

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

MARCH, 2009

SHREVEPORT, LA

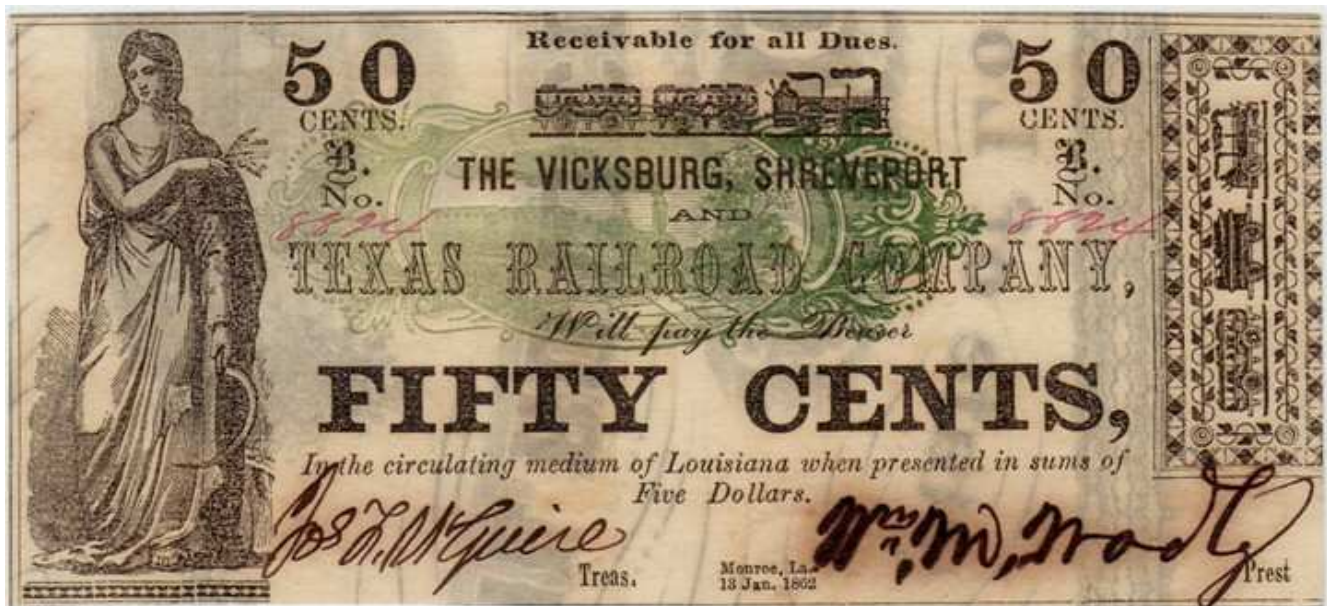
OUR 28TH YEAR

The First Locomotive in Shreveport Ran Before the Civil War !

Last month's newsletter (February) discussed the various dates that have been used for the first railroads in the Shreveport area. Clarification of the actual dates has been achieved by further study and by reviewing an unpublished paper presented by Emilia Gay Griffith Means to the Red River Railroad Historical Society on March 17, 1995 at the Barnwell Center in Shreveport. In that paper, titled "*Shreveport and the Transcontinental Railroad 1850-1865*", Gay describes national, regional and local railroad activities of that time period and when they occurred. Here are some excerpts from Gay's paper:

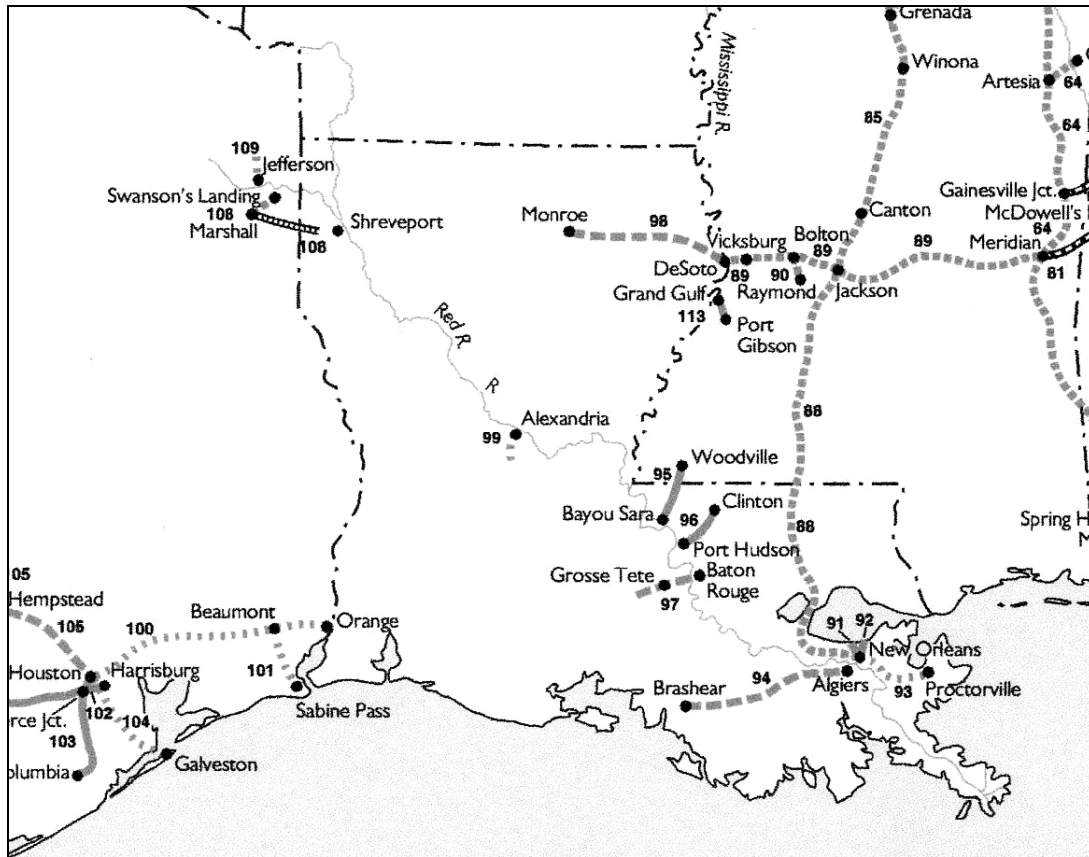
"The Vicksburg, Shreveport and Texas Railroad Company...was granted a charter by the state of Louisiana on April 28, 1853. This railroad was to begin at a point opposite Vicksburg...on to Shreveport and the Louisiana-Texas boundary line...In April 1853 Caddo parish adopted a railroad tax to subscribe to one hundred thousand dollars worth of stock in the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Texas Railroad. By August 1853 a survey was completed from Shreveport to the Texas line and a planter from west of Shreveport, Dr. Alfred Flournoy, contracted to build eight miles east from the Texas line. Flournoy left within a year...another contractor was hired...to construct the western division.."

"In April of 1860 the first locomotive the *Benjamin May Johnson* arrived in Shreveport and made a run over one and one half miles of track. In that same year the track was extended to Jewella and by 1861 after laying a total of five miles of track all work was suspended."



This attractive coupon was issued by the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Texas Railroad in 1862. The image came from the *Confederate Railroads* web site at www.csa-railroads.com and is attributed to be from the collection of Pete Angelos. Note the fine engraving and that it is payable "in the circulation medium of Louisiana...".

As stated, the first locomotive to run in Shreveport was the 4-4-0 *Ben Johnson* or *B. M. Johnson*, named for Shreveport banker Benjamin May Johnson. It was built for the Vicksburg, Shreveport & Texas by Rogers Locomotive Works in 1859 for 5 ft. 6 in. gauge track, often used at that time before the “standard gauge” of 4 ft. 8 ½ inches was adopted. This interesting map from *Confederate Railroads* shows the multiplicity of track gauges used in our area at the time of the Civil War.



The Railroads of the Confederate States as of June 1, 1861

- 4' 8 1/2" Gauge
- 4' 8 1/2" Gauge built during war
- 5' Gauge
- 5' Gauge built during war
- 5' 6" Gauge
- 5' 6" Gauge built during war
- Uncertain Gauge
- Uncertain Gauge built during war

On the map, railroad 98 is the Vicksburg, Shreveport & Texas running from Vicksburg to Monroe at that time. The Southern Pacific is shown as a 5 foot gauge running from Marshall to Greenwood. The map clearly shows how important it would have been for Shreveport to be linked to Vicksburg and to Texas.

The *Confederate Railroads* web site contains maps, photos and data regarding railroads in the south during the Civil War, including this information about the V. S. & T.:

“The road was chartered in 1853 to link northeast Texas to the Mississippi River, through Shreveport, without relying on the uncertain river levels of the Red River. By January 1861, the line was in operation the 75 miles from Vicksburg to Monroe, Louisiana; an additional 5 miles had been built west from Shreveport. In early 1862, the Confederate army seized the road because of the Union sympathies of its directors. Since Monroe was a major quartermaster post for the Trans-Mississippi Confederates, the road was heavily used in their

supply until Union operations caused serviceable rolling stock and other machinery to be dismantled and hauled to Shreveport in August 1863. Eventually, the entire line east of Monroe was destroyed, with usable iron rails being removed to support other Union railroads. In September 1862, the line west of Shreveport, the locomotive Ben Johnson, and several cars were leased to the Southern Pacific Railroad for an extended period.”

Other sources provide bits of information about early locomotives used in this area:

The *Ashuelot*, a 4-4-0 built for the Southern Pacific in 1847 by Hinkley. It was reported as retired in 1863.

