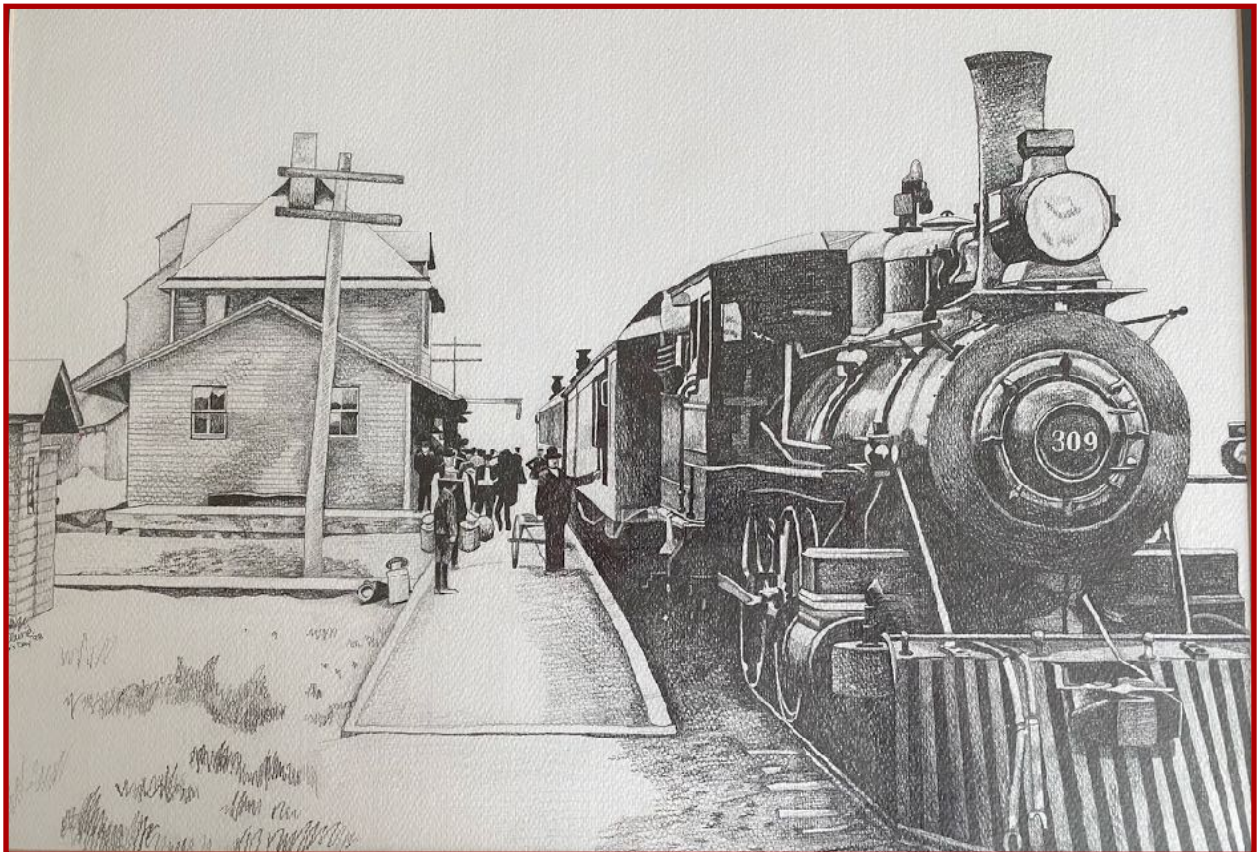


ROCK ISLAND REPORTER

**E-NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO, ROCK
ISLAND AND PACIFIC RAILROAD**

ISSUE NUMBER 31

SEPT 2021



**COVER: CRIP #309 DEPICTED IN A STATION STOP AROUND 1910.
PENCIL AND CHARCOAL ARTWORK FROM THE COLLECTION OF ELVON
AND CLEO VANDALSEM.**



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1. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE IOWA CHAPTER NRHS SLIDE SHOWS

Thank you to everyone that tuned in for our February slideshow. We set a new record for live viewers during Sunday's program. We also greatly appreciate Harold Ziehr who kindly made the Anglund collection available for use in this slideshow. Please also note this slideshow as well as all previous shows have been archived on the Iowa Chapter YouTube channel for viewing at any time.

