

# R E R A I L

## A REPORT ON RAILROADS IN LOUISIANA

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RERAIL is a summary of local and regional railroad activities. Contributions, comments, and questions are welcome. Write or call me at home, or call me at work, in New Orleans (838-1983), between 7:00 and 3:30, Monday through Friday. Items of interest include motive power, rolling stock, operations, reports on trips, newspaper articles, and personal anecdotes. A 12-issue subscription costs \$6.00. (On new subscriptions, each 6-page issue will count for 1 1/2 regular 4-page issues.)

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### SOME THOUGHTS

When RERAIL first came out in April, I wasn't sure it would last for six months. That's why I only offered six-issue subscriptions. Now, we're on Issue Number Seven, and the prospects for continued publication look pretty good. You can even subscribe for 12-issues! To celebrate six months of survival, I've put together this SPECIAL GIANT SIX-PAGE ISSUE. In addition to its size, there are a few other differences.

First, part III of the L&N feature is an historical look at the line into New Orleans. This wasn't originally part of the article, nor were historical items within RERAIL's intended scope. However, I've spoken to several of you about this, and there seems to be some interest in this sort of material. There aren't too many places where you can easily find or exchange information on Louisiana railroad history. We can start right here. Hopefully, this article will encourage others to share what they know, or to do some historical research on their own. In connection with the L&N feature, I've reproduced an 1875 New Orleans And Mobile timetable. Again, this was not the sort of material I originally intended to include in RERAIL, but I think it will add interest to the article and value to the publication.

Finally, I've included a somewhat lengthy Trip Report section. In the past, I've tried to keep these rather brief, because of space, and so as not to bore anybody. My intent is to make the reports more interesting, and perhaps even entertaining. Let me know what you think, or I might bore you somehow!

### ALMANAC

111 YEARS AGO - On 29 October 1870, the last spike was driven on the New Orleans, Mobile & Chattanooga Railroad, between New Orleans and Mobile. The exact location of the ceremony isn't known, but it was somewhere in the vicinity of Lake Catherine, Louisiana. (see L&N feature)

100 YEARS AGO - Not in Louisiana, but close enough. This year is the 100th anniversary of the COLUMBUS & GREENVILLE. Not bad, especially for a road that temporarily disappeared.

### ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

STANDARD SAND & GRAVEL/T&NO (#5, p2, GM&O item) - Although the ex-T&NO 0-6-0 (Lima serial no. 6772, March 1924) at Franklinton has the number 156 on the sides of its cab, and on the rear of its tender; and while that was its original number, that wasn't its number when SS&G got it. By then, it was the 842. Here's a brief summary of how and why that happened.

THE T&NO began receiving 1000 hp diesel switchers in 1943, beginning with the number 30. (It had gotten some smaller units earlier.) In December 1946, they had 83 0-6-0's, numbered between 78 and 166; 12 0-8-0's, 175-186; and 9 S2's, 30-38. By 1949, the diesels were up to 88, so they were occupying former 0-6-0 numbers. Among the units acquired that year were four Baldwin DRS-6-6-1500 "heavy switchers" (at least one showed up at Avondale almost immediately), numbered 187-190, right above the 0-8-0's; and 12 PA1's, numbered in the 200-series.

IN 1950, several classes of T&NO steam engines, including most or all of the switchers, were renumbered to accomodate more diesels. The switchers went into the 800-series, so the 156 became the 842. The renumbering allowed the 1000 and 1200 hp units to continue upwards into the 100-series, where they eventually reached 128. It also made room for more 6-axle road switchers; since the PA1's already occupied the 200-series, subsequent C-C's were numbered DOWNWARD from 186! They eventually got down to 155. Second 156 was an Alco RSD5, serial no. 80784, built in September 1953. It was renumbered 2857 in 1965, and retired in 1967.

MEANWHILE, time and the elements have enabled the "real" 156 to reclaim its own number.

AMTRAK (#6, p.2) - The three F40's that went out on the BUM PHILIPS SPECIAL on 9-13 were the 258, 358, and 300.

GULF COAST REPORT (#5, p.2) - ALABAMA STATE DOCKS 802 is an MP15DC, not AC. Their MP15AC is the 803.

