

## **SHORT LINE NEWS 1 (December 2003)**

**An occasional newsletter for Friends of the Short Line Railroad**

**By Conrad Cheatham**

**(The St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)**

A major event in the post-abandonment history of the Short Line occurred on August 19, 2003. On that date a dedication service was held at New London naming Missouri Highway 19 between U.S. Highway 61 and the edge of Perry as the Short Line Route. State Representative Rachel Bringer spearheaded a bill through the State Legislature to make this possible. After Governor Holden signed the bill the Missouri Department of Transportation began working on the signs and a dedication service. The Hannibal MODOT office put together a nice dedication service and sent out a number of invitations in conjunction with the Ralls County Historical Society. Some 85-90 people came to see the service. Ron Leake, president of the Ralls County Historical Society presided and invited attendees to visit a Short Line display at the nearby Ralls County Electric Cooperative office building. The Rev. Conrad Cheatham gave a brief history of the construction of the Perry Branch. Rep. Bringer spoke as did State Representative Wayne Henke. Then a cover was removed from the new sign for westbound traffic. The other sign is located near Perry. Several Short Line fans had a number of pictures, passes, papers, lanterns, etc., on display. This was probably the most attention the Short Line has received since abandonment hearings were held in 1944.

The depot at Center was donated to the Ralls County Historical Society. It has belonged to the City of Center since MODOT stopped using it. The Society plans to repair it and develop a Short Line/railroad museum. This was the third depot in Center. The first depot was destroyed by fire from a lightning strike in 1910. The second depot was completed in 1911 and torn down to make room for the construction of present highway 19 in 1937. The present building was constructed in 1937 on a different site. If you would like to assist in the plans please contact Ron Leake in care of the Society at P.O. Box 182, Center, MO. 63436. It is a tax exempt organization.

When the Short Line people decided to build the extension to Perry and perhaps beyond they offered a deal to the area residents. They had decided to use the grade of the old Ralls County Branch Railroad from New London to Perry. This grade was constructed in 1872 under the direction of Richard Dalton. Dalton was associated with the St. Louis & Keokuk, a predecessor of the St. Louis & Hannibal. Dalton had the route surveyed and then the land owners were hired to build the grade through their property.

Twenty years later the officials of the Short Line asked for property owners to donate the 100 foot right of way/grade free and clear. In addition they asked for \$300 per mile from Ralls County residents to repair the old grade for rail service. In addition, they had to provide land in Perry and Center for depots and switching facilities. Various Short Line officials visited in and around the area promoting these requests. Local attorneys Judge J.B. Orr of Frankford and J.P. Wood of New London promoted the extension. The citizens agreed to all requests.

The St. Louis, Hannibal & Kansas City Railway was incorporated by the officers of the St. Louis & Hannibal on August 14, 1891 to build from the shops at Oakwood to downtown Hannibal and from New London to Perry. This new line was capitalized at \$280,000. The original plans were to utilize the M.K.&T. right of way into Hannibal but the Katy turned the Short Line down. The board of directors of the Hannibal Union Station denied the Short Line's request to enter that facility. The Short Line was forced to build its own track into town and to build its own passenger station. Construction on the Perry Branch started the first week in November 1891.

The winter of 1891-92 involved some extremely bad weather which delayed construction a great deal. It was difficult to work on the old grade which stayed muddy way up into the spring. The ties were ordered but the grade was too wet for them to be put down. The contractors were

McDonald & Penfield of Fremont, Nebraska. These contractors brought in a large force of men and animals, but there was only a limited amount of work that could be done. The Company announced a completion date for January, but the weather delayed that and various other completion dates. On one occasion a Hannibal Journal reporter met a couple of officials at the junction site at New London and had to stand in mud up to their knees. This bad weather affected operations on the main line with a number of washouts and derailments. Finally the first spike was driven in early May. Construction took off. Company engineer DuBois and his staff laid out the sites for the depots and other facilities in Center and Perry. J.D. Pitt and G.G. Thompson of Frankford had a contract to furnish ties for the extension.

The extension was completed and turned over to the company on July 25. An officials' train had been run from Hannibal to Perry a short time earlier. The first excursion was run on the 25<sup>th</sup> which was well patronized. According to the History of Ralls County a large crowd boarded at Perry, Center, and the flag stops. To collect fares the train was stopped in a field far enough from civilization to require a long walk for any who refused to pay. Conductor Stark ordered everyone off & then pay up to get a ride to Hannibal and back.

On July 29 The Frankford Chronicle reported that a special train was going to leave Perry on that date at 6:00 a.m. with 16 cars of stock heading to Chicago. This stock was being shipped by a Mr. Rogers, a stock dealer. The paper expressed the hope that this was the forerunner of future patronage.

The first agent at Center was John Thompkins, who was transferred from Eolia. Thompkins was from Peno and had been at Eolia since 1890. He was in the news a great deal in the summer of 1892 as he had married Minnie Tucker of Eolia in June and then in late July they were in Center where he assumed his job. (Incidentally, one of the last agents at Center was William Watts who attended the sign dedication in August 2003.) The first agent at Perry was P.L. Truelove who was transferred from Moscow Mills.

The first crew consisted of: Conductor – Lee Jackson “Snow” Stark, Engineer – Mert Tierney, Fireman – Walter Glascock, and Baggage Man – Frank Glascock. This crew was different from that mentioned in several newspapers a week or earlier. Locomotive # 10 was predicted to be assigned to the Perry Branch. The 2 Glascocks were brothers.

Mail service on the Branch began on September 20, 1892 with closed pouch service to Center and Perry.

The Perry Branch operations started July 25, By the end of August the newspapers reported that Engineer DuBois was at work with a crew surveying 3 possible extensions. The possible routes were Perry to Centralia, Perry to Renick near Moberly, and Perry to Mexico. These routes led some to speculate that the Wabash was behind the extension to Perry and that the Wabash was planning to buy the Short Line. One writer even claimed that the rail for the branch had been purchased from the Wabash and that it was rail that the Wabash had laid just a few years earlier. But we know now that the Perry Branch was never extended beyond Perry and the Wabash never purchased the Short Line, despite rumors every few years that the Wabash was considering buying the Short Line for years.

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 If there is interest in similar type newsletters from time to time, please let me know. There are many interesting things about the Short Line which I and others can share with all who are interested.

## **SHORT LINE NEWS 2**

### **The St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad**

Center Depot: Several retired carpenters have offered to work on the depot – replace broken windowpanes and make other repairs. Volunteer labor is appreciated. The Ralls County Historical Society is working on 2 buildings – the Center depot and a museum/library building in Perry.

An old Short Line baggage cart (express wagon) has been found and donated to the Center museum by Arnold Sharp. For decades this cart has been sitting on a farm, in recent years it was covered by weeds. It will be a centerpiece at the railroad museum. Thanks to Mr. Sharp.

When the surveyors laid out the route for the Short Line they were confronted with crossing a number creeks and rivers which required a number of bridges and trestles. The topography of Frankford and the town creek required the construction of a 500 foot long trestle. This trestle was supposed to be temporary until it and the other trestles could be filled in. Unfortunately, the continued impoverished nature of the Short Line delayed such a move. The Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners sent an inspector over the Short Line in 1879. The inspector noted that improvements needed to be made for safety purposes. He recommended that the 5 bents in the channel should be put on masonry pilings or the whole area of the trestle should be filled in to a depth of 5 feet. This was not done.

In October 9, 1884 the Frankford Chronicle announced that the Short Line was proposing to fill in the long trestle and a 20 foot arch would be built to accommodate the road and the town branch. The next week the paper reported that Short Line officials had met with officials of Frankford to make arrangements for filling in the trestle and moving the eastern entrance into town by way of Jasper street. By December farmers were complaining about the railroad's plans. They wanted 2 openings – one for travel and one for the stream. They argued that one passageway would be dangerous in winter. The same issue noted that a steam shovel was a Dumkum's Cut removing dirt for the fill in town.

It was noted in the January 23, 1885 paper that Chief Engineer, E.H. Mott, had announced to the Chronicle that the company had abandoned plans to fill in the trestle. Instead the ends would be filled with dirt and an iron span, 30 feet long, would bridge the gap. This was a cheaper plan. The railroad was in receivership.

The Company changed directions. In the April 9, 1886 issue of The Chronicle it was reported that the Short Line's dirt train was dumping 60 carloads of dirt a day into the big trestle at Frankford. (In 1886 the Short Line owned no hoppers and 35 flatcars) The October 15, 1886 paper reported that the work of erecting the stone archway had started. This arch was expected to cost \$10,000. According to the Company this would be a 50- foot archway with a 24-foot span and 25.5 feet from the roadway to the crown of the arch. Both the roadway and the waterway were to be paved. The roadway would be a little higher than the waterway. In late October the town council considered seeking an injunction against the Company's work. However, the work was completed which eliminated a safety problem. As this work was going on the papers reported that the railroad was filling in some other trestles including the long one over Big Peno Creek, south of Frankford.

Built in the mid-1880s the Frankford Arch still stands. If you are traveling on U.S. 61 turn off at the main Frankford exit and head into town. At the first stop sign turn left and head into town. As you cross the railroad grade a grain elevator will be on your left.

Going downhill look for Jasper Street. (There is no street sign on the left.) Turn left and Jasper will take you to the Arch. The road no longer goes under the Arch so it is best to park and walk down to the Arch. Parking on Jasper is limited. Go one block to King and park behind the Wagon Wheel Restaurant and walk around the pony pen. It is best viewed in the afternoon. Go back to Low Street and head downtown. There is a small park and a set of stairs leading up to the

railroad grade. A Missouri Pacific caboose has been installed on a few feet of track. The abandoned grade can be walked a short distance in both directions. A couple of miles south of Frankford is the 3-arch bridge over Little Penno Creek. The bridge now carries a county road. Some good photographs can be made. Be aware – there is a neighbor who is suspicious of visitors stopping to admire this unusual bridge. (The filled trestle over Big Penno still stands, but is on private property and very difficult to reach. The bridge is gone.)

A question was raised recently about the number of tracks at Perry. An old county atlas (1904) at the Courthouse in New London shows 3 tracks at the depot. There is one long track which runs on the north side of the depot and goes to the back of the property. On the south side of the depot there is long track which seems to have been the mainline. This track runs beside the bay window of the depot (on a Sanborn Insurance Map). Off of this track is another double-ended siding which rejoins the mainline on the west side of the depot. Coming off of this siding is a very short siding which runs close to Depot Street. The atlas shows that the Short Line had 9.19 acres of land on the west side of Perry. A 1926 Sanborn Insurance Map shows that Sinclair Oil Company and Standard Oil Company had tanks located on the north side of the north siding.

None of the maps sources available show the right of way and tracks around the coal mines. Nor is the turntable at Perry shown.

For those going into Frankford there is a new building being constructed on the grade to the right as Low Street crosses the grade. This is a fertilizer dealer. The bank behind the new building and an older metal business has been cleared of brush and trash by the contractor and the next door property owner. This has revealed an old stone wall on the bank and other large stones. Also uncovered were some concrete pillars. According to a local historian these were foundation pillars for a structure to load grain into railroad cars.

The 1909 Sanborn map does not show this structure, but J.B. Jones had several grain warehouses and an elevator in the vicinity of the depot. That is the latest map I have of Frankford. Since the railroad continued on until 1944 various other structures could have been added.

### **SHORT LINE NEWS 3** **(The Friends of The Short Line)**

Back in the early 1990s there was a popular political statement: "It's the economy, stupid." That is a statement that really applies to the history of the St. Louis & Hannibal. As you look over the history of the railroad you can see the ups and downs of the American economy reflected in the railroad. I decided to make some comparisons and I note that the Short Line was definitely influenced by the panic/recessions which occurred between 1857 and 1944.

The original railroad on the route between St. Louis and Keokuk, IA., was the St. Louis & Keokuk Railway. This line was chartered on December 29, 1856 but was not built. Railroad construction needed a considerable amount of money. America was rocked by a financial panic which struck in August 1857. The American economy had been booming since the end of the Mexican War. On August 24 the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company failed. One writer has noted that this began one of the worst economic crises in American history.

Almost immediately after this failure New York banks put severe restrictions on capital. This caused the public to perceive that a several financial problem was about to happen. A run on the stock market caused the price of stocks to fall 8-10% per day. Great Britain pulled its money from its American branches, railroads over built and then defaulted, etc. A severe blow against the economy occurred when the steamship S.S. Central America" sank on September 12, 1857 during a hurricane. This ship was carrying gold and silver from the San Francisco mint to Eastern banks. This included some 30,000 pounds of gold valued at \$20 per ounce and a number of wealthy individuals.

Banks failed all over the East Coast and there were failures as far west as Omaha. There was a severe financial contraction here and all over the world. Major investments were slowed or stopped altogether. The new railroad needed financial help from beyond the Midwest for its construction. Then the Civil War broke out, further limiting funds for railroad construction.

After the War efforts were made to re-start the St. Louis & Keokuk. Money was still tight in the counties through which it was to pass. Finally, some construction work began in 1871. In the political turmoil over which route to use a new company, the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk was chartered and started construction toward Wentzville. On September 12, 1873 a financial panic occurred when the Philadelphia banking company of Jay Cooke & Company closed its doors. The Cooke bank was heavily invested in railroads. It was funding the new Northern Pacific Railroad as another transcontinental route. The Cooke company realized it was over extended and declared bankruptcy. This bankruptcy touched off others. 89 railroads went bankrupt. 18,000 businesses failed during the years 1873-75. While the Cooke failure was the catalyst for this panic the Grant Administration had a monetary policy of contracting the money supply which caused the financial problems to magnify.

The short money supply/recession continued until 1878. It was during this time that the Short Line was moving south from Frankford to Bowling Green in 1874-75 (12 miles). It made it to Prairieville/Eolia in 1879 (15.5 miles). It was after Eolia that Short Line people went East and secured financial assistance from John I. Blair and Moses Taylor. These two supplied the capital to complete the line to the Wabash. (Its noted that the better financed St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk Railway reached St. Peters in 1879). So the Short Line took almost a decade to build the 89 miles from Hannibal to Gilmore and a major cause may have been the Panic and Depression of 1873.

The Perry Branch was built in 1892-93. Even as the line was being constructed between New London and Perry there were investigations into extending this branch beyond Perry. Surveys were run on different routes from Perry to the Wabash or another road. Articles in the Frankford Chronicle speculated on when the extension would be built. A couple of articles even speculated

that the Wabash would buy the Short Line, extend the Perry Branch westward and make it a major Wabash route. One writer even claimed that the Short Line had purchased rail removed from a Wabash main line in Illinois. No extension or sale was made.

A Panic of 1893 was probably a major factor. There were various causes of this panic. Too many people tried to redeem notes for gold. The Philadelphia & Reading Railroad went bankrupt. Then it was joined by the Northern Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the Santa Fe all went under. The Company with the most widely traded stock, the National Cordage Company went into receivership. 15,000 companies and 500 banks failed. The Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890 are both given as major causes. With this bad money situation the wealthy Blairs did not want to put up funds for the extension, even though the money supply began to improve during 1896.

The beginnings of the railroad planned to run between St. Louis and Hannibal was affected by the panics/recessions in 1857 and 1873. The Great Depression of 1929-30s was a factor in a drastic change of the railroad. In the 1920s John Ringling took more and more control of the circus as his older brothers died. Several of his sisters-in-laws complained that John was spending too much of the circus profits on his projects, on things like oil wells, the 1925 edition of the Madison Square Garden in New York City, his personal art collection, a large house in Sarasota, FL, trips to Europe, railroads, etc.

These sisters-in-law brought suits and battled John. Things went bad him. His wife Mabel died in 1929. In 1930 the Depression hit John and the circus very hard. He lost control of the circus and the ability to schedule Madison Square Garden. John had to give up his \$50,000 annual salary. His sister, Ida Ringling North and sons John and Henry, moved to the mansion in Sarasota to help John with his financial problems. Some of these recommendations included getting rid of non-revenue producing property. This included the section of the Short Line from Bowling Green to Gilmore. The family did heed the pleas of officials from Troy and preserved the 5 miles of track from Troy to the Burlington Railroad at Moscow Mills. The rest was abandoned in 1932-33.

Panics and recessions had definite effects on the Short Line throughout its history and pre-history.

## SHORT LINE NEWS 4 (The St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)

Recently I was looking at some deeds at the Lincoln County Court House and I found one that had reference to some equipment for the Short Line. In May 1881 the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk leased some equipment from John I. Blair and Moses Taylor. Blair of New Jersey and Taylor of New York were money men from back East who were already supplying the capital to complete the railroad from Eolia to Gilmore and the Wabash. When William Walker and some other railroad people went East to find money to complete the road they went to Blair and Taylor. Blair had been putting up money for the St.L.H.&K. since 1872.

In this lease Blair and Taylor supplied a locomotive which was lettered for the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk and given the number 2. In addition they furnished 20 flat cars which were lettered for the railroad and numbered 11-49.

The yearly rental that was agreed upon was put at 10% of the value of the equipment or \$13,602. It was stipulated that at the end of the lease, the equipment had to be in the same condition as when it was delivered to the railroad. Or the railroad would have to supply a sum to cover the "injuries" to the equipment by wear and tear.

The lease was signed by Blair and Taylor and by S.P. Wisner, the president of the railroad.

This new equipment fit in with equipment which the railroad had purchased from the Missouri Railway Equipment Company on August 1, 1877. This purchase included a locomotive numbered 1, 1 Combination Baggage and Coach # 1, and caboose # 1, also included were 5 boxcars #'s 2,4,6,8, 10 and 5 flatcars #'s 1,3,5,7, and 9. Later in 1881 an equipment register reported 3 locomotives, 1 coach, 1 mail and express car, 40 boxcars and 35 platform/flat cars. In 1882 they had 5 locomotives.

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The Ralls County Historical Society continues to work on restoring the Center depot. Maxine and Mike Moore are overseeing the work. Jeff Hibbs volunteered to power wash the depot inside and out. Randy McDonald of McDonald & Sons Enterprises has donated some paint. A Community Service "guest" of the Ralls Sheriff has been painting and doing some repair work. If you would like to help in any way or in any amount please call Maxine Moore 573-565-8009. The depot is looking much better.

At an annual meeting in Hannibal in May 1876 the following directors were chosen: George Greene, W.W. Walker, S.P. Wisner, J.T. Ely, J.W. Barnett, Walton Perkins, David T. Waddy, S.R. Woolfolk, N.S. Dimmitt, William Buchanan, W.B. Elliott, J.D. Pitt, and Stephen Reynolds. Walker, Wisner, Ely, and Buchanan were from Iowa and were connected with the Missouri & Iowa Railway Construction Company. Woolfolk, Waddy, and Perkins were from Lincoln County, MO. Reynolds was from Pike County while Dimmitt, Pitt, Elliott, and Barnett were from Ralls County.

The Hannibal Morning Journal of September 20, 1881 reported: "The Short Line train commenced running to Silex, in Lincoln County yesterday (19<sup>th</sup>), and will run regularly hereafter. The distance from Hannibal is 58 miles."

In August 1875 the Accommodation Train arrived in Hannibal at 10:00 a.m. from Frankford. It left Hannibal at 1:25 p.m.

The Perry Museum has a number of Short Line photographs on display along with other items.

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The Troy Free-Press of April 18, 1924 reported that Kuhne Bros. Produce Company of Troy shipped 3 carloads of eggs and dressed poultry last and 2 carloads so far this week. On last Friday this company received a carload of ice. Kuhne Brothers was a major customer of the Short Line in Troy for many decades. They shipped many carloads of eggs and poultry and received a number of products by rail. They were a leader in the fight to stop the abandonment and then a major promoter of the St. Louis & Troy Railroad.