As we look further down the road, we will be looking for people to submit material for future shows. Thanks to advances in technology, no one would be required to travel to Iowa and present a show. Shows can be pre-recorded or presented live, according to the preference of the presenter. I would be happy to do more than one per month if there is sufficient interest. Please send an email to iowachapternrhs@gmail.com if you are interested in presenting. Here is the current schedule of programs:

September 19, 2021 - Duane Rapp
October 17, 2021 - Keith Graber
November 14, 2021 - Chris Lastovich
December 12, 2021 - OPEN
January 16, 2022 - Russell Lyon

Please reach out if you have any interest in providing a future show. Here are the ground rules for a presentation:

1 - We need to know the sources for all images. Photos provided by the photographer, purchased or otherwise acquired legally are all fine. Please do not submit anyone else's photos and claim them as your own.

2 - Notes are needed about the photos. Dates taken, train IDs, locations are all great. Anything relevant that can help fill in the backstory as I will be giving as much detail as time allows when presenting.

3 - Full shows should be 80-150 images in length. We are trying to fill about an hour of time, and this amount of photos with some descriptions works really well for the given time frame. Don't worry if you have a smaller amount of material, we can pair your program with another presenter to accommodate shorter programs.

4 - We need 100% digital content for these shows. As much as it would be great, there is no way presently to project traditional slides to a PC screen. Ideally a show would be burned to CD or USB and mailed/delivered to my address. I can also attempt to meet anyone that is nearby to Marion and execute a handoff if that works better.

Ultimately, we are trying to provide a meeting experience when meeting in person is not possible. I know many railfan groups have not met in person for quite some time, and we are going to do our best to fill in that void. Please share this email with anyone who is interested and we will hopefully make this a successful venture.

Thank you

Thomas A Hogan, Treasurer Iowa Chapter NRHS
3088 Newcastle Rd
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 431-1181

A MIGHTY FINE ROAD: A HISTORY OF THE CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY (INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS) BY H. ROGER GRANT WINS AWARD.

A Mighty Fine Road: A History of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company (Indiana University Press) by H. Roger Grant has won the Benjamin F. Shambaugh prize for the best book published on Iowa history for 2020. The State Historical Society of Iowa annually gives his award.

ABILENE, KS

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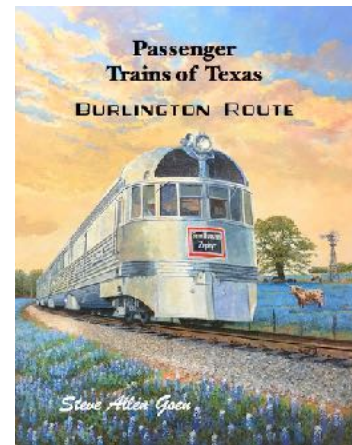
The Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad will be operating hourly steam trains between Abilene and Enterprise, from 10am until 3pm, as part of the local Heritage Day Festival on Saturday, October 2. The trains will be powered by ex-ATSF #3415, a Baldwin 4-6-2, restored and owned by the railroad. The line is part of the former Rock Island branch from Herington to Abilene and Salina. More information can be found on either the Abilene Visitors' Bureau website or the railroad's website--both listed below.

[Steam Locomotive #3415 Ride - Heritage Day Festival](#)

ROCK ISLAND REPORTER

Passenger Trains of Texas - Burlington Route. By Steve Goen

My next book, titled "Passenger Trains of Texas - Burlington Route" is scheduled to be released in late September. The book will once again showcase operations on the Burlington-Rock Island including B-RI name trains like the SAM HOUSTON ZEPHYR, the RED HEAD and the PIONEER ZEPHYR which only operated as a B-RI train for six months. Other Burlington passenger trains featured include the WEST TEXAN, the GULF COAST SPECIAL, COLORADO SPECIAL, the Wichita Falls to Abilene doodlebug, the Childress to Lubbock motorcar, the Pampa mixed, Spur mixed and even the Wichita Falls & Oklahoma mixed that shared Waurika Union Station with the Rock Island.



