

ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chapter No. 188 founded in 1987



2007 DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS

President	Gary McCullah
Vice President	Mitch Marmel
Secretary	Clare McCullah
Treasurer	Katherine Mindoro
Editor	Bill Merrifield
National Director	Chuck Girard
Board Director	Mike Sypult

NRHS Chapter Meets 7:00 PM Thursday, May 18, 2007 at the Shiloh Museum's General Store. Chapter meetings are cancelled due to inclement weather on days when the Springdale Public Schools are closed due to weather conditions.

Travis Walls will present at the May meeting the program "When, Who, and What Is Going On in a May 10, 1865 Photograph."

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

Volume 20, No. 9

May 2007

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

CHAPTER MINUTES

April 19, 2007

The regular scheduled meeting of the Arkansas-Boston Mountain Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 19, 2007 by President Gary McCullah, at the Shiloh Museum General Store in Springdale, AR. There were 23 members present.

Secretary, Clare McCullah's minutes from the March 2007 meeting were approved as stated in the *Scrambler* dated April 2007.

National Director, Chuck Girard, stated he has registered for the convention in Chattanooga, TN.

Scrambler Editor, Bill Merrifield, stated he asked our president, Gary, to submit a monthly column to the *Scrambler*.

Treasurer, Katherine Mindoro, was unavailable to read the Treasure's report this month.

Membership Chairman, Chuck Girard, stated we have three members who have not paid their dues. He felt that one member will probably renew and the other two would have to be dropped. He stated he would give them until next month before dropping any old members for nonpayment.

Special Events Chairman, Al Kaepfel, stated Feather Fest is in Springdale, AR on June 9, 2007. This year the Chapter will be set up on the lawn of the Shiloh Museum. The Director of

Museum was very enthusiastic and welcomes the Chapter with open arms. The Frisco Fest in Rogers will be held Saturday, August 25, 2007. The Chapter will be set up in our usual spot beside the Frisco Caboose. Mr. Kaepfel stated will have a sign up sheet at next meeting for Feather Fest for volunteers. On May 5, 2007 is a train show at Ramey Jr. High in Fayetteville, AR. David McDonald stated there would be a Garden Railroad set up at Hot Springs Village on June 19, 2007. They are to have seven or more Garden layouts to enjoy.

Programs and Activities Chairman, Mitch Marmel, stated that programs are taken care of to the end of the year.

Archivist, Al Kaepfel, was given newspaper articles of himself and Bob Stack assisting the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad in the alteration of their caboose. John Hendricks donated a book on steam locomotives to the archive.

Sign Committee Chairman, Chuck Girard, informed the chapter the David McDonald, his grandson, Christopher Nalley, JP Bell, and himself boarded the A&M for a ride to the remote community of Lancaster to place the last sign. Tom Duggan completed the assembly of the back sides of the last three signs for Chester, West Fork, and Rudy to make them two sided signs. They are ready to be assembled to their counterparts.

Mr. Duggan stated that he notified Bob Oswald that the signs were finished. Mr. Duggan stated that Mr. Oswald is progressing slowing from the effects of a problem caused by his heart medicine.

Old Business: It is still two months until the Quad Chapter's meet in Ft. Smith. Mr. Duggan stated tickets have been sold from all over USA. Advertising has increased with the assistance of A&M's marketing specialist. Al Kaepfel needs members to volunteer to assist with the meet. They hope to have good attendance from the Chapter members. The Parlor car is filling up quickly and tickets are selling rapidly. There are seats available in the coach cars.

New Business: Mr. Tolar stated the Tired Iron's Spring Crank Up starts April 20-22, 2007. Due to a generous donation, the land is now paid. The road is paved. The clubhouse has city water and is all finished. The Sawmill is to be working at the Crank Up. Admission is free.

Tom Duggan read the following statement sent to the local NRHS Chapter from Member Ray Getty:

I would like to thank the members of the NRHS ABM chapter for there friendship over the last five or so years, but a personal situation in my life has forced me to relocate where I have family in Ft. Worth, Texas.

I look forward to reading the Scrambler each month and enjoy hearing about the goings on in N.W. Arkansas where I will still be visiting from time to time. I have sold the Cardinal to ITAC in St. Louis and am not sure what they have planned but for those interested I will try to keep you up to date. The car should be moving from Chester in the next couple of months to there facility.

