



THE Lantern

September 2022

Volume 27 Number 09

HEADLINES

- Sept. 10 Sopchoppy Depot Day
- Dothan Train Show, Sept. 17-18
- 2022/23 BBMRA Officers
- 2023 Tallahassee Show Dates
- Lloyd Depot Historical Tidbits
- Upcoming Events
- Billboard Reefers Out of the Past
- The Georgia, Florida & Alabama RR
- The Rutgers House
- Minutes

HO, N T-Traks running Sept. 10 at Sopchoppy Depot Day



September 10, 2022: Sopchoppy Depot Day, Sopchoppy, FL. BBMRA is running trains – the HO and N Scale T-Traks from 9 to 4 EDT. More information about the event can be found here. From the [visitwakulla.com](https://www.visitwakulla.com) Internet site: <https://www.visitwakulla.com/blog/fun-for-the-whole-family-at-sopchoppy-depot-days/>

Activities all day include exciting presentations by Historian BJ Allen on the region's significant turpentine history; Museum Founder/Director Nelson Martin on the Depot Museum's creation; children's activities including the Kiddies Train with Engineer John Borden; and the Big Bend Model

Railroad Association's giant model train layout continuously running inside the Towles Building next to the Museum! Plus, arts and crafts and games for kids!

Arts and Craft Vendors and Food Vendors will be in the park — plus Sopchoppy's own Civic Brewery is creating a new, featured beer for the event!!

Dothan Train Show is Sept. 17-18; Once Again, BBMRA Members Get In Free

The Wiregrass Annual Model Railroad Show & Sale in Dothan has emerged over the years as second favorite of BBMRA members, surpassed only by our own show. It is coming up soon, September 17-18, and BBMRAers once again get in free. Just tell George Bum and the others at the door you are a BBMRA member.

Mr. Baum, president of the Dothan area model train club and show coordinator succeeding the late Dan Adams, confirmed that the reciprocal agreement between the Tallahassee and Dothan clubs is still in effect. Dothan club members will get in free at the Tallahassee Show June 25-26.

The Wiregrass Annual Model Railroad Show & Sale is September 17-18, 2022, at the National Peanut Festival and Fairgrounds in Dothan, AL. Hours are Saturday, 9am-5pm, Sunday, 10am-4pm. (These are Central times.) Free admission for BBMRA members. Others: \$7; \$5 for youths 6 to 12, and free for five and under. The Dothan club increased general admission from \$6 to \$7, effective with the 2022 event.

Many of the regular vendors at the Tallahassee show will be in Dothan, including Joe Ray, Wes Corscia, Tucker's Trains, and BBMRA member Sam Miller.

That same weekend is the summer show & sale at the Villages near Leesburg: September 17-18, 2022: The Villages Model Train Show & Sale, Savannah Regional Center, 1545 Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages, FL, 32162. Saturday, 9am-4pm, Sunday, 10am-3pm. Admission, \$7, children under 12, free. <http://thevillagesmodeltrainclub.com/>

And in November: November 19-20, 2022, Pensacola Railfest Model Train Show & Sale, Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds, Building 1, 6655 Mobile Highway, Pensacola, 32526. This is a new date. In the past, this show has been on the first weekend in December.

September 20, 7:30 p.m. BBMRA Meeting - Planning for the Coming Year



BBMRA meets Tuesday, September 20, at 7:30 p.m. EDT through Zoom.

Club Meetings are Zoom Only

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87359055848?pwd=WTVtUDhBUmhXVFp3RkY4WWNnZ2NXdz09>

BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.

Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password: BBMRA2022

2022/23 BBMRA Officers

Here are the officers of the Big Bend Model Railroad Association for another year:

- **President - Andy J. Zimmerman**
- **Vice President - Stacey Elliott**
- **Treasurer - Neal Meadows**
- **Secretary - Sheldon Harrison**
- **Large-Scale - Sam Miller**
- **HO-Division - Phil Weston**
- **Small-Scale - Brandon McKenny.**

The president, vice president, treasurer and secretary were elected by all participating BBMRA members during the Zoom meeting Tuesday, August 19. The Large Scale, Small Scale and HO Division members designated their coordinators, completing the BBMRA Board.

Brandon McKenny is successor to Garth Easton, who passed away late last year. Andy Zimmerman and the other board members were incumbents and are undertaking another term. Andy was club vice president and succeeded John Sullenberger following John's death almost 10 years ago.



2023 Show Dates: June 25-26

The dates for the 32nd Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale have been set by BBMRA and the Leon County Fairgrounds: Saturday, June 25, 2023, and Sunday, June 26. Set-up will be Friday, June 24. The show is now a regular two-day event, three days including the Friday set-up.

Historical Tidbits on the Lloyd Depot

From Sam Miller: In the last Lantern, we reported that Ed Schroeder, a long-time BBMRA member, helped draft the articles of incorporation for the Gulf Wind Chapter of the N.R.H.S, which owns the old Lloyd Depot building. Helping Ed was the late Dave Kerns, also a member of our club. That got Ed's memory working overtime and he came up with these nuggets about the Lloyd Depot.)



