



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



VOLUME 37 NUMBER 3 MARCH 2006



Approaching Gum Springs crossing in Little Rock is Missouri Pacific No. 7, *The Southerner*, at 75 mph powered by 4-8-2 Mountain #5310 in 1948. Notice there are two of the 2131-2142-class Railway Post Office cars in the consist. These twelve cars were home-built at Sedalia, Missouri in 1942. The last three cars on the train are a Diner-Lounge of the 10230 series and two heavyweight sleepers, a 10-1-2 operating from St. Louis to Los Angeles and a 12-1 operating from St. Louis to San Antonio. (*John A. Mills photo*)





The former Rock Island Hazen, Arkansas restored depot as seen on October 18, 2005. In 1912, the Cotton Belt Railroad also had a depot in Hazen on a little-known branch line. That story is below. *(Ken Ziegenbein photo)*

THE HAZEN DIVISION

By the late W. A. (Bill) Merck, former Cotton Belt employee, as written for the March 1983 Arkansas Railroader,

All railroad branch lines contain a certain amount of color, much more than do their main lines. Possibly the least known of the Cotton Belt branch lines was one simply called The Hazen Branch. It too had a small amount of color. Mostly from memory let me relate a few facts about this branch.

A printed history of the branch is almost non-existent. Meager information obtainable is that it, along with another branch line that ran from Stuttgart to England, was originally chartered as the Central Arkansas and Eastern Railroad. This name lasted only a short period of time and both branches were soon absorbed into the Cotton Belt.

Timetable information for the year 1912 (*when Brinkley Union Depot was built*) shows the little branch line train made a daily, except Sunday, round trip from Hazen to Stuttgart. It left Hazen at 5:25 a.m., arriving Stuttgart 7:25 a.m. It layed over all day in the latter city and headed back to Hazen at 6:20 p.m. and arrived there at 8:15 p.m. The distance from Stuttgart to Hazen on the branch was 20 miles.

As far as I know the branch never had a passenger train as such but back at that time, with but few exceptions, most passengers riding branch lines on the Cotton Belt were carried in a long drover's caboose. These cars were divided with a section in the rear for the crew, the middle section for passengers and the front section for baggage, express and LCL (Less-Than-Carload) freight, such as cream cans, poultry crates, etc. For caboose riding, these cars were the ultimate in comfort. In recent years models of the cars are in demand by railroad model buffs.

I have no information about motive power used, however with the light rail and thinly spread ballast I am sure only small power was used, possibly a tall-stack 4-4-0.



The only town of any consequence on the branch line between Stuttgart and Hazen was a Polish community named SLOVAC. Ever heard of it? The town was founded by Poles and mostly populated by members of that race. As far as I know it is still there. When U.S. Highway 70 was the main artery of traffic between Little Rock and Memphis, when you entered the city limits of Hazen you could look out your car window and see the Cotton Belt depot sitting some three or four blocks to the east. The line ended at the depot except for a spur track that curved from the depot to the northwest, crossed the Highway 70 and tied into the Rock Island line. This was the interchange point.



An old Cotton Belt 'Drover Caboose' sitting in the woods north of Ashdown, Arkansas in February 2002. It was being used as a bait shop but is now restored and in downtown Ashdown.

As a teenager, the only things I ever saw on the branch was some of the roadbed and the depot at Hazen. I visited the depot some two or three times and I recall the long-time agent was a gentleman named Buddy James. In addition to the Polish community of Slovac, something else that may add some color to the little branch is an unconfirmed story I heard several times. During the duck hunting season, the conductor and the brakeman armed with their shotguns went out on the back platform of the caboose and shot their days limit of ducks. If this is true then I am sure the conductor then pulled the air and the train stopped out on the prairie for the crew to get off and go back and retrieve their ducks.



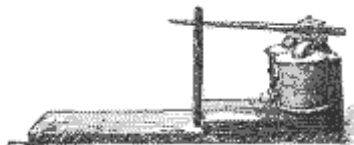
Principal commodities carried on the branch were rice, lumber and hay, in addition to the light LCL and a few passengers. In the early 1930s, highway trucks and hard surface roads dried up the traffic on the branch. It began operations in 1911 and was abandoned in 1937. There are probably very few present day residents of Hazen who remember that their town was once served by both the Cotton Belt and the Rock Island.

(Bill Merck was a long-time Cotton Belt employee and charter member of the Arkansas Railroad Club. He passed away in the 1980s.)

END OF WESTERN UNION TELEGRAMS – END OF A GREAT ERA

On January 26, 2006, Western Union sent its last telegram after over 150 years of operation. However, the company still has a strong money-transfer business and revenues are \$3 billion a year. The world's first telegram was sent on May 24 or May 26, 1844 by inventor Samuel Morse, after he got a grant of \$30,000 from the U.S. Congress. That message?: "What hath God Wrought?" It was sent from Washington to Baltimore (Western Union didn't come into existence until 1856). The last 10 telegrams included birthday wishes, condolences on the death of a loved one, notification of an emergency and several people trying to be the last to send a telegram.

Telegrams were used to announce the first flight in 1903 and the start of World War I. During World War II, the sight of a Western Union courier was feared because the War Department, the precursor to the Department of Defense, used the company to notify families of the death of their loved ones serving in the military. From a peak of 200 million telegrams in 1929, Western Union's telegram business had plunged in recent years, and only 20,000 messages were sent in 2005, most of which were from corporations with official notifications. Rest in peace, another part of history!





The old general merchandise store at Pettigrew, Ark. Was across the street from the main track of the Fayetteville & Little Rock (Frisco). The rails came in 1897, 42.8 miles from Fayetteville, and Pettigrew was a terminal. Sawmills soon made it the "Hardwood Capital of the World". Beside the door "High Prices for Bourbon Stave Bolts Delivered to Harrison, Ark." On 30 June 1937, the last train left town. The photo was made in April 1967.

WATCHING THE TREES DISAPPEAR

GENE HULL

This old general store at Pettigrew, Arkansas shows the effect of the passing of time, obviously, it never received the saving grace of a coat of paint. It sat quietly, surrounded by a prolific growth of Ozark Mountain hardwood forest.

The little Madison County town saw the slow spread of home seekers filtering into the valleys, which "wrinkled" that area of Arkansas. Then, in 1897, Hugh F. McDaniell appeared. Directly behind him came a gang of men laying a line of lightweight iron rails.

The Fayetteville & Little Rock Railroad had come to town.

When the rails reached St. Paul, 34.0 miles east of Fayetteville, the assault upon the vast forest began. Sawmills sprang up like mushrooms. Lumber and railroad crossties were shipped out by the trainload. Hugh F. Mc Daniell and his brother, J.S.

McDaniell, shipped 2 million worth of crossties only during 1887.

When the railroad reached Pettigrew, it was decided this would be the end of the line. Pettigrew soon was called the "Hardwood Capital of the World". There were more that a dozen mills nearby. To the left of the double-door entrance of the big general store a sign was nailed up giving notice that "High Prices for Bourbon Stave Bolts Delivered to Harrison, Ark.". By 1904 there was a large whiskey distillery a short way west of Combs, owned and operated under the strict supervision of the federal government.

