

Cruising the Panhandle

The Amarillo Railroad Museum is replicating Santa Fe Railway history through our layout, but there is history happening daily across the Panhandle. Today we can record the real railroads photographically and by default be a repository for this history. Much of the information was gathered from RR Pictures Archive: <http://www.rrpicturearchives.net/default.aspx>. This is an exceptional site, especially for shortline and privately-owned locomotives. Unless otherwise credited, all images and photos are by G. J. Michels, Jr.



Texas North Western Railway Co.

TIME TABLE NO. 1

Effective 12:01 A. M.
Sunday, March 27, 1983.
Prevailing local time

For the information and
government of employees
only.

William L. Bailey, President
Homer A. Lamb V. P.
and Treasurer
David D. Roberts,
Superintendent

March 27, 1983
GENERAL ORDER NO. 1
Entire System:

Maximum speed on main tracks:
Ten (10) miles per hour.
Maximum speed on side tracks:
Five (5) miles per hour.
Maximum gross weight of any
car and lading: 263,000 lbs.

The Uniform Code of Operating
Rules, Dated June 2, 1968, applies.

Yard limits extend throughout
the entire system.

Communications by telephone:
(806) 966-5120
966-5176.

David D. Roberts,
Superintendent.



Texas North Western Railway Co.

"The Pheasant Route"

Elter Route, Box 58
Dumas, Texas 79020

Starting off is an interesting Class III shortline, the Texas North Western Railway Co. (TXNW). The Texas North Western was chartered on January 28, 1982, with reporting marks TNW, to acquire the existing track between Etter and Morse Junction, Texas, and between Stinnett, Texas, and Hardesty, Oklahoma, operating trackage left by the collapse of the Rock Island Railroad in 1980. In 1988 the road had seven employees and operated 2,368 carloads over thirty-two miles of chemicals, and petroleum and coal products. track. The top three commodities shipped were farm products, coal, and oil. In recent times it has become one of the premier car storage companies in the nation.

As far as is known, "The Pheasant Route" slogan was as short lived as this timetable.





Left. In the early 1980s the TNW used a pair of SW7s. A Wes Carr photo from the early 1980s captured locomotives #88 and #89 heading into Etter, Texas, just east of the then Santa Fe interchange. This was the “world headquarters” of the TNW at the time. The paint scheme and the locomotives were short lived. At this date there was a soybean pressing plant that shipped soybean oil. Perhaps this

is what the tank cars are carrying to the Santa Fe interchange. The consist is punctuated by a covered hopper used to carry carbon back.

Much better was to come.

Below. Same location in 2022. The reporting marks are now TXNW instead of TNW, and the tracks look like a high-speed mainline. The TXNW headquarters were moved south of Sunray.



THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023

[illegible]

The reverse side of the one-page Timetable #1 reveals an optimistic two subdivision and one branch railroad. The Liberal subdivision and Pringle branch were soon abandoned. Six-axle locomotives, as shown at the bottom of the timetable, may have operated out of Liberal in the early days, but never out of Etter. Today, the TXNW runs from Etter to Sunray, TX. Few industries exist, but the railroad has developed the largest car storage yard in the United States southwest of Sunray.



Aerial views of the car storage yard near Sunray. The Andersons is a diversified agribusiness specializing in commodity trading, ethanol, plant nutrient, and railcar leasing and repair. Prior to this development, the land was center-pivot-irrigated corn and wheat fields.

Both photos TXNW Railway





This photo, taken at Etter in 1984, shows TNW 273, a GP9. This was originally Union Pacific 273 built in 1954.



