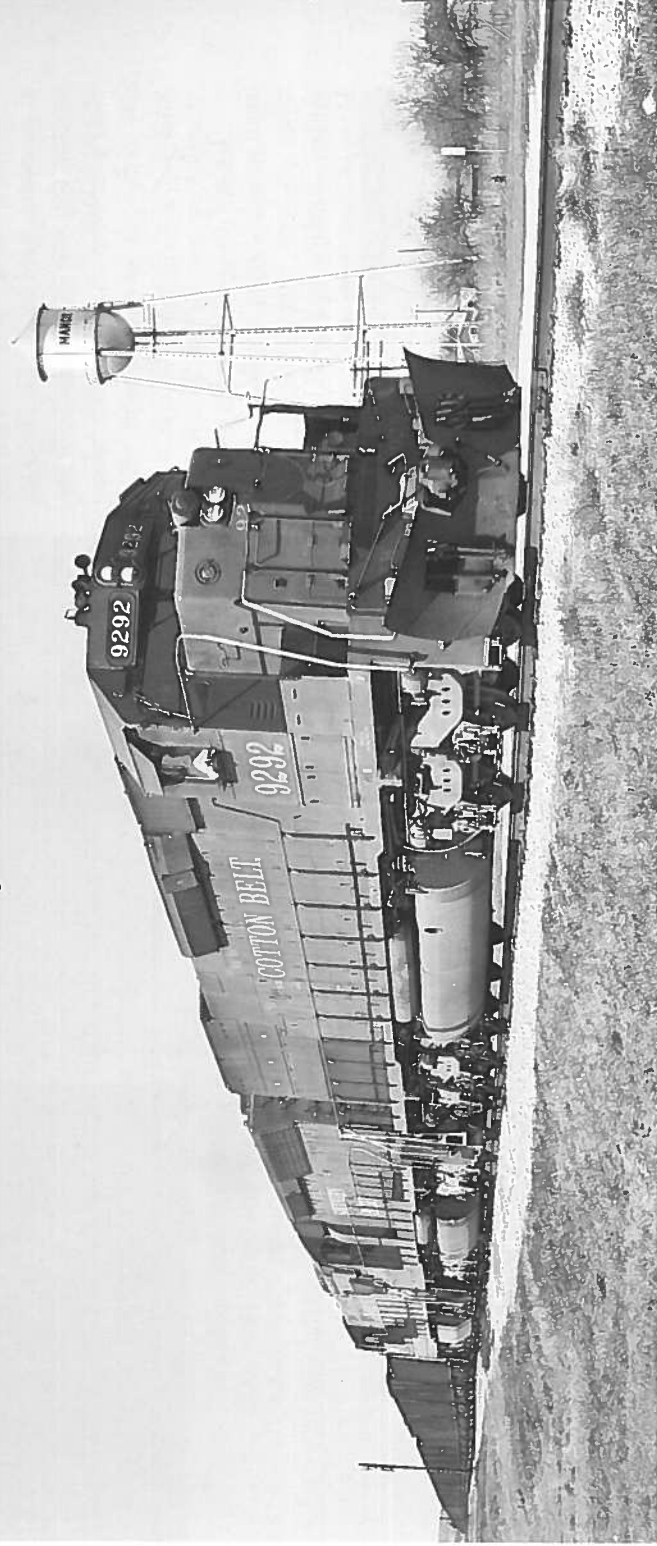


SP Operations in Austin and Central Texas

— Part Two —
By David M. Bernstein



Extra 9292 West, a rock train originating on the Llano Branch, rolls through Manor, just west of Austin in the 1970s. —Joe Dale Morris

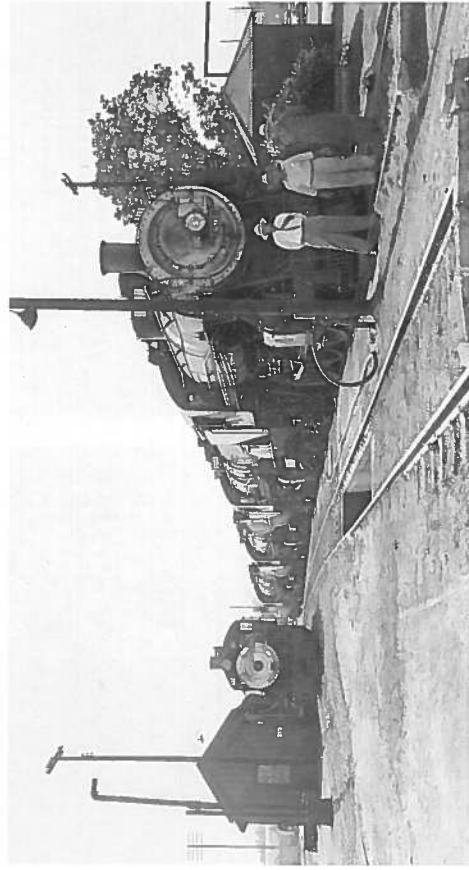
As we have seen, in the immediate postwar era, regular passenger service to Austin was discontinued in 1951, although T&NO continued to operate special trains for civic and sporting events until 1957. At the same time, dieselization of the Austin Division also began in 1951 and was completed by mid-1953. Thus, by 1957 lines in and

out of Austin were entirely freight only operated with diesels.

The Lampasas Branch was a casualty during this period. Constructed in 1902, the branch had operated at a loss for several years and in 1950 T&NO filed an abandonment application with the Interstate Commerce Commission. In the application the line's present maintenance was described as "decid-

edly substandard" with an immediate expenditure of \$42,000 necessary to keep the line in service, and an estimated annual maintenance cost of \$61,090.

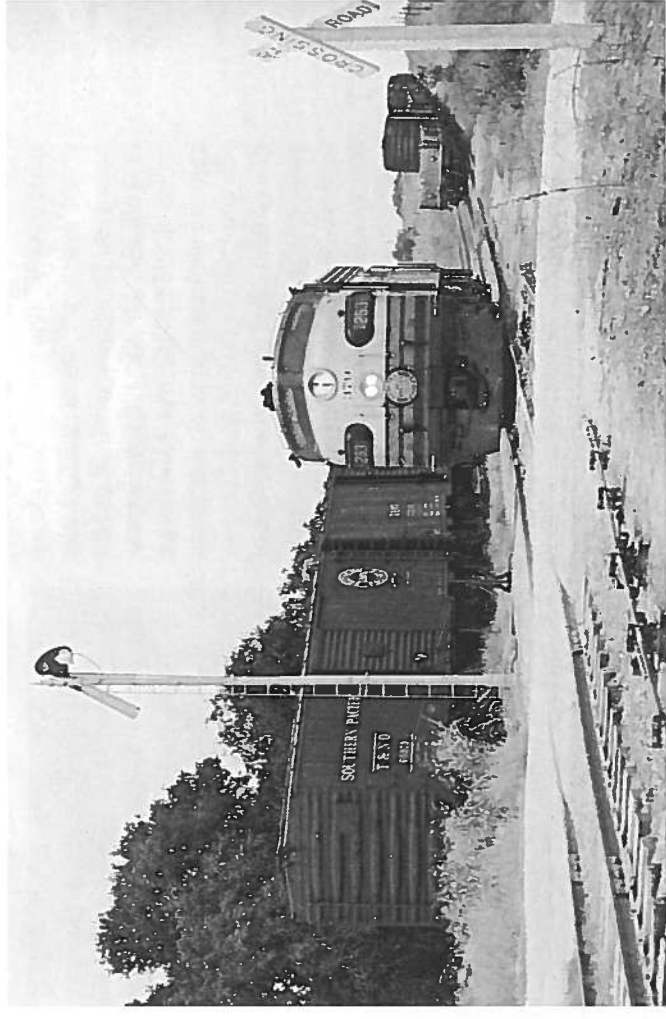
Operation in 1950 consisted of one local freight train six days per week. There were no industries on line and most of the traffic handled was bridge traffic with the GC&SF. During the seven-year period 1943 to 1949 the branch handled 4,453 carloads, an average of 636 carloads per year. T&NO offered the entire branch to the GC&SF which agreed to purchase trackage within the city of Lampasas. The ICC originally approved the abandonment on May 12, 1950, however the proceeding was reopened in December 1950 due to protests by the Lampasas Chamber of Commerce and four shippers. The ICC reaffirmed the original abandonment on March 12, 1951, with effective date of April 23, 1951. D.R. Fitch, with a 1910 seniority date, had served as Lampasas agent since 1924. He was assigned to a new position as assistant agent at Austin.