I hope the members enjoy, and the club can use the trains I have donated. I know Al and Tom will see that they get good homes and the club can make a few dollars in the process. Please note that all LGB locomotives have on, off and lights only switches so if the locomotive does not run when you first put them on the rails, flip the switch. If you can't find the switch (some are hard to find), please e-mail me and I will let you know where it is. The mogul and all blue White Pass diesel have sound factory installed with bells and whistles activated by track magnets, several of which are included in the box of parts. Please feel free to contact me to say "hi" and I wish all of you good health.

Raymond Getty
4505 Wheatland Dr.
Ft. Worth, TX. 76179

Mr. Duggan stated Mr. Getty donated to the Chapter an estimated \$3000.00 in G scale LGB equipment for garden railroading. LGB equipment is made

in Germany and very high quality. A sampling of the equipment showed 4 locomotives, 11 freight cars, 2 log trucks, 5 passenger cars, a water tower, a coaling tower, several buildings, and lots of track. The plan is to sell equipment and the proceeds to go to the local Chapter. Mr. Getty requires a written receipt for the merchandise for tax purposes. Tom Duggan and Al Kaepfel will inspect and photograph each piece prior to being sold.

Tom Duggan displayed a map of the Frisco Railroad and its structures. He thought it would be a nice map to add to the Chapter's displays.

Ray Tolar introduced his new book and donated a copy to the Chapter entitled The Searcy I Remember from 1922-1942. If you would like to read the book, it can be checked out by seeing President McCullah.

Chuck Girard stated Ft. Smith has a 1924 wooden Frisco Caboose sitting downtown. The caboose previously sat at the Memphis Fairgrounds since the 1960's. It was donated to the Boys and Girls Club at Ft. Smith as a restoration project. He stated he hopes to do an article for the *Scrambler* about the caboose. Mr. Girard stated the inside of the caboose is in good shape but the outside needs to be restored. They were searching the number of the caboose and learned it has been renun-

bered at some point in time by the Frisco.

Chuck Girard stated the old Frisco depot in Ft. Smith was purchased by National Park services but it has been just sitting and not used. Negotiations are under way to change the old depot onto a city bus terminal and a Jefferson Bus Lines terminal. The Chapter would be encouraged to put up a Historical display in the building. The proposal is very much in the planning stages.

Bill Merrifield read a letter from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration wanting a tax report from the Chapter. It was decided to have Tom Duggan and Katherine Mindoro take care of the matter..

The meeting was adjourned by President McCullah. President McCullah reminded the membership to donate to the coffee kitty.

The presentation was presented by Gary and Clare McCullah on the Kentucky Railroad Museum in New Haven, Kentucky. Those interested can obtain additional information about the museum on their website: www.kyrail.org

Clare McCullah, Secretary of the Arkansas-Boston Mountain Chapter

FROM THE HEAD END

A month has come and gone and it is time to gather up a bucket of electrons and produce a column. The National Convention will be at Chattanooga this year. I don't know if my schedule will allow me to go. However, I hope that those that can and are of a mind to will go, if for no other reason than to ride the TVRM excursion. There is also the Southern Appalachia Railroad Museum at Oakridge (Knoxville), TN. Take exit 356 on I-40 and go north to get there.

Speaking of excursions, our Quad-Chapter excursion is getting quite a bit of press. If we don't sell out, I will be surprised. I want to thank Tom and Al for taking the lead on this and also Mitch for providing access to the Ft. Smith Trolley Museum. This is truly a team effort. I encourage those who will be traveling to visit any railroad museum or excursion train you may come across. First, there is usually material for a program and, second, you may take a photo that either asks or answers a question.

I mentioned the NRHS News in my previous column. Some of what I share at the meetings is found there. In a move to get the bulletin back on track, there are two outside suppliers in addition to the in-house staff working on alternate issues of the Bulletin. We may not be caught up in 2007, but the hope is to get closer. The use of outside suppliers does not mean the end of the need for volunteer workers. In fact, volunteer staff will be able to focus more on railroad history and less on other things. One final note, National President Greg Molloy warned that we can expect our dues to go up due to the use of outside suppliers. After looking at the new format Bulletin and the NRHS News, I believe it is money well spent.

Last month I talked about change. We have had at least one positive change and that is Tom Duggan's update on Bob Oswald's condition. I owe Bob and Annie an apology for not calling, sending a card or doing something to boost Bob's spirits. The reason is there are just not enough hours in a day. I may tackle the topic of being too busy next month.

