

THE PEACH BLOSSOM SPECIAL

Sunday, June 19, 1994

Springfield, Mo.

West Plains, Mo.

Jonesboro, Ark.

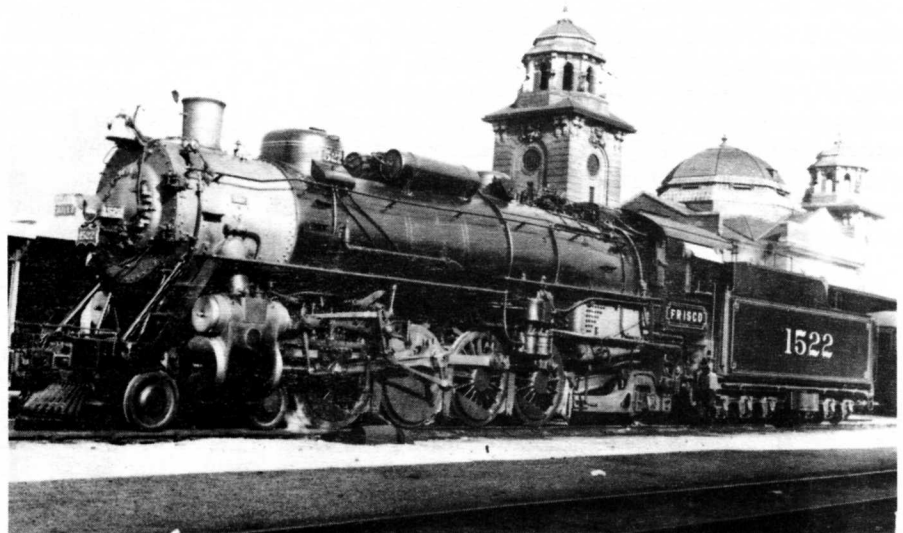
Memphis

Sponsored by the St. Louis Chapter, National Railway Historical Society
In Cooperation with the St. Louis Steam Train Association, Burlington Northern Railroad and Norfolk Southern Corporation

Welcome Aboard!

Your hosts in the St. Louis Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS), along with the members of the St. Louis Steam Train Association, and Burlington Northern Railroad, welcome you aboard this special steam-powered excursion train over the most rugged section of the former St. Louis - San Francisco Railway, or Frisco Lines.

Today's excursion is powered a steam locomotive which regularly ran over this route during its service career, Frisco 1522. Built in 1926 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, the 1522 regularly operated over the route of our train today between Kansas City and Birmingham, Ala., handling important Frisco passenger trains such as the *Kansas City - Florida Special*.



Frisco 1522 at Terminal Station in Birmingham, Ala. in 1940, awaiting its run to Kansas City on the Kansas City - Florida Special. Photo by Frank Ardrey, Woody Bell Collection.

This trip is operated through the courtesy of Burlington Northern Railroad as a special movement en route to the National Railway Historical Society convention in Atlanta. It marks the first time since its restoration that the 1522 has returned to this route, over which it operated so often and so well. Very special thanks go to Burlington Northern for hosting this extraordinary opportunity to recall and replicate a bit of railroad history. Also, sincere thanks to Norfolk Southern Corp. for providing the use of its excursion passenger train.

For Your Safety and Comfort

Safety First! These are the two most important words on the railroad, and they should be your two most important words today, too. For safety's sake:

- ◆ *Always watch your step!* Be especially careful...
- ◆ Getting on or off the train, or
- ◆ When walking about the train or between cars.
- ◆ At stops, watch your footing on uneven ground, gravel, and track ballast stone.
- ◆ Always step **OVER**, *never* on top of, the rail.
- ◆ Always **walk**, *never* run.
- ◆ Keep your head, hands and arms fully inside the train at all times!

