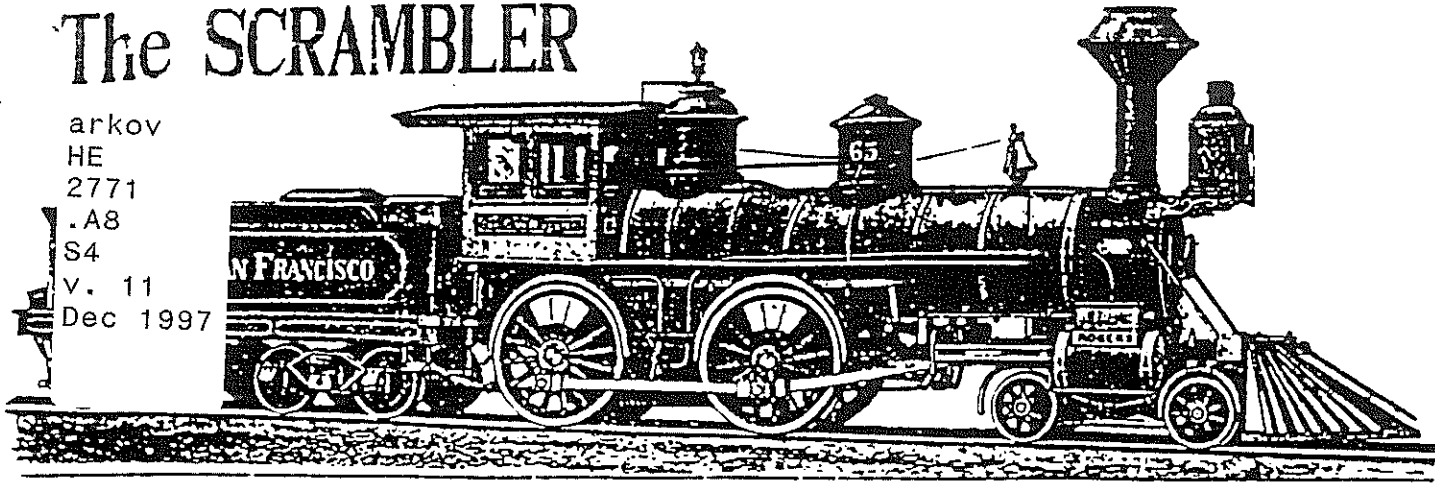


The SCRAMBLER

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ARKANSAS BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME 11 NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 1997



MINUTES OF MEETING November 20, 1997

The Chapter met for the regular monthly meeting at the Shiloh Museum at 7:00pm on November 20, 1997. The meeting was called to order and President Tom Duggan welcomed members and one guest.

The minutes of the September meeting published in this month's scrambler were approved as published.

Report from officers Bob Oswald on National Directors Meeting. Details of the meeting are on file with the Secretary's records. Bob encouraged members to attend both the National Annual meeting and the Board of Director's meetings.

The Treasurer's report was given by Treasurer Bill U'ssery a copy of the report is on file with the secretary's records. He has the 1998 dues and membership cards and dues can be paid at any time.

George Alison reported on the Scrambler, a reduced form of the Scrambler will be published in December including a map to location of the dinner meeting.

Under the report from committees Ray Toler of the Manitou Committee read a portion of a letter from a Mr. Wagoner of the St. Louis Chapter. Their chapter is restoring some passenger equipment and wants to borrow the trucks from the Manitou. The Fort Smith Trolley Museum also wants to acquire them for a heavy weight car they are rebuilding. Ray agreed to speak with Mr. Tony Hannold, President of the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad about the trucks. The railroad owns the trucks.

There was also some discussion on setting up a display with the salvaged items from the Manitou.

Audit committee, needs to audit the treasurer's books.

The nominating committee has nominated the following persons to serve in these positions for 1998: President, George Alison; Scrambler Editor, Tom Duggan. Chapter Director, Eugene Schmidt will remain in the position for another 3-year term. Other officers have agreed to remain in place.

Ray Toler suggested that someone else take over the refreshment detail. At the January meeting a list will be started for persons who agree to furnish coffee and cookies to the meetings. The Chapter will purchase a coffee maker for this detail. Juanita Toler has furnished the refreshments for the meetings for many years. Now it is someone else's turn.

There was no old business to discuss.

There was some discussion on the joint meeting trip to Eureka Springs.

(CONT. ON PAGE TWO)

Bill Cossery needs a headcount for the Christmas dinner. Bill will call members who were not present at the meeting tonight.

Bill Merrifield gave an update on the upcoming programs. He will need someone to present programs after the New Year begins.

As there was no additional business to discuss, the business meeting was adjourned and Bill Merrifield presented interesting and informative program on steam locomotives.

Ron Allen
Secretary

EDITORIAL from the Editor:

It is almost like an Academy Award writing this tidbit, for my final Scrambler. I certainly couldn't have put ^{cut} four years worth of issues without an abundance of help.

First to Bob Oswald who nearly always contributes a page, if not two, of Scrambler material, but he also processes the Scrambler after printing for mailing. This is quite a task in itself. Questions Should be posed to Annie as she usually has a hand or two in this also.