This book is the third volume in my "Passenger Trains of Texas" series and will be a whopping 184 pages (36 pages longer than my Rock Island book) and is hardback.

Because of the additional number of pages I've had to raise the list price from \$59.95 up to \$69.95. That's only a \$10.00 increase for an additional 36 pages of rare photos, advertisements and information. Not a bad deal if you think about it.

If you order before October 1, 2021 you can purchase "Passenger Trains of Texas - Burlington Route" at the special pre-publication price of only \$59.95 plus tax and shipping. Contact Steve Goen at texaszephyr@sw.rr.com or visit my website at www.texaszephyrpublishing.com for full order information.

Also still available: "Passenger Trains of Texas - Rock Island", hardback, 148 pages.

THE 31ST SEMI-ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE ROCK ISLAND MEET SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2021.

The 31st Semi-Annual FRIENDS OF THE ROCK ISLAND meet is scheduled for Saturday, November 6, 2021.

6:30pm - 9:00pm at Grace United Methodist Church - Lower Level (enter at rear) 12739 Maple Avenue Blue Island, IL.

6:30 PM: "Mini" Swap Meet / Display - Bring items you want to trade, sell or show. Limited # of free tables. One table per dealer limit. **Reservations required** - first reserved first served.

7:30 PM: Program(s) To be announced.

FARE: Free will donation to pay for flyers, mailing and a donation to the church for the use of their facilities.

CONTACTS:

General Information: Jim Suhs <jamessuhs_at_sbcglobal.net> 815-588-1504.

Tom Mitoraj <mitoraj_at_yahoo.com> 630-606-7030.

Swap Tables: Paul Hunnell <phunnell_at_yahoo.com> 630-369-0221.

Further details TBA.

MASK ISLAND DECALS INC.

Mask Island Decals Inc. now offers a large variety of Rock Island as well as Rock decals.

The latest decals are a fifty foot blue El Reno rebuild SL load protection. Also two forty foot combination cars as delivered and El Reno repaint.

Please view my web site. Maskislanddecals.com.

Hubert Mask

Mask Island Decals Inc.

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Etched HO Medallions

Sized to fit early diesel passenger locomotives (TA, E3, E6, DL-107) – Set of 2 \$3.00



Sized to fit large steam locomotive tenders used on 4-8-2's and 4-8-4's – Set of 2 \$3.00



(Note, other large tenders had painted on medallions that were even larger.)

Please provide a small SSAE and send to

Steve Hile

617 Sunset Drive

Naperville, IL 60540

STILL AVAILABLE

1925 ROCK ISLAND (CRI&P and CRI&G) GENERAL ROSTER BOOK

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***Individual numbers* and detailed statistics** shown for each type of equipment as follows: Steam Locomotives, Motor cars, Passenger cars, Freight cars, MofW equipment, Stations, Shops, Engine houses, Turntables, Coaling stations, Stock yards, Junctions/Interchanges, Personnel ...and MUCH MORE.

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WEBSITE, AND ROCK ISLAND LINES ON GROUPS.IO**



3. THE ZEPHYR ROCKET

BY MICHAEL ARMSTRONG

The Zephyr Rocket ran between Minneapolis/St. Paul and St. Louis. It was operated by the Rock Island Lines from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Burlington, Iowa, where the Chicago Burlington & Quincy (Burlington Route) took over handling the train to St. Louis.

During the 1960's, the ZR covered the 583 mile route at an average speed of about 40 MPH. Equipment was a mix of Rock Island and Burlington Route cars pulled by a single Rock Island or Burlington Route locomotive. The Zephyr Rocket handled a number of head-end cars laden with mail and express.

