

# The Scrambler

Volume 18, Number 1

October 2004

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

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## *The Colemans of Fort Smith* (September 2004 Scrambler)

Two individuals recalled the December 30 1952 KCS-Frisco train wreck in a personal way.

Richard Young of Mansfield lived in south Fort Smith not far from the Cedars, OK accident scene. His father, Bernard, was an Arkansas State trooper. When trooper Young learned of the accident he decided to help at the scene. He knew that the Oklahoma Highway Patrol officer responsible for Cedars, OK had to drive quite a long distance to work the accident. It was a fortunate decision as the OHP officer drove so fast that he suffered a flat tire when responding to the

accident. Richard Young recalled that on the dark and rainy night Towson Avenue was filled with ambulances as survivors were brought to the two area hospitals.

Chapter member David McDonald recalled hearing about the accident. He went out with his camera and tried to take pictures of the accident. He said that he had some pictures but was unsure of their location some 42 years later. David said that Cedars was not a regularly scheduled passenger train stop as the Cedars area had very few inhabitants.

## *Arkansas & Missouri Railroad Mock Terrorist Drill*

Chapter Membership Vice President and A & M volunteer conductor Chuck Girard of Fort Smith was one of 32 volunteer participants in the Sunday, September 12 mock terrorist attack on an A & M passenger train at Mountainburg, AR. The train suffered two attacks by Lowell, AR policemen who assumed the role of terrorists.

Chuck survived the two attacks although in the second attack he was "shot" in the shoulder with a special kind of training bullet. He mentioned that his shoulder still stung some four days after the attack. It was

also a surprise that the passengers were forced to lie down in a field by the terrorists. Fortunately, Chuck was wearing his conductor uniform. He was not affected by the abundant ticks or chiggers.

The exercise reinforced the railroad's positive public image. It afforded area FBI, police and SWAT teams the opportunity to work together in an unusual and well organized exercise. A & M Police Chief Ron Sparks said that the Mountainburg train exercise was the first of its kind staged in the United States.

## The Frisco in 1904

The Eighth Annual Report of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad reported on the events of the year ending June 30, 1904. The 70 page plus volume focused more on financial matters and predated the ICC mandated system of standardized accounts that began about 1910. The thousands of statistics, un-audited of course, and words provide an interesting glimpse into the Frisco of a century ago. Annual reports of railroads were seen as promotion tools and the 1904 issue was no exception.

In 1904, the Frisco was in a period of feverish expansion that came to a halt with receivership in 1913. The architect of the growth plan was Benjamin F. Yoakum, Chairman. In 1900, the year the Frisco acquired the 47-mile Rogers, AR to Grove, IT Arkansas & Oklahoma RR in Northwest Arkansas, the line averaged 1400 miles. By June 30, 1904, average miles exploded to 4,217 miles excluding the Chicago & Eastern Illinois and 395 miles of other railroads. Included in the 1904 tally was the 143.9 mile long Ozark & Cherokee Central that linked Fayetteville, AR to Muskogee and Okmulgee in the Indian Territory.

Freight was the principal 1904 revenue source with 11.11 million tons hauled. Freight trains of 1904 were much different than today. The average Frisco freight was 19 cars in length with 12.6 loaded cars and 7.4 empty cars. The average load per car was 15.84 tons or about 200 tons of freight per train. The Frisco did not provide information on commodities carried. However, it would be safe to say that coal, from mines in Southeast Kansas and the Fort Smith, AR area, was important. Another important commodity was ties cut

from the abundant hardwood forests of Northwest Arkansas.

To haul freight the Frisco used a fleet of 21, 679 cars including 736 new coal cars, and 225 new flat cars purchased in the 1904 fiscal period. An interesting purchase was two "powder cars that were perhaps intended to carry powder for mining operations. I would imagine that train crews were not too happy when they saw a "powder car" listed in the manifest.

