

# Roundhouse Notes

Paducah Chapter  
National Railway Historical Society  
OCTOBER 2015

**Cairo Bridge Replacement**  
In 1950-51 the IC set about replacing the truss spans on the Ohio River bridge at Cairo IL. The original spans dated from 1889. The top 4 photos from October 16th, 1950  
Photos & Text from IC Scrapbook on Facebook



*This photo was taken at 9:30am, shortly after crews began moving the first new span of the Cairo bridge. Yes, that is a giant yardstick in the distance. It was used to measure movement of the two spans. IC photos, Cliff Downey collection*



*By 10:08am the old span was mostly out of the way. October 16, 1950, IC photo, Cliff Downey collection.*



*By 1:29pm the first span to be replaced on IC's Cairo bridge was completely out of the way. Crews will soon begin moving in the new span. IC photo. Cliff Downey collection.*



*By 4:55pm the new span was almost in place. Once movement is complete, crews will begin reconnecting the rails, signal wires, company telephone, etc., and the bridge will reopen shortly after midnight. IC photo, Cliff Downey collection.*



**LEFT:**  
*On August 21, 1951, the 3rd span to be replaced is dropped into the Ohio River. The replacement span had been moved into place a few weeks earlier. After the span was stripped of rails, timbers, wires, etc., it was dropped into the river and cut up for scrap. IC photo, Cliff Downey collection.*



**RIGHT:**  
*When the 400' span was dropped on October 10, 1951, it created a crater about 4 feet deep, which the man at left is standing in. IC photo, Cliff Downey collection*

# NEWS AND VIEWS

*Bob Johnston*

**1518 DISPLAY:** Since the last report in *NEW & VIEWS*, Allan Rhodes and John Maxfield have painted cross stripes on the sheet metal “windows” in both the locomotive and the combine and caboose. They look surprising real, especially the two cars. The plan is still for wood & glass windows to be made by WKCTC Shop classes, but in the meantime what has been done is a big improvement. Also, the red window stripes on the cab window match the new coat of red paint on its roof. Although most people today are not aware, this writer well remembers that when steam locomotives came out of the rehab program at the I.C. Paducah Shops, the cab roof was painted red as was the inside of the bell; this is demonstrated by photographs in various Illinois Central histories with color photographs. Therefore, the red cab roof not only sets the locomotive off, but is authentic. According to Commissioner Rhodes, plans are still in the works to get the headlight and marker lights rewired put on a timer to come on at night, as they did when it was at First & Broadway.

**P&L:** In the past several months R. J. Corman’s railroad construction has been doing the first major reworking of P&L’s North Yard since the railroad purchased the facility from the ICG. Dozens of old switches and turn-outs have been replaced with new and much new heavy rail has been installed. This despite a decline in coal business that all railroads have experience because of an abundant supply of cheap natural gas, the slowing of manufacturing, and other issues. However, this follows the pattern P&L has always followed of

“staying ahead of the curve,” and upgrading the railroad, as evidenced by the replacing of the two huge trestles at Muldraugh.

After a mid-summer hiatus, work is resuming on the Bluegrass I office car at the old “motor car shop.” Decision has been finalized to convert it from a bedroom car to a reception car. It has been pretty much gutted with plans underway to install new bathrooms, kitchen equipment, bar, new flooring, and a large reception room. Facilities and equipment in the car to be retained are being repaired, and as reported earlier, a self-contained generator with fuel tank will be installed beneath the car to make the old generator car unnecessary. A few years ago, R. J. Corman made a similar conversion; both railroads use the cars more for public relations purposes than overnight travel by officials. Major railroads still use the traditional business cars for executive overnight travel to some extent, but not regional roads such as P&L and R. J. Corman.

On recent trip through North Yard, I noticed at least seven CSX SD 70’s; I understand that these locomotives were not part of P&L’s fleet, but were awaiting transfer to the Progress Rail Shop in Mayfield for undisclosed work. Some of P&L’s SD 70’s (acquired last year from CSX) have been given Distributed Power (DP) capabilities, as have all eleven of their GP-40-GP35 Mother-Slug sets.

**Birthday-**On August 27<sup>th</sup>, the P&L celebrated the 29<sup>th</sup> birthday of its formation from the ICG’s Kentucky

Division. At least three of the original employees remain on the job: A.V. (Tony) Reck, Chairman & CEO; G.I. (Gaylon) James, VP Transportation; and R.W. (Russ) Burzynski, AVP Purchasing & Materials Management. This year the celebration was low profile, but next year, the 30<sup>th</sup>, will probably receive more attention. **Also**, our friend and fellow chapter member, Mike Favre, has come out of retirement and, at their request, returned to the P&L as a part time consultant in the IT (Computer) Department. Mike reports he is glad of the opportunity as he was getting bored with retirement.

The latest RAIL MAIL, the P&L Transportation Employee Newsletter, announced that since May, ten new employees have been hired by P&L, including six Conductors, one Carman, two Trackmen, and one in the Accounting Department. EVWR has hired three conductors, and the A&O, one trackman.

