

# GREAT PLAINS DISPATCH

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

May 2010

Volume IX

Number 5



## LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



### 50 YEARS AGO

Santa Fe's Ranger, Nos. 5 and 6, between Kansas City and Houston, was discontinued May 1, 1960, although until mail contracts could be shifted to other trains, an extra ran with head-end cars and a caboose. No. 5 left Wichita southbound at 1:50 p.m., No. 6 at 3:50 p.m. It was the top Chicago-Texas train before inauguration of the Texas Chief April 4, 1948. ("Santa Fe Trackside With Bill Gibson," by Lloyd E. Stagner)

Frisco's Firefly, Nos. 117 and 118, made its last runs between Fort Scott, Kan., and Tulsa, Okla., May 22, 1960. It was combined with the Sunnyland, Nos. 107 and 108, between Fort Scott and Kansas City.

### 80 YEARS AGO

The Santa Fe shops in Wichita are turning out six rebuilt refrigerator cars every day and the locomotive rebuilding shops are turning out six locomotives a month. There are 332 employees compared with 186 when the Santa Fe took over the Orient, with a monthly payroll of \$45,000. (*Wichita Eagle*, May 10, 1930)

The tracks of the Wichita and Western branch of the Santa Fe are soon to be taken up from the east bank of the Big Arkansas, on Orme Street, to a point one mile west of Friends University. Now under construction is a 1.5-mile connection allowing W&W trains to

enter and leave the city by way of the Orient tracks on Bayley Street. The new track will connect with the W&W about a mile west of Friends and with the Orient just west of the Orient Shops. The W&W bridge over the Big Arkansas is to be removed. Grading is almost completed and laying of steel will start in a few days. (*Wichita Beacon*, May 11, 1930)

### 90 YEARS AGO

Through streetcar service resumed on North and South Main streets May 3, 1920, after paving work. (*Wichita Eagle*, May 2, 1920)

A.M. Patten, manager of the McKinley Syndicate properties in Kansas, was in Wichita May 1, 1920, on one of his periodic inspections. He said it was likely the company would ask the city commission for an increase in streetcar fares. If the request of the employees for more pay is granted by the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations, it will cost the company \$175,000 more a year in Wichita. He said last year after paying all obligations it had only about \$1,100 left. (*Wichita Beacon*, May 3, 1920)

The contract has been let for construction of Arkansas Valley Interurban's car shops on Ackerman's Island, at a cost of \$50,000, to Schuler Construction Co. It will first be necessary to tear down some of the old Wonderland Park buildings to make room. This work is now under way. (*Wichita Bea-*

*con*, May 5, 1920; *Wichita Eagle*, May 9, 14, 1920)

Work was to begin May 26, 1920, on the AVI terminal buildings at Waco and Douglas. Siedhoff Construction Co. had the contract. (*Wichita Beacon*, May 25, 1920)

The Kansas Court of Industrial Relations let AVI increase freight rates 15 percent and passenger fares from two and one half to three cents per mile, putting fares on the same basis as steam roads. They go into effect May 15th. (*Wichita Eagle*, May 14, 1920)

The city commission passed a resolution May 14, 1920, for the streetcar company to move its wye on the Mount Carmel line at Grand and Athanian one block west to Grand and Meridian, and to do away with its loop at University and Hiram on the University line and build a wye one block south on Hiram Avenue. (*Wichita Eagle*, May 15, 1920; *Wichita Beacon*, May 17, 1920)

Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas were preparing to fight for the Kansas City, Mexico & Orient. Unless assistance was received, it was possible it could be abandoned. (*Wichita Beacon*, May 22, 24, 1920)

Work on lowering the Missouri Pacific tracks from Millwood to Maple Street started. It will take two weeks and cost \$1,600. (*Wichita Eagle*, May 28, 1920)



**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

**MAY  
NRHS MEETING**

May NRHS Program: Harvey Koehn will present a program titled "Depots, Bay Windows, and Cupolas." The material will be over depots and cabooses of the Frisco, Santa Fe, Missouri Pacific, and Rock Island. There will be other images to see too.

Depots, which once were the mainstay of most towns and cities in Kansas, are now mostly gone, though many still remain somewhere, mostly off the railroad site. Cabooses have become more and more of a distant memory. Railroads phased out cabooses around 20 years ago. The now all-to-familiar FRED had replaced the caboose at the end of the train.

The meeting will be held Fri., May 21, at the *Great Plains Transportation Museum*, 700 E. Douglas, Wichita. Meeting time is 7:30 pm.