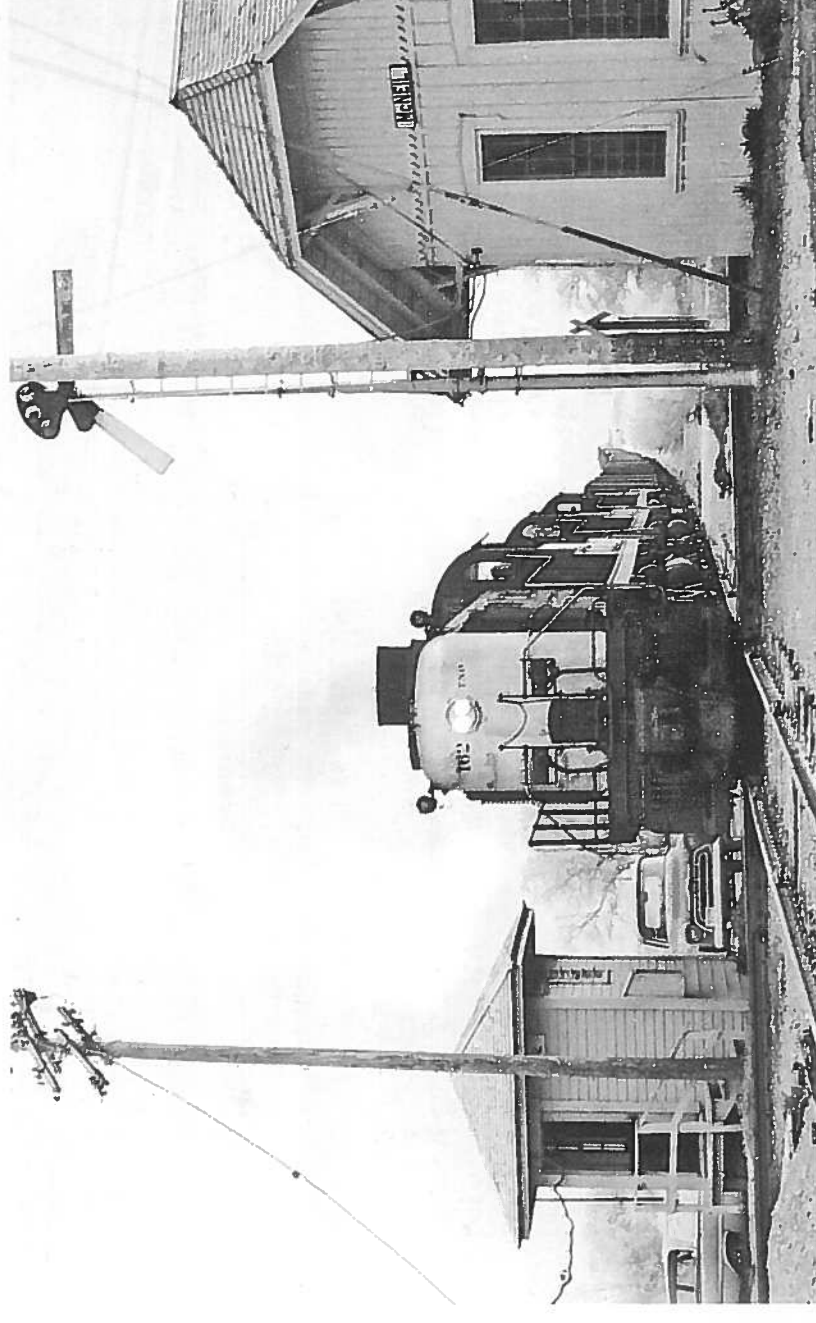
The last steam locomotives in Austin gather for movement to Houston via Hempstead on May 29, 1953. The move was powered by Ten-Wheeler No. 691 hauling Mikados Nos. 740, 746, 777 and Consolidation No. 887. —F. Dale Morris photo courtesy of Joe Dale Morris

During 1957 T&NO filed an abandonment application for the Cameron Subdivision (former SA&AP) between Giddings and Cameron. Press reports from Brenham and Giddings speculated that the T&NO was also planning to abandon the "Austin-Hempstead Line." In an interview published in the *Austin American - Statesman* newspaper on August 8, 1957, General Manager Roland de Waal stated "Southern Pacific does not have any plans whatsoever of abandoning the line from Hempstead to Austin. It's not in the cards." This proved to be partially true.

The Hempstead to Brenham segment operated through a flood plain between MP 5 and MP 7 which was subject to flooding and service interruptions. Major flooding had occurred 15 times between 1908 and 1957. The Brazos River bridge at MP 7.03 consisted of three 200-foot truss spans crossing at a point where the river turned sharply in a 180-degree curve.



Train No. 253 has dropped two boxcars at McNeil and the locomotive is moving back to the train left standing on the main track. When this photo was taken in 1954 a single F unit was used when traffic was light, as was this case on this Sunday local to Llano. The semaphore signal is the interlocking signal protecting the Missouri Pacific Railroad crossing. —Jim Hickey photo, David M. Bernstein collection



Operating as Extra 162 West, a train of empty cars for rock loading is crossing the Missouri Pacific diamond at McNeil. The station was owned, maintained and operated by the MP. A joint agency was maintained by the railroads by agreement effective November 1, 1911, with each company paying 50% of the building maintenance and T&NO paying one-third of the operating costs. The small building to the left is Interlocking No. 132, which was owned, operated and maintained by the T&NO. This was a cabin interlocking normally lined for Missouri Pacific movement. When on duty, the agent handled the interlocking signals, otherwise T&NO trains were required to stop before passing the interlocking signal and send a crewman ahead to operate the interlocking for their route using a manipulation chart displayed above the interlocking machine. After completing their move the T&NO crew would restore the route for the Missouri Pacific. —Jim Hickey photo, David M. Bernstein collection

After the 1957 flood the bridge became unstable and efforts to stabilize the main piers by pouring concrete proved unsuccessful. T&NO faced an expenditure of \$588,300 to repair the bridge and the embankments. A watchman was employed to make a visual inspection of the bridge before the passage of trains over it. After the 1957 flood only minimal maintenance was performed between Hempstead and Brenham.

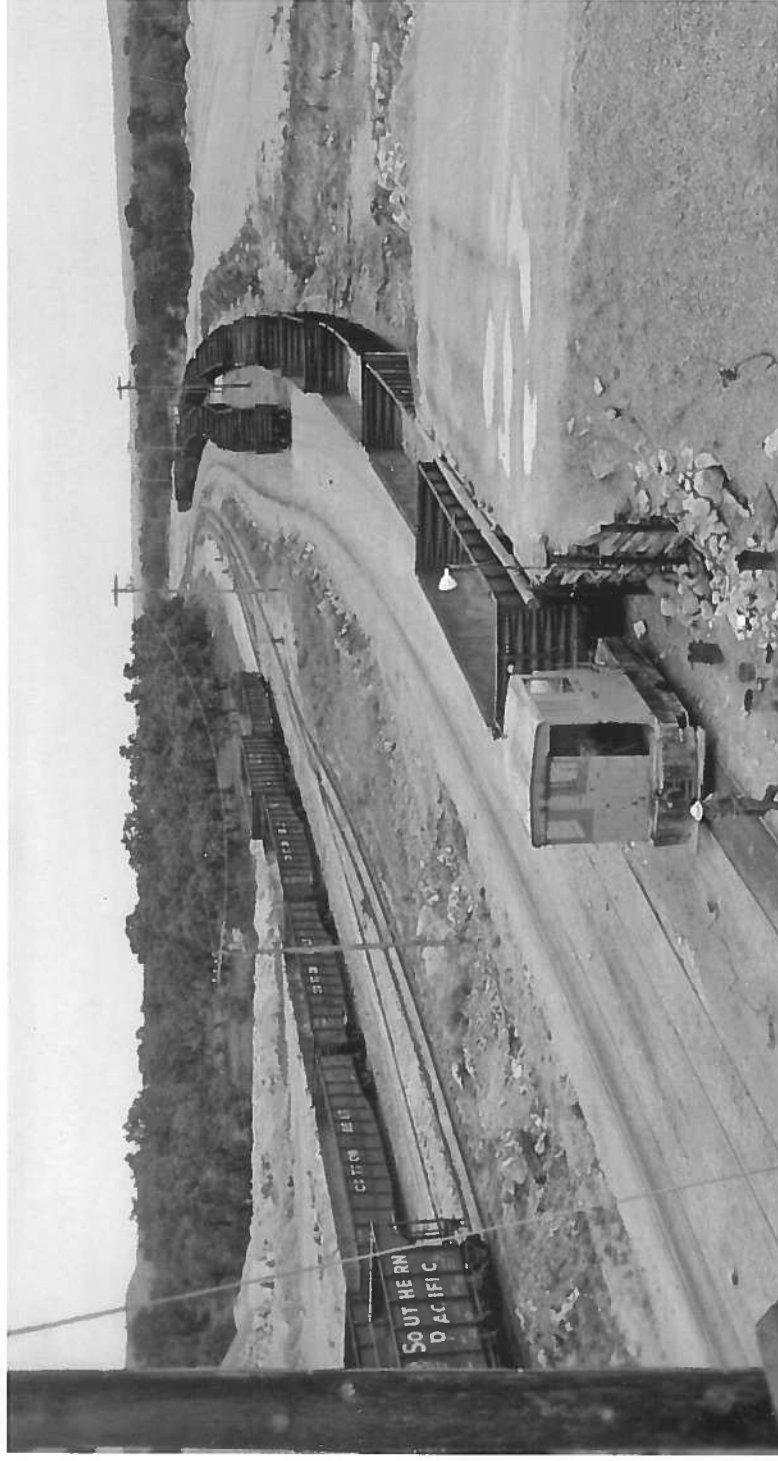
On May 2, 1958, daily through freight trains Nos. 239 and 240 operating between Austin and Houston's Englewood Yard were abolished. Thereafter traffic formally handled on those trains was handled through Hearne. Regular passenger service had been discontinued in 1951 and the last special passenger trains operated in 1957, leaving the triweekly local between Austin and Hempstead as

