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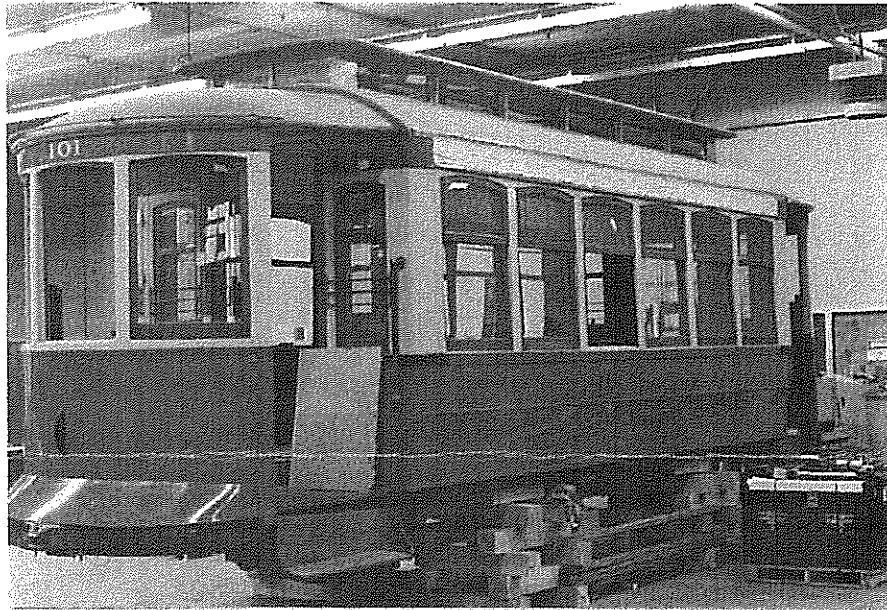
The Scrambler

Volume 14, Number 11

July 2001

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.



This is Brill battery car. A railroad with lines in Northwest Arkansas ordered a battery car for passenger service in 1914. The effort was unsuccessful as the car never operated reliably. It was returned to the unknown builder.

What railroad experimented with a battery car?

- (a) The Frisco
- (b) Kansas City & Memphis
- (c) Pacific & Great Eastern
- (d) Arkansas & Ozark Midland

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The Scrambler

An Important Reminder from President Bob Stark- Our July meeting will take place on Thursday, July 19 at 6:30 PM (note the early time) at my home in Fayetteville. It will be a cookout. Member Tom Stark will be contacting members by telephone in due course to discuss what is needed. We look forward to seeing you on July 19.

Ray and Juanita Toler have volunteered to handle refreshments for the August 16 meeting. Tom Duggan is scheduled to present a program on "Interurbans-What Happened?"

Northwest Arkansas Railroad History

This is the first public timetable of the Saint Louis and San Francisco Railway that reflects service to Northwest Arkansas. It appeared on page 263 of the *Official Railway Guide* for July-September 1881. At Seligman stages for Eureka Springs were available; at Rogers for Bentonville and at

Fayetteville for Alma. The town of Plymouth, MO would shortly become Monett, MO. The train operated at 16.8 mph southbound and 17.5 mph northbound. The o symbol denoted a station with telegraph service.

ARKANSAS DIVISION.					
Mail	MI	JUNE 8, 1881.			Mail
P. M.		[LEAVE]	[ARRIVE]		A. M.
8 42		.....	St. Louis		6 30
A. M.		[LEAVE]	[ARRIVE]		P. M.
8 35		.....	Peirce City ... ♂	♂	6 00
*9 10	0	.....	Plymouth *... ♂	♂	5 45
9 31	8	.....	Purdy.....		5 09
9 45	13	.....	Butterfield.....		4 53
9 58	19	.....	Exeter.....	♂	4 37
10 16	25	.....	Washburn.....	♂	4 20
10 40	30	.....	Seligman 10... ♂	♂	4 05
11 02	37	.....	Blanset.....		3 43
11 28	45	.....	Avoca.....		3 17
11 45	50	.....	Rogers 11... ♂	♂	3 00
12 01	56	.....	Lowell.....		2 44
12 17	61	.....	Springdale.....		2 28
12 45	70	.....	Fayetteville 12... ♂	♂	*2 00
N'ON		[ARRIVE]			[LEAVE] P. M.

