

GREAT PLAINS DISPATCH

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

JANUARY 2011

Volume X

Number 1



LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



50 YEARS AGO

The Jan. 15, 1961, Wichita Eagle Magazine had a feature article about old Runnymede, an English-style village located on the Orient north of Harper. Jan. 18th's had a biographical article about Irvin Van Blarcom, who spent 50 years with the Railway Mail Service prior to retirement Jan. 6th.

70 YEARS AGO

Construction began on a 750,000-bushel terminal elevator north of 25th Street on the Missouri Pacific for Farmers Cooperative Commission, to be completed by June 15, 1941. It was the seventh major storage unit for wheat in Wichita. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 13, 30, 1941)

80 YEARS AGO

The Kansas public service commission Dec. 31, 1930, granted MoPac permission to substitute a mixed train for the motor between Wichita and Hardtner. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 1, 1931)

This spring MoPac will lay new 90-pound rail replacing 85-pound steel on 20 miles between Tonovay and Reece and between Summit and Rosalia on the line to Yates Center (\$175,000), 90-pound rail replacing 75-pound on 12.5 miles between

Maize and Colwich (\$75,000) and six miles of 75-pound rail replacing 65-pound between Alameda and Kingman (\$45,000). (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 11, 1931)

The January 1931 Frisco Employee's Magazine said, under Wichita news, "Several units of the 'Fanchon and Marco' shows have traveled via Frisco from Wichita to Joplin. Of course there were girls galore--beautiful girls--and they received service de luxe." Also, "The new Waterman Street subway is nearly finished, and the paving will soon begin through our tracks. When completed this will be a very busy street, taking a lot of traffic from Douglas Avenue."

90 YEARS AGO

A.H. Webb is returning to Wichita as superintendent of MoPac's Wichita Division. He had been in Kansas City as general superintendent. He first came to Wichita in 1886. J.E. Snedeker, present head of the division, remains here as ranking official under Webb. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 1, 1921; Wichita Beacon, Jan. 2, 1921)

Old streetcar rails from Garden City are in use as barb-wire fence posts on the old Stevens cattle ranch in Finney County. (Wichita Beacon, Jan. 12, 1921)

All Arkansas Valley Interurban offices, except that of President George Theis Jr., moved to the second floor of the new station at Waco and Douglas Jan. 15-17, 1921. The \$140,000 passenger depot opened for business Jan. 31, 1921. Formal opening was Feb. 15th. An unfinished entrance was left on the east side to be connected to a new hotel to be built. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 18, 30, 1921; Wichita Beacon, Jan. 8, 30, 1921)

AVI carried 729,431 passengers in the first 10 months of 1920 vs. 768,377 in the same period of 1919. Average fare was 55 cents, 8 cents more than in 1919, making income practically the same, but expenses were up, making profits less. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 17, 1921)

The streetcar company will stop using tickets, because they are too expensive, and substitute aluminum tokens for the same nine for 50 cents. (Wichita Beacon, Jan. 21, 1921)

A man was struck and killed by a Bitting Avenue streetcar Jan. 21, 1921, in the third block on North Main. (Wichita Eagle, Jan. 22, 1921)

It is reported the Orient will hold a conference to plan building of 260 miles of new track. (Wichita Beacon, Jan. 30, 1921)



**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

**JANUARY
NRHS PROGRAM**

The January program will be a presentation by Frank Ruf covering the museum's special collections.

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

There will be the 6:00 p.m. informal dinner gathering at the *Riverside Cafe*, 739 W. 13th, Wichita before the meeting.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- February: Annual Meeting; The Museum Year in Review and a RR DVD (if time)
- March: Randy Spillman, Working for the Railroad
- April: Topeka Chapter Exchange Program
- May: Robert Walz presenting
- June: Annual Picnic
- July: Platform Meeting, Location TBA
- August: ??
- September: Annual Banquet
- October: KC Chapter Exchange Program
- November: ??
- December: Annual Slide-Free-for-All

If you have a presentation you would like to assist with, contact Harvey Koehn.