At Burlington, Iowa, baggage, mail and express cars were switched out requiring 30 minutes or more to accomplish this task. A typical equipment consist in the mid-1960's was one locomotive, a handful of head-end cars, an RPO (Railway Post Office car), and one or two coaches.

Meal service and sleeping car accommodations were terminated in 1963. The Zephyr Rocket entered service in January 1941 and made its last run in April 1967.

While not an exact replica of the Zephyr Rocket, the following model railroad photos are my interpretation of how the train and associated operations may have appeared in the mid-1960's. A nameless train by this time, the 1965 timetable lists it as Rock Island trains #19 and #20 and Burlington Route trains #8 and #15.

The model Zephyr Rocket is operating on my layout as a Southbound train from Minneapolis/St. Paul to St. Louis. I hope you enjoy the visual trip from the Twin Cities to "The Gateway to the West St. Louis".

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Above: Zephyr Rocket departing Minneapolis and passing switch engine. Below: Trains meeting at Elsberry, Missouri.



— **ROCK ISLAND** — **REPORTER**

4. **ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD PICTURES BY DEAN HEARN**

Below: RI #17052-17051 @ Boone, Iowa 9-25-1986



Below: RI #17063 @ Des Moines, Iowa 10-1980



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Below: RI Covered Hopper @ Boone, Iowa 10-24-1992



Below: RI Depot @ Council Bluffs, Iowa 9-27-1992



ROCK ISLAND REPORTER

5. FRED BLANK UPDATE ON AEROTRAIN RESTORATION

COSMETIC RESTORATION OF THE ROCK ISLAND AEROTRAIN THE FINAL FINISH COAT ONTO THE LOCOMOTIVE COMPLETED

The National Museum of Transportation in St. Louis is continuing work on the aerotrain. Much progress has been made. For the locomotive, all the metal repair work was completed and final coat of paint has been applied. Some of the accessories were reinstalled onto the locomotive after painting was completed. Work will begin on laying out the red stripe for the locomotive while work is continuing of the two passenger cars.



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Volunteer Harryvan reinstalling the polished air horns onto the top of the locomotive



Volunteer Adams cleaned and reinstalled the station power connector onto the finish painted front side of the locomotive



The entire locomotive was completely painted with the silver paint on 10 June 2021. We will begin laying out the red stripe next week, weather permitting



A piece of sheet metal was cut to fit the area in the passenger car for the stair repair



The sheet metal for the stairway repair was welded into place. Supports for the stairs will be added later



A. ROCK ISLAND'S CAPITOL REBUILD PROGRAM

In the early 1970's the locomotive roster of the Rock Island was in dire need of major overhaul. Strapped for cash, the Rock embarked upon a Capitol Rebuild Program whereby some 160 of its "better running" diesel locomotives were selected for complete/rebuild overhauls. Rock's major diesel repair facility at Silvis, Illinois was not singularly equipped to handle a magnitude of such a major undertaking in getting the needed number of units completed and quickly back into service in a timely fashion to move the freight tonnage at the time. RI management made the decision to out shop half the units by selling them to Precision National, who in turn, shopped them out to Morrison-Knudsen (M-K) located in Boise, Idaho. M-K rebuilds would receive both GP-7s and GP-9s and be assigned numbers in the 4400-4500 range when completed. After M-K had rebuilt a dozen, Rock Island cancelled the contract sending the remaining units to the Silvis Shops and the Illinois Central & Gulf Shops in Paducah, Ky. All the M-K rebuilds were painted in the Red and Yellow paint scheme while the Silvis and Paducah units were painted in the Blue Diamond "R" paint scheme?? (Was this but another example of RI management in the last years of operations, making paint decisions that causes one to wonder just what were they thinking??)

The following are several pictures of the M-K rebuilds as seen through the camera of Paul Walters.

Former GP-7 #1228 overhauled as new number 4448 on 12-31-74, westbound at Calvin, Ok. Repainted into the Blue Paint Scheme on March 16, 1977.

