

GREAT PLAINS DISPATCH

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

AUGUST 2010

Volume IX

Number 8



LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



80 YEARS AGO

The August 1930 Frisco Employee's Magazine said work began July 1, 1930, clearing the site for the new million-dollar Frisco-Rock Island depot in Oklahoma City, to be completed in March 1931.

The Aug. 16, 1930, Wichita Eagle detailed construction and improvements under way at Santa Fe's Orient shops.

The Aug. 20, 1930, Wichita Beacon pictured new Missouri Pacific motor car No. 653, which made its initial run from Wichita to Geneseo Aug. 19th with motorman E.T. Carroll. It's a combination coach, smoker, baggage car and motor and replaces a smaller one that didn't include a baggage compartment, making it necessary to pull a separate car. It has a 250-hp Winton engine. The coach has 15 double seats with bright blue upholstery. The smoking compartment has five similar seats.

Arkansas Valley Interurban was reducing service from 11 cars a day each way to eight Sept. 1, 1930. Until March 10, 1930, there were 15 each way but increased automobile use greatly reduced rail passenger traffic. Cars would leave Wichita at 6, 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. and 12:45, 2:45, 5:30, 8 and 11 p.m. (Wichita Eagle, Aug. 23, 27, 1930; Wichita Beacon, Aug. 24, 1930)

New bus and streetcar fares were to go into effect Sept. 3, 1930--7 cents a ride or 15 tickets for \$1. Transfers may be made from bus to streetcar or vice-versa at any point where the lines in-

tersect. School fares are 5 cents. Several new buses are to be added at once. Streetcar tracks crossing the Big Arkansas on the company's bridge are to be moved to the steel and concrete Douglas Avenue bridge. (Wichita Beacon, Aug. 29, 1930)

90 YEARS AGO

The rivalry between jitneys and streetcars was really getting out of hand. A man was struck and killed by a jitney bus at Main and Douglas at 10 p.m. Aug. 4, 1920. The driver was arrested on a charge of manslaughter as it was alleged that while driving south he sped up to beat a streetcar to a crowd returning from the circus at the First National Bank corner. The man killed and his son were attempting to board a South Main Street car when the accident happened. In late August, two jitney drivers were arrested on charges of assaulting a streetcar motorman at the loop on South Emporia Avenue. (Wichita Beacon, Aug. 5, 1920; Wichita Eagle, Aug. 27, 1920)

Carmen employed by the Wichita Railroad and Light Co. went to work Aug. 16, 1920, at the new wage scale recommended by the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations. (Wichita Beacon, Aug. 16, 1920)

Kansas City, Mexico & Orient General Manger A. DeBernardi announced Aug. 18, 1920, the Wichita shops, employing 250 men, would close indefinitely Aug. 31st. But Receiver William T. Kemper announced Aug. 21st the Interstate Commerce Commission had granted its application for a \$2.5 mil-

lion loan to be used in paying debts and continuing operation of the property. (Wichita Beacon, Aug. 18, 21, 1920)

The ICC loan assured continued operation of the shops, with an increase of 15-20 percent in the number employed immediately and perhaps more later. One of the first extensions planned was from Alpine, Texas, the Orient's present terminus, to Presidio on the Rio Grande, 140 miles. (Wichita Eagle, Aug. 23, 1920)

The Orient would keep its headquarters in Wichita and on Aug. 25, 1920, signed a lease for the entire fifth floor and part of the fourth of the Sedgwick Building. It currently had offices in four different places. The general offices were in the old telephone building at 223 N. Market, the traffic offices in the Union National Bank Building, the legal department in the Butts building and the engineering department at the Midland Valley depot. (Wichita Beacon, Aug. 25, 1920)

The AVI commenced using their two and a half blocks of new track in Halstead Aug. 24, 1920. This will enable the street-paving force to lay base where the old track had been. It purchased a lot at Spruce and Second streets and will commence to clear it immediately preparatory to erecting a new passenger depot. (Wichita Beacon, Aug. 25, 1920)

A MoPac train pulled by switch engine No. 2614 ran over a man at First and Waco. (Wichita Eagle, Aug. 19, 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 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, 316-744-7259 or 700 E. Douglas, Wichita, KS 67202-3506

AUGUST
NRHS MEETING

Do you know the answer to these questions? When did the Santa Fe start using rule books? What does the term "decorating" mean? Before the days of radio, in a passenger train, how did the engineer and conductor communicate with each other? How many pages were taken out of the rule book when Santa Fe discontinued using train orders? For the answer to these and other questions come to our August meeting.

For our viewing pleasure we shall watch a DVD of a couple of previous NRHS programs. On August 19, 1992 the late Mike Hurley presented a session on Santa Fe Rule Books. As it will have been 18 years and one day since some of us have seen that presentation, and some of you have not seen it at all, it is time for a repeat. Another repeat will be a video on hand signals and lantern signals done on July 16, 1988 at one of our annual picnics. The late Lloyd Stagner and the late Mike Hurley were the presenters.