the sole operation. The only station between Hempstead and Brenham was Chappel Hill which produced one carload of logs and five carloads of pulpwood during 1960. Note Chapel Hill is also spelled "Chappell Hill" in various documents.

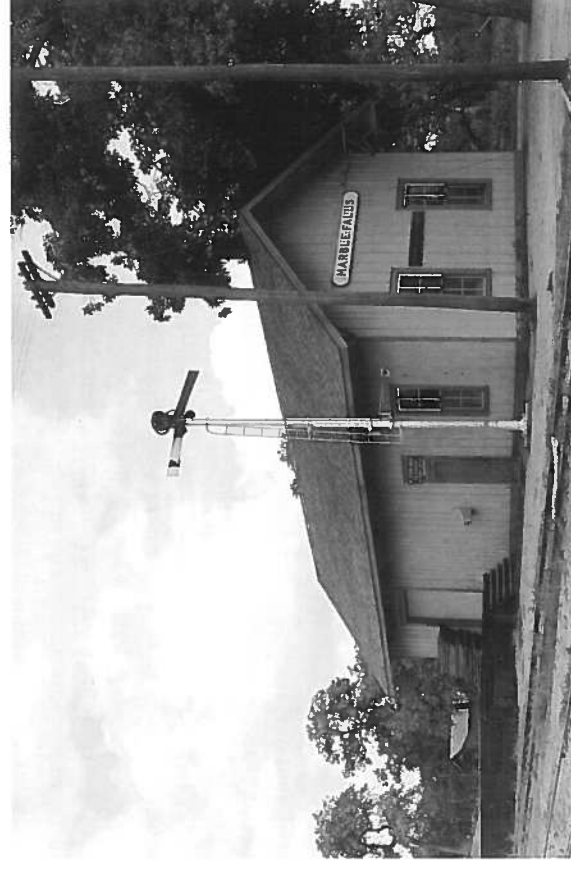
Between 1956-1959 T&NO studied the possibility of abandoning the Llano Branch between Fairland and Llano (29.2 miles) and the Marble



Llano was the terminus of the Llano Branch, 98 miles northwest of Austin. The freight station at Llano, shown below, burned on February 2, 1961. In the view, above, an industrial locomotive spots gondolas at Premier Granite Quarries in Llano in November 1965. —Above, Southern Pacific Lines, below, David M. Bernstein collection



A worker lowers stone onto an SP flatcar at Llano in November 1965. The car is stenciled ASSIGNED TO JETTY ROCK SERVICE RETURN TO AUSTIN TEXAS. —Southern Pacific Lines



The depot at Marble Falls on the 6.4-mile branch line from Fairland built in 1889 to tap limestone deposits. —David M. Bernstein collection

Falls Branch between Fairland and Marble Falls (6.4 miles). These segments had 61½-pound rail laid in 1892 with a maximum speed of 15

mph. In addition there was an 8-mph speed restriction over the three-span Colorado River bridge (MP 78.5) and a 12-mph speed restriction over the single-span Big Sandy Creek bridge (MP 84.7).

In a letter to General Manager

Roland de Waal dated November 16, 1956, Chief Engineer L.A. Loggins

stated "as little money as possible has

been spent on both branches since

1930. Each year we have tried to relay

as much of the 61½ lb. rail as possible,

however budget reductions have

eliminated this every year." Loggins

estimated expenditure for \$712,600 in

track work was required to raise track

line was rebalasted between Fairland

and Stolz in 1963 and between Stolz and Llano in 1966. The original 1892 Colorado River bridge at Kingsland was replaced in 1962. The Marble Falls Branch was rehabilitated during 1961-1963, with second-hand 75-pound rail and new ballast.

The following is an account of freight train service compiled from Dispatcher's Record of Movement of Trains for the two-week period Sunday, March 1, through Saturday March 14, 1959. During this period train dispatching was conducted from Ennis, Texas.

Freight Train Service — 1959

Traffic moving from Austin to Hearne was handled by locals 236-232 on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. On Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday traffic from Austin was handled by the Hearne extra. Traffic moving from Hearne to Austin was handled by locals 233-237 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday traffic from Hearne to Austin was handled by the Austin extra.

West of Austin service was provided six days per week as illustrated in the table. No. 253 normally departed Austin between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., made a side trip to Burnet and arrived Llano between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. No. 254 normally departed Llano between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., made a side trip from Fairland to Marble Falls and arrived Austin between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Two local crews based in Austin worked six

Freight Train Operation • March 1959

Eastward

Train	Origin	Destination	On Duty	Operates	Home Terminal	Connections
254	Llano	Austin	7:00 am	Daily Ex. Sunday	Austin	No. 236 / Extra
236	Austin	Hempstead	8:00-10:00 pm	Sun-Tue-Thur	Austin	No. 232 at Giddings
Extra	Austin	Hearne	9:00-11:00 pm	Mon-Wed-Fri-Sat	Austin	No. 254 at Austin
232	Yoakum	Hearne	10:00 pm	Sun-Tue-Thur	Yoakum	No. 236 at Giddings

Westward

253	Austin	Llano	8:30 am-12:30 pm	Daily Ex. Saturday	Austin	No. 237 / Extra
237	Hempstead	Austin	9:00-10:30 pm	Mon-Wed-Fri	Austin	No. 233 at Giddings
Extra	Hearne	Austin	11:25 pm-12:30 am	Sun-Tue-Thur-Sat*	Austin	No. 253 at Austin
233	Hearne	Yoakum	10:30-11:30 pm	Mon-Wed-Fri	Yoakum	No. 237 at Giddings

* Scheduled days of operation. The crew was normally on duty 11:25 p.m. the previous day.

days per week. At Austin there were two yard jobs and an extra board.

East of Austin service was provided daily, three days by the assigned locals and four days by the extra trains.

No. 236 departed Austin between 10:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday with three units. No. 232 operated from Yoakum to Hearne on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday with two units. The locals met at Giddings between 1:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., exchanging units and cars. No. 232 departed Giddings with the three units from Austin and No. 236 departed Giddings with two units from Yoakum. No. 236 performed local

work at Manor, Elgin, Butler, Giddings, Brenham and usually arrived Hempstead between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. with a few cars for No. 56, the Hearne to Englewood local.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday the opposite locals operated. No. 237 picked up a few cars interchanged by No. 55, the Englewood-to-Hearne Local, and departed Hempstead between 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. No. 233 departed Hearne between 10:00 p.m. and midnight with three units. The locals exchanged power and cars at Giddings between 1:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. No. 237 arrived Austin between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. with

three units.

The Austin-Hearne Extra operated on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday (the days when Nos. 236 and 232 did not run), departing Austin between 10:00 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. with three units. The Hearne-Austin Extra operated on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (the days when Nos. 233 and 237 did not run) departing Hearne between midnight and 2:00 a.m. with three units and arriving Austin between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.

The table at left tabulates cars handled by each train during the period March 1 through March 14, 1959. Caboosees are considered an empty car, therefore a one-car train consisted of engine and caboose only.