- ◆ If you get a wind-blown particle in your eye, do not rub the eye. Let the eye's natural watering action remove the particle.
- ◆ A medical team is on board. *For medical assistance, contact any crew member.*
- ◆ Children should not play in aisles.
- ◆ Coolers and packages must be kept out of aisles.
- ◆ Please always follow the instructions of your car host or other NRHS or railroad crew members, especially at photo stops.
- ◆ No sandals, thongs or bare feet permitted. We reserve the right to insist on appropriate, safe footwear.
- ◆ **Alcoholic beverages may not be brought aboard or consumed anywhere on the train, nor anywhere on railroad property.**

TO FULFILL A VISION: SOUTH BY SOUTHEAST ACROSS THE OZARKS

A Railroad History of Today's Route

Our trip today across the Thayer Subdivision of the Burlington Northern Railroad takes us from the high plateau of the Missouri Ozarks to the broad, flat alluvial floodplain of the Mississippi River valley. It is a route of strong geographical contrasts. Beginning on some of the highest terrain in the Midwest near Springfield, our train eventually ends today's trip on some of the lowest and flattest land in the central United States.

Such geographic contrasts are perfectly in balance with the way in which our train contrasts with the railroad world of today: a steam locomotive operating among 3,000-plus horsepower diesel-electric locomotives; a passenger train moving in what is normally an all-freight-train environment; and intermediate stops for passengers, fuel and water contrasting with nearly non-stop expedited freight trains of today, filled with tri-level racks of automobiles, flatcars carrying highway trailers, and double-stacked containers riding in special well cars.

These contrasts show us the broad canvas upon which the nation's railways have painted their story of transportation service to the nation. For our route today, that story begins in Kansas City, in the period after the Civil War. It is a story of the vision of one of the most important railroad strategists of the mid-1800s, and how that vision was reshaped by the dynamic economic and social forces which always ultimately shape any business endeavor.

From Kansas City, Vision and Plans

In the decade before the Civil War, Kansas City began to emerge as a moderately important trading center in western Missouri. A collection of small trading posts and river towns early in its history, it increasingly saw itself as a potential railroad center of strategic importance in its region.

But Kansas City's vault to commercial prominence through its railroads would have to wait until after the Civil War. Several events quickly brought the idea of Kansas City as a rail center to fruition. Most important of these was the completion on July 3, 1869 of a railroad bridge across the Missouri River. Built by famed engineer Octave Chanute in the face of difficult river conditions, the bridge linked Kansas City at Cameron, Mo. with the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad, which ran east and west across northern Missouri between its namesake cities. But with the H&StJ in the orbit of the rapidly expanding Chicago, Burlington & Quincy system, which was aggressively building links from Chicago all across Illinois, Iowa and Missouri, the bridge had even larger significance. It became the tool which forged an enduring strategic link between the Kansas City and the vast net of railways spreading westward from Chicago. That link would be seen ever after by Kansas Citians as the

decisive factor in the growth of their small town into a great commercial metropolis in the late 1800s.

A key player in these developments was James F. Joy, a skillful lawyer from Detroit who possessed a masterful grasp of railroad politics and strategy in the trans-Mississippi West, and who had adopted Kansas City as the centerpiece of his plans. Joy managed the H&StJ and the CB&Q for its key investors, capitalist John Murray Forbes and his fellow investors in Boston. It was Joy with whom the Kansas City leaders had negotiated to get the H&StJ connection built, along with its important bridge. It was Joy who had convinced Forbes to develop the H&StJ connection to Kansas City, and not the competing community of Leavenworth, Kans., located upstream from Kansas City on the Missouri River. And it was Joy who was privately investing in Kansas City real estate, including in land which would eventually be developed into the great stockyards and meat-packing complex that would affirm the city in its place on the nation's economic stage.