## **SHORT LINE NEWS 5 (May 2005)** **(St. Louis & Hannibal Railway)**

Kathy Threkeld of Hannibal has sent a variety of items on the Short Line from old newspapers. Reading them helps us learn more about the railroad and its day to day activities.

The Perry Enterprise of December 24, 1908 noted that “The Wabash depot at Gilmore was completely destroyed by fire Saturday night. The fire broke out in the freight room and in a short time the entire structure was wrapped in flames. Very little was saved from the building. A coach will be placed on the track for the accommodation of passengers and the telegraph office will be located in a building near by until a new depot can be erected. This is the third time the depot at Gilmore, which is used jointly by the Wabash and the St. Louis & Hannibal railroad, has been destroyed by fire in the past 5 years.” [This depot had a rough existence as there was another fire in 1910]

A September 16, 1892 issue of The Frankford Chronicle had an article on excursion tickets to St. Louis. “The St. Louis & Hannibal R’y. Excursion Rates to St. Louis for the Fall Festivities.

On each Monday and Thursday prior to October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway Company will sell excursion tickets to St. Louis, at one fare for the round trip to persons wishing to attend the St. Louis Exposition. Tickets limited to 5 days from day of sale.

On every day during the week commencing Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> and ending Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway Co. will sell excursion tickets to St. Louis at one fare for the round trip-tickets limited to Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> – to persons attending the St. Louis Fair and Veiled Prophets.”

From the July 22, 1892 issue of The Frankford Chronicle there is an item on the Orrwood Station.

“Orrwood Station. We have it upon reliable authority that the new station to be established on the Short Line extension, between Center and Perry, and which has heretofore been referred to as Noonan Station, will be known as Orrwood Station, named in honor of Judge Orr and Hon. J. Perry Wood, of New London. It is half way between the two cities mentioned above, and is situated in the midst of some of the best farming land in Ralls County. Buck Little, who formerly conducted a country store at Sidney, will erect a building at Orrwood and establish a general store. As the country in that vicinity is thickly populated it is not improbable that a post office will be opened there. – [Hannibal Journal]

In her History of Ralls County Goldena Howard wrote of Noonan: It was located in Center Township on Dry Fork on Highway 19 between Perry and Center. It was named for James Noonan, an Irish immigrant. There was a post office there in 1892 which was discontinued on March 9, 1906. The Noonan family ran a stage stop where teams were changed and meals could be secured and where guests could board. There was a general store run by a John Gillam and his son. Howard says that the flag stop and stock pens for the Short Line were named Orrwood.

Another news item from Kathy T. – from The Hannibal Journal of September 20, 1901: “A burning bridge just above Silex came near causing a serious wreck on the Short Line noon train a few days ago. The bridge had almost burned down and left the rails suspended with but little support. There is a sharp curve at that place and Engineer Sullivan did not see the danger until almost upon it. He put on the brakes and reversed his engine in time to stop just as the engine got over the bridge. One car of merchandise was destroyed, the rest of the train quickly moved out of danger.”

The Frankford Chronicle of September 30, 1892 had an article entitled “Want The Short Line Extension.

Ex-State Senator Proctor, of Sturgeon, Boone county, was in the city yesterday (Monday) in consultation with chief engineer DuBois, of the Short Line, relative to extending the line beyond Perry. Senator Proctor has large land interests in Boone and would be greatly benefited should the Short Line tap the Wabash at Sturgeon.



Other points on that road are also seeking to get the Short Line, namely; Renick and Centralia. Mr. O'Rear and others, from Renick, will be here to-day (sic) to consult with Mr. DuBois and a committee from Centralia will be here to-morrow (sic).

Said Engineer DuBois to a Journal reporter: 'We will survey the three lines and then adopt the best. There will be no question that the road will be extended beyond Perry.' – Hannibal Journal."

The Ralls County Historical Society is still planning to dedicate the Center depot as a museum this Spring. The date has not yet been set.

From the June 23, 1892 Bowling Green Times: "Centre is enjoying a big boom since the road actually touches at that point. 5 new brick storerooms are to be built at once and then a handsome new schoolhouse."

The Bowling Green Times of June 16, 1892 noted: "The Short Line has purchased rails to lay 10 miles of track, commencing 2 miles above Moscow Mills and laying north toward Briscoe. 12 men have been put on each section and will endeavor to get the roadbed in good condition before the track laying begins.

From The Troy Free Press of February 26, 1915: "At the annual meeting of the stockholders of the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway, held last week, H.M. Modisett was re-elected General Manager and Passenger Agent. Reports from the various departments showed that the "Short Line", under the able management of Mr. Modisett, is in good condition. The roadbed has been greatly improved recently, a long stretch of the track is ballasted with rock, nearly all the wooden trestles have been replaced with concrete bridges, and the neat, up-to-date depots at many points would be a credit to larger towns."

## SHORT LINES NEWS 6

### The St. Louis & Hannibal Railway

In June 1906 the St. Louis & Hannibal filed a valuation and description of the Company with the State of Missouri. This report is in the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson, City, MO. It is of interest in learning about the railroad at this time. For instance, there is a listing of rolling stock at that time and its valuation. I thought this might of interest to our readers.

8 Locomotives at a value of \$4,000 each for a total of \$32,000		
2 Chair cars	3,500	7,000
5 Passenger cars	2,250	11,000
3 Combination cars	1,500	4,500
3 Caboose cars	400	1,200
60 Box cars	250	15,000
15 Stock cars	250	3,750
36 Flat & coal cars	200	7,250
1 Pile driver	1,000	1,000
3 Tool & derrick cars	450	1,350
35 Hand & push cars	10	350
1 Bridge car	250	250
10 All other cars	250	2,500
Total Rolling Stock		87,350

This gives us a look at the rolling stock and its value on June 1, 1906. This can be contrasted with the Official Equipment Register (OER) for January 1904. This sheet shows the following equipment for the Short Line:

- 9 Locomotives
- 18 Stock Cars Numbers 152-200 (even)
- 57 Box cars Numbers 32-150 and 202-300 (even)
- 33 Coal cars Numbers 13-97 (odd)
- 4 Flat Cars Numbers 99-105 (odd)
- 6 Ballast cars Numbers X1-X6
- 2 Cinder cars Numbers 21, 41
- 3 Cabooses Numbers 5, 6, 7
- 6 Coaches Numbers 31-36
- 3 BM&E cars Numbers 20-22

Basically this is a picture of the Short Line in the very early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Friends of the Short Line are still looking for some particular photographs: a picture of the New London depot when it was in service as a railroad depot; a closer up shot of the Whiteside depot – the only one available is a distant shot from the top of the hotel; a good shot of the depot in Perry – we have a distant shot from 1908 that shows little of the building; etc. We can use shots of early locomotives and trains.

Over its existence the Short Line had some very interesting people working for it or with it. I am trying to collect together some information on some of these people to share with others. I have found a few obituaries and some folks have sent me information on various workers.

One obituary I received is of James Francis Harvey. Harvey was a long time mail clerk on the Short Line's mail car. He was born Lincoln County in 1855. Early in his career Harvey studied law under Judge Robinson in Troy. In the early 1880s Harvey entered the railroad mail service and spent one and a half as a mail clerk on the Wabash out of Hannibal. In 1884 Harvey

moved to the Short Line where he was a mail clerk for 27.5 years. He began as the Short Line was going into bankruptcy to emerge under the ownership of John I. Blair and Moses Taylor. He worked through the deaths of Taylor and then Blair. Ill health forced Harvey to retire in 1911, but he remained a resident of Hannibal until his death in 1926. He left a widow and two daughters.

Another interesting person was Clarence Yochum. Clarence was not a Short Line employee but he had close ties to several employees. His father was Alexander "Alex" Yochum who was a long time employee of the Short Line. Alex was a fireman and then an engineer for 35 years. Clarence was the nephew of John Yochum who was a long time fireman and then engineer for the Short Line. When the trackage from Troy to Moscow Mills became the St. Louis & Troy Railroad in 1933 John became its first engineer. I had the pleasure talking with Clarence not too many months before he died. He mentioned riding the Short Line with his father and the struggles a train could have on some grades. Unfortunately he died before we could have a proper interview. He was a good connection to the Yochum brothers and to Short Line operations.

The Roman Catholic community of the St. Louis area dedicated the corner stone of the present cathedral on October 18, 1908. The Short Line was involved. The October 9 issue of The Troy Free Press carried an announcement that the Short Line would run an excursion train to St. Louis and return for those wishing to attend the special service on October 18. The train was scheduled to leave Silex at 8:10 a.m. and Troy at 8:42 a.m. The return trip would leave St. Louis at 7:00 p.m. The round trip fare from either Troy or Silex would be \$1.75.

The paper of October 23 had an article noting that the train was run. Hannibal furnished 320 passengers, St. Clements a score or so, the Millwood community over 80 who boarded the train at Silex, and at Enon Father VonBrunn brought a large party from the Flint Hill congregation. The attendance from Troy was not very large. The train consisted of 10 coaches pulled by 2 engines. The paper noted that the railroad handled the excursion in a very satisfactory manner to all concerned. [Editor's note: Millwood was a large Roman Catholic community in those days.]

From The Franford Chronicle of February 6, 1891: "Engineer William Bonfils, of the Short Line, was badly scalded at this place at this place on Thursday of last week. He had occasion to go under his engine, and in crawling out, he raised up under the cylinder, and opened the valve, sending a volume of steam and hot water upon his neck and down his back. He went on with his train to Hannibal, but suffered fearfully, especially when the furnace doors were opened." The August 14 issue of The Chronicle quoted the Hannibal Journal as saying that Billy Bonfils had resigned as a Short Line engineer to take a position with the Hannibal & St. Jo Railway.

Whiteside Whispers in the Troy Free Press of September 4, 1891 noted that construction had begun on a water tank in Whiteside. Water in Silex was insufficient so the tank was being moved north. Their little town was booming. The October 30 issue noted that shop forces from Oakwood came down the previous Sunday to install the pipe and engine for the water tank. That same Fall the papers reported that a water tank was being constructed in Moscow Mills.

## **SHORT LINE NEWS 7**

### **(The St. Louis & Hannibal)**

There is a Short Line museum. The long proposed railroad museum in the Short Line depot at Center, MO., is now open. Some 69-70 people attended the dedication activities on July 30, 2005. President Ron Leake and other members of the Ralls County Historical Society have been working on a railroad museum to commemorate the St. Louis & Hannibal and its service to Ralls County.

This is the third depot in Center. The first depot was built in 1893. A fire caused by lightning in 1910 destroyed it. A second depot was constructed on the ruins of the first depot. When the State Highway Department decided the highway between New London and Perry in 1937 the second depot was removed because it was too close to the new highway 19. The third depot was constructed across the tracks from depot # 2. After the Perry Branch was abandoned in 1943 the depot was used by the State Highway Department for many years. When MODOT moved its facilities the depot became the property of the City of Center. The City has now leased the depot to the Ralls County Historical Society.

The museum opened with a number of Short Line photographs and railroad artifacts. Since the opening the museum has received a number of items from Bill Watts of Troy, MO. As far as we can tell Watts is the last living employee of the Short Line. He filled in for agent Perry Swan at Center when Swan was away. He was agent at New London. After the Perry Branch ceased passenger operations the railroad still had the contract to carry the mail from New London to Frankford to Perry along highway 19. Watts carried the mail before leaving for World War II.

In 1947 Watts left the Army and came to Troy to work for the St. Louis & Troy Railroad. When the St. Louis & Hannibal abandoned its track from Bowling Green to Gilmore the people of Troy campaigned for rail service. The Short Line set up a short line to tie Troy with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy track at Moscow Mills. In 1945 this company was sold to people from the Troy area. Watts worked for the St. Louis & Troy from 1947 until it closed in 1960.

Besides some small items Watts donated some larger track equipment – a spike puller, a track gauge, a track leveler, a spike maul, etc. These items were used on the Troy road and may have been used by the St.L.&H.

The railroad museum does not have regular visiting hours, but it is under the Ralls County Museum in Perry. That museum is open on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Arrangements can be made to visit the depot by contacting Ron Leake at 573-565-2025.

Recently I have had several opportunities to ask Watts some questions about his work for the railroads. Watts grew up in Silex and knew agent Warren Kolb well. As a child he would often hang out at the depot. Later, as a young man looking for work Kolb suggested that he consider the Short Line. At first he was not too interested but the \$15 a week pay seemed good in the late 1930s. A number did not have a job.

Watts signed on and was sent to the Frankford, Center, and New London area. He had several opportunities to relieve Perry Swan the agent at Center. Swan was originally from Whiteside and Bill knew many of his family members in the Silex-Whiteside communities. Center then had a good business in lumber and produce as well as a good feed business.

Watts became the agent at New London. After passenger service ended on the Perry Branch in 1942 the railroad company still had the contract to deliver mail to and from Perry. Each morning Bill would park his vehicle in the freight room of the depot. He would drive a company truck. The mail was taken from New London to Frankford and then he drove to Center and on to Perry. At Perry he took a one-hour break. This gave the Post Office time to work up the inbound mail and to get the outbound mail ready to leave. During this time he would often eat at a nice restaurant and sometimes he helped with working the mail. He does not remember the names of people that were working at the post offices. On his return trip he retraced his route and picked up outgoing mail.

He remembers General Manager W.C. Ramsay as a very nice person. Ramsay hired him and he had various dealings with Ramsay. Also he had good relations with Auditor C.W. Crow and with Dispatcher Jack Jones. Warren Kolb was a longtime good friend. Kolb worked at the Troy and Silex depots.

Watts does not remember any ruling grades on the main line. Nor does he remember the fuel and water locations. He does not remember a coal chute.

The Short Line shut down about the time he went off to World War II. When he got out in 1947 he approached president Harry Gooch of the St. Louis & Troy. Gooch wasn't hiring until Frank Neese announced his retirement. Watts was hired and stayed to the very end. At that time John Yochum was engineer and A.G. Stuart was general manager.

The depot in Troy was torn down because of its poor condition. That was the only 2 story depot on the Short Line. Bill remembers that there were 4 rooms upstairs where the agent and his family lived. Downstairs there was a freight room on one end and a waiting room on the other end. In between there was an office. Stuart was the last person to stay upstairs. By 1945 the depot was in bad condition. There was considerable rot and the foundation was bad. It was considered to be unsafe and was removed. A boxcar was brought in to serve as the office.

There is an interest in having another Short Line meeting on October 15. If you are interested please notify Andy Sisk at 720 Angenette Ave., Kirkwood, MO 63122 or at 314-966-7789. This meeting will probably be in the New London area.

## **SHORT LINES NEWS 8** **(The St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)**

There is to be a meeting of the Friends of the Short Line at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant in downtown Frankford on November 16 at 11:00 a.m. It has been a while since the Friends gathered. Since we last met the Ralls County Historical Society has opened a railroad museum in the depot at Center. The museum is still developing. It received a tremendous boost when Bill Watts of Troy donated a number of railroad items to the museum. These were track repair tools from the St. Louis & Hannibal and the St. Louis & Troy Railway. These were a great addition to the museum. The museum is under the direction of the Ralls County Historical Society's Museum in Perry.

Frankford is noted as the location for the Arch and the 3 arch bridge south of town. When the Short Line was being built a large trestle was constructed in Frankford to bridge a creek and the surrounding landscape. Trestles are expensive to keep up. The Short Line was often the subject of criticisms by State of Missouri railroad inspectors for its upkeep of trestles and bridges. The Company decided to eliminate this Frankford trestle by filling in most of the trestle and building an arch bridge over the creek and a roadway. The track is long gone, but the Arch is still there. The roadway through the Arch is gone, but you can still marvel at its construction.

The last agent at Frankford was Henry Clyde Holman – known as H.C. His grandson Jim lives in Springfield, IL. In an interview with Jim in 2003 he noted that he started going to the depot in Frankford in 1938 when he was 8 years old. Jim described the depot as standing about 300 feet south of the grain elevator. It was painted a dark gray. It was heated by a big potbelly stove.

There were no indoor toilets. There was an outhouse across the tracks for crewmen and other employees. There was another outhouse beside the depot for passengers. H.C. opened the depot at 7:00 a.m. in preparation for the 7:30 a.m. southbound train. It was closed at 11:30 a.m. for lunch. The depot reopened at 1:00 p.m. and stayed open until 5:00 p.m.

Holman says that freight trains did not run every day. The typical freight train was 6-8 cars and a caboose. Sometimes a train might be 8-10 cars. Holman came from a railroad family. His mother came from Davis. Her father was a Short Line bridge building foreman named John Basil East. East lost a leg in a construction-related accident but continued to work for the Short Line.

As best as Holman can remember the Short Line freights that he saw were short – 6-8 cars and a caboose. Sometimes a train might be 8-10 cars. There were some days when freight trains did not run. In Jim's day the Short Line just ran between Hannibal and Bowling Green.

Among the industries that Holman remembers in Frankford there was a La Crosse lumberyard. A lot of walnut trees were grown in the area and were harvested and shipped out by rail. There was a cattle pen. He remembers seeing farmers driving cattle through the streets of Frankford to the cattle pens. There was a flour mill that received grain and shipped flour. The grain elevator was a major customer of the railroad. In 1902 it was Pindell Bros Grain Warehouse. In 1909 it was J.B. Jones & Company.

Jim does remember the old motor coaches that were like buses on railroad wheels. He thinks that they were red in color with a gold stripe around the middle. There was only one employee – a driver who collected fares. The steering wheel controlled the brakes. When the driver turned the wheel one way the car started moving. The engine sounded like a Model A and was very noisy. He thinks that there were 6 rows of seats on each side of a center aisle. The rear section was separated from the passenger section and carried baggage and mail. The driver wore overalls and a flat cap. He thinks that the streamline car, # 55, came out in 1940. He believes that the streamlining was made out of plywood and was silver in color. It was probably an attempt to compete with the Burlington Zephyr trains. He rode # 55 in 1940 and 1941.

Besides H.C. Holman we have learned the names of other agents at Frankford. These include W.M. Little – 1880-1883. Bye Brenneman became agent in May 1883. In August 1885 Ortho

Kirtley took over. E. C. Jackson was agent in 1886. Curt Tanner may have been there in 1889. Philip Kuhne became January 1891. T.M. Hartsook was agent in 1894. W.C. Huckstep was agent in 1898 until September when he was replaced by R.G. Teague. The next name we have is F.I. Campbell in 1916. C.A. Tapley was there in 1917 and 1918. Any additional names and dates would be appreciated. Most of the agent names from Frankfort and other stations have come from newspapers.

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An article in the January 28, 1925 Hannibal Evening Courier-Post notes that a Short Line wrecking crew found a large supply of mash and a “moonshine outfit” near the Salt River Switch. Wrecking foreman W.C. Riggs and his crew made the discovery while working a derailment on the storage tracks there. The operation was found in a small structure some distance from the switch. It was frozen but there were indications that there had been attempts to handle the mash after it was frozen. The operation included 2 barrels of mash, 2 empty barrels, a coal oil stove, 5 gallons of oil, and a bucket. Riggs called Sheriff J.A. Palmer of New London and turned the find over to him.

Work on the railroad museum at Center – the depot is currently being repainted. Efforts are underway to secure the donation of a former St. Louis & Hannibal boxcar. If the Museum receives the car it will be placed on some rails that are going to be laid on railroad property. There are several boxcars in the general area serving as storage buildings, etc.

