

Roundhouse Notes

Paducah Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
NOV 2015

Going Bananas

Fulton KY had the Banana Festival for years celebrating the banana trains that made a stop for icing on the IC. In these pictures we see where the bananas come from. The first four pictures are of the Chequita banana docks in New Orleans.

The last two are the inside of the ice house in Fulton KY. Chequita moved their operations to Gulfport MS in the 1970s. Chequita moved operations back to the port of New Orleans in 2014.



Here we see bananas rolling from packing to the warehouse that loads the refrigerator cars. These bananas came off a ship from South America.—Cliff Downey Collection



Inside the warehouse we see a refrigerator car and boxes of bananas on a conveyor belt.—Cliff Downey Collection



Workers prepare to load boxes of bananas on refrigerator cars in New Orleans—Cliff Downey Collection.



Refrigerator cars waiting for bananas in New Orleans. These will ship out on the IC to Fulton KY and beyond.—Cliff Downey Collection



*Inside shot of the ice house at Fulton KY
Cliff Downey Collection*



Lots of ice ready for the bananas at Fulton KY IC ice house.

Cliff Downey Collection.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Bob Johnston

MILE POST: Billie Joe LeNeave, 92, died on September 16, 2015 in Paducah. She was a long time resident of Bridge St. and was retired from the N.C. & St. L. Ry. where she was a clerk and the secretary to the Agent in the Freight House. As far as I can determine that leaves Roy Duncan as the last survivor of the NC work force in Paducah, with the exception of myself. I was temporary, not permanent, but was full time and drew a pay check for over two months in 1953. If you know of anyone else, please let me know.

P&L: Work continues on the Bluegrass I Office Car in the Equipment Shop in North Yard. New bathrooms are being installed; also new kitchen appliances are going in and the existing cabinets upgraded. There will be a reception room with a table and bar to replace former bedrooms. No word on when the work will be completed. Steve Lee, principle with Watsch, who is doing the work, was in Paducah recently, and while here exchanged the steam governor on the 1518 with an identical one. He needed the one from 1518 to put on WP 165, a 0-6-0 steam engine his company is restoring to operating condition for the Western Pacific Museum in Portola, CA. While here he swapped one of the classification lights on the 1518 with one from our museum (by the 2613 headlight). Now both the 1518 and the museum have a matched pair instead of the mismatched pair each had previously. (The difference is in the manufacturers). Of course not many will notice

or care, but some of us are purists. Permission for this work was requested and given by city officials. Two old GP 40's long used by the P&L in nondescript paint, have been repainted in P&L colors with large American Flags, and other logos to honor veterans, time for Veterans Day. Hopefully someone will come up with a photo we can put in **ROUNDHOUSE NOTES**. The Paducah City Commission has recently purchased from P&L 4.83 acres of land at 619 Campbell St., site of the yard tracks for the old I.C. Freight House, (appraised at \$315,000.00), for \$ 295,000.00. It will be used for the inflatable dome for vendors for the Quilt Show. The old site on the loop is the site for the new Holiday Inn Hotel. Although the tracks are long gone, 6th & Campbell was once a busy railroad site, with the freight house, the lead going to the river incline, and a team track across 6th St., where I and others have uploaded many a refrigerator car. It was also the location of the large ornate passenger station that served until Union Station was built in 1900, (A photo of it can be seen in the museum in the passenger display). **TRAINS NEWS WIRE** of October 20th had a report on how the decline in coal traffic is affecting short line railroads. Included was P&L subsidiary, Appalachian & Ohio, in WV. The A&O is essentially an all coal road that serves two mines that ship mostly export coal, plus to one power plant. They use mostly CSX run through equipment and average 3-4 trains per week. It is obviously the smallest in tonnage of

the three P&L roads, and like the others is dispatched from headquarters building around the corner from the museum

NRE: On September 15, saw an unusual sight at the entrance to the Equipment Shop: three BNSF GP 38-3's in new paint with consecutive numbers, 2570, 2571, and 2572. lined up parallel to one another. They were part of the BNSF rebuild contract at NRE mentioned before in this column. Otherwise, not much of special interest seen there, mostly NREX Geeps in blue & white paint, and ex UP units waiting on some sort of rebuild.

PROGRESS RAIL: Although it is unlikely to have significant effect on the Mayfield plant, Caterpillar's Progress Rail Services Corp. has entered into an agreement to purchase Rail Produce Solutions from Amsted Rail Co. RPS is leading U.S. manufacturer of track fastening products and systems and has been in business for over 90 years. Another example of the growing influence of Caterpillar & Progress on the railroad industry.