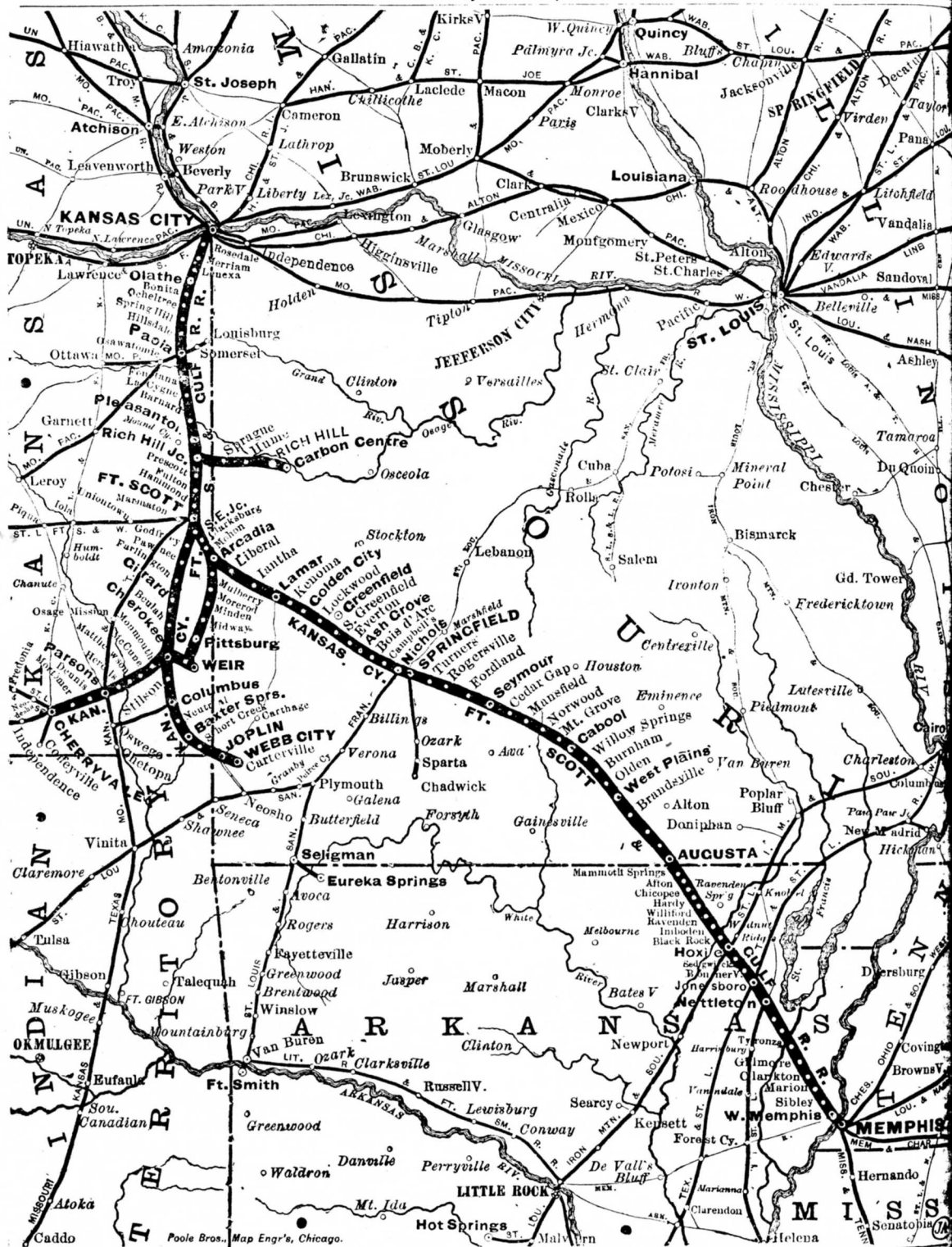
But even before Joy had become involved with the Hannibal Bridge, he was interested in building a railroad south from Kansas City toward the Cherokee Strip, or Neutral Tract, a 50 by 25 mile strip of land in the far southeastern corner of Kansas, held by the Cherokee tribes after their forced removal to the West from their native southern Appalachian homelands. In August of 1866, the federal government received the Neutral Tract in trust from the Cherokees as a settlement in the treaty of 1866. When a quick sale by the government under shadowy circumstances was voided in the face of public outrage, Joy pushed hard to acquire the lands in competition with four other railroad groups. He was successful in June, 1868, acquiring the entire 800,000 acre tract.

To help develop the tract, while remaining true to his Kansas City-centered strategy, he focused his attention on the Kansas & Neosho Railroad. It had been chartered in 1865 by Kansas City interests to run from Kansas City southwestward into the Neosho River valley in southeastern Kansas, then into Indian Territory (later Oklahoma) and eventually into Texas.

In October, 1868, Joy oversaw the reorganization of the Kansas & Neosho into the Missouri River, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad. To begin its southward expansion, he wasted no time raising \$4,000,000 in capital in his usually skillful manner. By the end of 1868, the MRFS&G had reached Olathe, Kans., 20 miles from Kansas City. In 1869, its rails stretched all the way to Fort Scott, Kans., nearly 100 miles from Kansas City. And by the end of 1870, the road extended to Baxter Springs, at the southern tip of the Neutral Tract in the far southeastern corner of Kansas, very near where Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri meet. There

Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf R. R. Line

NOW COMPLETED TO MEMPHIS, TENN., AND OPEN FOR BUSINESS.