One late item is an E-mail I received from the NRHS national office. There is a membership survey. You can get there from the NRHS website or via <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=335093661590>. The survey is also available in paper form from the national office. I encourage all to take the survey and let your voice be heard.

Gary, Chapter President

LOCALLY ON THE BEAM

The Georges poultry complex located to the north of Cassville continues to expand. Most notable is an under construction feed mill with six very large silos. The mill is served by an A & M rail spur that is not yet operational. The Georges mill is immense and dwarfs the nearby Tyson (Hudson Foods) mill at Willowbrook. One wonders whether the UP grain train will be operating north to serve the new mill.

The Gateway sand facility of the A & M has a high value customer. A walnut log company has an office at the facility and several bulkhead flats were parked near the walnut log company's office.

Response to the Quad Chapter railfan weekend in Fort Smith (June 23-24,2007) has been very good. Chapter members Bob and Rose Anne Hofer have volunteered to handle the Saturday check-in duties. We will need a few additional Chapter volunteers to make the event problem-free.

A welder has cut six holes in the sides of the ex Reserve Mining caboose in preparation for installing the new fixed windows. The welder also needs to create a copy of the cupola access assembly that was removed when the caboose served as an office for now defunct Rail Cruise America in St. Louis.

Chapter member Ray Getty's 16-4 Budd sleeper, the Cardinal, has been sold to ITAC. It is slated to leave the Chester tie track in the next month or two according to Ray.

IN THE YARDS

Unfortunately, the late news about Chapter member Bob Oswald from Anne Oswald has taken a sharp turn for the worse. Bob is now trying his best to recuperate from the effects of a stroke. Our prayers and best wishes go with them both.

Ruth Merrifield has been admitted to Washington Regional Hospital as the result of complications from a virus infection.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ANGEL'S SEAT

One of the great things about our chapter is the tight unity we have in our love for railroading and its history. While working at the NW Arkansas Model Railroad Show and Swap Meet last week, I spent several very enjoyable hours talking with chapter member Fred Lewis. Besides swapping stories of past railroad experiences we talked about the inevitability of growing older and what will be lost when our generation is gone. Since the majority of the chapter's members are around our age it caused me to reflect on how will the next generations know what it was like to live in the heydays of the thirties, forties and fifties of railroad transportation? ***How will our personal railroad experiences with steam and early diesel transportation get translated to those that follow us?*** Well, one sure way is to maintain contact with younger generations through chapter activities! But this begs another question, how can we pass our enthusiasm to other generations when roughly one-half of our membership or less attend our monthly meetings or our outside chapter activities. I am not writing about those who cannot come because of some infirmity of body or other perfectly valid reasons; and, I really am not trying to lay a guilt trip on those that miss these activities. I am saying that we who attend the meetings and activities need to find some way(s) to let them know they are genuinely missed and needed!

BRASS POUNDING DOWN THE LINE

Many Chapter members had a chance to ride the White River Railway and its successor entity White River Scenic Railway. The route was an attractive one as it meandered from Flippin, AR to Calico Rock, and AR along the White River on trackage rights on the Missouri & Northern Arkansas. Chapter members Bob Oswald and Bill Ussery also worked on the White River Railway and the White River Scenic Railway as conductors. Unfortunately, the somewhat remote location did not generate adequate ridership. The line finally shut down in November 2000.

One unanswered question was the disposition of the passenger cars. Thanks to Bill Ussery and May 2007 issue of *Trains*, we now have an answer. The magazine reports that the West Virginia Central purchased the White River Scenic Railway passenger equipment for use on its tourist train. The White River Scenic at one time featured a former California Zephyr dome car, a diner, and an ex Pullman heavyweight used by Bobby Kennedy in his 1968 presidential campaign. Some one told me that the CZ dome had been sold in 1997. The diner, owned by John Dortsch, briefly graced the A & M in early 2002 but never saw service. The car was easy to spot as it was painted in a dazzling silver and purple combination. The status of this car is unknown. The passenger cars included a 1947 ex- MOPAC car that saw service on the *Texas Eagle*, and a 1940 ex-MOPAC coach that ran on the *Colorado Eagle*.