ICG (#4, p.2) - On the list of all-orange units, change GP35 2500 to 2520, and add SW14 1415 and U30B 5002. New total: 24.

ICG (#6, p.2) - SD40 6071 is ex-GM&O 950, not 750. (The 750 is a GP38-2.) Nevertheless, the 6071 still is ex-EMD 434.

### NEWS

AGRICO - The two 70-ton GE's reported heading west on the MP in April and May are at the Donaldsonville plant. According to THE SHORT LINE, these are the units at that location:

GE 45-TON	----	----	----	----	----
#4 ALCO	S3	80057	8-52	ex-Davenport,	Rock Island & Northwestern 4
#5 GE 70-TON		31279	2-52	acquired new;	transferred from Pierce, FL
#9 GE 70-TON		30024	9-48	ex-Ashley,	Drew & Northern 172; from Pierce

AMTRAK - The timetable that went into effect on 10-25 affected all of our trains. (The NB Crescent still leaves at 8:15, but it gets to Slidell 4 minutes earlier.) A non-schedule change has been the addition of Heritage Fleet coaches to the CITY. A typical consist for the last week of the month was baggage, sleeper, Amfood car, 2-3 Heritage coaches, 1-2 Am-coaches; 6 or 7 cars total...The SUNSET has been running with 7 cars, and the CRESCENT with 10 or 11, typically.

An interesting SUNSET went out on 10-9: P30's 719, 708; baggage car 1172, NAMED "SILVER TREASURE"!; coach-dorm (ex-ATSF) 39912, sleeper 32041, diner 38038, lounge (ex-ATSF!) 39970, coach-baggage 31021, coach 34029. SILVER TREASURE was the car's Burlington name, but its the first Amtrak baggage car I've seen with its name reinstated. Also, the order of the high-levels has been reversed, i.e. the sleeper and diner are ahead of the lounge, and the coaches behind it.

(AMTRAK NEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

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#### SPECIAL FEATURE - THE L&N IN NEW ORLEANS: YESTERDAY AND TODAY (PART III) - By MIKE PALMIERI

THIS year is the one hundredth anniversary of the L&N's ownership of track in Louisiana. In 1881, they purchased two railroads in the state.

ONE of these was the historic PONTCHARTRAIN RAILROAD, or "Smokey Mary". The Pontchartrain was the first railroad chartered west of the Alleghenies, having been incorporated on 20 January 1830. It was truly one of America's pioneer rail lines. The road ran along the Mississippi River, from Girod St. (about 4 blocks upstream from Canal St.) to Elysian Fields Avenue; then north, along the Avenue's median, to Lake Pontchartrain, a total distance of 4.4 miles. The last train ran out to the lake in March 1935.

Coincidentally, the Pontchartrain was involved in what may have been the first proposed rail line between New Orleans and Mobile. In 1854, the Louisiana Legislature authorized the City of New Orleans to subscribe to the stock of the Pontchartrain so as to finance a line along the Gulf Coast. Apparently a survey was actually performed, but little, if anything, was built. In 1861, the NEW ORLEANS & MOBILE was incorporated. I don't know if this line was connected with the Pontchartrain's proposal, but it looks like nothing happened.

THE first company to really do anything was the NEW ORLEANS, MOBILE & CHATTANOOGA, incorporated in Alabama on 24 November 1866. A ceremonial groundbreaking was held near Mobile in early 1867, but the company was not franchised to do business in Louisiana until August 1868. This Act also empowered the firm to build WESTWARD from New Orleans! Actual construction began in early 1869, and the "gold spike" was drive on 29 October 1870, near Lake Catherine, La. It is rather remarkable that the line was substantially completed in 21 months. Much of the route is through swamps; almost 10 miles of trestle was required on the 141 mile line. (Only 33 miles are in Louisiana.) The track gauge was 5 feet, a common one in the South back then.

REPORTEDLY, when one railroad official was asked what the company would do once it got to New Orleans, he replied "West we go!" So, in December 1870, construction began on the west side of the river, across from New Orleans, at WESTWEGO! In April of the following year, the company changed its name to the NEW ORLEANS, MOBILE & TEXAS, and on 1 October, the line was opened to Donaldsonville, 57 miles. Meanwhile, plans for expansion north from Mobile were terminated, after about 65 miles of the line had been surveyed.