NO CHANGE OF CARS OF ANY CLASS BETWEEN KANSAS CITY AND MEMPHIS, TENN.

This map of the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf announced the opening of the line to service in the November, 1883 issue of the Official Railway Guide. Courtesy of the Barriger Railroad Collection, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

Joy's road, by now known as the "Border Tier Road" for its route southward parallel to the Kansas-Missouri border, paused. It was ready to build into Indian Territory, where it held claim to a significant land grant.

Joy believed--correctly as it turned out--that the conditions of the Indian Territory land grant through the new lands of the Cherokee Nation could accrue to only one road, and that road must be the first to reach the Territory border with Kansas. He intended to be the first, and to secure the grant and its right of passage through the territory for his Border Tier Road.

But he wasn't alone in casting his gaze upon the Cherokee Strip and Indian Territory. The Union Pacific Railway, Southern Branch (a company actually unrelated to the Union Pacific despite its name, and which had recently reorganized as the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, or Katy), had also built to a point near the Indian Territory border from Fort Riley in central Kansas. Its leader, Judge Levi Parsons of New York, hoped just as intently as Joy to reach the border first. As the two roads raced to lay track and then to have the completion of their lines certified to meet the conditions of law, sporadic violence broke out between their construction forces. But there was perhaps even more skullduggery. Long-time legend in the Cherokee Strip holds that an agent of the Katy, dressed as a Quapaw chief, hoodwinked Joy's chief engineer (none other than Octave Chanute) into believing that the border had nearly been reached, when actually it was several miles further south. However the deed was done, the MK&T was certified by President Grant as having reached the border first. Joy had his 800,000 acres in Kansas, but he had been frustrated in his drive southward to Texas through Indian Territory. If the growing cattle industry of the Southwest were to feed the stockyards of Kansas City, it wouldn't be on the rails of the Joy system.

As the Border Tier Road and the Katy had driven toward Indian Territory, local interests in nearby Springfield, Mo. watched with interest as these lines approached within about 100 miles of their city. In 1869, representatives of the Kansas City Board of Trade met with Springfield interests to begin developing plans for a road. Kansas City interests intended to finance and build the road with local capital, but without Joy, who had his own agenda, they were unable to fulfill their plans. Any railway connecting Springfield and Kansas City would not be built by Kansas Citians, but by Joy.

Headed Southeast Across The Ozarks

Frustrated from entering Indian Territory, Joy turned his attention elsewhere. Following a suggestion by Octave Chanute, he began to survey a line from near Fort Scott toward Springfield, continuing on through northern Arkansas to the Mississippi River near Memphis. Joy had long been involved in railroad development from east to west with the Burlington system and the Forbes group, but he was now listening to another siren song of the Gilded Age: the belief in the

wealth of trade between latitudes, with northern manufactured goods and processed products flowing to the South, and southern agricultural products and cotton flowing north.

Between 1878 and 1882, track was completed in several sections between Springfield and a point near Fort Scott by two companies, the most important being the Fort Scott, South Eastern & Memphis Railroad Company. By the end of 1882, a direct rail link existed between Springfield and Kansas City, even as plans were being laid and another company formed to build from Springfield across the Ozark Divide toward Memphis. This line from Springfield to Memphis over which our train travels today is thus the farthest extension of James F. Joy's grand strategic plans. But it represents a tactical adaptation in those plans, not their strategic fulfillment.

From Springfield, the line was constructed to the Missouri-Arkansas border near Thayer between 1881 and 1883 by the Kansas City, Springfield & Memphis Railroad Co. (of 1881). This company was organized in that year by other Boston investors of the Forbes group, most notably H.H. Hunnewell, Nathaniel Thayer and Charles Merriam, for the purpose of building toward Memphis. The remainder of the route, from the Arkansas border to Bridge Junction, across the Mississippi River from Memphis, was constructed at the same time by a second company, the Kansas City, Springfield & Memphis Railroad Co. (of 1883).

