

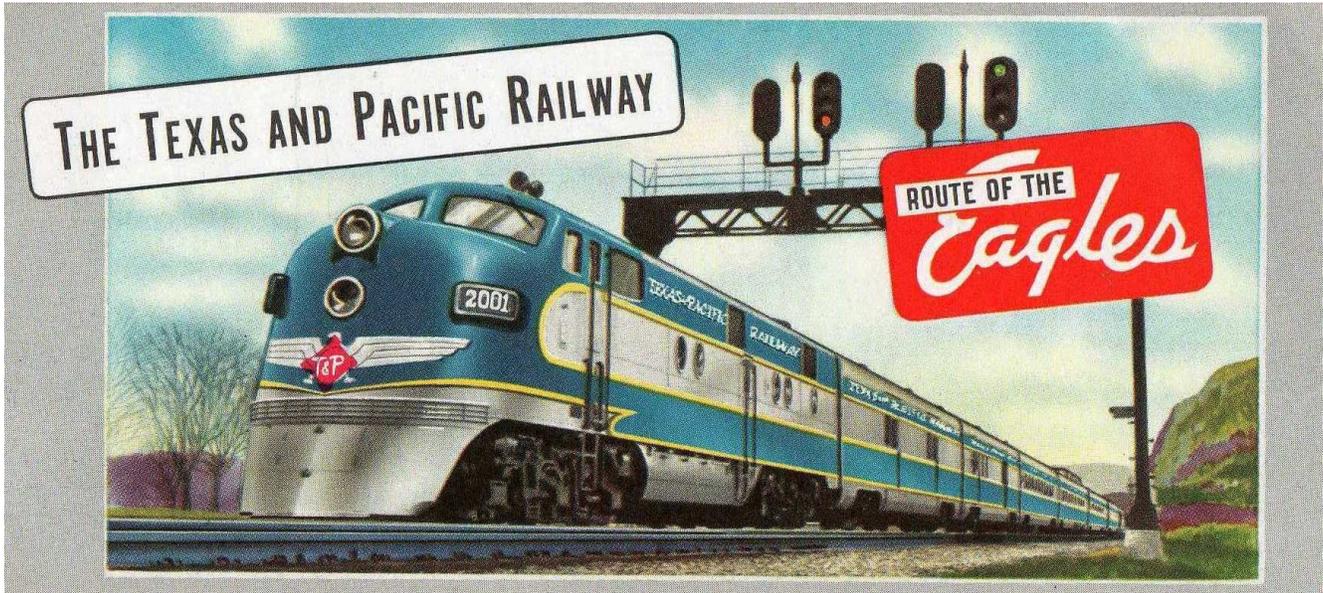
# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

FEBRUARY, 2010

SHREVEPORT, LA

OUR 29<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

## “A Hog Can Cross the Country Without Changing Trains....But You Can’t”



### Here Come The Eagles !

Robert R. Young, a native Texan who led the Chesapeake & Ohio and New York Central railroads, made this startling claim. His statement spurred the railroads into establishing one-car transcontinental service in the 1940's. Unfortunately, it is probably a valid statement again today.

One of the first railroads to take up the challenge was the Texas & Pacific Railway. According to an article in the July, 1947 *Shreveport Magazine*, by the end of that year T&P would inaugurate a new train, the *Texas Eagle* as a deluxe streamliner between New York and El Paso, a distance of 2,407 miles. It would roll from the North Atlantic coast to the Mexican border, the longest schedule in the country. It would be a joint effort between the T&P, Missouri Pacific and Pennsylvania railroads. From El Paso to Texarkana, a distance of 863 miles, the *Texas Eagle* would use T&P tracks and be hauled by a T&P diesel. The Missouri Pacific would take over for the 493 mile run from Texarkana to St. Louis, and from there to New York the *Texas Eagle* would be a Pennsylvania baby. Each participating railroad would supply its own diesels which would harmonize in design and color with the rest of the train. Six trains would be in constant use over the 4,800 mile round trip. In addition to 8 new 2000 horsepower F-7A EMD diesels, 48 new cars were purchased for \$5,800,000. Actually, the new train did not go into service until August 15, 1948 due to delays in getting all the new equipment.

The *Sunshine Special* had been operating from El Paso to St. Louis for about 30 years over T&P and Missouri Pacific tracks. Since July 1946 it had been operating under the same train designation all the way to New York in preparation for the Eagles. Never before had any railroad or combination of railroads operated a daily through train beyond St. Louis or Chicago. Passengers who boarded the train could travel from New York City to El Paso without changing trains or even changing seats. The Eagles would tie-in with the Southern Pacific at El Paso and one sleeper and one coach would continue on to Los Angeles.

Shreveporters could board the *Louisiana Eagle*, which began service in September 1948 between New Orleans and Dallas, and change to the coast cars in Ft. Worth.

Additionally, W. G. Vollmer, president of the T&P, implemented a railroad credit card in early 1947. It enabled financially responsible travelers to say “charge it” when buying tickets at any T&P ticket office or when buying meals in dining cars. T&P was the first railroad in the West to implement this service. Other efforts to boost train travel were free “coffee-on-the-house” on all trains at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., economy breakfasts (60 cents) and dinners (90 cents) in dining cars. The T&P also instituted a hotel reservation service along the line, available at ticket counters.