Charles C. Lukas and his partner, Walter C. Gilstrap, owned the general store and one in St. Paul. From the front of the store Lukas counted 210 wagons loaded with lumber or crossties. Timberland was rapidly cut over and business on the railroad was declining. On 30 June 1937 the last train left Pettigrew.

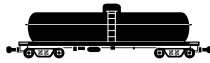
REMEMBERING - 3

P.B. Wooldridge


Back in 1944, I was a telegraph operator at Faith, Ark., 11 miles south of Pine Bluff, during World War II. Back then, before automatic signals and radio communication, every day provided us with surprises and excitement.

At this late date my recollection is dim but the following is my best reconstruction of events.

The Agent at Rison reported a tank car leaking oil on a northbound 60 car oil train, pulled by an 800 engine. We flagged the train at Faith and reported the problem. Then we had to flag No. 5, the passenger Morning Star, and head him in the siding.



Trainmen stopped the leak but a considerable amount of oil had been spilled. After the oil train had departed, I ran down to the south switch of the siding and handled it when No 5 left. Before leaving, No 5 had worked up his steam pressure and then blanketed his fire, as the air was heavy with oil fumes. AS No 5 DISAPPEARED DOWN THE TRACK, I WAS HOPING ALL THAT OIL WOULDN'T CATCH FIRE. IT DIDN'T!

This was just one of many examples that proved the importance of those small intermediate stations during World War II, such as Faith, Rone, Gravel Pit, Kent and Genoa, all in Arkansas. 

2006 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

PRESIDENT - Fred Fillers, 29009 Bandy Rd, Little Rock AR 72223-9720 (501-821-2026), cfillers@aol.com
V-PRESIDENT - John Hodkin, Jr., 506 Gordon North Little Rock AR 72117-4713 (501-945-2128), nlrailfan@sbcglobal.net
TREASURER - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826), wwalker@aristotle.net
SECRETARY - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826), wwalker@aristotle.net
EDITOR - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340), ken@trainweather.com
NRHS DIRECTOR - Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr, Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)
PHOTOGRAPHER - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729), johnphotonut@aristotle.net
HISTORIAN - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington Ave #31, N Little Rock AR 72114 (501-945-7386)
BOARD '06 - Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769 (501-664-0232)
BOARD '07 - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, North Little Rock AR 72116 (501-758-1340), ken@trainweather.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
BOARD '10 - Robin Thomas, 10980 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72212-1412 (501-225-1952)

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 \$22 a year more, bringing the total to \$42 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 held **SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2006, 2 PM** at our normal meeting place, Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, 4401 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock. The program will be presented by new member TOM SANDLIN. Tom will have a slide show on Southern California trains. We had 35 at our February meeting and hopefully this healthy turnout will continue in March! Refreshments are always served and the public is invited. **FUTURE PROGRAMS:** APRIL 9, David Hoge will have a digitally-projected show with photos from two trips to Nebraska and Wyoming on the BNSF coal lines, including Crawford Hill; MAY 21, Mike Condren will have a digitally-projected show. He'll let those in attendance decide what show we want to see and he'll have various choices. (Thanks to John Hodkin, Jr., our VP, for arranging these programs)

MARCH 18 RAILFAN TRIP POSSIBLE - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (479-331-2030), shay473@cei.net, said he'd provide his van if anyone wanted to go on a railfan, train-watching trip March 18, a Saturday. Let Ron know if you are interested.

2006 DUES ARE DUE – It's for Arkansas Railroad Club dues again. They will remain the same \$20 a year as they have been now for several years. This \$20 means you are members of the Arkansas Railroad Club only which includes the monthly *Arkansas Railroader*. If you'd like to join the National Railway Historical Society (and thus be a member of the Little Rock Chapter NRHS), you must pay \$22 more (NRHS dues went up to \$22 from \$20). So...pay a total of \$20 for club only or \$42 for local chapter dues AND NRHS dues. If you can afford it, I do recommend joining the NRHS – their Bulletins have been improving for years and there's always great stories (including some by our very own Gene Hull and others). Very entertaining railroad-related reading. Fill out the form elsewhere in this newsletter.

MEMBERS BIOGRAPHIES NEEDED – In January's *Railroader* I had a form asking for information on your life's work history to include in a future newsletter. You need not have worked for a railroad, but we'd be interested in any kind of work you did, where you worked, time frame, comments. I will not include your address or phone number, just name (unless you tell me to), so when the *Railroader* gets on the Internet, it will not have that information. So far, I've received many responses and will try to publish them as soon as possible (at least one per issue depending on space, so if yours isn't included in this issue, it'll be printed in a future issue). It's a way to preserve your personal history, at least your work history, for posterity.

RAILROADERS and MY PERSONAL TRAIN PHOTOS ONLINE – Most of you know I put lots of train pictures online, as well as the monthly *Railroaders* (now in Adobe PDF format so you can see the entire editions including color and black & white pictures). The web address for the *Railroaders* is: <http://www.trainweather.com/road.html>

My current and past train pictures are here: <http://www.trainweather.com/sunday.html>
Starting a couple of months ago, I started using small photos on the picture webpages so they will download fast (for those with slow dialup connections) with an option to click on any photo to make them larger (for broadband users). This has been very well received.

WEBSITE NOTICED IN THE UK - I received an email in January from a person in another country who found my trainweather.com site on the Internet, especially the part of the site relating to railroads.

In a January 22, 2006 email: "I live in south wales u k i enjoy your web site. i found it by chance when looking up a relative who lives in Little Rock. I am a loco buff myself but steam only. - Des Fletcher. Rhondda valley."

Another email regarding one of my rail photos I posted on February 27, 2005: "Regarding your February 26, 27, 2005 page, All of CRYX (Cryo-Trans) cars are named, the one you happened to photograph is named "Ice Age Trail". CRYX also just ordered 429 more of the reefers from Greenbrier. I'm not sure if they will be named or not." – Zach - "I love the smell of journal grease in the morning"

MEMBER BART JENNINGS RARE MILEAGE TRAIN TRIPS PLANNED – Here are some rail trips Bart Jennings and the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum in Tennessee have planned this June:

BANKS, OREGON, June 6, 2006. Sponsored by the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum, the charter train will operate over the entire length of the Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad from Banks to Tillamook, Oregon. This one-way train trip will depart Banks at 8:30am and includes afternoon bus return. Tickets are \$139 with an optional lunch available for \$11. Tickets available with SASE from SARM POTB 2006, P.O. Box 620, Avon, IL 61415. Details at www.southernappalachia.railway.museum.

CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON, June 7, 2006. Sponsored by the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum, the steam-powered charter train will operate over the entire length of the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad and feature several photo run-bys. The train trip will depart Chehalis 1:00pm. Tickets are \$20. Tickets available with SASE from SARM Chehalis 2006, P.O. Box 620, Avon, IL 61415. Details at www.southernappalachia.railway.museum.

TACOMA, WASHINGTON, June 8, 2006. Ride behind steam over the former Tacoma Eastern between Morton and Tacoma, Washington. Sponsored by the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum, the charter train will operate over the route using steam from the Mount Rainier Scenic. This will be the first operation of such a trip in many years. This one-way train trip will start with a bus ride from Tacoma to Morton and then train return. Tickets are \$165 which include train, bus and lunch. Tickets available with SASE from SARM POTB 2006, P.O. Box 620, Avon, IL 61415. Details at www.southernappalachia.railway.museum.