In 1888, an overall reorganization combined many of these lines, still under the aegis of successors to the earlier investors of the Forbes group. The routes between Kansas City and Springfield were combined into the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Springfield Railroad Company. This company in turn was consolidated with the company which had built between Springfield and Memphis (the Kansas City, Springfield & Memphis) to form the new Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railroad Company. Other subsidiaries of the new company later added route miles from Memphis to Birmingham, Ala.

Into the Frisco Family

In 1901, the consolidated Kansas City, Ft. Scott & Memphis was leased to the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad, better known as Frisco. This company, descended from the Pacific Railroad of Missouri, the first common-carrier railroad west of the Mississippi, had built routes through its various predecessors extending southwestward from St. Louis to Oklahoma City and into Texas. The addition of the KCFS&M made the Frisco's system a large "X", with the two legs crossing a Springfield (Kansas City to Memphis and Birmingham from northwest to southeast, and St. Louis to Oklahoma City and Texas, northeast to southwest). With such a central position, Springfield became the hub of the Frisco system.

At the time of the lease of the Ft. Scott road by the Frisco, the SL&SF was led by Benjamin F. Yoakum, who held the company's top positions from 1900 to 1913.

Like James Joy before him, Yoakum believed in aggressive expansion, almost heedless to whether sufficient traffic existed to support the expansion. He aggressively pushed Frisco into Texas in the face of strident opposition by Edward Harriman and his Southern Pacific, coordinated services with the Rock Island (with whom he had previously clashed), and gained control of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois. The C&EI coordinated services with Frisco, giving its southwestern traffic access beyond St. Louis and southeastern Missouri to Chicago. Yoakum also spent heavily, upgrading the Frisco's and C&EI's fixed plants, cars and locomotives. But his expansion and spending left Frisco weak, and the 1913-14 depression on the eve of World War I plunged to road into bankruptcy. It was reorganized in 1916, emerging as the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway, but still popularly known as Frisco.

From Steam to Diesel

In 1928, Frisco purchased the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis outright in the boom days before the Great Depression. The Depression brought another bankruptcy, and then trusteeship between 1932 and 1947. But also before that bankruptcy, Frisco purchased some of the finest steam locomotives to ever operate on its lines: the 1500-class Mountain types, of which the 1522 powering our train today is an example. The 1522 and its sisters, nos. 1500 through 1529, were built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Eddystone, Pa., near Philadelphia. They were produced in three groups in 1923, 1925 and 1926. Built as dual-service engines, they were at home on a tightly scheduled passenger train, or on an expedited freight.

The first group of 1500s, nos. 1500 through 1514, were assigned to the territory between St. Louis, Springfield and Monett, Missouri. Frisco was so pleased with the performance of these engines that five more 1500s, nos. 1515-1519 were ordered in 1925. These additional engines put enough locomotives into the motive power pool to allow lengthened utilization cycles while fully protecting passenger train schedules. The 1500s began to run through from St. Louis all the way to Oklahoma City on trains such as the *Meteor*, and the *Bluebonnet* and *Texas Special*, which used Katy rails from Vinita, Okla. to Dallas and San Antonio. The 1522 came in the last group of ten engines, nos. 1520 to 1529. These were assigned primarily to the Kansas City - Memphis - Birmingham line, the route of today's excursion and the trip tomorrow from Memphis to Birmingham. On this route, the 1500s especially handled the important *Kansas City - Florida Special*. It is thus especially appropriate that the 1522 returns today for the first time since its restoration to the line it used so often in regular service.

After bearing enormous volumes of traffic during World War II, Frisco entered perhaps the healthiest period of its corporate existence. Postwar traffic was strong in its southwestern and southeastern territories, and the company carefully fostered its good connections with other roads to build bridge traffic between the roads on its flanks. Steam was retired and the road was fully dieselized in February, 1952. On-line traffic was

good, too, and Frisco tapped it with innovations such as the first bi-level automobile-carrying racks. These now ubiquitous carriers mounted on flatcars first served the Chrysler plants at Fenton near St. Louis, one of the company's major traffic sources. As with other roads, as freight business was reinvigorated, passenger service came to an end. For Frisco, the last passenger trains operated in 1967.

