

# GREAT PLAINS DISPATCHER

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

April 2010

Volume IX

Number 4



## LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



### 40 YEARS AGO

One-month-old Burlington Northern was already looking at expanding. The August 1970 Trains pictured BN brass arriving in Dallas on a Katy inspection special April 2, 1970. BN executives said at their first annual meeting they were studying "the advisability of acquiring through lease or other means an operating position in the MKT." But they ultimately passed, choosing Frisco instead in the late 1970s.

The Midland Valley was being dismantled. In 1967 it was merged with Texas & Pacific by parent Missouri Pacific, which took control of its stock in 1964. In early 1969, 54.9 miles of track from Silverdale, Kan., to Pawhuska, Okla., were toted away by a Houston construction company. The 35 miles between Wichita and Oxford, Kan., were purchased by Commercial Metals of Dallas, which has removed most of the rails and ties. Steel, bridges, ties and ballast will be gone by June. Ten miles of that stretch, however, beginning at 57th Street South, are owned by one man, Rex Neff of Udall, Kan. A photo showed the disused bridge over Cowskin Creek near Mulvane. (Wichita Eagle-Beacon, April 26, 1970)

### 70 YEARS AGO

Santa Fe President E.J. Engel said the local shops for rebuilding refrigerator cars employ nearly 600 men and the

Santa Fe Trailways bus company 425. In 1919 station earnings at Wichita were \$6,220,000 and payroll was \$560,000. In 1939 station earnings were \$4,690,000 and payroll \$930,000. (Wichita Eagle, April 2, 1940)

### 80 YEARS AGO

The April 1930 Frisco Employees' Magazine said razing of the Frisco passenger depot in Tulsa, Okla., began with ceremonies March 3rd. Temporary quarters were being provided pending completion of the new Union Depot. It also pictured William Allen White, the "sage of Emporia," boarding the Kansas City-Florida Special at Kansas City Feb. 20th. He was a new member of President Hoover's Haitian Commission and was en route to Palm Beach, Fla., where he would join other members of the commission for the journey to Haiti.

A man was killed April 29, 1930, in a collision with an Arkansas Valley Interurban car at the Second Street crossing just north of Island Park. (Wichita Beacon, April 29, 1930)

### 90 YEARS AGO

The streetcar company will be asked by the city to set back the loop at the end of the South Main line far enough so the curve will not extend beyond the center of the street. The loop has been in its present place for more than a year, but complaints from residents

prompted this step. (Wichita Eagle, April 10, 1920)

Three new Arkansas Valley Interurban trailers arrived April 12, 1920, and will be used for freight and express. It's planned to run trains starting the first of next week instead of the single motors and trailers as in the past. Increased business makes this necessary. (Wichita Beacon, April 3, 1920; Wichita Eagle, April 13, 1920)

The Kansas Court of Industrial Relations was asked to fix wages of Wichita streetcar workers, now 34-42 cents an hour. Workers are asking 60-65 cents. AVI petitioned the court to increase passenger fares from two and a half cents to three cents a mile and to boost freight rates 15 percent, approximately equivalent to rates charged by steam railroads. (Wichita Beacon, April 16, 28, 1920)

The April 25, 1920, Wichita Eagle had a photo of the first railroad engine to bear the name Wichita, a 4-4-0 now in operation out of Pratt on the Wichita Northwestern.

The city commission passed an ordinance April 27, 1920, requiring Missouri Pacific to lower its tracks on West Douglas within 90 days to conform with the grade of the street. (Wichita Eagle, April 28, 1920)

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**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 an 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, 316-744-7259 or 700 E. Douglas, Wichita, KS 67202-3506

**APRIL  
NRHS MEETING**

The April NRHS program will consist of a oral history of the railroads built through Doniphan County showing many depots and some features along those rail lines. Presenter will be Robbie Chitwood from the Topeka Chapter.

The meeting will be held Fri., April 16, at the *Great Plains Transportation Museum*, 700 E. Douglas, Wichita. Meeting time is 7:30 pm.