From Ed Schroeder: As to the Gulf Wind acquisition of the Lloyd Depot, here are some relevancies in fact and others buried away in the recesses of my gray cells:

- By the end of 1966 - Lloyd Depot had ceased operations as a depot.
- On July 1, 1967 – ACL and SAL Railroads merged to form the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, a.k.a. SCL. See <https://www.aclsal.org/chronology>
- 1968 – Jefferson County Historical Society acquired title to the Lloyd Depot from SCL. See <https://www.floridianamagazine.com/lloyd-and-its-historic-railroad-depot/> The *Floridiana Magazine* article is the best piece found so far about the Lloyd Depot. SCL retained title to the land on which the depot rests. That is my recollection of discussions in which I participated when Gulf Wind took over the rights of the Jefferson County Historical Association and is consistent with the *Floridiana* article.
- At a time, unknown, Mrs. Lafitte, Lloyd resident and officer or member of the Jefferson County Historical Society, contacted Gulf Wind about taking over the rights of Jefferson in the depot.
- Irv Lipscomb, then band director at Belle Vue Middle School, was probably Gulf Wind president in 1979, when Gulf Wind acquired title to the Lloyd Depot.
- Members began cleanup work at the depot. My son, E.C., accompanied me many times in our 1975 gas guzzling Buick Century wagon. On one of the trips, I was at the top of my 16-foot extension ladder wire-brushing the brick near the peak of the roof when an SCL freight came roaring through Lloyd. I say 1979 because the ladder was purchased to do work at the home we had just acquired.



Some other Big Bend/Gulf Wind/Lloyd Tidbits.



Waiting Rooms - When acquired by Gulf Wind, the Depot was a shambles. Looking south from the street toward the track, from east to west the depot consisted of two waiting rooms located in the east segment. Their entrances faced the track and the street. A wall separated the “colored” and the “white” waiting rooms, harking back to the 1896 “separate but equal” decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, a case that arose in my hometown New Orleans. Segregated public transportation, lunch counters, drinking fountains, rest rooms prevailed throughout the south into the 1960's. In this picture, Sam Miller and Ed Schroeder are standing in the Post Office entrance of today. This door faces the street and was the entrance to the “colored” waiting room.

Agent's Office—The entrance was from the freight segment in the depot's west end. The Lloyd Post Office now consists of the old waiting rooms and the agent's office.

Freight Room – The freight room had four heavy wooden doors. The west end of the building had two and there was one on the front and one on the back to the freight

loading dock. In the past there was a wooden freight dock extending out the west end of the building. (Neal's addition)

No Public Restrooms - The depot had no public restrooms, but my son, E.C., remembers seeing an "outhouse" south of the tracks. Thankfully, today the depot freight room has two modern restrooms for use when the depot is open for workdays or open house events.

More Ed Schroeder Reminisces in the Future

Ed is planning additional contributions for the Lantern:

1. Taking the Gulf Wind
 - a. Tallahassee to New Orleans (Thanksgiving 1970), and
 - b. Tallahassee to Jacksonville (Christmas 1970 or Easter 1971)
2. Southern Railway 4501
 - a. Tallahassee to Lake City
 - b. Dothan to Albany, Ga



Drew Hackmeyer repointing or repairing the brick work on the Depot wall.

Other Club members should step up with their important memories! Contact Neal or Sam.

BBMRA Important Events in 2022!!



Help us build this calendar. Email sammiller61113@outlook.com. Please confirm that an activity is still on before you travel to it. We are listing Internet links whenever possible.

Here is a terrific national calendar:

https://www.railserve.com/events/train_shows.html

BBMRA meetings are the third Tuesday of each month. We have resumed meeting through Zoom only because of the COVID resurgence.

BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.

Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password: BBMRA2022

Lionel Interest Group Operating Sessions: each Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at Sam Miller's house in Woodgate. Call (850) 459-3012 for further information.

September 10, 2022: Sopchoppy Depot Day, Sopchoppy, FL. BBMRA is running trains – the HO and N Scale T-traks from 9 to 4.

September 17-18, 2022: Wiregrass Annual Model Railroad Show & Sale, National Peanut Festival and Fairgrounds, Dothan, AL. Saturday, 9am-5pm, Sunday, 10am-4pm. (These are Central times.) Free admission for BBMRA members. Others: \$7; \$5 for youths 6 to 12 and free for five and under.

September 17-18, 2022: The Villages Model Train Show & Sale, Savannah Regional Center, 1545 Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages, FL, 32162. Saturday, 9am-4pm, Sunday, 10am-3pm. Admission, \$7, children under 12, free.

<http://thevillagesmodeltrainclub.com/>

November 19-20, 2022, Pensacola Railfest Model Train Show & Sale, Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds, Building 1, 6655 Mobile Highway, Pensacola, 32526. This is a new date. In the past, this show has been on the first weekend in December.

Pay Your 2022-23 Dues by PayPal

The BBMRA now has the option for new and current members to pay their dues online by using the PayPal link on the BBMRA.ORG website. It is under the Membership menu item. When you select the

PayPal button you will get the option to use your PayPal account if you have one or use a credit/debit card. The dues are \$21 using this method.



If you would like to pay by check, you can send your \$20 to [BBMRA, PO Box 3392, Tallahassee FL 32315-3392](#) or you can send it directly to [Neal Meadows, Treasurer, 2812 Whittington Dr., Tallahassee FL 32309-8213](#).

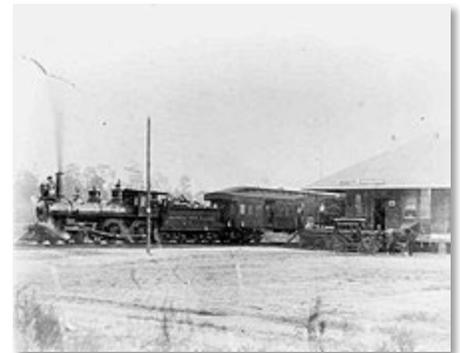
The Georgia, Florida, & Alabama Railroad

(Some parts excerpted from Wikipedia)

The **Georgia, Florida and Alabama Railroad** (the **G.F. & A.**), known as the Sumatra Leaf Route, and colloquially as the Gopher, Frog & Alligator was a 180 miles (290 km)-long railroad from Richland, Georgia to Carrabelle, Florida. It was founded in 1895 as a logging railroad, the **Georgia Pine Railway**.