## SHORT LINE NEWS 9 (The St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)

A group of 32 or so Short Line enthusiasts met at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant in Frankford on February 4. A highlight of the meeting was the opportunity to meet and hear Bill Watts of Troy. Watts worked for the St. Louis & Hannibal before he went to serve in World War II. After his military service Watts went to work for the St. Louis & Troy Railroad that continued service on the stretch of track between Troy and Moscow Mills from 1933 to 1960. Watts was the agent for the Short Line at New London. He applied to the Short Line for a job on the advice of Warren Kolb Kolb had been agent at Watts' hometown of Silex. Watts was working at a service station in Ashley when the railroad called him to work. The railroad paid \$15 per week which was good money in 1939.

He filled in several times at Center and then took the job at New London. While there the Short Line abandoned its service to Perry. Since the company still had a contract to carry the mail. Watts was given the job of carrying the mail in a pickup from New London to Frankford to Center to Perry. After an hour layover in Perry he reversed the route, picking up the outgoing mail.

After military service the Short Line had ceased its existence so he applied at the offices of the St. Louis & Troy in Troy. At first the company was not hiring, but then the previous general manager retired and Watts was offered the job. As the general manager he ran the office, worked on the track, and on at least one occasion he ran the 20 ton Plymouth locomotive when the engineer John Yochum was unable to bring a car from the Burlington interchange to an industry in Troy.

After the St. Louis & Troy died in 1960 Watts was involved in a variety of other work, including Collector of Lincoln County. Unfortunately Bill did not take any photographs of trains or depots. But he did have some track working tools which he has donated to the railroad museum at Center.

During the business meeting the Friends of the Short Line discussed the need for a more formal organization. This was agreed to so that FOSL can seek a tax-exempt status and better apply for grants. There was some discussion of possible projects, such as selling T-shirts and other items lettered for the St Louis & Hannibal. Museum director Ron Leake announced that some rail has been laid on the old grade at the depot in Center. Several St. Louis & Hannibal freight cars have been located. Efforts are underway to get one or more of these donated to the Museum for display.

The general opinion was that this was a good meeting. Friends came from all over NE Missouri. It was decided to have another meeting on Saturday, March 18, at Center. We are planning to meeting at the Christian Church as it is across the street from the depot. That meeting is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. No lunch will be available.

One of the goals suggested for the FOSL is to uncover and share information and material on the Short Line. There are gaps in our photographic coverage. In depot pictures we need a photo of the Whiteside station – the one usually shown is a photo made from the roof of the Whiteside Hotel. The depot is small and partially hidden. We need a good photo of the Perry station. All we have is a distant shot of one end behind a corn carnival special train in 1908. It would be good to have a photo of the New London depot when it was in service as a depot. We only need copies of photos, not the originals. If you can help please contact Conrad Cheatham, 306 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Elsberry, MO.

Several questions came up about a company doctor named W.T. Waters. Allen Ballard lives in Dr. Waters' former home in New London. Checking my few employee timetables I find that Waters was listed as a local surgeon at New London in 1929 and was still listed in that capacity



in January 1940. Dr. J.C. Chilton was Chief Surgeon at Hannibal in 1929. He was still Chief in 1940.

Other surgeons in 1929 were: O.W. Snodgrass at Frankford, F.H. Wilcoxon at Bowling Green, L.P. Guy at Eolia, O.H. Dameron at Silex, W.P. Smith at Troy, H.B. Norton at Center.

In 1935 H.B. Norton was listed as local surgeon at Hannibal, Waters, Snodgrass, and Wilcoxon were still at the above places. J.E. Brown was local surgeon at Perry.

In 1940 J.W. Hardesty was listed as Surgeon at Hannibal while Norton was listed as local Surgeon at Hannibal. Waters, Snodgrass, Wilcoxon, and Brown were at their 1935 locations.

Company medical people can be an interesting study. In earlier reading I have read accounts of various wrecks the names of various doctors are mentioned as either going to the accident to offer assistance and the injured were taken to various doctors were help. If anyone can offer further information on Short Line surgeons please send it to me.

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 Ron Leake shared a 1912 folder from New London. In this folder there is a Short Line schedule of trains leaving New London. Going south: No. 1 mail left 6:23 a.m.; No. 5 Perry left at 9:20 a.m.; No. 3 mixed left at 11:35 a.m.; No. 9 Perry left at 4:40 p.m.; No. 7 freight left at 5:05 p.m.; No. 11 Perry left at 11:45 a.m. Going north: No. 6 Perry left at 7:20 a.m.; No. 8 freight left at 11:00 a.m.; No. 2 mixed left at 1:15 p.m.; No. 10 Perry left at 1:45 p.m.; No. 4 mail left at 10:20 p.m.; No. 12 Perry left 9:00 a.m. Trains 11 and 12 operated only on Sundays. Through passengers had the option of the mail train and the mixed train on the main line. There were 3 trips between Hannibal and Perry.

This contrasts with 1926. A friend loaned me a copy of his reprint of the February 1926 Official Guide. The Short Line schedule in that book shows that the road only operated 1 through train each way on the main line (Nos. 1 & 2) and one train each way on the Perry Branch (Nos. 5 & 6). This schedule was dated October 4, 1925. D.C. Chilton was listed as the Chief Surgeon. This was under the ownership of John Ringling, but before the Mack motor coaches had taken over passenger operations.

## SHORT LINE NEWS 10

A nice group of Friends of the Short Line gathered at the Christian Church in Center on March 18. The Christian Church is in a good location as it is only about one-half block from the depot. Friends were able to look around the museum before and after the meeting at the church.

After a talk on the Short Line history there were a number of comments and questions from the audience. A woman who started life at Owendale on the Perry Branch talked about the generosity and kindness of the Short Line crews. She mentioned that during the Depression, when things were extremely tight, that the train crews would sometimes drop off a little coal to help her family.

The Short Line did have a number of nice, friendly people. There are many stories of the trains stopping to allow passengers and crew to pick blackberries or apples or other fruit that was in season. There were not too many trains running on the main or branch so there was no traffic interference problem. Much of this may have been due to the kindness of Conductor Jake Totsch. Jake was the main passenger conductor for many years. He looked after the women and children riding the trains. Anyone who caused trouble for a woman or a child usually felt Jake's wrath which meant hitting the ballast.

Another kind act was skating parties. The Short Line southbound passenger train would take children from its northern stations to the large railroad pond at Eolia for ice-skating. The evening northbound train would return them to their home stations. I have heard that these skaters would ride in the baggage car for free. I am not certain if this was an official Company action or just the kindness of the crews.

Another person mentioned that a friend told him that trains continued to come into downtown Bowling Green years after the Short Line had ceased operations. The Chicago & Alton (the Alton Route) railroad probably purchased the Short Line track from the interchange to the industry served. (Maybe Ed Lawson can tell us what businesses needed rail service in downtown Bowling Green in the late 1940s). This would not be unusual. The Burlington purchased some Short Line track in the Hannibal area.

The passing of Short Line fan Neal Fink of near Troy was noted. Neal died on March 5. He came from a railroad family. His father and grandfather worked for the Wabash in the St. Louis/St. Charles area. Neal was a major HO modeler. There is a great layout in the basement of his home. Its primary focus is the Wabash, but there is a Short Line factor with equipment lettered for the St.L.&H. The track has hand laid ties and very good scenery. Neal was also an accomplished artist and produced a series of drawings of Steamboats On Western Rivers that were collected into a book. Even though he was primarily a Wabash man and active in the Wabash Historical Society Neal had a keen interest in the Short Line. Sometimes he would call with challenging questions. He will be missed by many.

Bill Watts was unable to come to the meeting because his son-in-law had bypass surgery and he wanted to be with his daughter and her family.

As this is being written a large section of the old grade in downtown Troy is being removed. This was a section on the edge of Cherry Street. 30 or so years ago the railroad crossing was very plain and rail could be seen sometimes in the pavement. Cherry has been paved several times.

Ron Leake found an article on the Short Line electing officers for 1916. This item was from the "New London Times" of March 7, 1916. J.A. Jordan was elected president. This was Joseph A. Jordan. Jordan became superintendent of the Short Line on August 5, 1892. The 1897 "Hannibal City Directory" listed Jordan as the General Manager. He was a veteran of the Chicago & Alton Railway. Jordan moved up the line and in 1913 he moved from being Vice-President & General Manager to President of the Green Bay & Western Railway & the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway. The Blair family was involved with financing the building of various components that made up the G.B.&W. The G.B.&W. and the Short Line shared officers and people moved between the two roads. Jordan died on August 1, 1923.

The vice-president was Edgar Palmer. Edgar was the son of Stephen S. Palmer who was long time associated with the Blairs. Stephen succeeded John Insley Blair when Blair retired as president of the Short Line and the G.B. & W. In turn Jordan succeeded Stephen when he died in late February 1913. Edgar became vice-president of the 2 roads when Jordan moved up in 1913.

Charles (C.W.) Cox was secretary-treasurer of the Short Line. He had become secretary-treasurer of the G.B.&W. in 1913. He had succeeded Mark T. Cox in this position.

The Coxes and the Palmers had offices at the Robert Winthrop & Company facilities in New York City.

As I am typing on this on the afternoon of March 27 Bill Watts' daughter in Louisiana has called to say that Bill fell on Saturday and broke his hip. He is in the Lincoln County Medical Center in Troy. He will have surgery on March 31 after some medicine can get out of his system. She does not know his room number. It was her husband who had the bypass surgery that kept Bill from coming to our meeting. He is doing well. Came home on March 23. Bill Watts is in Room 237, Lincoln County Medical Center, 1000 East Cherry St, Troy 63379. Please join me in a prayer that Bill will make it through the surgery and through recovery.

At the meeting I was asked about the number of locomotives and freights on the Short Line. I have just found an article in a 1924 Hannibal newspaper that the Short Line had purchased 22 acres of land near the Wabash's Outer Depot for additional storage and repair tracks. The freight car repair business was booming.

## SHORT LINE 11

The Federal Government did something very beneficial to modern day railroad historians early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Interstate Commerce Commission (predecessor of the modern Surface Transportation Board) ordered all railroads in the country to be examined to determine their value.

A number of inspectors were sent out to thoroughly examine every railroad, large and small. Every foot of track was examined. This included main lines as well as branch lines, sidings and yards. Detailed maps were put together using this information. All buildings and other structures on railroad property were examined. All locomotives and other equipment were examined as were signs and crossing guards.

The information secured was used in a variety of ways. The track maps became major components of engineering departments. These valuation maps became the cores of these engineering departments. They were changed as track was modified.

The building research was used to help railroad officials know what structures the company had and where these were located. Each division office knew what buildings it had and their value.

A tentative valuation of each road was made and presented to company officials. These the officials could accept or reject. The company's rejected points were re-considered and accepted or rejected.

A valuation document was drawn up and published in book form. For large railroads these books could be right large, or even in multiple volumes. For shortlines and small railroads the documents were published with other similar documents. These document books are stored in large libraries that have government collections, such as Candler Library at Emory University near Atlanta, Ga.

The St. Louis & Hannibal was examined in the mid-teens. The Short Line's valuation was put at \$1,906,770 as of June 30, 1918. A valuation document was submitted on December 17, 1925. It was finally decided on June 25, 1926. It was published as Valuation Document # 519.

Other items from these studies are stored in the government archives outside of Washington, D.C.

I thought that I might share some things from my photocopy of Document 519. The valuation study shows the St. Louis & Hannibal as it was when John Ringling purchased it in 1919. There may have been some changes, but this is basically the railroad.

On June 30, 1918 the company owned a single track standard-gauge steam railroad, located wholly within the State of Missouri. It extended from Hannibal to Gilmore with a branch line from Ralls Junction to Perry, a total of 103.241 miles. In addition it owned 9.769 miles of yard tracks and sidings. (We can see here how closely the inspectors measured the tracks.) This gave a total of 113.010 miles.

The company owned 1,207.71 acres of land that had a then value of \$135,192.30. It leased 1.91 acres from the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Company that was valued at \$936.35.

The document described the physical characteristics of the road: "The grading is medium, averaging 24,367 yards per mile. Some classified material was encountered in excavation. The bridges are all of conventional design. The main track is laid with new 60 and 70 pound and re-lay 60 and 70 pound rail."

The equipment was described: "The carrier owns and uses the following equipment: 8 steam locomotives, 35 freight-train cars, 11 passenger-train cars, 6 work-equipment units." The inspectors put a replacement new cost of \$115,683 on the equipment.

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 I will have more from the Valuation Inspection later.  
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After writing the above I had to stop to do some other things. In the meantime I received a call from Mary Brown of Louisiana that her father, Bill Watts, had died. Mary noted that Bill was not able to do the rehabilitation requirements and had become depressed. He died on Thursday, May 4. Visitation was at McCoy-Blossom Funeral Home in Troy where had once worked on May 6. The funeral was on Sunday afternoon at the funeral home. A small group of FOSL people were present.

As far as we know for certain Bill Watts was the last employee of the St. Louis & Hannibal. He was the last employee of the St. Louis & Troy that operated about 5 miles of track between Troy and the Burlington at Moscow Mills. He will be missed.

William Howard Watts was born in Whiteside (on the Short Line) on June 28, 1916. He was raised in Silex (on the Short Line). He married Pearle Duvel in 1935 in Pittsfield, IL. Bill told me that his railroad career began in 1938. A longtime childhood friend was Warren Kolb, the Silex agent. Kolb had suggested that Bill might try to get a job on the Short Line. He applied to be an agent, but in the meantime he worked at a service station and garage in Ashley, MO. Finally the railroad called. At first he was a relief agent and he substituted some for Perry Swan at Center. Then he was sent to the New London depot. After passenger service ended on the Perry Branch in 1942 he fulfilled the railroad's contract to haul the mail by using a truck. The St. Louis & Hannibal ceased operations while he served in World War II. Returning from military service he applied for work on the St. Louis & Troy. President Harry Gooch said they were not hiring. But then the current general manager retired. Bill was hired and was general manager until the railroad stopped in 1960. Then Bill worked for Crown Appliance Co. of Old Monroe, MO, as a salesman and repairmen. He was elected Collector of Lincoln County. Then he spent 15 working for the funeral home from where he retired in 1998. In addition Bill and Pearle produced a family of 2 daughters and a son and six grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. We extend our sympathy to widow Pearle, daughters Mary and Dorothy Jean and son Paul and the rest of the family. A correction to the published obituaries – the St. Louis & Troy was a standard gauge railroad.

**Bill Watts June 1919-May 2006**

## SHORT LINE NEWS 12

John Ringling was in deep financial trouble by 1930. His previous spending habits had caught up with him. His health was very poor and he lacked his old fighting spirit. Sister Ida North decided to send her two sons to see if they could figure out some ways to rescue Uncle John.

John Ringling North and his younger brother Henry Ringling North studied Uncle John's situation. They made a number of suggestions. One was to get rid of things that were not producing revenue. The brothers decided that the 52.6 miles of the Short Line from Bowling Green south to Gilmore did not produce much revenue. Troy might produce good revenue, but not Edgewood, Cyrene, Eolia, Whiteside, Silex, Davis, Owen Station, and Enon. The Perry Branch had the Perry coal mines which produced much of the revenue. Both the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Missouri Public Service Commission concurred and order the abandonment to proceed. The railroad decided to stop service south of Bowling Green as of May 31, 1932.

For the remaining trackage the Short Line Company announced that it would make some changes to improve service. A major change would be the introduction of a motor car to provide two daily roundtrips. The May 27<sup>th</sup> issue of "The Hannibal Courier Post" noted these plans. It gave some description to the motor car. It would look like a bus on the rails powered by a gasoline engine. The big car would be 50 feet long and would travel at a speed of 30-35 miles per hour, though it could go faster if needed. In addition to passengers the car would carry mail, express, and less than carload freight.

The newspaper article noted that with the addition of the motor car that the patrons of the northern end of the system would receive the very best ever offered by the company.

On the next day (28<sup>th</sup>) another article offered another surprise. The Short Line announced that on June 1, 1932 fares would be reduced. A one-way ticket would be at the rate of 2.5 cents per mile. Roundtrip tickets would be reduced by 10%.

Freight rates would be reduced. Less than carload freight would be carried at a rate of 20 cents per mile along with a 2 cents emergency charge. That would include store door delivery of freight that originated on the Short Line.

In addition the Short Line announced that a new time card would go into effect on June 1, 1932. Under this new time card train # 1 (a steam powered train) would leave Hannibal at 4:30 a.m. and arrive at Bowling Green at 6:15 a.m. There it would meet with the Star Mail Route that had been set up to service the post offices that would loose rail connections with the rail abandonment. This train would carry passengers, freight, mail and express.

Returning the train, as # 2, would leave Bowling Green at 9:00 a.m. and arrive at Perry at 11:15 a.m., leave Perry at 12:15 p.m. (as train # 4) and arrive at Hannibal at 2:00 p.m. daily, except Sunday.

Under the heading of Motor Coach Service the article noted that the motor coach would leave Hannibal at 7:15 a.m. (as train # 101) and arrive at Perry at 8:45 a.m. It would leave Perry at 9:15 a.m. and arrive at Hannibal at 10:45 a.m. (as train # 102).

The next coach would leave Hannibal at 2:01 p.m. (as train # 103) and would arrive at Perry at 3:30 p.m. Train # 104 was to leave Perry at 3:55 p.m. and reach Ralls Jct. at 4:52 p.m. This coach would leave Ralls Jct. at 4:55 p.m. and reach Bowling Green as train # 105 at 5:45 p.m. Train # 106 was scheduled to leave Bowling Green at 6:30 p.m. and arrive at Hannibal 7:50 p.m. This was daily service.

Sunday was limited to the motor coach. Train # 107 was scheduled to leave Hannibal at 4:30 a.m. and arrive at Bowling Green at 5:50 a.m. Train # 108 was scheduled to leave Bowling Green at 6:20 a.m. and arrive at Ralls Jct. at 7:08 a.m. It would then run over to Perry as train # 109, leaving Ralls at 7:11 a.m. and arriving at Perry at 8:10 a.m. The coach would return to Hannibal as train # 110, leaving Perry at 8:40 a.m. and arriving at Hannibal at 10:10 a.m.

[This Sunday service would have been a joy for rail buff, but nightmare for someone trying to go from Bowling Green to Hannibal – almost 4 hours to travel 32 miles.]

An article in the June 1 Hannibal newspaper noted that when the first motor coach arrived in Perry that morning at 8:45 a.m. that there was a crowd of about 250 people on hand to welcome it along with a brass band. Large crowds were also on hand when the car reached New London and Perry for the first time. This same article noted that the last regular to go all the way to Gilmore left Hannibal on Monday, May 30, and returned to Hannibal on Tuesday, May 31. The writer expected the track south of Bowling Green to be removed in a short time.

The track south of Bowling Green was eventually removed and sold for scrap. Another cost cutting move that the North boys made was to sell John's bourbon collection. It must have been extensive. John's health continued to decline. In the fall of 1932 he suffered a stroke. His health improved some, but in December 1936 he died. John Ringling North became president of the St. Louis & Hannibal.

The articles above on the first motor coach were from various issues of the "The Hannibal Courier Post". "The Perry Enterprise" had similar articles. In its article on the arrival of the first motor coach in Perry it was noted that the coach was operated by E.N. Lock. Representing the railroad company were P. T. Jones, the general freight and passenger agent, C.W. Crow, auditor, and J.M. Worland, local treasurer. The Perry High School Band was directed by William H. Robey, Jr.

This article claimed that the motor coach was 45 feet long and was powered by a 125 hp. Mack engine. (The Mack Truck Company built a number of rail motor coaches that were used on a number of railroads, including the Short line). Locals on the first coach to leave Perry included: James and John Pierce, William Robey, and R. J. Cowherd.

