



Consider this your official welcome to the Central Branch Railroad and Marshall County Kansas. There are many things to see and do during your visit to Marshall County. Let's start with a little history of the railroad.... which is how everything else came to be in the first place.

### *The First Proposed Railroad in Kansas*

The interest in establishing a railroad line, that would later become known as the Central Branch Railroad, started in Atchison, Kansas in the spring of 1860. Prominent businessmen in the area felt that their city was ideally located as the crossing point between the cities of Chicago to the southwest and St. Louis to the northwest. They believed the town of Atchison, because of its location, would surpass the cities of St. Joseph and Kansas City, Missouri as a railroad destination point. As a result, the newly formed Atchison & Pikes Peak Railroad was given permission to build a rail line from Atchison, Kansas through St. Joseph, Missouri, where it would then connect to the Union Pacific's transcontinental line in Kansas City.



Early Railroad map of Waterville, KS

### *Central Branch Railroad arrives at Netawaka, Kansas*

Construction on the new rail line began in the spring of 1860. The new railroad line traveled west from Atchison, Kansas to the Kansas town of Netawaka (located just west of Whiting Kansas) approximately 56 miles east of present day Blue Rapids, Kansas.

This new line was named the Central Branch Railroad upon its completion in 1867.



The following year track was laid further west across the river to the city of Waterville, Kansas, thus completing the first 100 miles of the Central Branch Railroad.

The towns of Waterville, Blue Rapids, Frankfort, Vermillion and Whiting were among the towns established as part of the railroad expansion west.

### *Future Plans...*

The future plans for extending the Central Branch rails west into Colorado were halted in the fall of 1868 when the Union Pacific Railroad bridged the Missouri River at Kansas City.

In the spring of 1869, the Central Branch Railroad came under the control of the Union Pacific Railroad. A few years later in 1899, the railroad was taken over by the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The name of the railroad line was changed twice between 1899 and 1908. In 1909, the railroad formally, once again, became the Central Branch of the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

*(Continued Inside)*

Eventually the railroad would again come under the control of the Union Pacific Railroad where it would remain thru the fall of 1989. The railroad had survived its first one hundred years of service.

### *The End of The Line...*

In 1990 the end of the Central Branch Railroad was near when the Union Pacific Railroad filed papers to abandon an 88-mile section of the original Central Branch rail line from just west of Atchison, Kansas at Parnell, to just east of Frankfort, Kansas at Vliets. That abandonment eventually took place. The rails and ties were removed and sold for scrap. All signs of the railroad disappeared forever.

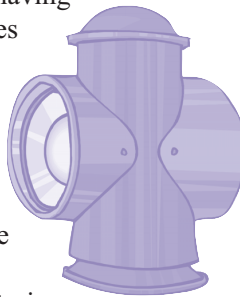
### *Saving the Rails*

In 2001, the last remaining portion of the Central Branch railroad located in Marshall County, Kansas was put up for abandonment. A two and a half year effort beginning in 1999 by the newly formed Marshall County Railroad Historical Society resulted in the successful purchase of the remaining 11.98 miles of the Central Branch Railroad in Marshall County.

The Marshall County Railroad Historical Society managed to raise **\$45,000 in just 7 days** to save the railroad. Had it not been for their actions, the railroad would have suffered the same fate as the original 88 miles of the Central Branch Railroad line to the east.

### *A Part of History*

Marshall County Kansas is home to the last remaining 11.98 miles of the original Central Branch Railroad, one of the oldest and longest historical railroad lines in the State of Kansas. It is rich in history having first brought settlers and their families west, helping to establish the towns of Waterville, Blue Rapids and Frankfort in Marshall County. The Central Branch Railroad also served as a destination point for shipping cattle and turkeys, (Yes, turkeys were driven from Beloit, Kansas to Waterville, Kansas) loaded onto the train and shipped to customers in the east.



The Central Branch also served as part of the original **Orphan Train Route** delivering homeless children from the east to the midwest so local farm families could

adopt them. In later years, the Central Branch Railroad served in World War II as a designated route to transfer German POW to the prisoner of war camp located North-east of Concordia, Kansas. Many local residents remember the **World War II POW trains** passing through the towns of Waterville and Blue Rapids with the prisoners of war aboard. "We knew there were prisoners of war on board because the Pullman cars had the shades drawn in the middle of the day..."

### *The Central Branch Railroad Today*

Our goal and purpose for the Central Branch Railroad today is the same as when we started in 1999.... to preserve and share the history of the Central Branch railroad in Marshall County. Come and experience for yourself the 100 year history of the Central Branch railroad.



Sharing the history of the railroad with future generations

### *The Weaver Hotel*

Imagine what it would be like to spend the night in a newly restored hotel originally built in 1905. Even better, imagine what it would be like to be able to walk out of the front door of that hotel and take a trip by rail to the towns of **Blue Rapids** to the east or "**Somewhere**" to the west just like the travelers did over one hundred years ago.



