

The Scrambler

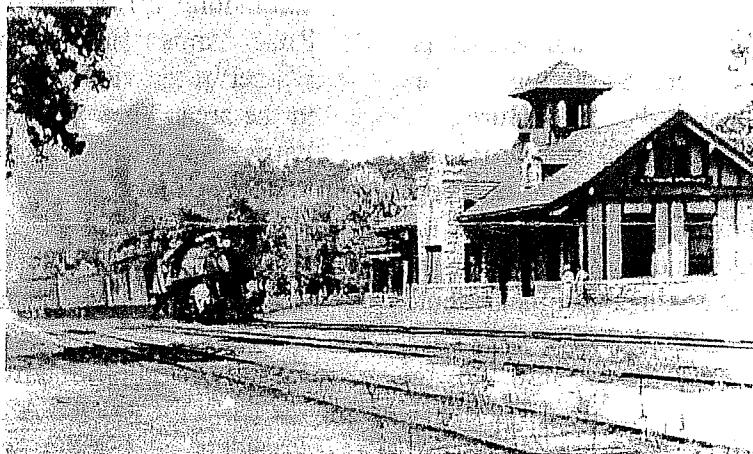
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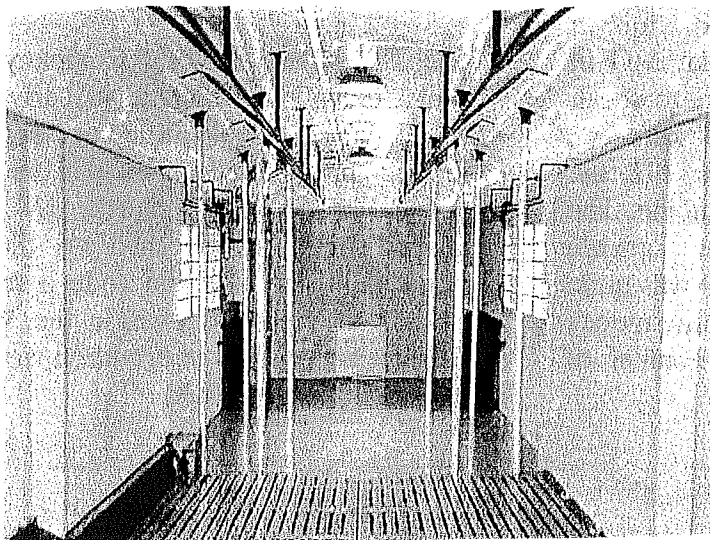
Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

Opinions expressed in the *Scrambler* are those of the Editor and contributors. They do not represent the official view of the Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter, its members, officers or directors or the National Railway Historical Society, Inc. unless otherwise stated.

Chapter secretary Ron Allen will read the minutes of the March meeting at our April 19 meeting.



This undated image, from the internet, shows a southbound Kansas City Southern 800 class steam locomotive pulling RPO 60 past the Sulphur Springs, AR depot.



Left -In 1949 American Car & Foundry built two new mail-baggage-express cars as part of the re-equipping of the *Southern Belle*. One car, No 68, operated until the end of KCS RPO service in 1969. This image shows the 30-foot mail apartment where clerks sorted mail.

The Arkansas & Missouri Railroad Company

The Monett-Springdale train usually passes through Northwest Arkansas in the pre-dawn hours. However, the last week in March saw the train passing through Rogers at 8:00 AM on two consecutive days. The train is well powered with five to six Alco 420 units. Spliced in the middle of the engine consist is lowly T-16 switcher 16. Perhaps it may be in a testing mode prior to resuming regular switching service. Speaking of engines No 68, an Alco C-420, will be the scheduled passenger train motive power for the 2001 season.

The 2001 season passenger train leaflet is now available. Fares are \$4.00 higher for Springdale trips while the Van Buren – Winslow trip is up by \$3.00. The brochure cover is identical to 2000 but inside the brochure is a great improvement. The brochure is nicely laid out and almost certainly had some graphic designer input. The brochure also has a system map but unfortunately, it came out to light to be useful.

The Chapter member Rogers Historical Museum Friday, March 16 evening charter trip to the Devils Eyebrow was a great success. Treasurer Bob Hofer reported the train was visited by a group of history interpreters who were headed for a Confederate reunion at Springfield, MO in 1890. Bob enjoyed the opportunity to speak with the interpreters. The car's kerosene lamps provided the lighting in car 102, the former Boston & Maine 1898 combine. The delicious food came from the upscale Market at Pinnacle Point. The trip was quite a success as the Museum raised some money and more importantly gained a number of new members.

Your Editor was scheduled to ride the Rogers Historical Museum train but was knocked out by an allergy. The March 18 *Benton County Daily Record* carried a front page color picture of Chapter member Rose Anne Hofer comforting the victim of a passenger train accident on Saturday, March 17. At first, I thought it had something to do with the Rogers Historical Museum train but it seemed odd as the picture was in full daylight. The accident, which took place near the Rogers municipal airport, involved a southbound one-car excursion train and the automobile driver received serious injuries. Rose Anne Hofer was comforting the mother of the victim and just happened to be in the area. The excursion train was a Saint Patrick's day train that operated from Monte to points south.

