

The Scrambler

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April 2004

Monthly Newsletter of the
Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

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ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAIN CHAPTER NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of Meeting

March 18, 2004

The Chapter met for the regular monthly meeting on March 18, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the Shiloh Museum's "Old General Store"

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Chuck Girard and the members and guest were welcomed.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read.

Treasurer Bob Hofer read the Treasurer's report. The report reflected a cost overrun on the publication of the Timetable books approved at the last meeting. A motion was made to accept the cost overrun, the motion was seconded and passed. A copy of the Treasurer's report is on file in the Secretary's notes.

National Director Tom Duggan had nothing to report from the national but as *Scrambler* Editor, he reported a problem with color printing of the March 2004 *Scrambler*.

As Membership Chairman, Chuck Girard issued a challenge to all members to get new members and to get old members back.

In the report from committees, the Sign Committee reports that they are ready to start to work once the legal aspects and other details can be worked out with the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad.

The Map Committee reports it is ready to make up maps to give out at events for donations to the chapter.

Tom Duggan reported that all our work on the baggage car is on hold. The car may be leaving the railroad's property. There is a

possibility that the A&M RR may trade the baggage car for another piece of rolling stock for the excursion train.

In the report from the Park Committee, if the baggage car is lost there will be no further need for us to work on the park.

A committee was appointed to meet with Mr. John Lewis to see if there is anything that the chapter member's can do to try to save the Fayetteville Frisco depot from possible demolition.

Scrambler Editor Tom Duggan stated that the Chapter is running low on stationery. A motion was made to purchase 1000 sheets of stationery. Tom also said we need a new design on the letterhead. A suggestion was made to let the local high school students submit designs, and to award a prize to the winning entry.

On the Timetable Book Project, Bob Oswald and Tom Duggan made 30 copies of the book. Ten copies were made available to Chapter members who made a \$20 donation to the chapter.

Under Old business, the Model Train show scheduled for March 27th appears to be well planned and everything appears to be a go. Several members have signed up to work this show.

For anyone who joins the chapter at the Model Train Show will be able add \$20 to their membership fee and get a train ride on the April 4th Fort Smith Special. The train will leave Springdale at 9AM and a bus will leave Fort Smith at 3PM for the return trip

to Springdale.

Programs and special events scheduled for the chapter include Springfest in Fayetteville on April 24th, Featherfest in Springdale on May 1st and Frisco Festival in Rogers on August 20th. We are also schedule to participate in Frontier Days in Fort Smith at a date to be announced.

Program and Events Chairman Al Kaeppl announced that in April, Bob Stark will present a program on the history of the Fort Smith & Western Railroad and in May he will present a program on his trip to Montreal. In June we will have a show and tell in which several members will present short items of interest There are no programs scheduled after June.

NRHS Update

Chapter members by now have received the issues 2 and 3 of the 2003 *National Railway Bulletin*. Both issues were superb with one focused on Cuban railroading (love those Budd cars even if demotored !) and the Baltimore & Ohio respectively. Issue 4 should be arriving soon as mailing was scheduled for late March 2004. Once Editor Jeffrey Smith completes 2003 he will move to a letter size format for 2004 issues.

National Secretary Bruce J. Hodges has resigned. Barry O. Smith, presently Vice President, will become National Secretary of NRHS. Jeffrey Smith, currently Editor, will assume the added job of National Vice President. These interim appointments by President Gregory Malloy are subject Board of Directors at the Altoona, PA meeting on April 4, 2004.

The individual responsible for processing memberships at the National level has also spent time sending notices to individuals

Under New Business we had a report from Mr. Lewis of the Kansas City Chapter on the Kansas City Union Station.

A motion was made to adjourn the business meeting and Dr. Bob Lundeen presented a video of a service stop of the Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985 in Van Buren. Then Steve Tharp presented an interesting and informative program on his 1983 trip to Colorado and Wyoming on a train handled in part by the Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985. Steve had some very fine slides taken during the many photo run-bys scheduled on this trip

Ron Allen, Secretary

whose memberships expired in years prior to 2003. National Directors received printouts on the topic but I must say I could not determine whether the effort was time or cost efficient. This comment comes from someone who regularly read computer printouts in German.

