

# GREAT PLAINS DISPATCH

The Official Newsletter of the Great Plains Transportation Museum  
and the Wichita Chapter National Railway Historical Society

March 2009

Volume VIII

Number 3



## LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



### 30 YEARS AGO

The March 11, 1979, Wichita Eagle looked at two Kansas short lines, the Garden City Western and the Hutchinson & Northern.

An Amtrak cutback plan announced by President Jimmy Carter six weeks ago will take effect as planned, eliminating service to Wichita. (Wichita Eagle, March 17, 1979; Dr. Edward N. Tihen Notes, Special Collections, WSU Libraries)

### 60 YEARS AGO

Rock Island replaced its daytime Texas Rocket, Nos. 509 and 510, with the Oklahoma Rocket between Kansas City and Oklahoma City March 13, 1949. It went south here at 11:40 a.m. and north at 6:45 p.m. (Through car

service was still available to Dallas, via Nos. 27 and 28 south of El Reno, Okla.) (Wichita Eagle, March 11, 1949)

### 70 YEARS AGO

There were no bidders at the auction sale of the Arkansas Valley Interurban March 27, 1939. The next step was to be filing for abandonment. (Wichita Eagle, March 26, 28, 1939)

### 80 YEARS AGO

Effective March 1, 1929, American Railway Express Co. was succeeded by Railway Express Agency, organized by 86 leading railroads. (Wichita Eagle, March 1, 1929)

Under the Santa Fe, the Orient resumed using Wichita Union Station, starting with the first arrival March 7, 1929. It had used the Midland Valley depot since Aug. 7, 1918. Its freight terminal would be moved from the Midland Valley to the Santa Fe freight house on South St. Francis March 8th. This meant the Midland Valley had

to begin doing its own switching.. The Orient moved out of Union Station as of Jan. 6, 1915, to save money, but got sued for it. Coach No. 409 was set up as a temporary depot at Douglas and Mosley avenues. In August 1918 local offices at 813 and 901 E. Douglas were moved to the Midland Valley as part of federal control of the railways. Even as late as July 1926, before sale to the Santa Fe, there was talk of building a new office building and station on East Douglas. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 2, 5, 6, 1915; Aug. 5, 1918. July 15, 1926; March 1, 6, 8, 1929; Wichita Beacon, Aug. 5, 1918)

The Santa Fe station at Viola, Kan., was to be abandoned and connection built to let trains use the Orient depot. At Cherokee, Okla., the Santa Fe station was to be used and the Orient's abandoned. (Wichita Beacon, March 13, 1929)

Arkansas Valley Interurban freight business between Wichita and Valley Center had increased more than 40 percent since discovery of oil near Valley Center six months ago. AVI was compelled to buy a new 50-ton electric locomotive, capable of pulling 25-30 cars. Delivery was expected in late April. (Wichita Beacon, Wichita Eagle, March 22, 1929)

The March 24, 1929, Beacon had a feature article about Col. A.H. Webb, longtime Missouri Pacific division superintendent.



*Frisco train #330, eastbound out of Wichita, with F-units 31 & 62 and GP7 587, are doing the honors for this the train on May 03, 1972. A. E. Ramsey photo, J. Harvey Koehn collection.*



**THE MISSION OF  
THE GREAT PLAINS  
TRANSPORTATION  
MUSEUM**

To be *THE* Railroad Museum  
Of Kansas.

Dedicated to record and exhibit the importance of railroad transportation in the human, agricultural, commercial and industrial heritage of Wichita, Kansas and the Great Plains.

To showcase that heritage with an "Action Display" of rail equipment operation. Giving visitors an exciting learning experience through motion, set in a unique, historic and scenic urban location.

To enhance the action display with significant and appropriate railroad locomotives, rolling stock, equipment and structures; through interpretive displays, dioramas, exhibits and media; and educational and community programs.



The GREAT PLAINS DISPATCHER is the official monthly newsletter of the Wichita Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. and the Great Plains Transportation Museum, Inc. Members receive the DISPATCHER as part of their membership. All material submitted for publication should be submitted by the 25th of the month for publication in the next months DISPATCHER. Submissions may be sent to the editor at: [editor@gptm.us](mailto:editor@gptm.us), 316-744-7259 or 700 E. Douglas, Wichita, KS 67202-3506

**MARCH NRHS MEETING**

The program topic is steam locomotive whistles and chapter member Ron Chamberlain will present the program. If you are wanting to know more about steam locomotives this will be the monthly meeting for you to attend. There is more to locomotive whistles than one might initially think. The meeting will be held Friday, March 20, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church 1101 N. River Blvd in Wichita. Meeting time is 7:30 pm.

