

# The Scrambler

Volume 16, Number 9

June 2003

## Monthly Newsletter of the 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.

### Schedule of Chapter Programs

(All programs begin at 7:00 PM and are open to the public. The meeting place for the Chapter is the General Store of the Shiloh Museum, 118 West Johnson in downtown Springdale)

**June 19-** Chapter member Ray Getty's ex B & O, ex-ACL and ex-Amtrak 16-4 sleeper is now in Fayetteville. Ray will do a program on the history of the car that originally began as a Pullman-operated sleeper on the Baltimore & Ohio RR. The 16-4 configuration is unusual and you will enjoy learning about the car.

**July 17-** Chapter member George Alison videotaped an oral history session some years ago that featured the late Al Morsani of Rogers. Morsani was a longtime Frisco employee who worked in an agent capacity at many locations. He was a link to an era of railroading now past.

**August 21-** Chapter member Al Kaepfel is a student of American History who has been taking courses at the University of Arkansas. Al, who is also Chapter Archivist, will present a program on Civil War Railroads.

**September 18-** Both Larry Cain and Tom Duggan have made the 1400-mile drive to Ely, Nevada. Ely, which is located in the middle of nowhere, is the location of the Nevada Northern Railway. The Nevada Northern is a time capsule of old time railroading that will be dissected by Chapter members Larry Cain and Tom Duggan

#### PLEASE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

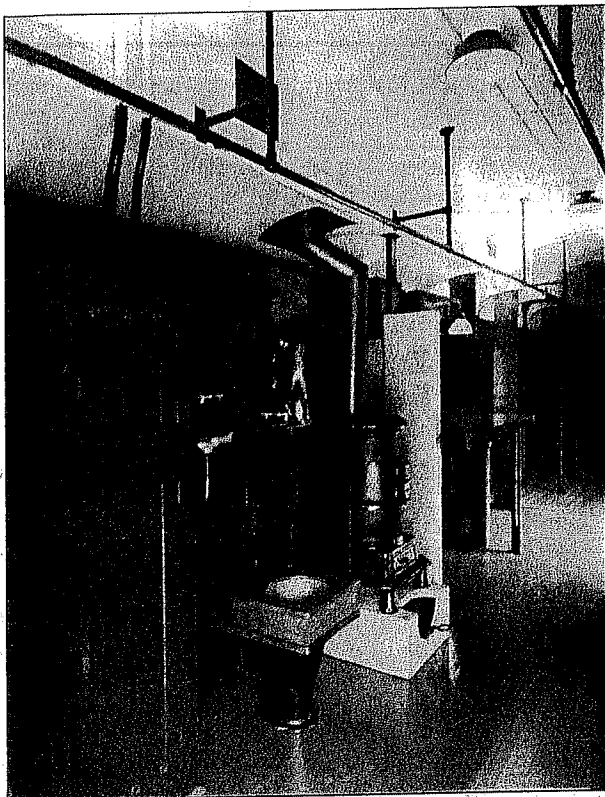
Dr. Don Gray Thurman-Little Rock, AR.-Dr. Thurman, a state employee, joined the Chapter at the May 2003 Senior Celebration in Fayetteville. He is interested in the history of the Cotton Belt at Rison, AR.

Steve & Marie Gentry of Fayetteville along with sons Brian and Chris took advantage of the Quad Chapters Convention new member special. Steve is interested in HO gauge while Brian likes computer train simulator games. Marie is a design professor at the U of A.

Katherine Mindoro of Bella Vista enjoys train riding. She took advantage of the Quad Chapter new member special.

Ellis E. Melton, Jr. of Fayetteville enjoys HO modeling. After graduating from the U of A, Fayetteville in 1965 he worked two years as a brakeman and fireman for the Rock Island in Little Rock. He saw our Quad Chapters publicity flyer at the Tractive Effort Hobby Shop in Fayetteville and took advantage of the special offer.