An item from the June 22, 1933 "Enterprise" noted that the Short Line had just completed preparation of a third motor coach. This coach was supposed to be larger than the two previous coaches, carrying 16 passengers instead of 13. It was supposed have 40% more room than the other two. This car was equipped with reclining seats that were upholstered in leather with individual lights for each pair of seats.

## SHORT LINE NEWS 13

The family of the late Bill Watts has been going through his house and garage getting ready to sell it. (Bill's widow is in a nursing home in Troy) A number of railroad items were found that were given to the Center museum. These included another spike puller, a spike maul, some chains, and other track equipment. There was some Railway Express Scales that still work. An item of special interest was a desktop that seems to have been in the old Troy depot, judging by some papers stapled inside the lid. These items are a great edition to the museum's collection. We all appreciate Bill's family thinking of the museum. Thank you!

Using his digital camera Ron Leake was able to photograph the papers without removing them from the lid. These papers are already in poor condition and would probably be destroyed in an attempt to remove them.

One paper has the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk Railroad letterhead. (The St.L.H.&K. RR) was the company name from July 1872 to December 1885.) This paper is from the Office of General Superintendent. "Hannibal, Mo. March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1882. Mr. B.F. Wilson has been appointed Assistant General Freight Agent, and Assistant General Ticket Agent of this Company, with headquarters at Hannibal, Mo. Signed by W.W. Walker, General Superintendent."

(In my research I have found Frank D. Wilson listed as Assistant General Freight Agent in 1882. A B.J. Wilson was listed as trainmaster in 1883, 84 while B.F. Wilson was listed as a dispatcher in 1883.)

W.W. Walker came from Iowa with the group that offered to build the St. L.H.&K. in 1872. He had been associated with John I. Blair in other endeavors. On the Short Line he was listed as General Manager in 1874, Vice-President & General Superintendent from 1877-81, Superintendent in 1880, Vice-President, General Superintendent, & General Freight & Passenger Agent in 1881, President and General Superintendent in 1882, 83. Walker presided over the completion of the railroad in the spring of 1882. But he disappeared from the newspaper articles after the 1884 bankruptcy. Walker was from Walker, IA. Some years ago we visited a nice railroad museum in the old 2 story Rock Island depot.

Recently the question came up about the number of locomotives that the Short Line had. Back in the 1980s a friend who had access to a number of volumes of the Moody and the Poor annual stock report books did a lot of research in this area for me. I am grateful to G.M. MacDonald of Greensboro, N.C. for this information. In addition to Mac's info I have found some other information in other sources.

In 1877 the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk purchased locomotive No. 1, a 4-4-0, from the Missouri Railway Equipment Co. In addition the same source sold them a combination passenger car, a caboose, 5 box cars, and 5 flat cars.

In May 1881 they purchased locomotive No. 2 from John Insley Blair of N.J. and Moses Taylor of New York. These 2 men were also financing the construction of the railroad from Eolia to Gilmore. An Equipment Register from 1881 lists 3 locomotives.

The railroad had 5 locomotives in 1882; 6 from 1883-91; 6 in 1894; 7 1895-1901; 8 in 1902; 9 in 1903-10; 10 in 1911-12; 9 in 1913-17; 8 in 1917-18; 9 in 1920; 12 in 1921; 11 in 1922; 45 in 1923; 39 in 1924; 30 in 1925; 27 in 1926; 22 in 1927; 24 in 1928; 20 in 1930; 7 in 1933; 14 in 1939-44.

The big jump in numbers occurred when owner John Ringling decided to operate the Western Locomotive & Car Leasing Company. This was a used locomotive and car company. A number of old New York Central System locomotives and cars were purchased and brought to the Short Line and other Ringling roads for resale. An old employee, Lad Arend, told me that he was sent back east on several occasions to shepherd locomotives to Hannibal.

This all changed when Ringling got into great financial difficulty with his sisters-in-law and with the Depression. His sister sent her 2 sons to help Uncle John out of his problems. These nephews recommended getting rid of things that were not producing much income, like the



section of the Short Line from Bowling Green to Gilmore. It included also this used locomotive and car dealership. 4 locomotives and the motor coaches could easily handle the business.

Livestock was a big industry on the Short Line from the earliest days to the end. Every station, both manned and unmanned, had stock pens from where livestock was shipped out. Poultry was also big. Kuhne Brothers had a large poultry operation in Troy that shipped all types of fowl back East.

On December 20, 1923 the poultry plant of the Ralls County Mercantile Company was destroyed by fire. The value of the stock and building was put at near \$75,000. The fire started in the second story of the building where hides, feather, etc., were stored. The building contained an ice plant, cold storage and picking plant. About 3500 live chickens, \$1000 worth of cream, and \$50,000 of dressed chickens, geese, ducks, and turkeys for the Christmas trade were destroyed. About \$1000 worth of feed was destroyed and 2 carloads of eggs and poultry were partially destroyed. Part of the dressed poultry in the cold storage was saved. The building was valued at \$25,000 and was insured for \$22,000. There was no insurance on the stock. The plant steadily employed 25 men and during picking season the number was 35. The building was 2 years old.

A 1921 Sanborn Insurance map shows the Rall County Mercantile Company was located in a triangular piece of property on the south of the tracks bordered by Lamb Street and what is now Highway 19. A rail siding was on the north side of this property.

In her history of Ralls County Mrs. Golden Howard wrote that the Ralls County Mercantile occupied 4 store buildings on the south side of the tracks. It included a poultry, egg, and feather buying station. R.S. Buchanan and Harvey Keithly were involved. The poultry plant and icehouse were built in 1920. After the poultry plant burned in 1923 Buchanan replaced it with a larger plant. H.H. Reed was a major partner. Later they expanded and built a plant in Perry. Buchanan and major stockholder, Miss Nora Keithly, sold their shares in the Mercantile to H.J. Finley and Don E. Brothers of Wellsville. Reed was from Wellsville. Brothers became the manager of the Mercantile.

**SHORT LINE NEWS 14****(Friends of the St. Louis & Hannibal Rwy.)**

Once again we have to note the deaths and injuries of some Friends of the Short Line. Kathy Threlkeld of Hannibal died. Kathy was at some of our earlier gatherings and would have been at later meetings but she had developed cancer. She battled cancer for several years and it took most of her strength. She continued to work for a State Farm insurance agent who was good to Kathy and gave her time to go home and rest each day. Kathy was interested in all railroads in the Hannibal area with a special interest in the Short line. I still remember an email I received from Kathy after a trip to Arkansas on a vacation. She liked to visit antique shops and when coming out of one shop she saw a switch lock in the window. On closer examination she saw that it was labeled St. Louis & Hannibal. She said that was the best \$35 she ever spent. Kathy will be missed by many of us.

The father of Short Line researcher Andy Sisk died in late September. We extend our sympathy to Andy and the rest of the family.

Another Short Line fan Bob McNeill of Foristell had a bad fall and is now suffering from several compressed veterbrae.

There were numerous stock pens all up and down the Short Line's main and branch line. Livestock was big business. But the Short Line had also a large poultry business. In Troy there was Kuhne Bros. The Kuhne family was involved in a number of business ventures in the Troy area. This company protested the abandonment south of Bowling Green. Then it was heavily involved in the start up of the St. Louis & Troy Railroad.

Another big poultry business was that of R. S. Buchanan in Ralls County. Ron Leake has put together a large file of newspaper articles dealing with this company. Some additional information was found in the History of Ralls County by Golena Howard.

R. S. Buchanan came to Center and was involved with the Ralls County Mercantile Company. This company sold groceries, furniture, dry goods, etc. It was located in a complex of buildings near the depot. A Sanborn Insurance map shows a track serving this complex.

In 1921 the Mercantile expanded into poultry. Facilities were constructed to handle the processing of poultry. A great deal of ice was needed year round so the Mercantile built an ice plant. This plant moved Center away from relying on ice cut in the rivers. Buildings were built to handle the actual processing as well as to store feathers and hides. This plant employed 25 year round employees and would add temporary workers during the busy times of the year.

Fire hit the plant on December 20, 1921. An article in the "Hannibal Courier-Post" the next day put a value on the loss at about \$75,000. Destroyed were some 3,500 live chickens, a large amount of cream and dressed poultry. Also destroyed were 2 railroad cars partially loaded with eggs and poultry.

Buchanan rebuilt his Center facility, but then he sold his stock in the Ralls County Mercantile to 2 men from Wellsville, MO. He continued to promote the sale of Blossom products.

An article in an October issue of "The Perry Enterprise" reported that R. S. Buchanan, manager of the Blossom Brand Products Company in Center had announced his intention to build a large poultry processing plant in Perry. This would be a place where locals could bring eggs, fowls, cream, hides, and wood to be sold. Buchanan was going to erect 2 large buildings just west of the depot and on railroad grounds. 2 railroad tracks would be laid to serve this facility. To show his commitment to this operation he rented the J.E. Boulware property and moved his family to Perry.

As in Center Buchanan moved Perry to modern times by constructing an ice plant. This required the drilling of a 112 foot well by Lloyd Evans. This well had a flow of 20 gallons per minute.

While the Perry facilities were under construction the newspapers in December 1926 reported that the Center facilities were booming. It was operated under the name Blossom Brand. Over

the previous 2 weeks the plant was processing 1,000 geese per day. Since local sources could not meet the demand Buchanan had to have 2 carloads of live geese shipped in from Sedalia and Clarence. Carloads of dressed geese were shipped to the New York City area before and just after Thanksgiving. Orders had been received for 75,000 geese during the Christmas season.

On February 27, 1927 an article reported that Blossom Brand was buying W. L. Davenport cold storage plant in Mexico, 28 miles from Perry. Also the corporation name would be changed to the R. L. Buchanan Company. Products would continue to be marketed under the Blossom Brand name. This same "Enterprise" article noted that 2 buildings were under construction for the Perry facility. A 100x100-foot building would house the refrigeration machinery and the company offices. The foundation and basement for a 180x200-foot building had been laid.

An article in the April 7, 1927 "Enterprise" reported that a carload of eggs was shipped out of the Perry facility on the previous Tuesday and a second carload on Wednesday. By May 12, 1927 an article reported that the Buchanan Company had shipped 8 carloads of poultry, eggs, and cream. The first car of dressed poultry had been shipped from the Perry facility the previous Wednesday. The average refrigerator car hauled 25,000 pounds of poultry with a value of \$6,500.

A progress report appeared in the July 7, 1927 "Enterprise". The business at the Perry facility had really taken off. In the 60x40-foot poultry dressing room 31 people were employed in killing and dressing fowls. So far the largest number of birds processed in a day was 2,100. 4 days after leaving Hannibal a refrigerated car would reach New York City. An egg candling room was 12x40-feet with 14 people grading eggs. 30 dozen eggs were put in a case while 400 cases filled a railroad car. A sweet cream department encouraged farmers to enlarge their dairy herds. Buchanan sent trucks out on 6 routes to pick up cream and eggs.

Buchanan was a major customer on the Perry Branch. An article in the Feb. 26, 1931 "Enterprise" noted the business in 1930. Buchanan was the second largest shipper at 216 carloads of eggs and poultry. This included 80 cars of dressed chickens, 19 cars of dressed geese, 1 car of dressed ducks, and 116 cars of eggs. There was some inbound traffic – 3 cars of live poultry and one car of eggs. This was only the Perry business.

This is a long segment but it covers a major customer of the last 2 decades of the railroad's existence. In 1930 the Short Line had 46 insulated boxcars.

## **SHORT LINE 15**

### **(Friends of the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway)**

The year 1882 was a red-letter year for the Short Line. Construction finally reached Gilmore and a connection with the Wabash Railway on the first Thursday in April. To celebrate the event a special officials train was run all the way from Hannibal to Gilmore. "The Troy Free-Press" of April 12 stated that a new and elegant coach pulled by the new and beautiful engine No. 3 made the trip.

On board were W.W. Walker, the president and general superintendent and his lady, W.B. Elliott and lady, Col. F.C. Cake and lady – all of Hannibal; George Douglas of Nevada, a distinguished capitalist; J. S. Ely, vice-president and treasurer; William Green and lady; William Buchanan, secretary of the company – all of Cedar Rapids, IA; Joe McCune and lady of McCune's Station, Mo.; Dr. J.S. Reynolds and lady of Bowling Green, Mo.; Miss Hattie Perkins, W. A. Woodson and Judge E. N. Bonfils of Troy; George F. Green, conductor, and lady of Eolia; T. C. Wilson, chief engineer; H. B. Walker, assistant engineer; J. C. Hogg and J. H. Lyman, contractors; Judge A. K. Wilson, Auburn; F. C. Cake, Jr., clerk; H. W. Elliott, engineer; Will D. Bonfils, fireman; W. D. Wade. Brakeman; and Dan Kennedy, of the steam scraper company.

This special train left Hannibal at 7:25 a.m. It arrived at New London at 8:00, Bowling Green at 9:20, Eolia at 9:57, Silex at 10:25, Troy at Noon. It reached Gilmore about 1:00 p.m. The visit to Gilmore was brief as it returned to Troy for dinner about 2:00 p.m.

Thus the newly completed road was celebrated. An article in the "Hannibal Journal" that was reprinted in the "Bowling Green Times" of April 13 noted that in its unfinished condition the railroad had been running daily mixed trains. Management had announced that now it would begin freight and passenger trains after new equipment was purchased. At that time there were plans to run trains from the Union Station in Hannibal to the Union Station in St. Louis via the Wabash from Gilmore into the City.

The completion of the Short Line in 1882 was about 3 years after its chief competitor was completed. The idea of a railroad running down the western side of the Mississippi did not go away with the chartering of the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk to be built on the interior route. A group of people in Louisiana and Clarksville wanted to bring business to their river ports. A group of business people associated with Clifford Banking in Clarksville chartered the Clarksville & Western. Some construction was done and then the St. Louis, Keokuk & Northwestern had come on the scene. This road had ties to the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy system. This new company completed the line from Hannibal to the Wabash at Perque near St. Peters in 1879. Eventually it built on north to Keokuk and then in the 1890s it constructed its on line into St. Louis to fulfill the old 1857 dream of a railroad from St. Louis to Keokuk, IA. The St.L.& NW. eventually was swallowed up into the C.B.&Q. It continues today as the K-Line of the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe. It is a heavily used line seeing many trains of coal, grain, and other freight whereas the Short Line stopped running in 1944.

Looking at the passenger list of that special train we can see many of the original incorporators of the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk in this group. George Greene, W.W. Walker, George Douglas, and John F. Ely came from Cedar Rapids, IA, and offered to complete the railroad from Hannibal to Gilmore over the interior route.

William Williams Walker was listed as the president of the railroad. Walker was one of those who signed the incorporation papers on June 13, 1872. In these articles of incorporation Walker was listed as being president of the Missouri & Iowa Railway Construction Co.

Walker was a native of Middlefield, NY. He was born on August 8, 1834. He received education training at Brown University and at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, NY., from which he graduated in 1856. Looking for an engineering job he headed to Iowa where he caught the attention of John Insley Blair who was surveying a predecessor of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway. In 1860 he was made chief engineer of the Cedar Rapids & Missouri

River Railroad. From 1868 to 1872 he was chief engineer and general superintendent of the Sioux City & Pacific Railroad. During that same time he was chief engineer of the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad and of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad. In 1873 he became chief engineer of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Minnesota Railroad. Walker's involvement with the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk was varied. In 1874 he was listed as general manager. From 1877 to 1880 he was vice-president and general superintendent. In 1880 he was listed as superintendent. Then in 1881 he was vice-president, general superintendent, and general freight & passenger agent. He seems to have been president and general superintendent from 1882 until the receivership began in 1884.

The Walker, (IA.) "Centennial History" says that he was involved in other railroad projects in Missouri and the southwest. He was involved in various enterprises in his adopted hometown of Cedar Rapids – president of the Cedar Rapids National Bank and president-secretary of the Cedar Rapids Water Company. In addition Walker was editor of the "Cedar Rapids Republican" newspaper.

Walker's first wife died in 1862 leaving him with two small daughters. In 1864 he remarried. As a long time Ruling Elder in the local Presbyterian Church Walker followed the teachings of the Bible and did not allow his construction crews to work on Sunday. His crews had the reputation of doing more in 6 days that most rival crews did in 7.

Walker died in 1893. The town of Walker, IA was named for W.W. as he was instrumental in building the predecessor of the Rock Island through that area.

William B. Elliott was born in Pennsylvania in 1831. He moved to Ralls County in 1865. In 1880 he moved to Hannibal. He farmed in Missouri and Illinois. He served in the Missouri House of Representatives. Promoted the building the St.L.H.&K. and served on its board.

Joseph McCune was born in 1828. He lived in a brick house on Peno Creek near McCune's Station. The railroad passed through his farm, east of his house. He served on the board of the St.L.H.&K.

Dr. Stephen S. Reynolds was born in Kentucky in 1826. His family moved to Bowling Green, MO. in 1832. He began his medical career in KY, but then returned to Bowling Green, MO in 1851. He served in the MO House of Representatives and on the boards of the St. Louis & Keokuk and the St.L.H.&K.

Please remember the Short Line Museum in the Short Line Depot in Center. Also the Ralls County Museum in Perry. Let's try a meeting in January at Bowling Green.

## **SHORT LINE NEWS 16**

### **(The St. Louis & Hannibal Railway)**

Some recent issues had my thoughts on the sick and bereaved in our group. When I was writing this I didn't realize that I would have severe medical problems. On February 14 & 15 I suffered a light stroke. Barbara and I had been to a church related meeting just east of Asheville, N.C. On our return trip we spent the night of Feb. 14 in Crossville, TN. My walking was terrible and I was no better on the 15<sup>th</sup> so Barbara called 911. I was taken to the Cumberland Medical Center and learned that I had suffered a stroke. I was given an MRI (lot of fun, not) and put in the ICU section. After a few days I made it to a regular room where I soon contracted a severe virus that was heaving in that area. That put me back into ICU for a short period of time. I finally "escaped" from the hospital on March 2. I made it back to Elsberry on March 6 and have been making progress since. I have gotten back involved in my 2 churches and other activities. I have reached the place where I thought I would try another newsletter. Thanks for your patience.

Recently Ron Leake emailed a publicity release on a new book "Salt of the Earth" by Rev. Richard Smith. Mr. Smith writes a descendent of slaves in Ralls County. He grew up in the day when the African-American children of Ralls County could not attend the public schools of Ralls County. Instead they had to ride Short Line trains to and from Hannibal for school. He says that this was in the hurdy gurdy/Mack rail cars. Its too bad that the children had to go to Hannibal for school but they did provide steady business for the Short Line. Has anyone seen pictures of these children boarding or riding the cars?

Andy Sisk has been trying to envision a scene that may or may not have happened – one of the Short Line's motor coaches crossing the Short Line bridge over the Chicago & Alton tracks at Bowling Green with a C&A train passing underneath. No photographs have been found of such a scene. Bowling Green/Pike County historian Ed Lawson does not know of such a picture nor even of a picture of the Short Line bridge. Do any of you know of such photographs? If so please let me know (Conrad Cheatham, 306 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Elsberry, MO 63343).

In lieu of such photographs Andy has commissioned railroad artist Robert West to pain such a scene. If photographs could be found it would help artist West.

The decision to abandon the Short Line south of Bowling Green caused customers in the abandoned section to seek relief. Effort was made to get the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad to purchase the 5 miles from Troy to its Francis Line at Moscow Mills. The Q refused but offered to build an interchange connection to the Short Line tracks.