The meeting will be held Fri., Aug. 20, 7:30 pm, at the Great Plains Transportation Museum, 700 E. Douglas, Wichita.

There will be the 6:00 informal social and dinner at the Riverside Cafe before the meeting. See below for more details.

THE SEPTEMBER BANQUET
AND PROGRAM

Our annual banquet will be at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church on Friday, September 17, 2010. Notice the change in day and date. Normally we have been holding the banquet on the Saturday following the third Friday, but that will be different this year.

Deborah Fischer-Stout of the Northern Flyer Alliance will present the program after the meal. The NFA is the group promoting the return of Amtrak through Wichita. Watch for further details.

OCTOBER

This will be the exchange program with the Kansas City Chapter NRHS.

NOVEMBER

Our own Mr. Lee Swanson will present a program on railroading in and around the Cincinnati, Ohio area.

DECEMBER

Annual slide free-for-all and election of the chapter board for 2011.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2011

by J. H. Koehn

The annual election of officers for 2011 is only a few months away. One position that has been vacant for two or more years --I have lost track -- is that of the vice-president. The VP is the one in charge of the monthly programs and I have been taking care of those duties of the unfilled position. The Chapter board hopes that someone steps forward to be VP and fulfill the duties and responsibilities. I will take care of the February, April, and October programs. Someone, or several others, will need to either present or schedule someone to do each of the other monthly programs and activities. We have numerous resources within our own membership, and some of you have contacts who would do an excellent job on a program.

PRE-WICHITA CHAPTER
NRHS DINNER AT THE RIV-
ERSIDE CAFE

Mark your calendar for the informal dinner and social which begins at 6:00 p.m., at the Riverside Cafe, 739 W. 13th. Call Harvey (733.2085) or send him an e-mail jhkoehn@prodigy.net by Thursday evening of the 19th so he has an idea of how many will be attending.

THE GPTM WEBSITE

Have you been to the Museum website lately? Point your internet browser to gptm.us and scroll about halfway down. There you will find a section called "Special Collections – Online". There are some interesting historical documents in pdf format that you may open and view. Among the items to see are some Arkansas Valley Interurban waybills in addition to a couple of other items. Keep checking back as more will be added or changed out soon.

**FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR,
J. Harvey Koehn**

I will report on the status of the 2009 Yearbook and on the 2010 Yearbook at the chapter meeting. Briefly stated, the 2009 Yearbook, in electronic format, should be available sometime this month.

The Summer 2010 issue of the NRHS *Bulletin* will contain articles on the Garden City Western and California's Coast Line. The expected distribution will be in September.

NEW TOPIC: NRHS ON FACEBOOK!

NRHS has launched an official Facebook page. The page went up in early July. We have loaded some preliminary content (2009 & 2010 convention photos) and more will follow. We have not yet finalized our standards and content plans, but expect to do so shortly. The NRHS page can be reached through a button on the www.nrhs.com home page or by searching in Facebook pages under "NRHS". We invite all Face-book users to visit the NRHS page and stay in touch.

From the NRHS Telegraph, July 2010 (The Telegraph is a publication for NRHS leadership.)

OTHER EVENTS

Aug. 21 – Planes, Trains & Automobiles Show, Waterville, 9:00-4:00. Car show, silent movies, airplane fly-in, model train display, train rides, food. Benefit: Marshall Co. Railroad Historic Society.
www.centralbranchrailroad.org

Aug. 21 - 3rd Annual Topeka Railroad Festival. Great Overland Station. 9:45-6:00. info@greatoverlandstation.com

Sept. 1-4 - 30th National Narrow Gauge Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, St. Charles, MO. 30ngconvention.org

Sept. 10-11 - RITS Convention, Comfort Suites Hotel, Burlington, IA. www.rits.org

Sept. 11-12 - Frisco Convention, Crown Plaza Lenexa, contact: Richard Napper, 785-582-4209
renapper@centurylink.net

Oct. 8-9 - Missouri Pacific Railroad Historical Society Convention, State Fair Inn, Sedalia, MO.
www.mopac.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

Oct. 23-24 - Western Ks. Train Show, Ellis Co. Fairgrounds, Hays. Sat. 9:00-5:00, Sun 11:00-4:00. klk@mchsi.com

Nov. 6-7 - Mid-Continent Prototype Modelers, Lions Activity Center, 150 S. Main, Benton. Sat. 9:00-5:00, Sun 11:00-5:00. mcpmmeet@hotmail.com

Dec. 4-5 - Oklahoma City Train Show, Oklahoma State Fair Grounds, Oklahoma City. Sat. 9:00-5:00, Sun. 11:00-5:00. www.okctrainshow.com

Dec. 11-12 - MacTrax Show, McPherson Comm. Bldg., 122 E. Marlin, McPherson. Sat. 10:00-5:00, Sun 11:00-4:00. skytracker@ks-usa.net

Jan. 30-31, 2011 - Wichita Train Show & Swap Meet. Cessna Activity Center. Sat. 9:00-6:00, Sun. 11:00-4:00. Contact Phil Aylward 316-830-6608

ABILENE & SMOKY VALLEY NEWS

The ASVRR has been notified that the Rock Island depot has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Work continues on painting and repairs for the depot.