## Baggage Car Photos-Continued

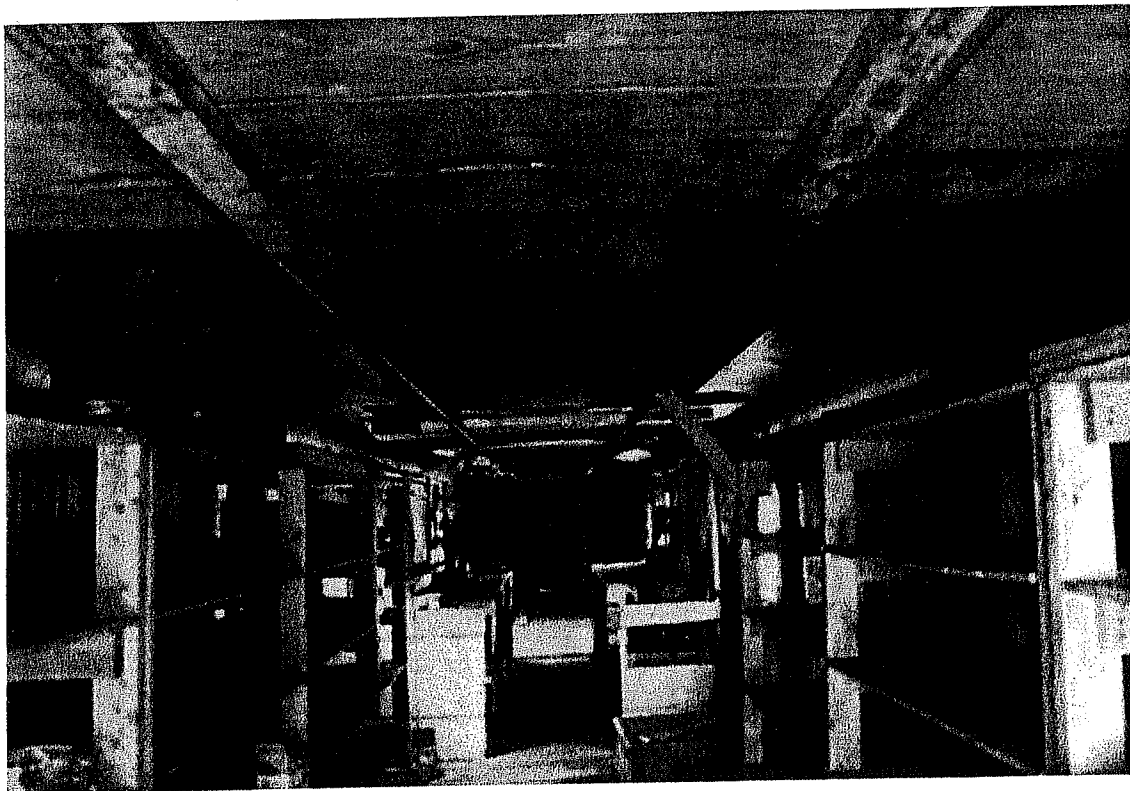


Left-The baggage-express car was once No. 705 on the Missouri Pacific equipment roster. It probably went into MOW service sometime in the 1950s as express business disappeared.

The cars were provided with minimal facilities. The object that resembles a sink is actually a direct drop toilet. Chapter member Larry Cain has furnished a spool that will very closely approximate a non-working toilet.

The car at one time had a stove similar to the one shown in this 1927 photo. It may be expensive to find a replacement.

**Below-This is a view of the baggage car when it was used for storage by the A & M. All of the wood removed by Chapter volunteers has been saved and may be used in The renovation of the car-Editor photo**





The car has two identical 19-foot compartments, one at each end, that were used to carry express items such as iced fruit and vegetables. The floor beneath the wood slats is made of tin and has drainage holes. The Chapter plans to construct an exhibit on the Railroad History of Northwest Arkansas in one compartment. (From the Barriger Collection of the Mercantile Library of St. Louis at the University of Missouri, St Louis)

Deek Dietrick, National Director of the Kansas City Chapter, would like to ascertain our Chapter's interest in a rare mileage trip on the Branson Scenic Railway. The trip would have to be on a Sunday morning, around 8:30 AM was mentioned, and would operate from Branson, MO to Flippin, AR over the Missouri & Northern Arkansas. The roundtrip would be about 121 miles and would cost about \$50.00 including breakfast. The cars would be all Budd lightweight and likely would include at least one dome lounge car. Normally the Branson Scenic operates 40 mile roundtrips north and south of Branson. Flippin is a place that once loomed large in the operations of the White River Scenic trains that ceased operating in 2000. We need to advise Deek if there is any interest by our Chapter.