While Texas & New Orleans discontinued passenger train service to Austin in 1951, the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad was operating four passenger trains between Austin and Pershing in 1959 (service ended in 1964).

M-K-T Operations

The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad operated a local freight train No. 380 from Austin to Granger, returning to Austin as No. 381. Operating six days per week (Sunday rest day) normally on duty at 6:00 p.m. These trains originated and terminated at Yard Office (T&NO freight yard). Katy trains operated over the T&NO between Austin and Pershing (1.8 miles). During the two-week survey, No. 380 departed Yard Office with an average train of 20 loads and 18 empties (38 cars), ranging from 24 to 51 cars. Train No. 381 normally arrived Yard Office in the early morning hours when there was no T&NO operator on duty, thus only two trains were recorded, averaging 43 loads and 8 empties. Locomotives used were exclusively EMD F7As and F9As (M-K-T 71A, 201A, 211A, 228C and 229C).

In 1961 Southern Pacific applied with the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon between MP 0.6 near Hempstead and MP 18.9 near Brenham which was approved on August 23, 1961. Operations between MP 0.6 and MP 10.6 near Chapel Hill were discontinued on September

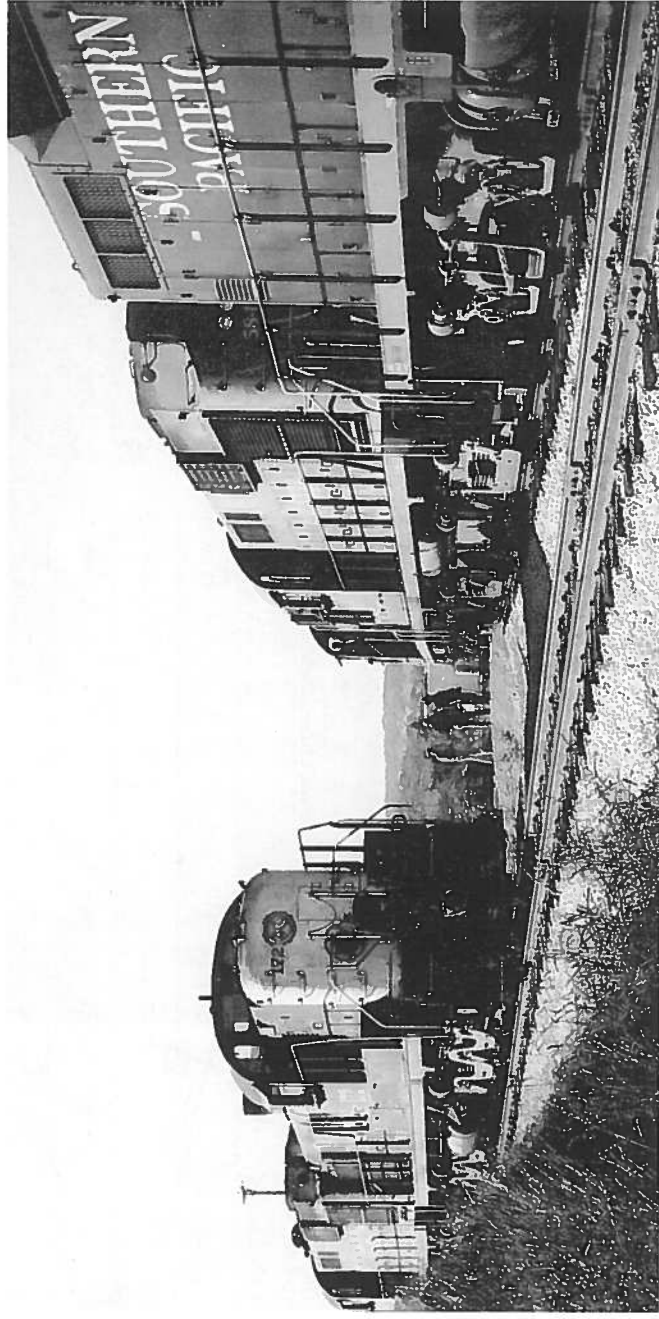
Average Cars Handled March 1-March 14, 1959

Train 253	Loads	Empties	Total	Most Cars	Fewest Cars
Departing Austin	8	33	41	63	11
Arriving Llano	2	5	7	17	1
Handled Per Trip	8	49	57	106	22
Train 254					
Departing Llano	4	2	6	11	1
Arriving Austin	40	9	49	81	29
Handled Per Trip	43	17	60	84	37
Train 236					
Departing Austin	28	28	48	91	3
Arriving Hempstead	1	7	8	12	2
Handled Per Trip *	6	3	49	109	2
Train 237					
Departing Hempstead	1	2	3	10	1
Arriving Austin	18	31	49	77	39
Handled Per Trip	20	43	63	77	50
Austin - Hearne Extra					
Departing Austin	41	16	57	76	40
Arriving Hearne	43	26	69	97	49
Handled Per Trip	56	28	84	112	60
Hearne - Austin Extra					
Departing Hearne	25	43	68	95	39
Arriving Austin	19	37	56	107	27
Handled Per Trip	33	44	77	119	45

*No. 236 averaged 4 cars departing Austin on Sundays because there was no connection from No. 254. Departures from Austin on Tuesday and Thursday ranged from 66 to 91 cars.

Locomotives Used March 1 - 14, 1959

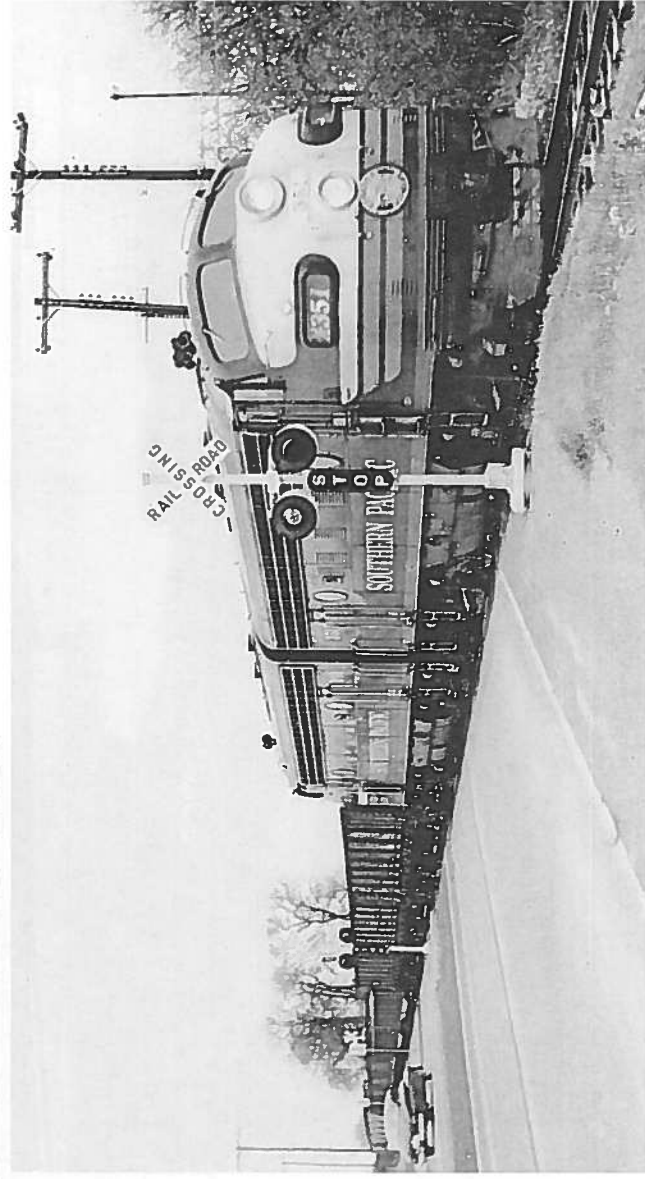
Model	Unit Numbers
GP9	T&NO 242-243-245-248-400-401-402-404-412-418-421-422-427-428-448
F3A	T&NO 300-302-319-321-325-330
F7A	T&NO 350-353-364-367-370-373-374-375 SSW 935-941-949-957
F9A	T&NO 600-604-611-612-614-616-619-622
F9B	T&NO 702



Above: Local freight trains No. 253 from Austin (right) is pulling onto the east leg of the wye at Wilke meeting No. 254 from Llano (left). The wye track connected the Llano Branch with the 0.6-mile Burnet spur, which continued 2.3 miles further east to Lampasas until abandoned in 1951. The employee timetable in effect when the photo was taken in 1963 required No. 253 to make a side trip to Burnet unless otherwise instructed. No. 254 was required to make a side trip between Fairland and Marble Falls unless otherwise instructed. —Jim Hickey photo, David M. Bernstein collection