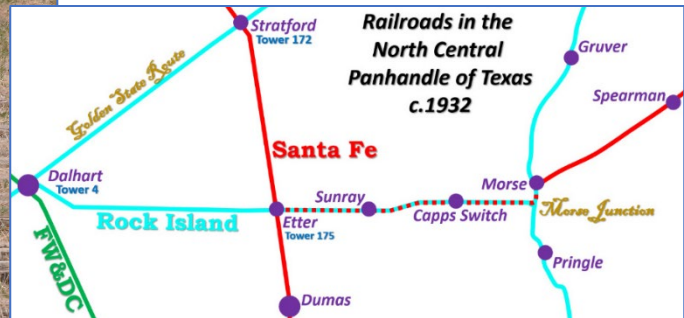
Jump forward to 2015. TXNW 121 (nee-MP 3304, ex-UP 4304 to ex-UP B4304 SD40-2) and 116 (ex-CBQ 285 GP9) get ready for a run at the TXNW engine facility south of Sunray. It is hard to imagine an SD40-2 venturing out on the TNW mainline in the 1980s.



On a cool and rainy day in October 2008 the shortline does what a shortline does. The 15-car train will drop off the covered hopper and nine empty tank cars at the TXNW storage yard. The five tank cars behind the locomotive carry liquid fertilizer for Patton Custom Fertilizer in Sunray. The 118 is nee-SP 8573 ex-ex-UP 8849, ex-LTEX 884 (SD40T-2) built in 1979. The train is slowly backing toward Sunray.



Left. Looking east at Etter toward the TXNW/BNSF interchange, a cut of cars are moved from the TXNW to the BNSF. The ties in the foreground are the remains of the 1930-built Rock Island line that went west to Dalhart. It was listed as Subdivision 41A. The 12½ miles between Dalhart and Wilco were abandoned in 1960. The track from Etter to Wilco remained until 1982 when the last seventeen miles of the line west of the crossing were abandoned.



Right. Seeking railroad history is often bittersweet. This is what remains of the Rock Island engine house at Etter. A far cry from the end of 1931, when the Railroad Commission of Texas published a list of interlocker installations that had occurred during that calendar year. It showed that a 4-function automatic interlocking was installed at Etter, identified as Tower 175, to control the Rock Island/Santa Fe crossing.



See <http://txrrhistory.com/towers/175/175.htm> for more information.



Located immediately south of the BNSF/TXNW interchange at Etter is a DeBruce Grain facility. Here hoppers are being unloaded and the empty hoppers will be sent out on the BNSF. The lead locomotive is DeBruce Corporation GP9 1661 (ex-BNSF, 6198 ex-BN 6198, nee- CB&Q 451). The facility and interchange can be seen at the upper left while the BNSF Dumas District mainline, and US 287, are to the right.



DeBruce Grain 309 is ex-Iowa Interstate (IAIS) GP7 # 309, nee-Wabash 479. Built in a group of 34 locomotives in 1953, the 309 is still in its IAIS paint scheme, only the white DBG on the cab below the number reveals its ownership. As Wabash 479, the locomotive had a steam generator for passenger service.



The facility at Etter is a terminal for dry distillers' grain (DDG). DDG is a co-product of the dry-grind fuel ethanol production process, consisting of the remaining residue of grains used in the ethanol process after fermentation. DDG has become the number one source of protein used in cattle feedlots. MWTX 212672 is a Trinity 6,351 cubic foot, four-bay covered hopper that has been optimally designed to transport distillers dried grains.

Right. Dropping south from Etter, hidden on the northwest side of Dumas, is a derelict “critter.” The owner is unknown, but #93 probably switched a local industry before being put up on tie blocks and left to rust away. Is it possibly a Plymouth industrial locomotive?



Left. Two Panhandle Northern (PNR) GP39-2's and a GP40-2LW (**Independent Locomotive Services ILSX 1390** ex-KCCX 795 1978, **Omnitrax/PNR 2301** ex-KCCX, and **Helm Leasing HLCX 4291**, ex-OMLX 4291, nee-CN 9648) drag a freight north from Panhandle to Borger. KCCX is Kennecott Copper Corporation

Right. Shattuck, Oklahoma, is a little far afield for a cruise, but close enough, especially with three Motive Power & Equipment (MPRX) remanufactured locomotives basking in the sun. **MPRX 3513 “Bullet”** (SW1200), ex-BNSF 3513, ex-CTLC 3513, ex-NREX 3513, ex-JOHNSTON GRAIN, nee-BN 245, **MPRX 2238** (Yard Slug), ex-TNMR 4120, nee-ATSF 120, and **MPRX 2810** (GP38), ex-NS 2810, nee- SOU 2810.



