

GREAT PLAINS DISPATCH

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

APRIL 2011

Volume X

Number 4



LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



20 YEARS AGO

Kansas Southwestern Railway began operation of 298 miles of Missouri Pacific trackage, leased from Union Pacific on April 14, 1991, extending northwest and southwest from Wichita to Geneseo, Hardtner, Radium and Iuka. BROE Cos. (OmniTRAX) bought KSW from Chicago West Pullman Transportation Co. in September 1992 and merged it into its Central Kansas Railway in April 2000. Watco acquired the road and began operating it as Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad June 30, 2001.

40 YEARS AGO

Trains not included in the new Amtrak basic system made their last departures April 30, 1971. Wichita kept the Texas Chief (for eight years) but lost Nos. 1 and 2, the San Francisco Chief. The last westbound No. 1 was due out of Wichita at 11 p.m. April 30th, with the last No. 2 due out at 7:05 a.m. May 2nd.

80 YEARS AGO

The April 1931 Frisco Employee's Magazine said spring movement of horses and mules to the southeast has

been exceptionally good. Frisco had several special trains of livestock to Memphis and the southeast. It also said the Wichita Ship by Rail Club had a membership of about 700 and expected it to increase it to 1,000 in two weeks. Proceeds from membership fees are being used in advertising such as "Ship and Travel by Rail" stickers on windshields, pamphlets giving data on railroad payrolls, taxes paid, etc. Mr. A. Lentz of Atlanta & Southern Railway Co., regular speaker over Shreveport, La., radio station KWKH, has been secured to give the main address at the open meeting of the club March 26th.

The first flight of the new Transcontinental and Western Air mail planes arrived here westbound at 10:54 p.m. April 20, 1931, and the first eastbound at 4 a.m. the 21st. They use low-wing all-metal Northrops. Mail now crossed the country in approximately 24 hours. (Wichita Beacon, April 21, 1931)

90 YEARS AGO

Seventy Pullman cars will be parked on the elevated tracks and north of the Missouri Pacific depot to house 2,000 visiting Rotarians here for the 17th District meeting April 7-8, 1921. (They were pictured April 8th.)

(Wichita Eagle, April 3, 8, 1921)

C.R. Lewis has resigned as superintendent of the Arkansas Valley Interurban and bought an interest in Cocking Transfer Co. Until about a year ago he was superintendent of the Wichita Railroad and Light Co. (Wichita Eagle, April 4, 1921)

An empty streetcar ran into a standing AVI train at Newton April 7, 1921. The streetcar was demolished, but there were no injuries. (Wichita Eagle, April 9, 1921)

The April 14, 1921, Wichita Eagle had an ad with a photograph of the interior of the Arkansas Valley Interurban cafe.

AVI officials reached a compromise April 23, 1921, in a dispute with track workers. Officials had insisted on cutting pay from 42.5 cents an hour to 35 cents but agreed to a scale of eight hours for 40 cents an hour with an option for 10 hours at 35 cents if they chose. (Wichita Eagle, April 25, 1921)

Correction: The item last month about closing exits at Union Station was from the March 26, 1921, Wichita Eagle. not 1961.

Don't miss the April NRHS meeting on railroad telegraphy!



**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**

This month is the Topeka Chapter exchange program. Messrs. Dick Spain and Don Reser will talk about railroad telegraphy. Mr. Spain is a retired Santa Fe telegrapher and Mr. Reser has worked for various railroads, including a stint at Wichita's Union Station.

It has been a long time, if ever, that the Wichita Chapter has had a program about telegraphy. This topic should be one of our more interesting programs. Bring a guest.