TACOMA, WASHINGTON, June 9, 2006. Ride behind steam over the former Tacoma Eastern between Tacoma and Morton, Washington. Sponsored by the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum, the charter train will operate over the route using steam from the Mount Rainier Scenic. This will be the first operation of such a trip in many years. This one-way train trip will depart Tacoma with bus return. Tickets are \$165 which include train, bus and lunch. Tickets available with SASE from SARM POTB 2006, P.O. Box 620, Avon, IL 61415. Details at www.southernappalachia.railway.museum

WANTED - FOR SALE OR TRADE

WANTED - LAVACA, ARKANSAS DEPOT PHOTO - H. E. Huber of Plano, Texas sent the following email: "Would you perhaps have a photo of the depot of the Arkansas Central RR at Lavaca? Mr. Jack James is curator of the Lavaca Museum and needs a copy of the old depot to exhibit. We have tried Union Pacific's archives in Omaha, Neb and they don't have one. If you don't have a picture, would you perhaps know anybody that might have one?"

Thanks for your help. H E Huber herbbety@comcast.net

WANTED - DEVAL'S BLUFF RI BRIDGE PHOTOS/INFORMATION – Received the following email February 13 from Oscar P. Chilson: "I received your email address from Cary Bradburn of the NLR History Commission. My grandfather, George Fischer; his son Ray Fischer later established the Fischer Honey CO in NLR, is believed to have been involved in both the ferry and the RR bridge that spanned the White River at DeVall's bluff. Have you any suggestions as to where to look for pictures and structural details for the first RR bridge that was built across the White River at DeVall's Bluff, AR? It is said to have been completed in 1871 and to have two "draw" spans of 175 ft each. I have found that "draw" sometimes means swing.

There is plenty of available information about the historical/economic significance of this RR connection between Memphis and Little Rock and that it was built by the Memphis Little Rock RR, but I am striking out on the structure itself. I cannot believe that there are no pictures or engineering drawings. I simply do not know how to ask the question or where to ask it. Thanks for whatever. Oscar Chilson. Mr. Chilson's email address is: chilsonoa@sbcglobal.net

KNOW OUR RAILROAD CLUB MEMBERS

L. TILLMAN WALKER

RAILROAD: Rock Island; **POSITION:** Brakeman and conductor; **PERIOD OF SERVICE:** 35 years, 6 months; **LOCATIONS:** Little Rock; **COMMENTS:**

Hired by Rock Island RR August 18, 1942. Made first student trip August 19, 1942 out of Booneville, Arkansas on train #992 leaving Booneville at 12:30 PM. It was a doubleheader with one 900-Class Rock Island passenger engine and one 3000-Class Freight Rock Island engine, both steam. The 3000-Class was one of the largest engines operating in Arkansas. Made student trip to Camden, El Dorado, Memphis and Booneville. Held regular runs and road switchers at Malvern and Stuttgart and regular road service to Booneville, Hot Springs, Camden, Memphis, El Dorado, Searcy, Stuttgart. Made first paid trip to Hot Springs and return January 1943.

Had to jump off engine at Butterfield before it turned over. Jumped off engine at Benton before rear-end collision, no flag out, in injuries, but crashed caboose. Conductor jumped out before impact. Got 30 demerits because conductor told me not to put torpedoes down.

On SSW passenger train #6 in March 1943. Rear brakeman on #994 train Biddle to Memphis. Got train order at Lonoke. About 1:30 AM slipped on step of caboose, held on grab iron for about one mile before I managed to pull myself back up on caboose. Conductor wanted to know where I had been so long when I brought order in caboose.

I failed to get derail in pocket track at Haskell, Arkansas. Ran engine 2536 over it, got engine all on ground. Last derail I ever forgot about. Got 10 demerits for that, so did engineer and fireman.

September 1946 out of Booneville on Extra 2318 with 75 cars, loads and empties. Had run by rock Jockey at Bigelow changing shifts. He was supposed to run 20 minutes ahead of every train but we came around a curve at Ross Hollow beside the river, hit Big Rock, derailed engine. Fireman and brakeman and I started on water tank but I could not make it, so I went out the window, slipped down gangway and hit ground, end over end to the old river bed in vines. Engine never turned over. Rock Mountain on one side and river on the other. The brakeman and fireman came and got me out of the vines. No broken bones but black all over. Engineer stayed in cab of engine, said he was afraid to jump on account of apron was jumping up and down so bad.

Coming out of Hot Springs and between Jones Mill and Butterfield, we met a train going to Hot Springs. We were supposed to meet at Butterfield. The fireman was running the engine going to Hot Springs, he had 4 diesel engines pulling 105 cars, most of them loads. He let it get away from him and they ran into us head-on. Jumped off and not one got hurt, but damaged our two diesels and their 4 units. Turned over 12 or 15 cars.

Was conductor on train #88 out of Hot Springs with 118 cars out of Butterfield, 8,400 tons, three units between Butterfield and Haskell. Broken rail turned over 31 cars, largest derailment I was ever in. One diesel unit that derailed, believe they are safer than steam engines. Was on one train where one good friend was run over by two steam engines and killed. Something you never forget. And crossing accidents, I have made out a lot reports on injuries and deaths to motorists and been on engine shoving injured and dead motorists down the track, another thing you can't forget.

Made my last trip January 4, 1978. Lots of ups and downs but enjoyed it. Even liked to get killed several times. Always thought it better to try to jump than get scaled to death or burned up.

The above is some of the accidents I went through. Would take a book for all of them. (Above written in April 1986 – Mr. Walker is now deceased)

FRANK A. BROOKS, JR.

COMPANY: Presbyterian Church (USA). I was an active minister for 43 years. I have now been retired 8 years.
POSITIONS IN THE COMPANY: Pastor in Trenton, Kentucky, pastor in Gulfport, Mississippi, worked for denominational headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, pastor in Batesville, Arkansas, pastor in Ripley, Mississippi and pastor in Leland, Mississippi. In retirement I live in Corinth, Mississippi.

COMMENTS: I have always been interested in writing and had quite a number of things I wrote in print. Many of these have been railroad-related. Some are:

“TRAVELING BY TROLLEY IN MISSISSIPPI” (Stories about streetcars). This is a 75-page book which was in the September 1983 issue of “Southern Traction.” I did a story on each of the 12 trolley lines which operated in Mississippi. Photos and maps included.

“THE LIMEDALE NARROW-GAUGE RAILROAD” (Batesville) You will remember that Ken Ziegenbein and I did this. I wrote the narrative and Ken did the photos. It was printed in the June 1985 issue of ARKANSAS RAILROADER.

“A MISSISSIPPI MUSES ABOUT THE G. M. AND O.” This piece was published in the November 1993 issue of NATIONAL RAILWAY BULLETIN of the NRHS.