**FUTURE NRHS  
PROGRAMS**

- May** - - Depots, Bay Windows, and Cupolas by J. H. Koehn
- June** - - Annual Picnic
- July** - - Annual platform meeting; Location TBA.
- September** - - Annual banquet
- October** - - Kansas City Chapter exchange program.
- November** - - Lee Swanson will present the program with an Ohio setting.
- December** - - The traditional slide-free-for all again.

**OTHER EVENTS**

- Apr. 17 – Ozark Model Railroad Association, Springfield Catholic High School. Information: Ron Williams, 417-883-5350
- Apr. 17-18 - Cowley County Railroad Heritage Days. Paris Park, Arkansas City. Events include Family Fun Days, Railroader's Reunion and Train Show. 620-442-6750
- Apr. 23-25 - KRHS Convention, Sedalia, MO. www.katyrailroad.org
- May 28-30 - Katy Days Festival, Forest Park, Parsons. www.katydays.com
- Apr. 24-25 – Western Heritage Division Train Show, Burke High, Omaha,

Sat. 9:00-5:00, Sun. 10:00-4:00.  
blundquist@cox.net, whdnmra.info

May 1 - Bartlesville Oil Flyer (Train ride to support loco 940) , Santa Fe Depot at 10:00, 1:00 & 3:00. Tickets \$10. www.bartlesvillelocomotive.org

May 15 - Santa Fe Depot Car Show, Kingman. sfdepot@sbcglobal.net

June 4-6, 11-13 - Thomas the Tank Engine, Midland Railway, Baldwin City, KS. www.midland-ry.org

June 22-26 - NRHS Convention, Scranton, PA  
www.endlessmountainrails.com

July 21-25 - SFRH&MS Convention, Denver, CO. www.atsfr.com

July 28-31 - UPHS Convention, Boise, ID. www.uphs.org

Oct. 16-17 – Two Depot Train Show, Kingman Co. Activity Center, Sat. 9:00-5:00, Sun. noon-4:00. Displays also at Santa Fe Depot and MoPac Depot. sfdepot@sbcglobal.net or 620-532-2142

**QUAD CHAPTER**

Kansas City Chapter will host on Saturday, May 15. Tour the BNSF RR facility on the Johnson Community College campus in the a.m. Lunch afterward.

**LOOKING BACK**

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A carload of steel arrived in Wichita April 12th and another is on the way from Hillsborough, Ohio. Work can now be resumed on the new AVI track into Wichita. By late April steel had been laid up to the approach to the interurban bridge on Seneca Street but is now delayed because a carload of needed heavy steel has been lost in transit. (Wichita Eagle, April 14, 1920; Wichita Beacon, April 28, 1920)

**RAILROADING IN WICHITA****APRIL 1910**

By Fred Tefft

**April 2**

Actual work on construction of the shops of the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient railway in West Wichita will begin within three weeks.

**April 6**

Report of another visit to Wichita yesterday of President Arthur E. Stilwell, of Orient Railway, with a party of 25 English capitalists. The Englishmen were fed popcorn. (English Lords and Millionaires Ate Pop Corn and Saw Wichita).

**April 7**

As soon as the street car company completes building its double track on Main street between Lewis and Bayley, it can begin on its new track on Maple street and then the paving of that street can be hurried along.

Practically an entire new line of heavy steel was laid along the Fairmount car line several months ago and better cars were substituted for the old cars formerly used. A 20 minute service is now given in place of the old 30 minute service.

**April 9**

Article about new Santa Fe railway freight depot, now under construction. A heating plant has been constructed in a 30 by 40 foot concrete and brick building just east of the depot, and this plant will also heat the new passenger station through a pipe laid to the site of the depot at the east end of William street. It will be about a month before the freight depot is ready for occupancy. The total length of the depot is about 810 feet. The two story office building at the north end is 90 by 40 feet. The warehouse proper extends 450 feet south of the office building, and adjoining it to the south is an open platform 200 feet long, and south of that is the automobile platform, 70 feet long. An awning fourteen feet wide

extends the full length of the warehouse on the west side. All of the tracks will be on the east end of the depot, on which there is an eight foot awning. East of the depot is a transfer platform 680 feet long. The track details have not all been worked out, but there will be four loading and unloading tracks leading to the depot.