The membership renewal process has encountered problems and the renewal cutoff date was extended to March 31, 2004. The annual renewal rate for NRHS overall was about 80% as of March 22, 2004. As of that date the 36 of 38 Chapter members had renewed for 2004 with one renewal coming in after the renewal report date. Thanks to all members for helping to make the renewal task somewhat easy for Treasurer Bob Hofer. The Ozarks Chapter, probably located in Springfield, MO had 9 of 11 renewals while the Little Rock Chapter had renewed 34 of its 49 2003 members.

REA Memories-Continued

Richard Young, the subject of last month's REA article, must be a pack rat as he was able to find several trip documents covering his 1964-1965 REA relief messenger service on the Frisco between Fort Smith and Springfield, MO. It is wonderful that he cared enough to save them and help us get a peek into life on an REA car in 1964.

The Frisco normally placed the baggage car immediately behind the engine with the mail-baggage car following the baggage car. Young said he had little contact with the RPO clerks. Car 359 was a 69 ton baggage car and car 134 was a 77 ton mail-baggage car. The RPO apartment occupied 30 feet of the car.

Exhibit A is a receipt for five cans of milk carried from West Fork to Rogers, a distance

of 30.2 miles. Railroads usually had special rates for carrying empty cans of milk and cream

IF NOT CORRECT NOTE EXCEPTIONS

THIS WAYBILL MUST BE PREPARED IN QUADRUPPLICATE

Form 1324 Standard

TRAIN BAGGAGEMAN'S WAYBILL OF BUTTERFAT, MILK AND CREAM

THIS WAYBILL MADE BY A. E. Bleck (NAME OF TRAIN BAGGEMAN)

TRAIN NO. 710 DATE 5/7/64 WAYBILL NO. 27

FROM W Fork Ark (STATION) TO Rogers Ark (STATION)

CONSIGNEE Rogers Cream

SHIPPER	NUMBER OF CANS									TO BE INSERTED BY RECEIVING AGENT	
	BUTTERFAT			MILK			CREAM			RATE	CHARGES TO COLLECT
	5	8	10	5	8	10	5	8	10		
<u>W Rogers</u>			<u>1</u>			<u>3</u>					

ORIGINAL AND DUPLICATE OF THIS WAYBILL, MUST ACCOMPANY SHIPMENT TO DESTINATION. FOR RATES GOVERNED BY ST. LOUIS REVENUES, ST. LOUIS, MO. SHIPMENTS TO BE RECEIVED BY ISSUING TRAIN BAGGEMAN. ORIGINAL OF THIS WAYBILL MUST BE DEPOSITED IN CONSIGNEE'S OFFICE. COPIES MUST BE DEPOSITED IN ST. LOUIS, MO. BY RECEIVING AGENT. DUPLICATE TO BE FOR FILE. OTHER COPIES BY RECEIVING AGENT. WAYBILL WILL BE SIGNED BY EACH TRAIN BAGGEMAN HANDLING SHIPMENT.

CONSIGNEE

A. E. Bleck
 (NAME OF TRAIN BAGGEMAN)

REA Memories-Continued

Exhibit B is a tally sheet covering mail carried on the northbound Frisco train 710 on May 5, 1964. Readers will note that cars 134 and 359 operated through to St. Louis.

The report provides an interesting insight into the transportation and distribution of closed pouch mail following the 1963 introduction of ZIP codes. The Van Buren

total is noteworthy as the MP operated a Claremore-Little Rock RPO run that dropped mail at Van Buren for points north. Fayetteville likely served as a regional collection point for mail bound for St. Louis and in addition received trucked mail from Siloam Springs that came off the KCS Kansas City -Texarkana RPO that lasted until 1968

Local (Oct. 1959) Sheet No. _____

ST. LOUIS-SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY COMPANY
Train baggageman's report of U. S. Mail Carried

Tr. No. 710 Date 5-7-1964

From H. Smith To Monett

I certify information on this report is correct:
Richard Young
(Train Baggage Man)

Prepare this report in triplicate, mailing original and one copy to General Baggage Office, St. Louis. Record in upper right hand corner complete headend consist, also mail count in cars not worked en route by you. Record below cars worked en route by you, showing count of mail (pieces) taken on, put off, and balance. Also attach memos furnished at terminals at stations showing count of mails loaded.