**NRE/VMV:** On August 11, the Paducah City Commission approved a resolution in support of the expansion of National Railway Equipment Co. This supports a 2012 letter from the city to the Kentucky Economic Development cabinet pledging a 1% payroll tax rebate to the company for a period of ten years. This was in response to the announcement in 2012 for a \$920, 000 expansion which included 25 new full time employees. At the commission meeting, Commission meeting, Commissioner Rhodes made comments about the 90 year history of the shops in Paducah.

**SOUTHERN COAL HANDLING:** This new facility in west McCracken County adjacent to the end of the P&I Bridge is in operation with a double loop, 136 lb. rail and concrete ties. In contrast to the coal transfer yard at Calvert, also owned by Southern Coal, and GRT at Grand Rivers, owned by Kinder Morgan, the west McCracken operation does not store coal on the ground, but unloads directly from rail car to barge.

**ULLIN CABOOSE:** On September 5<sup>th</sup>, the village of Ullin, IN, 20 miles north of Cairo on U.S. 51, and the (now) CN main line, celebrated a ribbon cutting on the renovation of its I.C. caboose located next to the historic I.C. Ullin Depot, which also underwent a renovation completed in April 2012. (Thanks to Mike Favre for this information).

**PINES ROAD GATES:** During the first week of September, the crossing gates were finally installed on the crossing of Pines Road and the P&I. This project, which was to comply with regulations requiring them on double track crossings, was first announced at least ten years ago. About three years ago, installation finally started, but halted when complications arose about how to handle the unusual N. 34<sup>th</sup> St. intersection. Early this year the street was closed just before it reached Pines Road and a cul de sac constructed, and now, months later the job is finally done.

**MISC. SIGHTINGS:** On August 13<sup>th</sup> I saw the FUPD (Fulton Turn) coming in with 62 cars and only one locomotive, a few days later I saw it again with about 20 cars and two locomotives, go figure. John Deming recently reported seeing in South Yard, a UP coal train with a Kansas City Southern locomotive. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, on a trip through North Yard, I saw at the

“Roundhouse” (Diesel Shop), both the UK & UL GP-38’s; of course two of the new SD 70s are also painted in those two school’s colors; on the same trip at Division Street, I saw a BNSF train awaiting departure with a locomotive mixture of an SD 70, a GP-38, and a GE 4 axle still in Santa FE Warbonnet paint.

**MORE HERITAGE UNITS:** CSX has joined with UP and NS in acknowledgement of their predecessors, but not to the extent of the first two. On a recent repaint at its Waycross, GA locomotive shops, CSX GE AC44CW #323 was seen displaying a rectangular Louisville & Nashville commemorative logo on the locomotive’s right side; and in early August GE AC44CW #256 was photographed with a Seaboard Coast Line emblem on the same position. A CSX spokeswoman has told *TRAINS NEWS WIRE* that the railroad intends to feature at least 10 predecessor logos on as many locomotives the same way. While a nice and appreciated gesture, it is not as striking as repainting entire locomotive in predecessors’ colors and logos as UP and CSX have done.

**MUSEUM:** The museum had 744 visitors in July, a big increase of over 300 from July of 2014; August dropped down to 161, which was a decrease of 50 from the August of last year. I haven’t done research, but doubtlessly boat visits have considerable to do with the variation, plus July is the height of the tourist season.

In August, MS Sally Metz of Poplar Bluff visited the museum and asked if we had any information about her grandfather, Herman J. Keeney who was Yardmaster for the N.C. & St. L in Paducah during the flood of ’37. We did not, but she called me and offered to send me a copy of the story which she did. It was pub-

lished in 1952 in a book of collected railroad stories. This one is entitled “A Depot Rescue,” and is a fascinating account of what happened at Paducah’s Union Station during the flood, and how Mr. Keeney organized and improvised under extreme conditions to rescue and care for not only railroad employees, but the surrounding population as well. Interestingly, it mirrors the account found in Appendix A of Don Lessley’s book, “Paducah Gateway” which we sell in the museum. That account was told from the viewpoint of Albert Tharp, section hand for the NC, and often mentions his “boss” who is obviously Mr. Keeney. The published story is much more detailed and interesting. I have a file of it in the museum for those who are interested. Our thanks to Ms. Metz. Another example of how without the museum another piece of Paducah railroad history would have been lost. *This writer well remembers Albert Tharp and the velocipede (identical to the one in the museum) which he rode down from the yards at 6<sup>th</sup> & Norton every day to clean up, do track repair, and re-oil the switch lamps).*

## Roundhouse Notes



Published monthly by the Paducah Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. Send your news, photos to:

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*IC Cairo Bridge replacement in 1950-51*

*This aerial view taken on October 16, 1950, shows that the first span (measuring 518' and the one closest to the Illinois shore) has been moved out of the way and crews have yet begun to start moving in the new span. IC photo, Cliff Downey collection.*

**Meeting \***  
**Tuesday OCT 13th**  
**7PM**  
**At the**  
**Museum Meeting**  
**Room**

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