



**COTTON BELT RAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
TYLER TAP CHAPTER  
JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER**



**Purchase of the Old Swann Warehouse Property**

The Cotton Belt Depot Museum has had an interesting year in 2015. Most recently, the museum purchased a lot just south of the depot, behind the REA express and City Café across Oakwood St. It is our hope to have the Rock Island RPO car, currently resting at the former Whistlestop Ranch and donated to the Society by Bud Garrett, moved to this lot. The lot was purchased from Melanie McElfratrick and previously belonged to the Swann family.



**Moving Our Storage Space**



Speaking of the City Cafe across the street, in October the City of Tyler informed us that our storage space across the street in the old City Café (and blue steel warehouse behind it) is going to be repurposed and that we needed to move out. Fortunately, they allowed us to use the building next door, known as the Jacobs Building, so we have moved the stored artifacts to Jacobs. The City's intent is to rehab the front façade of both Jacobs and City Café and use the City Café and its steel warehouse in back as a small business incubator they are calling Innovation Pipeline.

**The Society's First Exhibit at the East Texas Fair**



Also in October we were asked to create and man a booth at the East Texas Fair. Through the hard work of our members Paul Royal, Brent Muecke, and Shane Murphy, we managed to move display cases, artifacts, and HO scale model railroad table to the fairgrounds. Once this was up and running, additional members Mary Jones, Glenn Wilkins, John Depoe, Tony Wilson, Hal Meyer, and Jimmy Whitehead manned the display during the 10 day run of the fair. We all agreed it gave the museum and Society some good exposure to the public.



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**What's Happening in the Museum**

Beginning in late August we came up with a plan to reorganize the museum's interior starting with a general clean-up and gradually re-arranging display cases and the displays in them. We have also moved the sale items (caps, t-shirts, mugs etc.) where they are more easily seen and this has increased sales of these items. Along with this we also came up with a plan for a new model display layout. Society member Danny Hogden has been building this in his garage in sections and as of this writing, half of it is in the museum now. Shane Murphy has been cleaning up the original Cotton Belt Texas lines CTC panel in his garage and is designing a simulation of trains running across the system, via relays and microprocessors, to illuminate the lights across the top of the CTC. This project should be completed by the time you read this. Looking forward, 2016 will no doubt be one of more change and new opportunity. The new model display layout should be operating by mid-winter and with the CTC in operation, the museum will have a new look, blending some new features with the older ones.



**Visit the Cotton Belt Depot Museum Facebook Page**

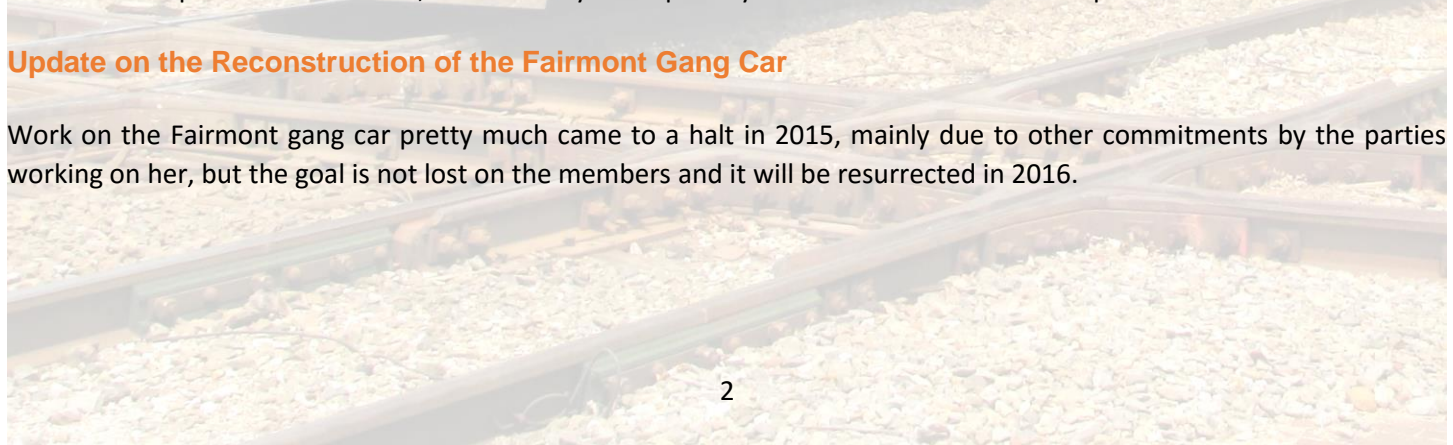
During the latter half of 2015 the museum's Facebook page, Cotton Belt Depot Museum Tyler Texas, has been consistently updated by Paul and Shane and is slowly creating some new interest in the museum and we have had some new visitors that noticed us on Facebook and came in for a look.

