

# GREAT PLAINS DISPATCHER

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

MAY 2013

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## LOOKING BACK

By Michael M. Bartels



### 50 YEARS AGO

The city commission May 14th granted Rapid Transit Lines permission to discontinue evening bus service for much of Wichita and all service after 9 p.m. Sunday, effective June 2nd. The next two years were called critical in determining the future of the bus system. (Wichita Eagle, May 15, 23, 1963)

The May 26, 1963, Eagle pictured interior remodeling under way at Union Station.

### 70 YEARS AGO

About 300 volunteers will check passenger loads on city buses May 19th to determine how equipment of the Wichita Transportation Co. can be used to the best advantage. All equipment is in service except for a few small buses, and it is expected that after the survey they will be put in operation during rush hours. Although the population has about doubled, little additional equipment has been allowed. (Wichita Eagle, May 12, 1943)

Defense Transportation Co. will begin service May 31st to the Beech and Boeing plants using 11 converted school buses. (Wichita Eagle, May 30, 1943)

### 90 YEARS AGO

After being closed for several months, the old Frisco passenger station on East Douglas will be opened and used for the Near East Relief as a central bundle depot starting May 7th. Its use has been donated by the railroad for this purpose. (Wichita Beacon, May 3, 1923)

The first of three new engines purchased by the Orient from the government last February was placed in service May 8th. They are part of a lot that was to have gone to Russia. Since their purchase they have been in the Wichita shops undergoing alterations to adapt them to service here. (Wichita Eagle, May 10, 1923)

Lee Taylor of Sawtelle, Calif., superintendent of Wichita's mule car line 30 years ago, was visiting. In his day the mules drew the small passenger cars from First and Water streets along Water to 10th Street, then east to Market, north to 13th, east to St. Francis and north to 15th Street. There their burden was taken by small steam cars, which rolled to Fairmount on one line and out to the Burton Car Works on the other. (Wichita Eagle, May 13, 1923)

New track recently laid on the Wichita and Western between Kingman and Wichita

has allowed a 25-minute reduction in running time. The train now leaves Wichita at 7:10 a.m. and arrives at Kingman at 8:40. (Wichita Eagle, May 16, 1923)

American railway magnate George Jay Gould, 59, died today in France. He succeeded to the leadership of the Gould family on the death of his father, Jay Gould, on Dec. 2, 1892. (Wichita Beacon, May 16, 1923)

The Wichita Railroad and Light Co plans to build an extension south on Grove this year to accommodate high school students. Late this year tracks may be extended south to Kellogg and east from there. Rails have arrived for extension of the College Hill line and work will begin immediately. Within the next year another extension may be built somewhere between Cleveland and Hillside. (Wichita Beacon, May 18, 1923)

The May 31, 1923, Eagle said the expanded Missouri Pacific shops now under construction near 25th Street will be ready for operation within 90 days. Fifty new Baldwin 1400-class 2-8-2s are to be delivered to MoPac by early fall, and 11 will be used on freights between Wichita and Durand. The MoPac depot is also being remodeled.

## PASSENGER RAIL SUPPORTERS SAY THEY HAVE 'MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT' FRIDAY

By Bill Wilson  
The Wichita Eagle  
Wichita passenger rail supporters have what they call a "major announcement" set for a 4 p.m. Friday news conference at Union Station, 701 E. Douglas.

The news conference, to celebrate National Train Day on Saturday, is being character-

ized by city officials as an "update on significant developments regarding passenger rail advocacy in this area."

The news conference will be led by Wichita Vice Mayor Pete Meitzner, along with business representatives who serve on his local steering committee.

It will take place outside the north entrance of Union Station, just off Douglas.

*Gary Oborny with Occidental Management encouraged representation from the train museum to be on hand for this press conference.*



**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

**MAY NRHS MEETING**

May's meeting will be on the subject of Australian Railroads. Presentation will be by Dr. Gary Harmon of Augusta.

