

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

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

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*May, 2014*

SHREVEPORT, LA

*Our 33<sup>rd</sup> Year*

## DOT.DOT.DOT.DONE



May 10, 2014 will mark the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah in 1869. The 1,928 mile "Pacific Railroad" link between Sacramento, CA and Council Bluffs, IA connected with the existing railroad network to the East Coast. This famous photo by Andrew J. Russell shows the celebratory "media event" that was covered live across the country using the technology of telegraphy. Telegrapher W. N. Shilling was at a small table at trackside with his telegraph key connected to a nationwide hookup. Here is the dialog -

Omaha telegraph: TO EVERYBODY: KEEP QUIET. WHEN THE LAST SPIKE IS DRIVEN... WE WILL SAY 'DONE' DON'T BREAK THE CIRCUIT, BUT WATCH FOR THE BLOWS OF THE HAMMER

Promotory telegraph: ALL READY NOW. THE SPIKE WILL SOON BE DRIVEN. THE SIGNAL WILL BE THREE DOTS FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE BLOWS

The "Golden Spike" was inserted into a special drilled hole, but no one struck it because of its value. It was replaced by an iron spike with wires connected to it and the hammer so the blows to the iron could be "heard" via the telegraph wires. At Washington, D. C. a ball was suspended outside the capitol building which was detached and dropped at the first tap of the hammer at Promontory. Wires were extended to the bell in the capitol dome and each tap of the hammer more than 2000 miles away was repeated on the great bell. The wires in San Francisco were connected with the alarm bell in Fire Department tower, and also so

adjusted that at the first tap of the hammer on the last spike fired a parapet gun at Fort Point at the entrance to the Golden Gate. Governor Stanford of the Central Pacific RR tapped the iron spike very lightly with the hammer. Just the slightest touch was all that was necessary to carry the 'tapping' message over the wires. After several taps were telegraphed, the wires were disconnected from the spike and the hammer and the telegraph operator simply keyed DOT.DOT.DOT.DONE

### Upcoming Events

- May 16 RRVRHS Meeting – 7 p.m. in the Library at The Glen Retirement Village, 403 East Flournoy Lucas Road. For information or directions call (318) 470-5933.
- June 6 First Friday Railroad Photography Meeting – 7:30 p.m. at the Shreveport Water Works Museum/ Railroad Museum – 142 N. Common St. – call (318) 458-3123 for information.

### The President's Message

Hello Railfans !

I can't believe that another month has passed and it is time to write again. Not that I mind, it just seems to come so soon. A lot of things are happening with the museum. Mary Durusau is no longer our contact person with the state. Louisiana was split up into 2 sections, north and south, and Mary has the south. Wayne Waddell has the north which includes us.

Thursday we will have a meeting with City Councilman Jeff Everson, Liz Swaine, Dale Ward and other city officials about the land next to Common Street. Three of the other parties involved have given their OK to proceed. I will let you know how the meeting turns out.

We sent George Henley a sympathy card regarding the passing of his wife. We also sent a thank you card to Mr. James Mohr for his \$2000 donation. Dave Bland is doing well after his back surgery.

In the next few weeks we will be needing help building a wall in the meeting room at the Water Works Museum. This will help cool and heat the meeting area. Gary and Frank have moved the 7 ½ inch gauge steam engine, riding car and track panels to the museum in anticipation of laying track there.

That's about all for now. Hope to see you at the next meeting.

Happy Railroading!  
Russell

### Are You Up-to-Date on Your Dues ?

Please send a check or money order for \$20.00 with this membership form to Bill Hasheider at 6813 Despot Road, Shreveport, LA 71108

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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