Locals from the Troy area persuaded the St. Louis & Hannibal officials to set up a separate railroad to operate the track from Moscow Mills to Troy. The St. Louis & Troy Railway was set up with John Ringling, the Short Line president as president of the Troy road.

In 1943 the Ringling family decided to get rid the its Missouri railroads. An Abandonment application was filed with the Missouri Public service Commission on January 6, 1944. The abandonment application noted that the road was in poor condition and needed at least \$5,000 in repairs which it did not have. No interest had been paid in 1942 or 43. In the first 11 months of 1943 the road had lost over \$2,000.

This brought Troy businesses and industries back to square one. A group of local businessmen and community leaders decided to organize a new company to operate the railroad. At this stage of the game John Ringling was dead. The executors of his estate were his nephew John Ringling North and sister Ida Ringling North.

The Estate agreed to sell the railroad to a new company represented by Harry T. Gooch, Roy W. Blair, Charles Kemper, and Austin C. Creech, all of Troy. The Estate agreed to sell to the new company a note payable to John Ringling of \$30,000 that had been executed on February 20, 1933. The new company was required to pay the sum of \$12,000 to the Estate by May 1, 1944. 151 shares of common stock, out of an authorized 500 shares, were in the sale.

The Abandonment Application filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission went into more detail about the 5.2 miles of railroad. It notes that when the line was laid there was no ballast laid. Over the years the ballast had been added from time to time. But the track had settled. Most of the line was located alongside the Cuivre River and had been subjected to frequent floods. The ties were deteriorating and the culverts needed repairs.

There was an attempt to determine the salvage value of the line. The rail was light. There was some salvage value in the culverts. There was some salvage in the track tools and tools in the engine house. There was no machinery in the engine house. There was a gasoline engine in poor condition (it was a gasoline-mechanical Vulcan engine) and 2 boxcars. The station buildings and grounds had some value. The estimate net salvage value, after salvaging expenses had been subtracted, was put at \$15,000.

Industries on the line were all located at Troy. Troy had a small grain elevator. Kuhne Bros. Produce had been a shipper but by 1943 most of business was handled by trucks. U.S. Shoe Machinery operated a wooden shoe heel factory and received wood. There were several bulk oil stations: Lincoln County Oil Company, Lincoln County Farm Bureau Oil Company as well as Sinclair, Shell, and Standard oil facilities that were turning more and more to trucks. The highway department has an asphalt plant near the station. Both Troy and Moscow Mills were located on U.S. Hwy. 61, a concrete slab highway that ran from New Orleans to Canada. State highway 47 crossed Troy from east to west. Several truck companies offered regular service on these highways along with the old Foster Bus Lines that was a Trailways operation in 1943. Troy had a 1940 population of 1,493 while Moscow Mills had 347 people. Troy was only Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad's Francis line that passed through Moscow Mills.

This is what the Troy people purchased in 1944.

## SHORT LINE NEWS 17

My recent illness forced me to delay some Short Line News. As my health improves I hope to be able to do more Short Line research and to produce a few more newsletters. I hope that you find these items as interesting as I do. I appreciate any questions or comments on the St. Louis & Hannibal or its step child the St. Louis & Troy. I can't guarantee that they will be answered but I will try or try to find an answer. My continual thanks go to Ron Leake who sends these newsletters out by email and prodes me a long.

Ron reports that John Rogers continues to improve. John has kept the Short Line Museum in Center open, but he was very ill during the winter. Ron says that John continues to improve and hopes to be able to staff the Museum this year. God bless John and me and other sick with healing.

For a very small railroad the St. Louis & Hannibal had a lot of weird or unusual things about it. One of the major unusual things were 2 of its principal owners. These were John I. Blair and John Ringling. I have written about Ringling before, but now I would like to share a little biography of Blair. This might seem boring, but I believe that you will find that Blair was very different. Please stick with me!

John Insley Blair was born in upstate New Jersey in 1802. He came from a large family which lost its father when John was right young. As a child he took various jobs to help the family finances. When he was 11 he became a clerk in a general store owned by a cousin. John was very frugal. He saved his pay and in a few years he was able to buy the store. John drove a hard bargain with his suppliers. He demanded cheap prices from the salesmen/drummers who called on his store. This cut their commissions, but since John had a monopoly they had to do business with him. But then he began to branch out and buy other stores in other communities. Eventually he had a chain of 6 stores that were run by various relatives. By buying for 6 stores he commanded even lower prices from his suppliers. He helped his business by lowering his prices below his competitors and still made a good profit. He used these profits to purchase flour mills and eventually owned 5 flour mills. Also he purchased a cotton mill.

JIB chartered a bank in 1830. He served as president of this bank for 40 years. This was Belvidere Bank that became a national bank in 1865. This bank was one of only 3 in New Jersey to go through the Civil War and several panics without suspending specie payments. During the War it lent the Federal government \$ 1 million.

In the late 1830s JIB got acquainted with George and Seldon Scranton. He assisted these brothers in buying Oxford Iron Furnace. This brought JIB into the iron industry in upper New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. The Scrantons were from a town in eastern Pennsylvania that soon bore their name. This led JIB into another fairly new industry that needed a great deal of iron – railroads!

In 1841 JIB took his family on a trip to New Orleans, La. Part of the trip was by train. Railroads were still very new in 1841 so they could only travel a portion of the way by train. Part of the travel was over the Charleston & Hamburg Railroad from Charleston to Hamburg, S.C. (Hamburg is just across the Savannah River from Augusta, GA.) The C.&H. had been operation since 1830 and JIB pronounced it to be a marvelous trip.

When the Blairs returned home JIB got heavily involved in railroads. Before the trip he had been somewhat involved in railroads, especially some of the predecessor companies of the Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western Railway. JIB joined with some of his iron industry buddies like W.E. Dodge, Anson Phelps, Oakes Ames, the Scranton Brothers, etc. His involvement in the D.L.&W. Brought JIB into contact with a banker named Moses Taylor. (Later Blair and Taylor funded the completion of the Short Line).

In 1860 JIB went to Chicago for the presidential convention of the young Republican Party. While on this trip he became convinced that the railroad industry was about to boom in Iowa and the Midwest. JIB and his second son DeWitt Clinton and other relatives got heavily involved in



surveying some predecessors of the Chicago & Northwestern railway. Diaries were kept that have been published by the Iowa State Historical Society. These diaries show the rough life of the surveying party and other workers. This railroad work opened the door for JIB to purchase large amounts of land that added to his wealth. These surveyors determined the route of the railroads, but they also determined whether or not a town received railroad service. By determining the location of stations JIB was able to name many of these stations and towns.

JIB named many towns for him, members of his family, and friends. One station was named in honor of his friend Oakes Ames. Ames, IA gained additional fame when a state university was located there. Towns were named for both of JIB's daughters. When a favorite dog was killed by a train JIB changed the name of the station to Colo. (The website for Colo, IA shows a very small town that admits the origin of its name.) Iowa has had a number of towns with names like Blairstown, Blairsburg, etc. Incidentally Blairstown, MO was named for JIB. It is on the route of the old Kansas City & Southern Railway that JIB owned for a time in the western part of Missouri. JIB named numerous towns in the upper Midwest or platted them. It is somewhat difficult to list them all. I have seen several lists that do not agree with each other. There are several places that were in a list but when I checked their website it said that the town was named for someone else.

JIB moved his family to Gravel Hill, NJ in the 1830s. Within time he convinced the community leaders to change its name to Blairstown. He made Blairstown his headquarters. Since Blairstown was not on a railroad he had the 12 mile Blairstown Railway built from the town to the D.L.&W. tracks. This made it easier for JIB to travel. He built a mansion on top of a hill overlooking Blairstown. (The mansion and the Blairstown Railway are now gone.)

Still in operation is Blairstown Academy that was established by JIB and several others in 1848. This was established to educate local boys and the sons of Presbyterian ministers. The Academy was presented to Newton Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of which JIB was a member. (Today it is co-educational) The first electric power plant in Blairstown was built by JIB to provide electricity to the Academy and his home.

JIB's friendship with President Lincoln got him appointed to the first board of directors of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1864. This effort at building a transcontinental railroad was caught up in scandal and other problems and was not built. It was revived in the 1868-69 timeframe and built from Omaha, NE to meet the Central Pacific in Utah, but JIB was not involved.

In a future issue I will share a little more about John Insley Blair.

## **SHORT LINES NEWS 18**

**(Friends of The Short Line)**

Recently a friend phoned to ask some questions about the Pike County Short Line Railroad. This friend is modeling the Short Line and has decided to add a second line that he is calling the Pike County Short Line.

The Pike County Short Line comes out of the early history of the Short Line Railroad. The St. Louis & Keokuk Railroad was chartered in 1857 to build a railroad between St. Louis, MO and Keokuk, IA. For various reasons this road was not built. The effort was renewed in the early 1870s. Work was done on the line from Oakwood to New London.

A major controversy arose over the exact route. The 1857 charter had only specified the counties through which the road was to be built, but not the towns. There was a group of people who wanted to build through Troy, Bowling Green, and Frankford. However, there was strong push by Louisiana and Clarksville to have the railroad routed along the western banks of the Mississippi River. Both of these towns were riverports. They saw the railroad as a means to bring business to their ports. This river route had the support of those who were planning the Ralls County Branch Railroad from New London to Perry and beyond.

When it seemed that the river route might win out 2 Pike County townships took action. Movers and shakers in Cuivre and Peno townships chartered the Pike County Short Line Railroad on May 23, 1871 to fund an effort to build a railroad from Bowling Green through Frankford to the St. Louis & Keokuk railroad at New London. Cuivre Township subscribed \$50,000 to the project along with a private subscription of \$21,000. Another \$25,000 subscription was promised. On June 27 Peno Township voted to subscribe \$40,000 to any railroad company who would build a railroad through the township by way of Frankford.

The St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk Railroad was incorporated on July 13, 1872 by the Missouri & Iowa Railway Construction Company. Its purpose was to build a railroad Hannibal to the North Missouri/Wabash at or near Wentzville. There were several attempts at directing the money from these 2 townships to the river line or the old St. Louis & Keokuk but these failed. On March 4, 1873 the Pike County Short Line was sold the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk. In this sale the StL H&K was given permission to use the Pike County Short Line name. Those selling the PCSL included the 2 townships, R.K. Biggs, William Bage, S.G. Reynolds, John McCune, P.P. Parker, D.L. Caldwell, James Monaghan, and the Missouri & Iowa Railway Construction Company. A.P. Miller was president and P.P. Parker was secretary.

By the time this sale was enacted the Missouri & Iowa Railway Construction Company was already busy building the railroad from New London to Frankford. So the Pike County Short Line was incorporated into the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk and this railroad used the name Short Line.

Back to John Insley Blair: Blair was extremely wealthy. It was reported that at his death in 1899 that estate was worth over \$70 million. It has also been reported that Blair was very tight with his money. I have found a number of stories that show how cheap he could operate.

It is reported that one occasion he was eating lunch at a restaurant in a depot somewhere in the west. He noticed a sign on the wall that stated that meals for passengers were 50 cents while they were just 25 cents for employees. The story says that when JIB finished eating and went to pay that he handed the cashier a quarter. The cashier wanted to know if he belonged to the railroad? He replied by saying that the railroad belonged to him. Then he left.

JIB had offices in New York City. He would go there to take care of business. The stories are that for lunch JIB would go to a restaurant and order a pot of hot water and a cup. When the water arrived he would take a container of tea from his coat. He would make his own cup of hot tea for lunch. For food he would take some of the saltine crackers on the table and eat them or take some crackers out of a container in his pockets.

In those days before through sleeping cars many passengers had to change trains in Chicago. This might require a lengthy wait until the connecting train departed. Most people of some wealth would rent a room at some hotel near the stations. There families and individuals could rest or refresh themselves and/or dine at a restaurant or at the hotel cafe. On very long layovers patrons could nap or take baths and/or change clothes. When JIB came into Chicago he operated differently. He usually went to the men's room. There he could get a shave and maybe a haircut. He would often nap in the barber chair or on the couch or chairs. Sometimes he might wash his shirt in a sink and put it on the radiator to dry in wintertime. Sometimes he might read a newspaper lying around in the restroom. The restroom attendants had instructions to call JIB in plenty of time to catch his connecting train. The attendant and/or barber would receive a dime or so tip for his assistance. There might also be a lecture on not wasting money on unneeded things or on saving money for a rainy day.

Speaking of those attendants – on one occasion JIB had his shoes shined by an attendant. JIB paid him but the attendant did not have change. So a year later JIB came to the same men's room with muddy shoes. He got them shined and told the attendant that he paid double the previous year so he owed nothing this time.

Several sources noted that JIB traveled an estimated 40,000 miles every year. Since he had a number of properties, railroad and otherwise, in the Midwest we can imagine that he went through Chicago quite often, much to the regret of the attendants in the men's room. Of course any bad service would be reported to the station managers.

JIB married Nancy Locke in 1826 and they had 4 children. The oldest daughter married Charles Scribner who started a noted publishing business. The other daughter married Clarence Mitchell of New York City. Marcus never married. Before he died young he bothered his parents with his lifestyle. DeWitt Clinton became JIB's right hand man and traveled all over the East and Midwest with his dad or doing business for his dad. He did not succeed his father as president of the Short Line. This account of JIB has been long, but he was a huge factor in the Short Line. Learning a little about JIB can help us better understand the Railroad. He supplied a great deal of money for its construction, but may have operated it on the cheap. The little Short Line was just a small cog in Blair's rail empire.

**SHORT LINE NEWS 19**

In 1942 the St. Louis & Hannibal made an effort to abandon the Perry Branch. They asked the Missouri Public Service Commission for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to allow it to abandon the Branch. This was Case No. 10,200. A hearing before the P.S.C. was held on May 25, 1942. Company attorney Harry Carstarphen appeared for the Company. W.H. Robey of Perry appeared for himself and residents of Perry and Center. The testimony noted that the Branch was 17.8 miles from Ralls Junction. The population of Perry was 830 and Center had 488 people while the tributary area of the Branch had about 2500 people. Both Center and Perry were served by the motor-freight carrier, Hannibal-Quincy Truck Lines and by the passenger carrier, Finley Bus Lines. Both of these were able to use a paved highway. It was noted that both of these carriers were pulling business from the Short Line. Rail service consisted of one motor coach with a passenger capacity of 14 with a compartment for less than carload freight, mail and express. This operated daily except Sundays. Steam freight service was provided as needed. Abandonment would eliminate one motor coach operator and two station agents.

It was noted that the Branch track was not ballasted and was just laid on the surface of the prairie land. It had not been adequately maintained and was in need of several thousand replacement ties. The Company estimated that it would cost at least \$20,000 to enable the continued operation of the Branch.

System figures for 1941 showed Operating Revenues of \$100,583.68 while Operating Expenses were \$80,048.46. Figures for the Branch were: Operating Revenues of \$13,032.54 while the Operating Expenses were \$14,937.03. These figures did not include deductions for applicant's fixed charges of which \$4,397 was assigned to the Branch.

Citizens from New London, Bowling Green, and Frankford were opposed to the abandonment but would rather see it go than to loose the whole railroad. Protestants from Center and Perry opposed the abandonment. They charged that one reason for the low patronage of the Branch was due to the Company's failure to maintain its property. They also noted that the War had caused a shortage of rubber which had caused a severe shortage of auto tires.

The PSC stated that it understood the economic situation of the branch, but that Pearl Harbor had changed conditions tremendously. It noted that areas that produced 90% of the world's rubber supplies were in the hands of the enemy. Just supplying rubber to the armed forces might be difficult. There was the possibility that all privately owned vehicles and a large percentage of the commercial carriers might have to be immobilized. If the railroad was abandoned the people of the area might be placed in conditions similar to what existed before the railroad was built in 1892. In addition this area supplied 2 classes of products essential to the war effort: food and fuel. (There were 2 coal mines operating within 4 miles of Perry.)

The Commission denied the abandonment request. However, it stipulated that the Company could re-file after January 15, 1943 and should present evidence of continual financial difficulty. This order was announced on September 11, 1942.

This gives a look at the situation on the Branch in 1942. Abandonment was approved in 1943.

Recently Andy Sisk visited with his aunt Jewel Mason. Jewel lived in Frankford during the time 1919-39. Later she lived on a farm between Bowling Green and McCune Station. The Short Line tracks ran through their property. She remembers the Short Line. As a child her mother would take her to the tracks to see the train go by. She would wave at the train and conductor Jake Totsch would wave back. She described Jake as a big man with a large head. He wore a conductor's hat and was usually in the baggage car. She remembers that the average freight train was some 12 or so cars – there would be 3 or so hoppers and the rest would be boxcars. [Editor's Note: the Short Line brought coal from the Perry mines.] Jewel said that there was a siding behind the depot that was used by the feed store, for loading and unloading freight, and for oil cars. She remembers a cattle chute some 8-10 boxcars lengths south of the depot. She remembers seeing cattle driven through backyards on the eastern edge of Frankford for loading on trains.

Jewel says that the motor coaches/Hurdy-Gurdy were maroon in color. Their colors were very similar to the colors of the cabooses. She remembers that the seats were leather. When Andy asked her about opening the windows she stated that she would have been afraid to open them – the motor coaches rocked so much that she would have been afraid of being thrown out. She believes that the regular passenger cars that were used before the motor coaches were green in color. [Ed. Note – Pullman green?] Her future husband Ed used to ride the motor coaches and cabooses of freights to come to Frankford to see her. Later Ed rode the train to visit Jewel's farm near Bowling Green

She remembers the circus train going through once, perhaps about 1925. She thinks that it was about 12 cars long. In other years her father told her about John Ringling riding through in a caboose.

Jewel remembers that Charlie Tanner was the section foreman on the section based at McCune Station. Once General Manager Ramsay sent Tanner on a handcar with a bucket of water to help Jewel fight a fire along the right of way that had been started by a passing train. She had been fighting the fire with a wet gunny sack when Ramsay came by in his Packard automobile. She had complained to the General Manager and he sent Tanner to help fight the fire.

We are appreciative of Jewel Mason's eyewitness information on the Short Line. We thank Andy Sisk for quizzing his aunt.

Reflecting on the request to abandon the Perry Branch. The Hannibal Public Library has 2 slide carousels of images that Andy Sisk made from the files of Harry Carstarphen relating to the abandonment. These slides are in the Missouri Room of the Library. [Ed. Notes. – When I tried to look at these slides several years ago the staff on duty had trouble finding them. Then I was told that a projector was no longer available.] It was noted that the tracks were not ballasted and just laid on the ground. Interesting! When the Branch was constructed in 1892 it must have been built cheaply. Newspaper articles note that the new effort used the right of way from the old Ralls County Branch Railroad efforts 20 years earlier. Some of the old grade had to be rebuilt. But essentially the 1892 railroad was laid on the grade constructed in 1872. It is surprising that no effort was made to ballast the track. Andy Sisk says that people have told him that after a rain mud would squirt from under the tracks as a Hurdy-Gurdy passed by. Looking a 1914 PSC inspection report it was noted than 10 cars of ballast were being delivered to the Branch daily. Andy has a family picture from 1913 that shows ballast on the Bran

## SHORT LINE NEWS 20

Our group has been hit by death again. Early in August 2007 John Bibb of Louisiana died. John and his wife attended most of our meetings and helped with our finances. Also John Conn died. John was a media man and videotaped a gathering at the elementary school in New London as this group was considering having regular meetings. Both of these men will be missed. We extend our sympathy to their families.

One of the aims of this newsletter is to share information on the Short Line from my files and the files of other fans. I hope that this is interesting and informative.