**FUTURE NRHS  
PROGRAMS**

**June 19** - - Annual Picnic at the museum

**July** - - Annual platform meeting; Location TBA.

**September** - - Annual banquet, Northern Flyer Alliance presentation

**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**

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

May 28-30 - Katy Days Festival, Forest Park, Parsons. www.katydays.com

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

**2010 BNSF SPECIAL**

BNSF will be operating a passenger special origination in Topeka May 30. The train will consist of 14 vintage passenger cars and will provide rides for employees and their families as well as the Boys & Girls Club of America.

Most events will be held at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. on the dates listed below. Some events will be dedicated to the Boys & Girls Club or other local non-profit organizations.

- May 30-31: Topeka, Kan.
  - June 1-2: Kansas City, Mo.
  - June 3: Fort Scott, Kan.
  - June 4 and June 6: Tulsa, Okla.
  - June 7-8: Springfield, Mo.
  - June 9: Thayer, Mo.
  - June 10-11: Memphis, Tenn.
  - June 13: Birmingham, Ala.
  - June 14: Amory, Miss.
  - June 15: Chaffee, Mo.
  - June 16: St. Louis, Mo.
  - June 17: West Quincy, Mo.
  - June 18: Brookfield, Mo.
- BNSF News*

**RAILROADING IN WICHITA****MAY 1910**

By Fred Tefft

**May 1**

Fourteen and a half acres of land lying northeast of the Missouri Pacific roundhouse were purchased yesterday by the Rock Island Railway company as a site for its new yards and roundhouse. Cost was \$7275. The track is 300 feet wide and about a mile in length, beginning near 23rd street at the Rock Island and Frisco crossing and extending northeast between the Missouri Pacific and Rock tracks to the northeast corner of section 4, township 27. The company also owns about 30 lots south of this tract. On this ground the Rock Island will place improvements costing about \$200,000, including a five stall round house, power plant, water tanks, coal chutes, cinder pits, car repair shops, and tracks. All of the switching of trains will be done in the new yards, thus relieving congestion in the down town yards, which will be used only for making team track deliveries. Construction of the tracks will begin in a few days. The Rock Island railway will also build a new freight depot and warehouse costing about \$150,000. It will be built on the site of the present freight depot. New team tracks will be constructed south of the freight house this summer.

**May 3**

Special election to be held today to vote on \$30,000 of bonds to help build the Orient shops, \$30,000 to help build Arkansas Valley Interurban terminals in Wichita, and \$22,500 for a new permanent bridge over the Little Arkansas river at 11th street. The present bridge at 11th street is 20 years old, has been condemned by three city administrations, and is very unsightly.

**May 4**

In election yesterday Wichita re-voted (for third time) \$30,000 in bonds to aid Orient Railway company by large ma-

jority. The city also voted \$30,000 in bonds in aid of Arkansas Valley Interurban Railway, but \$22,500 worth of bonds for a new bridge across Little river at 11th Street were defeated by 85 votes.

The Orient Railroad will today start clearing the ground for building the first building of its new shops and will also start construction of a track near Wheeling avenue on the shop site for the unloading of materials for the shops.

**May 5**

The difficulties between the Santa Fe Railroad and the Kiowa, Hardtner and Pacific Railway Construction company have been settled, and the later company are now putting in the contested crossing and are laying steel west of the Santa Fe main line at the rate of about one mile per day.

A deal was closed the first of the week between the Kansas Gas and Electric company and Wichita Railroad and Light company by which the street cars will be operated with power supplied by Kansas Gas and Electric beginning about November 1st.

The first steel for the Arkansas Valley Interurban will be laid about May 16, starting at Valley Center, where 20 car loads of steel rails have already arrived.

**May 6**

The roadbed of the Arkansas Valley Interurban is almost completed from Valley Center to Wichita, and at the Valley Center end there are now on sidings 20 cars of steel rails from the Illinois Steel company at Gary, Illinois. Twenty cars of ties are also all either in transit or on the ground. The second car of overhead copper equipment has arrived.

**May 7**

Advertisement of Wichita Railroad and Light company. Says the com-

pany's equipment includes twelve double truck cars, twelve open summer cars, 34 single truck winter cars, and four double track summer trailers. There will be added during the present summer four more double truck cars and four more double truck summer trailers. There is at present over 30 miles of track. At present the company is paving about twelve miles of streets over which it operates, and at end of the present season over half of the entire mileage will be paved.

Article says Wichita has 33 miles of street railway track. Budget calls for \$400,000 worth of improvements this year including \$50,000 car barn, compared with \$250,000 last year. The company carried ten million persons during 1909. It has 350 employees and monthly payroll of \$14,000.