HOPTOWN DEPOT: On October 7th, Ann and I had occasion to visit Hopkinsville. While there I took the opportunity to check out their historic depot on North 9th St. in the heart of downtown; built in 1892, after a fire destroyed its predecessor, it is now the home of the Pennyroyal Arts Council. Originally frame, in 1909, it was stuccoed and a two room Railway Express Office added. Passenger service ended there in 1971 (14 years

after Paducah). During its years in passenger service it was visited by such luminaries as President Theodore Roosevelt, "Buffalo Bill" Cody, John Phillips Sousa and his band, and Booker T. Washington. On the night December 7, 1907, Dr. David Amos, founder and leader of the Night Riders was wounded nearby in his famous raid and burning of the tobacco warehouses in Hopkinsville. (The subject of a recent McCracken County Library program by Judge Bill Cunningham). Restoration of the depot took place from 1976-82, during the administration of two mayors. (Information from bronze plaque inside building). It is on the National Registry of Historic Places. By sad contrast the much larger Paducah Union Station was razed in the early 60's. A partial explanation is that, as stated, the Hoptown station is on a main street downtown, while Union Station was less than desirable outlying area, plus by the 70's there was much more awareness of the importance of restoration.

SERINDEPIDY: The Hopkinsville Depot is on the CSX (former L&N) main line between Evansville and Nashville and shortly after I arrived I was treated to a long (over 100 car) CSX Southbound Stack train; as I was leaving to visit the nearby famous Ferrell's Hamburger Stand for lunch, a northbound mixed freight passed, and I was returning there was a southbound mixed. That evening after we returned home, Ann and I decided to eat supper at the new Mexican restaurant across from the Coke Plant at 31st & Broadway adjacent to the P&I. While we were sitting in their garden, around 6:30, CN'S FUPD (Fulton Turn) came in, followed almost immediately by a BNSF ballast train of empty Hertzog

hoppers headed to be loaded at Vulcan at Lake City. So in one afternoon, I saw five trains, from three different railroads, on two different sets of rails, plus visiting an historic depot. Not a bad day for a rail fan!

TRAGEDY FOR KY: In the recent S.C. floods, two R.J. Corman workers were drowned when their vehicle left the road and became submerged while they were returning to their motel from their job site. They were part of a five member team working to restore Norfolk Southern damage due to the flooding. RJC is an independent rail conglomerate headquartered in Nicholasville, KY and founded by the late Rick Corman with a dump truck.

FLASH: As this is being written, Congress seems to be poised to extend the deadline for the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) until 2018. Slated to go into effect at the end of 2015, it is a date impossible for the railroads to achieve even though they have spent hundreds of millions of dollars. Reasons range from technical such as radio wave band problems to cultural such as installations on Indian reservations. Railroads had warned that at the first of the year or earlier, they would have to stop accepting most hazardous materials as well as most passengers to avoid being in violation. If the extension passes it will avoid or at least postpone that crisis.

MUSEUM: The museum had 222 visitors in September, down from 2014, but in October we had 395, which was up slightly from 2014, mainly due to the boats which came this month. It is often interesting to talk to the passengers who visit from all over the world. One lady said her mother's family were the Puryears and knew they were involved with the railroad some way. I was able to

explain to her that they were investors in building the Paducah, Tennessee, & Alabama from Bruceton to Paducah, and that Puryear, TN was named for them, and show her the reference in the Gateway book, which she bought. Another couple from England told me about a trip they made by rail from London to Vladivostok, Russia, changing gauges once.

Walter Bromley, with the help of John Deming, is making good progress on installing the Plexiglas around the O gauge layout. Thanks to both of them.

This year's Christmas dinner will be at the Gondolier Restaurant in Paducah at 6:30 PM on Dec 8th This will take the place of the December meeting.

The Board of directors will present the slate of officer nominations for officer election at the NOVEMBER meeting. Anyone wishing to "run" for office please attend this meeting. The Current slate that will be presented is listed below. We currently have a position of Program Director that is currently vacant.

Roundhouse Notes



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*Workers of United Fruit Company (Chequita) prepare to load bananas in refrigerator cars in New Orleans in 1953. Note they are wrapped bunches instead of boxes.
Times-Picayune photo*

Meeting *
Tuesday Nov 10th
7PM
At the
Museum Meeting
Room

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P.O. Box 1194
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