THE "Panic of '73" put an end to these grand plans. The line west of the Mississippi was sold at auction and eventually became the NEW ORLEANS PACIFIC. I don't know if there were any other names in between. In 1881, the NOP became part of the TEXAS & PACIFIC. It was apparently during this time that the name NEW ORLEANS & MOBILE was first used. That name appears on the 1875 timetable which accompanies this story, and in several references to the line, but it appears that the road was not reorganized under that name until April 1880. (Between 1873 and 1880, the line east of the river was in the hands of a receiver.) Two weeks after the reorganization, the line was leased to the L&N. The L&N had formed a committee to look into acquiring the line in October 1879 and, in 1881, they purchased it.

MOST of today's line follows the route laid out over 110 years ago. Over the years, the swampy terrain and salt water have



(AMTRAK NEWS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE) - The four private cars that came into N.O. as a special, on the SR, on 9-30, went out on the CRESCENT on 10-2. They're operated by 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS... At 3:30 PM on 10-1, F40 296 was seen heading in to downtown New Orleans on the Southern's St. Louis St. line. This was the old main line into Terminal Station. Nobody knows what it was doing...Amtrak 10000 went out on the CRESCENT on 10-4, with Mr. Boyd...SP 117, the TUSCON, went west on the SUNSET on 10-5 and -23. (Considering how much the SP dislikes passenger trains, they sure use their office cars a lot!)

Miscellaneous F40's, from Chicago and Washington, have been receiving their 24-month inspections at NOUPT..."Foreign" F40's seen in service: on the CRESCENT: 269, 277, 362, 376...on the CITY: 333 (796379-2, 9-80), 354, 370, 373 (807050-13, 6-81). Damaged P30 700 still at UPT...No report of E-units being shipped out or cut up, yet.

EMD - According to EXTRA 2200 SOUTH, two Louisiana roads recently received some significant units. MP 2334, built 7-81, should be the 2000th GP38-2; and L&N 8143, built 8-81, should be the 3000th SD40-2 (not counting "tunnel motors"). Next January, the "dash two" line will begin its eleventh year of production.

EXXON - On 10-7, a new, yellow, 144-ton GE center-cab switcher (41264, Aug.'81), lettered "EXXON COKER NO. 3", was in the KCS yard in Baton Rouge, waiting to be delivered. The unit has two 600 hp Cummins diesels. Its normal top speed will be 25 mph, but it was shipped down without the pinion gears mounted on its traction motors, so that it could be moved at regular freight train speeds. These GE's are among the heaviest four-axle units around. A typical B-B road switcher weighs 260 to 275,000 pounds, and very few weigh over 280,000.

FAMILY LINES - SW1500 5015 was at Louisville from 9-13 to 10-8, being repainted FAMILY LINES. That leaves the 5002 as the only yellow-and-grey switcher here. (The other FL units are 5023, 5032, 5035...)...On 10-20, #471 came in with C30-7 7006, SD 35 1203 and U30C 1575, all in FL paint. The 1203 is one of only 5 (1200-1204) original L&N SD35's still with 1200-series "road" numbers. The 1205-1212 and 1213-1220 have been renumbered 4513-4520 and 4505-4512, right above SD38-2's 4500-4504. These are "switch engine" numbers. (1278-1288 are ex-SCL/ACL SD35's; 1221-1224 and 1289-1297 are SDP35's.)

L&N/FL GP30 1014 and L&N GP38-2 4109 were on the MP at Avondale on 10-4. The 1014 was at Race St. Yd. on 10-14. These are the first reports of L&N units in transfer service to the MP in several months...On 10-9, train X401 came in with GP30's 1013, 1005 and 1030 (and 121 cars). All-GP30 sets are unusual in road service. Actually, all-anything sets are pretty unusual, because the L&N has so many different kinds of units, plus it mixes in SCL power.

At least three black-with-yellow-stripes SCL SD45 showed up at Gentilly. That's REAL unusual! On 10-1, the 2014 came in on #479, ahead of L&N U23B 2810, GP40 3026, U23B 2751 and GP40 3019...On 10-19, the 2021 came in on #415, between SCL/FL SD40 -2 8043 and SCL U36B 1828...And on 10-21, the 2008 (ex-ACL 1032!) showed up on #471, behind L&N GP40 3007 and SCL U36B 1799 /U33B 1727/U36B 1780...L&N GP7 2381 was back at Gentilly from 10-12 to -16. This is ex-2274, ne-407, built 4-51.