Second to Erv Lewis for his everflowing spring of articles, stories, advice, and encouragement. He has been a great supporter from the beginning. I believe Ruth also lends a hand on occasion.

Third to Tom Duggan for his many articles finely researched and prepared for use in the Scrambler. I hope, and I'm quite sure, that he hasn't used up all his material, as he is slated to be your editor.

Fourth, to the Chapter as a whole, for encouragement and support, while I've been putting out your newsletter.

I look forward to Tom's version of the Scrambler, and hope all the Chapter members will help him with an occasional story or anecdote from your railroading memories as they've easily enjoyed by all who read the Scrambler. We send copies out to several other Chapters and museums.

The stories you tell and hear, whether from yesterday or years back, is what keeps connected with the other Chapters of the NRHS, because we all like to tell one and hear one more before we go home.

George

Amtrak, the political parable

As we talked, I tried to imagine Joe Vranich as a young man. We knew each other in the 1970s, when I was a newspaper reporter and he was executive director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers—an advocacy group—and later a spokesman for Amtrak. Now Vranich is 52, and he's in my office plugging his new book, *Derailed*. It is, surprisingly, a denunciation of Amtrak. "You were right," he had written me, "and I was wrong." After all these years, Vranich now sees Amtrak as a huge blunder. It's an inescapable conclusion.

Amtrak has always intrigued me as a political parable: a stunning example of government's inability to abandon the old, the stupid, and the failed. Amtrak's ridership is stagnant. It was 16.6 million passengers in 1972 (45,000 a day), its first full year; in 1996 it was 19.7 million (54,000 daily). In the same period, the number of airline passengers has tripled, from 191 million (523,000 daily) to 581 million (1.6 million daily). Meanwhile, Amtrak has drained \$19 billion in federal subsidies, an amount now rising about \$800 million a year.

And things may get worse. Amtrak may be struck by 2,300 maintenance workers, who want an 18.5 percent wage increase over five years. Amtrak says that it cannot afford the raises. Whatever happens, Amtrak is said to be drifting toward "bankruptcy": a situation in which it might shut down because it can't pay its bills.

Perhaps a strike or cash crisis will concentrate Congress' attention on Amtrak's worth. But the record suggests that Amtrak will still survive. The main reason is that it enjoys undeserved public respectability. Some years ago, as I recall, the late John Chancellor gave a TV editorial on Amtrak. He described passenger trains as a sign of a civilized society. Chancellor was a decent man who captured popular opinion. Pas-

Robert Samuelson



senger trains are not merely nostalgic. They symbolize a more relaxed way of life—a longing for escape. They seem a way to save energy and curb pollution. Trains seem enlightened.

Imagery triumphs over reality: Trains provide few benefits, because they serve so few people. But no one wants to seem unenlightened; politicians dread being cast as the executioners of passenger service. The result is a huge capacity for delusion. When Congress created Amtrak in 1970, the idea was to shift the unprofitable passenger trains of private railroads to a new corporation that, after a small amount of federal money, would become profitable. This scheme, I wrote then, was doomed. Planes carried people long distances more quickly; suburbs had ended the need for most short-distance, city-to-city trains. Except perhaps in dense corridors like the Northeast, trains made no sense.

Vranich now believes this—and worse. He thinks that Amtrak impedes first-rate, high-speed trains in the few corridors where they might thrive. "All the visionary proposals for high-speed trains are non-Amtrak proposals," he says. He came to this view the hard way: As president of the High Speed Rail Association in the early '90s, he watched Amtrak fight a proposal for a high-speed train between Dallas and Houston.

No matter. The delusion endures. Congress is now considering an Amtrak "reform" to make it more "businesslike" and shave subsidies. Is this a joke? Well, almost. If the "reform" passes, it would trigger pay-

ment of a \$2.3 billion tax "refund" to Amtrak even though Amtrak has never paid taxes. This backdoor subsidy is an atrocious abuse of the tax code: it's throwing good money after bad.