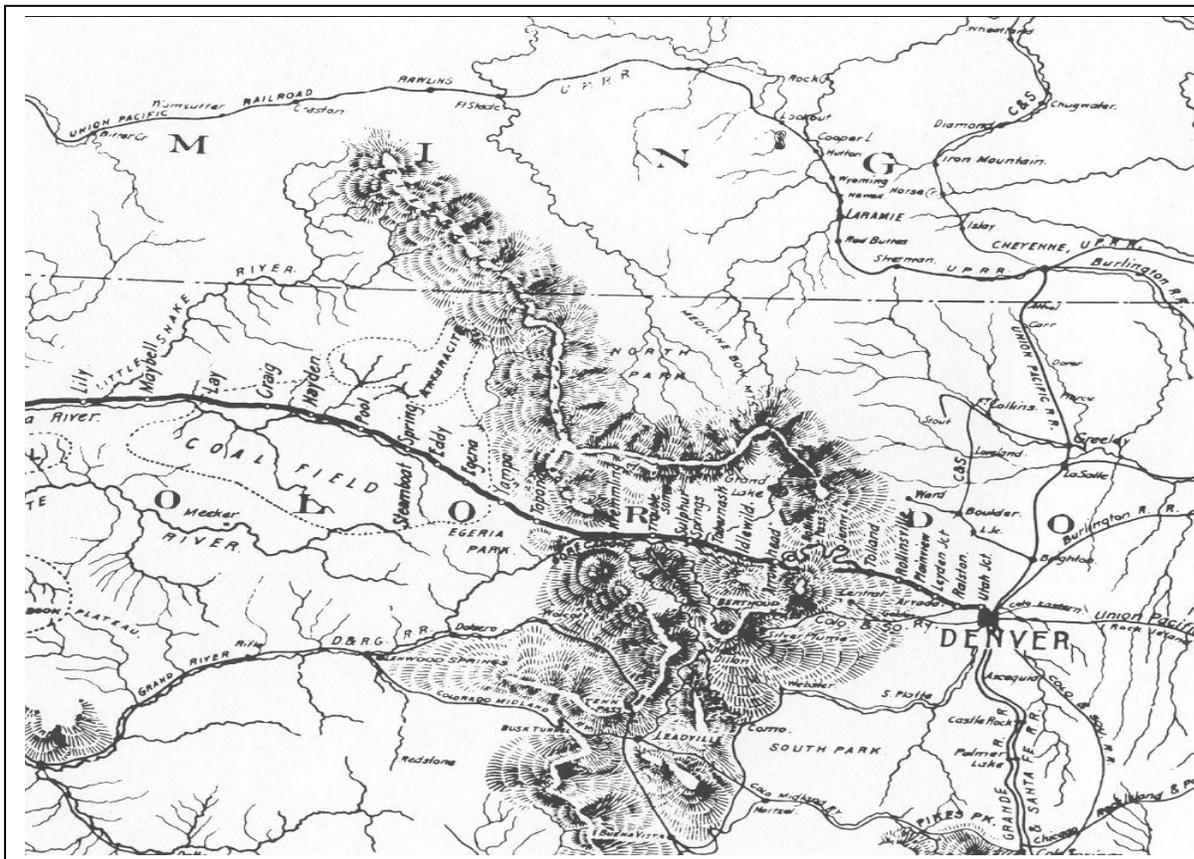
West Virginia now has a significant number of tourist train operations in addition to the one and only Cass Scenic. One ride Tom Duggan took some three years ago was on the Potomac Eagle that operates on state owned track adjacent to the Potomac River. The coaches were heavyweight ex-Montreal commuter coaches that featured six wheel trucks. The interiors were grey and pink.