**May 9**

Laying of steel for the Arkansas Valley Interurban started this morning, working south from Valley Center.

**May 11**

The Santa Fe railway will begin unloading and delivering inbound freight at its new freight depot, corner of Tremont (*now Santa Fe - ed.*) and William street, next Monday morning. Outbound freight will not be received at the new depot until the paving on Tremont street is completed, which will be about June 1. Until then it will continue to be received at the old freight depot.

**May 12**

Improvements being carried out by Wichita street railway company. The work on new tracks on West Side line from Hiram east to Seneca on Maple will start today. The tracks will be torn up and there will be no service for two weeks or more until the work is completed. The new double track will be extended to the entrance of Masonic home, and a new switch will be constructed in front of the Trinity Method-

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

ist Episcopal church. Seventy pound rails will be used. Workmen have now finished laying brick pavement at the intersections of South Main with English and Watermen streets. The rest of the paving will be finished as soon as brick can be secured. The old track has been torn out as far south as Bayley street, and new double tracks put in its place. Hillside avenue work will begin June 1. New track will be laid for one mile and three new switches installed. Waco avenue has been finished and opened to traffic for the past two weeks.

Owing to the amount of work to be done by the company this summer it is not probable that the Emporia avenue line will be built. A new track will be laid on Central avenue from Main street to the park. Because of the legal battle between the Trinidad paving company and West Douglas property owners, nothing has been definitely decided in regard to the car line from Seneca street to Mt. Carmel.

### May 13

A construction train arrived at Valley Center yesterday to be used in building the Arkansas Valley Interurban line from Valley Center to Wichita. The Jennings Construction company will move its men and teams to the grade work from Valley Center to Sedgwick and right-of-way agents will be busy between Sedgwick and Halstead.

The Santa Fe received the first shipments of freight at its new freight house today.

### May 16

Report of wreck on the Orient Railroad near Milton Saturday afternoon. Twenty injured.

### May 18

Mr. A. G. Jennings, head of the Jennings Construction company arrived in Wichita yesterday to take charge of the steel laying on the first

stretch of the Arkansas Valley Interurban railway from Wichita to Valley Center. He hopes to complete the work inside of two weeks. Yesterday he supervised the setting up of the big new grader which was at once put into service at 24th street. It is the largest made and the most complicated in use in the West, and it requires eighteen horses to handle it.

### May 19

Santa Fe engine No. 1849 yesterday pulled a train of 60 cars totaling 2416 tons from Newton to Kansas City. The average tonnage of a train is less than 1000 tons.

A ceremony is to be held today inaugurating the first track laying of the Arkansas Valley Interurban Railway company. The mayors of Wichita and Newton will attend. Mayor C. L. Davidson and President W. O. Van Arsdale of the interurban will drive the first silver spikes. The ceremony will be held at 23rd street and North Main.

### May 21

Excavation of the foundation of the power house at the Orient shops has been completed, and concrete work will begin Monday.

### May 26

The terminal station of the Arkansas Valley Interurban Railway company is to be located at the corner of 1st and Water. The tract was purchased today from Herman Steinbuchel for \$40,000, or \$320 per front foot. It extends 125 feet on Water street and 140 feet on 1st street. The site is a portion of the Fred Stackman estate. Mrs. Steinbuchel was formerly Mrs. Stackman. It had been owned by her family for 28 years. Cars for use on the line between Wichita and Valley Center are expected to arrive early in July. Motormen and conductors are already being hired to begin work about August 1.

### May 27

Article reports on agreement between

Santa Fe, Rock island, Frisco and Orient railways to unite in building of a Union Station and use of one elevated track to cross Douglas Avenue. The station is to cover the site now occupied by the Santa Fe depot. The Arkansas Valley Interurban Railway company decided yesterday that its terminal in Wichita will be located at the northeast corner of 1st and Water streets.

### May 28

Santa Fe engine No. 1015 and Missouri Pacific engine No. 826 were brought to Wichita yesterday from Belle Plaine, where they collided Monday morning

The Rock Island railway through E. W. Cline, general land agent for the Rock Island at Topeka, yesterday closed the deal for ground 600 feet by 200 feet for its new freight yards, etc., near Hydraulic and 29th street. Bought from Charles Fay for \$500 per acre and adjoins the other strip 200 feet by half mile purchased by Rock Island few weeks ago from Sam W. Stewart.