The meeting will be held Friday, May 17, at the Great Plains Transportation Museum, 700 E. Douglas. Meeting time is 7:00 pm.

There will be the 5:30 p.m. informal dinner gathering at the Riverside Cafe, 739 W. 13th, Wichita before the meeting.

*The starting time for NRHS meetings has been changed to 7:00 PM.*

Presenting our program this month will be Dr. Gary Harmon of rural Augusta. Gary is a retired veterinarian who practiced many years in Andover. Gary is originally from Ellsworth County. Born in Ellsworth, Harmon, in his early years, lived south of Kanopolis on a farm where the MOP train track went between the house and barn. Mom was concerned I might get run over by a train, so dad fenced the yard with barbed wire on top to try to keep me contained. Mom found me hanging from the seat of my pants from the barbed wire. I remember transients coming by and mom giving them a meal - some did some work for a meal. In 1944 my family moved from a Kanopolis farm to a farm south of Ellsworth where I did most of my growing up. My first train ride was from Ellsworth to Wilson on the UP - cost was 65 cents. My father was on the Co-op board of directors and I remember UP, Frisco, & MOP competing to supply box cars for wheat harvest.

The first part will mostly be about riding & touring the ROVOSS RR, billed as the most luxurious RR in the world. This RR was started by Rohan Voss about 20 years ago. ROVOSS rebuilds and runs refurbished train equipment

throughout Southern Africa. ROVOSS operates out of an old Steam engine repair facility that the British built in 1943. Riding a ROVOSS train lets the rider see and feel what it was like to be white and rich and travel by train in Africa. We (Gary and wife Cathy) rode from Pretoria to Victoria Falls, 3 days and 2 nights, through SA, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. I will also talk a little about apartheid, Nelson Mandela, Soweto, a safari, and Victoria Falls.

The second part will be riding the train across Australia from Perth to Sydney, 3 days and 3 nights. Australia did a good job of planning for growth, but not a good job of planning for railroads. The trip took us through the "Outback". When the train is on schedule, it offers whistle stop tours of Kalbarrie, Baker, Adelaide, & Broken Hill. The program will include a little about the Australian Open Tennis Tournament, a visit to a sheep station, Sydney & New Zealand.

And, to make things a little more interesting the night of the program, Dr. Gary has submitted these questions for you to ponder beforehand. May 17 - pre test: Person with most correct answers will win a not too valuable prize.

1. Where did the GHAN train get its name?
2. What is the name of Australia's transcontinental train?
3. Where did the ROVOSS RR get its name?
4. What is the gauge of Africa's RR System?
5. What gauge is used in Australia?
6. Where is the longest stretch of straight track in the world?
7. What is the Capital of South Africa?
8. What is the currency of Zimbabwe?
9. What are the "BIG 5"?
10. Name the 3 Great Waterfalls of the World.

**NRHS PROGRAMS FOR 2013**

The November program on Civil War, Southern Railroads will be on Saturday afternoon, November 16, at the Wichita Sedgwick County Historical Museum, beginning at 2:30. Mark your calendar accordingly.

June: Lance Garrels on UP 844.

July: Trackage gathering along the BNSF in Augusta. Other details are still in the arrangement stage.

August: TBA

September: Annual Picnic at Museum

October: Kansas City Chapter Exchange Program

November: Confederate Railroads Generalship by Chris Gabel

December: Annual slide/JPEG/movie clips free-for-all and election of officers

**OTHER EVENTS**

**June 13-16:** NMRA MCoR Convention, Olathe, KS, [www.mcor-nmra.org](http://www.mcor-nmra.org)

**July 24-27:** UPHS Convention, Topeka, KS, [www.uphs.org](http://www.uphs.org)

**July 31 - Aug. 4:** SFRH&MS Convention, Flagstaff, AZ. [www.atsfr.com](http://www.atsfr.com)

Sept. 13-22, NRHS Convention, Fairbanks & Anchorage, Alaska, [www.nrhs.com](http://www.nrhs.com)