THROUGH PULLMAN PALACE SLEEPING CARS, Without Change
BETWEEN ST. LOUIS AND PEIRCE CITY, MO.
 Day Coaches, without change betw. St. Louis & Vinita, I.T. & St. Louis & Wichita, Kan.
 EQUIPPED WITH MILLER'S SAFETY PLATFORM AND THE WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE

The Miller Safety Platform was widely used between the 1860s and 1900 to mitigate the impact of passenger cars telescoping into each other when a crash happened.

International Rail Mystery Photo

Chapter members Marilyn and Larry Cain were kind enough to send this Internet picture to the Editor. The most interesting and unusual track structure is on the left. Here are some possible clues: It was taken in the Japanese

island of Hokkaido: The station on the right has been abandoned by Japan National Railways. Please tell Marilyn or Larry your guesses at the July barbecue to be held at President Bob Stark's home.



Northwest Arkansas Railroad History

From the Springdale News, May 12, 1906

FRISCO EXCURSION BULLETIN

On Sunday, May 20 we will have a special excursion train to Monte Ne, Ark., roundtrip 50 cents. Train leaves Springdale at 10:25 AM and returning leaves Monte Ne at 7 PM.

2002 National Railway Historical Society Convention

The 2002 NRHS National Convention will be hosted by the Grand Canyon Chapter of Williams, Arizona. Williams, population 2900, is the primary gateway to the Grand Canyon. It is up in the mountains at an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet. Your Editor, who went to graduate school in Glendale, Arizona recalls that Williams was not too warm during the day compared to Phoenix. Night time temperatures in late summer are often in the fifties. The high altitude really makes one thirsty and dehydration is a concern.

The principal attraction for the convention- planned for October but now relocated to August 18-26- is the steam-powered Grand Canyon Railway. This line is about 65 miles long and connects William Junctions to the Grand Canyon located north of Williams. The Chapter also hopes to operate a two day inbound steam train from the Los Angeles area pulled by Engine 3751 and a corresponding return trip. They also plan to offer a ride on the steam powered train through Verde Canyon.

The Convention is still a work in progress and there is much to be done. I had a chat with a Chapter member while on the Metro Link excursion in Saint Louis. The Grand Canyon Chapter has 37 active members. The remote location of Williams is such that attendance by East Coast participants is likely to be small. Williams has no scheduled air service and Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* stops at 10:16 PM westbound and at 4:16 AM eastbound. The Grand Canyon Chapter hopes to attract participants from Southern California. There are relatively few NRHS chapters in the Southern California- California has only two

NRHS Chapters, neither located in Southern California- but quite a few members that are Associate members. Engine 3751 also has a big following on the West Coast.

The Chapter has a excellent working relationships with the Grand Canyon Railway and Burlington Northern Santa Fe over whose tracks the 3751 would operate. Engine 3751 is a Baldwin 1927 4-8-4 originally built for the Santa Fe. It was located in a San Bernadino, California park for many years. It was retrieved by the San Bernadino Railroad Historical Society and after years of work began to operate on the main line. It participated in the Railfair held in Sacramento in 1999.

The 2002 Williams convention looks to be very interesting in spite of its location. It is less than eighteen hours from Southern Kansas where Northwest Arkansans could board the *Southwest Chief*. This assumes that one wants to skip the 3751 trips that likely will be a sellout assuming they materialize.

It will be interesting to see what type of convention is forthcoming. The Grand Canyon Chapter is small but no doubt they will benefit from help from the substantial tourism industry. Williams has 1,400 beds. The 2000 National Railway Historical Society convention, held in Stamford, Connecticut, was hosted by the Western Connecticut Chapter of about 60 members. The 2000 convention lacked steam operations so the Grand Canyon Chapter has an advantage.

The 2003 NRHS convention will take place in Baltimore, Maryland.

2001 NRHS Convention in St. Louis

The June 19-23, 2001 NRHS Convention was a most enjoyable experience for the Editor. Chapter member Martin Post attended. Jeff Lewis, son of Chapter member Ruth Lewis, also was in attendance from the Kansas City area. The Convention was very well run and kudos to the 140 St. Louis Chapter members who worked so hard to make the Convention a success. The St. Louis Chapter hosted the NRHS Convention about ten years ago. They have also operated steam excursions from time to time using Frisco 1522 of the closely related St. Louis Steam Train Association.

The first steam excursion utilized UP 3985 pulling a string of UP business fleet cars. The cars, including domes, were in immaculate condition. The route selected was an 84 mile run from St. Louis to Gorham, Illinois on the UP (ex MOPAC) Chester subdivision. The run was on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. It is largely an alluvial plain area without any significant grades. Much of this area was severely affected by the huge floods of 1993 and several towns had since been relocated. This line never saw much passenger traffic with the principal train being a Cotton Belt run from St. Louis to Pine Bluff and Dallas.