The northern and southern ends of the railroad have been abandoned, but the section from Cuthbert, Georgia, to Tallahassee, Florida, remains in use by various railroads.

[Hannibal Kimball](#) promoted the Bainbridge, Cuthbert, and Columbus Railroad to run north-to-south through southwest Georgia in 1869. Although work began on construction in 1870, it was never completed, and in 1872 the project was abandoned amidst financial problems and bond endorsement issues that stirred allegations of impropriety against Kimball. During the 1880s, attempts were made to revive the railroad, with some activity taking place in the middle of that decade, but this too came to nothing.



Georgia Pine Railway locomotive #3 at Colquitt, Ga before 1898



A Georgia, Florida, and Alabama Train at Carrabelle

Finally, in 1895 local entrepreneur J. D. Williams laid rails on part of the route creating the Georgia Pine Railroad connecting Bainbridge to Arlington. By 1898, the railroad was renamed the Georgia Florida and Alabama Railroad^[9] and by 1901, it had been extended north to Richland. In 1902, the G.F. & A. completed the section from Tallahassee to Bainbridge.

The G.F. & A. was leased to the [Seaboard Air Line Railway](#) in 1927. The Seaboard went into receivership at the end of 1930, and the lease was revoked in 1931. The Seaboard was reformed after receiving government loans, and it agreed to operate, but not lease the G.F. & A. In 1944, the court that was overseeing the Seaboard's receivership authorized the company to purchase 90% of the G.F. & A.'s bonds.^[9]

Seaboard became part of CSX Transportation in 1980. In 1983, the former

G.F. & A. line was sold off to the [South Carolina Central Railroad](#), and in 1989 it became part of the [Georgia Southwestern Railroad](#). In 1997, the portion of the G.F. & A. route from Richland south to Cuthbert was abandoned, and in 2002 the Georgia Department of Transportation acquired the remaining Cuthbert to Bainbridge section. The Georgia Southwestern remains the operator of the line.

The northern terminus of the line was at Richland, where it met the [Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway](#) and the [Columbus Southern Railway](#). It ran almost due south through [Cuthbert](#) and [Edison](#) to reach Arlington, where it crossed the [Central of Georgia Railway](#). It continued through [Colquitt](#) and [Bainbridge](#) before crossing the [Flint river](#) and entering [Florida](#). It continued through [Sopchoppy](#) and Tallahassee and on to its southern terminus in Carrabelle on the Florida Gulf Coast.^[6]

Current Day

The Cuthbert-Bainbridge segment is now owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation and operated by the Georgia Southwestern Railroad.

The segment from Bainbridge to Attapulgas, Georgia, is owned by CSX.

The Attapulgas-Tallahassee segment is owned by the [Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad](#).

A 2.4-mile part of the abandoned Tallahassee-Carrabelle segment of the GF&A is now the [Tallahassee-Georgia Florida and Alabama \(GF&A\) Trail](#) in the [Apalachicola National Forest](#). Research work on the rail-to-trail project was done by Genesis Group.

From Neal Meadows: The HO Scale group of the BBMRA members will be on site at Sopchoppy on September 10 to show their T-Trak layout and the trains that they have decorated for the Georgia, Florida, and Alabama Railroad. Phil Weston, HO Coordinator sent some photos of the cars he has worked to that will be at the show.

		
<p>The DUKW duck boat was a 6-wheel drive amphibious modification of the 2 ½ ton truck. Scratch built from styrene and mounted on a flatcar.</p>	<p>The LCVP/LCM was a non-amphibious landing craft used for personnel transport. The LCM landing craft was used for transporting mechanized equipment. Scratch built from styrene and mounted on a flatcar.</p>	<p>GF&A 1539 sliding door boxcar.</p>
		
<p>GF&A 1534 sliding door boxcar.</p>	<p>GF&A 5678 3-domed fuel tanker.</p>	<p>GF&A 5411 3-domed fuel tanker.</p>

These cars and locomotive were built and/or decorated by Scott Garner. His focus is on log trains and the decapod that pulls them. Here is a view of the whole train stretched off into the distance.



The first Decapods were built for the [Lehigh Valley Railroad](#) in the late-1860s. They proved too rough on the track because of their long-coupled wheelbase. No more followed for 19 years, until the [Northern Pacific Railway](#) bought two for use on the switchbacks over Stampede Pass, while the 2-mile (3.2 km) tunnel was being built.^[2] In low-speed service where high tractive effort was critical, these Decapods were successful. Small numbers of other Decapods were built over the next twenty years, mostly for service in steeply graded mountainous areas where power at low speeds was the requirement. The type did not prove as popular as the successful Consolidation (2-8-0) type. Among Decapod users was the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. The engines were tandem compounds, but their ongoing reversing limitations became the genesis of the (2-10-2) wheel arrangement.



Seaboard Air Line #544, one of over 200 undelivered [Russian Decapods](#). It resides at the [North Carolina Transportation Museum](#).

The first boost in the number of Decapods occurred when Imperial Russia ordered approximately 1,200 Decapods from American builders during World War I. When the Bolshevik revolution occurred in 1917, 857 had already been delivered, but more than 200 were either awaiting shipment or were in the process of construction.

