

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

August, 2011

SHREVEPORT, LA

Our 30th Year



The Montpelier Station Depot: Montpelier, Virginia
By Nathaniel Means

When William DuPont bought Montpelier, the estate of former President James Madison, the Southern Railway System became his vital link for a weekly commute to Delaware and to bring in large quantities of supplies to Montpelier. Consequently, he used the depot which is photographed in this issue of the Red River Valley Railroad Historical Society. DuPont located his depot right along the line of the Southern Railway that connected Charlottesville to Orange, Virginia after 1880.

DuPont bought Montpelier in 1902 as a retreat for his family in Virginia's Piedmont just outside of the town of Orange, Virginia. DuPont's daughter Marion Scott DuPont took over the estate after her father's death. At Montpelier she established the Montpelier Steeple Chase Races which are still hosted on the grounds of the old Madison Plantation. After Marion Scott DuPont died in 1983, the family transferred Montpelier to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The National Trust has restored the mansion back to what it would have appeared in the time of James Madison.

William DuPont had the depot constructed in 1910 by the standard pattern of the Southern Railway System's depot plans. Uniformly, the Southern System's depots featured segregated waiting

rooms for white and “colored” passengers, the white waiting area being considerably larger than that of its counterpart. DuPont embraced segregation for his black employees who in 1930 numbered twenty out of a total of fifty laborers. In the late 1950s, the Southern Railway desegregated its depot and passenger service.

DuPont’s depot became the central point at which he brought in a vast supply of feed to run his growing horse farm. As one former hand put it, “[du Pont] didn’t buy no dozen of this or that, he’d buy a carload of feed, or bran, buy carloads of oats...everything that was bought was bought by the carload...The farm men would unload ‘em.”

The Montpelier depot was just one small point in the Southern Railway System’s vast 8,000 mile web of track that crossed thirteen states. Montpelier Depot was part of the Southern’s Washington Division which extended from the Capital city down to Lynchburg, Virginia. The station agent at Montpelier also ran the station at Orange four miles to the north and Somerset, three miles to the south. Telegraph operators assisted the station agent in carrying out his duties. Passengers bought their tickets and took their baggage receipts through the passenger window. Freight Manifests for shipments arriving and departing the station were billed and filed in the office, and the telegraph relayed Western Union telegrams and messages from the train dispatcher in Alexandria, Virginia, and other stations up and down the line. Managers of the Southern Railway System expected its employee’s to follow its precepts: “Station agents...must always have in view the promotion of the Company’s interests...must give courteous attention to passengers, shippers, and all other persons having business to transact at their stations...will cultivate the confidence and good-will of the public.”

When the United States Post Office opened a station in 1912, the community became known by its new official name of Montpelier Station. The Depot remained in service as a passenger stop until 1967, and in 1974 it closed altogether

Recently, the Montpelier Foundation completed a pristine restoration of the depot to document Southern segregation. Moreover, it serves as a model for an exemplary effort in historical preservation of an early twentieth-century rural railway depot.

(Editor’s note: Thanks to RRVRS member Nathaniel Means for his great photo and article. Nathaniel and his mother Gay Means recently returned from a trip to Virginia.)

Upcoming Events

- August 19 RRVRS Meeting at the Glen – 7 p.m.
- September 16 RRVRS Meeting at the Glen – 7 p.m.
- October 11 Discussions at the Depot – “A Brief History of the Vicksburg, Shreveport & Pacific Railway” by Larry Davis - 6:00 pm at the T&P Depot Museum, Marshall
- October 29 RRVRS Fish Fry at the McNeill Street Pumping Station

Next RRVRS Meeting on August 19 at the Glen

The meeting will be held on Friday, **August 19** at **7 p.m.** in the library at the Glen Retirement Village, 403 East Flournoy Lucas Road. **Please be on time** for the beginning of the meeting so you won’t miss anything. The Glen Retirement Village is located on the south side of Flournoy Lucas Road between Ellerbe Road and Youree Drive (Highway 1). For information or directions call Dave Bland at (318) 470-5933.

McNeill Street Pumping Station (Shreveport Water Works Museum)

Due to state budget cutbacks, they are having to reduce their operating schedule. If you would like to be trained as a volunteer tour guide, call Dale Ward at (318) 221-3388.

Red River Railroadin'

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P. O. Box 9211, Shreveport, La. 71109

Volume 1 — Number 1

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The Red River Valley Railroad Historical Society, Inc., is a non-profit organization (charter pending) dedicated to the preservation of historic railroad artifacts and equipment.

Please report any rail news, events or any pertinent information to the editor. Write or phone (318) 635-2409 anytime day or night. Deadline for inclusion is the 21st of previous month.