In recent times I have had several major articles published in GREEN DIAMOND, the publication of the Illinois Central Historical Society. Some of them might be of interest to readers of ARANSAS RAILROADER. Since they are set in the same general area of the South. I have several other articles which have never been published about train trips I’ve taken in the past, etc. (Written January 9, 2006)

JOHN (J) CARY NETTLES

COMPANY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration; **POSITONS IN THE COMPANY:** Senior Scientist and Chief of Space Power Division.

PERIOD OF SERVICE: 1941 to 1970; **JOB LOCATIONS:** Cleveland and Sandusky, Ohio.

COMMENTS: Son of Elbert Nettles, long-time engineer on Louisiana-Arkansas Division. Graduate of LSU with BS in EE 1938. (Written January 2006)

SILVERIO R. MARTINEZ

RAILROAD OR OTHER COMPANY: L&A-KCS; **POSITIONS IN THE COMPANY:** Opr. – Station Agent; **PERIOD OF SERVICE:** August 1, 1952 – October 15, 1994.

JOB LOCATIONS: Hired by the L&A Railroad in April 1952 at Shreveport, La. Sent to Sulphur Springs, Texas to break in as station agent and telegrapher. On August 1, 1952 I was sent to Kenner, La. as agent until February 13, 1953 when I went to the U.S. Army- I was out of the service on February 8, 1955. Went back to Kenner in April 1955. Bid job at Cullen, La. in May 1956. In 1958 an Agency job came open. I was agent until 1965. In 1965, Stamps, Arkansas came open account of Mr. Horn retiring. I stayed at Stamps until 1972 when the Stamps station was closed.

I bumped Agency at Hope, Arkansas. While at Hope in 1975 I took the Agency for the Frisco doing both L&A and Frisco work. Later the BN took over the Frisco so I was Agent for both the BN and L&A. In 1982 I was bumped at Hope. In return I bumped at Ashdown until I retired on October 15, 1994.

COMMENTS: I enjoyed working for the L&A-KCS for 42 years. It was more of a family company. You were known by name not by number like the Frisco and BN. (Written January 2006)

DON WEIS

RAILROAD OR OTHER COMPANY: Weis Butane Gas Co., Brinkley, Arkansas; Sunray DX Oil Col, Brinkley, AR; Sun Oil Company, West Memphis, AR; Tamak Transportation Corp., Memphis, TN; Synergy Gas Corp., West Memphis, AR

POSITIONS IN THE COMPANY: Manager, Supply & Distribution, Wholesale LP Gas Salesperson & Region Manager, Sungas retail; President, Tamak Transportation Corp.

PERIOD OF SERVICE: 1958-1995; Tamak – 1962 to present.

COMMENTS: Presently have own company, leasing some railroad tank cars to various companies.

TOM SANDLIN

RAILROAD OR OTHER COMPANY: Railroad: CRI&P RR – 10/65, switchman in Ft. Worth, Texas; 10/65-10/66, operating trainee, system; 10/66-10/67, assistant trainmaster, Dallas, Texas; 10/67-4/68, trainmaster, Belleville, KS; Civil Service: 1968-1996, all Southern California.

COMMENTS: My couple of years on the railroad are priceless to me.

My email: high.green@earthlink.net

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.

IOWA - IOWA NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD – to abandon a line of railroad known as the Iowa Northwestern Railroad, extending from milepost 235.25 near Lake Park, IA, to the end of the line at milepost 252.3 near Allendorf, IA, a distance of 17.05 miles in Osceola and Dickinson Counties, IA (the line). The stations of Harris (MP 240.5), Ochededan (MP 246.0) and Allendorf (MP 251.8) are located on the line. A final decision will be issued by April 14, 2006. (STB Docket No. AB-1067 (Sub-No. 1X), decided January 5, served January 13, 2006)

WASHINGTON - YAKIMA INTERURBAN LINES ASSOCIATION – To abandon a line of railroad known as the Naches Branch, from milepost 2.97 (near Yakima) to milepost 14.26 (near Naches), a distance of approximately 11.29 miles in Yakima County, WA. Effective on February 18, 2006. (STB Docket No. AB-600 (Sub-No. 1X), decided January 12, served January 19, 2005)

NORTH DAKOTA – BNSF – To abandon a 7.12-mile line of railroad between milepost 144.21 at Grafton, and milepost 137.09, near Voss, in Walsh County, ND. Effective on February 25, 2006. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 432X), decided January 20, served January 26, 2006)

ALABAMA – NORFOLK SOUTHERN - To abandon a 5.8-mile line of railroad between milepost 55.3-N at Fort McClellan, and milepost 61.1-N, at Anniston, in Calhoun County, AL. Effective on March 4, 2006. (STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 265X, decided January 27, served February 2, 2006)

WYOMING - BNSF - To abandon a 0.11-mile line of railroad between milepost 42.59 and milepost 42.70, near Cody, in Park County, WY. Effective on March 4, 2006. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 436X, decided January 27, served February 2, 2006)

MICHIGAN – GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RR INCORPORATION – To abandon its line of railroad, the Flint Old Main, between milepost 265.3 and milepost 267.5, in Flint, Genesee County, MI, a distance of 2.2 miles. Effective on March 11, 2006. (STB Docket No. AB-31 (Sub-No. 40X, decided February 1, served February 9, 2006)



FORMER COTTON BELT OR ROCK ISLAND EMPLOYEES! (or anyone else interested in preserving railroad history): Want to help preserve and operate the historic 1912 Brinkley Union Depot in Brinkley, Arkansas? This depot was saved from demolition in the late 1990s and is now fully renovated and open as a top-notch museum. The museum has railroad items, along with many other historic artifacts from the past. It has the original 1912 tile floor, which once saw 500 passengers a day get on or off Cotton Belt or Rock Island trains in Brinkley.

Want to help? Join the Central Delta Historical Society, which operates this depot. You'll get a membership card (*created by Arkansas Railroader editor Ken Ziegenbein*) and free admission to the museum as well as a 2 or 3 time-a-year publication called the "Doodlebug." Dues are only \$15 a year for individuals and \$25 a year for couples. Mail dues to Central Delta Historical Society, 100 W. Cypress St., Brinkley AR 72021. We welcome your support! (*I've included a separate membership form with this newsletter at no cost to the Arkansas Railroad Club*)



ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS



UNION PACIFIC, A&M TEAM UP TO HAUL CORN

(*Springdale, Arkansas January 11, 2006*) - Arkansas & Missouri Railroad struck a deal with Union Pacific Railroad and some of the nation's top poultry companies to start the region's first shuttle line January 10 to transport corn from Van Buren to Springdale.

"The shuttle program will bring grain back into Northwest Arkansas by rail," said Mark Bonnell, systems administrator for Springdale-based A&M Railroad. "Hopefully, we can get 85 to 90 percent of it by rail now." Grain had been the company's top transport commodity, but presently about 50 percent of grain sent to Arkansas customers arrives by truck, Bonnell said.

The shuttle arrangement between Union Pacific and A&M Railroad was a deal three years in the making, he added. Arkansas & Missouri Railroad is a short-line railroad company that serves more than 150 customers on 149 miles of track from Monett, Mo., to Fort Smith. The rail line originally was part of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway that was built in the 1880s and merged with Burlington Northern Railroad in 1980. A&M Railroad acquired the line in 1986.

