and North Arkansas is by far the most controversial railroad in the history of Arkansas. Reading any of several books on the M&NA shows what a colorful and tenuous beginning and existence this little railroad survived before ceasing operations in September of 1946.

So, who cares about a little freight-hauling railroad that very few people have ever heard of? Well, some people have heard of it, and sometimes in strange ways.

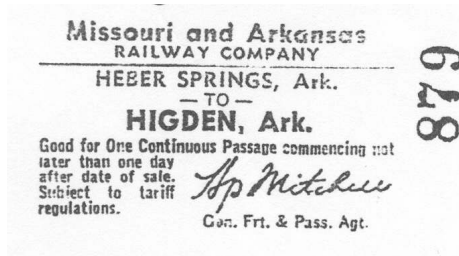
Now I don't claim to know much about trains. They used to go 'clickity-clack,' and sometimes you could hear one puffing "I think I can, I think I can" as it was struggling up a steep hill. There also were a few decorative railroad ties in my back yard, but who knows which line they may have once been a part of? Other than that I am working from stories, history and reference.

Some of that history goes back to the late 1800's and a ramshackle little home deep in the Missouri Ozarks. My Dad was later born in that cabin along with a brother and sister. The nearest school was several miles away where they went to high school. One mark of civilization near the cabin was a railroad, which because of the thick vegetation was only evident when a train was going by blowing the whistle and spewing wood smoke. That was the Missouri and North Arkansas, or M&NA line which local people came to call the "May Never Arrive". Folks who have lived in

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"that part of the world" made it clear to me that the proper pronunciation of the state's name is "Missoura, and not "Missouri".

Many years after my Dad passed away I made a trip back to Missouri in search of family history which I had not received earlier in life. My Dad's sister and mother were gone so the only relative left to give me information was his brother. This was fine since his brother and I enjoyed each other's company, and I knew that I would learn some of the information I was looking for from him. His brother was a very "down home" person who had spent his whole adult life driving a bread delivery route on the back roads of the Ozarks where he could always find time to visit with whoever the delivery route took him to that day. I enjoyed hearing some of his terms and sayings which were not part of my "college educated" research papers. An example which I have always remembered, but never had a chance to use was saying "that old dog won't hunt," meaning whatever was being said was not true.



His brother and I made a trip one day out to the home site where my Dad and his family were born. As I said it was a make-do log cabin which after many years showed the ravages of time and lack of maintenance. Visiting this place was important to me because I could see what humble beginnings my Dad's family had come from. Considering the way he grew up, the "home" he grew up in and the fact that he put himself through a distant high school and then business school, my Dad made a good life for his family. A souvenir I gathered from the assorted rubble was a flat iron

which still serves as a door stop in my home today.

No doubt there were many stories told about growing up in that out-of-the-way little home; many of which I probably never heard. One story my Dad did tell me however was about how he caught catfish in the local streams. I never thought seriously about catching catfish this way, but I am sure they were taken home and enjoyed by his family. That would be a welcome change from squirrel and whatever else his family could bring home. As the tale was told to me he would find a fallen tree lying across one of the many streams which ran through the area and, very slowly and quietly crawl out onto the log while little by little running one hand along the underside of the log until feeling a fish lying there in the still water. The trick then was to grab the fish, and in one motion fling him up onto the bank where he could be cleaned and made ready for the skillet.

No doubt another sound was in my father's ears as all of this was going on; the sound of the M&NA chugging through the Ozarks. I'm sure that he hoped the whistle wouldn't frighten the fish he was trying so hard to catch for dinner. The reason for blowing the whistle so often was to frequently let people ahead know the train was coming, the that they should stay off the crossings. It must have been effective because there were few reports of train/car collisions. However, even though the railroad had a good safety record in terms of collisions with people crossing the tracks, my Grandfather never did accept the sound of the M&NA chugging through at all hours of the day and night while the engineers blew that infernal whistle.