March 2000 was also the month when the railroad made the final payment of six million dollars covering the purchase of the BN's Fort Smith Subdivision in 1986 that is the basis for today's A & M. Larry Bought, President and CEO, also stated that the railroad intended to apply for a Federal Railroad Administration loan for track rehabilitation. The area involved is thirty mile of track between Springdale and Fort Smith.

The Tokyo Broadcasting Company (TBC) had a crew in Springdale in early March. The Japanese were filming on the A & M for the program "Romancing the Roads" which has been on Japanese TV for five years. The group focused on the scenic portions of the line and rode a high rail vehicle to capture images in the Winslow-Chester area. (TBC information via Chapter member George Alison)

Dear Members:

In order to keep up our momentum from the great previous year , I am asking for your help to set some short and long range objectives for our chapter.

The general purpose of our group is to help keep alive the rich history of Railroading in Northwest Arkansas.

We had done a great job with some outstanding presentations and great articles in the Scrambler.

Question number one is, but how do you get these to other interested persons now and in the future??

Should we try to establish some depositories for the written history of NWA Railroading??

Do you also have some ideas on possible physical preservation projects?

Please drop me a note or call with your comments or ideas.

Important Dates to remember:

April 19. Founders Night-To honor our Chapter Founders
June or July-Tom Stark's Hot Dog Meeting'

Is it possible for us to make a trip to the Cotton Belt Museum in Pine Bluff? Ray Tolar??

Bob Stark

FRISCO Railroad History

(Note: During labor unrest of the early 1920s, many employee personnel files contained a form letter that required their signature. Thanks to Chapter Marilyn Cain for advising Editor of a web site with this information-Editor).

ST. LOUIS -SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY COMPANY

1923

(Name of Employee)

In entering the service of St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company, it is with the understanding that I am doing so as a new employe and that I do not belong to any of the following organizations:

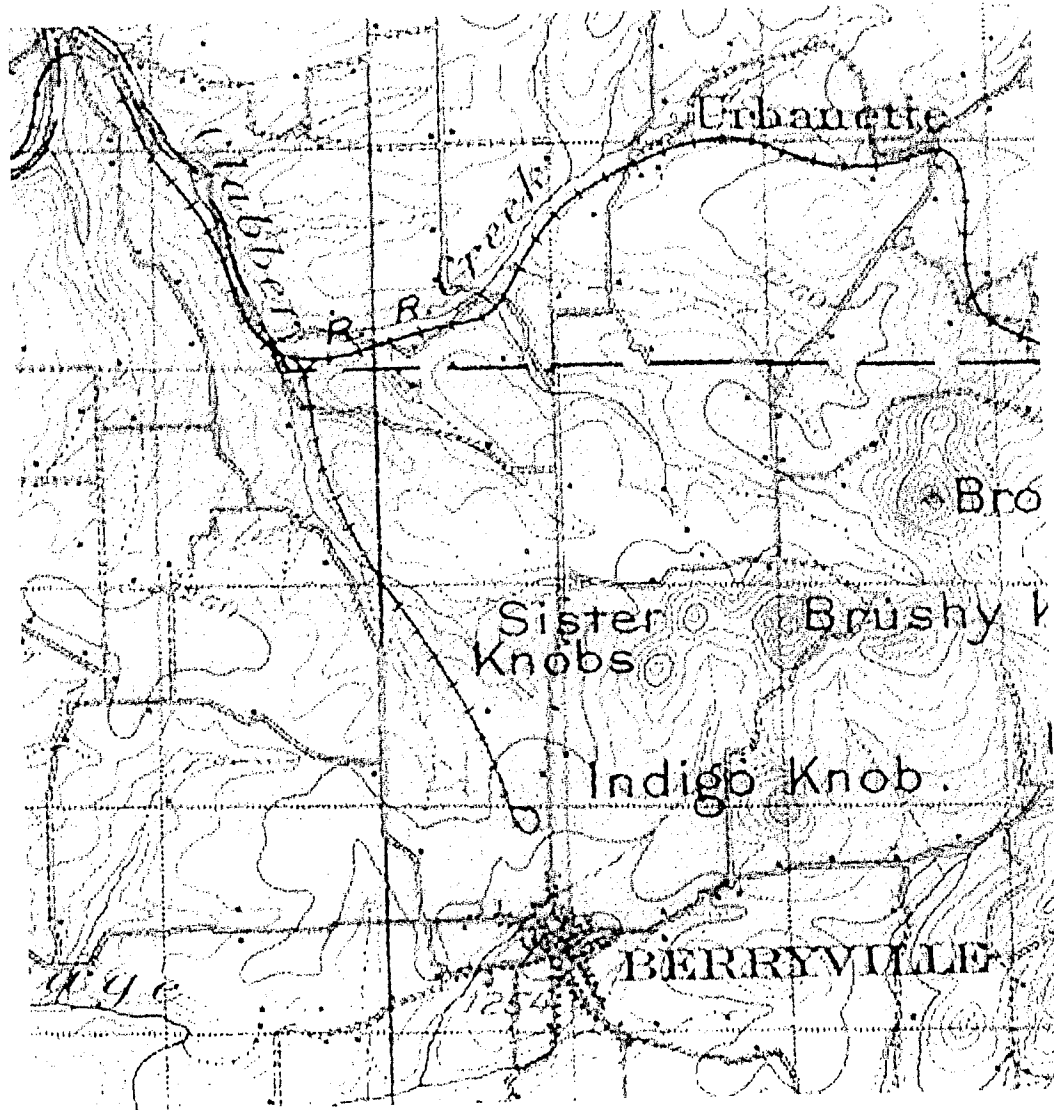
- International Association of Machinists.
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and helpers of Americas.
- International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers.
- Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers International Alliance.
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.
- Brotherhood Railway Carmen of America
- International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers.