HEADEND CONSIST OF TRAIN												Mail Count of Cars not worked enroute		
Car No.	Origin	Destination	Kind of Traffic	Feet	Pieces									
359	H. S.	H. I.	MP											
134	"	"	MP											
TOTAL														

NAME OF STATION	Car No. <u>134</u>			Car No. <u>359</u>			Car No.			For Office Use	
	Taken on	Put off	Balance	Taken on	Put off	Balance	Taken on	Put off	Balance	Feet	Pay Due
FOUND IN CAR											
<u>H. Smith</u>	<u>22</u>		<u>22</u>				<u>9</u>		<u>9</u>		
<u>Van Buren</u>	<u>42</u>		<u>64</u>								
<u>Fayetteville</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>47</u>				<u>6</u>		<u>16</u>		
<u>Springdale</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>41</u>				<u>6</u>		<u>21</u>		
<u>Claremore</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>37</u>								
<u>Monett</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>28</u>								
LEFT IN CAR	XXXX	<u>28</u>	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	<u>21</u>	XXXX	XXXX		Total Line Haul	
TOTAL	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	XXXX			<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	XXXX		TERMINAL CHARGES	

USE REVERSE SIDE FOR ANY REMARKS.

Feet	\$
Pieces	\$
TOTAL	\$

Train Show

The March 27 Train Show held at the Clarion Hotel in Rogers, co-sponsored by the Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter and the Sugar Creek Model Railroad & Historical Society, Inc., was a resounding success measured in both attendance and financial performance. Full details have not yet been finalized but all who worked or sold at the show will agree that attendance was heavy throughout most of the six hours of the Show. Al Kaepfel and George Alison spent much of the day assisting young engineers who wanted to operate Al's N gauge setup. Larry Cain assisted Chapter member Bill Merrifield with his adjacent G scale layout. Larry also stopped by on his way back from Neosho and helped Bill take apart and store the layout.

The Show was the first public distribution of the newly printed Bob Oswald's book Timetables for the Frisco Lines in Northwest Arkansas. The 232-page book provides copies of Frisco (and successor) public, employee and Official Guide timetables. The period covered is 1881 to 1998. Reception of the book has been gratifying and the first run of 30 copies has been distributed by Bob to local museums and libraries free of cost as well as being made available at the show. As mentioned at the March Chapter meeting the production of the initial 30 copies required the effort of two members for a total of 17 hours. The Editor looked into printing the book but the quotes were stratospheric. Of course, the printing cost would drop sharply if we had 300 copies printed. Unfortunately disposing of 300 copies would take years, tie up Chapter funds and involve a lot of storage space and lifting..

Also popular at the show were color copies of the Editor's 1949 Arkansas Railroad map and to a lesser extent the Editor's 1890 Census Map of U.S. Railroads. Al Kaepfel made significant progress in reducing the stock of pink engineer's caps that have lingered in the Chapter goods inventory for at least five years.

The best news is that three new people joined the Chapter at the Train Show. Don Hall of Fort Smith is well informed on Frisco passenger cars. He was working on a never finished Frisco passenger car book using materials from the defunct Frisco Museum. Tracy Berzley and her dad Francis are new members. Many local members know that Tracy is the smiling and helpful person that works with Brenda Brown in handling passenger train ticket and gift shop sales. Francis Berzley works at Cargill on the night shift. He likely will not be able to attend the Thursday night meetings. Bill and Cherie Bradley of Prairie Grove have returned to the area. Bill used to ride the Frisco out of Fayetteville. They will be on the April 4 Springdale to Fort Smith train.

