

Roundhouse Notes

Paducah Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
October 2013

Once Again I have been scanning the Paducah Sun of yesterday for railroad news.

Paducah Sun November 29, 1904

A lively fight is now on between the city, the Illinois Central and the projected electric railway promoters over the right of way granted the electric company at Eighth and Trimble streets. The Illinois Central objected to the tracks crossing its line at that Intersection claiming that it would make it too dangerous, a position fully justified by the facts as anyone can see by visiting the locality. The general council paid no attention to this objection and despite the menace it might prove to human life by allowing too many railroad tracks at that corner, granted the right of way. The Illinois Central then took matters into its own hands and began building switches across the crossing It claims that the property belongs to the railroad and has never been dedicated to the city for a street. This is borne out by the records.

Last Friday night the city solicitor was instructed to make an investigation and find out who owned the property and if it developed that the city had a right to it as a street, to proceed to take legal steps to stop the switch laying.

Paducah Sun March 28, 1901

SKULL CRUSHED DEATH OF A GRAVES COUNTY MAN AT FULTON THIS A M

He is supposed to have been knocked from the elevated Illinois Central tracks

Wm McMasters about 40 years old and a resident of

Pryorsburg Graves county, and a member of the county committee was killed in Fulton this morning. He was found near the Illinois Central elevated track about 1 o'clock with his skull crushed, and lived but two hours, never regaining consciousness. An examination revealed bruises on the back which indicated he was struck by a train and knocked from the tracks. As his watch and \$1000 in notes were found on his person the idea of robbery is not accepted. An inquest was held and the remains were taken to Pryorsburg this afternoon for burial. McMasters was a wealthy tobacco buyer and stock man and was in business in Pryorsburg. One dollar in cash and a check for \$35 are all that were found on him besides



NEWS AND VIEWS

Bob Johnston

EXPLANATION, DIS-

CLAIMER & WARNING: This has been one of the slowest months since I have been doing this column (ever since the club started) for what I regard as pertinent railroad news that has any local connection or interest. The only notes I have are about three new EMD SD 70Ace's that were purchased by the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad located in SW Missouri and NW Arkansas. They were demonstrators including the yellow "Caterpillar," that was on display at the EXPO in Las Vegas in 2012, and all three were repainted in the Progress Rail Shop in Mayfield, and came in and went out on the PAL; and a personal sighting on September 12, of the outbound BNSF local crossing Clark St. with 11 cars and the usual two GE four-axle units on the lead. The one on the point was in badly faded, "Warbonnet" paint, possibly one of the last few left running in the country. That's it!

Because I am facing my deadline, I have decided to fill my assigned space with a review/history of the two-block parking area between the railroad museum and the commerce building and the block the new P&L building is on (Washington to Adams and 2nd (Marine Way & South 3rd St.) that was once a busy rail yard. Some may have forgotten and others never have known about its significance. If you have no interest in railroad history, read no further, but I hope it will be of interest to those who have either forgotten or never heard the story.

THE FREIGHT HOUSE & TEAM TRACK: The Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway Freight House (now the new Com-

merce Center) was built in 1925 on the site of the old St. Nicholas Hotel. It replaced the older wooden structure that stood at 5th & Norton St. adjacent to the yards. It was built in response to, and in anticipation of more new business resulting from the opening of the Ohio River bridge, built by the NC and the C.B. & Q. RR, on January 1, 1918. (Photo in the museum). A single track led from the yards on South 6th St. down Norton St to and across Third Street, and then between South 3rd and South 2nd to Adams St. where it diverged into six tracks to form the Public Team Track where formerly residences had stood. Three tracks went behind the freight house and between it and an open sided, roofed loading platform (with a ramp to Washington St.), that extended the length of the main building. A fourth track was on the east side of the platform, a fifth went down the middle of the yard, and a sixth went behind the location of the Boyles building and what is now the Railroad Museum. Each track extended to Washington St. where each had a bumping post. Between Clark and Adams Streets; along 2nd St. (about where the P&L office building is now), was a stock pen where cattle could either be watered and fed in transit or loaded from cattle cars onto trucks.

When built, the second floor of the freight house housed the Superintendent's Office and the Dispatchers' Office. The first floor was the Local Freight Office. The one story warehouse handled Less Than Carload (LCL) freight. Incoming box cars were unloaded and their contents separated into separate areas of "piles," for different local

business and stores, or for the general public. Pallet jacks or fork lifts were unheard of and all freight from caskets to boxes of chewing gum was unloaded by two wheel "hand trucks;" one of which is in the museum. Although the freight house was owned and staffed by the NC, it and the team track operated as a "Joint Agency" of the N. C. & S. L. and the C. B. & Q. RR. During all of the steam era, switching was shared by the two railroads with each road supplying the engine for equal and alternating periods. When diesels arrived in the early 1950's (earlier than on the I.C) the NC exclusively supplied the switch engine and crew with the Q paying a fee for each of their cars switched.

Although the Illinois Central Freight House and Team Track was across town at 6th & Campbell, they also had small yard near the river on Washington Street with tracks behind the warehouses on 2nd between Washington & Clark and also down Maiden Alley to Kentucky to serve the warehouses there plus coal for the Paducah Water Works boilers. It is interesting to note that before Maiden Alley became a trendy entertainment and restaurant district it was simply a listing in the switching tariff.

The team track was switched three times daily. In mid-morning cars that had arrived on the NC local were brought down and placed; in late afternoon the engine came down, pulled empties, and did whatever re-spotting was required, and between 10:00 p.m. and midnight it came back bringing the cars off the "Q" (later BN) local that had arrived in town earlier in the evening.