A&M Railroad's engineers will operate the cars and locomotive engines owned by Union Pacific for the shuttle line, Bonnell said. (*Editor's note – I guess this means there will no longer be exclusive Alcos's on this line, right?*) The shuttle will operate from Van Buren to deliver grain to poultry operators in Springdale. "Before, we picked up trains in Van Buren and delivered grain with our power," he said. "It would take two or three days to unload."

Terry Tucker, feed mill manager for Tyson Foods' Springdale feed site, said the new shuttle line will save the company several cents per bushel of corn. "Plus it gives us cars we can run back and forth," he added. "Every seven to 10 days, we can expect a shuttle train to come in. Before, we just had to buy so many [rail] cars on the open market."

Each rail car carries 200,000 pounds of corn that will be mixed by Springdale-based Tyson to create the company's chicken feed. Tyson uses more than 1 million pounds of corn each day, he said. "If we weren't able to get it on rail, we would have to get trucks. It would take 25 to 30 trucks a day to sustain production," he said.

January 14's delivery provided 73 rail cars for the first shuttle train in Northwest Arkansas. The shuttle train delivered 27 cars of corn to Tyson, 37 cars to George's Inc. and nine cars to turkey processor Cargill Inc., Bonnell said. Union Pacific spokesman Jason Hess said the Omaha, Neb.-based railroad uses shuttle programs across the southern half of Arkansas to transport corn for poultry companies.

Non-shuttle trains must secure the freight, load the train, find a locomotive to power the train, then take the locomotives off at interchanges with other railroads such as A&M, Hess said. "Now, we're able to turn those very quickly. The power will stay with the train," he said. (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, by Cristal Cody*)

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

CHICAGO UNION STATION REDEVELOPMENT

(*January 9, 2006*) – *The following Amtrak press release was relayed to me by Daryl Stout:* Amtrak has selected Jones Lang LaSalle and its joint venture partner, Youssefi-Scott Development Company, to enter into negotiations to redevelop the Headhouse Building of Chicago Union Station, a property owned by Chicago Union Station Co. (CUSCo), an Amtrak subsidiary. The redevelopment plan calls for a program that will completely revitalize the building, bounded by Clinton, Canal, Jackson and Adams streets, into a major, environmentally conscious mixed-used development including new office space, a hotel/conference center, condominiums and retail space.

Improving and adding to this historic structure will provide the centerpiece for the revitalized West Loop. There has been significant commercial and residential development in the downtown area west of the river, and a mixed-use development will provide this burgeoning area with additional commercial and retail services. CUSCo and Jones Lang LaSalle plan to preserve the historic structure while creating enough additional development to benefit the area and make the project feasible.

Under the agreement, Jones Lang LaSalle and its partner will have a fixed period of exclusivity to complete a development agreement with CUSCo for the conversion of approximately 500,000 square feet of vacant former railroad offices in the building and for the construction of a tower first envisioned when Chicago Union Station was completed in 1925.

As originally conceived and designed, Chicago Union Station was to be a high-rise structure, but was never completed. The station was initially designed by famed Chicago architect Daniel Burnham and completed by Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, the successor to D.H. Burnham & Co. after Burnham's death. The building is an historically significant element of Chicago's transportation heritage and the project would restore, refurbish and enliven a building envisioned by Burnham. The plan by Jones Lang LaSalle and its partner calls for the preservation of the exterior elevations, rooflines and Great Hall - including the 300-foot-long barrel-vaulted skylight that soars 115 feet over the room - and adds an 18-story tower in a project totaling approximately \$250 million.

"Chicago Union Station serves as an important transportation terminal for area commuters and as a gateway and transfer point for Amtrak passengers from throughout the country," said Amtrak Acting President and CEO David Hughes. "We hope this project will realize the original architect's vision for the station as a vital center of life and activity in the West Loop." Chicago Union Station is the busiest passenger terminal in Chicago and is the most intact of what were once six major downtown Chicago stations. An average of 50 Amtrak trains come and go from Chicago Union Station every day, with more than 6,000 passengers using the station daily. System wide, it is the fourth busiest Amtrak station.

Chicago Union Station is also the largest of the four downtown terminals used by Metra, which is formally known as the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Rail Corporation. Six of Metra's 11 routes operate into and out of Chicago Union Station. More than 120,000 Metra passengers and 242 commuter trains use Chicago Union Station on weekdays, plus weekend service.

The redevelopment plans do not include the passenger concourse, ticketing areas and train platforms, which were renovated in 1991, so existing Amtrak and Metra rail operations will not be affected. Rather, the travel experience will be enhanced by the many new amenities to be offered, restoring the vibrant atmosphere of the early days of the station. CUSCo was formed in 1913 by five railroads that have since been absorbed by other lines and has been wholly owned by Amtrak since 1984. For schedules, fares and information, passengers may call 800-USA-RAIL or visit Amtrak.com.

UNION PACIFIC MILITARY-FRIENDLY EMPLOYER (continued in next column)

Union Pacific Railroad will continue its aggressive hiring pace in 2006, at all levels, from train service to management.

One employment pool Union Pacific Railroad continues to target is the Armed Forces -- particularly members of the military who are either retiring or looking for employment while remaining in the Reserves or National Guard. In recognition of its efforts to recruit and hire former members of the military, G. I. Jobs magazine -- a national monthly magazine that assists transitioning military members and veterans in their search for civilian employment -- named Union Pacific Railroad the nation's top Military Friendly Employer for 2005.

Union Pacific targets people with military experience for several reasons. Many of the railroad's technical jobs -- such as diesel locomotive mechanics, electricians and railcar mechanics -- are well suited for military members who have developed similar skills working with military equipment.

Lifestyles and working conditions are also similar between the military and the railroad, and many positions at Union Pacific involve outdoor work with non-traditional working hours. Interested applicants are encouraged to visit <http://www.up.com> and click on "Jobs at UP." Persons without access to computers should visit their local job service, public library, or copy center. Applicants should be a minimum of 18 years of age. People who receive a job offer are required to successfully complete a medical exam, drug test and background investigation.

1998 RAILROAD KILLER EXECUTION DATE

The serial killer who rode the rails in 1998 in search of victims has been sentenced to death in a courtroom in January 2006. Angel Maturino Resendez had nothing to say as the judge finalized his death sentence, despite his attorney's request that the sentenced be postponed. He is scheduled to be put to death on May 10, 2006 for the 1998 murder and rape of Dr. Claudia Benton of West University.

Maturino Resendiz got the name the "Railroad Killer" because he was linked to 14 slayings in Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and Illinois near the rail lines he rode nationwide. He has claimed to have committed even more.

Most of the victims, including Dr. Benton, lived near railroad tracks. Investigators said he hopped trains and rode them from place to place often robbing, then killing his victims. (*Dallas Morning News summary*)

TEXAS STATE RAILROAD PARTIAL SHUTDOWN?

At a well-attended meeting in Palestine, Texas in January, Walter Dabney, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department state parks director, explained the state of the park system, especially the Texas State Railroad. Apparently, there isn't enough money to keep the Palestine depot open in 2006, but at least the train will still run out of Rusk. He also said that Texas was 49th in spending on state parks, with Mississippi last. Interestingly, John D. Parker, commissioner for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission, said. "Arkansas has the park system we should have because they funded it. But we can't do anything without the support of the (Texas) Legislature."