**April 10**

Article about progress in grading the Arkansas Valley Interurban Railroad line. The Jennings Construction company started work two miles south of Valley Center and is now within five miles of Wichita. They commenced work March 1st and will reach Wichita not later than May 1st. Ten teams are being used, part horses and part mules. Superintendent of the work is Jim Dempsey, who says that never in all his varied experience has he ever seen such easy and inexpensive grading. One car of standard ties, seven inches by nine inches, and seven feet six inches long, of hard wood, has arrived on the ground. The copper for the equipment is now somewhere on the way between the Eastern mills and Wichita, and the steel rails will be rolled week after next.

Article describes the cars ordered for the Arkansas Valley Interurban Railroad. They are 54 passenger combination baggage, passenger, and smoking cars with electric lights and heated by hot water. In the passenger compartment the woodwork is mahogany and the seats are plush. In the smoking compartment the seats are rattan and the wood is quarter sawed oak. Photographs of interior and exterior of similar car (shows car of "The Newcastle Line").

**April 13**

The Orient railway has received a \$10,000 steam shovel, which will be located in a rock cut at Anthony to prepare rock ballast for the tracks. The tracks will be ballasted from Wichita to Altus, Oklahoma, 260 miles. Bal-

lasting work will commence at Wichita about April 16. A base of rock twelve inches thick will be placed on top of the dirt grade. On top of the base, ballast ranging in thickness from six to twelve inches will be placed. It will take about a year to complete the ballasting of the track.

Superintendent Morrison says the double track on South Main from the Hamilton hotel to Bayley street will be ready when the baseball season opens April 22. A part of this will be old track but a good share of it will be new. The new rails will be in place from the Hamilton to Indianapolis, where it will connect with the old double track to Bayley.

The grade of the Arkansas Valley Interurban will be completed to the city limits on the north within the next 30 days. The contractor, who established his first camp about five miles north of the city, has moved to the vicinity of Sullivan's dam. Five miles of the grade has been completed.

**April 14**

Superintendent Morrison in his budget has asked for an appropriation for a street car line on South Water to William, and thence east on Main, to serve the new auditorium.

Superintendent Morrison of Wichita Railroad and Light company left today for Illinois to attend the semi-annual meeting of superintendents of the McKinley Syndicate. He will stop at St. Louis to urge the speedy completion of the four new Pay As You Enter cars and the four trailers now being built there for use in Wichita.

**April 16**

The Rock Island Railway will spend \$200,000 in Wichita during the coming summer. An entirely new freight yard, round house, and coal chutes and storage tracks will be built along the

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Rock Island right-of-way north of the stock yards. The old freight yards immediately south of the freight house will be transformed into tracks for loading and unloading of goods. The old coal chutes and yard accessories will be transferred to the new location. Work will commence within ten days. Details. Says there will be a six stall roundhouse and a turntable. The Rock Island will also ballast its roadbed between Caldwell and Herington this summer.

**April 19**

The Kansas Gas and Electric company has purchased from the Wichita Railroad and Light company all its lighting business in the city. The deal was consummated in the East yesterday.

**April 20**

The Santa Fe Railroad will spend about \$200,000 this summer improving its tracks and roadbed through Wichita. The old rails will be replaced with 90 pound rails, and the roadbed will be reballasted over the Midland (sic) division, from Newton to Ark City, and also over the lines from Augusta to Winfield and from Mulvane to Wellington.

The new Santa Fe freight depot will be completed and ready for use by May 1. The total cost will be about \$275,000, including \$125,000 for the depot proper and tracks, and \$135,000 for the ground they occupy.

**April 22**

The Wichita Railroad and Light company has had a large gang of men at work on the South Main street car tracks for the past two weeks, and with rapid progress so that a double track now extends from Douglas to Bayley street. However, the old track is still in and will be used in connection with the new one until the new rails have been laid on both.

**April 23**

Active work on the construction of the Orient shops will begin in ten days. The first unit, to be completed this year, will cost about \$450,000. The site consists of 80 acres in West Wichita. The shop buildings will cover about eight acres, and the rest will be occupied by the yards, storage tracks, car repair tracks, coach tracks, and other sidetracks.