As notified to those who worked or sold at the Show we are having a review on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 PM at the Clarion Hotel in Bentonville. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss what went right and what needs improvement. Please send your comments to the Editor so that we can have an efficient meeting with a minimum of repetition. We should also have some financial and attendance data available by April 13.

Unit Coal Train -1940- Epilogue

I have had several inquiries about the Unit Coal Train article in the March 2004 *Scrambler*.

One reader asked why was the Missouri Pacific criticized for not using Arkansas coal while the Frisco was not criticized ? The answer is the word "oil".

As seen in the following table the Frisco began to use oil burning locomotives at an early date:

<u>12/31</u>	<u>Steam Engines (No.)</u>	<u>% Oil Burning</u>
1922	906	0.0
1924	939	22.6
1926	995	23.8
1928	928	25.2
1930	870	32.1
1932	829	33.9

The Central Division ,with a handful of exceptions , used oil fired steam engines. By 1932 coaling stations not in use due to oil burning engines included Bacone (air operated hoist on the Muskogee Sub), Hugo, OK,(hand shovel car to 100 ton capacity pockets) Fayette Junction,(300 ton steam operated) Talahina , OK (helper district 200 ton steam operated coaling tower) and Fort Smith , AR. (300 ton electric operated). The Central Division engines took oil from tank cars located at Talahina, OK, (helper district engines) Chester , AR (helper district engines), Fayette Junction, AR, Hugo, OK and Rogers, AR (Bentonville Branch) and Muskogee and Okmulgee on the Muskogee Sub. In addition, the Frisco had a 240,000-gallon oil storage tank at Monett, MO.

The Fayetteville Frisco train image in last month's *Scrambler* showed a double-headed

The Frisco was the largest railroad in oil rich Oklahoma and for many years petroleum was the Frisco's single most important freight category. In 1932, petroleum and refinery products accounted for 28.1% of Frisco freight revenues, by far the single largest category.

train pulled by engines 1317 and 1331. The 2-8-0 engines were built at Alco, Schenectady in 1912. The use of double-headed engines in the 1940 coal train must have been a recent event. Until at least 1933, the union contract with Frisco effectively prohibited the use of double-headed trains. When double headers were allowed, the Frisco must have recognized a great savings in an era when train crews consisted of engineer, fireman, head end brakeman, conductor and rear-end brakeman. A double-headed train probably was able to operate with a reduction of three crewmen as two brakemen and one conductor was redundant. One would imagine that the Frisco, like other railroads, had to agree to arbitrary payments and other work restrictions to obtain agreement to permit double- header operation.

Upcoming Chapter Programs and Events

From Al Kaepfel

15 Apr 2004. Bob Stark will show us a history of the Fort Smith and Western.

20 May 2004. Tom Stark will show and describe his recent vacation by Amtrak and VIA to Toronto and Montreal.

17 Jun 2004. We will entertain the members with a series of shortish presentations on a variety of subjects, each by a different member. There still is time open. If you will make a 5 to 15 minute presentation on a subject of special interest to you, please let Al Kaepfel know at 927-3163. Especially to you newer members who have not put on a program - plan to do it. We all want to hear from you. Let Al know..

Our chapter will be participating in at least the following events.

27 Mar 2004, Saturday. NWA Model Train Show at Clarion Hotel, Bentonville.

24 April 2004, Saturday. SpringFest at Dickson Street Depot, Fayetteville.

1 May 2004, Saturday. FeatherFest at A & M Depot, Springdale.

28 Aug 2004, Saturday. Frisco Festival at Frisco Caboose, Rogers.

23 October 2004 , Saturday. Fort Smith Frontier Days at Frisco Station, Fort Smith.

Please keep these dates open and available. We will have a booth with tables; please bring items of historical interest and look forward to discussing them with the interested public. We will also have the N gauge layout and the chapter's new G gauge layout. Everyone is invited to bring locomotives, rolling stock, buildings and structures to add to the layouts. And you are invited to help in setup, operating the trains, and breakdown. For both layouts, we will encourage children to operate the trains.