Recently Andy Sisk secured some bridge information from the Archives of the old I.C.C. From this sheet we note: The bridge over the Big Peno Creek consisted of 3 – 40 ft and 1 – 42 ft. deck plate girder spans, 2 concrete abutments, and 3 concrete piers for a length of 165 feet. The bridge was built in 1915. [Ed. Note: The site of this bridge is located on the farm of former Pike County Clerk Ford. It is some distance from paved roads. Some years ago a number of Friends were able to visit the site due to the kindness of Mr. Ford who took us there in 4-wheel drive vehicles. The grade leading up to the bridge is very visible. The bridge is gone but a pier still stands.]

The bridge over the Chicago & Alton RR at Bowling Green was described as a one trussed stringer span, single track, on 2 concrete abutments, length 28 ft. The bridge is gone but the concrete abutments can still be seen from Business 61 in Bowling Green.

Bridge 76 over Mule Creek was one 58 ft. deck plate girder span on 2 concrete abutments that was built in 1909. Does anyone know the location of Mule Creek? I have asked several Pike County historians, but they do not know.

Unfortunately the Valuation Report does not give the location of all the bridges. It mentions one 46 ft. deck plate girder span on 2 concrete abutments that was built in 1911. Another bridge was one 117 ft. thru riveted truss span on one concrete abutment and one cylinder pier that was built in 1906. A third bridge was composed of two 75 ft. thru plate girder spans on 3 cylinder piers that was built in 1915

Looking at the Report of the Inspection in 1914 by the State P.S.C. I find that the Short Line had 4 miles of Joliet 56 pound steel rails, 63.5 of Edgar Thompson and Scranton 60 lb. Steel and 36.5 miles of Illinois steel Company's 70 lb. steel rail. The rail was described as being in good condition except for the 56 # rail in the first few miles out of Hannibal and about 4 miles of the 70# rail between Whiteside and Silex. The rail in both of these sections was badly kinked and surface bent and there were a number of chipped and spliced rails in the 56# section. It was recommended that the rail in both sections be replaced as soon as finances permitted. In the meantime a 15 mph speed restriction should be placed on both of those sections. It was noted in the 56# rail leaving Hannibal that half angle bars were used as splices on broken or short pieces of rail. This was severely criticized. The tie condition was found to be very good. White oak ties were used. Some 141,855 ties had been renewed between 1910 and 1913 on the main line. In the same period 28,849 ties had been renewed on the Branch. Those renewals were considered to be above normal. It was noted that no tie plates had been used on that road.

The report noted that the right of way and roadbed were in fair condition. Ditches in the cuts needed to be cleaned out and opened for drainage. The full right of way showed no indication of having been cut and cleared twice each year as the law required.

Ballast: Engine cinders, earth, burnt slag from mines and river gravel were used for ballast. There were 40 miles of earth ballast, 1.5 miles of burnt slag, 55.5 miles of salt river gravel, and 6 miles of engine cinder ballast. At that time some 20 cars of ballast were being delivered daily, 10 cars to the main line and 10 to the Branch. While the earth ballast was described as good general manager Modisett stated that the intention was put the entire line on gravel.

Bridges: The inspectors noted that in 1904 there were 10,353 lineal feet of timber bridges in use. A decade later the number was down to about 3,000 feet. Concrete and steel structures were

replacing the timber trestles. At that time the wooden Howe truss across Big Peno Creek was being replaced with concrete abutments and piers and a steel bridge. (See the above) If finances permitted there were plans to replace the wooden Howe truss across the West Cuivre River that year. (It was done in 1915)

Speaking of the valuation records back in the nineteens the people in Washington who spend our money determined that our Nation's railroads should be examined to determine their replacement value. Over a period of years the Nation's railroads were thoroughly examined. Examiners walked every foot of each railroad taking copious notes. Things like cattle guards, fences, switches, etc. were noted. Depots, roundhouses, section houses, and numerous structures were measured and sometimes photographed or sketched. Locomotives, freight and passenger cars and other equipment were examined. All of this information was collected and processed and preserved. The examiners placed a replacement value on everything. The railroads were then permitted to examine this study and perhaps question the value. In the case of the Short Line it was examined in the 1915 era. The Company questioned some of the findings and the final verdict was not rendered until in the mid-1920s. Summaries were drawn up of the examinations. These were published in a bound form. Many of these summaries can be found in major libraries. In Missouri the summaries can be found at the Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri, St. Louis campus. Other collections may be located in other libraries of which I am not aware. The material collected is preserved in the Archives of the Interstate Commerce Commission just outside of Washington, DC. This October Andy Sisk plans to visit the Archives and examine the boxes of material on the Short Line. Andy has been in touch with some folks at the Archives and has arranged to visit there around the first of October. Whatever Andy finds he will share with the group, perhaps through this newsletter and at the Museum in Center. Personally I am looking forward to seeing what is available.

From time to time non-railfan friends (other than Ron Leake) send me things that they may uncover on the Short Line. Yesterday Lincoln County historian George Giles sent me an obituary via email of a Troy man who died in 1901. This man's son Dudley Farmer had come to his father's side. Dudley was mentioned as a conductor on the St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad. Checking some of my lists I find Dudley mentioned as a brakeman in 1899. My lists are incomplete, but brakemen were often promoted to conductor on most railroads. All information from George, Ron and others is appreciated.

## *Short Line News # 21*

The big news for the Friends of the Short Line is that Andy Sisk has just made a trip to the I.C.C. Records Center in Maryland outside of Washington. Andy spent October 3 at the Center looking at the Short Line Valuation records. From a couple of phone calls he had a big day. He was able to see and copy a number of the records dealing with the Short Line in 1915. Andy will be sharing this information with me and others and we hope to share this information with the rest of the group in the near future. Thanks Andy!

There is very little for sale on the Short Line. Member Allen Ballard runs Speedee Print Co. at 516 Broadway in Hannibal and has produced some note cards with Short Line scenes on them. Also he has some other items with Short Line scenes on them. The model railroad store in Hannibal has some magnets with a picture of a Short Line motor coach on it. [Neither I nor this organization has any financial ties to either of these.]

Over the years a number of interesting characters were associated with the Short Line, probably the most popular of these was the old conductor Jake Totsch. Many years ago I was able to talk to people who had ridden with Jake or had seen him. All seem to have had a favorable opinion of Totsch. For many people Totsch was the Short Line. He was a very large man. Many have claimed that he was so large that he would use his chest as a writing table. He seems to have been a very friendly person who ran his trains in accord with his wishes and those of the company. He did not like drunks, especially drunk men who made advances on women. More than one drunk lost his place on the train because a very obnoxious behavior. He liked women and children and went out of his way to assist both in having a pleasant trip. But woe to anyone who tried to bother a woman or child! Jake, and perhaps other conductors, would stop their trains to allow patrons to pick blackberries and other fruit in season. With few trains on the tracks and constantly late trains there was little danger of trouble. Also children were allowed to hitch a ride in the baggage cars of the southbound trains in the mornings and spend a day skating on the frozen railroad pond at Eolia. They would return home on the evening northbound passenger train.

Jacob (Jake) Totsch was born in Brown County, IL on February 25, 1869. He worked Northwestern Lumber Company and then Harrison-Curd Lumber Company in Hannibal. He worked on the Hannibal Police Force from June 1893 to June 1894. Then he went to work for the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway as Yardmaster in Hannibal. On May 3, 1895 he became a substitute conductor on the extra board. By May 1897 he had become a conductor on the work train. He became a regular conductor in 1900 and in April 1903 he became a passenger conductor which post he held until his death in 1927.

Jake had 3 brothers. One of these was Judge John Totsch of Hannibal whose name is seen frequently in local newspapers of the 1920s and 30s. Jake was married twice – he and his first wife had a daughter, Mrs. John Sultzman. His second wife was Ona Handy of Frankford. The above material is taken from Jake's obituary.

Stories: Once a man boarded the northbound passenger train # 2 at Troy. He was carrying a saddle that he has just purchased and was taking it home. Jake told the man that saddles were carried in the baggage car and this saddle should be taken to the baggage car. The man argued that he didn't want his new saddle put in the baggage car and damaged. Jake and the man got into a shouting match that then erupted into fisticuffs. Jake and the man fought all the way up the line. When the train reached Famous and Davis the fight stopped while Jake put on his coat and cap and got down to do his work. After Jake re-boarded and finished his work of taking tickets and seating passengers the fight resumed. At Briscoe the man picked up his saddle and departed the coach. He thanked Jake for the trip.

Once a young man with marriage on his mind flagged the train down and boarded the southbound train. He forgot to tell Jake his plan so Jake was surprised to see a bunch of red flags facing the train a few miles further on. After stopping the train Jake asked what the problem was.



He was told that a wedding was going to take place. A young girl boarded the train along with some other people and went to the young man. The train proceeded on. Near Davis the engine developed some trouble. It took about 2 hours to correct the problem with the young couple worrying and begging for the crew to hurry. As the train reached the Moscow Mills depot there was a crowd standing on the platform. The couple and their friends stepped onto the platform after asking Jake to delay the train. A minister was in the crowd and he stepped forward to marry the couple while the train crew and the other passengers watched. As soon as the benediction was pronounced the now married couple climbed back into the coach to begin the first leg of their honeymoon trip.

Jake did not like wisecracks. Once a man with baited breathe got on the train and announced that he was going to Hell. Jake said: "O.k. 75 cents and get off at Silex."

In the summer of 1910 a buggy whip salesman boarded the train at Troy. As the train was pulling out of the station the salesman frantically sought out the conductor with the news that he had left his sample case on the platform. Jake stopped the train. Then he had the train backed a quarter of a mile to the depot where the man got his case. (He could be very accommodating).

As I stated earlier Jake did not care for drunks and deadbeats and troublemakers. More than one these characters found himself "on the cinders" as the saying went. This was often in the middle of nowhere. More than once the Company was sued by a man who had been put off a train and forced to walk miles in the dark.

Jake was the conductor on # 1 in 1925 when a car load of clay at the clay mines near Whiteside jumped the derail and rolled all the way to Silex where it crashed into the last coach. The coach was telescoped into the next car. Jake was down on the ground and he was credited with helping patrons off of the coach when the runaway was spotted. No lives were lost thanks to Jake and other crew members.

For many people Totsch seems to have been the face of the Short Line. In the old days when I would talk to people who had ridden the train or who had been around the railroad they would talk about Jake. Unfortunately on January 14, 1927 Jake slipped on some ice and fell. He contracted a cold and flu. He was taken to Levering Hospital in Hannibal. It was determined that he had suffered a partial stroke. He died on February 13, 1927.

I am always interested in Jake Totsch stories. If anyone would like to send them to me they will be appreciated. Conrad Cheatham, 306 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Elsberry. MO 63343.

**SHORT LINE NEWS # 22**

(The Friends of the St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)

Thanksgiving is behind us now and Christmas is just around the corner. Before we all get too involved in other things I thought that I might work on another newsletter. There are some things to report – Andy Sisk brought me some early Christmas presents back in October when he returned from visiting the I.C.C. Valuation records near Washington. More on that later.

Ron Leake says that the museum at the depot in Center has been closed for the winter. The weather will be getting worse and people in Ralls County are getting involved in other activities. As soon as things get better in the new year the museum will be opened. Most of you probably know that the Bowling Green depot still stands. It is a residence. Back in October I took a friend from Georgia to see it and learned it is almost blocked off visually. A large fence has been erected just east and south of the building. For years the depot has been fairly open for good photographs. But in recent years things have been constructed around it so that it is difficult to get good photographs. It is mostly open from the north and west. From the north there are several obstructions, like automobiles. The depot is located on West Champ Clark Drive that was formerly known as College Street.

This depot was built in 1909 to replace the previous depot that had burned. As best as I can determined the 1909 depot was the third Short Line depot.

Andy found and brought back copies of some interesting material. Keep in mind that all of this material dates to 1917-18 period. He was able to get some more bridge information. This list tells us that the bridge over the Salt River at New London consisted of two 147 foot riveted truss spans with 2 masonry abutments and one masonry pier for a length of 294 feet. The superstructure was built in 1910. (The pier and abutments are still standing and can be seen with some effort.

This list tells us that the bridge over Spencer Creek consisted of two 70 foot and one 40 foot through girder spans, 2 concrete masonry abutments and 2 concrete piers for a total length of 180 feet. This superstructure was built in 1912.

When the Valuation Report was made in 1918 the Short Line had 9 locomotives.

- # 5 a 4-4-0 built by Cooke Locomotive Works in 1892
- # 6 a 4-4-0 built by Schenectady Locomotive Works in 1884
- # 7 a 4-4-0 built by Schenectady Locomotive Works in 1884
- # 14 a 4-4-0 built by Pittsburgh Locomotive Works in 1895
- # 15 a 4-4-0 built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1888
- # 16 a 0-4-0 built by American Locomotive Company in 1899
- # 17 a 2-6-0 built by American Locomotive Company in 1910
- # 18 a 2-6-0 built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1912

Locomotives 5,6,7,14,15 were listed as Mixed Service – they could work both passenger and freight trains. 16 was listed as switch service – worked the Hannibal area. 17 and 18 were listed as freight service. 14-16 had been acquired second hand. # 18 is noted as the last Short Line engine purchased new.

Passenger equipment in 1918 included:

Baggage car # 19 had a length of 34 feet. It had a wood body and wood underframe with 4 wheel arch bar trucks.

Baggage and Express cars #s 20-21. These were built by Jackson & Sharpe Co. in 1884. They were 50 feet long with wood bodies and underframes and 4 wheel trucks.

Baggage and Mail cars: # 22 was built by American Car & Foundry Co. in 1891. It was 50 feet long with wood body and underframe and composite 4 wheel trucks.

# 23 had a length of 60 feet with wood body and underframe and composite 6 wheel trucks. It was purchased second hand.

Passenger cars: #'s 31-33 were built by Litchfield Car & Equipment Co. – Jackson & Sharpe Co. in 1884-85. They were 50 feet long with wood bodies and underframes and composite 4 wheel trucks.

#'s 34, 36, 37 were built by American Car & Foundry Co. in 1891. They were 50 feet long with wood bodies and underframes and composite 4 wheel trucks.

Work Equipment in 1918 included:

Outfit Box Car: No. 122 was built by Litchfield Car & Mfg. Co. in 1884. Its capacity was 40,000 lbs. It had a wood body and underframe.

Cinder Car: No. 41 had a capacity of 40,000 lbs. With a wood body and underframe.

Flat Cars: Nos. 109, 184, 198 were built by Interstate-State Car Co. – American Car & Foundry Co. in 1884 and 1905. Their capacity was 4000 lbs. with wood underframes.

Pile Driver was built in 1915 with a wood body and underframe. Its capacity was 60,000 lbs. Its length was 32 feet. It was purchased second hand.

[In 1918 wood bodies and underframes had not yet been outlawed nor had arch bar trucks. 1884 was when the old St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk Railway went into receivership. In 1891 the Short Line was preparing for its building of the Perry Branch.]

I will give the freight car roster in 1918 in a future newsletter. Some people may not want all of this information. Please keep in mind that this is a good picture of the railroad that John Ringling purchased in 1919. Ringling made a number of improvements that helped as well as some that were questionable. Locomotive # 18 was the last locomotive that the Short Line purchased new. Ringling brought in a number of used locomotives and used freight cars.

One of the major things that Andy found were the Valuation Maps. These maps are dated July 1, 1917. Andy brought back copies of maps showing most of the stations. These maps give us information on all of the sidings and businesses at each station in 1917. Things would have changed over the next 2 decades, but most of the sidings were probably still in place when the lower end was abandoned in 1933 and the end of the branch in 1943 and the main line in 1944. In several cases we can see things like the location of the railroad pond in Eolia that supplied water to the tank and provided a good place for people to skate in the winter.

Andy brought a list of stations that tells us what was at each location in 1918. For instance, Edgewood had just a passenger shelter that was wooden with a board roof. It was 12.5ft.x14 ft. The stockyard had one pen. Cyrene had a similar structure but its stock yard had 2 pens. I will share more of this information in the future.

**SHORT LINE NEWS # 23****(Friends of the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway)**

Member Dick Blough sent in an article from a 1941 *Railroad Magazine* by Lad Arend. This was an autobiographical article by a man who referred to himself as a short line boomer. For those who are not familiar with the term a boomer was a railroad employee who moved around from railroad to railroad. Most railroad employees chose to spend their careers with one or maybe a couple of railroads. Boomers were people who moved constantly for various reasons. Some guys preferred to work in warm weather so they might take a job with a road in the northern climates, but when frost started appearing they headed for warmer roads. Some just had itchy feet – a few months or years in one place was all that they could handle. Some guys ran afoul of trainmasters or superintendents and left before being fired. Some left to escape pregnant girlfriends or a matrimonial noose or creditors, or the law or whatever.

Arend was a man who moved from short line to short line. I had the privilege of corresponding with Arend in the mid 1970s and Barbara and I visited with him briefly at his home in Ohio. A mutual friend had told me about this guy who had worked on the St. Louis & Hannibal at one time. So I enjoyed our letters. I have thought about sharing some of the information I received from his letters. Dick's article has spurred me on.

Lad Arend was born in 1885. I corresponded with him in the mid-1970s so he was no spring chicken. His memory was pretty good. Arend's connections with the Short Line family began with his employment by the old Dayton, Toledo & Chicago, a little short line in Ohio that John Ringling owned. Arend worked in the auditor's office. The DT&C folded in the early 1920s. After a brief stop with another road Arend came to Hannibal. In his article he stated he came to Hannibal to work in the auditor's office of the St. Louis & Hannibal until he was able to become its general manager.

In the article Arend relates several adventures while was on our railroad. As an auditor he traveled to the different stations to check the books. On one occasion he had traveled to Silex on No. 1. As soon as the train stopped he went into the depot to confer with the agent when there was a loud commotion and a crash. A gondola loaded with slag had just crashed into the rear car of No. 1. An article in a 1925 *Troy Free-Press* gives more details than Arend. There was a quarry near Whiteside. Crews had loaded a gon and were moving it so that an empty could be positioned for loading. The loaded car started rolling and could not be stopped. It jumped the switch and got onto the main line and followed No. 1 to Silex. On Silex hill the speed increased. Passengers were just leaving No. 1 when the runaway was spotted. Alarms were given and Conductor Totsch helped carry a woman passenger into the depot and several other people hurried away. The runaway hit with enough force to jam the rear of the car into the rest of the car. No one was killed but several were injured in the rear car and the next car.

Arend related another adventure at Silex. During the winter of 1924 he was making his rounds in cold weather. A blizzard struck while he was at Silex. Train No. 2 was canceled along with other trains. As the hotel was full he had to sleep on a table in the depot. As he slept on the hard table he envisioned being in his bed the next night. Unfortunately the storm grew worse. No trains were run the next day and the highways were closed. So he spent a second night on the hard table. He did get home the following day.

In Hannibal Arend had a room at Mrs. Martz's boarding house. An attractive young lady was a waitress at the home. Despite the no fraternizing rules between boarders and the help Lad was able to date Millie Varvullas. Millie became his wife.

By 1926 Arend got itchy feet and left the St. L& H. When I corresponded with Arend in 1975 he told me that on several occasions he was sent east to shepherd some locomotives that Ringling had purchased back to Ringling lines. To build up his locomotive and car leasing business Ringling purchased a group of locomotives and a number of refrigerator cars from the New York Central System. Arend had to ride in a locomotive to make certain that none of the locomotives

were stripped or diverted to some other road's property. These locomotives were moved in the consists of local freights which meant that the journey was slow and Arend spent time sitting in passing tracks and yards. It was boring work but he was able to read and most of the crews were friendly and made suggestions about where to get food or invited him to join their meals.