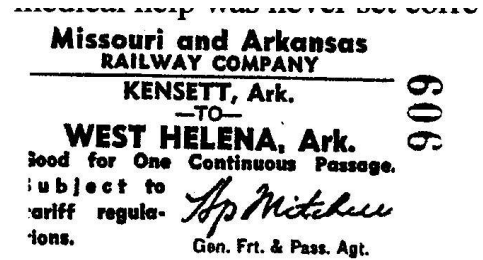
Arthur, my Grandfather, would sometimes say "I'm going to find another place to live, and move my family out of these woods away from this dad-gum clickity clack railroad", stomping his foot as if adding emphasis to his statement. He and his wife Effie were raising their three youngsters in a little log cabin, which would seem to be "way out in the woods" if seen by today's high school students used to driving their own cars to the paved, lined parking lots surrounding their schools. It would be difficult for today's students to imagine but Arthur, a teacher in a school near the small hamlet of Purdy, actually walked to his job each day.

Another of Arthur's frequent complaints was about the rain. It seemed to him that although the cabin's roof did not leak, the surrounding area quickly became water logged and sloppy to walk through. Although Effie was a good

housekeeper, she did not appreciate him coming in with muddy shoes. To make things worse, when there was rain the numerous creeks would fill and run causing Arthur to jump them, sometimes landing short and soiling pants and shoes. It was times like this when he became especially conscious of the train's whistle in the middle of the night. On those nights he would say to himself "one of these days I'm going to climb on that train just to see where it goes!" Then, in his sleep he would remember; "tomorrow I have to jump Cain creek".

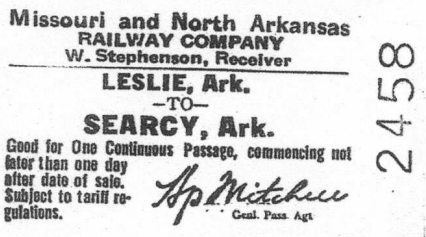
As fate would have it, leaping one of those creeks led to an unfortunate incident which had a sudden and permanent impact on Arthur's family. In jumping one of those many streams Arthur landed the wrong way, breaking his leg which because of the distance to medical help was never set correctly leaving him with a permanent and noticeable limp.

Arthur had no way of knowing, but in spite of his strong dislike of the M&NA he was going to see changes come to his local area. In the late 1800's he was a school teacher who fell in love with a local girl, the proverbial farmer's daughter. He and Effie were married and nature being what it is they soon had three youngsters, a girl and two boys keeping their lives interesting. The youngest of those children was my Father, born in 1903 only 23 years after the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railway was completed to the Arkansas border. That was still before the M&NA began running by Arthur's cabin.



Until the railroad came there was little interest in this area. The neighboring mountain country had known only infrequent visits, although the Osage Indians called the land their hunting grounds for many years. Of no concern to the Indians, France claimed ownership of the land from 1682 until it was ceded to Spain in 1762. The Spanish then ruled the area until 1800, when France once again took control and held it until 1803. That was the year in which the United States acquired the land, much of which was then considered useless alligator-infested swamp, as part of the Louisiana Purchase. When this happened, any claim the Indians may have wanted to exercise became moot.

Because the Osage Indians had been active in this area for ages before arrival of the white man, they knew the location of numerous springs and water sources. Many of these were in deep woods, and were kept secret as places of healing waters with power to restore health and vigor to anyone who drank from or bathed in their plentiful supply. Stories of the health-restoring power contained in the spring water were traded to Indians of other far away tribes as well. Cherokee Indians are reported to have visited the springs to partake of the wonderful restorative power the spring waters reportedly held. Around 1775 an Osage Chief, Black Dog, reportedly scooped out a basin so that others could soak in the curative waters. The Indians believed that the greatest curing would occur if the healing waters were bathed in during a full moon.



Naturally in spite of the Indian's wish to keep the spring's existence quiet, word got out. Some profiteering white men could see the possibility of lining their pockets if they started a business and notified enough people. During the Civil War Dr. Alvah Jackson, the first white man to find the spring, made his living bottling the "elixir" which he sold to local citizens under the moniker "Eye Water." He later established a hospital at the spring which became popular with disabled Confederate soldiers who bathed in and drank the sweet waters until they could hold no more. Additional

information was not found as to whatever became of the hospital.

Arthur may have known of the spring back when the M&NA was first coming into existence. The Eureka Springs Railway (which eventually became the M&NA) was granted a charter in February, 1882 to build from Seligman, Missouri to Beaver, Arkansas, only thirteen miles away. Arthur was bound to have heard of that railroad construction, and known deep inside that his world was changing.