These stranded locomotives were adopted by the United States Railroad Administration (USRA), the body created by the Government to oversee and control the railroads during the War, converted to American standards, and put to use on American railroads. Small and light-footed, these Russian decapods proved popular with smaller railroads, and many of them remained in service long after the USRA's control of the railroads ceased. Many indeed lasted until the end of steam on those railroads.

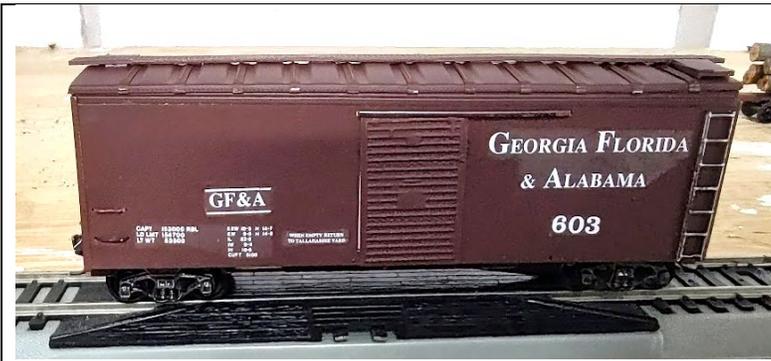
The pictures below were submitted by Scott Garner. He has built kits and decorated other cars for the Georgia, Florida, and Alabama railroad. He has some that are still in progress.



Scott says these log cars are brass and came already assembled and painted. He added the GF&A logos.



This cute little "Bobber" caboose is Scott's own prototype. GF&A 56



This is an Athearn metal and wood kit that Scott says will be up and running at the show at Sopchoppy. GF&A 603



This caboose was a vintage Pacific HO Silver Streak undecorated Kit. The cow thinks it is a nice job! GF&A 901

Look for these and other great model trains at the Sopchoppy Depot Day festival.



Signals from the Sunshine Region



Sunshine Region of the NMRA National Model Railroad Association has an election here is the location to see Bio's [October 2022 Election Bio's | sunshine region](#).

Convention for Sunshine Region of the NMRA National Model Railroad Association in Plant City October 6 thru 8 for more details, open this link [2022 Plant City Special Convention | sunshine region](#)

Robert Feuerstein Email: photobob321@gmail.com

BILLBOARD REEFERS OUT OF THE PAST

CRAZY CRYSTALS by: Neal Meadows

I though the Crazy Crystals reefer cars were an interesting choice for this month. They are brightly colored and fall within the billboard reefer time frame. The company has an interesting history as well as the railroads that served Mineral Wells. For many years the town was only accessible by train. Here are 24.80 pictures of models of the Crazy Crystal rail cars.



Micro-Trains 049 00 800 40' double sheathed wood reefer in N Scale. Price was \$27.95 and was released 4/1/2019 ART 472

This 40' double-sheathed wood reefer with vertical brake wheel is brown with yellow decorated sides and runs on Bettendorf trucks. Built by American Car & Foundry in 1922 in an order of 50 cars, The Crazy Water Company leased this and other cars from The American Refrigerator Transit Company. "Crazy Water," said to cure many physical maladies, was mineral spring water boiled down until only the mineral crystals remained.



Micro-Trains 049 00 230 40' double sheathed wood reefer in n scale. Price was \$24.80 and was released 9/1/2015 ART 416



This is a Scale-Craft O scale wooden reefer boxcar made from a kit. It is very old and is on sale as used now for \$70. ART 479



This is a custom line of z scale cars produced by Bowzer. This and others were produced for PennZee and Father Nature lines of models. This is a 34" wood reefer. It is no longer available for sale by Bowzer. The company stopped making these kits in 2009. ART 522
It appears that these are available from US Z Scale at uszscale.com



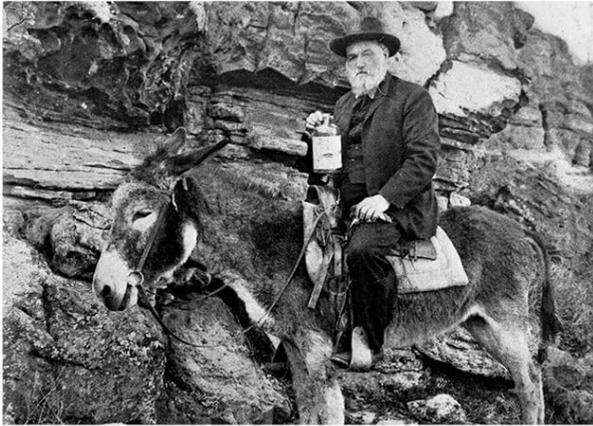
Mantua HO Crazy Crystals Water Co. Steel Reefer

This Mantua HO scale reefer is a 40' Steel sided car. The actual model is made with plastic molded body shells, Circa 1950s. ART 468



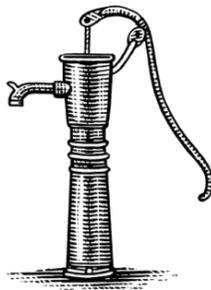
This is a 1/4 scale wood sheathed ice reefer built by Jim Hawkins. This car is really detailed. ART 420

CRAZY HISTORY



1877

James & Armanada Lynch left the town of Denison, Texas, with their nine children and 50 head of livestock - searching for a drier climate to help heal their rheumatism. After news of Comanche attacks farther west, they settled down on Christmas Eve 1877 in a pretty valley tucked in the hills of Palo Pinto County.



