



Several Rides in June

We had several rides in June, each interesting in their own way. On June 9 we had a ride going east out of Waterville and had a mechanical issue about halfway to Blue Rapids so we changed motorcars in Blue Rapids.

On June 13 the family pictured below enjoyed a ride across the Big Blue River.



On June 22 we had a scheduled ride and a last minute addition. It turns out that the husband of the person who scheduled the ride is a first cousin to my wife's sister-in-law. That made for some interesting conversation and we learned that the person who scheduled the ride had an uncle who was adopted off of an orphan train. While that ride was in progress the Spoo brothers from Frankfort asked our flagman about a ride for them and a visitor from Pennsylvania. We learned that the Spoo brothers were the ones contracted to remove the bridges from the abandoned rails.

We had a "mystery tour" group scheduled for June 29 but that ride was cancelled due to the heat. The

tour coordinator is going to try and reschedule this fall.

On June 30 and July 1, Max Searcey from Marysville scheduled two family rides. The June 30 ride was to go west from Waterville with a stop at "Somewhere". We encountered one downed tree just west of the switch and Jim Wilson was able to get that cleared before the ride started. Unfortunately we encountered more downed trees from the wind storm further west and were forced to go back east. We went east to Musil farms and then returned to Waterville. On July 1 the Secrecy ride went east from Blue Rapids across the Big Blue River and back.



Crew members that helped with all these rides were Larry Moon, Charlie Weickert, Kenny Winkenwader, George Lookhart, Larry Springer, Gary Holbert, Jim Wilson, Tina Wilson, Ann Walter, Dave Crawford and Kathy Crawford.

We are looking for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering email Larry Moon - lm@centralbranchrailroad.com or contact us at centralbranchrailroad@gmail.com

Walt Disney on the Rails

This article was written by Jim Dobbins from Goff, KS and included with his permission. It was originally published in the Courier Tribune, Seneca, Kansas.

In July of 1897, three brothers -J.L. Van Noy, Charles S. Van Noy, and L.C. Van Noy- plus G. W. Krebs incorporated the Van Noy Railroad News Company in Kansas City, Missouri. At that time, when most passenger trains carried neither dining cars nor snack cars, private businessmen such as these saw a profit opportunity by opening eating establishments and even hotels at junction points along railroads, and selling snacks and novelties aboard passenger trains.

So what does that have to do with Nemaha County, Kansas? One of those establishments was erected in Goff, Kansas along the Central Branch of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Five other Van Noy eating houses and/or hotels were erected in Kansas: Coffeyville, Council Grove, Hoisington, Downs, and Greenleaf. Downs and Greenleaf were also on the Central Branch.

The Van Noy Railroad News Company had signed a contract with the Missouri Pacific Railroad in 1908 to own and operate the above mentioned services on its lines. At this time Goff had two Railroads, the Central Branch and the Kansas City Northwestern Railroad. Both used the same depot, the lines crossed at the northwest edge of the town, and both were owned by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. The Van Noy eating house and hotel was constructed just east of the depot, and began operation in November of 1909. The first depot had burned in February of 1908, so the new eating house was finished not long after the new and larger depot was put into use. Four trains a day stopped between the hours of 11:45 am and 1:00 pm for anywhere from ten to twenty minutes each, for passengers to disembark and grab a bite to eat. Each railroad had an eastbound and westbound train stopping between these hours for a lunch break. Not much time to enjoy a leisurely meal!

In the year of 1916, a young man by the name of Walt Disney was living in Kansas City, Missouri and needed a job for the summer. His older brother, Roy, had been employed by the Fred Harvey System as a news butcher on Santa Fe trains, selling magazines, peanuts, candy, apples, soft drinks, cigars and so on. Roy suggested Walt seek a similar position.

Walt Disney was hired for a period of two months by the Van Noy Railway, Hotel and News Company which had changed its name in February of 1912. In an article published in the October 1965 issue of RAILROAD MAGAZINE, under Walt's byline, Walt relates that he felt very important wearing a neat blue serge uniform with brass buttons, a peaked cap, and a shiny badge on his lapel! "As the train rolled into one station after another I stood beside the conductor on the car steps to enjoy the envious stares of youngsters waiting on the platform."

Walt also worked for the Van Noy Company on passenger trains running out of Kansas City for the Kansas City Southern Railroad and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad, the latter commonly known as the Katy.

"I especially liked the Missouri Pacific run between Kansas City and Downs, Ks. (which would have included Goff). It took six hours, because we'd stop at every station en route and we often pushed boxcars out of the way to clear the track. During the journey I sometimes went to the baggage car and supplied the baggage man with cigars or chewing tobacco and then I'd climb over the tender into the engine cab to do the same for the engineer and fireman. They'd let me ride in the cab with them for a while - and what a thrill that was!"

"The train would stop overnight at Downs before taking on coal and water for the return trip. One night I

decided to walk around the town to look it over. Wandering down the main street, I was window-shopping when a policeman asked what I was doing there and where I had come from. I said I was the news butcher on the train but I had to accompany him back to the train and unlock my merchandise hamper in order to prove it."

In Roy Bell's book, *GOFF: THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS*, quoting the Goff Advance newspaper, there was more freight and baggage handled at Goff than any other station on the Central Branch in 1916. This being the case, it is not hard to imagine that young Walt Disney on his travels through the area, would probably have been inside the Goff depot and the restaurant of his employer, the Van Noy Company, on several occasions!

The Kansas City Northwestern Railroad ceased operation the last day of October in 1919. The need for railroad news services and en route eating services began declining as railroads added dining cars to their fleet of passenger cars. In February of 1923, Missouri Pacific Railroad ended their contract with the Van Noy Company.

Thus, business at the railroad eating establishment in Goff fell off, and it was closed sometime in 1924. In December of that year a man by the name of C. K. Simon purchased the building and the next spring the building was moved about two blocks in Goff and remodeled into a residence. It remains at that location today.

Walt Disney lived from 1901 to 1966. He was and will always be a famous personality. The fact is we know he at least passed through Wetmore, Goff, Corning and Centralia on several occasions while on the train. As to whether he detrained at any of these locations probably can't be proved, but one could certainly speculate that at some point(s) in time, he was on the ground in Goff, Kansas in the summer of 1916!

Some of the information for this article came from these sources:

GOFF: THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS By Roy Bell c 1990

RAILROAD MAGAZINE, October 1965 Disney Studio by staff writer

MISSOURI PACIFIC LINES- NORTHERN KANSAS DIVISION by Douglas C. Brush, c 2012

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2018 Ride Rates

Adults: \$10 Children ages 6-12: \$7 Children 5 & under: Free

- Waterville west to "Somewhere" (45 minutes)
- Blue Rapids east across the Big Blue River (60 minutes)
- Between Blue Rapids & Waterville (60 minutes)
- Waterville east across the Big Blue River (2 hours - \$5 added fee)
- Rental of "Somewhere" for picnics, cookouts or celebrations - \$15 plus ride fare