Word of the miraculous cures occurring in the spring water spread like a wind-blown fire in a dry forest. People came from all directions by all means of conveyance, including horseback, wagons and on foot. Newcomers quickly began building structures to house them. By July twenty families were living near the spring in frame houses and tents, even occupying precipitous slopes. Within a year five thousand people inhabited the hills and valleys surrounding the spring. A small community had been created; it became very evident that only a railroad could handle the growing crowds of immigrants. Recognizing this, the local residents opted for permanence and on July 4, 1879 voted to name the community Eureka Springs, the name which is still on maps today.

In April of 1882, stockholders of the M&NA met in Eureka Springs to approve a proposal by the Board of Directors consolidating the Eureka Springs Railway and the Missouri & Arkansas Railroad. This short, nineteen mile length of railroad quickly became the Eureka Springs Railway. The Eureka Springs road knew it was a real railroad when it had to payout \$214.50 for livestock killed or injured by its trains in 1883. Regardless, the value of the railroad continued to increase. By August trees were being cleared and, with mule-powered drag buckets, earth was being moved while protruding bluffs were being blasted for the proposed right-of-way. It is hard to imagine that with all of that commotion, Arthur would not have learned that a railroad was coming and would run near him.

When building something as tricky as a railroad through difficult terrain and having multiple river crossings, some things are bound to cause problems. The M&NA had its share ranging from a small race riot to train wrecks to falling boulders. While all of these caused their own work stoppages, none was serious enough to "derail" progress. In February, 1901 progress was held up by both a strike and a race riot, both of which were quickly handled with minor consequences. The strike involved the dissatisfaction some tracklayers expressed about the quality of their rations. This was quickly quelled by bringing back a former camp cook and making a "heavy" order for food including California canned goods and Kansas City meat.

The racial problem was not quite as easy to handle. A group of tracklayers had built a small fire to warm themselves in the snow. It was claimed that a Negro fellow had pushed a white man into the fire, in an attempt to get closer, and the white man pushed back. The Negro shot the white man in the leg and took off. He was easily tracked in the snow, captured and put in jail. No additional information was offered as to what later happened to either man.

These didn't cause tongues to wag nearly as much as the "picnic event" that happened on a November Sunday in 1909. An officer of the Railroad Company invited two young ladies who were visiting from Missouri, to accompany him on a picnic in the forest along the company's tramway. Fall colors were in full display - a perfect day for a picnic. The Officer had appropriated one of the company's gasoline-powered motor-cars, fitted with wheels which would run on rails, and the three of them set gaily off for a fun time at the top of the winding grade where they would open picnic baskets and feast in the forest surroundings. They chugged up the winding track, crested the summit and rolled easily around sharp curves, admiring the ever changing display of fall colors.

The ladies later reported that the picnic was most enjoyable. As the sun began casting lengthening shadows the railroad officer and they reloaded the car and prepared for the trip home. They putted through the woods, again crested the summit, and began the steep winding descent toward the bottom. That was the point when memories of a nice day began to "go down hill". Many times in the past loggers had objected to being required to drop heavily

loaded log trains down this hair-raising grade.

The borrowed motor car was rolling along at a good clip when the railroad officer began bearing down on the hand brake. He shut off the engine in an effort to use its resistance and braking power to slow the car to a safer speed. These were good ideas, but proved to be of no avail as the car continued to gain speed on the downhill grade. Neither his efforts nor the now overheating hand brake were a match for the natural pull of gravity. By now the car was rolling so fast that the picnickers were afraid to jump.



On one of the sharper curves the makeshift wheels climbed over the outside rail, throwing car and revelers into the woods along the company's tramway. The two ladies were thrown a considerable distance, and in spite of the thickness of their voluminous dresses one of them was badly battered and bruised. The other, while somewhat banged up was less seriously hurt. Unfortunately the Company Officer was pinned beneath the car. The less hurt of the ladies managed to run frantically down the hill for help.

When rescuers arrived, they quickly lifted the overturned car off of the Company man intending to get him to town for help. They were too late; he was already dead. The mountain, and the often complained about steep grade had claimed their victim.