The C&NW passenger car has been placed in service. Flooring was replaced, tables and chairs installed, the kitchen completed and air conditioning is in and working. The Milwaukee coach work continues, and generators have been installed in UP caboose 25183 for the two cars.

Extras on the lineup:

Sept. 4-6 - 3415 Steam Engine
Sept. 11 - Brookville Hotel Dinner train
Sept. 18 - Kirby House Dinner Train
Oct. 9 - Brookville Hotel Dinner Train
Oct. 23 - Kirby House Dinner Train
Reservations: 785-263-1077

DREAMS DO COME TRUE

The A&SVRR DVD "Dreams Do Come True" is now for sale. \$20, for approximately 62 minutes about the work done on the #3415 Steam Engine. This includes the move from the Eisenhower Park to ASVRR grounds, the tear down and rebuild and the opening day ceremonies held May 23, 2009.

Thanks to Ric Jung, an ASVRR volunteer, and many others this DVD is well done. If you would like to have one you may call the office, 785-263-1077.

Rail Reflections

RAILROADING IN WICHITA AUGUST 1910

By Fred Tefft

August 1

A new railway is in prospect for Wichita. It is an extension of the Midland Valley system from Arkansas City to McPherson. A state charter has been issued to the Wichita, McPherson and Gulf Railway company. A subordinate corporation, the Midland Construction company, was also chartered.

The Santa Fe freight offices were moved to their new location at corner of William and St. Francis on Saturday night and yesterday. The old freight house is to be torn down in the next few months.

August 2

Steel crews of the Arkansas Valley Interurban railway are now just above 29th street and before the week is ended they will close the gap and connect up at 23rd street. Over 40 cars of material are being unloaded in Valley Center for the next unit of construction between Valley Center and Sedgwick. Grading is being done on that stretch and is within two miles of Sedgwick.

August 3

Work on the Orient shops is being pushed ahead rapidly. Already the company has expended \$450,000 on the work.

August 4

The last link in the Arkansas Valley Interurban rails between Wichita and Valley Center was laid this afternoon, and the first train, a steam train carrying workman and supplies, passed over the line to Valley Center to begin the laying of steel between Valley Center and Sedgwick. The trolley wire is not yet all in place. The first rail of the interurban system was laid three months ago near 24th st.

August 8

The Rock Island expects to finish

its new yards north of the city by September 1st and the round house, coal chutes, oil tanks, turntable, and telegraph office by October 15.

August 9

Article about progress on construction of Arkansas Valley Interurban Railroad. Work of putting up trolley poles will start today. The crossing of the Frisco tracks at Valley Center is now completed and the line of track will be finished at once through the city of Valley Center. The steel is now all here, 65 car loads, from the Illinois Steel company, Gary, Indiana, unloaded at Valley Center, and ready for track laying. Grading of the section between Valley Center and Sedgwick will be completed this week, and the laying of steel northward from Valley Center will commence. The sub-power station for Valley Center, 38 feet square, will be commenced this morning.

August 10

Article reports organization yesterday of the Wichita, McPherson and Gulf Railway Company here yesterday, and also that of the Midland Construction Company, which proposes to build the railway from Arkansas City to McPherson.

August 16

About 10,000 people visited Riverside park Sunday. Ostriches which were put in the park Sunday morning attracted the most attention. Many park visitors walk or go in automobiles. The majority, however, go by street car, either on the Riverside lines or on the North Main cars to Murdock avenue. On the Riverside cars alone 6526 persons were hauled. Besides the usual three cars which run on this line the street car company put on nine extras.

August 19

The new sub-power station at Valley Center for the Arkansas Valley

Interurban Railroad was started yesterday and will be pushed rapidly to completion.

August 25

Petition is to be presented to city commission asking that the Wichita Railroad and Light company be prevented from moving its loop on the North Riverside line from West 11th street to West 10th street. This move of the loop was proposed by the company in order to escape paying a pavement tax on West 11th street, which is soon to be paved. Another report is that the street car company is planning to move the loop a block north to 12th street, which would allow it to escape the pavement tax.

August 26

Ordinance passed by city commission giving Missouri Pacific Railroad authority to build a switch track across 2nd street along the east bank of the Big Arkansas river and along Sherman avenue to serve the power plant of the Kansas Gas and Electric company on 3rd street.