HIJACKED TRAIN DERAILS

(*Lawrence, Kansas January 14, 2006*) -- Police are investigating a train derailment Saturday night, January 14, that happened when an unknown person climbed into an unlocked Burlington Northern Santa Fe engine near downtown Lawrence and started the engine moving. It got up to 14 miles per hour and traveled about 200 yards before hitting a derailing lock and going off the tracks. According to an event

recorder in the engine, someone began tinkering with controls inside the engine at 9:59 p.m. By 10:04 p.m., the engine was moving.

BNSF spokesman Steve Forsberg said it's not unusual for engines to be left idling, especially during cold weather. Engines also are left unlocked and running at times, he said, but in those cases crews normally remove a piece of equipment from the engine that will keep it from running properly.

The railroad company is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information that leads to the person responsible. Anyone with information is asked to call (800) 832-5432 and refer to complaint case No. 179. Forsberg said about \$1,000 damage was done to the engine, which was lifted back onto the tracks with a crane and taken to Topeka for repairs.

INDIAN TRIBE SUING UNION PACIFIC

(Reno, Nevada January 11, 2006) - An American Indian tribe is suing the Union Pacific Railroad and seven other landholders, claiming the companies stole land in vast stretches of the west in violation of an 1860s treaty with the U.S. government. The civil lawsuit, filed on behalf of the Western Shoshone National Council, chief Raymond Yowell and six national council members, seeks a declaration that the Western Shoshone nation holds title to land, minerals and water in so-called "checkerboard" lands the government granted to the railroad in the 19th century.

The action seeks "past and future damages for waste and trespass" and calls for the companies to "disgorge all monies and things of value" obtained as a result of controlling the lands. The defendants, in addition to Union Pacific Railroad, are BNSF Railroad Co., Newmont Gold Co., Barrick Goldstrike Mines Inc., Glamis Gold Inc., Nevada Land Resource Co., Sierra Pacific Power Co. and Idaho Power Co.

The lawsuit would void the transfer by the United States from 1862 to 1869 of millions of acres of land to the Union Pacific Railroad Co., and attempt to recover profits from the sale, exchange, lease, development and other uses of those lands The Western Shoshone have never relinquished title to the lands.

RAILROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The Federal Railroad Association said that various metrics used to gauge rail safety showed continued improvement from January to October of 2005. Chief among the group's findings were an 11.3% decline in train accident rates and a 13.9% decline employee casualty rates compared to the first

ten months of 2004, as well as an 8.2% decline in grade crossing incident rates. FRA data also revealed improvements in major causes of train accidents, including decreases in rate of accidents caused by human factors (17.5%), equipment defects (20.6%), signal problems (17.1%), and yard accident rates (17.1%).

RAILROADS WAVE OF FUTURE – HARRIS POLL

Results of a Harris Poll released in early February 2006 show that most Americans view railroads as the preferred future mode for moving passengers and freight. "Freight railroads (63%) come far ahead of all other modes that adults would like to see have an increasing share of freight transportation," said the polling organization. "They are followed by air freight (35%) and trucks (24%)."

Asked to name two preferred means of passenger transportation, the poll respondents listed commuter trains (44%), long-distance trains (35%), local bus service (23%), and airlines (23%). Harris said safety and energy efficiency were seen as top priorities for passenger transportation.

"When it comes to the transportation system 'in the nation as a whole,' two-thirds (68%) of adults believe this should be a responsibility of the federal government. Relatively few see this as the responsibility of state government (13%), local government (2%), or private companies (8%)."

The poll was taken the week of December 8, 2005.

NS/KCS JOINT VENTURE INCREASES CAPACITY

Norfolk Southern and Kansas City Southern have agreed to form a joint venture that will increase capacity and improve service on the Meridian Speedway between Meridian, Mississippi and Shreveport, Louisiana. This line is an important and direct rail connection between the southeast and southwest parts of the country. The increased capacity will give both railroads the ability to handle more volume and improve their service.

KCS will contribute a 320-mile rail line between Meridian and Shreveport and NS will invest \$300 million in cash to mostly be used for capital improvements to increase capacity. The capital improvements will include signal systems, extended sidings and stretches of double track, upgrading track speed and other capacity enhancements to the line. KCS will contribute its rail line to the joint venture for a 70 percent interest, while NS will invest cash for a 30 percent interest. KCS will operate the line while NS will be the sole provider of certain intermodal services over the line.

Michael R. Harverty, KCS chairman and CEO said: "For many years the Meridian Speedway in Louisiana and Mississippi has had great potential. Now, with this partnership, it will realize that potential." *(NS Newsbreak thanks to Randy Tardy)*

AMTRAK NEWS

FY 2007 BUDGET HAS AMTRAK INCLUDED THIS YEAR/NARP MEETING IN LITTLE ROCK MAR 18

The Bush Administration's Fiscal Year 2007 budget includes \$900 million for Amtrak with some strings attached. But at least it wasn't the Zero amount budgeted for 2006, which Congress overrode and gave \$1.3 billion instead. I think that can be considered a positive development since Amtrak supporters and its record ridership doesn't have to start from a zero funded budget.

Also, charter Arkansas Railroad Club member Bill Pollard, who is very active in supporting Amtrak and its operations, helped plan a National Association of Railroad Passenger Annual Meeting (Region IX) in Little Rock to be held March 18 at the Cox Center, next to the downtown public library. Region IX of NARP includes Texas and Missouri and some other surrounding states, so there'll be a lot of passenger rail supporters in town the weekend of March 18. I plan to meet some at the Amtrak station (Union Station) in Little Rock at midnight and 4:30 a.m. that morning, if anyone wants to join me. This would be a great chance for you to see an active passenger station at work (grossed over \$1 million in 2005).

EVENTS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS - Saturday, April 1, 2006 - The Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society's annual RAILROADIANA SHOW AND SALE at the Arkansas Railroad Museum, 1700 Port Road in Pine Bluff. Hours will be 9 AM to 4 PM. Admission: \$5 adults, \$2 children 6-12, children under 6 free. There will be railroad memorabilia, model trains all scales, and door prizes each hour. Information" 870-535-8819.

THE FIRST TRAIN TO TOWER GROVE - USUALLY WINS THE RACE TO UNION STATION

By: John Mills (*written February 2, 2006*)

What could be more exiting to an eleven year old who loved trains, than a full fledge passenger train race? Forget about the famous race departing Englewood in south Chicago between the famous crack New York Central and Pennsylvania Railroad flyers which is well documented. This race though not prestigious was much longer, a distance of about thirty-five (35) miles and often ended in a "dead heat". The first few miles the track ran almost parallel and the passengers on both trains were soon caught up in the competition. The train crews would wave and gesture to each other in non-vulgar motions and the train whistle sounds added flavor to the competition. In today's culture "mooning" each other would probably be acceptable.