Progress on the M&NA continued as it became a freight hauling railroad, slowly starting to improve schedules and equipment. Passenger cars were evolving from upgraded box cars with some soft seats to Pullman sleeping cars. With those improvements, and an increasing economic status of people, more passengers were beginning to ride trains. When that idea became evident to the people promoting long distance trains, a new proposal also surfaced.

By February of 1883 the passenger depot in Eureka Springs was finished and people were using it. The *Arkansas Gazette* of February 3 gave word direct from Eureka Springs regarding the formal opening of the depot: "...joy has reigned supreme and Eureka's boom is swollen to the fullest extent. Its permanency (the town) is not a question, but a fixed fact." The Harrison, Arkansas, *Times* contributed more information: ... "the road is reported as first class in every particular and the most expensive for its length in the United States. The fare is \$1.75 one way, \$3.50 round trip, between Seligman and Eureka Springs." Chicken Little was not running around crying "the sky is falling", but folks in Eureka Springs were joyfully saying "people are coming" and preparing for good times; they had their railroad and depot now.

In 1884 important people in Eureka Springs, including several major investors in the Eureka Springs Railroad formed the Eureka Improvement Company. Being pillars of the community they were especially aware that an increasing number of visitors could be expected to come to Eureka Springs, even though available accommodations were somewhat limited. At that time the Perry House, located near the Basin Spring and built in 1882 was the leading hotel in Eureka Springs. It was four stories high, and had 100 rooms all connected to the office by a new innovation called the "electric announcitor." The Southern Hotel had 50 small rooms and there were several other hotels. Members of the Improvement Company agreed that a larger, more modern hostelry was needed to accommodate visitors.

This agreement shortly proved to be propitious when in 1888 a terrible fire destroyed 480 houses, and the business district along Spring Street. Losses from that fire included the Perry House, and its 100 rooms near Basin Spring. A wish to build another large hotel was welcomed by the community.

The Eureka Improvement Company had proceeded with plans to erect a handsome stone hotel at the top of West

Mountain, at an elevation of 2000 feet. They believed a large, new hotel was greatly needed to handle the optimistically projected crowds of visitors. Moving ahead with a grandiose set of building plans, they named the proposed hotel "The Crescent".

Local and regional news in 1886 centered around the Crescent Hotel which was completed in April, and had its grand opening on May 20. A quotation in the *Arkansas Gazette* states "... the hotel was built and furnished in the most substantial and elegant manor at a cost, including the grounds, of over \$250,000." An early picture of the Crescent Hotel was featured in the December 18, 1886 issue of *Harpers Weekly* which gave it national attention.

It would be a pretty sure bet that Arthur and Effie were not subscribers to *Harpers Weekly*, and therefore were not aware of the fuss made over building the Crescent Hotel. In the meantime however, the M&NA kept running and interrupting Arthur's sleep.

Things continued to happen at the Crescent Hotel though, and later visitors learned about them! As is the case with many old structures, and in particular older hotels, the Crescent acquired a ghost, maybe more than one! One of the fascinating, and most disruptive entities to inhabit the old hotel was the "clothes thrower". Guests hesitantly reported that they woke up to their clothes having been strewn about the room, although they heard nothing during the night.

Another, more upsetting to know about, was a man who marketed himself as a licensed physician while autopsying bodies in the Crescent's basement. "Dr." Norman Baker is reported to have removed not only some people's body parts, but also unsuspecting family's savings as well. "Dr." Baker is reported to have been sighted repeatedly in the Crescent's lobby wearing his usual purple shirt and white linen suit. He was identified through photographs of the famous entrepreneur.

As an interesting sidelight, a maintenance man for the hotel refused to go into the laundry area under the hotel after witnessing all the washers and dryers come on in the middle of the night with no other staff on duty but him. The laundry room was located next to Dr. Baker's old morgue, which still had his autopsy table and walk-in freezer (for bodies) right where he left them.

Speaking of ghosts and things that go bump in the night, the M&NA even boasted of a phantom train, or at least one that disappeared into the air one night. Not often is a phantom train, which just disappears, documented in a prestigious publication like *Railroad Magazine*. This story from Eureka Springs, Arkansas seems to fill the bill.