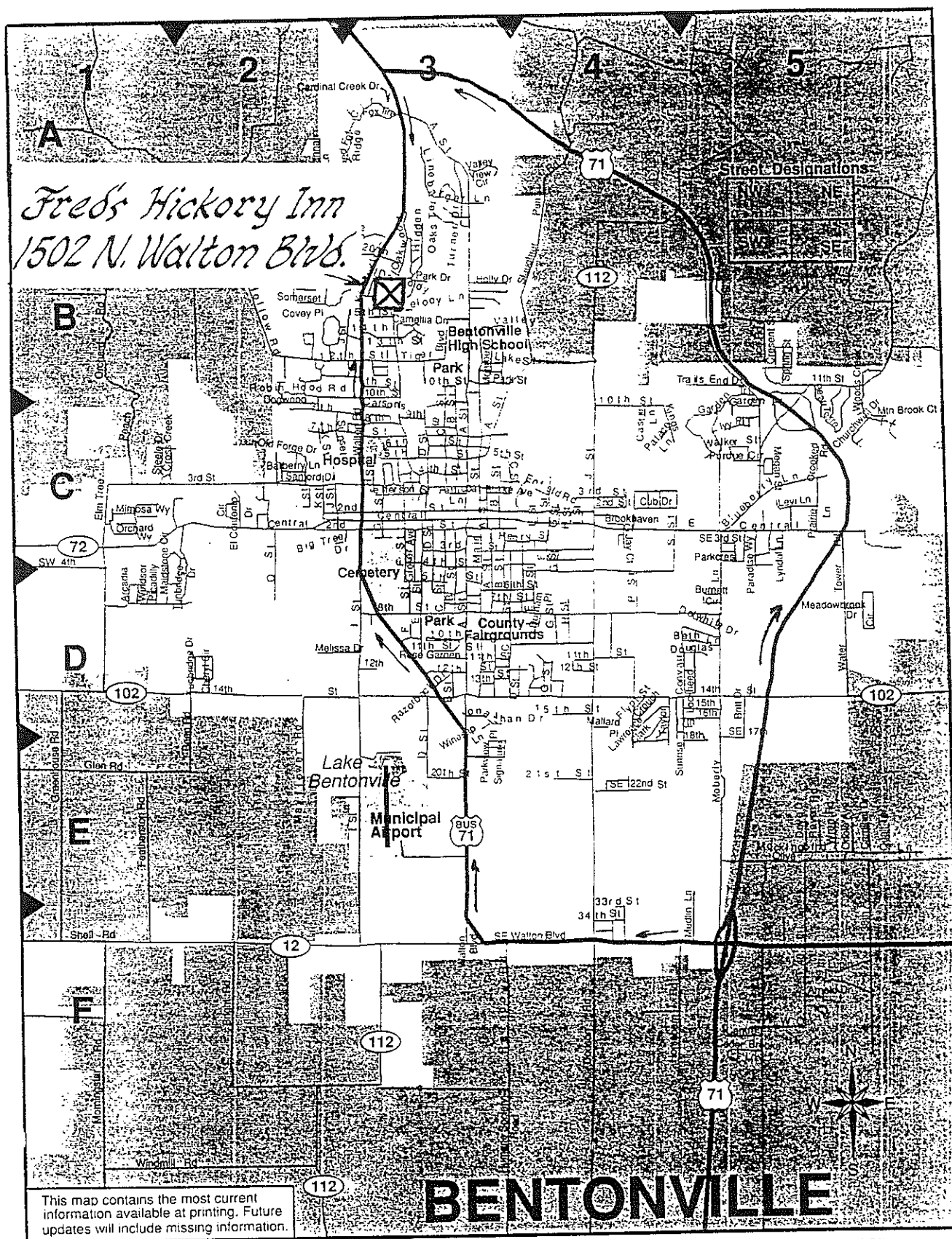
Amtrak's problems are intractable. Its equipment is aging. In 1996 the average passenger car was 20.7 years old. Without new investment, service will deteriorate; but new investments can't pay for themselves. The only sensible reform is to shut down Amtrak. Allow a phaseout of a few years. States and localities could assume service that they deem essential. This would probably preserve trains in the Northeast Corridor, which account for half of Amtrak's passengers.

The larger lesson here is government's inability to end even the worst programs. If Amtrak survives, everything is safe. This puts the hoopla over the recent balanced-budget agreement in perspective. Congress and the White House actually did little to cut deficits. They would have dropped anyway. By the year 2000, almost 85 percent of the expected drop in the deficit reflects what the Congressional Budget Office calls "economic" and "technical" changes: a stronger economy and higher-than-expected taxes.

Good government should emphasize the necessary and effective and eliminate the wasteful and unneeded. But what we see is a huge inertia that avoids such distinctions. "Do we have an obligation to speak up when we've created something that doesn't work?" Vranich asks. "I think we do. . . . Amtrak is a failure. It will be a failure years from now."

This is common sense; it will probably go unheeded.

Robert Samuelson is a columnist for the Washington Post.



This map contains the most current information available at printing. Future updates will include missing information.

The ABMT annual Christmas dinner is December 18th at Fred's Hickory Inn, at 6:00PM. The address is 1502 N. Walton Blvd., Highway 71, in Bentonville. We will have a menu to choose from that the Chapter selected. The Chapter will also be picking up the tab. Bob will provide a program suited for the occasion. All you will need is a good appetite.

Riders

1997 has been a good year for riders on the trolley. November 1 ended our season for daily operation. Winter months the trolley operates Saturday and Sunday and by appointment at other times.

During the regular season, the number of riders increased by 28%. This is an excellent increase compared to the previous six years.

The National Historic Site is closing for three years for renovation which will probably cause a

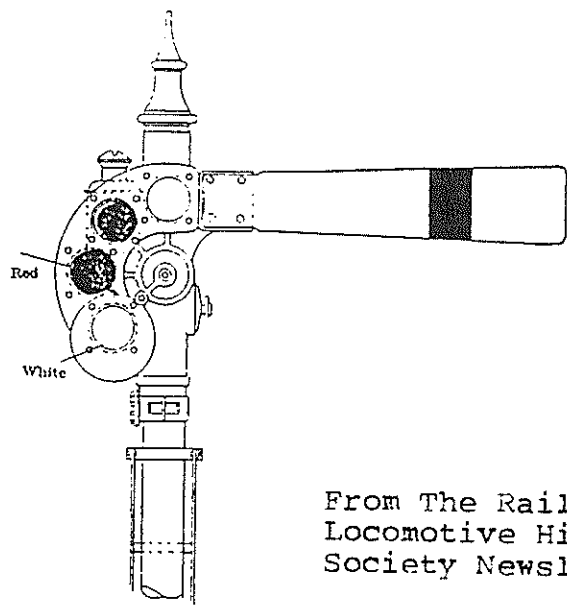
decrease in the trolley ridership since the trolley runs along the edge of the park. Judge Parker's courtroom has now been loaned by

From the Fort Smith Trolley Museum Trolley Report Web Page
<http://www.fortsmith.com/trolley/>

the Historic Site to the Old Fort Museum for display. This should help traffic to that museum and also to the trolley.

LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER'S NEW BOOK

The Little Rock Chapter has just released a new book titled, "Railroad Stations and Trains through Arkansas and the Southwest", authored by Clifton E. (Gene) Hull, frequent contributor to The Bulletin. The 8" x 11 vertical format book, with 120 pages (8 in full color), on 100 pound gloss enamel, hardbound and with dust cover, sells for \$29.95 + \$4.50 shipping and handling. It is available from the Little Rock Chapter, P. O. Box 9151, North Little Rock, AR 72119-9151.



From The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Newsletter

CHANGING SIGNAL LIGHTS ON THE ERIE RAILROAD

The following article was originally published in the *Erie Railroad Employees Magazine* of October, 1906. It describes a time on the nation's railroads when modernization of signal systems and the widespread introduction of electric lights in many communities resulted in the need to change the basic colors of railroad signalling. The Erie's experience was repeated all across the country. -- Ed.

Work is now in progress changing the night signal indications from white to green for "clear," and from green to yellow for "caution." The red lenses in the low or dwarf signals which indicate "stop" have been changed from to a blue-purple or violet color, in order to avoid confusion at interlocking plants, where so large a number of red dwarf signals are used, the normal indication of which is stop.

This system of signals has been in use on the Delaware Division and N. Y. S. & W. road since 1902. On Sept. 5 the new signals were installed on the Buffalo Division, Sept. 17 on the Susquehanna Division, Sept. 20 on the Lima Division, Sept. 22 on the Chicago & Erie R. R., Sept. 24 on the Cincinnati Division from Marion to Dayton, and on Sept. 29 on the

Rochester Division. These changes on each division were made simultaneously on the day set, gangs working from each end of a division to a common meeting point, yard signals being changed by local employees at the same time. The new signals are working well wherever installed and will be put in on other divisions as rapidly as possible.

While the change is, of course, for greater security to employes in operating the system, it is primarily one for the better protection of the public generally, as securing a greater amount of safety to travellers. The Engineman, under the new system, will be relieved from the bewildering display of red lights at inter-locking plants, and in the yards through which they have to pass, sometimes at a very high rate

of speed owing to the substitution of the violet lamps.

White as a "clear" signal has always been attended with some degree of danger. Thus if the red lens in a semaphore casting is broken by mischievous boys or from any other source, it would give a clear signal when it had been set for "stop." The danger is obviated with green as the "clear" signal, for if either the red or green lens be broken, it would give yellowish or white light, which in the case of the yellowish tinge would mean "caution" or in a clear white light would give instant notice that something was wrong, as white has now no place as a fixed signal, and is only used in hand lanterns in switching yards.

Another danger of the white light as a "clear" signal has been that in case it should go out an Engineman might readily mistake a white light elsewhere displayed as his signal, such, for instance, as an electric light on a corner or in a switchyard, a lantern light at a crossing, or even a light in a house adjoining the track, particularly near curves. There are few green lights used anywhere, except at police stations in cities, so that green as "clear" adds to the element of safety in the handling of trains.

They are telling the story of an Irish section Foreman who had helped install the new green lights, and who was ordered to report as to their efficiency. He was delighted to see Erin's colors so liberally displayed and wired back to the Division Superintendent, "O. K. The green light is on top and it looks all right."

Richard Allin

Our Town



Way to go: Mail by rail

BILL BURK, a retired vice president of the Santa Fe Railroad, writes occasionally, and his most recent letter helped.

"Your ... column re: Amtrak and mail and express cars hit home. You can recall, I am sure, when passenger trains threw mail bags off at little towns where they did not stop, and picked up mail

sacks 'on the run' with the hook."

Well, there was a time, Burk remembers, "when Santa Fe ran two mail trains per day (20-22 cars each) between Chicago and Los Angeles. That, my friend, was a lot of mail. No. 7, Chicago to L.A. and No. 8, L.A. to Chicago, ran faster than regular passenger trains because they stopped only for crew changes."

Bill remembers that while Santa Fe was still in the passenger business, the company took delivery on 50 new lightweight, stainless-steel mail and express cars. Oddly, a short time after that, the postal service began diverting mail to trucks.

It led to a curious situation: Passenger trains on the Santa Fe, for example, moving north on the Texas lines, would daily unload five or six cars of mail at Wichita and the mail was then load-

ed onto trucks and driven to Kansas City — where the trains had been headed anyway.

Burk can't explain the postal service's reasoning.