It is not too early to mark your calendars for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Frisco Festival in Rogers. As in years past we will have a prime location-free of charge- located next to the Frisco caboose. We will need Chapter volunteers for Saturday, August 23 to set up and run the model trains, answer questions and to watch over the excited children as they clamber through the Frisco caboose that is maintained by Chapter member Rogers Historical Museum. A sign up sheet will be available at the June and July Chapter meetings.

On Friday, May 25 Chuck Girard and the Editor received a tour of the former Frisco depot in Fort Smith. Cliff Black, Superintendent of the Fort Smith National Park, explained that the National Park Service (NPS) had recently purchased the property for \$950,000. The future budgets of NPS look grim so it is unlikely the NPS will have the estimated \$3.5 million to restore the build-

ing to its 1904 state as Frisco Central Division headquarters.

The Frisco depot, which saw passenger service only from 1948 to 1965, has undergone several renovations since leaving railroad ownership. According to Black the roof is sound and the HVAC systems are of recent vintage. It has been extensively changed in its forms as restaurant, office building, Café Santa Fe and nursing home. We did find one door with a painted plate glass Frisco logo. Fortunately Chapter member Bob Oswald gave the floor plans for the original building to Chuck Girard who in turn gave them to Superintendent Black. NPS hopes to use the upper floors for a University of Arkansas, Fort Smith degree program in historical interpretation scheduled to begin in the fall of 2004.

The NPS hopes that a railroad will begin passenger train service using the Frisco depot. If this were to take place then a small portion of the downstairs could be used for railroad ticket sales and a waiting room. If this were the case then the NPS would want help from the Chapter in developing and constructing a display on the railroad history of Fort Smith. Both Chuck and the Editor assured Superintendent Black that the Chapter would be willing to help with this worthy project.

Bart Jennings and the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum are sponsoring a one-day rare mileage trip on the Idaho Northern & Pacific on Friday, August 8, 2003. The one-way trip of 102 miles (the return is by bus) costs \$125. You can obtain more information by accessing the following web site: <http://www.techscribes.com/sarm/idaho.htm>. Jennings has a reputation for running good trips.

## Arkansas & Missouri Railroad Company

Brenda Brown, Passenger Traffic Manager, has a new little dog called Mo. The female canine is tiny, cute and very friendly to all. Sometimes she sleeps in Brenda's pocketbook.

The long delayed baggage car renovation project involving the A & M owned 1927 ex MOPAC baggage-express car is once again moving forward. Members will recall that the project was on hold about a year ago when retired President Tony Hannold decided to sell his majority shareholding in the A & M. The change in ownership brought many things to a halt while the new owners decided what to do. The baggage-express car project was about the lowest imaginable priority.

We have been advised that the two-track car barn south of the depot is available to house the baggage car. The car barn needs electricity. Larry Cain and I spent some time two Saturdays ago measuring things. The car is about 75-feet long while the bar has a usable interior dimension of 81-feet. The barn would provide good protection but has a low visibility factor.

We also spent some time exploring the A & M -owned street that is west of the depot. The street is a possible alternative location although it likely would entail more expense for moving as there is no track on the side street. The side street-name unknown- was the object of a lot of work and expense sometime in the past two decades. It has lights and a water supply together with a small park sur-

rounded by high quality iron work. The entire park appears to have had no

care and upkeep for at least ten years. Larry Cain thought the park was a joint project of the City of Springdale and the Burlington Northern that last operated through Springdale on September 1, 1986. The park also housed a drive in teller facility for the former First State Bank.

At the June 19 Chapter meeting we will be looking for volunteers to assist with the periodic Saturday morning baggage car project. We normally work three or four hours depending on the weather. Chapter Archivist Al Kaepfel has obtained at some effort a supply of correct-size and style flat head screws that will replace the many screws that have disappeared over the years. There are about 270 holes that lack proper screws plus a number of holes where certain people, notably the Editor, persisted in using historically inappropriate screws.

We also need to finish primer painting the estimated 5% of the car that is unpainted. Much of the paint work is more touch up in nature with little skill required. We still do not have a certain idea of the paint colors used in the car. The Chapter purchased the 1927 builder's photos for \$243.00 but of course they are black and white. We need to do the final coat paint work before we start work on the floor. The current floor is in very poor condition so it will not be a problem if paint lands on the floor.