**A Meeting With the City of Tyler**

In the early summer we had a meeting with new mayor Martin Heines and assistant City Manager Susan Guthrie to outline growth plans for our future. There was nothing that came out of the meeting other than letting them know we are part of their City and want to continue to play a part in the development of the north side of downtown Tyler. We also had a visit from a Union Pacific manager from Omaha proposing a three-way land swap between them, us and Tyler Transit that would give up a place to display our business car Dixie that is currently stored in San Antonio, and although the UP manager said he would present it to Omaha, it is currently a low priority item for them and is on the proverbial back burner.

**Update on the Reconstruction of the Fairmont Gang Car**

Work on the Fairmont gang car pretty much came to a halt in 2015, mainly due to other commitments by the parties working on her, but the goal is not lost on the members and it will be resurrected in 2016.





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**The Annual Train Show**

Our annual train show in April was a success. We completely filled Harvey Hall, had a good turnout from the public, and made a small profit to help fund the museum. A good time was had by all.

Our annual train show this year is the weekend of April 30-May 1 at Harvey Hall in Tyler and we hope all our members can help out in some way. If you want to lend a hand, call or email Shane, Glenn, or Paul or just leave a message on the museums phone 903-595-7232.



**Remembering Our Lost Members**

On a more somber note, in 2015 we lost two members who were active in our Society, Sara Wilkins and Pete Martinez. We have missed them dearly this past year.

**New Cotton Belt Print Available**



CBRHS member Tony Wilson has commissioned a print from artist John Winfield and has made available to the public 50 of the prints at \$60 each. The print can be purchased at the museum or ordered by phone, email, or US mail for delivery by USPS mailed in a protective mailing tube.

**Model Railroad Club**

A group of like minded railway modelers meet at the museum on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 pm. Anyone can come and join us, no dues are required. Occasionally we will meet at Shane Murphy's house to run trains on his layout, but the normal meeting is as described above.



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**Smoke Over Tyler by Shane Murphy**



The Cotton Belt purchased 24 "modern" 4-6-0 locomotives from Baldwin about 100 years ago, modern meaning newer than the first decade of the 1900's. They were the primary passenger motive power fleet at the time, and were 35% engines designated Class GO. Principal dimensions are: 22" x 28" cylinder; 69" dia. driver; 200 psi. boiler pressure; 49.6 sq. ft. of grate area; 35,000 lbs. tractive effort; and 221,000 total engine weight. Tenders held 8000 gallons of water. The first 10 purchased by the St. L SW, #650-659 had Walschaerts valve gear installed. The next 8 locomotives ordered were essential the same, save for Baker valve gear which the Cotton Belt began to

favor over the Walschaerts, and tenders of 9,000 gallons of water. All GO class ten-wheelers had ALCO power reverse gear, and were built to burn coal. In 1923 all GO Class engines were rebuilt to burn oil and were fitted with mechanical lubricators. These finely tuned engines received graphite smokeboxes with the headlight centered on the smokebox front cover, and a cast Cotton Belt Route logo on the valve chests. They also had their brass bells mounted to the smokebox door rather than on the boiler top like the others. Full length front steps down to the pilot deck completed the overall new look. One locomotive of this class, the 665, received a green paint job with gold lettering, and rather than the engine number on the tender, this #665 had its engine number on the cab with the words "Lone \* Limited" written across the flank of the tender. #664, 665 and 667 also received splendidly balanced Scullin disc drivers. With the arrival of diesels, these ten-wheelers were scrapped at Pine Bluff in 1949-1950.



These ten wheelers pulled all of the named trains, and every other steam powered passenger train across the Cotton Belt system. In the rare color photo seen here, the 665 is leading the Lone Star out of St Louis, a decade after losing it green Lone \* Limited scheme.

Modelers wishing to re-create a Class GO ten-wheeler have their hands full if a Scullin disc driver model is what one craves, as these have not been produced by any brass or plastic manufacturer. Scullin drivers are available from Northwest Short Line but boring out the wheel centers would be required to fit the axle used on the particular model of one's choice. This author chose to model St. L.S-W #653 which is not one of these disc drivered locomotives. I used a Bachmann HO scale ten wheeler, removed the coal load and fabricated an oil bunker in its place and moved the headlight from atop the smokebox to its new position centered on the smokebox door. Also fabricated from styrene were the front steps from the running boards down to the pilot. This was a "close enough for me" model so I then painted and decaled the locomotive to represent St. L SW ten-wheeler Class GO #653.