NOW, HE sees that the question of putting mail and express back on passenger (Amtrak) trains has come full circle. The need is there — Amtrak is capable of connecting Chicago and Los Angeles in slightly less than two days — but the railroads over which Amtrak runs appear to be reluctant to let Amtrak trains carry mail and express that could keep them in business.

Amtrak is negotiating with the freight lines about carrying mail and express on its trains. Amtrak even says it already has the authority to carry such cars, but that reasonable cost negotiations must be worked out.

Just why the freight railroads object to Amtrak's carrying mail and express is unclear.

IT IS hard to figure out why the United States will not take the passenger train, and all its potential, seriously. Many people in Little Rock appear not to know that a passenger train runs through their town.

A railroad can carry passengers more efficiently on rails than they can be carried on the highway, whatever the mode of transportation. It can also beat highway transport in carrying mail and express, in speed and in cost.

An increasing population in the United States will one day make passenger trains our No. 1 means of moving the most people. It's inevitable, and already American engineers are examining the high-speed TGV of France.

From the Arkansas Democrat Gazette

KANSAS MINITRAINS

By Herman Page, Editor...

From the Topeka Chapter
SPARKS October 1997

Several months ago, I asked for information on the various park, museum, or other small, almost "kiddie ride" trains, since I have observed that in many cases, this may be the first exposure to trains that many kids ... and even adults!... may have. I am grateful for what has come in so far. A summary:

(1) Closest to home here is **Topeka's Gage Park** minitrain. I have little information about its history or source of its equipment, but it runs regularly.

(2) Scott Colebank sent a picture of a minitrain at the **Agricultural Hall of Fame in Bonner Springs**. The trackage runs by the restored Morris ATSF depot, and Scott's picture of the train appears to be the same train the UP brought to Topeka Railroad Days. (see below) The trackage here appears to be permanent.

(3) Lynn Aldrich has sent pictures of three different trains that operate from time to time on the site of the **State Fair in Hutchinson**. They have three different train sets, two of which are pictured as simulated steam locomotives. They are owned by a Mr. Schmidt, and are powered by O4 Wisconsin gasoline engines. Two sets were built around 1960-61 by Alton Herschelle Co of Buffalo NY, the third bought used (origin is unknown). Power is hydraulic drive to four axles. They are also taken to other state fairs.

(4) There is also one in **Emporia**, located in Soden's Grove, a city park. Apparently the train was having new wheels put on, but they didn't fit the gauge of the track, so more work was needed. The Early Bird Optimist Club operates the line as a fund raising project, and is needing help with rebuilding costs. They are reported to have an Ottaway F-7.

(5) The Oberlin Herald (8-13-97) showed a picture of a larger size minitrain on the **Decatur County Fairgrounds**. The locomotive is a simulated steamer, good sized, looks almost like a Mason "bogie" type. More information on this one ???

(6) **Northeast Kansas Railroaders in Atchison** have an extensive set-up near their museum at the old ATSF freight house. The *Atchison & Western* has around 1700 feet of track, planning expansion to 2100. Motive power includes an Ottaway 4-4-0 live steam loco, and an Ottaway Santa Fe F-7 with an 18 horse gas engine. They have a number of cars.

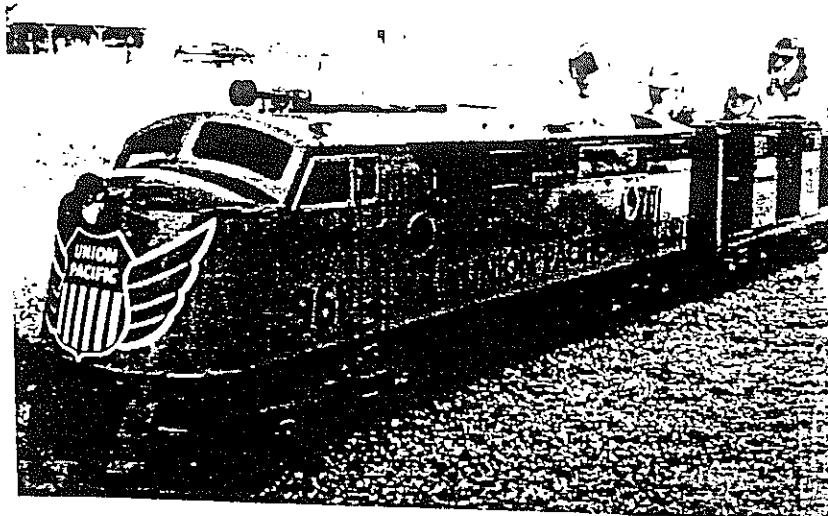
(7) There is a small layout at the park in **Leavenworth** which is on the site of the former CB&Q - L&T engine facilities. No information on power or equipment.

(8) **The Ellis Railroad Museum** has a minitrain, a replica of the GM "Train of Tomorrow". I have never seen it, or a picture of it, but I have seen the track there. Info? A picture?