On the passenger side, some 4.93 million people rode the Frisco in 1904. The number almost certainly inflated by the St. Louis World's Fair. Some 91% of the passengers were local passengers who started and ended their trip on the Frisco. It should be noted the local passenger also includes the St. Louis commuter service operated by the railroad. The local riders averaged a trip of 39 miles and paid an average fare of 95 cents. In of 2004 dollars, the 95-cent fare would equal \$19.00.

The 431,000 through passengers accounted for 9 % of 1904 passengers. The through passenger had an average trip of 183 miles and paid an average fare of \$4.00 or \$76.00 in 2004 dollars. Due to competitive factors, the through riders paid only 2.18 cents per mile while local riders had to pay an average of 2.42 cents per mile or 10% more.

The Frisco's heavy reliance on local passengers reflected the fact that the line had a lot of branch line business. For through riders the Frisco was at a disadvantage, as it had virtually no large city-to-city routes on which it was dominant. The Frisco had the shortest times from St. Louis to Oklahoma City but

in 1904, the oil boom in Oklahoma was still in its infancy. The Frisco also labored at a disadvantage on the St. Louis to Dallas run. The Frisco's first line to Texas passed through Northwest Arkansas and terminated at Paris, TX where a 103-mile ride on the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe was required to reach Dallas. The Frisco's second line to Texas via Oklahoma was finished in 1901 but still fared badly compared to the faster service available on the MKT. Slower running times also meant that the Frisco was at a competitive disadvantage in bidding on lucrative Railway Post Office business between larger urban areas.

Contrary to what one would imagine the typical Frisco passenger train consist of 1904 was five cars. Each car held an average of 11.88 passengers. In the same year, the line first equipped 70 passenger cars with generators and batteries, a definite improvement over the Pintsch gas

lamps of the era. One car absent on Frisco passenger trains of 1904 was the diner. They came into limited service by 1906 and were operated by Fred Harvey. The new diners eliminated many of the 20-minute meal stops at Fred Harvey operated Frisco Eating Houses. On the Central Division between Monett, MO and Paris, TX Frisco Eating Houses existed at Monett, MO, Rogers, AR (1898-1910) and Hugo OK.

Most of the railroad's steel track was 65-75 pounds per yard with light traffic areas having lighter weight track. The rails sat on cross ties of which 1,138, 000 were laid in 1904. Creosote was not yet widespread and both ties and section gang labor were cheap.

The Frisco's motive power consisted of 770 locomotives with 707 operating in road service As seen from the following table the Frisco was still a ten-wheeler road:

Type	No.	Avg. Total Weight (tons)	% Total Tractive Effort
Eight Wheel	162	47.7	15.2
Mogul	72	50.6	8.6
Ten Wheel	369	72.4	57.0
Pacific	15	96.3	2.3
Consolidation	89	70.0	16.9

The steam engines, all was coal burning, averaged 15.6 miles per ton of coal. The 15.6 figure is deceptive, as a heavy coal drag would likely burn more coal compared to a ten wheeler with three passenger cars. The average cost of coal in 1904 was \$1.72 per ton up sharply from \$ 1.49 in 1903. The engines consumed a total of 1,139,938 tons of coal or an average 1740 tons a year for each locomotive.

The Frisco was interested in promoting tourism in its service area. The Crescent Hotel in the Eureka Springs resort city was operated by the Frisco commencing in 1900. The railroad had an investment of \$15,000 in the hotel. The Frisco also owned \$20,000 of St. Louis & North Arkansas stock that likely was wiped out in the reorganization that created the Missouri & North Arkansas. The Frisco also had an investment of \$35,000 in the common stock of the St. Louis World's Fair Company of St. Louis.

## Report from Al Kaepfel

### **Special Events**

The final event of the year will be Frontier Days in Fort Smith on Saturday and Sunday, 23 and 24 October. Members' help will be needed. It is an easy run down the highway. We will be inside the newly refurbished Frisco depot. So please come and assist and enjoy.