Former GP-7 #1253 overhauled as new number 4459 on 3-19-75, northbound leaving El Reno.

Painted into the Blue Paint Scheme on 1-13-77.

Note: By April, 1977, all M-K Red and Yellow locomotive rebuilds were repainted in the Blue, Black Diamond "R" paint scheme.

Respectfully submitted: Dean Schirf, Harrah, Ok.



Above: Former GP-7 #1228 overhauled as new number 4448 on 12-31-74, westbound at Calvin, Ok. Repainted into the Blue Paint Scheme on March 16, 1977.
Below: Former GP-7 #1253 overhauled as new number 4459 on 3-19-75, northbound leaving El Reno. Painted into the Blue Paint Scheme on 1-13-77.



B. THE LIFE OF A DOODLEBUG

In the 1920's Rock Island invested heavily in Gas Electrics, often called Doodlebugs. In total, more than 30 of them were purchased from various builders. Often relegated to non-mainline passenger service, the Doodlebug played a major role in providing vital rail connections between rural communities and larger metropolitan areas where Rock Island's fleet of "Rockets" did the honor. Such a Doodlebug was RI #9090, built by Standard Steel Car Company in 1929 powered by a 300 horsepower gasoline engine. In 1941, its power was upgraded to a 400 HP diesel motor. Ole #9090 faithfully served as a "connector" in the 1940s and 50s by making daily runs between El Reno and Oklahoma City's Union Station to pick up passengers to do a platform change in El Reno, a distance of 30 miles, to board North/South bound passenger trains including the Texas and Twin Star Rockets. Following 30 years of faithful service ole Doodlebug #9090 was retired and ended up in storage at the El Reno yards where it languished for several years before being converted into a weed spraying machine. By all accounts, the Rock Island got back every dollar (and then some) that it paid for #9090 back in the day.

Here is a picture of #9090 (looking tired and needing a rest) taken on April 11, 1956 on its last day of service as westbound train #23 between Eldon, Mo. and Kansas City. (Please credit RITS and Art Gibson for this photo).



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Here is a HO Scale Model salute to Doodlebug #9090 in full Rocket colors. She's an attractive Motorcar that did the Rock proud throughout her days of providing passenger rail service on the Mighty Fine Line. (Model and picture by Dean Schirf)



C. THE ROCK ISLAND OF THE 1950's

The Rock Island never looked so good as when this picture was taken in the early 1950's in Des Moines, Iowa. It captures a Rock Island I grew up with at the time living in El Reno and Chickasha, Ok. RI steam engine #4055 no doubt commands the picture. The beautiful 4-8-2 is one of 61 such steam engines that occupied the roster for the Rock Island, faithfully providing a lifetime of service starting in 1913 and ending in 1953 when the railroad went all diesel. To even make the picture more complete is the engineer in the white cap at the throttle of #4055.... (were White Caps a RI Engineer tradition as I have seen many a picture, especially Passenger Engineers, in White Caps. RI Mountain #4055 first entered the property in March, 1927 and went to salvage in February, 1952. The handsome outside cabooses and switcher SW# 511, along with other rolling stock of the period, reminds the avid Rock Island enthusiast of a time time when the Great Rock Island Lines was rolling along with pride and purpose giving testimony to "The Road of Planned Progress". Dean Schirf, Harrah, Ok. (Please credit the collection of Stephen Eudy for this picture)