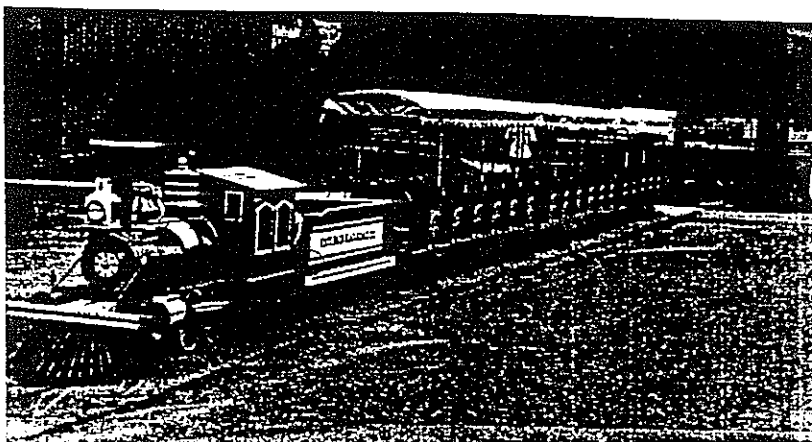
(9) The City of **Wamego** is reported to have a 12" Ottaway steam engine and three cars in a city park. Info?

(10) **Herington** likewise reported to have a minitrain in a city park, with an F-7 (unknown make) and a car. Likewise info ?

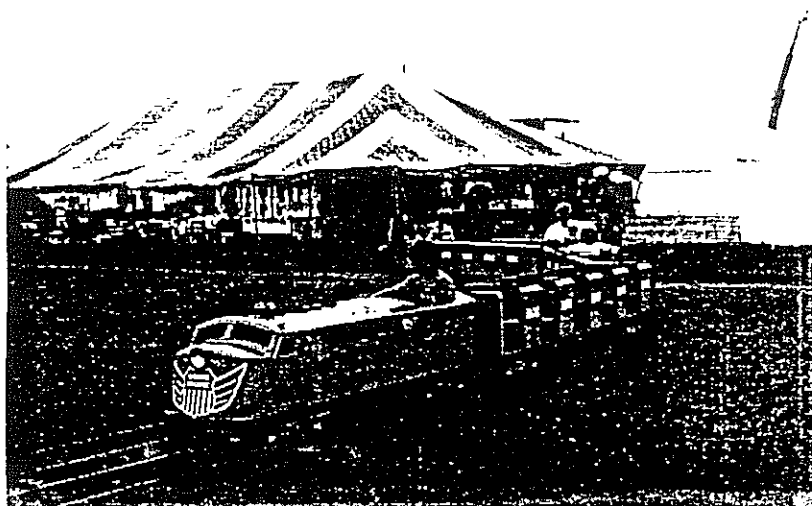
(11) The **Manhattan Mercury** (8-1-97) had a picture of a Santa Fe F-7 operating a minitrain in **Riverside Park in Independence**, along with other attractions run by the city.



Agricultural Hall of Fame minitrain power at their site in Bonner Springs (Scott Colebank photo) Looks like the UP train used at RR Days appeared here also.



One of three ministrains on the grounds of the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson (Lynn Aldrich photo)



UP minitrain handles passengers at the Topeka Railroad Days site in 1997 (HP photo)

(12), Finally, quite often for **Topeka Railroad Days** at Forbes Field, the **Union Pacific** has a portable minitrain which they bring in and set up sectional track and the train for kids to ride. It has a UP F-7, and three cars, painted in *UP Streamliner* colors. It's always a big hit with the kids here.

I suspect there are more of these small layouts in parks and other public places, and I'd like to know about them. Likewise, any photos would be most appreciated, and I hope we can publish some more information with pictures. Please help if you can! Thanks.
HP

THE OLD MISSOURI PACIFIC BUZZSAW

by: Gene Hull

Many of our nation's railroads used an insignia or emblem to promote the company or its service to the public.

The PENNSYLVANIA used the masonry keystone because of the state's central position among the 13 original colonies.

The ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN (Cotton Belt) chose the "gin blade" from the many cotton gins in the area served by the road.

The ST. LOUIS - SAN FRANCISCO (Frisco) had the stretched 'coon skin, so distinctly recognizable.

The ILLINOIS CENTRAL displayed the "green diamond."

The UNION PACIFIC proudly displayed (and still does) the patriotic shield with the bold red and white stripes of the national flag to denote America's first "transcontinental" railroad.

The KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN was proud of its Flying Crow.

The READER RAILROAD used a one-of-a-kind logo sporting a long-tailed 'possum, proclaiming itself to be the Possum Trot Line.

For some reason, the MISSOURI PACIFIC adopted the multi-toothed "buzzsaw" with varying numbers of "teeth," or points. (For a discussion of this subject, see the *Arkansas Railroader*, Volume 12, Number 10, 2 November 1981, by our honored eastern Arkansas railroad historian Jim Bennett.)

The illustrations with this article were given to the author during a visit about 30 years ago with Harry Hammer - Vice President - Public Relations at St. Louis.

The reason for the choice of the buzzsaw emblem is unknown, except that it may have been influenced by a similarly shaped seal applied to the company's legal documents. There may be some question about this (by the author) because of the bold, big-toothed symbol with the date of 1879. The points are much larger than those on most legal seals.