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

## WICHITA KDOT PUBLIC MEETING

On May 19th KDOT will host a public open house meeting from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Sedgwick County Extension Office - Sunflower Room. Please encourage your fellow community members to attend and learn more about expanded passenger rail service. There will be live presentations at 5:20p.m. and 6:20p.m.

## LYNN NYSTROM

Received at press time that Lynn Nystrom, of the UP steam crew, had a massive coronary and passed away on May 5. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

THE KANSAS CITY CHAPTER  
"PIONEER CHAPTER OF THE WEST"  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ANNOUNCES

*The 2010 Quad Chapter Meeting*

*Saturday, May 15, 2010*

*Starting at the*

**"National Academy of Railroad Sciences"  
(which is the BNSF Training Facility)**

*Located at Building JFC .*

*Park in the TRAIN parking lot at  
The Johnson County Community College*

The tour will start at 10:00am so it wouldn't hurt to be 10-15 minutes early. We will have lunch immediately after the tour, which should be at 12:00PM.

For a limited number we can provide chauffeured transportation to the college & lunch, departing from Union Station at 9:15 AM. Prior arrangements please.

Lunch = \$12.50 **Reservation** preferred / "at the door" accepted.

Lunch will be at Hayward's Bar-B-Que. **Menu:** Up to two meat choices on a large Kaiser bun. Beef, Turkey, Smoked Sausage or Pork burnt ends. Choice of side dish. = Salad, Smoked Baked Beans Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, French Fires, or Onion Rings. Kosher dill pickle (on the side). Tea or cola.

**Please Mail this reservation, and checks made payable to:**

**"KC Chapter—NRHS",**

**Bob Jefferis**

**6000 W. Richards Dr.—Shawnee, KS 66216**

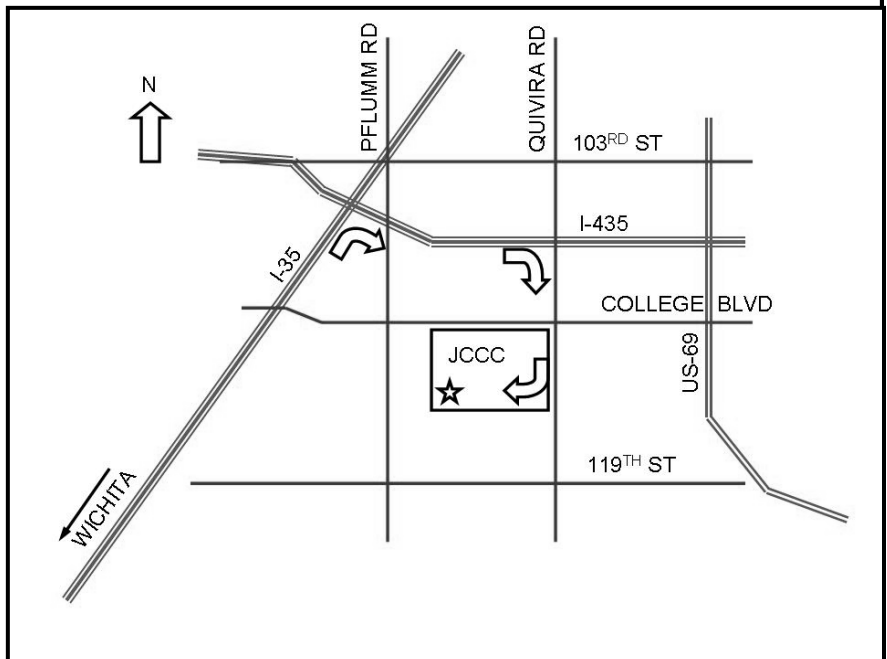
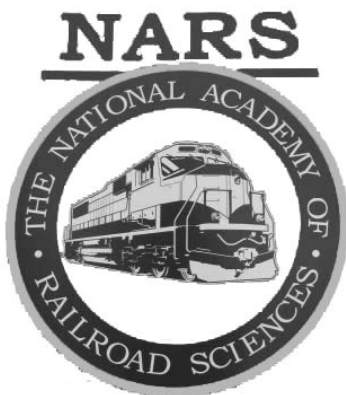
Reservations for Tour & Lunch  x \$12.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Request for rides from Union Station (Leaving at 9:15am)  x Free

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. & / or Email \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Please call Richard Wood  
(913) 208-4590 or Bob Jefferis at (816)  
808-4144.



# May 2010

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

**GREAT PLAINS**  
**DISPATCHER**  
 Great Plains Transportation  
 Museum  
 700 East Douglas Ave  
 Wichita, KS 67202-3506  
 (316) 263-0944  
 Return Service Requested