As the story is told, dating from 1911, the engineer of a passenger train was about to lower his speed for a water stop as he usually did. Just ahead he suddenly saw a caboose with the rear warning signal burning and a conductor swinging his red lantern. The Engineer yelled a warning to his fireman who also looked out the window, saw the caboose, grabbed the reverse lever and engaged it. Both men immediately prepared to 'join the birds,' but before they could jump the caboose vanished leaving only two warning flares lying between the rails. The Engineer then warned his superiors that there was going to be a train wreck ahead of him, and they needed to be prepared for it. There was no wreck on the M&NA, and to date there is no explanation for the Phantom Caboose. They just know it disappeared.

Although the M&MA continued to operate as a profitable railroad, and blow its whistle whenever it was near Arthur's home, after 1909 he wasn't there to hear it. As time went by the children grew up, graduated from school, married and in some cases moved away. Effie moved to a small home in Neosho and lived there until she passed away in 1955.

The M&NA continued to operate as a passenger railroad at a profit during most years, in spite of occasional setbacks. In the early 1920s the Government got into the railroad business with the passage of the United States Railroad

Administration Act, which was meant to "make every possible effort to move [train] traffic by the most convenient and expeditious route." As with all government recommendations, implementing such a plan through a national organization would take time; but at least for the M&NA business continued about as usual.

Of more concern to management was the wage situation. There had been widespread rumblings about low wages and the high cost of living in comparison to other industries. These rumblings were accompanied by constant talk of strikes which the M&NA management did not want to hear. Based on this possibility the Railroad Wage Commission recommended wage increases averaging 16 percent. Naturally the rank and file jumped on that; management had no choice but to pay the increased wages. What no one realized was that at that point the writing was on the box car wall; the M&NA was approaching its financial end.

Sadly the end finally did come to The Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad. In its glory days the sometimes black-cloud-covered railroad ran for 365 miles from Joplin, Missouri, to Helena, Arkansas, on the Mississippi. When the final abandonment came in 1949 it marked the longest, in route miles owned of any United States railroad in history.

Several factors contributed to the fall of the M&N

2. Speculative-type construction
3. Difficult topography
4. Absentee ownership and management
5. Plain hard luck

Author James R. Fair Jr., in his book The North Arkansas Line, made a statement that accurately sums up the history of the M&NA when he said: "...I resolved to look into the history of this railroad that had come and gone almost unnoticed by the outside world." Today what little remains, other than many memories, are even more unnoticeable after the rails and crossties were taken up in 1949-1952. The most visible remains today are the thick, dense stands of weeds and grass where the parallel rails once ran.

Even though those parallel rails are no longer used by the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad, it is said that on a night lit by a full moon, a lone conductor can be seen swinging his red warning lantern at the end of a lonesome caboose as it silently passes by.



Live In Entities of the Crescent Hotel-Why The Grand Old Lady Never Sleeps, Leaflet for Tourists about the Crescent Hotel, Published By Eureka Springs Landmark Hotels, 2 pages

Shortline Railroads of Arkansas, Clifton E. Hull, DCA Press, 416 pages

The North Arkansas Line, James R. Fair, Jr., Howell-North Books, 304 pages

(David Briggs collection, M&A Caboose 314 at Harrison, Arkansas)



Upper left photo is of Ron Esserman, who had the club over on June 11 for his annual train rides on the Walden Too backyard rail line. The upper right and the other photos on this page are of the demolition of the old 1931 Missouri Pacific Broadway Street overpass in North Little Rock. These were taken July 10, 2005. This overpass was 52 feet wide and had 44-foot-long beams, according to John C. Jones. You can see the Junction Bridge across the Arkansas River as we look to the south, as well as the Alltel Arena, plus the remaining tracks up to the Broadway overpass.





Arkansas Midland No. 726 is seen on Arkansas Avenue in North Little Rock, Arkansas, backing toward the old Cotton Belt North Little Rock yards in May 2005. This is one of the few places in Arkansas that has center street running. (*Brian Smith photo*)



One of the last Southern Pacific tunnel motors, No. 8269, in North Little Rock in May 2005. (*Brian Smith photo*)