### **Programs**

21 October. A program by Al Kaepfel.

"The Copper River and Northwestern Railway."

18 November. A two-part program.

1. Bill Ussery. "Rebuilding No.482, a narrow gauge steam locomotive."

2. Bob Stark. "A followup on the Rockville Bridge."

December. The annual Christmas Party (Date to be Announced).

20 January. A program by Tom Duggan on the "Frisco's Central Division Depots."

The number to call for special events and programs is 927-3163.

## The 2005 Train Show

Members unable to attend the September 16, 2004 Chapter meeting may not be aware that the 27 members present unanimously decided that the Chapter could not be a sponsor of the 2005 Train Show scheduled for Saturday, April 9 at the Clarion Hotel in Bentonville. The Chapter concluded that it would be easier for one entity, the Sugar Creek Model Railroad & Historical Society, to run the show in 2005. Our decision has been communicated to and agreed to by the Sugar Creek group. We have also requested the return of \$100 used to secure the reservation for the 2005 show.

Our decreased role should not be perceived as a reduction of our Chapter's of interest in participating in the show. Larry Keith, President of the Sugar Creek group, has indicated that our Chapter will continue to enjoy "honored guest status" at the 2005 show. Members that worked on the first show in 2004 agreed that the show was a success in financial and marketing terms. The show will afford the Chapter an attractive marketing opportunity for new members, our railfan-oriented maps, and the Frisco timetable book compiled by Bob Oswald.

Please be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, April 9, 2005.

## Synopsis of the NRHS Board of Directors Meeting

The NRHS Board of Directors met in Minneapolis, Minnesota on July 2, 2004 in conjunction with the 2004 NRHS Convention hosted by the Northstar Chapter. Here are some highlights.

The 2004 Railway Heritage Grants were announced, with a record \$32,000 awarded to 20 recipients. A full listing is available on the NRHS website ([www.nrhs.com](http://www.nrhs.com)) and will be published in the NRHS News. With this year's awards, the members of the NRHS have raised over a quarter million dollars to support a wide variety of railway history preservation projects. To date, 61 NRHS Chapters and 53 other organizations have received support from this program. VP-Public Relations James Andrisen prepared a press release and press kit for rail-oriented media.

Editor Jeff Smith reported that publication of 2003 Bulletin No. 5 had been delayed several weeks because of work on the Annual Activities Issue. The staff is already working on the first three 2004 Bulletins for publication in early fall.

Dues renewals for 2004 are on pace with 2003, with over 90% of the members renewed and more being processed. As of the meeting, only one chapter was on inactive status for insufficient renewals, and that matter was resolved the following week. Comptroller Bob Heavenrich reported that our finances are tracking close to the budget. The report of the outside auditors for the 2003 fiscal year was accepted by the Board of Directors. The auditors found no material discrepancies and reported no difficulties in carrying out the audit.

President Molloy reported for Membership Records Director Mike Bettiol that the Society is beginning to see the benefits of our rebuilt membership records system. This was a major effort and it caused more disruption than we had expected, but most of the work is now behind us. We are on track for a timely 2005 dues renewal process with some new and improved materials. Recent upgrades allow the NRHS to qualify for better postal rates and faster mail handling, improve the tracking of donations and provide more accurate status reporting. The new database also has much more flexibility to accurately reflect chapter dues structures and membership requirements. The chapter directory was recently removed from the NRHS website while the links were rebuilt, but this should be back up soon.

Media Services Director Mitch Dakelman reported that the Society is in the process of acquiring several important rail photography collections through donations and bequests.

Emblem Sales Director Marty Swan reported that Emblem Sales will adopt a new and simplified Postage & Handling charge structure.

After a long drought, two new NRHS chapters were chartered at the meeting:

- Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Chapter in Vicksburg, Mississippi with 21 charter members.
- Bradford, Ohio Chapter in Bradford, Ohio with 11 charter members.