As the years passed, the bulk of the business evolved into thousands of refrigerated cars annually of fruits and vegetables from all over the U.S. to the team track. There, wholesale produce and grocery jobbers from a 150 mile radius in four states sent their trucks several times weekly to either load directly from the cars or from brokers' warehouses. Hundreds of trucks, both straight job and semi, entered and left this area each week; most coming in empty and hauling out produce, plus semis bringing in produce from around the country to supplement the rail cars. In the later years "Piggy Back," refrigerated trailers also showed up periodically. In those days all freight rates were set and regulated by the I.C.C. and Paducah was a "breaking point," for tariffs, with all destinations further south carrying a higher rates. This gave Paducah brokers a competitive edge, and that fact, plus their ability to break up cars and sell L.C.L. lots in mixed loads to jobbers, made this, essentially, a terminal market. (Many waybills for these cars are still in the old green file boxes in the museum).

Until the late 50's and early 60's the reefers were the conventional insulated boxcars with bunners in each end containing ice for cooling, or for some commodities in moderate weather, the hatches left open for ventilation. Starting in the 60's, mechanical reefers appeared in increasing numbers; they carried twice as much loading as the conventional cars and at lower rates, giving the brokers further advantage. Despite all of these advantages, by the 1980's things began to change, as completion of the Interstate Highway System, larger trucks, and the desire by jobbers for more and varied items that required multiple pick-ups, caused more and more movement to trucks that could also make multiple drops, thus reducing the need for jobbers to haul out of

Paducah. Also, during this era the railroads were reinventing themselves and were less interested in single car business; by the middle of the 80's, perishable movement into Paducah had switched almost exclusively to trucks.

To look quickly back, in the 1960's, the L&N (which had taken over the N.C. & St. L.) like all railroads had ceased L.C.L. freight house business. In 1972, the L&N, because of decreased business and reduced staff, sold the freight house to brokers who switched to a cross-warehouse operation, unloading and then reloading trucks for delivery back to jobbers. By 1985, the only rail business left for the team track was an occasional outbound car of scrap metal from Paducah Hide & Junk who loaded gons from a ramp they had built on the vacant lot along 2nd St. between Washington & Clark. Also, in 1987, the P&L Railway had taken over ownership of the former NC/L&N property, and in 1990, they removed the track from Adams St., back to the yards on South 6th St., thus ending 65 years of constantly increasing and then waning rail activity in the two block area. The rails remained in the ground between Clark & Washington, until the completion of the Carson Four Rivers Center, and the construction of the parking lots, and some also were left between Clark and Adams until the construction of the P&L office building two years ago.

In 1992, Johnston Brokerage Company sold the freight house to Charles & Carolyn Simpson, who operated the Chief Paduke Antique Mall, and who offered the Paducah Chapter, N.R.H.S. the opportunity to start a railroad museum on the second floor, which, of course, we did, starting off with some members' private collections laid out on tables.

This, of course, is only a thumb-nail sketch of the railroad history of the

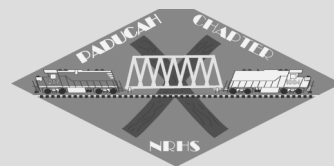
area around the Paducah Railroad Museum, but I hope it will remind and inform members and other readers of the significance of the heritage it is our mission to preserve.

MUSEUM: According to my count we had 560 visitors in September. This is substantially the same as 524 last September, and both months had several boats. For better or worse, the Paducah Model Train Club has basically moved out and discussions are ongoing about how to utilize the space. That was the area for the florist's cooler, and apparently repairs will have to be made to the floor, and possibly the walls, and new lighting installed. Also, discussions are ongoing about replacing their HO" gauge lay-out with an "O" gauge system.

Special Notice

Nominations for Chapter Officers will be accepted during the October 8th Meeting for Elections that are held at the November meeting for next years officers. Current officers are listed below. Meeting Guest will be a speaker from a local coal terminal.

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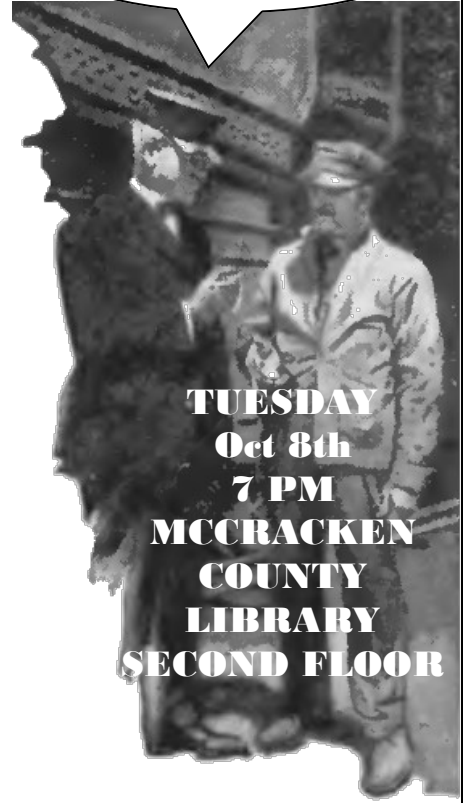
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Membership — Charles Gibbons
3409 Central Avenue, Paducah 42001

Illinois Central Railroad Hospital, Paducah, Ky.—6



Gosh! Its almost time for the meeting! We sure don't want to miss it.



**TUESDAY
Oct 8th
7 PM
MCCRACKEN
COUNTY
LIBRARY
SECOND FLOOR**

Roundhouse Notes
& Charles Gibbons
3409 Central Ave
Paducah KY 42001