**April 26**

The Arkansas Valley Interurban grade has reached the city limits of Wichita. Today the Jennings Construction company is pushing through the Cooley orchard, between 27th and 29th streets. Thirty cars of steel have been shipped by the mills in Chicago. The ties are also on the way. The trolley wire arrived some weeks ago.

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

**WICHITA'S 17TH STREET FLOUR MILL**

By Sam Andrews

John Moore, a Oklahoma flour mill owner, relocated to Wichita in 1913 to form a family business called Wichita Flour Mills. The mill was located at 17th & Santa Fe on the terminal railroad line. This became the first mill in town to be built of concrete, steel and large glass block windows.

Milling of wheat began in August, 1914. An expansion of the mill took place in 1918. Grain storage additions were made in 1916, 1926 and the 170 foot tall head-house went up in 1940. A shed to enclose the four flour loading tracks on the east side of the property went up in 2001.

Sunny Kansas Flour was a brand name made by the company. Its longtime logo was a Kansas sunflower and for many years, a large yellow sunflower was painted on the west side of the elevator building. Moore's grandson later took over the business and then sold it to Cereal Food Processors in 1973. The company continues to be one of the biggest shippers on the terminal railroad with a switch required everyday of the week.

Interesting railcars have been part of the mill's history. Back in late Wichita Flour era, the company had a fleet of airslide bulk hopper cars painted white, lettered Sunny Kansas Flour Mills with the sunflower logo. In the 1980's-1990's, Cereal Foods made flour hauled to the New England region in airslide cars with large billboard lettering of Wonder Bread and Hostess Cake. HO scale models of these cars were produced by Walthers years ago but the real ones are no longer around Wichita.

**100 YEARS AGO**

The caption reads:  
M.P. & Frisco wreck April 1910. Neodesha, Ks.

Photo from GPTM archives



**VALLEY EAGLE HERITAGE TOUR**

Union Pacific Railroad's historic steam locomotive, No. 844, will travel more than 3,500 miles from its base in Wyoming on a 28-day, eight-state tour to South Texas, to celebrate the railroad's history and heritage.

The "Valley Eagle Heritage Tour" will begin April 2 when No. 844 leaves Cheyenne, Wyo., and travels to North Platte, Neb. The locomotive will make overnight stops and be on display in the following cities before arriving back in Cheyenne April 29:

North Platte, Neb.; Marysville, Parsons and Coffeyville, Kan.; Kansas City, Mo.; McAlester, Okla.; Ft. Worth, Hearne, Houston, Bloomington, Raymondville, Harlingen, Palestine and Longview, Texas; and North Little Rock and Van Buren, Ark.

"This will be the first time No. 844 has operated south of Houston and we look forward to bringing a piece of living history to this part of our rail network," said Joe Adams, vice president of public affairs for Union Pacific's Southern Region. "Our steam locomotives play a special role in our collection of historical railroad equipment, which is the largest of any U. S. railroad."

The tour was named after a Missouri Pacific Railroad passenger train that operated between Houston and Brownsville. The Valley Eagle began running in late-1938 until the train was discontinued in June 1962. *UPRR*

**Tour dates in Kansas:**

April 3 – North Platte, NE to Marysville, KS  
 April 4 – Marysville, KS to Kansas City, MO  
 April 6 – Kansas City, MO to Parsons, KS  
 April 8 – Parsons, KS to McAlester, OK

April 24 – Van Buren, AR to Coffeyville, KS  
 April 25 – Coffeyville, KS to Kansas City, MO  
 April 27 – Kansas City, MO to Marysville, KS  
 April 28 – Marysville, KS to North Platte, NE

**Train Consist (southbound):**

814	Joe Jordan	Water Car
9336		Step Car
6334	Art Lockman	Tool Car
209	Howard Fogg	Power Car
5714	Golden State Limited	Baggage/Recreation
5818	Reed Jackson	Concession Car
5468	Katy Flyer	Coach
5473	Portland Rose	Coach



Crossing an overpass north of Centerville, KS.  
 Photo by David Stevenson

Approaching highway K-47 south of Erie, KS.  
 Photo by Fred Tefft



844 rounds the curve into Parsons with Dalene Deck watching the fireman's side. Photo by Dane Carlisle,  
 All photos taken April 6, 2010.

# April 2010

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

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