Left: SW1200 No. 117 on the Elgin Butler Brick Co. spur at Butler, 2.2 miles east of Austin, in 1955. The H&TC began serving the brick plant in 1912. The locomotive is returning to its train, the Austin-to-Hempstead local, standing on the Austin Subdivision main track. —F. Dale Morris photo courtesy of Joe Dale Morris

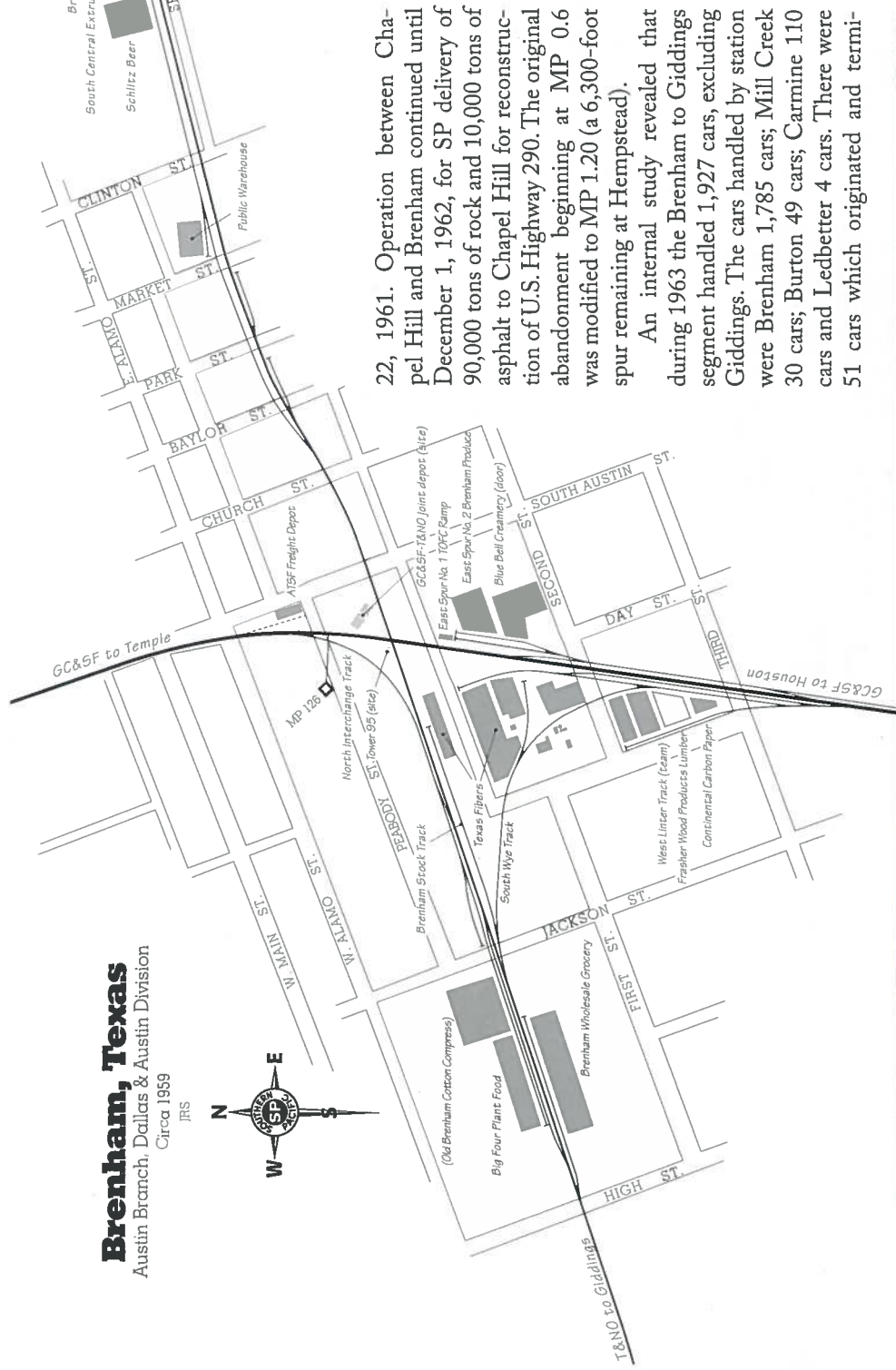


A loaded rock train operating as Extra 351 East crosses Fairland Inter-Regional Highway near Austin during the summer of 1955. This highway later became designated Interstate 35 and the railroad crossing was not grade separated until the early 1970s. —F. Dale Morris photo courtesy of Joe Dale Morris

Brenham, Texas

Austin Branch, Dallas & Austin Division
Circa 1959

IRIS



22, 1961. Operation between Chapel Hill and Brenham continued until December 1, 1962, for SP delivery of 90,000 tons of rock and 10,000 tons of asphalt to Chapel Hill for reconstruction of U.S. Highway 290. The original abandonment beginning at MP 0.6 was modified to MP 1.20 (a 6,300-foot spur remaining at Hempstead).

An internal study revealed that during 1963 the Brenham to Giddings segment handled 1,927 cars, excluding Giddings. The cars handled by station were Brenham 1,785 cars; Mill Creek 30 cars; Burton 49 cars; Carmine 110 cars and Ledbetter 4 cars. There were 51 cars which originated and termi-



The triweekly local from Austin is tied up in Brenham on August 5, 1977. SP had two team tracks in Brenham and served a number of industries including two cotton products plants, a lumber yard and Blue Bell Creamery.—Doug Woods



A local freight passes SP's freight station at Brenham, Texas, in July 1978. Two years later, Southern Pacific Transportation Co. sold all the trackage in Brenham between MP 18.7 and MP 21.9 to the Santa Fe.
—Doug Woods