In July 1941 on a trip to St Louis to visit relatives and attend a St Louis Browns vs. Boston Red Socks baseball game and see Ted Williams hit a home run at Sportsman Park was not the first or only time I witnessed this galvanizing event. An hour before our arrival in St Louis some 6.6 miles north of De Soto, MO near Hematite on the Missouri Pacific tracks is where it began. At that location our track passed under the (SLSF) Frisco track which ran from Memphis to St Louis. Suddenly our train number 18/28, the combined (at Knobel AR) *Hot Springs Special/Tennesian*, was passed overhead by SLSF (Frisco) train No. 806, the *Memphian*, with a consist of a 4-6-2 Pacific locomotive # 1025 followed by four head-end cars, two coaches, one snack-lounge car, and one 16 Section Pullman car, a total of eight (8) cars.

Our train was #18, the *Hot Springs Special*, which we had boarded at Little Rock for a 10pm departure. This train's consist included a 4-8-2 Mountain type locomotive # 5338 and a twelve car train of five head-end cars, three coaches, three Pullman cars and a coach-cafe-lounge. The four (4) Memphis cars had been switched into the middle of the train at Knobel.

Shortly after passing overhead on a wooden trestle the Frisco train was slightly behind us, both trains traveling about 60 to 65 mph. They veered off toward the northwest which resulted in them coming into Tower Grove from a southwest direction and scheduled to arrive at 7:18AM. Our train due in Tower Grove at 7:21AM had a more difficult route to follow including twenty (20) miles along the banks of the Mississippi River. In addition, our train had three conditional stops, to discharge passengers only, but on this date we made none of those stops. If only one of those stops are made, the race is lost by the MoPac train. The first train to get a Clear signal at the Frisco/ MOPAC crossing just west of the separate depots at Tower Grove usually wins the race to Union Station. Getting past Lindenwood yard sometimes delayed the Frisco train.

We arrive first, quickly discharge our passengers at Tower Grove and just as we begin to move I see the smoke from the Frisco # 1025 from over at the Frisco station as it pulls in with No. 806. We get a slight head start from Tower Grove then I hear the Frisco train "highball" with two short "toots" from their whistle. The final lap begins for Grand Ave Junction where the Terminal Railroad trackage starts. From Grand Avenue to the east end of the wye tracks to back into Union Station depends on the TRRA dispatchers. Luckily we have "green" signals and come to a stop just as the Frisco train pulls up along side us, not 10 seconds later. IT'S OVER, WE WIN!

When we finally stop under the shed in Union Station we are greeted by no less than six or seven streamlined (round-end observation car) trains including the *Eagle*, *Green Diamond*, *Abraham Lincoln*, *Mark Twain Zephyr*, *Zephyr-Rocket* just arriving from the Twin Cities and the *Pioneer Zephyr*. What a sight, when the universe was in order and things were the way God intended. Competitive action also has been known to take place between Pacific, MO and Tower Grove/Union Station between MoPac's No. 16 the *Sunflower* and Frisco's No. 2 *The Texas Special* as well as other trains operating along these almost parallel lines.



Diamond stack 4-4-0 No. 3 has a Union Pacific “brand” on her right steam chest, but she was operating on the old Oregon Railway & Navigation road, probably in 1890s.

An Arkansas Connection in Oregon

Gene Hull

The setting for our story is the beautiful, majestic Columbia River Gorge separating the states of Washington and Oregon. In pre-historic times the melting along the southern fringes of massive glaciers in the present area of western Canada created a comparative gentle trickle of a river, carving its path to the Pacific Ocean.

In the meantime, erupting volcanoes laid down successive layers of basaltic lava, over which the river continued to flow, but finally was blocked. Some 300,000 years ago, the vast glacial system began to break up and deluges swept down the path of the river, rupturing the intervening barriers of lava and sandstone, gouging out the present pathway of the Columbia.

This violence left large fields of jagged boulders along the bed of the river, creating vicious and turbulent rapids and whirlpools. Civilization advanced westward and transportation soon required steam-powered riverboats on the Columbia. These were confined to the more placid pools between the blockading rapids. This made necessary some means of portage for the passengers and freight.

It was inevitable that advancing technology provided short lengths of railroad (five to ten miles) as the means of portage. The Cascades, 57 miles upstream from Portland, Oregon presented a natural barrier to navigation. In 1851 a mule-powered tramway with wooden rails was built by a fellow named Chenoweth. It later was sold to a steamboat operator named Bradford. On 31 January 1859 it was incorporated as the Cascades Railroad. In 1861 a flood carried it downstream. It was rebuilt the next year by the Oregon Steam Navigation Company. The mules were replaced by a locomotive from the Oregon Portage Company operating on the south side of the river—the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company. It seems the OR & N was chartered 13 June 1879 as a consolidation of the Oregon Steamship Company and the Oregon Steam Navigation Co., owners of the portage road. The OR&N was leased 1 January 1887 by the Oregon Shortline Railroad. The lease was transferred 1 August 1889 to the Oregon Short Line & Utah Northern Railway, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific.

Who owns what?

The OR&N expanded until it had more than 1,000 miles of

main line in Oregon and Washington in the early 1890s.

The photograph illustrating this story was made in the early 1890s on the OR&N. The multi-domed 4-4-0 has a UNION PACIFIC “brand” on her slide-valve steam chest. The engine crew and a pair of capable looking “shacks” are proudly posed for the photographer. The bedraggled right-of-way and raw track show the construction was new. This is where the possible Arkansas Connection comes in (did you think we wouldn’t get there?)

The famous (infamous?) Author, Thomas W. Jackson, was a brakeman for the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company when he wrote the controversial book - ON A SLOW TRAIN THROUGH ARKANSAS- in 1903. The location of the photo is supposed to be near Hoquiam, Washington at the end of the track at the Pacific Coast.

Could one the young fellows on the pilot of the Hinkley-built 4-4-0 No. 3 be Thomas Jackson?

The following is a letter from ARC member Travis Bell:

I made another Amtrak trip to the west coast in October (2005) so I now have at least 20,000 Amtrak miles under my belt. This trip was quite different from any of my previous trips. For one thing, neither Eagle or Sunset limited had the Sightseer Lounge coach this time, all other trips have always included it. Apparently they have even changed names. Heretofore the coach now referred to as Sightseer Lounge was called Cafe Lounge. (*the regular Sightseer Lounges are back on the Eagles as of this printing – Ed.*)

What all four of our trains last fall had that they referred to as Cafe Lounge was a type of dining car, where food was prepared on the lower level and used dumbwaiters to bring Food to the upper level, at “Midships”, with fixed tables each with four chairs in each end of the upper level; one end used only for serving diners, the other end serving as the lounge where you could read, play cards or just visit with friends.

The other major changes have to do with schedule changes and delays. For one thing, between April and October they changed arrival times due in San Antonio (for the westbound Eagle) two hours later, and departure times for the eastbound Eagle to 8:00 A. M. The eastbound Sunset Limited is due in San Antonio at 10:25 P.M., so you have a long layover there.

It is very apparent that there is no love between Union Pacific RR and Amtrak. Another change since I last rode the Sunset Limited is its route through Arizona. Whereas it used to go through both Tucson and Phoenix, it now bypasses Phoenix and for some reason kills about 2 hours, westbound or eastbound at a place called Maricopa. (*I believe this bypass of Phoenix occurred more than 10 years ago due to track downgrades in the area. – Ed.*) And arrival times and departure times at LAUPT both are drastically changed in the past few years. (Of course, the Southern Pacific still existed and owned most of the route from Sam Antonio to L.A. the first trips to and from the west I made, whereas now it all was UP from Texarkana to Santa Barbara with the possible exception of the route from Ft Worth to San Antonio. Even the Coast Division is now UP).