Two arc lights have been installed at the Rock Island passenger depot. The platform is now almost as light at night as in the daytime.

Superintendent Morrison says street car service in Wichita will be slower due to lack of sufficient power until the new Kansas Gas and Electric power plant is completed. The load will be increased at least 30% because the traffic demands more of the heavy double truck cars which consume more power than the other cars. All the cars will have to be run slower.

August 28

The Missouri Pacific Railroad is to spend about \$500,000 this fall in improvements to the Wichita division. The line from Wichita to Geneseo, 86 miles, will be ballasted at a cost of about \$150,000. Several miles of the work has been started from the Gene-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

seo end, it will take six or eight months to complete. About 70 miles of track from Eldorado to Durand will be relaid with heavier 85 pound steel. This work will commence about September 10. The Kiowa branch, from Wichita to Kiowa, is to be relaid with 75 pound steel.

The street car company will soon have a double track from the corner of Douglas and Main to 21st street. The new oak ties and the heavy iron rails are piled along Market street from the Missouri Pacific tracks to 21st street, and work will be commenced this week. The new line on North Market will be entirely of new material.

August 29

Work will be commenced this week by the street car company on a double track line from 14th to 21st street on Market street. The steel to be used will be the type used on paved streets so that it will not be necessary to relay it when Market street is paved between these two points, as will likely be done in a few months. The new double track is made necessary because the interurban cars will reach the heart of the city over this line from 21st street.

The first car for the Arkansas Valley Interurban Railway company will be shipped from the factory about September 15. Construction work is progressing rapidly. The power substation at Valley Center is nearing completion.

August 31

Article reports collision of two Missouri Pacific trains in the 25th street yards yesterday morning. Collision involved passenger train No. 403 from Kansas City pulled by engine No. 2731 and a switching train of seven box cars pulled by engine No. 9824.

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

RAILROAD SHOPS DEMOLITION MARKS END OF AN ERA IN SPRINGFIELD MO

From the North Kansas Expressway viaduct, you can see the remains of a different era crumbling to the ground.

Rusted train tracks and piles of rubble litter the ground near the rail yards. The debris once made up the economic engine of Springfield: the Frisco Railroad Shops. The car shops, the last remaining large buildings of a once-massive complex, are being torn down. Historians say the facility built train cars, and helped build the city.

In 1980, the Frisco was merged into the Burlington Northern Railroad. The BN slowly began downgrading its newly acquired facilities in Springfield, including the former Frisco headquarters operation. In 1995 the BN merged with the Santa Fe Railway to create the current BNSF.

The Springfield Diesel Shops closed in 1996 as the new company sought to eliminate duplicate operations across its system. Hundreds walked home with a pink slip, while others were offered transfers to other BNSF hubs, such as Topeka, Kan.

The car repair shops chugged on under the auspices of Trinity Railcar until 2008, before it shuttered due to the rough economy and an accompanying decline in rail traffic. BNSF decided there is not a market to lease the shops again, and the vacant buildings have become a liability for the company.

"We're demolishing three car shop buildings that have been up from the 1920s (from what I understand), and should wrap up in the next couple of weeks," said Andy Williams, a spokesman for BNSF, in a telephone interview.

Ironically, more trains than ever are rolling through Springfield these days.

Williams says the train yards themselves, where freight cars are put

together to form trains, will remain in operation. The locomotive fueling facility will also continue servicing the many trains that ply the rails through town each day. The railroad says, if the economy improves, it could end up increasing its presence and job numbers in Springfield. However, Williams said, that's simply a "possibility" and not a set plan.

KY3 News

MISSOURI RIVER EAGLE SEDALIA SESQUICENTENNIAL SPECIAL

By Zach Pumphrey

Sept. 30 - Oct. 15, 2010

Tentative Schedule

Oct. 9 St. Louis-Sedalia

Oct. 10 Sedalia-Kansas City (Sedalia depot 150th)

Oct. 11 Kansas City (display Union Station)

Oct. 12 Kansas City-Marysville

Oct. 13 Marysville-North Platte

Oct. 14 North Platte-Cheyenne

The eastbound schedule has yet to be determined because they're not sure which day they're going to move the Ringling Bros Circus Train from Speer, WY to Denver, but as of last Monday, the power will be the Challenger, UP 3985, and that's straight out of Steve Lee's mouth in Denver last week.

The routing will be Cheyenne/Speer to Denver, Denver to probably Sharon Springs on the ex-KP, Sharon Springs to Salina, Salina to KC, KC to Jeff City, Jeff City to St. Louis, St. Louis to Gorham, IL and back, St. Louis to Sedalia.

Look for the rest of the schedule to show up in the next month or two. It should be an interesting trip and will be the first time the 4-6-6-4 has visited since 2004.

August 2010

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

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