A Vision Fulfilled

James F. Joy's vision had centered on the roads he controlled radiating out from Kansas City. But his plan was partially frustrated by his inability to gain access to the route through Indian Territory. Joy's business style also ultimately sapped his ability to fulfill his intentions. Where Forbes and other investors in his Boston group proceeded incrementally after careful planning, and only after consolidating gains from previous actions, Joy often boldly struck out in several directions at once. And most others in the Forbes group focused successfully on east-west railroads, Joy increasingly set his sights on north-south routes whose traffic prospects were not as strong.

Much of Joy's plan came to fruition over a century later when, on November 21, 1980, Frisco merged with Burlington Northern. At the heart of BN are the lines originally built by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the road on which Joy had, as part of John Murray Forbes' group, developed his skills as a railroad strategist, and whose bridge at Kansas City had secured the foundations for his vision. With the BN merger, Joy's lines had in a very real sense come home again. But they were linked now in a vastly greater system extending from the Pacific Northwest to Pensacola, Fla., and from Canada to Galveston.

But it is at Kansas City that James Joy's vision is most fulfilled. Much of what he had seen for that city ultimately was achieved, and Kansas City today is one of the leading manufacturing, agribusiness and distribution centers of the nation. There, where BN's ex-CB&Q and ex-Frisco lines from several directions intersect, BN today handles vast quantities of coal, grain and merchandise traffic to and from all points of the compass carried in dozens of trains each day.

In today's world of dieselized, piggyback, double-stack railroading, our steam train, standing as it does in such contrast, is a reminder of the foresight that James Joy, Nathaniel Thayer, H.H. Hunnewell, Charles Merriam, John Murray Forbes and others brought to the railroads they built over a century ago. And it is a reminder, too, along with the expedited freight trains we'll pass, of the fulfillment of that vision today all along our route...but especially in a place called Kansas City.

-- Mark J. Cedeck, Historian
St. Louis Chapter NRHS

Along the Way: A Guide to the Route

Burlington Northern Railroad Springfield Division Thayer Subdivision

Stations (named locations in railroad operating timetables) no longer in service are indicated by brackets []. Other non-station locations of interest are indicated by an asterisk *.

Milepost (MP) and station name or point of interest

Cuba Subdivision Milepost

237.5 Springfield (Commercial St. Team Track)

Our trip begins here at the former Frisco North Springfield yard, today known as North Yard on the Burlington Northern. We will first travel over a short portion of BN's Cuba Subdivision, the ex-Frisco main line to Lebanon, Rolla and St. Louis. The 1522 and its train arrived in Springfield yesterday over this route.

237.2 43 Track

Our train enters Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) here at the west leg of the wye track. The tail track of the wye is the Middle Belt, leading to a junction with the original Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis line through the center of Springfield, and was formerly known as the Memphis passenger main. The Middle Belt was built to enable passenger trains to easily reach the original Frisco main from the Springfield passenger depot, located downtown on the KCF&M line. Today it is mainly used as the connection to the 11.9 mile Kissick Branch.

[236.7 Eastern Jct.]

Former east leg of the wye for the Middle Belt.

235.1 Teed

Thayer Subdivision Milepost

203.2 Teed

As we follow the curve to the right, our train enters the BN Thayer Subdivision. This track, known as the East Belt, was built in the 1960s as a connection to the Memphis line.

206.2 W.S.

Formerly known as Willow Springs Junction. Located just east of the U.S. Hwy. 65 overpass, the East Belt connected here with the original Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis line through Springfield. Known as the Memphis passenger main, it was removed west of here about 1980.

210.8 James River Bridge *

308-foot combination beam and through plate girder bridge.

[211.8 Turner]

We begin the ascent out of the James River Valley and back onto the Springfield Plateau, ascending Rogersville Hill, a five-mile climb with two miles of 1.25 percent gradient.

[216.0 Palmetto]

Here the line completes its climb out of the James River valley. For the next 27 miles it becomes a true "ridge-runner", following the crest between the watersheds of the James River to the north and Findley Creek to the south. Both flow into the White River south of Springfield.

219.0 Rogersville

Pop. 995. 10,266 foot controlled siding. The railroad meets U.S. Hwy. 60, which parallels our route to Cabool.

226.4 Fordland

Pop. 523. Our train crosses over old Highway 60 as we enter town. In 1931 W.A. Hagel opened his Nut Exchange here,