The meeting will be held Fri., April 15, 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

- June 18: Annual Picnic
- July 29: KC Ch. Exchange Program about the Rock Island on July 29. *Please note that this is a change from the normal third Friday.*
- August: ??
- September: Annual Banquet
- October: KC Ch. 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

- April 15-17 - Katy Railroad Historical Society Convention, Clarion Inn, Wichita. www.katyrailroad.org
- April 16-17 - Hutchinson Fiesta Train, Wichita to Hutchinson with lunch at the Anchor Inn Mexican Restaurant. Tickets at Engine House Hobbies, 316-685-6608

May 21 – Santa Fe Depot Car Show and Carnival, beginning at 2:00. Concessions, free outdoor movie 8:35. Info: Gary Koon, 620-532-3671

May 21-22 – Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum Train Show, Agri-Business Bldg, 712 W. Washington, Arkansas City, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4. Info: 620-442-6750

May 28-29 – Cherry Valley Model Train Show, Phillips Recreation Center, Broadway & Heacock, Parsons, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-2. Free admission. In connection with Katy Day Festival. Info: john@dvmrc.com

June 8-11 – Railroad Station Historical Society Convention, Best Western Saddleback Inn, Oklahoma City. Info: TheodoreXakellis@juno.com

June 16-19 - Santa Fe Railway Historical & Modeling Society Convention, Phoenix, AZ. www.atsfrr.com

June 20-26 - NRHS Convention, Tacoma, WA. www.cascaderails2011.com

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

Aug. 6 – Turkey Creek Division, MCoR NMRA Meet, Lenexa Community Center, 13420 Oak, Lenexa, 8-3, model & photo contests, swap tables, railroad groups; 3:30-9:00 layout tours. Info: Robert Jefferis, jeffbob@everestkc.net

Sept. 17 – Frisco Convention, Frisco Bldg, Springfield, MO. Info: Ron Williams, rjwilliams1@mchsi.com

Oct. 22-23 - Two Depot Model Train show, Kingman Armory. Sat. 9-5, Sun. 11-4. Info: Anita Cheatum, sfdepot@sbcglobal.net

RIDE THE BARTLESVILLE OIL FLYER

Saturday, May 7 will be the day in Bartlesville. Train rides, provided by the K&O Railroad and the Heart of the Heartlands, will depart the depot at 10:00, 1:00 and 3:00. The destination has not been announced. Tickets are \$10.00. Call 918-336-8708 or go to www.BartlesvilleLocomotive.org.

An added benefit will be blowing the whistle from steam locomotive 940. Arrangements have been made for the use of an air compressor and everyone will have the opportunity to blow the whistle.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Anita Cheatum sent in this article in response to the March article on the Livestock Exchange building.

Really enjoyed the article about the Union Stockyards Exchange building. Was really heartbreaking for me to watch it going down and couldn't salvage a piece of the building. I asked the superintendent if he'd salvage a couple of the porch posts for me – his answer was for me to come back that night and get whatever I wanted but I had to be back in Kingman to go to work at 5:00. The guy seemed surprised that a WOMAN would want a piece of the building. What he didn't know – and didn't bother to ask – my first real job was at the stockyards – first as a scalemaster in the hog barn (that's right – the hog barn) and then I went to work for one of the commission firms. Worked there until I left Wichita to move to Emporia to go to college. My sister also worked there for many years for another commission firm and when the stockyards closed and was just a weekly auction, she clerked the auction for quite a while. The last time she and I was in the building was a late evening and we found the building unlocked but un-

manned so we took a sentimental walk thru the building (the building was vacant at the time and this was before the work release was put in there). I also remember the old Stockyards Hotel which was across the street and just

a bit to the west; the mule barns to the north of the exchange building; and a little greasy spoon to the west where my dad and I could get the best hot beef sandwiches for a quarter each.



New Jersey Transit 4501 on the H-KCKDEN1-05 at Dodge City April 5. The ALP-45DP is a dual-mode locomotive built at Bombardier and is en route the Transportation Technology Center at Pueblo, Colorado. NJT has 26 of these units on order. Photo by David Webb.



Tuesday, April 5, UP was installing a new turnout for the west "City" switch in Hutchinson. This is part of a project replacing 33 miles of 112 lb. jointed rail with 136 lb. welded rail between Arlington and Groveland. Photo by Lynn Aldrich.