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D. PUTTING ON THE RITS

In 2005 the Rock Island Technical Society (RITS) published a quarterly magazine called "The Rocket". Each edition contained some 30 pages of excellent articles and pictures detailing the history on the Road of Planned Progress. I would read each issue cover to cover in short order never disappointed in its superb informative content. In fact, Rock followers and subscribers could be justifiably proud of "The Rocket" as it was every bit as comparable to other Historical Class One Railroad Association Publications at the time. In 2010 RITS announced that its companion Quarterly Newsletter "The ROCK" would cease publication. Two years later "The Rocket" Magazine ceased publication as well. In 2013 RITS sent notification to its subscribers that RITS "had left the station", thus ending 36 years of meaningful information about the Great Rock Island Lines. I first subscribed to RITS in 1985 and always looked forward to its newsletters, data sheets, Annual Digest, along with membership rosters denoting what part of the Rock Island was of particular interest to each member. I do not know the complete story surrounding the demise of RITS and it would serve no purposeful reason at this late juncture to get into all of that now.... as RITS stated in 2013: "The Train Has Left The Station". But this I do know: For 36 years, of which I was a member for 27 of'em, RITS left behind a treasure trove of historical information detailing one of this country's great railroads, that was steeped in history, while serving 14 Mid- America states along its 8000 mile rail system, starting in 1852 and ending in 1980. Long live the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. Respectfully Submitted: Dean Schirf, Harrah, Ok.

Here is a picture of some of my ROCKET Magazines published exclusively for RITS by Whitewater Productions of Kansas City, Mo.



ROCK ISLAND REPORTER

7. JIM JORDAN UPDATE PHOTOS ON CALHAN RI CABOOSE



Above: Completed Lettering. Below: stairway and end work complete.





8. PHILLIP WEIBLER ON ROCK ISLAND ITALIC LETTING OF 1960-70S

The typeface started as Venus Bold Italic, but we changed it by doubling the height while keeping the width the same. Terry Carruthers worked with me on this (you'll see his initials -TBC- on a lot of 1960-'70s drawings). A blueprint shop in KC used a process camera to produce this lettering at 21" from the 42" we had drawn. The 21" was used on waycars, freight cars, and the bi-level commuter cars. Of course, only the ROCK ISLAND letters were done.

The earlier 18" block lettering got a 30" 'R' and 'I' and this was widely used before the 42" and 21" lettering was adopted. There were a lot of mis-cues on all these painting and lettering schemes - they we applied here, there , and everywhere on the railroad. The first yellow wing E7 was done in the roundhouse at Armourdale.

SOO Line and MILW had a lot to do with this. We figured if we used the SOO typeface we could put ROCK on one unit and ISLAND on the next. That would have created a stir on the ready track. PAW

SEASONAL BUGS GOT YOU DOWN THIS YEAR?



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GOING**

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Go to Paypal <https://www.paypal.com/us/signin>



9. RICH CASTAGNA ON FREIGHT CAR RETURN EMPTY INSTRUCTIONS

I am modeling the operations of the Rock Island in HO scale circa 1965 for the Chicago area. One area of operations that is fascinating to me is where did the cars go and why. In other words, what industry and businesses generated enough traffic for the Rock Island for them to invest in a dedicated fleet of cars or join a pool with other railroads to ensure an adequate car supply for the traffic expected.

Without access to waybills, an easy way to determine these assignments is to read the “When Empty Return To...” stencils on the side of certain freight cars. These stencils appeared to be quite common on assigned cars in the 1960’s before the wide spread adoption of the PICL (Perpetual Inventory of Car Location) system on the Rock Island. Many of these stencils lasted until the early 1970’s when they were painted out due to change of assignments or the implementation of the ACI tag identification. As car control became computerized, there was less need for the footboard yardmaster or switchman to read the stencil on an empty car in order to figure out where to route it.

This is by no means an all-inclusive list. It is more of an exercise to start the conversation. The stencils are from photographs of Rock Island freight cars in service from the 1960’s. I had to make assumptions on some of the particular industries served, but some were obvious. U.S. Silica Sand is one example, for the covered hoppers assigned to Ottawa, IL. Any errors on the customer assignments are my own.