CSX Corp. had a prime-time ad on ABC's national news program on 10-15. Is this a first for a railroad based company?

GM&O - Units reported in Louisiana this month: GP38's 702, 703, 718, 724 and 733; GP38-2's 740 and 750; and SD40's 902, 906, 911 and 913. No 500-series GP30's or 600-series GP35's have been reported since RERAIL began! (Most of the 600's are stored)

ICG - 10-5...as an economy measure, all four 11 PM switcher jobs at Mays Yd. were eliminated. One result is that NC-6, which use to get out around noon, now leaves around 4 or 5 PM...At least twice this month, NC-6 ran with 6 units. On 10-6, it had SD40A 6020/SD40-2 6033/GM&O SD40 911/GP38 9519/black GP9 9382/orange GP28 9430, on 10-28: SD40-2's 6040/6045/6049/GP35 2543/GP40's 3060/3058. Notice the 2543; it's an ex-GM&O unit. On 10-23, the 2537 showed up. These are the only two ex-GM&O GP30's or 35's which have been reported since RERAIL began, except for the two "GP26's".

On 10-7, SW14 1469 was back in Baton Rouge. It looks like these units are moving around a lot more than the old black ones did...On 10-28, SD28 9451 was back in Mays Yd...SW14 13 is still in New Orleans.

After you read the second TRIP REPORT, think about this. Ten years ago, there were gravel pits shipping literally hundreds of cars a day over the IC and the GM&O. Today, I don't know of any in southeast Louisiana that are. There are probably a few reasons for this, but one of the most common complaints seems to have been the inability, or refusal, of the ICG to provide their shippers with the cars they needed. So read IC Industries' president William B. Johnson's TURNTABLE column in the Nov. TRAINS Magazine, and see if you think this guy is "on the level".

At noon, on 10-8, a pair of GP40's (3032, in black, and 3068) ran light from Mays Yd. to Sty Docks, and came back with 115 empty covered hoppers, almost all of them CARGIL cars...On the Shoreline Branch: GP9u's 8141, 8021 (GP10, 5-74, 5409-37), and 8370.

The Sept/Oct'81 issue of ICG NEWS has a nice two-page story on the export of coal through the port of New Orleans.

On 10-21, there were THREE all-orange units in Mays Yd.: GP40 3041 and GP9u's 8087 and 8108. The last two were also seen together in Baton Rouge. The 3041 returned to New Orleans on 10-29; GP28 was down on 10-6.

Black units reported: GP40's 3003 and 3030; GP9's 9097, 9378 and 9382; GP18's 9400, 9404, 9408 (with "KOPPERS" lettered above its number, in white) and 9413; GP28 9432.

Joe Loggans, who's a clerk at Mays Yd., commented to me how much railroad ISN'T included in the new, 10-25 timetable. If they keep it up, soon they won't even need a timetable. (The only good railroad is NO railroad. Just ask Mr. Johnson.)

KCS - Each month, the KCS seems to try something different into New Orleans. This month, it was the GP38-2's turn. Late last month, and early this month, they tried two-unit-sets of geeeps: 4000/4009 on 10-3 and 4004/4006 on 10-4, but then they settled down to a basic GP38-2/SD pattern. Other 38's reported: 4003, '07, '10 and '11. Only one F-unit was reported; F3 4052 was down at least 3 times; and only one SD50, the 707. At least two GP30 were in: 4100 and 4111. A new SW7, 4301, in at N.O.

Seen at Baton Rouge on 10-16/17/18: NW2's 4209, 4215; SW7 4313; SW1500's 4331, 4338, 4340 and 4350; plus 4331 with slug 4257 and 4349 with 4252 (yes, TWO slugs!); MP15DC 4366, and GP30 4117. Coming next month: THE KCS FROM END TO END and a North Louisiana schedule update.

It looks like something derailed under the sand tower at New Orleans. It's leaning over at a funny angle. And finally, since about 9-1, Santa Fe GP38's and some unknown GE's have been operating into Deramus Yd., Shreveport from Texas. Don't know if they're pooled or leased or anything else.

