

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

MAY, 2009

SHREVEPORT, LA

OUR 28TH YEAR

O. Winston Link's Sounds of Steam



At our April meeting we listened to O. Winston Link's recording of the *General's* sounds during it's 1962 Centennial Celebration run, plus a sampling of sounds from one of the other albums pictured above. All railroaders are familiar with Link's great night photos of Norfolk & Western steam engines in the 1950's, but not everyone is aware that he became known for his audio recordings before he became recognized for his photography!

Link released five LP recordings of the N&W between 1957 and 1977, plus the 1962 *General* 45 rpm. All six are in collections at the LSUS Archives, where the above photo was taken. The "Long Play" 33 1/3 rpm LP technology had been introduced in 1948 and with the LP's high quality came a demand for better recording techniques and more interesting sounds. According to an article in the Summer 2001 Classic Trains magazine, Link stated: "Everything we had was the best. My Ampex equipment, people told me at the time, would be good until the year 2000. I thought that was a long way off. I got the stereo recorder in 1958 and am still using it...I had to go to the bank and get the money for it. I spent about \$4000 on that trip; I was in hock for a long time, but I got great stuff with it."

In addition to capturing the sounds of the steam engines, Link recorded other sounds from the background such as howling dogs, cows mooing, crossing signals ringing, children talking and railroad men explaining what was going on. Those sounds, combined with the steam engine, train and track noises, capture a wonderful “image” of that era. Unfortunately, current and future generations will not experience such an environment firsthand.

The final track on *The Fading Giant* album was made on Christmas Eve 1957 at Rural Retreat, VA. You can hear Mrs. J.E. Dodson playing carols in a church nearby as train 42 from New Orleans, the *Pelican*, pulls into the station. According to Link: “We were riding around looking for locations...we heard the chimes...We asked her to start playing about 20 minutes before the train arrived and to continue playing until we told her to stop...She did fine.”

One time Link paid a lady a dollar to use her electricity. After they were set up and waiting for the train, the lady disconnected an extension cord for some unexplained reason and they lost their opportunity. After that, he got his own power supply. It used two 12-volt automobile batteries; a DC motor powered a 120-volt AC generator to provide dependable power without noise that might affect the recording heads.

The LP and 45 rpm albums shown on the first page have been re-issued in a 5-CD boxed set and are available from the O. Winston Link Museum in Roanoke, VA by calling (540) 982-5465 or going to their website at www.linkmuseum.org A visit to the museum is really a trip you should try to make.

We will listen to more of Link’s sounds of steam at our May meeting.

First Work Day at the McNeill Street Pumping Station

On Saturday, May 2nd work began to renovate the building that has been offered to us for a museum at the McNeill Street Pumping Station (Shreveport Water Works Museum). Interior cleaning was begun by removing some lumber being stored there and sweeping it out. Cleaning work will be continued on at least one more work day, then painting can begin. Eventually, we will move in some display cases that were donated by LaRay Cook and start to set up our exhibits. This is an opportunity we have been waiting a long time for, so please get involved and help!

The museum is located at 142 N. Common Street. This is on the east side of the street 1/4 mile north of the intersection of Common with Caddo St. There is a "Shreveport Water Works Museum" sign in the front yard, as well as a large blue and white sign marking the driveway entrance.

Society Meeting on May 8 at the Glen Retirement Village (NEW DATE)

The next meeting will be held on Friday, **May 8** at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at the Glen Retirement Village, 403 East Flourney Lucas Road. The auditorium was not available on the 3rd Friday in May, so we moved the meeting to May 8. The Glen Retirement Village is located on the south side of Flourney 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 Flourney Lucas Road.)

We will discuss renovation work at the McNeill Street Pumping Station (Shreveport Water Works Museum), the upcoming trip to the Texas State RR and other activities. A program will be presented, including portions of O. Winston Link’s albums discussed on pages 1 and 2 of this newsletter. For information or directions call Dave Bland at (318) 470-5933.

Fish Fry and Operating Day at the Rose Center



On Saturday, April 25 we had a Fish Fry and Operating Day at the American Rose Center on the Jefferson Paige Road. It was a beautiful day and we had a great turnout. If you missed it, you missed a lot of fun and great food. Thanks to Russell Pedro and Mark Brunnetin for cooking the fish, boiled shrimp, french fries, hushpuppies and cole slaw. And thanks to Maurice Head for bringing the steam locomotive! As you can see from the photos above, the kids (young and old) enjoyed operating the diesel engine around the track. (Photos by Paul Hoge and Dave Bland)

The Bulletin Board - Events and Information for Railroaders

Society Trip to the Texas State Railroad May 23

We are planning to make a trip to the Texas State Railroad in Rusk, Texas on Saturday May 23rd. This will be our first trip there since American Heritage Railways began operating the railroad in late 2007. The steam powered train will leave Rusk at 11:00 am, arrive at Palestine about 12:30 pm, and board to return to Rusk at 2:00 pm. The train gets back to Rusk at 3:30 pm. Round trip ticket prices (including taxes) for the climate-controlled (air conditioned) car are \$47.00 for adults and \$27.00 for children under 12. Brown Bag lunches are available for \$8.00 if reserved in advance, or you can bring your own lunch. Food is available at the Palestine depot but the line is usually long.

Space will be limited since that is Memorial Day weekend, plus they are having special military exhibits at the Palestine depot that weekend. If you plan to go, let us know at the meeting on May 8th or call Dave Bland at 318-470-5933 (or email him at DDBland@aol.com) by **Saturday, May 9th**. If we get at least 8 people committed to go by that time, we may be able to charter the MKT Caboose for our ride!

For those that are interested in carpooling, we will meet at the Home Depot at I-49 and Bert Kouns at 7:30 am to drive to Rusk (110 miles). We should be back in Shreveport about 6:30 pm.

Upcoming Events

May 8	RRVRHS Meeting/Program at the Glen Retirement Village
May 23	RRVRHS trip to the Texas State RR in Rusk

New Website

Thanks again to Tommy Crenshaw for setting up our own website at www.rrvrhs.org containing an intro to our Society, our newsletters in color, and information on how to join. Check it out!!

We Really 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 RRVRHS email list. If you recently received an email from Dave, no action is necessary unless you want to be removed from the list. Thanks!

The President's Message – May 2009

Hello Railfans:

As I write this article for our great newsletter I am thinking back on many years of false hopes and starts for our Railroad Museum. I am happy to say that we have a good opportunity now to show the community what we can do. The McNeill Street Pumping Station group has asked us to join them at the old steam operated pumping station on Cross Bayou in north Shreveport. It is not as large as I would have liked it to be but it is a start. In the next few months we will be working to make our dream a reality. We need as many members to come out and help us as we can get. By the time you read this some work will already have been done, but there is something that everyone can do to bring this project to a successful conclusion. Please, let's go to work!

At our last meeting Dave provided a good program on the *General* locomotive. He had lots of historic pictures and information as well as sound recordings made by O. Winston Link. This was the type of informative and interesting meeting that we have been needing. Dave did a very good job but he cannot do this every meeting. We need others to present programs of this type.

We are also planning another visit to the Texas State Railroad and would like as many of you to attend as possible. Last time we had a great run and everyone had a good time. Contact Dave if you plan to join us so he can make reservations

Hoping to see all of you at the museum and the Texas State Railroad.

Happy Railroading!

Russell

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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 _____