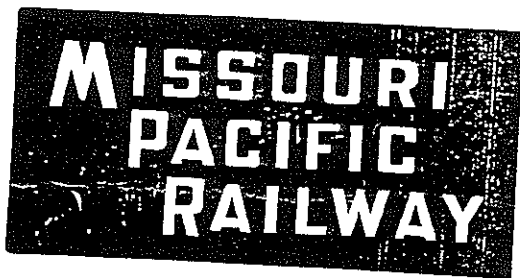
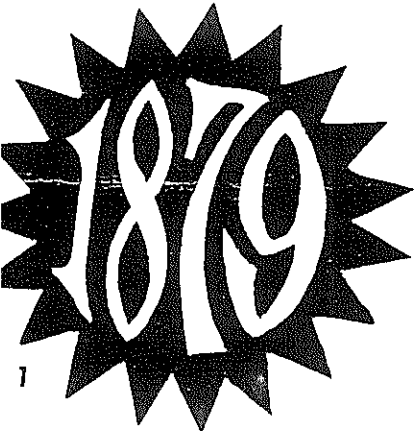
There is no explanation of the simple rectangle bearing the corporate title (No. 2)

The modified buzzsaw (No. 3) appeared in 1888 and included a flower design. The "teeth" still were rather prominent and there were 36 of them.

In 1896 the flowers disappeared and were replaced by a section of railroad track. There were 48 points, or "teeth." (No. 4)

The Missouri Pacific gained control of the St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern through stock ownership and the latter company was included on the red buzzsaws, with 72 points, until 1 June 1917, when the MoP legally absorbed the Iron Mountain. (No. 5)

The emblem shown as (No. 6), with 40 points, was used from 1917 until 1925, when the final buzzsaw was created. It was eliminated by the merger with the Union Pacific in 1988. ●



From the
Arkansas Railroader



PLACE NAMES VI

VAN BUREN (first post office, 1831) was not named for President Martin Van Buren (1837-1841). Rather it was named by Postmaster Thomas Phillips for then Secretary of State Martin Van Buren. Ha! Gotcha! The original depot was near the Arkansas River at the point where the SLIM&S (Iron Mountain, later Missouri Pacific, now Union Pacific) tracks crossed at grade. The "new" depot was built at the head of Main Street in 1904 or 1905 and the beautiful brick building is still in use by the Chamber of Commerce and as the A&MRR passenger excursion depot.

Between 1882, when Van Buren was reached, and 1886 all rail traffic had to be ferried across the Arkansas River to Ft. Smith. The first bridge to make the transit seems to have been a draw (bascule) span. It was replaced in the early 1900s by a swing span. And then with the completion of the McClellan-Kerr Navigation System after World War II, the third bridge, the present lift span was installed. Overall length is 2126 feet.

Fort Smith (the fort) was named for General Thomas A. Smith, commander of the Ninth Military District headquartered in St. Louis. The fort was first established in 1817 and the town around it took its name--FT. SMITH. The lovely Greek revival depot at Garrison Street was built in about 1904 and still stands. The second floor housed all the administrative offices of the Central Division of the Frisco.

At one time several other stations were listed in what is now Ft. Smith. Just south of the Arkansas River was OAK PARK, near the old Oak Park Cemetery. HILL was located about half way toward downtown Ft. Smith. And south of town were WARD, RUGE, FENN, and BASHE, possibly all names of railroaders. W. A. Bashe was station agent at Exeter for several years beginning in 1898. None of these stations are now recognized on the A&M timetables.

However SOUTH FORT SMITH (OK) is on the timetable. It is at this point, marked only by a station sign that the steel rails of the A&MRR suddenly become those of the Kansas City Southern.

So ends our six-month odyssey down the main line of the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad. Virtually all the station names, past and present, are known, but not all of their stories are. Additional tales (factual, of course) would be appreciated by the writer. Some of my sources were:

- Black, J. Dickson, "History of Benton County", 1975
 - Blaisdell, F. L., "Blaisdell's Map of Arkansas", 1919
 - Deane, Ernie, "Arkansas Place Names", 1986
 - Fenno, Cheryl Barnwell, "Place Names of Benton County"
 - Gardiner, Pete, oral communication (Amrita)
 - Hurd, Mrs. Ray, oral communication (Osborn, Hurd, etc.)
 - Melton, Emory, oral and written communications, 1990 (Missouri names)
 - Miner, H. Craig, "The St. Louis-San Francisco Transcontinental Railroad, The Thirty-fifth Parallel Project, 1853-1890", 1972
 - Nettleship, Dr. Mae, oral communication (Barbara, Lilburn)
 - Stamps, Fred, oral communication (Vogel)
 - Taylor, H. A., "The Old Frisco Depot at Lillie", Crawford County Historical Society, 1961
 - West, Doris, "History of the Railroads and Depots in Crawford County", Crawford County Historical Society, 1974
 - Winn, Robert G., "Railroads of Northwest Arkansas", 1986
- and numerous old Frisco timetables and track charts.