Quad Chapter Meeting Saturday, May 8, 2004 Wichita, Kansas

The Wichita Chapter celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2004. The Chapter has organized the following Quad Chapter events: (1) Excursion on the Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad to Hutchinson, KS, (2) Lunch at the Carriage Crossing in Yoder, (3) Evening programs on area rail history/activities, (4) Commemorative booklet on Wichita railroads and Union Terminal , (5) Other take home goodies including an Adlake lantern

Chapter members should have received a detailed package listing the events planned for May 8th along with a reservation form. There is also an optional train ride set for May 9 that has limited seating. Please attend to your reservations promptly to avoid disappointment.

Northwest Arkansas Railroad History

The Bentonville Railroad and the Bentonville Branch of the Frisco- Part 2

By Tom Duggan

The Bentonville Railroad had no freight cars and relied on the Frisco for freight car supply. It had at least two locomotives. Nothing is known of locomotive No. 1. The second locomotive, No. 2, was purchased new from the Pittsburgh Locomotive Works in 1884. It was a 4-4-0 or American type widely used by American railroads for light duty. The railroad had at least one passenger car, No. 1, when passenger service began in May 1883. In April 1888 the line purchased a brand new passenger car, car No. 2, from an unknown builder. A special night excursion ran to celebrate the new car's entry into service. Red crimson red plush upholstered the seats of car No. 2. Three months later a new baggage-express car, No. 102, entered service. The car builder was H.J. Werkerline of Bentonville. The passenger cars were likely of wood construction because steel construction was rare at this time. In June 1894 the Fayetteville *Sentinel* reported the sale of a long unused locomotive from the defunct 8 mile Pacific & Great Eastern Railroad of Fayetteville to Bentonville interests. It is possible the locomotive ended up on the Bentonville Railroad. The line also had one hand car and a cowcatcher equipped caboose to keep cattle away. The use of the cowcatcher caboose suggests the caboose functioned as the front of the train from Rogers to Bentonville. The use of the caboose at the head end would also avoid costly switching charges at Rogers.

For most of its fifteen-year existence the Bentonville Railroad operated two daily passenger round trips besides the main business of hauling freight. In the *Official Guide to Railways*, a monthly publication used by railroad ticket agents, the line listed its length as seven miles, a modest exaggeration compared to other railroads of this era. Timecards published in the Bentonville *Democrat* show the line had two sidings, Dickson and Bentonville June, at which passenger trains regularly stopped. The Dickson siding was named for H.D. Dickson who operated a

nursery and apple evaporator next to the siding. The early timecards allocated 25 minutes for the trip or 12.6 miles per hour. Contemporary newspaper accounts referred to the trains of the Bentonville Railroad as either "the Cannonball" or "the dinky." The term Cannonball also applied to Frisco trains. The more logical term was "the dinky" as this term today describes short passenger runs.

The first passenger schedules provided local service only and did not permit good connections with the six daily Frisco trains serving Rogers during this era. For many years morning and late afternoon roundtrips were the norm. In 1898 the running time rose to 30 minutes (11½ miles per hour) due to deteriorated track and equipment. In 1890 the line experimented with a nightly roundtrip. This improvement lasted until June 1890. The service ended because "the night trains took more people out of Bentonville than they took in." In early January 1892, N.S. Henry, General Manager, abruptly stopped the one Sunday roundtrip. The Board of Directors was upset and directed Henry to reinstate Sunday service effective January 8, 1892 even though the Sunday run did not cover costs. The Bentonville Railroad also operated excursion trains with the first recorded excursion to Rogers taking place on October 20, 1884.

In 1887, the sole year for which detailed operating data are available, the Bentonville Railroad carried 9,259 passengers. Some 5,077 passengers went from Rogers to Bentonville while 4,182 passengers journeyed from Bentonville to Rogers. The ticket collector was Conductor C. M. Robinson. He was an affable Missouri native who served as a jack of all railroad trades as he even operated the train and functioned as brakeman and fireman. He was extremely obliging and would stop to pick up passengers between stops, take children to school and accept eggs in lieu of cash fares. During harvest season Robinson would stop the train so passengers could pick apples and peaches from the extensive orchards adjoining the roadbed.