All current officers and regional vice presidents were nominated for another term in 2005. Nominations remain open through September 15.

Pre-registration is now open for the 2005 NRHS Convention in Portland, Oregon, hosted by Pacific Northwest Chapter. The pre-registration fee has been reduced to \$10. Pre-registration remains open through January 31, 2005, and forms are available through the national office and the convention website at [www.nrhs2005.com](http://www.nrhs2005.com).

The 2006 NRHS Convention will be sponsored by the national organization. The location and dates will be announced this fall.

The locations have been chosen for the 2006 NRHS Board Meetings. The spring meeting will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, sponsored by the Hoosierland Chapter. The fall meeting will be held in Huntsville, Alabama, sponsored by the North Alabama Chapter.

## AMTRAK EXITS THE MAIL BUSINESS

*(From Amtrak)*

“WASHINGTON – Amtrak will discontinue shipping mail for the U.S. Postal Service in order to concentrate on the core business of transporting passengers. For many Amtrak customers, this will mean an improvement in the schedule of their trains, while two Amtrak services that were primarily extended to accommodate mail and express business are being reduced or eliminated.

“Mail and express no longer makes business sense for Amtrak and has negatively impacted the quality of our passenger service, so the decision has been made to exit the business,” said Amtrak President & CEO David L. Gunn in a message to employees. “It is my intention to have all mail and express activity concluded by early October.”

In addition to a notification given last week to the Postmaster General, Amtrak is advising officials in Florida, Ohio, and Indiana that a limited number of stations will no longer be served by passenger trains as a result of the railroad’s withdrawal from mail and express hauling.

Amtrak has also been in communication with labor unions that represent Amtrak employees affected by the decision.

Amtrak’s mail and express business was marginal and did not justify the toll it took on passenger operations. The slower schedules necessitated by longer trains and the switching of express and mail cars at terminals and en route caused passenger dissatisfaction and increased costs.

The cost to lease or maintain aging equipment was another factor in the decision to exit the business. In Chicago, Toledo, Philadelphia, Washington, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Jacksonville, and other cities, train delays due to mail handling will be

eliminated. Amtrak is making arrangements to dispose of the specialized mail and express handling equipment and the passenger railroad will also reduce the number of locomotives it needs by shortening trains to and from Chicago.

Also, maintenance forces can concentrate on returning other elements of the railroad to a state of good repair without the additional equipment required by the mail and express business. Related to this action, Amtrak’s New York-Miami Palmetto will serve New York-Savannah, starting Nov. 1, 2004. Also starting Nov. 1, Amtrak will eliminate the Chicago-New York Three Rivers, substituting in its time slot the New York-Pittsburgh Pennsylvanian, extending that service to Chicago until the spring.

“I realize that this will be painful for some employees, but we will make every effort to provide opportunities for affected employees to remain with the company,” said Gunn. Approximately 300 employees are affected by this action, primarily at terminals and stations. Some workers are expected to exercise their seniority rights for jobs elsewhere in the corporation, including the package shipping business that will continue on trains with checked baggage.

A list of affected Amtrak routes, schedules, and communities follows:

Georgia and Florida: Palmetto and Silver Service Trains: The current Palmetto runs overnight New York-Tampa-Miami as a coach-only train, on a schedule driven by the needs of the mail business. After Nov. 1, it will become a New York-Savannah daytime service, as it was until 1994, and operate on a faster schedule.

The Florida cities of Lakeland and Tampa, now served by the Palmetto, will be served

instead by the New York-Orlando-Miami Silver Star. Sleeping car and dining car service to Tampa will be restored, with First class passengers from St. Petersburg, Sarasota, and Fort Myers having a much shorter bus ride to Tampa instead of Orlando. The Silver Star will operate at a more convenient time at Tampa (5:22 p.m. northbound and 10:35 a.m. southbound) than the Palmetto and operate on a one-hour faster schedule between New York and Florida. Rail service will be withdrawn from four Florida stations: Waldo, Ocala, Wildwood, and Dade City -- all served at night. A daytime motor-coach service will connect those cities plus Gainesville with the Silver Star both at Jacksonville and Lakeland.

Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois: Three Rivers and Pennsylvanian Trains: The New York-Pittsburgh-Chicago Three Rivers was extended from Pittsburgh to Chicago in 1996 and scheduled to meet the needs of the bulk-mail business that Amtrak is now exiting. Changes will come in three phases. Effective Nov. 1, 2004, the Three Rivers (New York-Pittsburgh-Chicago) and Pennsylvanian (New York-Pittsburgh) will be replaced by one New York-Pittsburgh-Chicago train offering Coach and Business Class service.

*(Scrambler Editor Note: It seem like yesterday, actually it was early in the term of former Amtrak CEO George Warrington, that the mail-express business was seen as the salvation of Amtrak's financial problems. I recall seeing several articles in rail fan magazines and NRHS Chapter newsletters that forecast a complete change in Amtrak's future due to mail-express revenues.*

It will operate on a schedule nearly one-hour faster than the current Three Rivers.

On or about March 1, 2005, service on the Three Rivers route will be eliminated west of Pittsburgh, following the legally required advanced notice to the affected communities of Youngstown, Akron and Fostoria, Ohio, and Nappanee, Ind.

Current plans call for changes in the New York-Pittsburgh train schedules with the effective date of the Spring-Summer 2005 Amtrak timetable in April. The westbound train to Pittsburgh will operate slightly later in the day than the current Three Rivers and the eastbound train to New York will approximate the current schedule of the Pennsylvanian. The 1998 extension of the Pennsylvanian between Pittsburgh and Chicago for mail and express purposes was eliminated in 2003 and a different Pennsylvanian schedule to New York was adopted last year.

Daily service between Pittsburgh and Chicago will be maintained by the Capitol Limited, which operates via Cleveland, Toledo, and South Bend, more populous cities north of the current Three Rivers stops in Ohio and Indiana.”

I would imagine that everyone was guilty of over optimism in a period when Amtrak management touted a goal of bringing operating losses down to zero. David Gunn, the present Amtrak CEO, seems to be an old-fashioned railroader who believes the most important priority is operating trains on time. The lack of on time operation is certainly one of the biggest complaints by Amtrak passengers.

# ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chapter No. 188 founded November 1987

## 2004 DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Vice President	CHUCK GIRARD	484-1500
Secretary	RON ALLEN	751-0761
Treasurer	BOB HOFER	855-1532
National Director	TOM DUGGAN	756-1901
Membership Chm. Programs & Special Events	CHUCK GIRARD	484-1500
Director	AL KAEPPPEL	927-3163
Director-Archivist	FRED LEWIS (05)	677-2935
Director	AL KAEPPPEL (04)	927-3163
Editor	BILL USSERY (06)	751-2873
	TOM DUGGAN	756-1901

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.

The next time you are in Springdale take a look at the yellow and red Arkansas-Oklahoma RR locomotive in the A & M yard on the baggage car side. The November *Scrambler* will contain an article on the Editor's October 2003 visit to the Midwest City, OK operation of this line.

Chapter member Jim Wakefield will present a program on The Missouri & North Arkansas-A Mountain Railroad using 40 year old slides produced by noted Arkansas rail historian Gene Hull. The program will be held at the Boone County Heritage Museum in Harrison, AR on Saturday, October 9 at 2:00 PM. It should be interesting and informative.

ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 1303  
SPRINGDALE, AR 72765-1303  
Address Service Requested

**When : Thursday , October 21**  
**Where : General Store**  
**Time: 7:00 PM**  
**What: Program by Al Kaepfel**  
**Topic: Copper River & Northwestern Rwy.**