When Empty Return to Agent at: Car Types verified by stencil 1956 to 1970										
				ACF 50' LO 2927 cf						
53' Flat FM										
East Moline IL	John Deer e		Des Moines	General Mills						

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					60' XAP					
St. Louis MO										
Wichita KS				Lansing MI	GTW	Chevy				
St. Joseph MO	MFA-Feed Division		Flint MI		GTW					
Iowa Falls IA	Ralston Purina (soy beans)	Wayne MI	C & O							
50' Airslide LO	(Malt loading)		50 and 60' XML							
Manitowoc WI	CNW / Wisconsin Maltng Co.	Irwin PA		Union RR (via PRR)						
Peoria IL		Pabst (?)								
					1958 PS-1 50' XM					
PS-2 37' LO										
Ottawa IL		sand			El Reno Davenport				Ammo Loading only	
Utica IL		sand								
					1964 86' XML					
ACF 37' LO square hatch										
					Buffalo NY	Wabash - Ford				
LaSalle IL		cement								

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Utica IL		Phila delph ia Quart z								
PS-2 50' LO 4000 cf										
Peoria		ADM								

Some of assignments of particular car types can be determined by the notes in the Official Railway Equipment Register such as the auto parts cars that are assigned to Chevrolet axle loading and flat cars assigned to the Caterpillar Joliet scraper plant. The fleet of RBL type 50' plug door box cars is very interesting to me because they do not appear to be free runners (I may be wrong about this). I welcome any additions, suggestions and/or corrections to this list.

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10. ROCK ISLAND FANS AND PHOTO SECTION

**DENMARK
SWEDEN
UNITED KINGDOM
NEW ZEALAND
ARIZONA**

ARKANSAS

Depot at Leola, Arkansas. No date... 1930's ?
From Collection of L. A. Reed



FLORIDA
HAWAII
ILLINOIS

IOWA

L. A. REED POSTCARD OF Doodlebug motor car at depot in Grundy Center, Iowa.

This postcard image is dated 1916. From Collection of L. A. Reed



GEORGE NILES IMAGE OF DES MOINES, IA 1950'S

Here is an image that will spark some thoughts on a day so long ago looking west in Des Moines, Iowa. No date on the negative. My thinking it was taken during the long shadows (around) noon in Dec. or Jan of 1952 or 1953, as paint is still in excellent or in nearly new condition on most of the diesels. This image taken by the late George Niles was sent to me by a friend of mine before he sold the negative on eBay.

Left to right:

Rock Island Diesels

740 Alco RS1 Built 11-43
629? EMD E6 Built 6-40
? SW or SW1
631 EMD E6 Built 11-41
677 EMD F7 Built 3-49
437 EMD GP7 Built 7-8-50
497 Alco RS3 Built 11-51
485 Alco RS3 Built 10-51

Provided by Roger Bee.



**KANSAS
KENTUCKY
LOUISIANA**

MICHIGAN
MASSACHUSETTS
MINNESOTA
MISSOURI

NEBRASKA

PHOTOS BY MARK HUFF

Union Pacific Big Boy 4014 parked at Fairbury NE depot Aug 8 2021



Above and below: Big Boy at Fairbury, NE August 8, 2021.



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Above: Big Boy support units and Depot. Below: Close up of support unit UP 4015.



**NEVADA
NEW MEXICO
NORTH CAROLINA**

OHIO
OKLAHOMA
TENNESSEE
TEXAS
UTAH
VIRGINIA
WEST VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON STATE
WISCONSIN



11. OBITUARIES

Stephen Eudy

RITS member, Rock Island railfan and Rock Island Reporter contributor.

I am sad to report that Stephen Eudy passed away earlier this week. He was a longtime Rock Island fan, dating back almost to the earliest days of RITS. No memorial service is planned, but I am meeting with some of the family members tomorrow and will try to get enough info to put together an obit for this upcoming issue. We seem to be losing Rock Island members faster than we

ROCK ISLAND REPORTER

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Coverage



The e-newsletter covers the history of the Rock Island Railroad in documents and miniature. It is devoted to its readers — anyone and everyone who has interest in the Rock Island.

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We hope you found this newsletter interesting and worthy of further issues. E-mail comments suggesting improvements would be appreciated. Pats-on-the-back are also appreciated.

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