1880

James Lynch drills the first well in Mineral Wells on his property. Before long, Mr. and Mrs. Lynch's rheumatism subsides, and the Lynch family realizes the funny-tasting water isn't harmful but beneficial.



1881

Legend has it that back in 1881, there was an old, crazy woman who would spend her days sitting next to the well, drinking the mineral water. People quickly noticed that this old lady's "crazies" began to look more like everyone else's "normzies."



1881

James' "Uncle" Billy Wiggins drills what's later known as the "Crazy Well." By year's end, over 3,000 people camp out on the Lynch property, filling their cups for 5 cents a glass. Over the next several years, 125 more wells spring up.



1900

Mineral Wells becomes the premier spa resort town of the South. Over 150,000 visitors and health seekers travel from all over the country to sip and soak in the healing mineral waters.



Thousands of people flocked to this magical well, christening it the "Crazy Well." Among them: Ed Dismuke, whose doctor recently delivered the news that there was no remedy for his life-threatening stomach disease.



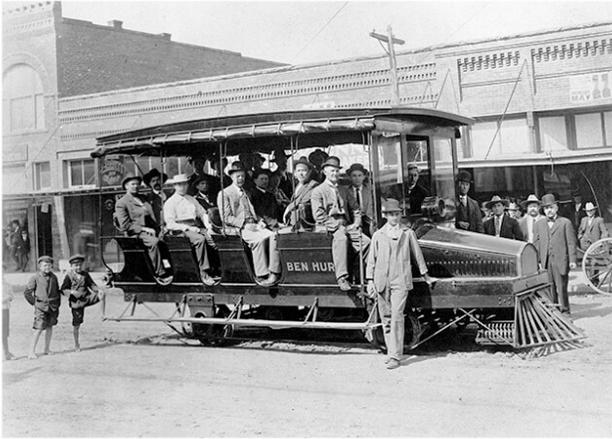
1900

There were many modes of transportation available to the many tourists that came to Mineral Wells, Texas via the railroad.



1904

Facing a doctor prognosis of "no hope," Mr. Dismuke began drinking the magical water from the "Crazy Well." Before long, his stomach ailed no more. In 1904, his health restored, Mr. Dismuke founded the Famous Mineral Water Company.



1909

Mineral Wells offers four bathing houses, seven wells and pavilions, two sanitariums, and 46 hotels and boarding houses among its attractions.



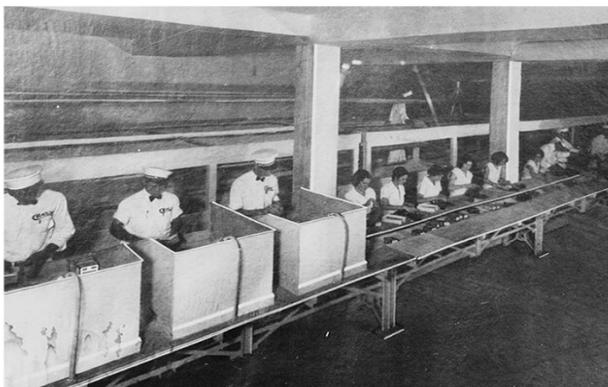
1913

Mineral Wells is home to 21 different mineral water companies.



1914

The current Famous Pavilion is built. Mr. Dismuke develops products from the curative waters, including Dismuke's Famous Crystals. With national distribution, they're a major success.



1930s

The Crazy Water Company focuses on promoting Crazy Water Crystals in drugstores nationwide. With a teaspoon of Crazy Crystals and a glass of water, people can enjoy the health benefits of Crazy Water from their own homes.



1940s

During World War II, fewer people make the journey to Mineral Wells, forcing most of the water companies to close by the end of the decade, including the original Crazy Water Company.



1949

Two door Mercury Coupe was used for advertising Crazy Water. It was equipped with a hand-controlled spotlight like those used on law enforcement vehicles. There were fog lights on the front with wide white wall tires and full hubcaps. Fender skirts adorned the rear wheels. The engine was a flathead V-8 and 3 speed transmission. Original price was just under \$2000. Today prices range from \$17,900 to \$82,000 for a restored convertible.



1957

After touting the mineral waters' health-giving properties for nearly six decades, Mr. Dismuke dies on November 6 from one of the things Crazy Water can't help – old age. (He was 97. So much for that doctor's diagnosis.

1958

Mr. Dismuke's widow, Ida Dismuke, sells the Famous Mineral Water Company to J.C. Causey.



1970s

Famous starts bottling the mineral water under both the Famous and Crazy Water brands.

1999

Several owners later, Scott and Carol Elder, with Carrol's parents Bill and Helen Arneson, purchase the Famous Water Company



2022

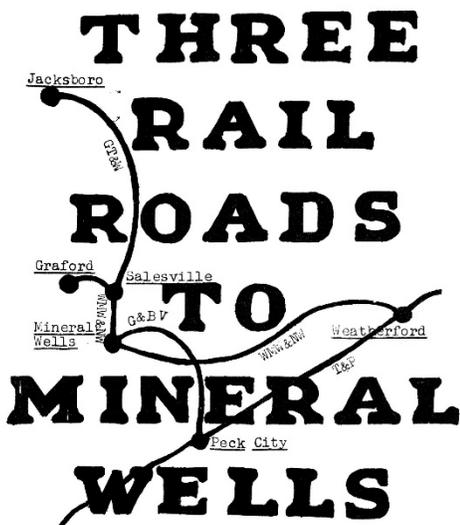
Now celebrating over 100 years of service to its loyal patrons, Crazy Water once again expands distribution to collect more crazy fans nationwide.