If MPRX 2238 looks a bit Missouri Pacific-ish, its Texas New Mexico Railroad (an MP/T&P subsidiary) heritage is showing through.



Rail Switching Service **RSSX 5049** (GP10), ex-ICG 8049, nee-IC 8049 and **3439** (GP9R), ex-SP 3429 at the northern end of the Proman, former G2X Energy, methanol plant (the old Celanese plant site) west of Pampa, Texas in 2019. The plant started producing methanol in 2015. Locomotive 3439 is fueled with methanol.

Hardeman Grain **HG 110** (GP7), ex-HS 110, ex-LRSX 110, ex-MKT 110, nee-MKT 1520 and **1822** (GP16), ex-GRIV 1822, ex-CSX 1822, ex-AARX 1822, nee-SCL 742 (GP7) at Chillicothe, Texas in 2010. Pride of ownership is evident. No patched lettering and faded paint here!



Further south down US 287 from Chillicothe, another nicely maintained locomotive, **BCQ 118** (GP7), ex-NREX 118, ex-WTLR 118, nee-MKT 118, is found at Harrold, Texas. The "Eleanor" switched the elevator. Harrold is about midway between Vernon and Electra on the BNSF (ex-Ft. Worth and Denver). BCQ is not an AAR-recognized reporting mark.



Missouri Kansas and Texas (MKT) GP7 1528 was built in December 1952. It was renumbered 118 in 1958 and retired on June 6, 1989. It was sold to Wilson Ry on July 19, 1989, and sold as SW&L 118 (**Above**) in April 1990. It was sold as WT&L 118 in January 1996. It was sold to National Ry Equipment Co as NREX 118 in 2005 and sold as Bolton's Crown Quality (*sic*) 118 "Eleanor" in 2007 (see previous page).

The Seagraves Whiteface and Lubbock Railroad (SWLR). SWLR was purchased by shortline holding company RailAmerica (RA) in 1995. RA then renamed SWLR to West Texas & Lubbock Railroad. RA sold the WTLC to Permian Basin Railways on May 25, 2002. 20



West Texas & Lubbock 118 at Lubbock, TX, 25 Aug 1996, by Marshall Higgins

Don Ross Collection

THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023



Read on, it will all make sense eventually.

C&O SD18 1811 in unit coal train service, Cottage Grove, Indiana. May 1969.



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Tim Vermande

Two decades later traditional C&O blue and yellow changed to vibrant (gauche?, gaudy?) Chessie System paint. C&O 7302 (ex-1803) Monterey, IN, 1989. SD18. C&O had 19 units built in 1963.



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Chad Malinovsky

Central Railroad of Indianapolis (CERA) 7302 at Winamac, IN, 1990.





It probably seems overkill to have two pages on a locomotive 225 miles north of Amarillo, but it is Coolidge, Kansas. Home of *American Vacation's* Cousin Eddie! But perhaps more important the locomotive is an SD18, and on ALCO Tri-Mount trucks! The SD18 was the third model in EMD's SD (special

duty) line of locomotives. It was designed as a modified GP18 with six axles instead of four. The additional axles allowed for more tractive effort and an even distribution of weight compared to the GP18. There were only 54 examples built for North American railroads. The Tri-Mount trucks are a giveaway as the C&O SD18's were the only EMD units to have these. They came from traded in RSD5's. One wonders if 1502 finds shuffling grain hoppers easier than the unit coal trains it worked when new in 1963. If nothing else, it is warmer in Coolidge; note the "window" air-conditioner.