Barbara and I were living in Georgia in the 1970s, but made annual visits to the Midwest each summer to visit relatives. One year we routed ourselves home via Franklin, Ohio so that we could visit Lad. We found him at his home – the railroad car *Chama* that he had purchased from a former employer. The car was set up on blocks on the edge of Franklin. We visited with Arend on his front porch. He was a white-headed man in his 90s dressed in a trainman's uniform. We enjoyed a nice visit, but then Lad had to go to a nursing home to help his wife eat supper and we needed to head south. Lad Arend got into a sports car and drove off with the top down. He was a very interesting person. He explained that many of his photographs of various short lines had disappeared along with a box of annual and trip passes. Years later I heard that much of his railroad collection had been donated to a museum.

When I first started researching the Short Line I found that several former employees were still living, including our late friend Bill Watts. Another employee I met was John Yochum. Yochum and his brother Alex had been engineers on the Short Line. When the St. Louis & Troy railroad was set up on the Troy to Moscow Mills section John had come to Troy to be the engineer. For a brief time the Troy road rented St. Louis & Hannibal # 1413 to power its trains. Then a second-hand gas-mechanical locomotive was purchased. In 1945 this was replaced by a 25 ton locomotive that had been purchased from Plymouth Locomotive Works. Yochum was engineer until in the 1950s when he retired. He was replaced by Oscar Cox who served until the abandonment in 1960. Cox was still living in Troy in the 1970s. I was able to visit with him some.

Roadway Equipment in 1917: 8 Fairbanks Morse Hand cars; 8 Fairbanks Morse Push cars; 5 Fairmont Motor cars; 6 H.P engine mounted on hand cars; 1 Motor Inspection car – Fairmont # 12, 1916; 1 Motor car, Booster 3 H.P. gas engine mounted on hand car; 2 Concrete mixers – one-fourth yard capacity, Municipal Engine Co., second hand; 1 Motor car, Fairbanks Morse, 1911.

Again, this was the Short Line just a few years before John I. Blair's grandsons sold it to John Ringling. Again I will have more information later. On January 22 I will join Andy Sisk in heading to the I.C.C. to see for myself. We will fly to Baltimore and commute to the Archives and return on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

## SHORT LINE NEWS # 24

I finally did it! On January 23 and 24 of this year I was able to visit the National Archives in College Park, MD. Back in the 1980s I learned that the Federal Government ordered all railroads to be examined as to their value. What would it cost to reproduce each railroad. This valuation examination had been ordered in the years before we got involved in World War I. It continued during the War and was not completed until in the late 1920s.

After learning about this I further learned that the St. Louis & Hannibal had been examined and that the results of this examination were in the National Archives. Naturally I wanted to see these records but was not able to go. In October of 2007 member Andy Sisk spent a day at the Archives. He noted that more than one day was needed and challenged me to go with him in 2008. Despite the limitations from my stroke I agreed to go.

It was more than I could have imagined. Not only does the Archives have the valuation material but there is information on a number of other things pertaining to the Short Line, including detailed information on the various abandonments. As times goes by I hope to share with you some of the things that we have learned about the Short Line that were not covered in the various newspapers.

For instance, we learned that when the valuation study was conducted (about 1917) the Short Line had 2 fuel stations: Oakwood and Gilmore. Oakwood had a coal trestle that was 145 feet long. (We did not find photos of anything). But the coal trestle had small buggies on tracks. According to photos that I have seen of similar facilities coal was placed in these buggies and then dropped into the tenders of waiting locomotives. This was a slow way to fuel a locomotive but cheaper than building a large concrete chute that was common on larger railroad. There was a similar type operation at Gilmore, except the trestle was smaller at 138 feet long. No fuel station was mentioned for Perry which suggests that locomotives used on the Branch were fueled at Oakwood. For many years the Short Line purchased the coal for its locomotives from the coal mines at Perry.

Water in 1917 was available at various tanks along the way. Oakwood had a wooden tank with a diameter of 20 feet and a height of 14 feet. This tank had a concrete frame and foundation. It was served by a dug well – 7 ft x 7 ft x 14 ft deep. Going south the next water tank was at Penno where there was a wooden tank that had a diameter of 22 feet and a height of 14 feet. This tank had a timber frame and foundation. It was served by a dug well – 7 ft x 8 ft x 9 ft deep. The next water tank was at Eolia. It was wood had a diameter of 22 feet and was 14 feet high. It had a timber frame and a concrete foundation. Eolia had the next tank. It was wooden with a 22 foot diameter and a height of 14 feet. This tank had a timber frame and a concrete foundation. Eolia had a pond/small lake that supplied water. The next tank listed was at some place called Elmore, MO. The wooden tank there had a 20 foot diameter and a height of 16 feet. It was on timber blocking. There was a pump house but no well was mentioned so there must have been a lake or pond. Gilmore had the next tank that was wooden with a diameter of 22 feet and a height of 14 feet. It was on a timber frame and a 10 foot concrete foundation. Gilmore had a dug well – 14 feet in diameter and 16 feet deep. Perry had a wooden tank that had a diameter of 20 feet and a height of 12 feet. It was on a concrete frame and a 18 foot high foundation. This tank was built in 1916. There was a pump house but no well was mentioned. Since this may have too early for city water there may have been a pond to store water. So far the only photographs that have been uncovered of any of the fuel or water stations is a picture of the Perry tank.

Information in the various reports seems to be pretty accurate, but Andy copied a map of the Short Line route dating from before the abandonment of the south end that had a mistake. This map shows the Short Line running through Louisville in Lincoln County. Louisville is printed on the map. But the Short Line route was east of Louisville. It went through Whiteside and then Silex. The map places Louisville right under Eolia and way east of the actual location of Louisville. Some other strange items on the map Frankford is not mentioned but Jones and

McCune are. Briscoe is mentioned but not Silex or Whiteside, both bigger places. On the Branch, Center is not mentioned but Briggs and Orrwood are. The other maps that were copied seem to be more accurate.

What did the Short Line look like before its final abandonment in 1944? Some notes that I jotted down from the abandonment procedure give us an idea. At that time the railroad ran from Hannibal to Bowling Green 32.8 miles. Passenger trains were operated by the motor coaches, also known as herty-kertys. In 1944 the railroad had 3 of these motor coaches with a total seating capacity of 50. Each of these cars had seats for a few passengers along with space for baggage and mail in the rear. The report lists 3 steam locomotives that were active, 2 of these were built before 1910 while the third was built between 1925 and 1929. Available for freight service on January 1, 1944 were 3 box cars, 8 flat cars, 16 gondola cars, and one caboose.

The directors of the company were John Ringling North, W.C. Ramsay, C.W. Crow, Harry Carstarphen, J.J. Richman, H.E. Rushing, and R.S. Moss of Bowling Green. North was president of the company (he was the older son of John Ringling's sister Ida. After John had health and financial problems in the early 1930s Ida sent her 2 sons to help John out. J.R.N. and Henry Ringling North helped Uncle John recover from the problems that he had with his sister-in-laws, the government and other problems. The boys recommended that the lower end be abandoned and the rail and other equipment be sold. After John died J.R.N. represented the Estate of John Ringling and became president of the company and then president of the great circus.) In 1944 the Estate still controlled 6,193 shares of stock. The rest of the directors had 1 share each. Ramsay was vice-president and general manager of the Short Line during the Ringling ownership. Crow was secretary, treasurer, and auditor during this same time. P. T. Jones was listed as General Freight & Passenger Agent. Jones was the dispatcher.

Passenger counts leading up to the Abandonment: 1941 – 4,937; 1942 – 5,896; the first 11 months of 1943 – 5,306. This was all local business. The Short Line had to compete with a concrete highway 61 on which Foster Bus Lines operated, along with personal automobiles and other vehicles. According to what some people remember the motor coaches gave a rough, swaying ride which didn't attract riders.

Again I have to report a recent death – Mrs. Eleanor Turnbaugh who owned the depot in Bowling Green and who worked at Crystal's Restaurant. The depot was divided into 2 apartments. Mrs. Turnbaugh lived in one end and her son Joe lived in the other.

SHORT LINE NEWS # 25  
(The Friends of the Short Line Railway)

The St. Louis & Hannibal Railway is long gone. The Bowling Green to Gilmore portion was abandoned in 1932, except for the 5 miles between Troy and Moscow Mills. The Perry Branch was abandoned in 1943 with the rest of the main line being abandoned in 1944. Much of the old railroad is gone, but it is also surprising how much is still left in 2008. 4 of the depots are still standing: New London, Bowling Green, Silex, and Center. Except for the Silex depot all of these are in their original location.

It is still possible to see portions of many of the bridges and culverts. The best time to view these is when the vegetation is gone for the season. The famous Frankford Arch is still an impressive structure for a little railroad. Recently one of our members learned that the City of Frankford hopes to open the Arch up more for viewing. A landowner who had previously not been happy with people wandering around on the Arch has died and the City wants to make the Arch more available to tour groups and others. The Missouri Pacific caboos still stands on the southwestern edge of the right of way. There is interest in cleaning up the caboos as a tourist attraction.

South of Frankford is the 3-arch bridge over the Little Peno. This bridge once carried the main line of the Short Line, but now carries a county road over the Little Peno. The railroad right-of-way can be seen on both sides of the bridge.

Further north the concrete abutments and the pier for the bridge over the Salt River are still visible if you can get to them. On the northern side of the river one must journey across a field. A gate across the road is often closed and locked. The bridge over the Salt River was the longest on the Short Line at 284 feet.

Not too far from the Salt River there is the bridge over Camp Creek. This can be seen off Camp Creek Road that is just off County Road O. This structure is about one-half to three-fourths of a mile off O.

South of Silex there was Bridge # 75. Today the abutments remain. Further on south of Silex is Bridge # 76 over Mule Creek. This bridge was once a 58 foot deck plate girder span constructed in 1909. Both of the structures can be seen from a gravel road that goes from good to poor. Turn off Highway E just as you are coming into downtown Silex. As you get beyond the business area you will begin to see the grade on your right.

Speaking of visible grade Andy Sisk was asking recently about a section of grade within a golf course just north of Troy. 2 golf courses were side by side on North Lincoln Drive. Both have Short Line grade crossing them. The course closest to the Cuivre River has been for sale for 3 or so years. Plans were announced to build some 500+ housing units that I figured would destroy the grade. The project ran into difficulty with the City of Troy and has not been built. Most of the time an iron gate across the entrance is locked. If you can find it open the grade is not too far inside the property. There used to be a sign there marking the grade.

If you go looking for the grade or culverts and bridge abutments please be careful. A member of this group was trying to see some concrete abutments near Davis when a man came out of a house with a shotgun. They had a peaceful discussion, but the property owner does not want strangers hunting for railroad grade.

I have been working on a list of bridges and culverts. It is not finished. So far it covers 2 pages. This material has come from the Valuation information and the Valuation maps.

When Andy Sisk and I visited the National Archives we had hoped that we might find some information on the motor coaches that the Short Line had operated. Unfortunately we found little mention of them.

Many railroads, large and small, used motor coaches. These gasoline-powered machines were cheaper to operate than a steam engine. Many railroads used them on branch lines where passenger traffic was light. Small railroads used them on all of their lines. The Short Line used



them on both the main line and the Perry Branch. A fellow by the name of Edmund Keilty produced a 3 volume series of books on motor coaches/doodlebugs/herty-gurdy/rail bus vehicles. His third volume is on "Short Line Doodlebugs". For the St. Louis & Hannibal he mentions 3 Mack railbuses. There are a number of pictures of the Macks as well as of number 55. Number 55 was a Mack rail bus that the company streamlined in the Oakwood Shops. Keilty mentions a number 40 that was purchased in 1925. It was gone by 1929 according to Keilty. This vehicle has been difficult to run down. Neither Andy nor I have seen a photograph of # 40. (If anyone has a photo or knows of one we would be glad to borrow it for copying.)

Some questions from Andy led me to dig into some papers that I had not looked at in some years. I found a letter from an acquaintance from 1975. This guy is quite knowledgeable about the Missouri Pacific and Rock Island railroads. I thought that he might have run into some information and material on the Short Line. The only thing he could offer was some information from his research into the old Midland Valley Railroad. He noted that in an item from 1927 that the Midland Valley had purchased from John Ringling one second-hand General Electric Company Gas-Electric Passenger Motor Car. Another note said that Motor Car 6 was released for service in February 1928. This car later became KO&G M22 and was finally burned at Muskogee, Ok. We don't know for certain that this was originally St. Louis & Hannibal # 40. Since no references or pictures of this car have been found Andy and I are wondering if it was ever used on the Short Line. It is possible that car # 40 was a part of Ringling's Western Locomotive and Car Leasing where Ringling was buying second-hand equipment and trying to resell them. The late 1920s were the time when the Short Line had a number of ex-New York Central System locomotives and cars. This is another Short Line puzzle. Any ideas or help would be appreciated.

The other rail coaches were built by the Mack Company. This is the same company that has been building truck tractors for decades. According to Keilty the Short Line added 3 Mack rail coaches in 1930. These were numbered 52, 53, and 54. One of these was remodeled in the company shops at Oakwood. It received a streamlined look with a slanted nose. This may have been done to compete with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad's Zephyr streamline trains. Some of these Zephyrs were run the CB&Q's K-Line that ran down the western shore of the Mississippi. The Short Line's # 55 could not compete with the Zephyrs which ran on much superior track. Keilty notes that 55 had only 5 windows on a side whereas the non-streamlined Macks had 7. 2 photos of # 55 have been found. One shows the car in the shop area. The other shows it out in service.

## SHORT LINE NEWS # 26

Great News! A book on a portion of the St. Louis & Hannibal has been prepared. Allen Ballard of New London and owner of Speedee Print Shop in Hannibal is preparing a book on the Perry Branch in connection with the Sesquicentennial of Ralls County. Allen thought that the railroad should receive some coverage during this special time. He says that this will not be a thorough history of the Branch. It will be more of a casual history. He will be using newspaper articles, photographs, maps, these newsletters, and other material. Ron Leake, Andy Sisk, Archie Hayden, myself and others have loaned him material. The book has some 210 pages. It is selling for \$30. Speedee Print is located at 516 Broadway in Hannibal, 63401. You might offer some postage money.

The Perry Branch had its origination in a scheme put forth by Richard Dalton and some others in the 1870s. The St. Louis & Keokuk Railway was under construction on a route to link those 2 cities together. The railroad was under construction between Hannibal and New London and plans were being made to run this road along the western banks of the Mississippi River or across a ridge or county-seat route. Dalton and others proposed building a railroad through Center to Perry and perhaps beyond. The Ralls County Branch Railroad was started. Construction was begun, but was caught up in all of the problems of the St. Louis & Keokuk. The R.C.B.R. died but the idea of a trans-Ralls County railroad was revived by the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway.

For more details please see Allen's book.

Seeing a book on the Short Line Railroad is a long time dream of this writer. Many times over the last 30 or so years I have been encouraged to write a history of the St. Louis & Hannibal. That has been in the back of my mind. In order to write something I have thought it necessary to collect as much information as I could on the road. This has been difficult. The Company's records have been long gone. Much of my research has come from reading microfilmed copies of "The Troy Free-Press" and other area newspapers. Since I lived in Georgia from 1973 until 1999 this has been difficult. Thankfully the State Archives allows libraries to borrow microfilmed reels of its newspapers. I have learned a great deal. But many questions have arisen about many things. Since my return to Lincoln County I have been able to learn a great deal more. Visiting the National Archives with Andy Sisk last January answered numerous questions. Meeting all of the folks in the FOSL has been a major boost. I still lack some information. What I lack may not be all that important.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad decided that it needed to link the two largest cities of Missouri together by a route more direct than using its tracks from St. Louis to Hannibal and then its Hannibal & St. Joseph Railway from Hannibal to Kansas City.

After considerable study the C. B. & Q. chose a route that utilized its St. Louis, Keokuk & Northwestern line from St. Louis to the Lincoln County town of Old Monroe. A new line would be constructed from Old Monroe to Mexico, MO. From Mexico the C. B. & Q. trains would operate over the Chicago & Alton Railroad tracks to Kansas City. This new line would cross the Short Line at Moscow Mills. It would miss Troy by a couple of miles. In 1903 there were some rumors that the "Q" would buy the Short Line and operate its passenger trains over the new line from Moscow to St. Louis.

It was decided to try and complete the new line in time for it to bring people to the World's Fair and the Olympics that were scheduled for St. Louis in 1904. Construction was started in 1903. This construction was a boon to the Short Line. The "Q" shipped a great deal of equipment and materials as well as animals and workers over the Short Line. So much stuff was brought down that the side tracks in Moscow Mills and Troy were often filled with cars. Articles in the Troy newspaper noted that some heavy pieces of machinery were brought in over the Short Line and then drug by teams of mules out to what became South Troy on the new line. The "Q"

contracted out the construction of the new line to various contractors in sections. Much of the freight shipped in was consigned to these contractors. Some of these contractors had carloads of fat cattle shipped into Troy for the feeding of the workers and hay and corn was shipped in for feeding the construction animals. This continued until the new road was far enough advanced so that equipment and materials could be brought over the new tracks.

The "Q" line spanned the Cuivre River and the Short Line at Moscow Mills. A track to connect the two railroads was not built. It was only after the St. Louis & Troy was chartered that the "Q" built a connecting track so that the new Troy road could connect with the national system. During the year of construction the Short Line hauled a great deal of freight from Hannibal to Troy and Moscow Mills for the "Q".

This construction gave the Short Line a good boost in revenues. Freight Revenues for 1902 were \$101,448; for 1903 - \$137,453; for 1904 - \$131,323; for 1905 - \$114,615. The net earnings were \$76,517 in 1903 and \$50,754 in 1904.

By the way this line did tap the coals near Hawk Point that the Short Line dreamed about in its early years.

Later the Short Line received another benefit from a competitor. It hauled in construction materials for the improvement of what became U.S. Highway 61. There had been a paralleling highway for many years. It was known as the Red Ball Route because its route through the countryside was marked by little red balls. This road was mostly gravel and mud. In good weather it was o.k. But in bad weather it was almost impassible. A couple of former residents from south of Moscow Mills told me that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century their father often used his mules to pull primitive automobiles up the large hill in front of their home. Finally in the late 1920s and 1930s it was decided to pave this road. The Short Line hauled in many cars of concrete, gravel, and other materials as well as road building equipment. The resulting concrete highway took business away from the railroad. Foster Bus Lines started by offering bus service from Troy to St. Charles in 1925. This bus line then followed the new highway and eventually offered service all the way to Cedar Rapids, IA. Passengers were pulled away from the Short Line. Not even the new motor coaches could compete. Truck companies joined in the fray. The Short Line gained some revenues from road construction, but the competitors on the highway helped doom the little railroad. Not even World War II and its many restrictions on motoring could save the railroad. In some ways I guess you could safe that the Short Line helped kill itself, but it really had no choice in the matter.

**SHORT LINE NEWS # 27**

In S.L. News # 26 I referred to the Foster Bus Lines. I thought I might pass on some information on this competitor to the St. Louis & Hannibal. Foster Bus lines was a product of M.C. Foster of Troy. Over the years I have collected a little information on this company. In addition his daughter-in-law is a friend of my wife's. While I have a fair amount of information on the F.B.L. that is still much to learn. The *Troy Free-Press* is a major source of my information.