RAILROADING IN WICHITA**APRIL 1911**

By Fred Tefft

April 7

C. W. Kouns, general manager of the Santa Fe, today accepted the ordinance adopted by city commission regarding the track elevation, etc. The city will vote on a \$70,000 bond issue to help pay for the Kellogg street viaduct at an election May 2. (The bond vote carried by 3919 to 718).

Rock Island Railroad advertises new electric lighted Pullmans from Wichita to Kansas City and St. Louis.

The Wichita Railroad and Light company yesterday delivered rails at 24th street and Arkansas avenue, and at 34th street and Mascot avenue, for the Arkansas Valley Interurban Railway company. The rails will be used to extend the line to the site near Sullivan's dam chosen for the aviation meet May 4, 5, and 6. The aviation grounds will be two and a third miles north of the city limits at 21st street. The interurban company only has three cars in use at present and will lease from the street car company all of its double truck cars and baseball trailers for handing the crowds during the three days of the meet.

April 11

A man was struck by Frisco engine No. 158 yesterday at the Douglas avenue crossing.

April 13

Article recounting the old story of a Missouri Pacific engine that fell through the Ninescah river bridge between Clearwater and Conway Springs in a flood in fall of 1885 and has allegedly never been found.

April 14

Double motor freight cars will be installed for service soon on the Interurban line. One of the new cars, No. 201, has been received from the St. Louis

Car company, and was given a trial run yesterday. The rails are being laid at the interurban depot, corner of 1st and Water streets, but it is not known how soon the depot will be open to traffic.

April 16

Superintendent Morrison announces plans of Wichita Railroad and Light company for the coming fiscal twelve months. Two hundred seventy five thousand dollars will be spent in improvements, of which \$175,000 has already been approved by the McKinley syndicate.

In a few months it is thought that the additional \$100,00 will be authorized to build a large car barn and repair shop on the company's property on Waco avenue between 1st and 2nd streets.

Of the \$175,000 already approved, \$80,000 will be spent for new tracks, \$80,000 for new pavements, \$5000 for the interurban connection at 1st and Main and along 1st street to the interurban stations at 1st and Water, already completed, and \$10,000 for new ornamental iron trolley poles ordered in by the city.

Improvements include new ties, double track and brick pavement on Main from English to Murdock and on Douglas from Wichita street to the Santa Fe tracks; a new double track on Central avenue from Main street to Riverside park; a new double track on Waco from Douglas to 2nd street; a switch at corner of West Douglas and Handley street; a new track on Cleveland from Douglas to 12th street; putting in a wye at Hillside and Douglas avenues; and rebuilding and paving the South Emporia line from William to Zimmerly.

The street car company from April 1 is also increasing wages in the total amount of about \$600 monthly, which equals the monthly earnings of the new Mt. Carmel line. The company employs 225 men with a monthly payroll of about \$13,000.

The new wages will increase the daily pay for motormen and conductors from

20¢ for first year men to 23¢ for fifth year men.

April 17

Four hundred tons of steel rails have been ordered by the Wichita Railroad and Light company from a mill in Pennsylvania to be used in building a new street car track on Main street and Douglas avenue where these streets are to be paved. The rails now in use on Main street and Douglas will be used in construction of the track on Central avenue where the traffic is not as heavy. The new rails are the standard six inch 73 pound per yard rails such as have been used in all the new track in this city recently when paving has been done.

The street car company's track builders are now at work putting in a "Y" at the intersection of Bitting and River Drive, about 400 feet north of the old loop on 11th street. When this is completed early next week, the North Riverside "stub" will be discontinued, and the South Main street cars will run alternately to North and West Riverside.

April 18

The Arkansas Valley Interurban station at 1st and Water will be ready for service in a few days. The platform track has been completed and the line-men are now stringing the trolley wires. They will be completed by Wednesday night and by Thursday or Friday the first car will pull up to the station. It is probable that freight car No. 1 will be put into service by the first of next week.