OTHER EVENTS

- Feb. 12-13 - Wichita Train Show & Swap Meet. Cessna Activity Center. Sat. 9-6, Sun. 11-4. Phil Aylward 316-830-6608
- Feb. 19 – Lawrence Model Railroad Show, Douglas Co. Fairgrounds, 2120 Harper St., Bldg 20. Information: James Taylor, jimforegolf@hotmail.com

March 19-20 – Boot Hill Model Railroad Show, Finney Co. Fairgrounds, W. Pavilion Bldg, 601 Lake Ave., Garden City, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-4. Info: Robert Simmons, ras@odsgc.net

April 9 – Ozark Model Railroad Show, Springfield Catholic High School, 2340 S. Eastgate, Springfield, MO, 9-3. Info: Ron Williams, rjwilliams1@mchsi.com

June 21-27 – National Garden Railway Convention, Overland Park International Trade Center, 115th & Metcalf, Overland Park; hosted by Kansas City Garden Railway Society. Info: Dave Roberts, gscaleisfun@hotmail.com

**NRHS MEMBERSHIP
RENEWALS**

NRHS membership renewals will be due December 31. If you have not received your renewal card contact Lee Swanson at 316-260-2553

**WICHITA CHAPTER NRHS
OFFICERS**

- President – David Meek
- Vice President – vacant
- Treasurer – Lee Swanson
- Secretary – vacant
- Editor – Fred Tefft
- Director – J.H. Koehn

GPTM OFFICERS

- President – John Gries
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- Secretary – John Deck
- NRHS President – David Meek
- NRHS Appointee – J.H. Koehn
- Board members at large: Eddie Allen, Tim McGill, Drew Meek, Frank Ruf, Fred Tefft, Norman Walters

AREA LOCALS ON THE BNSF
By Jayhawk

The L-KAN2111 goes on duty at Emporia on Sunday & Tuesday at 17:00 and runs to Wellington with a side trip from Mulvane to Wichita.

The L-KAN2121 goes on duty at Wellington on Monday & Wednesday at 11:59 (Or when they are rested) and runs to Emporia again with a side trip to Wichita from Mulvane.

The L-KAN2111 goes on duty at 17:00 at Emporia on Thursday and makes an El dorado turn. This crew has Friday & Saturday off.

The L-KAN0101 goes on duty at Wichita at 10:00 daily and makes a trip to Newton and return. (Local 10). The relief crew handles it on Sunday & Monday. The L-KAN0091 goes on duty at Wichita at 18:00 and makes a turn to Ark City daily except Friday. (Local 9). The relief crew handles it on Thursday.

The L-KAN0041 goes on duty at Wichita at 10:00 and makes a turn to Wellington with the relief crew from the above locals. (They go on duty when rested from the day before on local 9 from Ark City if it is after 10:00 AM)

The relief crew taxis to Abilene on Saturday and runs local L-KAN0181 from Abilene to Newton and return to Abilene on duty at 15:00.

The L-KAN0181 goes on

duty at 15:00 at Abilene on Tuesday & Thursday and runs to Newton and back to Abilene.

The L-KAN0191 goes on duty at 15:00 at Abilene on Monday, Wednesday & Friday and makes a turn to Superior and back.

The L-KAN0011 goes on duty at Newton at 06:00 on Monday & Wednesday and runs to Superior.

The L-KAN0021 goes on Duty at Superior at 08:00 on Tuesday & Thursday and runs to Newton.

The L-KAN0011 goes on duty at Newton at 06:00 on Friday and runs to Superior then turns back to Newton with a rescue crew getting them when they go dead.

3751 EXCURSION SUSPENDED

Train Festival 2011 organizers, California Zephyr Railcar Charters and the San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society regrets to announce the operation on Santa Fe steam locomotive #3751 to Rock Island, Il in July of 2011 has been suspended.

BNSF has reconsidered their approval of the excursion, projecting greatly increased traffic volumes this summer on their Transcon corridor. www.trainfestival2011.com

ON THE WEB

Be sure to check out the museum website. www.gptm.us Historical documents about railroading are being added.