282.0 Monett	347.4 Johnsons	398.2 Stewart
285.0 Wightman	350.1 Barbara	401.1 Rudy
289.6 Purdy	351.9 Efay	401.6 Ball
294.8 Butterfield	352.4 Fayetteville	403.6 Meadows
300.6 Exeter	353.8 McNair	404.3 Lillie
303.6 Wayne	354.4 Fayette Junction	405.8 Furry
306.9 Washburn	357.8 Greenland	407.8 Smeltzer's
312.8 Seligman	362.9 West Fork	408.3 Copp
314.8 Gateway	365.8 Woolsey	409.9 Van Buren
315.9 Osborne	367.0 Clary	411.6 Oak Park
319.7 Garfield	370.0 Brentwood	413.8 Hill
325.5 Brightwater	374.7 Winslow	415.4 Fort Smith (Garrison Ave.)
327.1 Avoca	381.0 Schaberg	418.0 Ward
332.0 Bentonville Jct.	382.7 Armada	419.1 Ruge
332.7 Rogers	386.1 Chester	420.4 Fenn
338.0 Lowell	390.2 Mountainburg	421.0 Bashe
340.4 Vogel	394.7 Amrita	422.5 South Fort Smith
343.1 Springdale	395.8 Lancaster	

ARKANSAS BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER, NRHS, OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:	TOM DUGGAN	2 LAKEWOOD DR	72745	756-1901
VICE PRESIDENT:	BILL MERRIFIELD	5278 SILENT GROVE	72762	751-7163
SECRETARY:	RON ALLEN	2718 JEAN ST	72762	751-0761
TREASURER:	BILL USSERY	112 WILLELLA PL	72764	751-2873
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DIRECTOR:	GENE SCHMITZ	1645 WEDINGTON DR	72701	443-4097
DIRECTOR:	LARRY CAIN	3413 BUTTERFIELD	72764	751-1949
EDITOR	GEORGE ALISON	21356 BUR OAK	72762	248-1269

72745-LOWELL; 72701, 72703-FAYETTEVILLE; 72762, 72764, 72766-SPRINGDALE

Railroad Agrees to Sell OC-Tulsa Line to State

From the Tulsa World

From the Fort
Smith Trolley
Museum Trolley
Report

By Barbara Hoberock
World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY — Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad has agreed to sell the state a line between Oklahoma City and Tulsa and a spur near Stillwater for \$6.5 million, said Neal McCaleb, the state transportation secretary.

The line would be used for freight traffic, not passenger trains, he said.

Lawmakers are discussing the possibility of returning high-speed rail service or Amtrak to the state, but McCaleb said this purchase was unrelated to that issue.

"We are buying it to maintain freight service for cities now served on that line," he said.

Officials are reviewing the 35-page proposal, which was received last week, said McCaleb, who is also the director of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.

"I would see us reaching a conclusion within 30 days," McCaleb said. "I don't have any reason to believe there are any hurdles or impediments. It is a document with 35 pages of legalese and requires some careful review."

Oklahoma already owns 680 miles of railroad, which it leases.

The state plans to tap the \$13 million railroad fund to pay for the \$6.5 million purchase. The fund collects fees paid by haulers who use the state-owned line.

"We make a tidy little profit," McCaleb said.

Burlington Northern merged with Santa Fe, and both companies had lines servicing the

same areas. Once the companies merged, they had no need for the line between Oklahoma City and Tulsa, which runs parallel to the Turner Turnpike, McCaleb said.

The company also owns a route that runs northwest out of Tulsa and south into Oklahoma City.

"They just needed one," McCaleb said. "They wanted to sell it. We are in the railroad business."

Sen. Dave Herbert, D-Midwest City, said the Passenger High Speed Rail Task Force, made up of 17 members, will study the route to see what it would cost to upgrade it to passenger service.

"Right now, depending on how many stops you have, if we could get that train up to 70 miles an hour, that is a good train," Herbert said.

Herbert, a co-chairman of the task force, has been lobbying for the return of passenger rail service in Oklahoma.

McCaleb, however, downplayed talk of a passenger rail service.

It would cost \$16 million to upgrade the tracks so trains could travel 40 mph, McCaleb said, adding that the state has no intention of upgrading the route, which is in good condition for slow-moving freight trains.

"I don't see that (spending \$16 million) in the cards right now," he said. "It is not a commuter service. People will not pay to ride at 40 miles per hour when cars are passing at 70 miles per hour."

However, someone might lease the line to run an excursion train, he said.

Help Us Restore Open Car #6

Henry Moore

Two years ago, the Trolley Museum purchased Vera Cruz open car #6 from the San Antonio Railway Museum and brought it to Fort Smith. This car needs extensive work. We have dismantled the car, but several of the truck frame pieces need to be "farmed out" to a machine shop for straightening and re-work before we can begin rebuilding the car.

To make this fund raising effort a little different, we are asking for donations to begin or end in a "6", for example \$60 or \$106. Please send your tax deductible donation to Fort Smith Trolley museum, 100 So 4th St, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Birney safety car #224 has been very faithful and reliable in its operation since 1991. But soon, we will need to begin some major preventive maintenance on this car. Please help us restore Vera Cruz car #6 to operational condition.

Meetings...ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS Chapter No. 158 (ABMT) 3rd Thursday of each month (except December dinner meeting). Meetings are held at the Shiloh Museum's General Store, 118 West Johnson, Springdale, AR at 7:00 PM. Visitors are welcome at all meetings. Annual dues of the Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter effective January 1, 1997 are \$29 (individual) or \$31 (family)

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