MP - On or about 10-2, slug 1417 showed up at Avondale paired with freshly painted SW1500 1518. The 1518 has been placed in service, but the slug hasn't. Reportedly, they're waiting for a second set; then, both pairs will be used together as helpers on the Huey Long Bridge. Back in June'79, the 1401 (rebuilt from SW8 8003) was here very briefly, with MP15 1545.

On 10-1, GP38-2 2222, the "quad deuce", was switching at Port Allen...On 10-4, I found a four-unit set of GP18's at Race St. Yd. It was very nostalgic. GP38-2 2247 was the switcher...GP38 (not a dash two) 2005 was on a transfer run in N.O. on 10-15. It has a paper air filter, M-type trucks and the latest paint scheme. The Mop only has 6 of these. They were all built in 1966 and '67 with components from wrecked geeeps. The 2005 is ex-855, ex-575, serial no. 32608, built 10-66 from GP18 547.

GP15-1 1594 was in transfer service at N.O., with 3 other B-B's, on 10-22...During the second half of the month, an abnormally large number of B23's began showing up at Avondale, especially the high-numbered ones...No GP50's reported...After getting 100 units this year, the Mop has 125 more on order, for delivery between 12-81 and 3-82!

SP - Not much to report...A set of consecutively-numbered GP40-2's, 7670-7673, at Avondale on 10-4...Train HOLNY's connection was delivered to the L&N on 10-9 by B23-7 5111, MP SD40-2 6027, and SP B30-7 7825!...On 10-27, the SP made an unusual mid-day (11AM) delivery to the NOPB, with unusual power: B30 7857, MP15AC 2702, B30 7835. They delivered 12 cars and got 20.

SR - The reason there's so little to report on this road is because it's so CONSISTENT. Just the same kind of power, in the same paint scheme, OVER and OVER...The SD35 reported on the MP at Avondale last time DID hit a truck near Donaldsonville. It was sent up to North Little Rock, around the middle of the month, to be repaired, courtesy of the truck's owner! It seems that SD45 3134 was similarly damaged on the MP when it was hit BY a truck, and will be repaired at NLR...Last month, the Southern built a new little building ABOVE the existing bridgetender's room, on the north draw of the Pontchartrain trestle.

----- T W O M I N I T R I P R E P O R T S -----  
I don't get out very much any more (too expensive), but this month I got out twice; once because of some really nice weather and once because of an out-of-town railfan. Here's how it went...

THE 7½ HOUR VACATION - On 10-3, I decided to take advantage of some beautiful weather, and see some railroads, too. So, I got my wife and my sons into the old Rabbit, and headed north. It would be a mini-vacation (the only kind we could afford). Our first stop was Franklinton, and what a sight it was. Surely, a railroad right-of-way with its track freshly removed is a sad sight; bare, rough ground, still fresh from the junkman. And a sight we'll be seeing more of, I suppose. Fortunately, nature will reclaim what is hers, and the harshness will mellow.

THE ex-NOGN etc. 4-6-0 no. 72 is, in fact, at the Fair Grounds; facing southwest, with its rods removed. No attempt has been made to fix it up, although some fan of Franklinton High School has thoughtfully, if somewhat unprofessionally, lettered "FHS" on the tender in fluorescent pink paint. It complements the rust very nicely.

THE ex-T&NO 0-6-0 no. 156 is nearby, on a short length of track still on the original right-of-way. It is facing northwest, and there are trees on the northeast side of the track, so the afternoon is the best time for photography. It, too, has no siderods. Two interesting notes; the front tender truck is an arch-bar, while the rear one is a Bettendorf. Also on the tender, neatly lettered and easily visible, "VACATED 1955". Vacated is SP-1sh for retired.

WE then continued north, to see how far the scrapper had gone. At Clifton, someone has already put a fence up across the right-of-way. Also, the track across Highway 25, leading into Standard Sand & Gravel, have been paved over. The scrapper is somewhere between Warnerton (LA) and Lexie (MS).