Well...you can do just that! The Marshall County Railroad Historical Society offers rides to the east across the 85 foot tall railroad tressel bridge, a two hour round trip. You can also travel west of Waterville to the town of Somewhere, and beyond, a forty minute round trip.



## Endless Possibilities

If by now you are thinking this would be a fun experience for church groups, class reunions, family reunions or anniversaries, you are not alone. We have hosted various groups and will be glad to work with you to meet your needs.

**How about a box lunch you can eat on the train or in our picnic areas along the rails?**



School children enjoy a ride on the rails

The MCRHS has even provided a few nighttime rides under a full moon. Give us a call at (785) 363-2343 or send us an e-mail to make arrangements.



## About our Trains

We are a little unconventional here at the Marshall County Railroad Historical Society. We try to see things

from your perspective. We also listen to what you tell us you want to experience. So with that in mind MCRHS members Gene Lott and Vic Jones built the Blue Rapids passenger car and members Gene Harding and Marc Lamoreaux built the Waterville passenger car. Our passenger cars are pulled by railroad motorcars, which were originally used to carry work crews and materials to job sites along the rails.





Motorcars began disappearing in the 1970's replaced by hi-rail pickups (Pickups with the rail wheels attached so they can be driven both on the highway and on the rails). We use motorcars because they are a part of railroad history that you seldom see anymore. They are also easier and safer to operate. Our professional built passengers cars are easier and safer to board, especially for children and older adults.



Larry Moon and members of the MCRHS built a locomotive in 2009

## Central Branch Railroad Passenger Safety Rules



-  Do not walk or stand on the rails. The rails can be slippery causing you to trip or fall.
-  Please do not place objects on the rails...objects such as coins can ricochet and hurt someone or damage the equipment.
-  When getting off and on the train watch your step. If you need assistance please ask a crew member.
-  While the train is in motion, please keeps arms inside of the passenger car. Do not reach for objects outside of the car. Watch out for hanging branches. Do not stand up or move around while the train is in motion. Always exit the train on the same side you entered unless instructed otherwise by a crew member.

**NOTE** - There are no bathroom facilities available during your train ride. Be sure to use the restroom before the train departs.

**NOTE** - Smoking is not allowed on railroad property. This is for your safety as well as for the safety of our crew members. Smoking is also not allowed aboard the train at any time.

*Thank You for your cooperation. We want your visit to the Central Branch Railroad to be a safe and enjoyable one.*

## What else is there to see and do while you are here in Marshall County?



While not a complete list, here is a "must see" list offered from our past visitors...

- Tour the Missouri Pacific Depot Museum in Waterville
- Tour the wooden 1925 Union Pacific caboose museum in Waterville
- Tour the Missouri Pacific caboose museum in Blue Rapids
- Spend the night in the restored Weaver Hotel
- Visit Alcove Springs on the Oregon Trail
- Visit the Pony Express Museum in Marysville

More information can be found at the Weaver Hotel and at various locations in Marshall County.



## 2015 MCRHS Donation Fee Schedule\*

ROUNDTrip DESTINATIONS	ADULTS	CHILDREN	MINUTES
Waterville to Somewhere	\$8.00	(6-11) \$5.00	(40)
Waterville to Blue Rapids	\$8.00	(6-11) \$5.00	(40)
Blue Rapids Bridge Tour	\$8.00	(6-11) \$5.00	(40)
Waterville to BR Bridge Tour	\$13.00	(6-11) \$7.00	(120)

(No Charge for Children under 5) Minimum car revenue \$65.00 per trip to cover expenses...Thank You

CHARTER RATES	ONE CAR (UP TO 20 ADULTS/CHILDREN)
Waterville to Somewhere	\$85.00 PER CAR
Blue Rapids Bridge Tour	\$85.00 PER CAR
Waterville to BR Bridge Tour	\$160.00 PER CAR

**Riding In Motorcar  
or Locomotive \***  
**Add \$5.00 to ticket price**

\*As Space Allows  
(Child must be with parent or guardian.)

A second car is available (same rates apply)

SCHOOL RATES	ONE CAR (UP TO 25 ADULTS/CHILDREN)
Waterville to Somewhere	\$65.00 PER CAR
Blue Rapids Bridge Tour	\$65.00 PER CAR
Waterville to BR Bridge Tour	\$70.00 PER CAR

**Night Rides**  
Add \$5.00 per ticket  
(full cars only)  
**Charter Night Time Rides**  
add \$25.00 per car

A second car is available (same rates apply)



### MEMBERSHIP RATES

**Come join the Marshall County Railroad Historical Society!**

<b>SINGLE:</b>	\$40.00	<b>FAMILY:</b>	\$55.00
<b>SINGLE LIFETIME:</b>	\$100	<b>FAMILY LIFETIME:</b>	\$150

**Marshall County Railroad Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 242  
Waterville, Kansas 66548

<http://www.centralbranchrailroad.com>

email: [centralbranchrailroad@gmail.com](mailto:centralbranchrailroad@gmail.com)