The Bentonville Railroad was an originating

railroad because it sent out more freight than it received. In 1887 the line received 2,838 tons of freight from the Frisco while sending out 5,447 tons. Some 42% of the total traffic involved forest products (a term that included timber and agricultural products), followed by merchandise, likely all incoming products, at 34.2 %. The main outgoing commodities in 1887, prior to the development of large fruit orchards in the late 1890s, likely were tobacco, railroad ties and lumber. In 1893 Bentonville's newly built Macon-Carson brandy distillery in Bentonville, the largest west of the Mississippi, swelled the traffic volume. Unfortunately for Bentonville shippers all rail freight shipments required the use of the Frisco. In common with railroads of this era the Frisco could charge captive customers whatever the traffic would bear and allocate scarce freight cars as it deemed fit. Even the establishment of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887 provided little immediate relief for communities such as Bentonville. The Frisco charged high rates on all traffic and limited access to markets not served by the Frisco. In the early years of the Bentonville Railroad this meant that most outgoing shipments went to St. Louis, some 335 miles away rather than the 100 miles closer Kansas City. St. Louis was preferred by the Frisco because the railroad lacked a Kansas City connection until 1892.

The Bentonville Railroad carried U.S. mail in closed pouches to and from Rogers. The line earned \$300 from mail carriage in the year ended June 30, 1888. The Bentonville Railroad provided Wells Fargo express service. The express companies specialized in small packages as the Post Office Department did not offer parcel post service until 1913.

The line also provided checked baggage service on the 5.25 mile run. A rare piece of Bentonville Railroad memorabilia is baggage check No. 208 covering baggage from Rogers to Bentonville on the Bentonville Railway. The hand made brass check was the work of Alonso Finis Milligan of Rogers. Mr. Milligan was born in Bentonville in 1875 and died in 1950. The check refers to the Bentonville Railway and this confusion in terminology was common throughout the life of the Bentonville Railroad. Bag-

gage checks were made in pairs with one baggage check connected to the baggage by a leather band. The second tag was presented by the customer at the destination baggage room upon completion of the trip.

Financial data on the Bentonville Railroad is sparse. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) did not begin collecting detailed financial and operating data on railroads until 1888. For the year ending June 30, 1888 the line posted total revenues of \$13,581 and a very healthy net profit of \$4,243. The 1888 ICC report showed that freight accounted for 57.4% of revenues, passenger service 40.4 % and mail the remainder. From the 1888 net income of \$4,243 the line had debt service expense of \$3,220 on debt of \$22,575. The debt service created an intolerable financial burden. Dividends were not paid in 1888 to the holders of the \$13,725 par value common shares. The high debt service expense suggests the line was bled at the expense of the common shareholders. It is highly likely that the line overstated its net income. It most certainly deferred track repair as a common theme of contemporary newspaper reports was the dilapidated state of the line's track.

On February 24, 1890 the Bentonville Railroad mortgaged all of its property to collateralize a \$25,027.71 demand note issued to N.S. Henry, General Manager and D.H. Woods, Vice President and Treasurer. A demand note is repayable in full when requested by the note holder. One cannot imagine a financing method more inappropriate for an illiquid enterprise such as a railroad. One month later Messrs. Henry and Woods demanded repayment in full. The railroad could not repay. The Benton County Circuit Court ordered a public foreclosure sale on the Benton County courthouse steps for June 2, 1890. The sale procedure suggests the foreclosure was a friendly transaction. F.M. Bates, General Passenger Agent of the line, handled the sale for the Court. He appraised the railroad as having a value of \$25,000. As was then customary Mr. Bates had to post a bond of \$50,000 (equal to twice the appraised value). The bond came from a group of Bentonville men including Dr. Smartt, President, several directors of the line and most surprisingly Messrs. Henry and