**FUTURE NRHS MEETINGS**

Apr.: Topeka Chapter Program  
May: Rock Island in Hutchinson  
June: Picnic  
July: Platform  
Aug: TBC  
Sept.: Annual Banquet  
Oct.: Kansas City Chapter Program

**OTHER EVENTS**

Apr. 17-19 - ARM Spring Conference, Dallas, TX. [www.railwaymuseums.org](http://www.railwaymuseums.org)  
Apr. 25 - Yoder Heritage Train, Wichita to Yoder & return. Tickets at Engine House Hobbies, 316-685-6608.

Apr. 30 - May 2 - KRHS Convention, Katy, TX. [www.katyrailroad.org](http://www.katyrailroad.org)

June 3-6 - Railroad Station Historical Society National Convention, Topeka Ramada. Banquet Friday with Rev. Herman Page as speaker; bus tour on Saturday. [www.rrshs.org](http://www.rrshs.org)

June 11-14 - Mid-Continent Region NMRA Convention, Best Western Airport, Wichita, KS  
[www.mcor-nmra.org/Conventions/MCoR\\_2009\\_Convention.html](http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Conventions/MCoR_2009_Convention.html)

May 29-31, June 5-7 - Thomas the Tank Engine, Midland Railway, Baldwin City, KS. 1-800-651-0388  
[www.midland-ry.org](http://www.midland-ry.org)

Aug. 10-16 - NRHS Convention, Duluth, MN  
<http://steamontherange2009.com>

July 16-19 - SFRH&MS Convention, Chicago, IL  
[www.atsfr.com](http://www.atsfr.com)

July 9-12 - UPHS Convention, Capitol Cheyenne, WY  
[www.uphs.org](http://www.uphs.org)

Sept. 18-20 - BRHS Convention, Rockford, IL.  
[www.burlingtonroute.com](http://www.burlingtonroute.com)

Oct. 16-17 - MPHS Convention, Omaha, NE  
[www.mopac.org](http://www.mopac.org)

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:**

The GPTM board has given Harvey the go-ahead to review and revise the museum's by-laws. If anyone non-board member wishes to serve on that committee please contact Harvey, preferably sooner rather than later. His phone number is 733 2085; e-mail is [jhkoehn@prodigy.net](mailto:jhkoehn@prodigy.net).

**CHAPTER MEMBER IN THE HOSPITAL**

Member Mike Provine is in the Memorial Hospital in McPherson. He had surgery for cancer on the 23rd of February, but the cancer had spread throughout his pelvic region to the extent that it was not removable. The plans are for him to begin a chemotherapy regimen in the near future.

For those wanting to send him get-well wishes, the hospital address is 1000 Hospital Drive, Room 316, McPherson, 67460.

**HELP NEEDED**

The museum needs people to work in the gift shop. Contact David Meek 316-684-0823

## RAILROADING IN WICHITA MARCH 1909

By Fred Tefft

### March 4

The new street railway bridge across Chisholm creek at 21st street will be placed in position Monday. It is being assembled by Moore brothers and is a steel bridge, 40 feet long and twelve feet wide. The old wagon bridge has been moved ten feet north to make room for the street railway bridge. Men began work this afternoon on the extension of the North Topeka street railway line from the loop at 14th and Topeka to 17th and St. Francis. The extension of the Riverside line on Franklin to Porter avenue is nearly finished. When the Topeka avenue extension is completed, work will be commenced on the Stock Yards extension. Next the South Main line will be improved. It will be double tracked in some places to improve the handling of passengers to the baseball park.

### March 5

Cars will commence to run on the extension of the Riverside line about next Wednesday. The track is all laid and was connected up with the Riverside line yesterday. The overhead wires and a Y at the end have yet to be put in, and it is thought the work will be completed by that time. The line will be known as the West Riverside line. It runs eight blocks west on Porter street from the Riverside car line to the new Country club grounds.

### March 7

W. P. Carnahan, assistant treasurer of Western Railway and Light company, which is parent company of the Wichita Street Railway company, is visiting and reports that the ten new pay-as-you-enter cars are now being made and will be shipped here when completed.