I had been warned that photo runbys were often a problem. There were several individual- apparently they were deaf- who got in the line of sight as the giant engine approached the picture locations at Valmeyer and another location. Many of the picture takers had video cameras with sound so there frequent requests to remain quiet (this is a polite rendering) as the 630,000 pound engine approached. The stack talk from the engine was less than I had anticipated as the enormous engine whooshed past.

The trip ran on time as it was a UP train on UP property. The return trip had a few delays as the passenger special waited in sidings for freight trains to pass. This line is very close to the river and I would imagine operations were bogged down during the high water earlier this year. The ride included sandwiches and soft drinks.

The second train ride was an evening dinner train that departed St. Louis Union Station and ran south to De Soto, MO. The equipment came from the exquisitely refurbished fleet of the St. Louis Car Company (not related to the defunct rail car builder. This was a top of the line operation that featured ex UP lightweight cars refurbished in mahogany and rich green. The lighting was subdued and we dined at tables graced with flowers and linen tablecloths. The food was served an elegantly dressed wait staff. One of the cars had an open bar and there likely were a few conventioners with headaches the next day. The consist also had several dome cars that were simply beautiful and off limits to those in the coach dining area. The food, prepared on board, was excellent. The desert was a cast chocolate locomotive filled with a delicate mousse.

The Rail Cruise America train, pulled by an A-B-A lashup of F unit diesels was scheduled to operate from 5:30 PM to 10:15 PM. As we left St. Louis Union Station it began to thunder and rain. It was such an enjoyable feeling to sit at a beautiful table and see the wet world slowly pass by in the dimming light. The train went beyond De Soto (41.5 miles from St Louis) and stopped. We then took a siding and waited for the northbound *Texas Eagle* from Arkansas to pass. The *Texas Eagle's* more

on less on time performance was regarded by local fans as being most unusual. The train is often hours late into St. Louis according to the locals. Our deluxe train waited. We waited some more and then moved a short distance. We waited again. Individuals with scanners said that we could have returned to St. Louis in ample time to avoid the *Texas Eagle*. Time passed and those dependent on the St. Louis light rail system, including your Editor, watched the clock with concern. The system shuts down at midnight. We arrived back sometime after midnight. The St. Louis Chapter provided car rides for those unfortunates depending on Metro Link. The overall experience with the Rail Cruise America train trip was superb. I believe that I could get used to five star luxury rail travel very quickly.

The third train trip involved a run north from St. Louis to West Quincy some 136 miles from St. Louis. The trip, powered by Frisco 1522, left from the St. Louis Amshack station. The station was constructed about twenty years ago of four or five modular homes connected together. It was beaten up and reminded me of the urban blight seen in New York City. The station is located in a remote area that is not readily accessible. The station was located in the freight yard area to save on expensive switching charges associated with use of the St. Louis Union Station. Prior to boarding the 1522 powered train, an Amtrak train arrived. It was powered by an AMD 103 Genesis 4000 HP diesel. The engine had a deep, deep idling sound and exuded strength even when standing still. The train was carrying a lot of head end traffic- located on the rear-including mail for the Post Office. It took quite a while to replenish the Amtrak train and to spot the head end traffic cars.

We crawled out of St. Louis as the train navigated the spaghetti junction of rail links.

The Gateway City at one time was served by an enormous number of railroads before the process of consolidation and bankruptcy took place. There were tracks everywhere and lots of trains waiting to go somewhere. It was quite a change from Northwest Arkansas. Especially notable was four-unit freight with four different and attractive BNSF paint jobs. Unit coal trains, both empty and full, were visible in profusion. Coal must be the financial salvation for the few remaining railroads.