Woods the very plaintiffs who had initiated the foreclosure action. The sale on June 2, 1890 saw Messrs. Henry and Woods bid \$25,000. From the facts of the sale it seems likely the demand note and foreclosure sale was planned friendly action by all parties. Mr. Bates earned \$3 for the property appraisal and conducting the sale for the Court. Transfer of the railroad's property to the new owners took place April 21, 1891. Henry and Woods then formed a new Arkansas corporation on May 23, 1891. It had the same name as the first Bentonville Railroad Company of 1882. This procedure spared the new owners the expense of re-lettering the rolling stock and reprinting ticket stock. Mr. Henry replaced Dr. Smartt as President while Mr. Woods continued as Vice President and Treasurer. The Bentonville Railroad Company of 1891 had an authorized capital of \$40,000 with \$36,400 subscribed. The amount of stock actually issued is unknown.

From the first day of operation in 1883 there was a desire to link the Bentonville Railroad with a railroad other than the Frisco at Rogers. An alternate link would assure Bentonville of competitive freight rates and access to new markets. This well-founded business desire would create repeated disappointments and financial losses due to Bentonville's repeated involvement with railroad confidence men. In early 1888 the Bentonville *Democrat* announced that construction of the Kansas City & Sabine Pass Railroad was certain. Bentonville stood directly on the route of the new line. A week later the same weekly paper trumpeted the proposed Central Kansas & Arkansas line from St. Joseph, Missouri to Van Buren, Arkansas. Bentonville again would be on the route of the second new line. A week later the *Democrat* denounced the Kansas City & Sabine Pass project as a swindle after having run an article speculating about Bentonville's role as a railroad center.

In December 1888 representatives of Bentonville, Jane, Missouri and Pineville, Missouri met with Col. Bush of the Kansas City, Fort Smith and Southern Railroad (the "Splitlog Line") in Neosho, Missouri. This line was in operation from Joplin, Missouri to Splitlog, Missouri (west of Anderson, Missouri). Matthias Splitlog, a wealthy Wyandotte Indian of French-Canadian

origin from the Kansas City area, built the line to tap the traffic anticipated from the Southwest Missouri silver boom. Unfortunately there were no commercial silver deposits in the area. Financially strapped Matthias Splitlog soon sold his railroad to Philadelphia investors. Bentonville was elated as the Splitlog's southern end was only 35 miles away. To whet local interest the Splitlog Line published its timecard in the weekly Bentonville *Democrat*. On New Years Eve 1888 the citizens of Bentonville held a railroad convention to raise about \$350 for a resurvey of the 1880 railroad route to Southwest Missouri. Bentonville felt it was a natural choice for an extension of the Splitlog. Residents hoped that the new line extension would reach Bentonville by July 4, 1889 in time for a gigantic celebration. The optimism chilled when newspapers reported the Splitlog was considering a southward extension to Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, a town some seventeen miles to the northwest. By February 1889 both Neosho, Missouri newspapers were speculating that Bentonville would not be on the Splitlog as Bentonville was too close to the Frisco at Rogers. Col. Samuel W. Peel, Bentonville's leading citizen, visited Philadelphia in May 1889 to plead Bentonville's case with Col. Bush of the Splitlog. Although the citizens of Bentonville had agreed to furnish a subsidy of \$50,000, Colonel Peel returned home without a commitment to include Bentonville on any southward extension. By late June 1889 the Splitlog had decided to follow a projected route that would involve extending the line to Sulphur Springs, Arkansas and then through western Benton County. A map published by the Splitlog shows the line intended to reach Prairie Grove, Arkansas en route to the commercial center of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Bentonville then sought to have the Splitlog build a branch from Sulphur Springs to Bentonville. The railroad did nothing more than to send a survey crew over the proposed branch line. The loss of the Splitlog connection was embarrassing. The Bentonville Railroad had extended its track one-mile in anticipation of a link to the Splitlog. The Bentonville Railroad was in the strange position of reporting it was a line of 6.25 miles including "one mile not operated." Perhaps the one-mile extension was a factor in the year later 1890 foreclosure and sale of the Bentonville Railroad.