Below. SCOX 5002 at Scoular grain elevator. Coolidge, KS, 2020.





What railfan has not said, "I'll take a picture tomorrow," but tomorrow the locomotive is gone" Leased locomotive. TLSX 1442, at Vittera (ex-Gavilon Grain, ex-ex DeBruce Grain) Amarillo Terminal on Amarillo Boulevard and Grand on February 23, 2023. A former Illinois Central SW14 rebuild. (Photo Taken with permission)



The ICG's last scheme as a pleasing orange and dark gray. 1442 at Memphis, TN, on June 20, 1986. Kodachrome by Chuck Zeiler



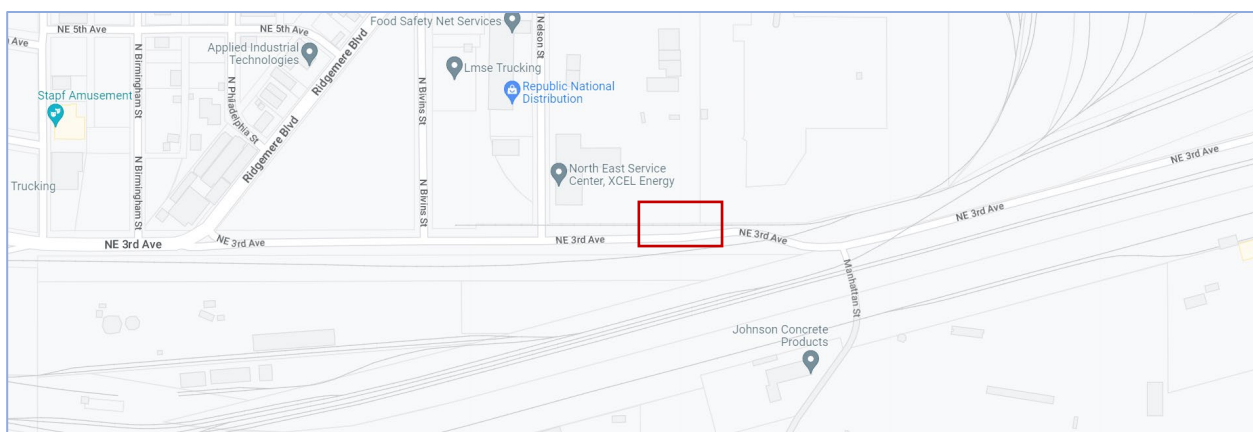
The 1442 in the original IC-inspired scheme used by the Illinois Central Gulf post Memphis in January 1984. Photo by Mike Condren.

THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023

Some call the Union Pacific “Uncle Pete” or “The Yellow Plague.” Regardless of opinions, the UP became a resident of Amarillo when it received trackage and haulage rights over the BNSF in 2003. Since then, the UP has secured rights south on the ex-Santa Fe line to Lubbock and on the ex-Burlington Northern line to Fort Worth. To clarify, under *trackage-rights*, the tenant railroad is responsible to the shipper for



providing transportation service over the joint facility and for loss and damage to the freight. A railroad receiving *haulage rights* gets control of marketing. It negotiates the rate with the customer over the entire route. It also supplies the cars and is on the hook for loss and damage. The railroad granting the haulage rights retains control over operations. The photo **above** of power for the Amarillo-Dalhart local (UP 4473 (SD70M), 2668 (SD60), and 7937 [AC45CCTE, originally an ES44AC]) was taken at the siding just west of the NE 3rd Street crossing of the BNSF Dumas Subdivision (red box below).





Southwest of Amarillo, nine locomotives (**above**) lead a freight east out of Friona, TX. A bit further west on the same day, eight units on an eastbound from Bovina. Why so many units?



THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023



THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023



THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023



THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023



THE AMARILLO RAILROAD MUSEUM, 1990-2023