TYLERTOWN is another sad sight, with TWO unused railroads (the Ferwood, Columbia & Gulf and the GM&O), over-grown with weeds but still intact. Both of the depots are in good shape, side-by-side, although used for some non-railroad purposes. Our next stop was McComb. The FC&G tracks west of Tylertown are still there, albeit well camouflaged with vegetation.

McCOMB is always overwhelming, because of the massive shop complex. There's nothing like it in Louisiana, although the KCS at Blanchard (Shreveport) is probably close. It seems likethere're always a thousand freight cars around the place, plus a few passenger cars. There was a short baggage car, about 60 feet long, completely painted in red lead, with no trace of any lettering, but with "SOUTHERN" cast into the sills of the baggage doors! Also, an open platform observation with Thermopane windows, and a solarium, both freshly painted orange, 3 85' 8-door ICG boxcars, and a GM&O tank car.

BUT the real prize was IC 51000, an ice-cooled 40-foot refrigerator car, built in 9-46 and still in very good condition. It was aluminum, with a blue-ish stripe along the bottom (it was probably green once), had a little diamond-shaped logo that said BUILDER IC McCOMB MISS, and was stenciled WHEN EMPTY RETURN TO ILLINOIS CENTRAL FOR BANANA LOADING! A true classic.

THE car's nice, round number aroused my curiosity, so I later checked a couple of EQUIPMENT REGISTERS. It turns out that it really is made out of aluminum, and it was apparently the only car in its series. By the time you read this, it'll probably be painted orange and assigned to some work train. Too bad.

LOCOMOTIVES were another story; I only found six. GP9u 8243 in the shop, SD20 2020 and GP18 9411 (in black) outside; and SW1 617 (14389, Aug'51, 4119-2, the last one they bought), SW14 1458 (4016-10, 3-81), and GP9u 8202 tied-up across from the station. At least one unit was switching in South Yd.

HEADING south, we caught the NB "City" south of Kentwood, at 5:55 PM, with rebuilt P30 712; a NB freight with GP9u's 8241 & 8142, and GP7u 7738, 94 cars, and caboose 199613 at Arcola at 6:10; and another NB with GP18 9425, GP40 3069, 11 cars and 199425 speeding through Roseland at 6:18. Not bad!

AFTER some really good catfish and stuff at Manchac, we were heading back north, only to catch no. 51, the SB piggyback train, south of Ponchatoula. Since I only got the first two engine numbers (GP40's 3042 and 3001; the last unit's number boards weren't lit), I decided to turn around and pursue it. After all, it was only 8:30. All I can say is that I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it myself. A long freight train going 65 mph on the ICG! Talk about a brave engineer...or maybe a crazy one? After some fast driving, I finally got ahead of him and pulled off the road at Manchac. A moment later, it flashed past, barely slowing down for the Manchac trestle...and I still didn't identify the third unit! Maybe I should have chased it to New Orleans?

(Joe Loggans talked to the ICG's computer, and found out that the last unit was GP40 3058. Very handy!)

COELACANTHS, GRAVEL PITS, AND NORTHERN RAILFANS - Coelacanth (sē'lə kanths') are a species of fish scientists thought had been extinct for 60 million years. Then, in 1938, one was caught off the coast of Africa. Since then, a few more have been caught. It seems the natives had been catching them all along, and eating them! That's about as cool as making a slug out of the world's last F-M Train Master.

ANYHOW, on 10-13, I came across a couple of coelacanth locos, while exploring gravel pits with Todd Minsk. Todd is from Hanover, NH and he's really in to obscure motive power. Louisiana gravel pits, it turns out, house some pretty obscure stuff. The only other time I got SERIOUS about gravel pits was about 10 years ago, with a guy named Joe Brockmeyer. Joe was from Cincinnati. These northern railfans aren't like you and me! (More on Todd next month.)

First, we hit the former Greene Brothers facility at Lacombe. (The Greene's called this pit COASTAL SAND & GRAVEL, and the one at Clifton STANDARD S & G.) It's now leased to IMCO, a drilling mud firm (the guy we talked to said they get Barite and Bentonite by rail, from Texas and Wyoming, and ship it out in trucks and barges), but Johnny Greene's EMD model 40 is still there. Only 11 of these were built, so it's worth seeing.