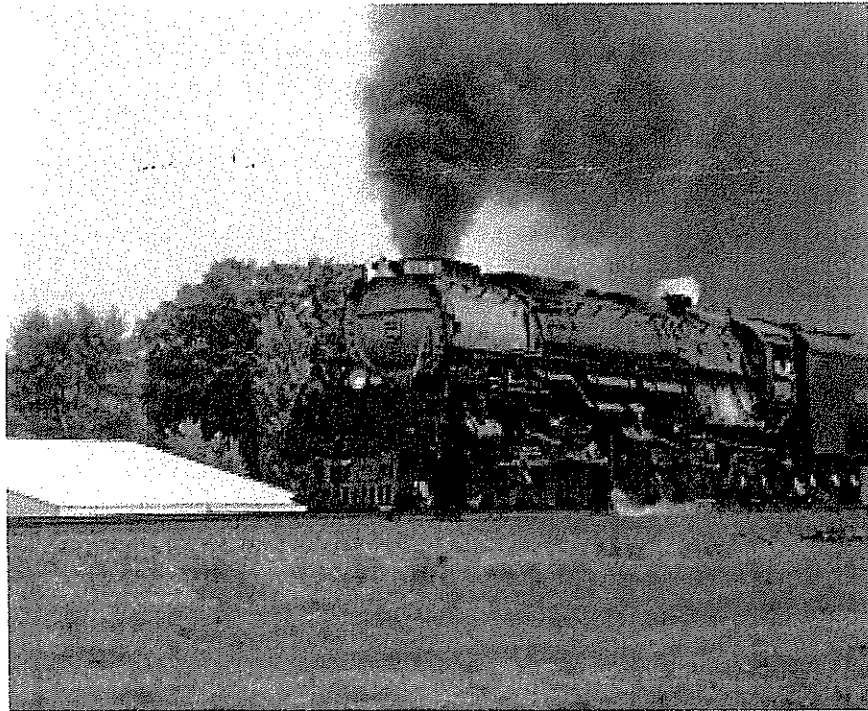
The run north took place in overcast and wet weather that later cleared. The train was pulled by Frisco 1522 and consisted of fourteen private cars and a last minute Amtrak replacement coach. The cars ranged from a heavyweight Pullman lounge to VIA lounge castoffs. I rode in the dome of the last car. It was built in 1958 for the CB & Q and had an unusual configuration of a dome, lounge and four or five deluxe bedrooms. The owner bought the car from Amtrak for \$46,000. It had been painted black for nightclub service. The Iowa based car was painstakingly refurbished over a period of years. It had two auxiliary power units as the dome required a separate air conditioning service. The owner said it was a labor of love as he only lost \$10,000 last year from renting out the car.

The trip north proceeded well until the wye at West Quincy was reached. Things began to slow down. The line is an important one and traffic was heavy. We went into a siding for virtually every train. We waited and waited and crawled and waited in an endless cycle. The second photo runby was difficult for passengers in the last car. The 1522 had a deep whist that echoed off the cliffs. The engine was quite loud and made an impressive sound as it roared by the 300 riders. It was difficult to take good photos

on the second stop unless you were at least seven feet tall. It was very crowded.

The remainder of the trip took place in dusk and darkness. It was amusing to watch the "foamers" as they risked life and vehicle to pace the train. They darted in and out of their pack as we headed back to St. Louis. I was amazed that no one had an accident. The dome is also a wonderful place to watch the headlights of cars as they approach the crossing signal. Signals winked to red as the train moved through the milky night. From time to time the deep sound of the whistle could be heard as the engineer signaled for crossings. I was reminded of a Montreal-Vancouver trip in 1985 as we passed the many small towns that dot the Canadian west.

We slowed down and entered a tunnel that carries the track of the Terminal Railroad of St. Louis under the Gateway Arch. The train began an ascent as it turned. Suddenly the train stopped. The steam engine had gotten out of sync and could not create traction. The engineer of the Amtrak diesel connected to the rear of the train (it provided 480 volt power for the private cars) then had his engine push the train up the grade and curve. We were quite late and several of us were having a renewed concern about the Metro Link. Our train crawled through the rail yards and we disembarked at 11:40 PM. The riders were tired but happy as the trip was enjoyable.



UP engine 3985 shook the ground as it went by the NRHS conventioners

**ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Chapter established November 1987

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Meetings... ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS Chapter No. 158 (ABMT) Third Thursday of each month (except December dinner meeting). Meetings are held at the Shiloh Museum's General Store, 118 West Johnson, Springdale, Arkansas at 7:00 PM. Visitors are welcome at all meetings. Annual dues for 2001 remain unchanged at \$29 for individuals and \$31 for a family. Dues are 50% less for members joining between June 1 and September 30. Please call 501-750-8165 for directions to the Shiloh Museum General Store.

Please note that there will be no meeting in June. Tom Stark will be contacting local Chapter members about the July Meeting and cookout at the Stark home near Arkansas Route 45 in eastern Fayetteville.

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