The *Madison* – Shipped from New Orleans Aug. 6, 1856 to Vicksburg for use on the V.S. & T. Built by Richard Harris & Co. Philadelphia. Scrapped in 1881

The *Marshall* - Brought to Shreveport on October 28, 1868, manufactured by Patterson Iron Works, New Jersey

The *Sam Houston* - Southern Pacific, twenty ton capacity

The *Scott* – Brought from Memphis on the steamboat Era No. 10

The *John Ray* - VS&T 1861

Just about all of the early locomotives were wood burning 4-4-0s of the “American” type. Rogers Locomotive and Iron Works in Patterson, New Jersey pioneered the design in 1852, which was the first to use the Stephenson valve gear linkage, allowing full forward and full reverse operation. Soon other makers such as Baldwin, Grant, Brooks Mason, Danforth and Hinkley started offering similar locomotives. It is estimated that over 25,000 were built. Several exist in museums, and a few nineteenth century 4-4-0s are still operating, according to Steam Today, published by TRAINS in 2008:

Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, *Edison*, built by Manchester in 1876, standard gauge
Eureka & Palisade (Dan Markoff), Las Vegas, *No. 4 Eureka*, built by Baldwin in 1875, 3-foot gauge
Nevada State RR Museum, Carson City, *No. 8*, built by Cooke in 1888, standard gauge
Nevada State RR Museum, Carson City, *No. 22 Inyo*, built by Baldwin in 1875, standard gauge

Although they are not the original locomotives, operating replicas of the *Jupiter* and *No. 119*, built by O’Connor in 1969, are found at the Gold Spike National Historic Site, Promontory Summit, Utah.

The Bulletin Board - Events and Information for Railroaders

Society Meeting on March 20 at the Glen Retirement Village

The next meeting will be held on Friday, **March 20** at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at the Glen Retirement Village, 403 East Flournoy Lucas Road. The Glen Retirement Village is located on the south side of Flournoy Lucas Road between Ellerbe Road and Youree Drive (Highway 1). (Please do not confuse it with the Live Oak Retirement Home located on the north side of Flournoy Lucas Road.)

We will discuss museum site status, including an offer from the Shreveport Water Works Museum for display space. Discussion of this month's newsletter will be solicited. A program will also be presented. For information or directions call Dave Bland at (318) 470-5933.

We Need Your Email Address

Your email address is needed so that notices and other information can be sent to you quickly. Please send an email to your Editor (Dave Bland) at DDBland@aol.com so you can be added to the RRVRS email list. Thanks!

Spring Street Museum

www.springstreetmuseum.com

Shreveport Water Works Museum at the McNeill Street Pumping Station

www.mcneillstreet.org

Shreveport Historic Preservation Society

www.historicshreveport.org

LSUS Noel Memorial Library Archives and Special Collections

www.lsus.edu/library/Archives.htm

Upcoming Events

March 28-29	Longview Train Show
April 5	TSRR Steam Photographers Special from Palestine
April 18 (Society Trip)	Heritage Day at Southern Forest Heritage Museum in Longleaf, LA
April 21	T&P Depot in Marshall – 7 pm – “The Marshall & East Texas Railway”
April 25-26	Cotton Belt Historical Society Train Show – Tyler, TX
May 16	TSRR Military Train from Rusk
November 8	TSRR Steam Photographers Special from Rusk

The President's Message – March 2009

Hello Railfans:

It's time for me to take pencil in hand again.

For those of you that missed the meeting last month, you missed a good show. Our editor had a very good story in the newsletter about early railroads in the Shreveport area during the War Between the States. At the meeting Dave had a good video on the same subject to carry the theme over at the meeting. Very good Dave, please keep up the good work! I'm sure Dave would appreciate some help in future articles and shows.

Saturday after the meeting Friday night Dave, Bobby Joe, Lea and I went to the McNeill Street Pumping Station (Water Works Museum) . The purpose of our visit was to meet with Dale Ward and Conway Link to look over a building that has been offered to us for a possible museum site. We will discuss our findings at the meeting in March.

After the inspection trip to the pumping station, Dave and I went to see the Railroad exhibit at the Spring Street Museum. Several of our artifacts are on display there. I was impressed at the quality of the exhibit. The ladies running the museum did a great job. I hope you had an opportunity to see the fine articles and photographs on display. During March the theme will be Street Cars in the Shreveport area, and next month the exhibits will be on early automobiles. A portion of the railroad exhibit will remain during the entire series. If you have not visited the Spring Street Museum I would encourage you to do so. It will be an enjoyable experience, and it is free.

Lastly I would like to thank Bobby Joe Miller for his contribution of \$100.00 for the purchase of a new tire for our John Deere tractor. Hope to see you at the next meeting.

Happy Railroading!

Russell

RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

2424 Lakecrest Drive Shreveport, LA 71109

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/rrvths/>

Russell Pedro – President Dave Bland – Vice President

Gary Fox – Secretary Bill Hasheider – Treasurer

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

It is time to pay your 2009 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 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____