**Sept. 28-29:** WTTC Train Show & Swap Meet, Cessna Activity Center, Wichita, KS, [www.wttcinc.org](http://www.wttcinc.org)

**Oct. 11-13:** Missouri Pacific Historical Society Convention, Pueblo, CO, [www.mopac.org](http://www.mopac.org)

**WICHITA TOY TRAIN CLUB**

The Wichita Toy Train Club and Museum, 130 S. Laura, is open to the public the second and fourth weekends of each month.

Saturdays 10:00 - 5:00

Sundays 1:00 - 5:00

Adults \$5.00

Children up to 12 are free.

Club members meeting is the first Saturday of every month at 8:30 AM.

[www.wttcinc.org](http://www.wttcinc.org)

**RAILROADING IN WICHITA**

**MAY 1913**

By Fred Tefft

**May 1**

The first pier for the temporary elevated tracks over Douglas was erected yesterday. The temporary elevated track will be built to transport sand to fill the elevation. Concrete bases for the permanent piers on the south side of the avenue are in place.

**May 3**

Grading for the new Santa Fe round house and switching yards in north part of town will start today. A twelve stall round house is to be built. When completed the present roundhouse and shops near Kellogg street will be torn down.

**May 4**

Pillars for the front of the new union station are now being hewed from big slabs of stone in Colorado quarries. Each stone will weigh several tons.

Lightning striking trolley wire directly over a southbound street car at Murdoch and Main street last night caused 30 minute delay in service. Circuit No. 5, which supplies Main from 14th street south to a few feet south of Douglas went dead. This circuit also feeds portions of the Riverside line and the Market street loop.

**May 6**

Street railway company has approved plans to spend \$71,000 on new work this summer, according to A. M. Patten, general superintendent of the company, who is now in the city.

The improvements are to be: Paving Hillside from 9th to 13th - \$17,031

Viaduct and elevated track expense - \$14,500

Depressing street at Douglas avenue

and building new double tracks - \$8098

Purchase of six new cars - \$24,600  
New crossing over Missouri Pacific on Waco avenue on Wonderland park line - \$1501

Moving houses off ground at 10th and Wichita and building storage tracks for cars - \$3200

Paying for air heaters installed in cars last winter - \$4299

**May 7**

The new union station will have an occupant by August 1. The Santa Fe passenger office will be moved in by that time so the old station can be torn down to make way for the elevation. The old Santa Fe passenger station, express building, milk house and mail house are being offered for sale. Several bids have been made but none has been accepted.

The sand fill is now even with the south end of the new station. A trestle is built from Douglas to 1st street, and one is now being built south from Douglas to connect with the one south of the new station.

**May 13**

Superintendent C. R. Lewis estimated between 7000 and 8000 persons rode street cars to Riverside park on Sunday. (*Mother's Day*)

**May 16**

Workmen began clearing a site north of the city near 29th Street for the \$300,000 roundhouse and yards which the Santa Fe will build there.

**May 17**

Article about Arkansas Valley Interurban says during one month the line carried 65,752 passengers.

Article about Wichita street cars -- says company has 35 miles of tracks, of which sixteen miles are paved. Sixty-four cars are now in use and six

(Continued on page 4)

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more are now being constructed for the company at St. Louis. Company has about 200 persons on its payroll and pays them \$5500 every two weeks.

Wichita Railroad and Light Company advertisement says the company is spending \$71,000 for improvements and \$42,000 for paving taxes in Wichita this year and has spent a million dollars for improvements and extensions in the last four years.

### May 18

Article says until the Rock Island roundhouse was built at 21st street in 1911, the Rock Island used the Frisco roundhouse.