THE GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM
Membership and Volunteer Application

Membership Categories

<u>Regular Memberships</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35
<u>Supporting Memberships</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1000

I want to volunteer in the following areas:

- Shop & restoration Gift shop
- Interpretive guide/Tours Fund raising
- Displays & artifacts Library
- General Maintenance Office
- Planning & Development Newsletter
- Other: _____
- Add me to your special activities mail list
- I would like to receive my newsletter via E-mail

I am paying by

- Cash Discover Visa
- Check Master Card

_____ Exp. Date

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____

Date Received: _____

Please remit to:

Great Plains Transportation Museum
Membership Coordinator
700 E. Douglas Ave
Wichita, KS 67202-3506

RAILROADING IN WICHITA JANUARY 1911

By Fred Tefft

January 1

The new street car line on the West Side from Seneca street west to Millwood avenue, north to Grand avenue, and west to Athenian, is completed; and the first car was run yesterday afternoon. The cars which run over this line are marked, "Mt. Carmel," but the end of the line is several blocks from Mt. Carmel academy.

Map of Midland Valley Railroad and connections -- showing proposed extension from Arkansas City north to Wichita and McPherson.

January 4

Residents of West Wichita have petitioned the city commission to have the Wichita Railroad and Light Company build a new street car line to the Orient Shops. Suggested route is south from Douglas on Osage, thence west on Dayton to Martinson and south on Martinson to McCormick. Superintendent Morrison says it is unlikely to be built this year because of expense of a new car barn, four new cars, and the necessary amount of street paving, plus possible extension from South Main to meet proposed interurban from the southeast.

January 7

Photographs of the Santa Fe train wreck (near *Mulvane*). Passenger train struck rear of freight train. Two engines on passenger train -- Nos. 1433 and 1431, both off track and wrecked.

January 13

Patronage on the new Mt. Carmel street car line has been so good that another car is to be put on during the morning and afternoon, giving a fifteen minute service from 6:30 until 8:00 a.m. and from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., beginning tomorrow.

January 15

Shows panorama photograph of city taken by Whittier the Photographer from the top rim of 212 foot smoke stack of new power house. Also photograph of the new smoke stack and article about power house, which for first time yesterday ran the entire Wichita street railway system and the Arkansas Valley Interurban. Smoke stack is

of steel lined with firebrick. Interior measures fifteen feet three inches. Current equivalent of 1300 horse power required for regular daily street car service, with 500 to 600 more h.p. at rush hours.

Effective today, the block signal system will be used in operating all trains of the Santa Fe railway on the middle division, from Newton south via Wichita to Arkansas City.

January 21

The temporary station of the Arkansas Valley Interurban is located on the ground floor of the Beacon building just opposite the elevators. There are plenty of seats and the room is warm. The temporary waiting room was established several weeks ago and will be used until the company builds its terminal station tracks to the Arkansas Valley Interurban depot at 1st and Water. All interurban cars load and unload in front of the Beacon building.

January 23

Three new cars have been ordered by the Arkansas Valley Interurban railway. One, an exclusive freight and express car, is to be delivered as soon as it can be built. The other two are to be passenger coaches and will be delivered later in the spring. Freight business has been heavier than expected. The sidewalk in front of the Beacon building very often looks like the platform of a busy railway freight house. Cans of milk, jars of butter, cases of eggs, boxes of apples and many other things are unloaded, while all sorts of goods are shipped out.

January 24

Yesterday was one of the Arkansas Valley Interurban's biggest days. Nearly 1000 persons took rides and the two cars were kept full all day and far into the night.

January 25

A petition is being signed by South End residents asking for extension of the South Main street car line two blocks south of the present loop to Levy Street and then west on Levy six blocks to Exchange Avenue. The street car company is now preparing to rebuild its line from the South Main street loop to the ball park and its car storage track on Levy Street from Main to Wichita Street.

January 26

Superintendent Morrison of street car company, in arranging service for the crowds attending the Forum opening entertainments this week, "banks" the Topeka avenue and Stock Yards cars on South Main street. People returning home on all other lines will find their cars on West Douglas avenue at Water street.

January 27

Rock Island railway will complete its facilities in northern part of the city on February 10. These consists of a six stall round-house, telegraph and yard offices, coal chutes, oil tanks, cinder pits and tracks. Approximate cost of the facilities is \$75,000. The new yards contain six tracks, each 4200 feet long, with total capacity of 600 cars.