Midland Valley Railroad has purchased property in West Wichita for \$37,800 for its depot and right-of-way to the fair grounds, which it purchased last winter.

Purchases announced yesterday include:

Sixty feet (the west two-thirds) of the Longnecker barn -- \$13,000. Mr. Longnecker will keep and use the east

(Continued on page 5)

RAILROADING IN WICHITA*(Continued from page 4)*

third.

J. Gardner block -- \$17,500. The block will be razed and site used for passenger station.

Kannahan tract, 50 feet -- \$7300. This adjoins the Gardner block on the east and will also be used for the depot site. Graders have pitched camp east of Peck, and the first dirt has been broken in Sedgwick county for the Midland Valley extension.

April 19

Arkansas Valley Interurban freight car No. 201 made its initial trip between Wichita and Valley Center today and was the first car to receive its load from the interurban station at 1st and Water, leaving with a full load of miscellaneous freight at 2:30 p.m.

April 20

The Wichita Railroad and Light company is planning to tear out the short strip of single track on South Main near the city building to replace it with a double track. This is the only single track on South Main for a distance of many blocks, and since the street is about to be repaved, the company plans to replace it with a double track. A "cross over" is to be put in near the Beacon building to care for the cars which run to the baseball park and the special work for the a loop soon to be put on William and Water streets will also be put in at this time. All the old cobblestones are to be taken up and replaced with good brick pavement along the street car right-of-way.

April 21

The Arkansas Valley Interurban has completed five miles of grade north of Sedgwick towards Newton, and steel is being laid on the first mile north of Sedgwick.

Douglas avenue business men have started a crusade to get rid of the cobblestones between the street car tracks on this street from Wichita street to

Washington and repave same with brick or asphalt.

April 26

Newton voted yesterday at a special election to give Arkansas Valley Interurban railway a 20 year franchise including the right to use certain streets for electrical railway purposes.

The road has been graded to the main line of the Santa Fe running west of Newton. This is within four miles of the city. Graders have started on the approaches to a \$15,000 viaduct to be built over the Santa Fe railway south of Newton.

April 28

Street car company started this morning putting in concrete on its right of way in first block of South Main preparatory to paving with brick in place of cobblestones that have been in place since the track was first put down a good many years ago.

April 29

Beginning next Monday the Interurban will handle all its freight business from its station, corner of 1st and Water streets. Ever since it has been in operation it has been handling shipments of freight by loading and unloading them in front of the Beacon building. At times there were so many drays waiting to unload goods into the cars that traffic on South Main street was all but blockaded. It was also necessary for shippers to appear on the scene at the proper moment or their goods would be left behind. At the station shipments may be left on the platform at any time, just as shipments are left at the railway freight depots. For the present passenger cars will continue to load and unload at the Beacon building waiting room.

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

WICHITA CHAPTER NRHS OFFICERS

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Treasurer – Lee Swanson
Secretary – vacant
Editor – Fred Tefft
Director – J.H. Koehn

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Drew Meek
Frank Ruf
Fred Tefft
Norman Walters
Kathleen Webb

SALT MINE EXPRESS

The Salt Mine Express began rolling through the Kansas Underground Salt Museum, 3504 East Ave. G, Hutchinson, on Wednesday, March 9. The miniature train ride will be offered as an extra \$3 option with the purchase of a gallery tour ticket. The train route is almost a half-mile in length and the narrated ride will take approximately 12 minutes. The train route extends through mined-out chambers in the ancient salt deposits that previously were not available to visitors. The area is pretty much as the miners left it years ago.

When the Hutchinson Zoo purchased a new train, the museum obtained the zoo's train. It had to be converted to run on batteries and has been refurbished. A track was constructed from pieces in the original Carey Salt rail system.

For more information, call the museum at 620-662-1425.

April 2011

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

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