The engine was built in 8-43 as part of a 3-unit order for the Army (order no. E574, serial numbers 2284-2286), numbers 7952-7954. This one, 7953, has spent most of its life around here. I don't think anybody knows where was originally assigned, but after the War, it was sold to something called GULF SOUTH WAREHOUSING. In the 50's, it went to AMERICAN CREOSOTE at Southport, in Jefferson Parish (Rick Boutall has a shot of it taken there), and in mid-1964 it went to Lacombe. Maybe somebody will save it. It only weighs 44 tons, and Imco doesn't use it.

HEADING west, we passed through Hammond, where we caught MB-1 (Memphis-Baton Rouge) heading west with 3 Paducah geeps (8199, 8348, 8216), and black GP18 9400 (with white number boards) switching at the station.

NOW heading north, our first stop was at LOUISIANA PAVING CO., between Independence and Amite. It was a shot-in-the-dark, but it paid off. From the parking lot, we could make out a locomotive-like shape off in the distance. As we got closer, it became the unmistakable form of a Plymouth FLEXOMOTIVE (so named because of its transmission), covered with rust but intact, except for its engine. Needles to say, we were elated and, as I was to later discover, we had made a real "find".

MY initial thought was that it was ex-MORSE & ORY GRAVEL number 60. This is the unit pictured on page 402 of THE SECOND DIESEL SPOTTERS GUIDE. M&O had two FLEXOMOTIVES, 58 and 60, both ex-INLAND STEEL units of the same numbers. But on one side of the cab, we could make out the number "forty-something". Fortunately, we were able to obtain its serial number, 4021.

AS it turns out, we had discovered a "new" FLEXOMOTIVE. According to THE SHORT LINE's INLAND STEEL roster (Issue 22, J-A '76) serial number 4021 is ex-49, built 3/40! (The 58 and 60 are 4093 (11-41) and 4375 (8-42).) Then, out of curiosity, I decided to see which of INLAND's units is in the 1941 LOCOMOTIVE CYCLOPEDIA (available from Kalmbach, for about the price of a small automobile). There, on page 1006 (figure 15.73), is the 49! Pretty good! It ought to be saved, just for that.

BY the way, the man in the office at LOUISIANA PAVING said that the place use to be HENDERSON GRAVEL. That doesn't mean anything to me, but maybe it will help track down this unit's history.

OUR next stop was the ex-GIFFORD-HILL, ex-MORSE & ORY/LOUISIANA EASTERN site at Shiloh, just south of Amite. Several of these pits had their rail lines incorporated as common carriers, but I don't know about them. Gravel roads are in a category all their own, like logging roads, mining roads and sugar roads. Maybe we can start a gravel road cult.

ANYHOW, when I was at Shiloh in 1970, with Joe Brockmeyer, they had a 4-wheel Whitcomb, an 8-wheel Vulcan, Flexomotive 58, 2 SW1's (ex-EL 359 and IC 614), a few IC passenger cars, and the IC Arcola depot! Later, the South East Louisiana Chapter-NRHS even stored some equipment there. All that's left now are some old ties and one locomotive truck. It looks like something from a 70-ton GE.

OUR next target was GIFFORD-HILL's Plant No. 33 at Arcola. I think this is the ex-Morse & Ory/South Central Railroad. That might explain how the operation at Shiloh ended up with the Arcola depot. In any event, we didn't see any trackage, and the people at the office said all of their equipment had gone to other facilities. I suspect this may have been where Flexomotive 60 may have been, at one time.

CONTINUING north a few miles, we came to the GIFFORD-HILL, ex-Jahncke Services/Feliciana Eastern operation. This was the only pit where we saw any rail cars: two IC gondolas. Back in '70, they had two Alcos: HH660 88 (ex-Birmingham Southern 88, ne-BS 50) and RS1 204 (ex-M&StL 204, ne-1144). Both of these are reportedly scrapped. Instead, we found ex-Erie-Lackawanna SW1 359, with its front end up on blocks and its rear up on jacks. Both trucks were nearby. It didn't have any numbers or lettering, but it still had one builder's plate: serial number 1058, built 5-8-40. Apparently it's being prepared for shipment somewhere. This unit was at Shiloh in 1970.