To sum up, despite the fact that intercity Amtrak trains are almost exclusively powered by GE P40 or P42 Genesis locomotives with more power and larger fuel tanks than the EMD F40PH they replaced, and Amtrak trains no longer haul mail or express freight (*except in a couple of areas –Eed.*), and generally haul fewer cars per train, thanks to the “Z” trains and double stack container trains on the UP, you can expect much longer times from start to finish

due to delays meeting these freights. Best I remember from the time we boarded the westbound Eagle at Texarkana until we stepped off the Pacific Surfliner # 769 at Santa Barbara was some 54 hours. That’s just too long to go coach class, so George and I changed our reservations at Santa Barbara to roomette and ate all meals on the diner on our return, and good thing too, because from Santa Barbara to Texarkana took 63 hours.

For the second time, I have been aboard an~ Amtrak train when it struck a wheel vehicle at a grade crossing killing two or more people. This time it was the westbound Eagle east of Ft Worth, where a young woman driving a Ford Ranger pickup ran around the crossing gates, the engine struck the truck just behind the cab on the driver’s side, and according to the engineer, the train struck the truck twice. Our train got stopped in about 8 or 10 carlengths. The woman died instantly, her husband was thrown out of the truck and was air evacuated but soon expired and I don’t know if the young child survived or not. We were in the fifth coach and the truck ended up on the side I was riding on, so I could see that the crossing gate was down and dust still flying, the gate still shaking, and the complete rear axle knocked completely off the truck.

My other experience was aboard the eastbound Sunset Limited in April, 1990, around midnight probably somewhere near the Arizona-California border when our train struck a pickup, killing the young man driving and another boy riding with him expired before morning. The engineer saw the truck stop, then start up and proceed into the path of the train, and naturally there was nothing the engineer could do to prevent the tragedy. But to sum up, I still am for Amtrak all the way and hope it can survive.

Now on to a different subject. The last few editions of the newsletter mentioned some writer wanting some info about the peach harvests years ago near Nashville, AR. I can’t answer his questions but can discuss other aspects of it. First-off, as I recall, the orchard was referred to as Highland and was at that time supposedly the world’s largest peach orchard. As long as steam power ruled the rails in the USA, Gurdon was definitely a “railroad” town. It had a four-stall roundhouse, turntable, rip track, caboosse track, wye track, a large steel-reinforced concrete coal chute arranged so that four tracks could have a locomotive being replenished at the same time, two water tanks, a huge bunker fuel tank, a machine shop, an oil-fired stationary boiler, facilities for cleaning ashpans on coal-fired engines and dumping the cinders in a gondola, two cylindrical devices to

catch and direct upward steam and hot water from engines having the boilers “blown-down”, a wheel orchard, two pump houses each with two steam-driven duplex pumps, one for pumping ‘water ‘to two different locations, the other used for pumping bunker C fuel from a sump under the caboose track for draining tank cars to the large storage tank; the other used to pump oil from the large tank to an elevated storage tank near the roundhouse and to the trackside oil cranes for the main north of the depot and just south of the roundhouse for southbound trains.

And personnel at Gurdon included machinists and their helpers., boiler makers and their helpers, engine wipers, fire knockers, hostlers and hostler helpers, water service people, coal chute and sander personnel, section gangs, carmen and car inspectors, and supervisory persons such as general roundhouse foreman (Mr. H. H. “Happy” Ryle), roadmasters, yardmasters, trainmasters, etc., two switching yards. Two branch lines broke out at Gurdon, and it always seemed to have an active extra board for operating crewmen from anywhere in the Arkansas Division.

Anyhow, each year just before the peach harvest commenced, two or more extra engines would be dispatched to Gurdon for preparation for switching the peach orchard. And they were usually “four-hundreds”, the oldest, smallest Consolidation (2~8-0) types to endure till the 1950’s, numbered 401 to around 485. They were rather ugly engines, being high-mounted, skinny-boilered, low drivered kettles, and not very well liked because they allegedly rode rough and were rather slow, having drive wheel diameters of only 55 inches. I understand they were among the first engines having fireboxes too wide to fit between the driving wheels, instead mounted high enough for the firebox to be above the rear drivers, thus causing them to have so much empty space between the frame and bottom of the boiler.

I hope this bit of trivia helps the fellow requesting the information on the peach orchard. .

BREAKING RAIL NEWS AS OF FEB 15, 2006 – The Louisiana Steam Train Association’s renovated SP steam locomotive No. 745 in New Orleans may be going to Kansas City in February for display at Kansas City’s Union Station. However, it and it’s associated exhibit cars will be TOWED to KC, but it may return to New Orleans under steam in late April after the display period is over. Here’s the notices from the LASTA web site (www.lasta.org) and a Yahoo Group associated with that organization. Note that nothing has been finalized yet as of this February 15 writing (which goes to press Feb 16):

“The Louisiana Steam Train Association (LASTA). SP 745 Spirit of Louisiana Exhibit Train Kickoff! - Sunday, February 19, 2006, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 1403 Jefferson Highway (across from Ochsner) next to the Sav-A-Center warehouse in Jefferson, Louisiana, near New Orleans.

Southern Pacific steam engine #745, built in Algiers by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1921, will leave the week before Mardi Gras to spread the word that New Orleans and Louisiana are coming back strong in the wake of the devastation brought on by Hurricane Katrina. The SP 745 Spirit of Louisiana Exhibit Train will bring the story of Mardi Gras to Kansas City for a two-month visit to that city’s new railroad museum. The public is invited to see this historic steam locomotive and tour the train’s exhibit cars packed with the exciting and colorful story of Mardi Gras! Proceeds from donations benefit the non-profit Louisiana Steam Train Association (LASTA) (which restored and maintains historic SP engine #745) with a portion going to help children who were victims of Hurricane Katrina. LASTA memberships available!

Contact Bruce Brown at 504-319-0531, or Walt Pierce at pager number 504-521-0577.”

Also, from the LASTA Yahoo Group site from Barry Keegan, leader of Marketing for the organization: “If all goes well now the SP 745 and her four cars will get towed to K.C. under partial steam (to maintain lubrication) for a two month belated stay at the KC Museum. Departure is going to be Feb 20-22. This will allow a couple of days to get the train to K.C. in time for Mardi Gras on 2/28 or before. The two theatre cars will be equipped with an historic Mardi Gras theme/display throughout. It is taking shape now and looks awesome. After staying in K.C. until late April, the train will STEAM BACK to New Orleans. The particular route is not published yet (as of February 15). Stay tuned for more on that.”



The photo at left, by John C. Jones, is of Israeli EMD locomotive No. 251, an EMD export. Doug Harley found out that it’s a G-8. Anyone know what it was doing here in North Little Rock last January?

By the way, John was featured in a UP publication locally, explaining to UP employees what he did and that he did not work for UP. Now they’ll know why he is on UP property at times, with permission.