M.C. Foster was involved in local transportation in Troy. He was a partner in a company that operated hacks between the Short Line depot and downtown Troy. He had the first taxi service in Troy. In addition Foster hauled freight and passengers between Troy and St. Louis. Before 1925 the highways were very poor and this effected the ability to travel beyond city streets. In bad weather the primitive roads became even worse.

By 1925 many roads and streets were being upgraded with pavement and other improvements. In the April 17, 1925 *Free-Press* it was mentioned that M.C. Foster had announced that he planned to have a bus line in operation between Troy and St. Charles by May 1<sup>st</sup>. The line did start until May 22. Foster started with one bus and was able to offer 2 roundtrips daily between Troy and St. Charles. Foster had a new 12 passenger International Bus. By March 5, 1926 the route had been extended to St. Louis.

As the Red Ball Route (Hwy. 61) was paved Foster began to extend his company north. Hannibal was reached by April 1928. This put it in direct competition with the Short Line along its whole route. Foster continued to expand northward. He reached Quincy, IL. in November 1929. Keokuk, IA was reached in October 1930. This was the original goal of the old St. Louis & Keokuk Railway of 1857. The line was extended to Cedar Rapids, IA in March 1936. Eventually Foster's operations extended to 17 buses covering 2,420 miles daily. On February 22, 1943 a hearing was held to sell the Foster Bus Line to Burlington Transport Company – Burlington Trailways, subsidiary of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway.

Incidentally, when the new owners of the St. Louis & Troy took over in 1945 they realized that the old gas-mechanical locomotive needed replacing. M.C. Foster loaned the new company money so that a new Plymouth locomotive could be secured.

It is interesting how things turn up. One Sunday afternoon I was getting ready to go to visit the local nursing home when the phone rang. It was Dick Blough of Jacksonville, IL. Dick was calling to inform me that there were some St. Louis & Hannibal negatives on ebay. He gave me the necessary information, but I was unable to look until late in the afternoon. When I was able to look I found that 2 of the negatives were shots that I have long had in my files – streamline motor coach # 55 parked out in the open. There was a picture of steam engine # 615 at Oakwood.

The third shot was the most interesting. It was a shot of the Short Line office building from its front side. This was a view that I had never seen. All of the shots that I had seen were from the side or the rear.

This office was a product of the expansion of the railroad in the 1890s. The Perry Branch was a major part of this expansion. Another major portion was for the Short Line to build its own line into Hannibal. Previously the Short Line had to operate over the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy) railroad. The Short Line wanted to build its own tracks into Hannibal's Union Station. The Station refused the Short Line's request. The Short Line did build its own line into Hannibal.

*The Hannibal Journal* of October 2, 1892 reported that work on the foundation of the new office building had started the previous day. Albert Easley had the contract. The building was going to be just beyond the Main Street bridge over Bear Creek.

*The Journal* of February 5, 1893 reported that the Short Line had moved into its new home. Operations would be centered in this new building. The general offices had been in the Bank of Hannibal Building while the freight office was at the corner of Front and Bird Streets.

The front room of the lower floor was the gentlemen's waiting room while that for the ladies was located at the rear. The ticket office was in a little room between the two. Immediately to the rear of the ladies' room was the freight department with wide doors that opened onto the platform.

Upstairs there were 4 large rooms – the front room was occupied by Mr. Jordan, the Superintendent. The other rooms were occupied by the General Manager & Ticket Agent, Auditor, Telegraph Operator, etc. It was described as being only a stone's throw from Union Station. This negative was purchased by Hannibal historian Steve Chou.

**The next meeting of the Friends of the Short Line has been set for Saturday, November 1, 2008 at the Krumbly Burger Restaurant in Troy at 10:30 a.m.** The Krumbly Burger has a meeting room and is located at 70 Front Street, near where the Troy operations of the Short Line were located. If you have pictures and material on the Short Line from Eolia south please bring them for others to see. We are also interested in pictures and material on the St. Louis & Troy RR. The Krumbly Burger is a fast-food type of restaurant with a variety of sandwiches. It features Blue Bunny ice cream products. It is about one-half mile west of US 61 and just off Hwy 47. Please exit Hwy 61 at the Hwy 47 exit and head west through 2 traffic lights. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> traffic light please turn left. It is right behind Burger King. While much of the Short Line grade in the area has been destroyed or altered there are still some remnants north and south of Troy. The Krumbly Burger phone number is 636-528-5646, Matt and Janet Bass are the owners.

## **SHORT LINE NEWS # 28**

Some 20 people gathered at the Krumbly Burger in Troy on November 1 to think and talk about the old St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad and its partial successor, the St. Louis & Troy Railway. This group was a mixture of first-timers and people who have attended every Friends of the Short Line meeting. Some of new folks just learned about our group from an article in the local newspaper or by word of mouth. Our meeting space was right crowded with people and displays. Since the meeting I have learned that Krumbly Burger has a basement that we could have used, provided those of us on canes could make it down the steps. Maybe some time in the future.

Among the items on display was a horn from one of the motor coaches. This horn was a part of an estate sale earlier in 2008. Ron Leake was able to secure the horn for the museum in Center. We do not know which coach had this horn. The auction listing only mentioned that it was on a car from the St. L. & H.

Speaking of the rail coaches Andy Sisk has a keen interest in the coaches. He showed us a model of a rail coach that he purchased recently. It is an older replica of a motor coach that looks very similar to what the Short Line operated. It is a metal structure and Andy has removed the paint and intends to have it repainted in the colors of the Short Line. The model may date to the 1920s. One of the few people still living who saw the coaches is Jim Holman who was a young child when his grandfather Clyde was the agent at Frankford. Jim remembers the coaches as being a maroon red color with a gold stripe around the middle. If anyone on this group knows of different colors please let me know so that Andy can get the correct colors. Unfortunately all of our motor coach pictures are black and white.

Otis Madden brought the water barrel that his father had used as a section foreman operating out of Eolia. The wooden barrel was filled each day and carried to the work site. Some years ago it was headed to a dump and Otis rescued it, cleaned it up and it is now an historic item.

George Hilton from near Louisiana is working on an interesting project. Using 1899 county atlases and modern GPS instruments George is trying to plot the out the exact route of the Short Line through each of its counties. While work prevented George from being present he brought some samples to me and I displayed them.

Over the years I have been trying to collect some biographical information on some of the people who were connected to the Short Line as employees or as management. Recently I have received additional help from a variety of sources. This has included finding obituaries of various people. Allen Ballard has found the grave sites of some Short Line people in and around New London. Finding some of this biographical information helps us to know these people better.

Henry H. Dickenhorst was the first agent for the railroad in Troy. Dickenhorst was born on September 12, 1852 on the Atlantic Ocean as his family was moving from Germany to Boston. His family settled in Lafayette County, MO. When he was 16 he decided to be a telegraph operator and went to St. Louis in 1868 to study that instrument. He finished his studies in 1873 and worked at several telegraphic jobs in the St. Louis area. He came to Troy in 1874 as an operator for Western Union. In 1878 he married Emily Smith of Concordia, MO. They had 4 sons – Walter, Herbert, Ervin and Richard.

Dickenhorst left Western Union in 1881 to become the agent and operator in Troy for the St. Louis, Hannibal & Keokuk Railroad. The railroad made use of his Western Union experience and he was involved in the maintenance of the railroad's wire operations. From time to time the Troy newspaper mentions that Dickenhorst was sent to repair the telegraph all up and down the line when the wires might be damaged by storms. Many new operators were sent to Troy to study telegraphy and how to be an agent under Dickenhorst. He seems to have been a very popular person in the area. The newspapers often refer to Dickenhorst as "Dick". For several

years he ran an ice business. A storage building was erected near the depot. During the winters he and his partners cut ice at nearby ponds. It was sold during the summers.

Ill health forced Dickenhorst to retire from the railroad in 1911. His doctors suggested that he should move to a spring area. He and Emily moved to Heber Springs, AR for him to enjoy the natural springs there. In previous years they had often vacationed in Heber Springs. Dickenhorst died on July 1, 1914. His body was brought to Troy for burial in the City Cemetery.

After the two-story depot was constructed in 1886 the Dickenhorst family lived on the second floor. The boys learned Morse code under their father and at various times worked relief at various locations along the Short Line. Son Ervin succeeded his father as the agent in Troy for several years before he went into finances. When the St. Louis & Troy railroad came into existence Ervin became a stockholder and supporter of the new railroad. He was still a stockholder when that road shut down.

Andy Sisk has asked Jim Holman if he remembers how the Short Line observed Christmas when he visited with his grandfather the agent at Frankford. Jim does not remember Christmas decorations at the depot nor passengers carrying Christmas packages. Holman was visiting his grandfather in the latter years of the Great Depression and the years of World War II. Neither the railroad nor its passengers had much money in those years. Things were different earlier in the railroad's history. Area newspapers report that the Short Line offered fare reductions over Christmas and other major holidays. These same papers often noted that many people took advantage of these sales.

The next meeting of the Friends of the Short Line has been set for **January 17** at J.R. Diamonds Restaurant near Silex at 10:30 a.m., *weather permitting*. Diamonds is a truck stop with good basic food. They are expecting us to order lunch from their menu. The location is just a few miles east of the grade.

As 2008 draws to a conclusion I would like to wish each of you the best over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. This has been a good Short Line year. It started in January with Andy taking me to the National Archives to see the Short Line material in storage there. In late May Allen announced his intentions to do a book on the Perry Branch. This book is now available. In November we had another Friends meeting. Over the year something interesting Short Line pictures have come to light along with more information and material. We have also been able to meet some new people who have an interest in or connections to the Short Line. As we celebrate the birth of our Lord I will like to pray God's richest blessings on each of you.

## *Friends Of The Short Line # 29*

(The St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)

A group of some 22 people gathered in the banquet room at the J.R. Diamonds Restaurant near Silex to talk about the Short Line. Many of those attending were folks who have been with us through out the time that we have been meeting. Others were there for the first time. There was no real program, but there was general discussion of the Short Line and why the participants are interested in this long dead railroad. Allen Ballard had copies of his History of the Perry branch for sale. Allen also showed a piece of rail that he had dug up in his back yard. Allen lives in the house in New London where a former Short Line doctor once lived. It is thought that Dr. Waters or some member of his family got this small piece of rail from the railroad area in perhaps New London.

The next meeting of the FOSL was set for Saturday April 18, 2009 at Center in Ralls County at 10:30 a.m. We will meet at the restaurant in Center and after lunch we will visit the Short Line Museum in the Center Depot. The museum doesn't have air conditioning so an April visit will be much more pleasant than later in the year.

The Museum is located in the third depot located in Center. The first depot was built in Center after the Short Line extension reached the town. This depot was destroyed when lightning struck the telegraph wires and entered the building. The second depot was removed when Highway 19 was upgraded in 1937. The first two depots had been frame structures on the south side of the tracks. The third depot was built of bricks and was located on the north side of the tracks. After the Branch was abandoned in 1943 the depot became a Missouri Highway Department building. Later it was turned over to the city of Center.

Center was a major location for the Short Line. Early on it had the Ralls County Mercantile that was served by a siding. Then in the early 1920s R.S. Buchanan built his poultry processing plant there. This became a major shipper on the railroad. Cars of poultry, eggs, cream, feathers, etc. were shipped to various locations. Many cars of dressed chickens and turkeys were shipped to the northeastern U.S.

One of those attending the last meeting was Richard Shafer. Shafer told us that he lives at Famous. Famous was a flag stop on the Short Line just north of Troy. The 1893-94 edition of *The Missouri Gazetteer & Business Directory* stated that Famous had a population of 40. L. Howell was postmaster and ran a general store. There was a small platform for the loading and unloading of freight and for holding cans of milk to be shipped out in latter years.

John Ringling purchased the Short Line in the Fall of 1919. There was a little confusion in the media. An article of September 29, 1919 issue of *Hannibal Courier-Post* suggested that the Ringling family was buying the Short Line. This article suggested that the Ringling family owned several short line roads. In reality it was John who was the railroad man. The other brothers might ride the circus trains, but it was John who actually owned railroads. The article was correct in saying that John had made a thorough inspection of the St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad on September 24. After making an inspection John purchased the Short Line himself. In the book *Ringling, the Florida Years* it has been suggested that John Ringling liked to buy struggling small railroads and try to revive them. The Short Line was struggling in 1919. Two years earlier John I. Blair's grandsons had forced through a re-organization of the Short Line. The railroad had been sold on the steps of the courthouse. The two grandsons still controlled it but they had eliminated some debt. Now they sold the Short Line to John Ringling.

This same article in the Hannibal paper noted that H.F. Martyrn had been named the master mechanic in charge of the Short Line shops at Oakwood. He replaced E.O. Smith who had been master mechanic for 15 years. The paper reported that it was rumored that the Ringlings had brought in this new master mechanic.



Again, it was John and not the family who had brought in this new man. Over the next year Ringling would bring in a number of new people into the management of the Short Line. Since Ringling owned other railroads he chose to bring in people from these other roads or to put areas of the Short Line under men who had similar duties on the other railroads. For instance, Harry Modisett would soon be demoted from General Manager to Traffic Manager.

Recently I received an email dealing with John Ringling's first railroad car, "The Wisconsin". This car is on display at the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, FL. "The Wisconsin" was built in 1905, the same year that John had married Mable Burton. This car was used by John and Mable from 1905 to 1916. This car was used before John purchased the Short Line. But it is interesting because it shows us how many wealthy people traveled. This was the first of a series of cars used by John and Mable.

This car was built by the Pullman Company for \$11,325.23. It was 39 feet long and 10 feet wide and weighed 65 tons. This car had an observation area at its rear end. There were 3 bedrooms, a dining room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and servants' quarters. Ringling sold "The Wisconsin" to the old Norfolk Southern Railway (not the current NS Rwy.) that ran from Charlotte to the eastern part of North Carolina. Eventually it ended up in Morehead City, N.C. where it was used as a fishing lodge by officials of the Atlantic & East Carolina Railway. Later it became a part of the rail collection at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. That museum donated the car to the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota. It is displayed so that a person can walk along a platform and look into each window and see how each room is furnished.

A recent issue of "The Lincoln County Journal" noted that another effort is being made to develop the former Royal Oaks Golf Course just north of Troy. Former efforts involved putting a residential development there. Those efforts were not approved by the Troy government. Now there is talk of a commercial development. The Short Line grade crosses this property just inside the currently locked gates. This site was visited by some of our FOSL members during our initial gathering. More than likely this is another section of the old grade that will be destroyed.

As mentioned previously I will be speaking to the Lincoln County Genealogical Society meeting on April 21, 2009 on the Short Line in Lincoln County. All Friends of the Short Line are invited to attend the meeting which begins at 1:30 p.m. The Society's meeting place may have been sold. I will try to get word of the new location out before April 21.

*Short Line News # 30*  
(Friends of the St. Louis & Hannibal Railroad)

The next meeting of the Friends of the Short Line will be held at Chelle's Restaurant in Center on **April 18, 2009**. Chelle's is the only restaurant in Center. If you are coming down the Short Line route (Hwy. 19) from New London please turn left at the 4-way stop. We are going to begin at **10:30 a.m.**

A special guest will be William "Buster" Johnson from Bowling Green. Johnson was a track man on the Short Line in the last decade of the railroad. His territory was Bowling Green to Hannibal. Ed Lawson and Andy Sisk have arranged this meeting with Buster Johnson. In a recent conversation Johnson told Andy that only the southern interchange track with the Chicago & Alton Railroad. The northern interchange track, that shows on our maps from 1917, had been removed. In that area was a Depression-era homeless camp. He says that clay from the Walsh/Whiteside area was still being loaded in hoppers on that southern interchange track for shipment to the Vandalia brick plant. He will be glad to answer any questions about the Short Line. Keep in mind that he worked on the railroad when the south end had been abandoned.

Another guest will be Gladys Coswell, a noted story-teller from Frankford. Mrs. Coswell was raised in Patterson, N.J. She and her family moved to Frankford in 1974. There she began collecting stories from family and friends. She has become a noted story-teller, winning awards.

Andy Sisk has commissioned the painting of a Short Line scene. His painting shows one of the motor coaches at the Frankford depot with snow on the ground. In one of the windows of the depot a very young Jim Holman can be seen waving. Jim's grandfather Clyde was the agent at Frankford and he is shown standing in front of the coach. This scene is as Jim remembers it today.

There will be 2 copies of this painting for sale on the 18<sup>th</sup>. One is a plain lithograph in a plain barnwood frame behind glass for \$50. The other is a canvas print in a barnwood frame that is imbedded with barbwire for \$60.

After the program and lunch we will have a tour of the Short Line Museum in the old depot. This museum was established by the Ralls County Historical Society. There are a number of pictures and other papers in the former office and waiting room. In the freight room there is a collection of track tools that were donated by the late Bill Watts, former general manager of the St. Louis & Troy Railroad. There is a desk that seems to have been in the Troy depot.

Center was an important site on the Perry Branch of the Short Line. It was to have been on the old Ralls County Branch Railroad that was promoted by Richard Dalton and others in the early 1870s. Dalton and the others envisioned a railroad connecting Hannibal with Perry, Mexico, and other locations. This road was surveyed and the grade was constructed. Local farmers were used to build much of the grade. Farmers were able to put their hired hands, mules, and other equipment to work during the non-farming seasons. This railroad project was caught up in the route controversy for the St. Louis & Keokuk Railway and all of this ended up in bankruptcy.

When the St. Louis & Hannibal decided to build a branch line west from New London they were able to use the old grade. Since it had been abandoned about 20 years earlier a great deal of work was required to repair the old grade.

After the completion of the Perry Branch in 1892 Center became an important stop for the Short Line. The Ralls County Mercantile Company was a major customer. In her history of Ralls

County Goldena Howard says that this company occupied 4 buildings and was involved in a variety of business activity including groceries, furniture, dry goods, etc. This company was served by a railroad siding.

Another major customer was the R.S. Buchanan Company. Buchanan was first associated with the Mercantile Company. Then he got involved in processing poultry and shipping dressed poultry via the railroad to New York City and other points in the East. A December 1926 newspaper article reported that the Center plant was processing a thousand geese per day. (There was a plant in Perry). Buchanan also shipped cream, eggs, feathers, and other poultry products.

Other railroad industries in Center included a distributor for the Illinois Oil Company.

Over the years Center had three depots. The first one was destroyed by fire on June 19, 1910. According to the newspapers there was a heavy thunderstorm that day and lightning came into the depot via the telegraph lines. The second depot was completed on June 14, 1911. When this depot was being torn down to make room for the expansion of Highway 19 a small time capsule was found in the foundation. This capsule was a bottle that contained some notes and a railroad timetable. The notes noted that the second depot was completed on June 14, 1911. That concrete block depot was built by 4 men from Frankford. The agent was Arah J. Rice whose salary was \$35. His brother Roy K. Rice was his helper. The 1917 Valuation Report noted that this depot was a combination depot of 17,430 cubic feet capacity. There was a stockyard that consisted of 7 pens. At that time the passing track was 1,595 feet long. There was a 369-foot siding that served the grain elevator.

Center received another depot when the highway department decided to widen and pave Highway 19 in 1937. The first two depots had been located on the south side of the tracks. The third depot was built on the north side of the tracks where the old grain elevator used to sit. It was considered to be a block closer to the business section of town. This depot was built by the Martin Construction Company of Hannibal.

I hope to see each of you all at Chelle's on April 18 at 10:30 a.m. Should be a good day with all of these guests. I am still on tap to present a program on April 21 at the Lincoln Genealogical Library across from Harry J's Steakhouse at 1:30 p.m. I will center my talk on the St. Louis & Troy. You are all welcome.