### March 8

It is impossible the new extension of the Riverside line will be completed

this week. The rails are down and the roadbed is in condition, but the overhead wires have not been strung. There is also some other work to be completed before the line will be ready to go into commission.

### March 9

Wichita had twelve inches of snow past 24 hours, the most ever recorded here in this period. The previous record was nine inches on November 8-9, 1888. Article about delays in street car service on all lines until 10:00 a.m. or later by the heavy snow. The large green cars, which are the only ones equipped with snow plows, started from the car barns at 5:00 a.m. and ran over the lines to push the snow from the track. Five teams and scrapers and 40 trackmen were also used. The snow was about four inches too deep for the cars to run. It blocked the motor and raised the cars off the track. Service on most lines was restored by noon, but on Fairmount not until afternoon.

### March 11

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad will build a new depot in Wichita, the plans for which have just been completed by Louis Curtiss of Kansas City. To be one story, 222 by 60 feet, finished in enameled terra cotta. Building itself is just 48 feet wide with six foot roof extension covering the platform on both sides. To be erected on site of the old depot and ground adjoining it on the south. Interior will have large general waiting room with nearly 4000 square feet of floor space. At opposite ends of building will be men's and women's waiting rooms, each 23 by 36 feet. Large baggage room 46 by 59 feet will occupy the entire end wing.

Article about sale of shacks on South Tremont street to prepare for new Santa Fe buildings. "One of the three most notorious sections of ancient Wichita will be no more." There also the Cole brothers established the most fashionable hotel in the new city, the old Tremont house, then managed by

the Fisher sisters. It was the Empire house moved from Emporia and Douglas avenue. Down there "Sweet" Ann and "Cyclone" held forth, and Emma Williams and Mag Woods, who forced the old Metropolitan Policy system to capitulate.

Auction sale of the fifteen houses on Tremont street with a crimson past, will be held tomorrow. Details. Includes fifteen cottages, frame hotel building (old Tremont house?) and one store building.

### March 12

Missouri Pacific locomotive No. 8505 caught fire in the yards near Oak street yesterday evening. Engine No. 9610 was nearby but could only take it to the Oak street crossing where the fire department reached it.

The 22 houses in second and third blocks of Tremont street sold at auction yesterday by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad brought from \$8 to \$700, with a total amount of \$2650.50.

Northbound street car No. 144 and Santa Fe freight train backing on Wichita and Western tracks at South Main and Orme collided last night at 6:00 p.m. One side of the car was smashed. Motorman Frank Clark and one passenger were injured. There were only six passengers on the street car. Conductor Lee Bowers was not injured. "What is left of the street car is hardly worth taking to the barn." Car said to have slid on wet rails. Superintendent Morrison comments that the light cars have one sand box and the large ones have two.

### March 13

Street car company expect to have cars in operation in the stock yards gate by April 1st. Track laying to commence by next Wednesday on lengthening of line half mile east from Topeka avenue on 21st street. Delay has been due to neglect in notifying Santa Fe Railroad

(Continued on page 4)

*(Continued from page 3)*

to order a crossing. This had to be ordered from Chicago and is expected here by Monday.

Two Missouri Pacific freight trains collided at Tolerville, five miles northeast of Wichita, at 5:00 a.m. today. Engine No. 2301 of an extra westbound freight collided with the caboose of westbound freight No. 451, drawn by engine No. 2608. No injuries.

The Wichita Railroad and Light company has strung ties along 21st street from the present loop to west of the Dold switch, where the new loop will be located. The strengthening and straightening of the Chisholm creek bridge was completed last week, and is now ready for the rails.

#### **March 14**

Article says street car company will begin building West Wichita line to Mt. Carmel as soon as it completes extension of Stock Yards line on 21st street, and that the plan now is to build the line straight west on Douglas from Seneca to the Academy. The previous depositing of rails along street two blocks north was only a bluff of the company to allow purchase of tracts of land north of West Douglas avenue which it desires to plat and sell.

#### **March 15**

Superintendent Morrison says the street car line to Mt. Carmel will go west on Douglas to Millwood, but from there on the route has not yet been determined, three routes are being considered.

#### **March 21**

The Missouri Pacific track east between Wichita and Doran is to be relaid with new heavier 85 pound steel rails, 18 cars of which were received and distributed yesterday by an extra work train.