Article says the six railroads employ about 1500 in Wichita. Missouri Pacific has 800 -- 300 trainmen, 200 engine men, 150 shop men, and 150 office and station men with monthly payroll about \$65,000. Orient has 250-300. Santa Fe has about 280, monthly section men. Rock Island has about 95. Frisco has about 50. Midland Valley has between 20 and 40.

### May 19

Mortgages for more than \$20,000,000 on the Midland Valley Railroad were filed in the register of deeds office today. They are held by trust companies in Pennsylvania.

### May 20

Wichita booster train left on Missouri Pacific yesterday pulled by Missouri Pacific engines No. 2519 and 2507.

Santa Fe Railroad has recently started improving its Wichita and Western branch with laying of heavier steel and re-ballasting with rock and cinders.

Midland Valley Railroad filed two mortgages with register of deeds yesterday, one for \$15 million and another for \$5,512,500 covering an issue of bonds totaling \$20,512,500. Four million of the first mortgage and the full

amount of the second will be used to pay off all indebtedness and take up the presently outstanding bonds of the company. One million will be used for betterments on the present road. The remaining ten million will remain in the treasury and be available for extension purposes. The road is said to be in excellent financial condition.

### May 21

Article about progress of work on union depot. Concrete work of the station is nearly finished, and yesterday workmen started plastering of the concourse, which will take about five weeks. The steel is in position and the forms are set for the north abutment of the Douglas avenue subway, and concrete pouring will start today. With the finishing of a trestle across Douglas avenue, sand trains will soon run across the avenue and build a sand fill to the north. The street car tracks at the Douglas avenue crossing were depressed about four feet yesterday to expedite the work on the subway. Excavations are being made for the Kellogg street viaduct and concrete paving will start within a week.

### May 23

The largest engine on Orient Railroad, No. 302, bought new seven years ago and in service on the Orient out of Chihuahua, Mexico, has been brought to Wichita for overhauling. It weighs 217,000 pounds and has four pairs of drivers.

### May 27

Article says petition being filed in Federal District Court in St. Louis today for receivership of Frisco Railroad.

The first sand train crossed Douglas Avenue yesterday. Two thousand cubic yards of sand are being hauled and dumped daily.

### May 29

Article indicates there are about 40 men employed as watchmen at railroad crossings in Wichita.

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

## WATSON FLOUR MILL

By Sam Andrews

A mostly unknown name of Wichita's early flour milling trade became Watson Milling Company. William Watson, owner of a flour mill in New Jersey, moved to Wichita in 1901 to form his new business. The mill was located at 17th & Santa Fe on the west side of the Santa Fe mainline.

Construction began in March, 1901 with milling of flour starting that November. This was a four story, 60 foot tall structure that became the largest mill in Kansas until Kansas Milling Company turned on its large mega size mill a few blocks away at 13th & Santa Fe in March, 1907.

Watson expanded his mill a year later in 1902 making this a two unit mill housed in the same building. During this time just about all Watson flour was exported to England.

In 1913 Mr. Watson sold his mill to Red Star Milling. The Red Star group already operated a Wichita mill at 18th & Emporia just north of the Watson site. Upon the Watson-Red Star merger, the Red Star mill became mill A, Watson plant mill B. A mill C was added in 1921 when a large size mill was built at 18th & Topeka--next door to mill A. Red Star closed its Wichita mill in 1966.

A decade before Red Star left Wichita, the old Watson mill was itself closed and soon torn down.

After leaving the milling trade in 1913, William Watson stayed in Wichita becoming chairman of the local Board Of Trade for a time. He passed away in 1952 at age 100.

**BNSF NEWS**

By Jayhawk

**Power Notes****New Power**

BNSF continues to receive the new ES44C4s this month from GE both at Erie and Fort Worth. BNSF got the 7112 – 7118 & 7120 – 7122 from Fort Worth during April. From Erie, engines 6571 – 6578 & 6580 – 6583 were delivered. There should be 18 more delivered from Erie and 61 more from Fort Worth.

