

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

May, 2011

SHREVEPORT, LA

Our 30<sup>th</sup> Year

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## 40,000 Soldiers Served by Red Cross Canteen at Union Station



On April 6, 1917 the United States came out of neutrality and declared war on Germany, thus entering the First World War. In order to serve soldiers passing through Shreveport's Union Station during "the war to end all wars", the American Red Cross established the canteen shown above. According to an article published in the *New Orleans Item* on June 29, 1919, from the time of its organization in 1917 until it was disbanded in May, 1919 the canteen committee served forty thousand soldiers. The canteen was organized with Mrs. E. H Randolph as commandant and Mrs. G. W. Jack as assistant commandant. The Shreveport Chapter of the American Red Cross set aside \$50 per month for the operation. In July, 1918, the canteen began its program of service at Union Station with two committees of two members each. Two young ladies of each committee met every train coming into the city. A temporary hut was erected in late 1917 on Wilson Alley. After the fighting ceased on November 11, 1918, the larger and more permanent hut shown above was erected near the lunch room at the depot. The committee of servers had increased to 40 and they served every day from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. The banner month for serving troops was August, 1918 when 7,000 soldiers passed through the station. Refreshments served to troop trains consisted of watermelons, punch, candy, ice cream, coffee, hot chocolate, lemonade and iced tea. Cigarettes and post cards were given away in large quantities. (Photo courtesy of LSU Shreveport Noel Memorial Library Archives and Special Collections.)

## **Amtrak Turns 40 Years Old This Month**

Forty years ago, on May 1, 1971, Amtrak operated its first intercity passenger train and began its continuing journey of meeting America's national transportation needs. Amtrak is offering several ways the public can join in on the celebration, including a special fare promotion and an anniversary website at [www.Amtrak40th.com](http://www.Amtrak40th.com) full of historical photographs and other materials, along with a book and a documentary DVD. The 40th anniversary celebration is occurring during a period of long-term growth that has seen Amtrak set annual rider-ship records in seven of the last eight fiscal years, including more than 28.7 million passengers in FY 2010 - and Amtrak is on track to set a new record this year. Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman recently published *Amtrak: An American Story*, a new book celebrating the railroad's first 40 years.

The federal government created the National Railroad Passenger Corporation during a time when the private railroads were getting out of the passenger rail business. In the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970, national leaders decided that maintaining a "modern, efficient, intercity rail passenger service is a necessary part of a balanced transportation system." Amtrak's national mission was reaffirmed by Congress and the President in the Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act of 2008.

While the 40th anniversary provides an opportunity to look back at each of the transitions in the history of the railroad -- the formation of the company in 1970-1971, the transfer of the Northeast Corridor to Amtrak in 1976, and the introduction of 150 mph high-speed Acela Express service in 2000—Amtrak President Boardman stresses that Amtrak is committed to "providing our country with the transportation choices it will need in the future." For example, Amtrak is actively planning for next-generation 220-mph high-speed rail service along the Northeast Corridor, and is beginning to implement a fleet renewal program to provide new, modern and more reliable equipment for passengers and to meet anticipated future service expansion.

Unfortunately, service directly to Shreveport is not in their current plans although it is often discussed and requested by passenger train supporters in our area. However, daily Amtrak service is available in Marshall and Longview. Tickets purchased for Amtrak service to or from Shreveport aboard the *Texas Eagle* include a trip by bus to the station in Longview. For schedules and fares call (800) USA-RAIL or visit [www.Amtrak.com](http://www.Amtrak.com). According to the timetable, it is possible to leave Shreveport at 6:45 a.m., ride the bus to Longview and the train to Dallas, and return to Shreveport at 7:45 p.m. (Subject to trains running on time!)

## **Next RRVRS Meeting and Fish Fry on Saturday May 21 at the McNeill Street Pumping Station**

Instead of having our regular meeting on Friday May 20, we will have a short business meeting and a Fish Fry at the McNeill Street Pumping Station on Saturday, May 21. The address is 142 N. Common St. in Shreveport. You will be able to tour the Shreveport Water Works Museum and see the progress on our museum building. We will have fish, shrimp, hush puppies, cold slaw, etc. The time is from 3 to 7 p.m., and we will eat about 5 p.m. The cost is \$5.00 per attendee, and you can pay when you get there. If you would like to bring a dessert or other dish, please call Kelly Jo at (318) 524-2832.

**Bring a friend!**

## Southern Forest Heritage Museum



The annual Heritage Day at the Southern Forest Heritage Museum in Longleaf was held on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. As mentioned by Russell in his President's Message below, he and Bill Hashieder attended. The M4 Railcar and the Fairmont Speeder were available for rides. Bill is shown taking a photo near 4-6-0 No. 400 outside the machine shop, and Red River and Gulf 4-6-0 No.106 is shown inside the train shed where it has resided since the sawmill was shut down.

### Upcoming Events

- May 21 RRVrHS Fish Fry at McNeill Street Pumping Station – 3 to 7 p.m.
- May 22 Tour Country Store in Mansfield (see below)
- June 14 "History of Marshall's T&P Hospital" – Marshall Depot – 6 p.m.
- June 17 RRVrHS Meeting at the Glen – 7 p.m.

### Invitation to Tour an Old Time Country Store

Some of our members belong to the DeSoto Historical Society. One of our members, Severn Doughty, has an old time country store containing lots of antiques including tools and numerous railroad items. He has invited anyone interested to tour it on Sunday May 22 during the DeSoto Historical Society meeting which begins at 3 p.m.. The location is just off Hwy 175 near Mansfield. For information and directions, you can call Gary Fox at (318) 631-9164.

**See Current and Previous Newsletters in COLOR at our website**

(Thanks to Tommy Crenshaw)

[www.rvrhs.org](http://www.rvrhs.org)

## The President's Message – May 2011

Hello Railfans:

Another month has gone by and its time for another report from yours truly.

Work is progressing at the McNeill Street location. Since our last report we have finished installing all of the metal conduit in the museum building and it has been inspected by the electrician. Several things needed changing and now that has been done and the work has been approved. Last Saturday four of us began pulling wire through the new pipe and installing the electrical plugs and switches. We should be finished with our part of the electrical work in 2 more working days. The next project will be to install the air conditioning system. That should take about 4 working days.

Last weekend Bill Hashieder and I went to the Southern Forest Heritage Museum in Longleaf for their annual spring event. We had a heavy mist all the way down but after we got there the weather turned out to be a beautiful day. Since last year they have made some improvements and there was more to see and do. There were three different train rides going down three different tracks. We talked to several officials and were told that in the next several weeks a track company will be on-site to realign the track around the mill and level and ballast the track. If you have not been there, I recommend a visit.

Don't forget our spring fish fry is coming up on May 21<sup>st</sup> and I am hoping to see all of you at the McNeill Street Pumping Station for lots of good food and friends.

Happy Railroading!

Russell

### **RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. Shreveport, LA**

Russell Pedro – President      Kelly Jo Brunettin – Vice President  
Gary Fox – Secretary      Bill Hasheider – Treasurer  
Dave Bland – Newsletter Editor – 797-8008 – [DDBland@aol.com](mailto:DDBland@aol.com)

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### **It is time to pay 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_