If already in the service, on date this understanding is signed, I thoroughly understand it is optional on my part to withdraw from membership in any above named organization and remain in service of the Company or retain my membership in above named organization and leave the service of the Company when requested to do so, without protest in whatsoever form. I also understand that in accepting employment I am to work under the rules and regulations agreed to between the Management and Frisco Association of Metal Craft & Car Department Employees.

(Signature of Employee)

St. Louis & North Arkansas Railroad

There must be an explanation for this 1901 Geologic Survey map that shows the St. Louis & North Arkansas branch to Berryville ending some distance north of Berryville. Fair's book, *The North Arkansas Line*, states that service to Berryville began June 15, 1901. He made no mention of the odd branch location.



The trolley shown in last month's *Scrambler* was located in downtown Cave Springs, Benton County in the late 1950s. It was operated as the Trolley Café for a number of years by Anna Buchanan. The trolley then went south a few miles on Arkansas 112 to the Tontitown area where it was spotted by Chapter member Bill Merrifield more than twenty years ago. Bill recalled the trolley still had a metal front but was otherwise in an advanced state of decay.

Amtrak

Your Editor had cataract surgery the week of March 19. While relaxing-doctor's orders- I watched with interest a Cspan telecast of the House subcommittee responsible for recommending Amtrak funding. The principal Amtrak representative was President George Warrington. He received a very thorough grilling from the subcommittee's chairman and a member from Massachusetts. Although President Warrington insisted Amtrak would reach operating self-sufficiency by 2003, a representative from the General Accounting Office and another government body contradicted him. The problem is that Amtrak has promised to take steps to reduce costs but in reality has made little major progress in this area. The Congressmen seemed a bit fed up with Amtrak and its continual inability to control or reduce costs. Warrington noted that the nearly one year delay in starting Acela high-speed train service in the Northeast had cost the company some \$80 million in revenues. He also mentioned that the planned growth in mail and express revenues had not been attained. President Warrington mentioned that none of Amtrak's long distance services would ever cover their costs even with increased head end revenues from mail and express. The only route that actually makes money for Amtrak is the Washington-New York Metroliner service. The Metroliner service covers its costs, equipment depreciation and excess Railroad Retirement Board payments. Other areas that are losing money but doing better include short routes out of Chicago, Boston to New York, Portland -Seattle-Vancouver, BC and some routes in California.

Warrington, who has a strong New Jersey accent, certainly did his best to answer the

questions in a frank and candid manner. He again reiterated that the Congress needs to come to a consensus on the future role of Amtrak. Congress has not provided enough funding for Amtrak in recent years. He was particularly concerned about the lack of funding for capital projects (new equipment and infrastructure) needed to supplement the annual subsidies for operations. Warrington indicated that future profitability of Amtrak would be a function of the investment made.

Editor's comment-As your Editor watched the hearings, he recalled the discussion about the creation of Conrail in the early 1970's. Conrail was created from the bankrupt hulks of the Penn Central and five Northeastern railroads in 1976. Government funding enabled Conrail to rationalize and modernize and by 1983, Conrail began to show an annual profit. The company went public in 1987 and in 1997 was acquired by CSX and Norfolk Southern. The Conrail story is impressive testimony to the idea that government control and funding may sometimes achieve great progress. One has to wonder whether Amtrak, which accounts for only $\frac{3}{10}$ of one percent of U.S travel, makes sense after years and years of funding. There seems to be lack of national consensus about the role of Amtrak. If Congress continues to fund the corporation on a short term basis, it seems certain that Amtrak will lurch along from crisis to crisis without achieving the goal of being a reliable provider of service. As a viable economic entity, Amtrak has no future. However, if the difficult political decision is taken that Amtrak is a national asset and deserves proper funding then the future seems a bit brighter for this stepchild.