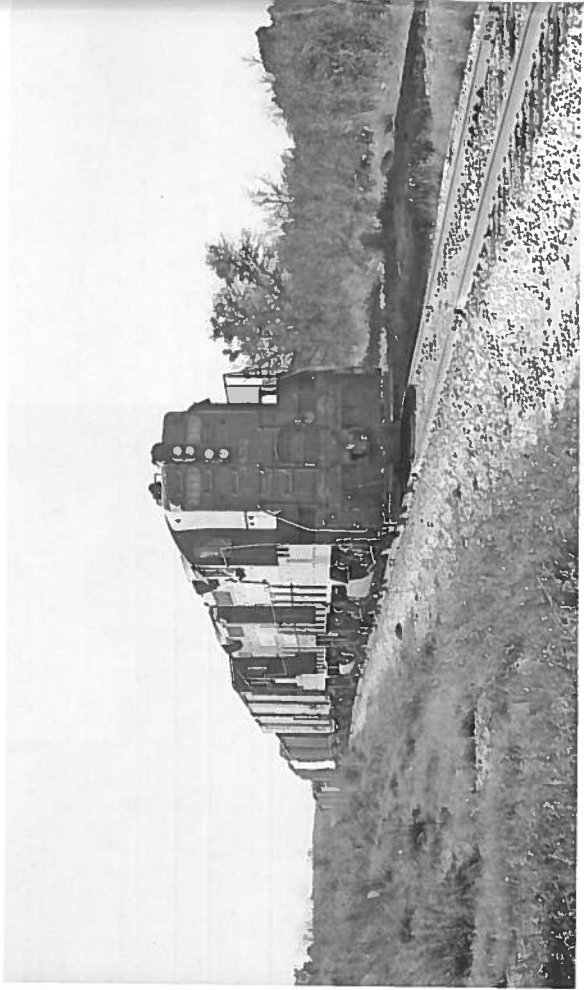
Giddings Branch Business 1974 - 1975

Station	Carloads Handled				Notes
	1974		1975 (6 mo.)		
	In	Out	In	Out	
MP 21.0 Brenham	772	73	319	30	Agent R. N. Deaver
<i>Business Sources:</i> Two team tracks, Brenham Wholesale Grocery, Green Grain Co. (beer and feed), Brenham Cotton Oil Mfg. (cotton and byproducts), Texas Fibers (cotton linters), Woodson Lumber Co., Blue Bell Creamery (cartons), Brentex Inc. (cotton piece goods), Schneider Furniture Co.					
MP 21.0 Brenham AT&SF	319	30	160	16	Santa Fe Railway interchange
MP 27.5 Mill Creek	5	0	4	0	Luederman Grocery, Team track
MP 33.8 Burton	0	0	1	0	Team track
MP 40.0 Carmine	180	0	98	1	Jacob's Store (feed)
MP 55.7 Giddings	696	13	428	33	Agent R. F. Jandra, 2 telegrapher-clerks
<i>Business Sources:</i> Lee County Farmers Co-Op (feed/fertilizer), Kieschnick Feed, Texas Highway Department (asphalt), Linder's Feed, Giddings Grain Co. and Cargill, Inc.					
MP 62.6 Hills	5	0	0	0	Hills Store
MP 82.9 Butler	28	699	9	129	Elgin Butler Brick Co.
MP 85.1 Stacks	119	0	0	45	Payne Brick Co.
MP 87.8 Elgin	77	27	36	1	Elgin Cotton Oil Mill, Team track
MP 87.8 Elgin MKT	5	10	2	5	Missouri-Kansas-Texas interchange
MP 100.0 Manor	3	3	0	0	Team track
MP 103.1 Decker	0	4	11	0	Decker Power Plant
MP 109.1 Smoot	0	42	75	0	O'Neil Floors, Capitol Aggregates (sand/gravel)
MP 113.5 Austin	1020	1704	35	544	Agent J. C. Abrahamson 7 station employees, 2 telegrapher-clerks, 1 relief telegrapher-clerk, 3 trick telegrapher-clerks and 3 person telegrapher-clerical extra board.
<i>Business Sources:</i> Jack Scholl Lumber Co. Holly St. Power Plant (equipment and materials), Brancroft Paper Co., East End Lumber Co., Brown Distribution Co. (beer), Industrial Laminates (plywood), Monarch Paper Co. Clevepak Corp. (scrap paper), Ehrich Warehouse (vacant), Read and Co. (oil), Furniture Barn, Inc., Texas Warehouse Co. Ace Lumber Co., Abel Stationers (furniture), Central Office Equipment Co., Barker Office Furniture Co., Austin Metal and Iron Co., Gardner Metal and Iron (scrap iron), Therman Supply Co. (insulation), Maverick Clarke (furniture), Pool Transfer and Storage, Austin Feed and Ranch Store, Roberdeau Van and Storage, Louis Shanks Furniture, Georgia Pacific (plywood and lumber), Texas Feed and Ranch Supply, Cargo Delivery Service, Crown Furniture Co., Karotkin Furniture Co., Hoefgen Co. (beer), City of Austin (pipe yard), Featherlite Pre-Cast Corp. (cinders), Gage Furniture Co., Monfrey Wine and Liquors (beer), Redwood Lumber Co., William Cameron Co. (lumber), E. E. Stuessy, Contractor (poles), Barker Drywall (wallboard), Richards Oil Co., Holloway Co. (wire fittings) and three team tracks					
MP 113.5 Austin MKT	193	105	80	12	Missouri-Kansas-Texas interchange
MP 115.0 Austin MP	2396	340	901	276	Missouri Pacific interchange

nated on the segment. Business consisted of feed, cotton, rock and gravel. There was a proposal to abandon 34 miles between Brenham and Giddings and continue to serve Brenham with a triweekly local from Rosebud operating over the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway between Cameron and Brenham. It was decided not to adopt this proposal and the Brenham to Giddings segment continued in service for 17 more years.

On February 2, 1961, the Llano freight depot was consumed by fire and temporarily replaced by a Pullman car until a new depot was constructed in March 1962. The passenger depot had been sold and removed from the property in February 1936.

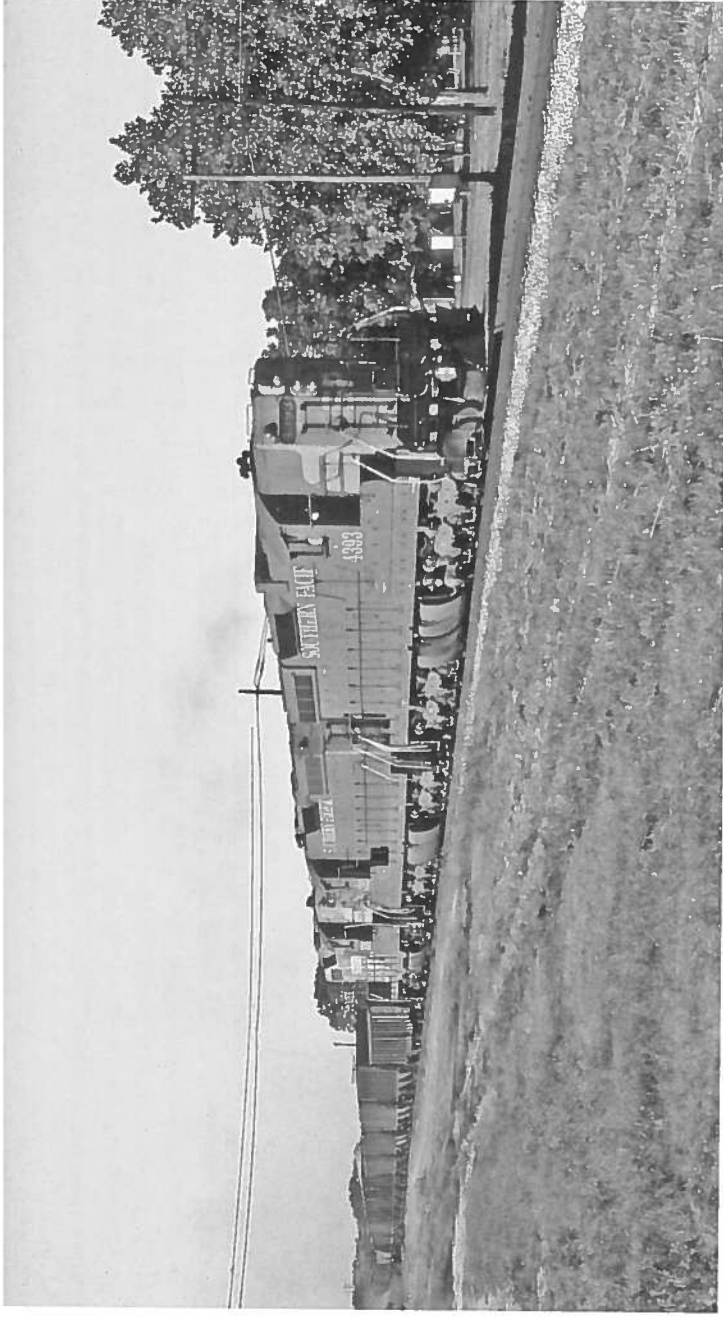
On April 10, 1961, the agency at



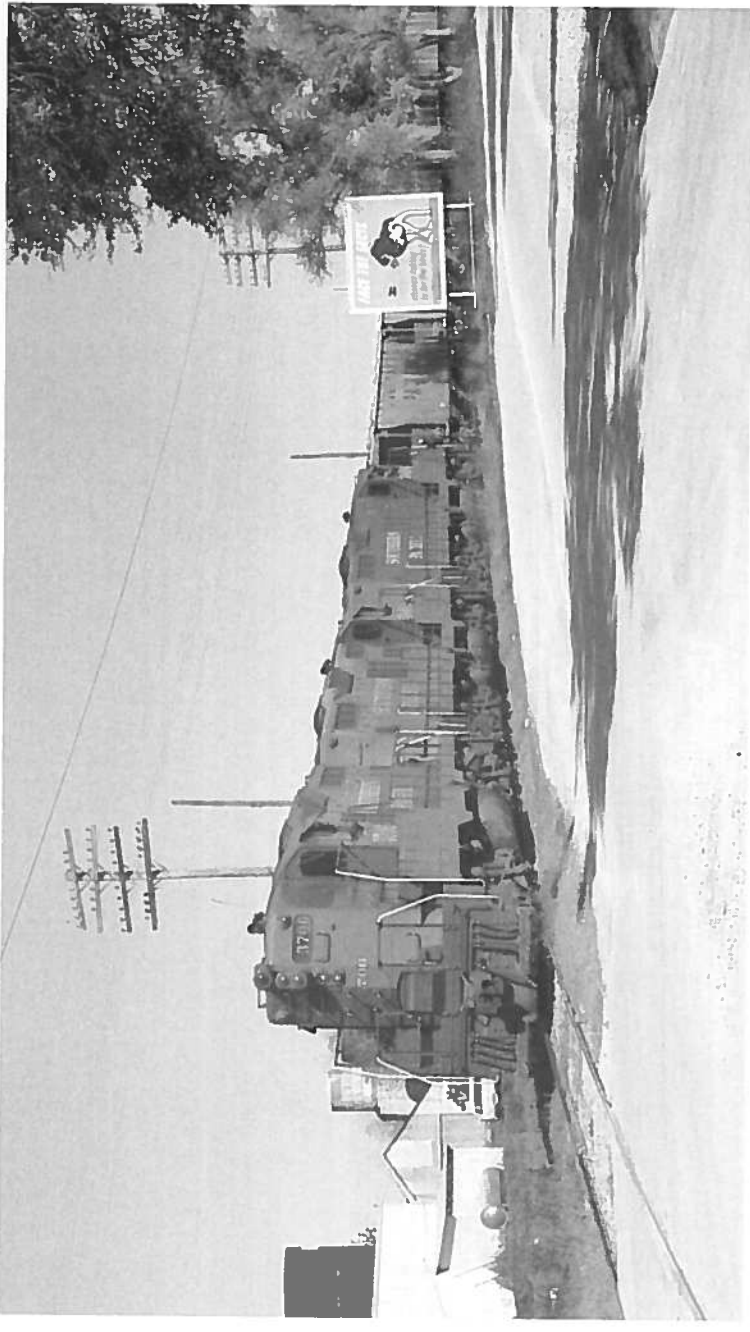
Llano to Austin local No. 254 is approaching Ranch Road 620 grade crossing between Cedar Park and McNeil in July 1967. This scene is remarkably different today as the railroad has welded rail with CTC and is surrounded by suburban Austin. -Joe Dale Morris