ANOTHER NEW RAILROAD — The Eureka Springs & North Arkansas is a new tourist railroad in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Almost 100 years after the first train pulled into town (1883), the steam trains have returned. The depot in Eureka Springs, built in 1913 of locally-cut limestone, is now on the National Register of Historic Places and is being restored to its original grandeur. Trains depart hourly between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily for the one and one-half mile ride. The ES&NA alternates between using engine No. 1, a Baldwin wood-burning 2-6-0 built in 1906, and No. 201, an Alco built in 1907 to pull its trains. Passengers presently ride in a deluxe gondola and

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MoPac Abandons Hosston Line

Local RRVHRS Receives Charter

The Red River Valley Railroad Historical Society is now officially a non-profit corporation in the state of Louisiana. A membership drive has now been started and a meeting is now being scheduled for late-November to be held in the Barnwell Art Center. All interested parties will be notified by mail or phone as to the specific time and date.



KCS — On trains #55/#56 in between Shreveport, La. and Dallas, Texas the KCS has started a motive power "pool" with the Santa Fe. The Santa Fe units (GP-38's #3537, 3527, 3524, 3506) while on the KCS operate between these two terminals, refuel, and layover only

The Missouri Pacific's Hosston Subdivision, running from Shreveport north to Hosston, La., has fallen on hard times. As of September 1, 1981 the I.C.C. has given it's permission to the "MoPac" to abandon the northern most 22½ miles of trackage from Hosston, La. (M.P. 34.1) back to Dixie, La. (M.P. 11.6).

Car loadings have steadily dropped over the last year and a half to the point of non-existence.

This trackage was part of the mainline for the once proud Texarkana, Shreveport & Natchez dating back to 1895, traces of which may still be followed all the way to Texarkana. The T.&P. purchased the railroad in 1901 and when the MoPac acquired the T&P, it became a secondary mainline between Shreveport and Texarkana with the primary main being that of the MoPac via Marshall, Texas.

This year is the 30th anniversary of the Red River Valley Railroad Historical Society. Shown above are excerpts from the first and third newsletters. Russell Pedro chronicled the beginning of the society in his President's Message for April 2006:

"In 1979, before the society was established, two railfans were talking in Cook's Collectors Corner about the many failed model railroad clubs in Shreveport. Paul Harwell and I discussed what happened in the past that caused these clubs to fail, namely not having a permanent home that the club owned. Several weeks later Paul Harwell, Randy James, Frank Andrews, Tom Garland and I met at 4046 Parkwood in my train room to discuss establishing a club. Over the next several months we collected many sets of by-laws, constitutions and charters from as many different railroad clubs as we could get our hands on. After compiling a constitution and by-laws establishing a mission and purpose we were ready to recruit members. This is not to say that anything was set in stone at this time. We invited as many people as we could think of to attend the first meeting. At that meeting we approved the constitution and by-laws and collected dues from most everyone present.

Our next task was to secure our non-profit 501c3 status from the IRS. Gary Fox, being an attorney, worked very hard for us on this project. It took many months to get this approved. Our next project was to start collecting for our museum and operating railroad. The society bought two Erie passenger cars from a short-line in Mississippi. Kerr McGee Wood Products in Bossier donated a 25-ton G.E. diesel locomotive and we were in business, or so we thought. During the next several months we spent many weekends and afternoons cleaning, repairing and painting one of the coaches. We had a Grand Opening down on Marshall Street at the Central Railroad Station with Mayor Hussey cutting the ribbon. The rest of the day we gave rides in the coach to anyone that came by."

The President's Message – August 2011

Hello Railfans:

In the last several months there has been considerable progress made with regards to the museum. As reported at the last business meeting, the model of the museum layout has been completed. Society members Jim McClure and Paul Hoge helped me construct the actual model and one of the regular operators at Jim's layout, Jason Busey, completed the scenery. The completed model will be on display at the next meeting. With completion of the model, we can start talking to the City Council, members of the press and anyone that can help finish the expanded museum. This is going to be a difficult job because of the economic situation with both the state and city, but I feel we have a very good chance to succeed this time.

Progress has been made on the current museum building. The ceiling has been painted and the only thing left to do with the wiring is to connect the air conditioning – heating system. The past two weekends Gary, Steve, Frank, Paul and I have removed the central stands, constructed forms and poured concrete to patch the 3 holes in the floor. After the mechanical equipment is installed the only thing left to do is paint the floor. Then display cases can be moved in and set up.

Several weeks ago we picked up more display cabinets from the old Dillards at South Park Mall. These cases were donated by Summer Grove Baptist Church, who owns the building.

I was talking to Dave last Friday and he informed me that we need to pick up our displays from the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum because they need the space for incoming exhibits. Our displays there have been set up for about 3 years and have been seen by numerous visitors. We appreciate the opportunity provided to us by Nita Cole, Curator.

Well, so long for now. See you at the next meeting.

Happy Railroading!
Russell

RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Shreveport, LA

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Dave Bland – Newsletter Editor – 797-8008 – DDBland@aol.com www.rvrhs.org

Have you paid your 2011 Annual Dues ?

Please send a check or money order for \$16.50 with this membership form to Bill Hasheider at 6813 Despot Road, Shreveport, LA 71108

Name _____

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