

Last Train to Paris

40 Tickets for last Frisco Passenger train to Paris gave agent business rush

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transcribed by Ron Henson

There was standing room only on the last south bound Frisco passenger train to be operated out of Hugo.

Forty tickets sold for the last run comprised the largest single day's ticket sales in an estimated 20 years.

A total of 57 passengers boarded the train at Hugo, most of them bound for Paris, but a few planning to disembark at intermediate points.

Trainmen estimated between 25 and 30 passengers rode various distances between Ft. Smith and Hugo. These included Y.C. Reed, a Negro woman living at Speer, who rode the last east-west Frisco passenger run out of Bennington a few years ago.

Around 200 years of Frisco service was represented in the last run crew. Some of the men will retire before very long and others will be assigned to other runs. Bill Stewart and W.E. Coleman, both of Ft. Smith, were engineer and fireman respectively. H.E. Spirgen, brakeman, and B.J. Mooney, conductor, both live at Monett, Mo. Julius Hill, the train's porter, is a Paris, Tex., resident.

Largest single party was from Grant. Mrs. Dean Gooding, Mrs. B.L. Murray, Mrs. Ruby Grimes, and Mrs. Luke Benton were the adults. Larry Nelson, Wilbur Gene Wilkins, Alvie Nelson, Bruce Gooding, Kay Slaton, Sharon Wilkins, Lois Ann Gooding, Kim Wyatt, Peggy Dean Gooding, Linda Murray, Sherry Benton and Rebecca Benton were the younger ones in the party. Riding with them as far as Grant, where her parents Mr. and Mrs. Gene Babb live, were Mrs. Edwin [Golden ¹] and her small son, Stan, of Hugo.

Dr. E.A. Johnson, Choctaw county's oldest practicing medical doctor, took time out from his duties to accompany his sister's grandchild, Betsy Hixon, and her grandmother, Mrs. Guy Hixson, on the trip along with his office nurse, Mrs. Elmer Verner, whose father was an early day railroad employee here.

From Ft. Towson Carl Gibson came to ride the last Frisco passenger car out of Hugo. And from Hugo were Miss Fannie Glenn, Deputy U.S. Marshall W.A. (Bill) White, who boarded the car carrying a traveling bag as if he were going on a long trip; W.H. King, a one time Frisco employee who has been in the insurance business many years, and his brother-in-law, W.H. Helsaple, of Prairie du Chien, Wis. Two sturdy grandsons flanked Mrs. Joe Wolff, Mike Lawrence and Jack Lawrence, Little Rock, Ark. She was assisted in keeping up with them by Miss Bill

Sweat and Miss Emma Sweat, the latter a Frisco employee.

Mrs. A.E. McLellan, whose husband is a retired Frisco man, accompanied four neighbor children on the trip, the children being Ethel Ann and Mike Shirey and Judy and Dudley Barnes. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Boyce, were passengers along with Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Brewer and daughter, Andrea; T.A. Marbut and W.H. Darrough Jr.

Retired employees of the Frisco making the sentimental trip included Jim Finney, switch engine foreman; C.S. Flannagan, who plans to retire soon as manager of the Hugo treating plant of American Creosoting Company, and Mrs. Flanagan; E.R. Harvey, agent; B.L. Kimbrough, switchman; Henry German, a Frisco car inspector 31 years; Ben Grady, switchman; T.J. Halkins, a bridge and building foreman 15 years before retirement with a 35 year service record; C.W. Streetman, shop employee and Jack Cook, brakeman.

W.E. Basham, of Paris, Tex., was on the train as was Mrs. C.M. Sasser, of Hugo, who was in route home from a visit in Mississippi but couldn't resist the temptation to continue to Paris and back.

1. The name "Golden" was supplied by Jan Babb-McClintock, in the original article it was unreadable. Thanks Jan!