Two employees pose beside the tractor trailer rig that hauls the boxes to and from the Crazy Box Company that provides shipping cartons for the Crazy Crystals



Billboard reefers being loaded with Crazy Crystals for shipment nationwide



Thanks to those, whose recollections follow.

Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Northwestern Railway by: H.L. Payne, 1975

Local Indian raids stopped when a couple of Kiowa chiefs, Big Tree and Satanta, were tried and convicted of murder. That constant danger ceased, but travel in the area was limited. The reason was that a trip, by stagecoach or wagon, was not very pleasant over roads that were hardly more than cleared trails. And, since comfortable transportation for those who came to the spa for their health was a must, efforts were made to get rail connections from the main line to Mineral Wells. The first attempt was a failure; the second, a success.

That success resulted in a charter from the Capital authorizing the Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Northwestern Railway to begin construction. 1889, was the year. Grade was completed that year, with rails to Weatherford the next. Right of way was surveyed to meet with the contour of the terrain some four extra miles, so grades would be tolerable. Length of the railroad is 24 miles. Rail width is the standard four feet 8 1/2 inches. Train movements are by order and telegraph, and WMW&NW trains are running on original roadbeds, with never a collision of record.

The Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Northwestern opened with the rolling stock of two steam locomotives, plus 81 cars: 14 coal cars, two coaches, two combinations, 8 flatcars, 47 boxcars, and 10 miscellaneous cars. In less than 10 years, WMW&NW was moving 35,000 miles of mixed trains a year, while switching over 75,000 miles. In the year 1899, 33,000 passengers rode the line. In fact, a survey was made, relative to running an interurban line to Mineral Wells, to help with the passenger load, but nothing came of it.

Truly a moving force, in building the railroad and keeping it running, was P. E. Bock. He brought his entire workforce down from Colorado to level the roadbed for the track, and then to lay the rails. He remained after it was completed, and conducted the first passenger train to Mineral Wells, then eventually became general Superintendent.

The last remains of some of those from China and Ireland, recruited in their own country to build railroads in America, are near Rock Creek in a lost Chinese cemetery. Farther east, beside the tracks, there was once an individual grave.

Crudest of tools, by standards of modern-day machinery, made the labor most difficult, and larger work gains were necessary. Part of Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Northwestern's labor force stayed to work in several coal mines in the Rock Creek area. A single mine in mountainside was of the walk-in type. Most of them were vertical minds with deep shafts. Some places, still undisturbed, clearly show some of the excavations. Where coal was a principal energy source, disposal of the cinders left after combustion was a problem, most especially with local coal. It would not burn cleanly.

Cinder pavement on Mineral Wells dirt streets improved conditions such as loblolly during rains. Durable and strong concrete was made by combining both sand and cement with cinders. Cinders were a disappointing application as ballast. Corrosives in cinders disintegrate wooden ties allowing holding spikes to loosen and the rails to collapse.

The early steam locomotive, other than being awesome, also could impart a wild kind of romantic feeling. Like the exhilaration when apprentice enginemen drove an engine to the wye to turn it around, and to clean its firebox grates. Engineers sometimes complained of hot and dirty conditions in the cab; cold dust flying and live cinders in the eyes, but usually, few resigned. Each one had his favorite engine. In time, oil burners were adopted. They did improve some working conditions, but certainly not to where the crews worked in spotless uniforms, even if some could be seen in white gauntlet and cap, on the T&P Sunshine Special passenger train. Working parts of an engine must have lubrication. If the particles of carbon, found in smoke, and road dust combined with oil, that forms a black paste, which is a sure bet end up on the engine crew.

Running mostly from east to west, in Parker and Palo Pinto counties, a diesel engine continues, maintaining a thrice weekly schedule between the two stations, Rutherford at one end and Mineral Wells at the other.

T&P calls it switching, so as not to make up a complete train, caboose, and all, like on the local to Baird, Texas from Weatherford. There is not enough freight assigned to the town, so this ends up being a long switch. The Mineral Wells passenger track still runs beside the big station, unused, except for freight movement, or for road crew equipment.

North from Mineral Wells, there is a stretch of track that was once the main line for both WMW&NW, and the railroad from the next county. Southward, there is a short spur. It is part of an ancient turning wye, a track arrangement that allowed steam locomotives to turn around. There is a warehouse unloading branch from it and this is sometimes used to park empty cars. Tracks serving abandoned Fort Wolters you're not useful. Neither are those to the brick yards. Various industries in warehouses and mineral rails, however, need the railroad to further their advantage of lower taxes and land values.

Early railroads generally had some humorous nicknames, based on letters in their heralds. GT&W's was "Getcha Ticket and Walk", or after a trip to the end of the line "Getcha Tub and Wash". Locally, WMW&NW's was "Water More Water and No Whiskey". Although in some circles that tendency was to reverse the words.

Crystals from the evaporated water were packaged and shipped nationwide and people came by train loads. Besides drinking the highly laxative water, visitors might also relax and enjoy hot mineral water baths, and a sense of well-being prevailed.

Some say that a money panic kept WMW&NW from expanding. Still others, equally as sure, relate those threats from a large railroad, which already had rails in the area, caused WMW&NW to stop construction to the north or west, leaving it with a stockpile of material large enough to lay a 40 mile stretch of track. All of it was stored at the northwestern terminus, Graford, not far from Mineral Wells. It was an ambitious plan: rails were to have been run through west Texas, through Lubbock, and into New Mexico to Albuquerque. Once there, the line was to have connected with Santa Fe, thereby providing a southern railway route.