Another public relations move was to provide familiarization rides for the younger generation. For example, in May 1947 a “Boys Special” train pulled out of the T&P station on Market Street with 250 members of the Red Shield Junior Optimist Club aboard. For two and one-half hours the seven-car special cruised through the Hollywood, Cedar Grove and Agurs sections of Shreveport giving these youngsters an insight into how a railroad works.

In addition to building good customer relations, President Vollmer addressed employee relations and teamwork with actions such as trying to meet all 8,000 employees and publishing an excellent employee magazine *T&P Topics*. His efforts paid off and T&P became a great place to work with a family atmosphere. W. C. Vollmer was president until December 1958 when he was replaced by John T. Suggs.

The T&P consolidation into the Missouri Pacific(MOP) began in 1962 and they officially merged on October 15, 1976. Major alterations in *Texas Eagle* service began to occur during the early 1960’s as the merger began. On September 3, 1961 *Texas Eagle* Trains #1-2 were combined with the *Louisiana Eagle* Trains #21-22 between Marshall and Ft. Worth. The most dramatic change occurred on July 1, 1962 when the MOP realigned and renumbered all T&P passenger trains. On February 27, 1964 the “West” *Texas Eagle* was combined with the *Louisiana Eagle* as Trains #21-22, operating over the entire length of T&P from New Orleans to El Paso. Later in 1964 MOP’s *Texas Eagle* Trains #21-22 were cut back to a New Orleans - Ft. Worth route and they continued that way until May 31, 1969 when they were cut again to a New Orleans – Marshall route. Then, at 10:01 p.m. on December 17, 1969 *Texas Eagle* Train #22 arrived in Shreveport on its final run to New Orleans. Passenger train service to Shreveport had ended.

The *Texas Eagle* name is still used by Amtrak for their daily Chicago - San Antonio train.

Sources: *Shreveport Magazine* (July 1947), *Texas & Pacific Railway “From Ox Teams to Eagles”* by Don Watson and Steve Brown (1978), *Texas & Pacific Color Pictorial* by Steve Allen Goen (1997).

## Bill Daniel Presented Program at January RRVRS Meeting



There was a great turnout at the January 15 meeting due to the program by Bill Daniel and the efforts of Kelly Jo Brunettin who called every member the week of the meeting. Kelly Jo even brought refreshments ! We had guests from the Shreveport Historic Preservation Society and from Pennsylvania, Bill Daniel's current home state. The filmmaker and photographer showed and discussed his film "*Who is Bozo Texino?*", a personal documentary on the secret history of hobo and rail worker graffiti. We all enjoyed the Q&A with Bill after the show. It was interesting to hear that he shot the documentary footage using 8mm and 16mm film! We hope Bill will return soon.

### Next RRVRS Meeting on February 19 at the Glen

The meeting will be held on Friday, **February 19** at **7 p.m.** in the auditorium 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. We have to pull together to get the museum open and D&R 10 moved. A program will be presented after the business discussion. Suggestions and assistance with future programs are needed, so bring your ideas to the meeting. 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.

### Shreveport Historic Preservation Society

This group was organized in 2007 as a non-profit organization with the mission to identify, document, and encourage the preservation of Shreveport's historic buildings, places and character. RRVRS members share many of the same interests and encourage your participation in their Society. Please go to [www.historicshreveport.org](http://www.historicshreveport.org) to obtain more information.

### Upcoming Events

- March 6 Jonquil Jubilee in Gibsland, LA - the L&NW Railroad will have two 1960's diesel engines on the side rail downtown for people to tour.
- March 19 RRVRS Monthly Meeting at the Glen
- March 20-21 Longview Train Show
- April 11 Texas State Railroad Photo Excursion
- April 20 Marshall Depot – 7 p.m. - "Who is Bozo Texino?" video
- May 1 Southern Forest Museum Heritage Day, Longleaf, LA (RRVRS trip)

## The President's Message – February 2010

Hello Railfans:

Well, it has been almost a month since our last meeting, which I might add, was an awesome meeting. I wish they all could be as good, although the last several have been very good thanks to our vice president Dave Bland. Those of you who could not attend missed a good one. I would also like to thank our new secretaries Mark and Kelly Jo Brunettin for the very good refreshments, and a sincere thanks to all who attended.

This month we have several things that we need to discuss and vote on. On Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> Gary Fox and yours truly went to an auction in north Shreveport and bought three nice display cabinets to add to the ones we already have. I think we almost have enough for the museum. Most of the cabinets can be used as-is without much work. Gary is working on securing replacement windows at a reduced price. I am working on a better price for the drop ceiling. We need some ideas on lights for the building, as we may not be able to use fluorescent fixtures.

Spring is not far off and several railroad events are approaching. The next event is the Train Show in Longview on March 20-21. This is a good show and I hope to see you there.

Another rail related event is the Southern Forest Museum Heritage Day in Longleaf on May 1<sup>st</sup>. This year they will be using a restored Rail Bus to ferry people around the museum. This vehicle came from Arkansas and it should be a delight for Railfans to see, photograph and ride. I hope that you will plan to attend this year. It is a very nice one day trip.

Well, I don't know much else to write about this month so I will close for now and hope to see you at the meeting.

Happy Railroading!  
Russell

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

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Dave Bland – Newsletter Editor – 797-8008 – [DDBland@aol.com](mailto:DDBland@aol.com)

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### **It is time to pay your 2010 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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