Llano Branch Business 1974 - 1975

Station	Carloads Handled			Notes
	1974	1975 (6 mo.)		
	In	Out	In	Out
MP 6.4 Butter Krust	55	2	4	0
<i>Business Sources:</i> Bette's Appliance and Service Center, Priester Mell Co. (cable and crossarms), Austin Baking Co. (flour and salt), American Mayflower Moving Co., Sears Roebuck Co.				
MP 7.3 Abercrombie	98	7	24	5
<i>Business Sources:</i> Team track, Capitol Acoustical (insulation), Jefferson Chemical Co., Reese Lumber Co., Cinbar Engineering Co.				
MP 9.8 Fromme	613	207	257	45
<i>Business Sources:</i> Wickes Lumber Co. (liquor), Capital City Lumber, A-Tex Wholesale Roofing, Austin Red Cedar (lumber), Crestview Builders, Edwards Feed, River City Machinery, Texas Highway Department, Acme Brick Co., Economy Furniture Co., Dormae Products Co. (padding), Laredo Truss Co., Inc. (lumber), Alamo Steel and Machine Co. S&G Construction Co. Constructional Chemicals, Holmans Furniture Warehouse, Inc., Specialty Chemical Co., McCoy Supply Co. and Pfair Tire Co.				
MP 16.5 McNeil	14	987	246	341
<i>Business Sources:</i> Austin White Lime Co. MP transfer, team track				
MP 31.5 Leander	53	0	4	0
<i>Business Sources:</i> Team track				
MP 38.6 Liberty Hill	0	34	2	7
<i>Business Sources:</i> Featherlite Pre-Cast Corp. (stone products)				
MP 49.5 Bertram	7	0	0	0
<i>Business Sources:</i> Team track, Systematic Corp. (insulation), Pedernales Electric Co-Op (poles), Ranchers Feed Co., Bertram Lumber Co.				
MP 60.0 Burnet	144	19	40	10
<i>Business Sources:</i> Hills Store				
<i>Business Sources:</i> Burnet Bulk Feeders, Southwestern Graphite, Rhoden Feed Co., Hoover Building Supply Co.				
MP 62.6 Gandy	0	5571	0	3059
<i>Business Sources:</i> Lone Star Industries (crushed stone)				
MP 64.4 Demarco	22	221	17	112
<i>Business Sources:</i> Bilbrough Marble Co. (crushed limestone)				
MP 67.1 Sudduth	4	3308	4	3076
<i>Business Sources:</i> Dow Chemical Co. (crushed limestone)				
MP 69.7 Fairland	2	26	1	6
<i>Business Sources:</i> Cactus Canyon Quarries, Texas Crushed Stone				
MP 71.2 Scobee	0	4	11	0
<i>Business Sources:</i> Decker Power Plant				
MP 79.1 Kingsland	0	42	75	0
<i>Business Sources:</i> Team track				
MP 90.5 Stolz	4	60	0	3
<i>Business Sources:</i> Texas Crushed Stone				
MP 98.8 Llano	520	99	147	14
<i>Business Sources:</i> Hill Country Warehouse, Lower Colorado River Authority (power utility), Buttery Hardware Co., Smith - McCullough Lumber Co., Graphilter Corp. (sand), Ranchers Supply Co. (feed), Thompson - Hayward Chemicals, Haase Brothers Feed Co., Premier Granite Quarries (stone) and Wooten Feed and Supply Co.				



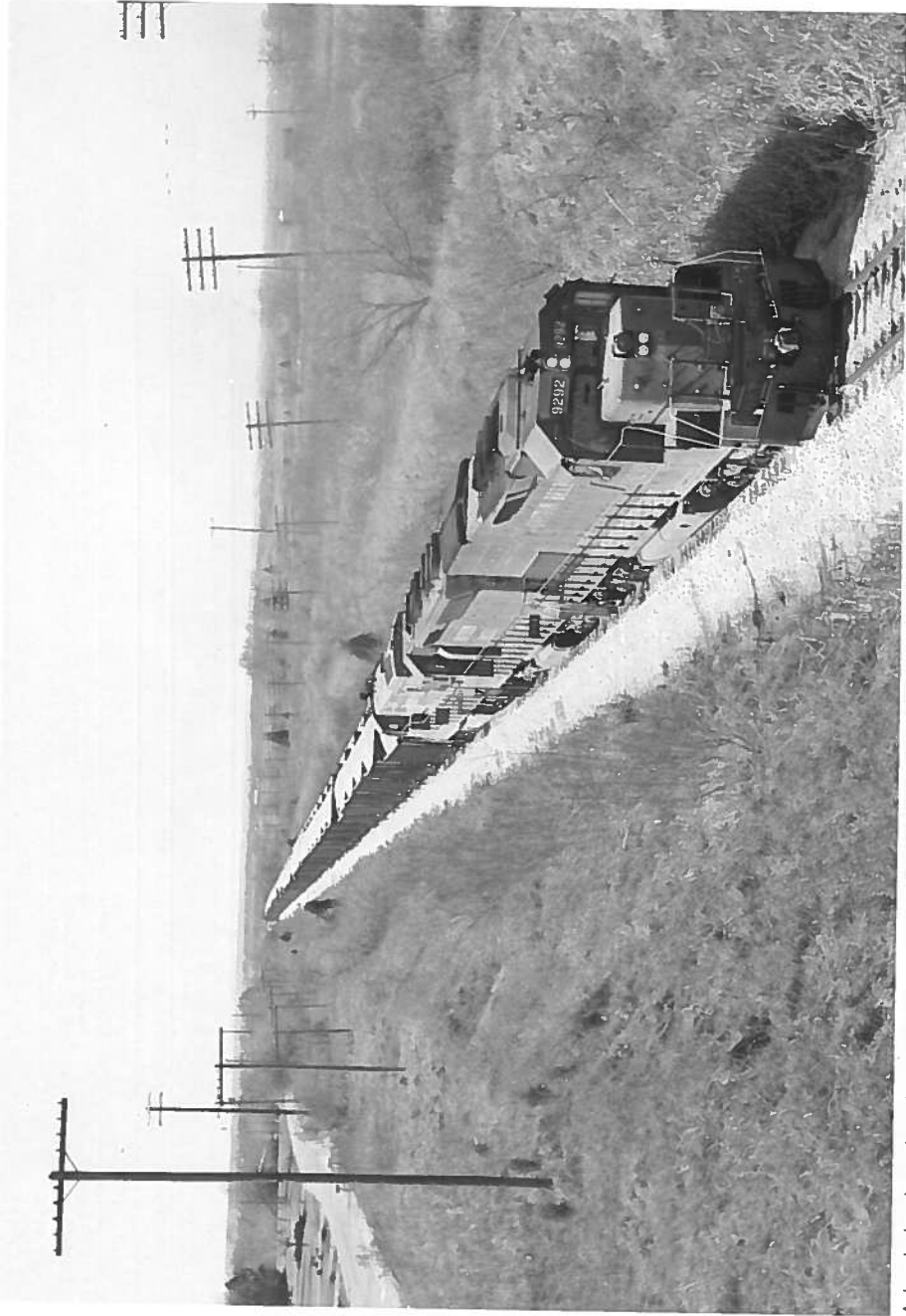
SD9s 4393, 4392 and GP9 3694 haul an eastbound rock train through Leander on October 4, 1975. -John B. Gwinn photo, David M. Bernstein collection