A well-known railroad magnate and financial manipulator had bought the majority of WMW&NW stock after 1900, and thereafter, Texas and Pacific took control. It is said that there was a tight money situation then. In order to facilitate the new management, on alternate runs, local railroad crews hauled Dallas passengers, and on the other runs, T&P train crews drew the assignment. Daily schedules had been established to and from Dallas. This caused an overnight layover for both crews. Several hotels near the union terminal, in Dallas, catered to railmen., and at this end, the train crew surely found rest in relaxation, in the resort town during its heyday.

As road and ground transportation improved, railroad passenger service declined. A more efficient method of moving passengers became a must, and WMW&NW found it in an attractive and streamlined gasoline motor coach. It hauled passengers to and from Dallas for a long time. Lower than ordinary coaches, enclosed central vestibules extended even lower, for easier exit and boarding. Forced air ventilation flowed through the car and exhausted through ventilators in the roof. Windows were round giving interiors spacious appearance, and when they were closed, the rider was free from exhaust and dust. And more comfortable ride, no doubt, increased patronage.

When passenger service to Mineral Wells ended in the mid-twenties, T&P ran a shuttle bus from a stop on the main line, several miles south. Roads were barely passable, and the slow speed enabled a local ne'er do well to get free rides on back of the bus. Until he pilfered the vehicle, when it was unattended, the driver tolerated his freeloading, but there after he was in disfavor. Reprisal came, when the bus empty and him on the back of the bus, that angry driver got revenge by speeding so fast he was not able to jump when he reached his place but was forced to hang on all the while into town and walked back.

Gulf and Brazos Valley Railway

As early as the mid-eighties, the town leaders had tried to get a rail line into Mineral Wells from Texas and Pacific, 10 miles South. The survey and grade work had hardly begun when T&P, which had offered to assist the short line, was put into receivership. Work stopped, but began again, underneath the financial arrangement, requiring that certain

phases of the work must be completed in set time periods. It could not meet the deadlines and the contract was defaulted. When revived again, the town at the proposed site of the junction with Texas and Pacific was no longer able to supply bonuses requested. While these failures were occurring, years, also, were passing and by the time that a new junction, at nearby Peck City, had been found, another railroad already had reached Mineral Wells. But work resumed, for Gulf and Brazos Valley, at company from Texas' central section, had proposed that this segment of track has become part of a plan to connect the entire Brazos Valley with the Gulf Coast by rails. More trouble when Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Northwestern refused to allow those tracks to cross their own, even parking box cars across the intersection. Agreement was reached, allowing G&BV to install a crossover, and continued to Mineral Wells.

To avoid a range of mountains, track was laid along the floodplain beside Rock Creek, the lovely, wooded stream that is still in a natural state. And, after all the years, most of the roadbed remains, following in whichever way the creek meanders. Culverts built from native stone are intact, and earthen bridge dumps still show wooden pilings. The surface of the right of way gives fragments of railroad hardware, even part of the flanged wheel. None of the valley is accessible by highways nor roads, so that is why it stays as it was three quarters of a century ago. G&BV reached Mineral Wells in March 1900 but lasted only few years.

A long-time railroad man tells of a Gulf and Brazos Valley train holdup along Rock Creek. It does not allude to it as a robbery, but rather, more in the sense of a lark. His story is that two old boys, hunting along the right of way on horseback, just made it up that a holdup would be funny. Perhaps they had seen an early movie called "The Great Train Robbery" by Thomas Edison, or it might have been the effect of the contents of a beer sack that they were carrying. In any in any event, when the train came along, they stopped it and gave engineer one of the beers.

Gulf Texas and Western Railway

GT&W was the other railroad which reached Mineral Wells some few years after G&BV, although not entirely it's on its own tracks. A fragment of WMW&NW rails north from Mineral Wells, leftover from anticipated expansion, was used. GT&W had 75 miles of track running out from the adjoining county seat through what is jokingly called the "Jack County Rockies", so this was a logical connection. Total charges for the use of less than 10 miles of WMW&NW track was twelve and a half dollars per engine, which that GT&W to engage in a bit of trickery, to trim costs. Since the predominant grade to Mineral Wells was downhill, the leading engine of a doubleheader might uncouple, on the fly, before a WMW&NW junction was reached. Running ahead of that moving train, it could switch onto a passing track, leading a single engine from the downhill run in on leased tracks. However, single engines sometimes had trouble making the uphill return trip if the train waiting was equally as heavy. If that situation was critical, some say the engineer would back his own train a mile or so east, and mount the grade full speed, through town with sufficient momentum to keep rolling. There were accounts of angry people rushing out on to the track, to try to stop this. A station window shattered, from those tremendous vibrations, occasionally.

Passenger service continued for a time long after freight stopped, or the motorized passenger coach, named affection affectionately, "The Doodlebug", also was discontinued in the 40s. So, after about 30 years of service, GT&W was out of business, terminated by the coming of roads into the area, previously accessible only by train.

Observing the highway construction, parallel to his tracks, an agent put it so aptly when he remarked, "Well, there goes railroad".



The Tallahassee Garden Center – The Historic Rutgers House

The Tallahassee Garden Center was built in 1848 for Henry Rutgers (City Councilman and Territorial Treasurer, 1842-1844) by George Proctor, a free black who built many of the early Tallahassee homes. The doors and woodwork are mahogany. Most of the other lumber is hand-hewn from native trees. Bricks came from a local kiln.