TRAINS THROUGH MEMORY

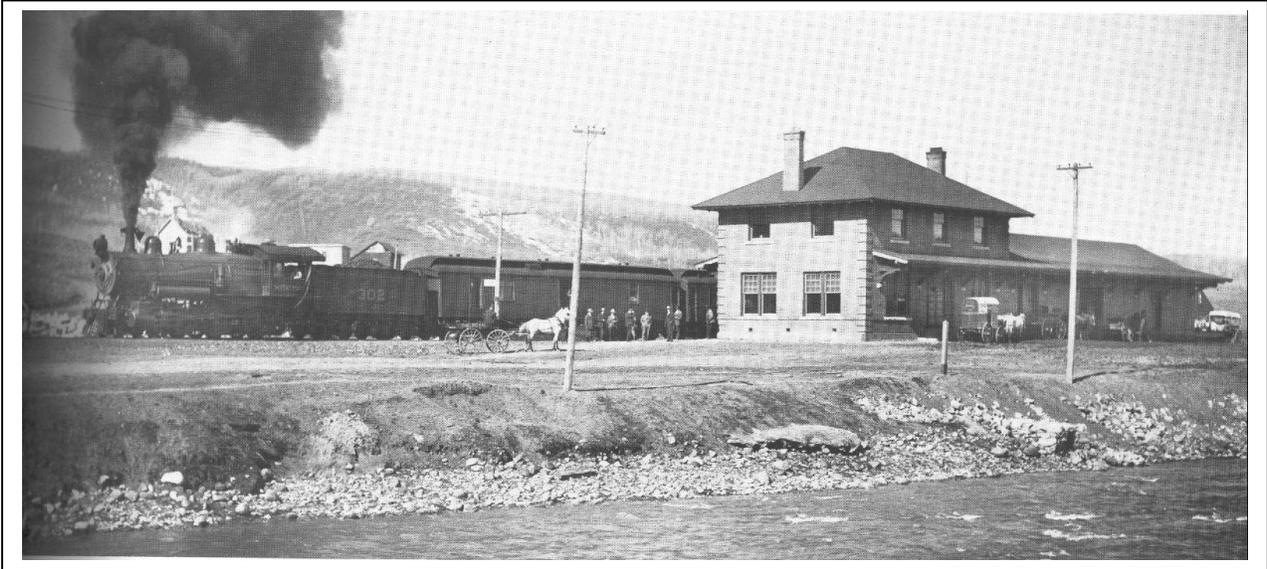
When your editor was a young boy in the mid thirties our family would attempt an annual trip by automobile from our home in Denver to visit relatives in Steamboat Springs located in northwest Colorado. It was always an arduous trip! Going westward up into the foothills over Genesee Pass was always an ordeal since the warmth of the eastern slope always caused the car to overheat and vapor lock. Occasionally, We would come

across a narrow gage passenger train puffing its way into Empire or Idaho Springs. Once we started up Berthoud Pass on the eastern slope, the US 40 road became a narrow dirt road with many hair-pin curves and steep drop offs. If the car made the pass without vapor locking, we would come down the western slope to the portal of the Moffat Tunnel of the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad. I never understood why we always stopped there and had a picnic until years later I learned that my father had worked on building the Moffat Tunnel on the eastern slope in 1927. There was a picnic table just above the tunnel opening and I often wondered what it would be like leaning down over the entrance when a huge steam locomotive would exit the tunnel. That happened once and I am not ashamed to admit it that it scared the fire out of me.

As the road wound down the western slope and entered into the tiny hamlets of Fraser and Tabernash, it was not unusual to see locomotives idling on a sawmill siding while lumber was being loaded. The railroad and our road paralleled the Fraser River all the way to Granby where there was a siding set-a-side for visitors to Grand Lake. Just beyond Granby, the Fraser joined the Colorado River that then plunged into the gorge near Hot Sulphur Springs. Negotiating the gorge was always treacherous and at times dangerous (even as it is today) for both automobiles and trains. That section of the road was one lane only. We often envied the D&SL roadbed lower on the opposite side of the gorge. After the gorge, we entered the fringes of Middle Park to the foot of Muddy Pass where the railroad branched southwestward towards the Gore Range and its fantastic gorge. If we made it up Muddy Pass (which always lived up to its name) the next hurdle was Rabbit Ears Pass which brought us into the incredibly beautiful valley of the Yampa River where we again joined the D&SL tracks which paralleled the road on the opposite of the river into Steamboat Springs. The railroad continued another 20 miles down the Yampa Valley to the coalmines of Hayden then on to Craig another 25 miles where it terminated. The Denver and Salt Lake never entered Utah.



At the turn of that century, getting into Yampa Valley during the wintertime was virtually impossible. The passes were closed and the only possible link to the outside world was westward to Craig and even that was very difficult and at times impossible. The valley with its farms and ranches had to be self-sustaining. When David Moffat was pushing through the Denver and Northwestern Railway Co. the residents of the valley were very supportive. They had only very limited means to get their cattle, produce, coal, and lumber to the outside world. When the surveyors arrived in Steamboat Springs in the summer of 1906, the summer festival was turned into a celebration of the railroad. The line to my hometown was completed on December 13, 1908.