THE tracks beyond the SW1 were all torn up, but at the rear of the facility we found a black-orange-and-white 65-ton GE (no plates, but should be 15628, 5-42; ex-U.S.Army 7021, ne-A.E.C., Hanford, WA; acquired by Morse & Ory in 10-62) last reported at the South Central R.R.; and IC 4151, a modernized heavyweight cafe-lounge, in pretty good shape...except for the windows. The last time I saw this car, it was at Shiloh.

FROM Gifford-Hill, we headed into Mississippi, destination - Fernwood, objective - Fernwood Industries' (aka Gulf Wood Preserving) 25-ton GE. Crossing the ICG tracks there, we found an assortment of tank- and boxcars sitting every-which-way, blocking both mainlines! Nice job, ICG. The 25-tonner's engineer told us that a northbound freight has just derailed, due to a broken rail in the crossover. Actually, the ICG track looks pretty good.

LEAVING Fernwood, we found the McComb wrecker being pushed to the derailment by two real "survivors": ICG SW1 617 and Fernwood, Columbia & Gulf SW900 number 900. Just think about it... an FC&G engine (there were only two) still painted FC&G, IN Fernwood, almost ten years after the railroad disappeared! We couldn't get any good shots because of the vegetation; and besides, there were a lot of nervous-looking people standing around. (Yes, they got at least one track cleared so that the "City" could get by that evening.)

WHEN you're in Fernwood, you might as well go all the way to McComb. It's just up the track, a ways. There, we found the front of the northbound freight, north of the depot, and at least 13 engines, including GP9 9378 and GP18 9408, both in black, and rebuilt GP18 8414. Also, GP38 9539, ex-GM&O 720, with large areas of red paint showing through the white. And what better place to have lunch than the McComb McDonald's, with its large, fair painting of two E7's on the "PANAMA"?

OUR last objective was to see if there were any industrial units left along the the remains of the ICG's Bogue Chitto District, so we went to Tylertown and turned right. This was the same route I had traveled a few weeks earlier, but in the opposite direction. The tracks are now torn up north of Lexie. At Franklinton, we found a fence going up around the 4-6-0 at the Fair Grounds. There were posts, about a foot in diameter and five feet high, all around the engine. And two of its drivers are pad-locked to the track! I'm glad I got my pictures when I did.

SOUTH of Franklinton, we went into several pits, but found nothing. I did see a pile a rail that had been broken into 3-foot lengths, though. What a way to go. Finally, around 5 PM, we got a good tip. There, amid piles of gravel, was the ex-Celotex boxcab Porter, in on piece; the ultimate coelacanth, as far as I was concerned! And to top it all off, the sun popped out from behind the clouds for a few minutes, before disappearing behind the trees. (The people at the pit there called it "the caboose".)

TO really appreciate this little engine, you have to know its whole story (if you don't already). First of all, it is LITTLE: 19 feet long, 22½ tons, 150 hp. It is the first of two such units built in June and July 1929 (serial numbers 7146 and 7150) by the H.K.Porter Co. for the UNITED FRUIT CO. That makes it 52 years old! Numbered 1 and 2, United used them on its Ferrocarrilera Transcontinental in Mexico for about 10 years, then sold them to EQUITABLE EQUIPMENT CO. in New Orleans.

ON 5 May 1939, the number 1 was resold to CELOTEX, as their number 3, for use at Marrero. It remained there until around 1975-77, when it moved to its present home, LOUISIANA INDUSTRIES' Price Pit, between Enon and Isabel. The ICG has already been torn up adjacent to the pit and, in fact, there isn't any trackage in the facility. The poor thing is just sitting there. It would make a nice addition to somebody's "critter collection", and a couple of big guys could probably haul it out of there with a Lincoln Continental. (A picture of one of these units, new, appeared in EXTRA 2200 SOUTH #22, O-N-D '78 page 32. A shot of this one, now, was in THE SHORT LINE #37, J-F '79, page 7.)

Nobody seems to know what happened to the other one. Bill Witbeck once told me that EQUITABLE had gotten a bunch of the engines that were used to build the Panama Canal, but they wouldn't let him look through their records to see where they went. I guess we'll never know.

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If I don't get any feedback on these TRIP REPORTS, I may bore you to death with more of them. Let me know what you think.

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REMEMBER RERAIL: REPORT EVERY RAILROAD ACTIVITY IN LOUISIANA -----