The Tallahassee Railroad to St. Marks was operational prior to the building of this home. It

carried cotton from the plantations in Leon and surrounding counties to St. Marks for shipping to mills located elsewhere. The railroad also carried goods and materials to Tallahassee imported from other locales. Mahogany wood is not grown locally or in the United States. It must be imported from other countries. The hardware, windows, and glass were probably shipped in for the same reasons. Mr. Proctor would most likely have received the supplies he needed, that were not made locally, via the Tallahassee Railroad. There was no road to the west and a hardly navigable road to the east in the early 1840s.

Located in the Gold District, the property stretched from McDaniel Street and Meridian Road to the present half-city block. The grounds originally contained a smokehouse, an outdoor kitchen, and a large carriage house. It also included pastureland for livestock.



In 1889, following the death of Henry Rutgers' wife Jane, Henry's niece and her husband, Clementine and Edward LeRoy inherited the house. The Leroy's sold the house to Erastus W. Clark in 1893 and, upon his death, his daughters Janie Clark and Minnie Clark Spears inherited the house. Upon the death of the latter, it became the property of The Salvation Army.

The house's architectural style, "double-pile center hall plan with "tripartite" front windows, is unique in Tallahassee. Two rooms were added in the late 1800's. A porch on each side lined the back walk. An indoor kitchen and wainscoting were added in 1926. Using a parterre garden design popular in the 1800's, the grounds follow a landscape plan that includes beds lined with boxwood. Crepe myrtle and southern magnolia define entrance

ways.

Rutgers House 1934

In 1954 the Tallahassee Garden Club purchased the property for its club house and continue to make updates and improvements while preserving the property's historical authenticity. In 1969 a restoration project was undertaken that included enlarging the original auditorium to accommodate 100 people, adding a stage, and installing central heat and air. In 1987 the Arvah Hopkins Patio was added. In 2015, a gazebo was added to the south lawn in memory of Jane Price, past president of the Tallahassee Garden Club. In June of 2016, the kitchen and trophy room powder room were completely renovated. Both obtained 21st century updates while retaining the integrity of the historic significance of the house itself. Additionally, a garden shed was added to house gardening tools and other gardening needs. Gifts from Circles, individuals and memorials have provided many lovely furnishings.

In 2017, an historical marker was installed on the front lawn denoting the significance of the property and of the club to the history of our region and our state.

Known as The Rutgers House, the Garden Center provides a central location for club and community activities. Circles use the Center for their meetings, workshops, flower shows, and special events. It is also available for rent for all types of private functions including retirement parties, memorial services, weddings, receptions, business meetings and special celebrations. The arrangement of the rooms makes it possible for more than one activity to take place simultaneously. In addition to the auditorium, there is a large parlor, dining room, modern kitchen, trophy room which displays awards and historic items, and a sunroom. A large attic is perfect for storing equipment and flower show materials. An ample parking area permits the Center to be used for large teas, receptions, or community activities. For rental information please contact the Venue Director. Leave a message at 850.224.3371 or use tgcvenue@gmail.com for rental inquiries. www.tallahassee gardenclub.com.

My wife, Jane Meadows, is a board member of the Tallahassee Garden Club and a member of the Sweet Bay Circle. The club is seeking new ways to advertise to the public. I agreed to place this article in our newsletter because of the possible historical connection to railroads in the area. In return she has agreed to share our Big Bend Model Railroad Association Annual Show and Sale cards to garden club members at events they are hosting or sponsoring. Pretty even trade, I think!

Most of this article was taken from the TGC website with added information relating to the railroad connection by yours truly. You may often be surprised how things around you are connected to railroads in some way. *Neal Meadows*

Minutes from the August 19, 2022, Meeting of BBMRA: President Andy Zimmerman called the meeting, held on August 16 via Zoom, at about 7:40 PM. There were 14 participants present at maximum.

Minutes – The minutes from the July meeting were discussed. Ed Schroeder forwarded, and Stacy Elliott seconded a motion to accept the minutes as presented in the July Lantern. The motion was accepted without objection.

Treasurer’s Report – President Andy shared the finances via Zoom functionality while Treasurer Neal Meadows described the details, particularly related to receipts from the show and renewal dues. The BBMRA balance is not shared in the minutes but will be produced upon request by any club member; but basically, we are in the black and looking good. Drew Hackmeyer moved a motion to approve the report as presented and it was seconded by Ed. The motion was approved without exception.

Slate Elections -The slate as described in the July minutes:

President – Andy Zimmerman

Vice President – Stacy Elliot

Secretary – Sheldon Harrison

Treasurer – Neal Meadows

It was voted on without modification. The motion was moved by Drew and seconded by Ed. The proposed slate was then accepted without objection. The remainder of the board are the three division coordinators, select in votes by the division members.

New Business - There was discussion of the proposal adopted by the club several years ago to allocate a percentage (proposed at 20%) of proceeds from the annual show to charitable purposes such as the Toys for Tots. This will finance a substantial Toys for Tots donation again late this year.

There was then discussion about considering purchase of a new trailer to haul the N-Scale T-Trak modules. President Andy mentioned our active role in several regional shows and stated it may become a convenient option. One option proposed was renting U-Haul trailers but logistics re height and typical T-Trak storage come into play.

Stacy and Phil Weston then mentioned an upcoming outing at Sopchoppy called Depot Day on September 10 where HO and N-Scale T-Trak modules will be on display. Lloyd Depot Day will showcase the past railroad history in the area, including the GF&A. Randy Lombardo mentioned that he is willing to help with the setup etc.

Division Reports