January 28

The new Orient round house in Wichita is receiving its first tenants, ten new engines ordered about a year ago from the Baldwin Locomotive Works for about \$200,000. Each weighs 125 tons and has eight driving wheels. They have been arriving all this week on the Rock Island and Missouri Pacific, and the last one came yesterday. *These engines were 206-215 (later 2540-2549), 2-8-0 wheel arrangement. Historians show the builder as Alco-Pittsburg, instead of BLW.*

January 31

For operating purposes the Rock Island Railroad has been divided into three districts. First district includes all mileage east of Missouri river and from St. Joseph to Horton, Kansas, with headquarters at Chicago. Second district -- all mileage west of Missouri river and north of Caldwell, Kansas, including St. Louis division, with headquarters at Topeka. Third district -- mileage south of Caldwell and east of Tucumcari, New Mexico, with headquarters at Fort Worth.

Petition presented in City Commission yesterday asking that South Main street car line be extended south to Levy street and west to Exchange Place. The line now extends to the ball park.

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

RAILROAD TIME
PART 2
TIME JUST KEEPS TICKING
AWAY

By J.H. Koehn

In the first installment on time, which was in the November 2010 issue, there was some discussion about the development of time zones, railroad time-keeping, and the standards for accurate timekeeping. In this issue you will read more about the watches themselves. All of the information in this article is about pocket watches.

The railroads had required specifications for their watches and, except for a few minor differences, the specifications were much the same from railroad to railroad. Some of these included that the watch had to be made in the U.S., lever set time, and have Arabic numerals, at least 21 jewels, and isochronism. Isochronism refers to the time variation when the watch spring is wound tightly compared to when the watch is mostly wound down. A watch was not supposed to vary more than 30 seconds per week. The approved watch brands were Waltham, Elgin, Hamilton, Illinois, and Ball.

A short list of employees that the railroad specifically required to carry an approved watch included enginemen, firemen, conductors, dispatchers, yardmasters, and trainmasters. For the most part, if your railroad job in any way took you on or near the main track, you were required to carry a railroad-approved watch. Not only did you need to know when a scheduled train was coming through, you needed to know when to expect it in order to be out of harm's way.

Scattered throughout a railroad's system were approved time inspectors. Generally there were local watch repairmen and the employee's timetable listed these. The timetable also listed where railroad standard clocks were

located. For Santa Fe's Plains Division, all of the Santa Fe mainline and branch lines in Harper County were in this division, there was a standard clock in Wellington.



The watch shown in the photo is a railroad watch, but it is definitely not an approved watch for employees. It is a commemorative watch which the BNSF gave to a shipping customer representative who passed it on to the author, knowing his affinity for trains. The watch face is about the size of a wrist watch. Note that the numerals are Roman and not Arabic. Also note that, as on many Roman numeral clocks and watches, the "4" is "IIII" and not the usual "IV". The watch case is made of brass and on the inside of the hinged cover is an embossed caboose.

HOLCOMB, KANSAS

By Sam Andrews

Holcomb, Kansas the location of a farm house next to the mainline tracks which became the location of the murder of the Herb Clutter family on November 15, 1959. The event later be-

came the setting for a novel and made for television movie both titled 'In Cold Blood'. References to the Santa Fe are found in both the book and movie.

The house sits about 1/4 mile south of the tracks near the west siding switch. The track now is used to hold empty tankcars waiting to be spotted at the nearby Tyson packing plant. Riders on the westbound Amtrak service can see the house from their coach windows during the early morning daylight hours in the spring and summer.

A couple of interesting train scenes in the movie: in the scene where the late night murder takes place in the house, there is a sound effect of a diesel engine whistle blowing for Main street which is the only crossing in Holcomb. In the trial at Garden City in 1960, another engine whistle sound effect is heard but this is of a steam engine and not a diesel which is in error as steam had vanished by this date.

One BNSF worker at La Junta grew up in the Garden City area and has a sister who was to spend that night with the Clutters but due to a automobile breaking down, was not able to make it to Holcomb.

WICHITA TRAIN SHOW & SWAP MEET

FEB 12-13, 2011—WICHITA TRAIN SHOW & SWAP MEET, Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS, Sat: 9-6, Sun: 11-4, Swap tables, Modular Layouts, Switching Contest, Model Contest, Photo Contest, Live Clinics & much more; Adm: \$6.00 for both days, Advance Table Registration includes 2 admission tickets, Before 12/31/2010 take off 10%, 8 foot tables are \$25 each, Info: mail registration to Phil Aylward, 603 Chestnut, Halstead, KS 67056-2302 or aylward1@cox.net

January 2011

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

GREAT PLAINS
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