The depot at Steamboat Springs February 14, 1914

The depot is on the south bank of the Yampa River. The passenger train is faced eastward departing for Denver. The depot building still exists today as an art academy. Behind the train is Holsome Hill where the Steamboat Spring was located. The first pioneers into the valley heard its distinct “chug, chug” hence the name. When the railroad made a cut in the hill it silenced the eruption of the hot spring. As a boy, I was skiing down the spine of this hill very close to the depot when I had a potentially serious accident.

In the summer of 1940, at the age of nine, I was put on a passenger train to Steamboat Springs alone. My mother turned me over to the conductor who kept a close eye on me. At first I was thrilled; but, like all kids, I began to bug the conductor with “Are we there yet?” I was, however, fascinated by the toilet. When you flushed the thing you could see the railroad ties rushing by beneath the train! No wonder the sign said over the toilet “Do not flush while in the station!” As the train left the approaches in the foothills and entered into the gorge at Eldorado Springs, the canyon walls seemed to swallow us up. Frankly, as a nine year old, I soon became bored by the sight of shear rock walls rushing by. However, it wasn’t long until the conductor began to warn us that we were approaching the Moffat Tunnel. Now that was something different! I knew we were close when they turned on the coach’s overhead lights. Suddenly, we plunged into the tunnel, the windows turned black, and all I saw was my own reflection in the windows. Almost immediately, the coach began to fill with an acrid odor of smoke that quickly became very uncomfortable! It seemed that the great Moffat Tunnel was an ordeal instead of an exciting event. I, along with the rest of the passengers, was greatly relieved when we passed out of the western portal.

As the train slowed in its approaches to Fraser and then Tabernash it was tuning dark outside. The porters began to make up the berths and soon I was tumbled into bed. I didn't sleep well at first but soon was snoozing away. I awoke a few hours later near dawn to discover we were still in Tabernash! I could feel the coach alternately jerk and clang as the train was being made into a mixed unit. I was relieved when we eventually got under way: but, that was short-lived as we seemed to stop at every little greasy spot along the rails to pick up milk, cows and whatever! I learned quickly why some said "Damn slow and late!" This was followed by again the shear walls of the canyon past Hot Sulfur Springs, the high mountain semi-arid Middle Park, and the shear walls of the Gore Canyon. Only the ever beautiful valley of the Yampa River broke the tedium.

Now that I am seventy-six years old, I can only shake my head and remark how much was wasted on the young. Oh that I could experience that trip again!

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT RAILROADING?

Answers to last month's questions:

QUESTION: In the early days of railroading after the Civil War, every station agent was familiar with an essential piece of equipment known as a crow's foot. In fact, every station had two of them; but, they were different. What in the world were crow's feet and what were they used for? (OK, that's two questions!) Yes, Virginia, this is a hard railroad question! However, I will give you a hint: a chemist would recognize them instantly and know why they were different. Editor.

ANSWER: The crow's feet were two bird leg and foot shaped metal pieces with "toes" extending approximately four inches out from the upright metal stalk. One was made of zinc and was quite heavy and thick. The other was made of copper and was quite thin. Each of them had a thumbscrew at the top of the stock to which a telegraph wire was attached. Each foot was placed in a cylindrical jar filled with an electrolyte solution. The zinc foot was in a zinc ionic solution and the copper foot was in a copper ionic solution. Into the mouth of each jar was inserted the legs of a U-shaped open ended glass tube containing a salt solution. This was called a "salt bridge". In modern terms, the zinc foot slowly dissolved into its own solution releasing electrons into the telegraph wire. The copper foot acted in reverse. It took electrons in and caused copper ions to form copper atoms that formed on the surface of the copper foot. The salt bridge completed the electrical circuit. As time passed, the heavier zinc foot became lighter and the lighter copper foot became heavier. In chemistry these are known as half-cell reactions. Each station down the line had to have a set of these jars since the DC current produced by them weakened in long transmission. They were the precursor to our modern dry-cell batteries. Editor

QUESTION: Who was the Christian millionaire that was the driving force in the founding of Streamtown, USA? Where is this unique facility located?

SCALE RAILROADING

Future Model Train Shows of interest to us:

May 26, 2007 7th Annual Parsons Katy Days Model Railroad Meet and Show Labette Community College, Multipurpose Bldg, NW corner of Heacock and Broadway Streets, Parson, KS Sat: 8am to 4pm, Sun: 12 noon to 3pm Admission free.