The next trial was the Kansas City, Bentonville and Southeastern Railway of November 1890. The line required the now standard \$50,000 subsidy and would run from Bentonville to Rutledge, (now Elk Crossing, and Missouri) with a southern extension to Springdale, Arkansas. The Bentonville *Democrat* did its part to fan railroad fever. It suggested the Kansas City, Bentonville & Southeastern would make Bentonville the "the Gate City of the northwest" and "railroad center of the South." In July 1891 the line became visible as surveying began and Dr. John Smartt, first President of the Bentonville Railroad, prepared to turn the first shovel of dirt. The Bentonville *Democrat* of July 2, 1891 printed an interview with a Mr. Schneider, chief surveyor for the Kansas City, Bentonville & Southeastern, which was highly skeptical of Mr. Schneider and prospects for the line. By late August 1891 the line was said to have been graded six miles. Traces of the roadbed, including three bridge abutments, are still visible in the difficult terrain above Hog Slaughter Hollow in Northeast Bentonville. The History of Benton County also contains a photo of a steam shovel described as building a railroad in North Bentonville. Work stopped suddenly in early September 1891 without track having been laid. The Kansas City, Bentonville & Southeastern was another failure.

The next railroad news reported was in May 1892 when discussions had recommenced with the Splitlog line. Bentonville's failure to make a deal with the Splitlog was unfortunate. The Splitlog later joined the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf, which today operates through western Benton County as the Kansas City Southern Railway.

January 1895 began with Dr. Smartt chairing another railroad committee. The Arkansas & Northwestern projected a line from Bentonville

to Aerie, Kansas (probably an early spelling of Erie, Kansas) on the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. The second phase contemplated an extension that would link Bentonville to the state capital of Little Rock. The line to Aerie, Kansas planned to connect with the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf that had taken over the Splitlog line in 1893. The financing package for the Arkansas & Northwestern Railway required Bentonville to provide \$50,000 in subsidy notes, Gravett, Arkansas (spelled with only one "e" at this time)-\$12,000, Southwest City, Missouri-\$12,000 and 25,000 railroad ties and Miami, Indian Territory-\$15,000. Following several mass meetings Bentonville raised the \$50,000 subscription and seemed assured of a non-Frisco connection to Kansas City. On December 26, 1895, work began with five teams of horses and twelve men. The subsidy agreement called for completion in 1897. In early 1898 the unused subsidy notes were returned to subscribers.

Just as Bentonville's Railroad Committee was dealing with the collapse of the Arkansas & Northwestern project, J. Jay Spencer of the Kansas City Terminal Railway met on January 18, 1896 with an officer of the Bentonville Railroad. Spencer, probably an agent of the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf, predicted the Bentonville Railroad would soon collapse. His solution to the collapse was the construction of a new railroad line from Bentonville to Sulphur Springs, Arkansas on the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf. The second phase envisaged a southern extension to Springdale, Arkansas that would turn eastward to Bald Knob, Arkansas on the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway. Spencer estimated the cost of the initial twenty miles as \$88,400. The timing of Spencer's visit was ironic as the last thing Bentonville needed was another railroad project requiring Bentonville capital and civic attention.

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chapter No. 188 founded November 1987

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The Chapter meets the third Thursday of each month (except December dinner meeting) at 7:00 PM. Meetings are held at the Shiloh Museum's General Store, 118 West Johnson, Springdale, Arkansas. Visitors are welcome at all meetings. Annual dues for 2004 are \$35.00 for individuals and \$38.00 for a family. Dues include membership in the National Railway Historical Society. Please call 479-750-8165 for directions to the Shiloh Museum General Store.

ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 1303

SPRINGDALE, AR 72765-1303

Address Service Requested



The Thursday, April 15 program will be presented by Bob Stark. The topic will be the Fort Smith & Western that operated between Fort Smith & Guthrie, OK until 1939. The fun begins at 7:00 PM.

Thomas & Marion Duggan
15225 Lakewood Drive
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