**Re-built/Re-numbered power**

BNSF also got two more of the rebuilt GP35s this month. BNSF 2672 & 2673 were released from Relco at Albia, IA during April. The 2672 was released from Albia on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was originally Santa Fe 1437 then renumbered to 3437, then renumbered to ATSF 2937. It was renumbered to BNSF 2637 before entering the GP39-3R program. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, the 2673 was released from Albia. It was originally ATSF 1446 to ATSF 3446 then ATSF 2946. It then became BNSF 2646 before it entered the GP39-3R rebuild program.

PRLX PR30C 3003 has been re-numbered to BNSF 1321 on April 11<sup>th</sup> at Tacoma. The BNSF computer also shows that it has been repainted into the Swoosh paint scheme.

**Older Power & Unusual power**

BNSF that has been released with the test emission kit on it has been pulled out of Transcon service for now anyway. Since April 26<sup>th</sup>, it has been working the locals between Belen and Rincon, NM. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the L-SWE0101-01 was seen departing Rincon, NM heading for Belen with BNSF GP60M 100 & SD60M 8163. The same power went back south from Belen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> as the L-SWE1111-02.

Here is a really unusual power consist seen operating on the ex Santa Fe on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Train M-AMSKCK3-28 was seen departing Newton, KS with SD40-2 1643 (Heritage 1) GP60 8739 (ATSF Blue & Yellow), SD40-2 1708 (BNSF Logo or swoosh scheme), & GP39-2 2758 (BN green & white). These same four engines operated from Amarillo to Kansas City on the train.

**Service Interruption**

BNSF suffered a second derailment on single main track at Fort Sumner, NM. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, BNSF Z-SBDCHI7-22 was hit by high winds west of Fort Sumner on the Pecos River Bridge derailing several double stacks on single main track. On April 17<sup>th</sup> at approximately 17:00, train G-SSDSTO9-12 (Grain train from Selby, SD to Stockton, CA) derailed 25 cars of the train at nearly the same spot as the Z train had derailed the month before. Lines 81 – 106 were derailed with 12 of the cars a total loss. Due to the derailment over 95 trains were held at various points across the system with the main line closed for about 36 hours. While the track was out of service, priority intermodal trains were staged to be first out when the derailment sight opened. Due to this derailment, a handful of detours were seen. The Z-LACWSP9-17 (Los Angeles to Willow Springs, IL) and Z-PHXWSP9-17 (Phoenix to Willow Springs, IL) were detoured over the UP between Vaughn, NM and Hutchinson, KS. Both of these hot intermodal train arrived at Hutchinson on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. In addition to those two trains, the S-LBALPC2-17

(double stack train from Long Beach, CA to Logistics Park Chicago) ran across the UP from West Colton, CA to Hutchinson arriving at Hutchinson on the 20<sup>th</sup>. At least one westbound was also detoured via the UP. The S-KCKSCO1-18 (Double stack train from Kansas City to Los Angeles Harbor) departed Kansas City late at night on the 19<sup>th</sup> and went to the UP at Kansas City. It ran via the UP over the former Rock Island and SP Golden State Route via Hutchinson & Liberal, KS, Tucumcari, NM and El Paso to West Colton, CA where it went back to the BNSF for the trip on to the Southern California ports.



Eastbound Cotton Belt train TUKCY (Tuscon-Kansas City Yard) train is at speed at Wellsford, KS. Wellsford is between Pratt and Greensburg on the former Rock Island Golden State route. The Wellsford station on the railroad is a siding with a length of 9,050 ft. Powering this train are an SD40 and two SD45s wearing numbers 7336, 9062, and 9148 respectively. The date of this photo is May 30, 1983. Harvey and his family were on the first leg of a family trip to Colorado.

Santa Fe tank car #101171 for company diesel fuel, is at Augusta, KS on May 22, 1983.

Both photos by J. H. Koehn



# May 2013

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

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