#### **March 29**

Street car No. 148 was derailed last night in the eleventh block on South

Main by boys placing a small wedge in the switch.

*Dr. Edward N. Tihen's Notes from Wichita Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita State University Libraries*

### **WIG-WAGS**

By Sam Andrews

Crossing protection received a big upgrade when the city railroads embarked on a program to install automatic wig wag signals at several locations across town starting in 1913.

A total of 33 devices were put in use as follows:

Mopac (14) 13th, 12th, 11th, Market, 10th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st, Seneca, Lawrence, Central, Waco, Murdock and Douglas. Santa Fe (7) 21st, 13th, 9th, Murdock, Central, Gilbert and Lincoln.

Frisco (6) 13th, Murdock, Washington, Cleveland, Hillside and Central. Rock Island (5) 13th, 9th, Murdock, Gilbert and Harry.

The 13th street tracks on the Santa Fe continued to be protected by a overhead wig wam until the late 1960's. If memory serves correct, some Mopac crossings north of downtown were still using the old devices into the 1970/early 1980's?

### **WICHITA NRHS MEETING** **MINUTES FEB. 20, 2009**

#### **Quorum Check and Call to order**

David Meek called the regular meeting of the Chapter to order at 7:35 pm at The Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. He announced that a quorum was present.

#### **Approval of minutes from last meeting**

The minutes of the January 2009 meeting were read by the Secretary. A motion was made by Norm Walters to

accept the minutes and seconded by Steve Corp. The minutes were approved as read.

#### **Treasurer Report**

Steve Corp gave a treasurer's report tonight.

#### **National Director**

Harvey Koehn said the Directors of NRHS had their meeting in February. He convention will be held in Scranton Pennsylvania.

#### **Vice-President Report**

announced that the 2010 NRHS Harvey Koehn told us steam whistles will be the subject of the program for the March meeting. The Topeka Chapter has the program in April. Lynn Aldrich will have the May program about Hutchinson.

This year will be the Topeka Chapter's turn to host the Quad/Tri chapter meeting.

#### **President's Report**

Bob Frahm displayed thank you notes from school tour groups for their tours. Fred Tefft received a 25-year award for membership in NRHS.

#### **Program**

The GPTM annual meeting was held in February jointly with the chapter meeting

#### **Door Prizes**

Door prizes were. 1) Kansas State Railroad maps, 2) a history of the Frisco Railroad, and 3) a Burlington Northern timetable book.

#### **Adjournment**

A Motion to adjourn was made by Norm Walters and seconded by Harry Adams The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Richard Hitchcock, secretary,  
Wichita Chapter - NRHS*

**N.R.H.S. AT TOPEKA ...**

Ninety railroad enthusiasts and historians assembled in the auditorium of Santa Fe's Topeka general office building on Sunday, February 9, for the annual Tri-Chapter meeting of the Kansas City – Topeka - Wichita chapters of the National Railway Historical Society. The joint session, on a February Sunday each year, is devoted to the members favorite hobby interest -- railroads.

Following registration, viewing exhibits displayed by the host Topeka Chapter, and visiting rail facilities of the city, a noon luncheon was held at the Hotel Jayhawk. The group returned to the auditorium of the Santa Fe office building for an afternoon business session. Final activity of the day was a tour of Santa Fe's car service, data processing and telegraph departments.

This was the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Tri-Chapter meeting. The first was held in Santa Fe's Emporia freight station meeting room in 1955.

While most of the members of the National Railway Historical Society's 52 chapters across the nation are not railroad employes, a number of Santa Fe Employes are active in the Topeka Chapter. Clayton Tinkham, assistant engineer in the signal department, Topeka, is president of the Topeka Chapter; Howard Killam, carman at the Topeka shops, is first vice-president; and Farley Bonnett, sheetmetal worker at the Topeka shops, is secretary-treasurer.

*The Santa Fe Magazine*  
 March 1964  
 Submitted by Lynn Aldrich

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# March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Evening Work Session	4	5	6	7 Museum Open Work Day
8	9	10 Evening Work Session	11	12	13	14 NRHS BOD Museum Open Work Day
15	16	17 Evening Work Session	18	19	20 NRHS Meeting	21 Museum Open Work Day
22	23	24 Evening Work Session	25 GPTM BOD	26	27	28 Museum Open Work Day
29	30	31 Evening Work Session				

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