Austin to Llano local train No. 253 switching the Austin White Lime Co. plant at McNeil. The plant was constructed in 1888 and served by the Southern Pacific and Missouri Pacific (and their predecessors). -Joe Dale Morris

Marble Falls Branch Business 1974 - 1975

Station	Carloads Handled				Notes
	1974	1975 (6 mo.)			
	In	Out	In	Out	
MP 4.0 Granite Mountain	8	158	5	0	Texas Granite Corp.
MP 6.2 Marble Falls	72	2529	11	1189	
<i>Business Sources:</i> Great Texas Lumber Co., Pure Stone Co. (limestone), R.M. Burnam Feed					



A loaded unit rock train en route Hearne passes through the countryside between Austin and Giddings in the 1970s. During 1974 alone, Lone Star Industries at Gandy, MP 62.6 on the Llano Branch, shipped 5,571 carloads of crushed stone, and Dow Chemical Co. at Sudduth, MP 67.1 shipped another 3,308 carloads the same year. Average size of eastward rock trains was 60 cars. -Joe Dale Morris

Giddings Branch Local Operations - 1975

End points/Mileage	Territory	Load Limit	Average Cars Handled
Austin to Brenham 92.5 miles	Single track, train order and timetable operation	270,000 pounds (135 tons)	25 cars per day (excluding overhead business)
Maximum Speed	Rail	Agency Stations	Interchange Locations
40 MPH	Primarily 90-pound jointed rail	Austin, Brenham, Giddings	Brenham / Santa Fe Elgin / MKT
<i>Operation</i>			
One assigned local crew between Austin and Brenham, on duty Austin about 1:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The crew performs all local work between Austin and Brenham, ties up at Dixie Motel in Brenham. After rest the crew goes on duty at Brenham about 8:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and performs all local work back to Austin.			
<i>Business (only loaded cars are tallied)</i>			
Year	Business	Carloads	Revenue
1974	Inbound	73	\$19,922
	Outbound	957	\$259,368
1975 (6 months)	Inbound	31	\$13,753
	Outbound	422	\$107,053
Totals	18 months	1,483	\$400,096
Monthly average	18 months	82.4	\$22,228

Bertram was discontinued.

During 1964-1966 the Llano Branch between Austin and Gandy was rebalanced and most of the older 80- and 90-pound jointed rail replaced by second hand 112- and 132-pound welded rail.

Freight Train Service - 1979

Following is an account of freight train service compiled from Dispatcher's Record of Movement of Trains for the two-week period Sunday July 8, through Saturday July 23, 1979. Dur-

ing this period train dispatching was conducted from Houston, Texas.

No. 253 (Austin to Llano) operated on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Six trains were operated during the survey period. On duty at Yard Office between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., departure times ranged from 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. GP9s 3314 and 3348 were the regular local power, supplemented on four trips with four additional units set out on line to originate rock trains. No. 253 performed local work and handled empty hoppers for

rock loading, making a side trip to Burnet as needed.
The trains arrived Llano between 5:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. where the crew tied up to rest before handling No. 254 back to Austin.
No. 254 was on duty at Llano 9:30 a.m. and departed before 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Six trains operated during the survey period. The train used the two GP9s from Train 253, made a side trip between Fairland and Marble Falls, arriving Austin between 5:00 p.m. and

Llano Branch Local Operations - 1975

End points/Mileage	Territory	Load Limit	Average Cars Handled
Austin to Llano 98.8 miles	Single track, train order and timetable operation	263,000 lbs. (Austin-MP 90.5) 210,000 lbs. (MP 90.5-Llano)	Austin to Llano (Trains 253/255) = 80 cars Llano to Austin (Trains 254/256) = 60 cars
Maximum Speed	Rail	Agency Stations	Interchange Locations
49 mph	Austin-Gandy = 132-lb. rail Gandy-Llano = 61.5-lb. rail	Austin, Llano	McNeil / Missouri Pacific
<i>Operation</i>			
Train 253 operates daily except Sunday leaving Austin approximately 11:00 a.m. and arriving Llano as Train 255 approximately 8:00 p.m. doing local work and distributing empty cars for rock loading at Gandy and Sudduth. Train 256 leaves Llano daily except Sunday, makes a side trip to Marble Falls, performing switching to and including Gandy. Pulls loaded rock cars from Sudduth and Gandy and picks up cars at McNeil arriving Austin as Train 254 and connecting with Train AUHEY (Austin to Hearne). McNeil Turn operates out of Austin as needed when 253 is too big to do local work.			
<i>Business (only loaded cars are tallied)</i>			
Year	Business	Carloads	Revenue
1974	Inbound	1,379	\$414,459
	Outbound	12,093	\$2,458,781
1975 (6 months)	Inbound	755	\$189,471
	Outbound	6,679	\$1,490,727
Totals	18 months	20,096	\$4,553,438
Monthly average	18 months	1161.4	\$252,986

Llano Branch Operation • July 8 - July 23, 1979

Train	Between	Trains Operated	Train Consist		Average Cars Handled		
			Loads	Empties	Loads	Empties	
Local 253	Austin and Llano	6	34	401	14,149	6	67
Local 254	Llano and Austin	6	119	38	12,310	20	6
Turn	Austin - McNeil - Austin*	5	62	60	6,817	16	16
Rock Extra	Austin - Gandy - Austin	7	471	259	65,609	67	37
Rock Extra	Austin - Fairland - Austin	5	334	218	46,355	67	44
Rock Extra	Austin - Sudduth - Austin	1	41	1	5,990	41	1
Totals		30	1,063	977	151,190		

* Train consist data for one McNeil Turn was not available, data tabulated was based on four trains. Caboose are tallied as empty cars.

No. 253 handled 9 loads and cabooses into Llano during the two week survey period.

No. 254 handled no loads and cabooses from Llano during the two week survey period.

Two of the Gandy Turns operated one way originating at Gandy, the other five trains originated at Austin. Three of the Fairland Turns operated one way originating at Fairland, the other two trains originated at Austin.

The most cars handled by a single train was the Fairland Turn of July 10th with 72 loads, 125 empties and 12,590 tons.

9:00 p.m. Note the locals operated six days in each direction until reduced to triweekly operation in 1978. In 1980 the six days per week in each direction was reestablished.

The McNeil Turn operated as p.m. using a single unit. Power used necessary from Austin to McNeil and return. Five trains operated during the survey on days when No. 253 did not operate. The on duty times for the turn ranged from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. using a single unit. Power used eight trains operating as turns out of

Freight Train Operation Home Terminal Austin • July 1979

Train	Origin	Destination	Operates	Connections
Local No. 254	Llano	Austin	Tue-Thur-Sat	
Rock Extra (loaded)	Fairland Gandy Sudduth	Austin	As needed	
McNeil Turn	Austin	Austin	As needed	
Local No. 236	Austin	Brenham	Mon-Wed-Fri	Giddings-Local 232, ENSAY and SAENY
AUFNY	Austin	Flatonia	As needed	
AUHEY	Austin	Hearne	As needed	
AULFY	Austin	Lafayette, LA	As needed	
Giddings Turn	Austin	Giddings	As needed	
<i>Westward</i>				
Local No. 237	Brenham	Austin	Tue-Thur-Sat	Giddings-Local 233, ENSAY
HEAUY	Hearne	Austin	As needed	Rock Extras
Giddings Turn	Giddings	Austin	As needed	
Local No. 253	Austin	Llano	Mon-Wed-Fri	
Rock Extra (empty)	Austin	Fairland Gandy Sudduth	As needed	
McNeil Turn	Austin	Austin	As needed	

Austin to Brenham • July 8 - July 23, 1979

Train	Between	Trains Operated	Train Consist			Average Cars Handled		
			Loads	Empties	Tons	Loads	Empties	Tons
Local 236	Austin and Brenham	6	260	132	27,362	48	24	5,136
AUFNY	Austin and Flatonia	2	102	2	12,824	51	1	6,412
AUHEY	Austin and Hearne	1	81	1	10,000	81	1	10,000
AULFY	Austin and Lafayette, LA	4	277	4	33,441	69	1	8,360
Turn	Austin and Giddings	2	151	23	17,292	76	12	8,649
Totals		15	871	162	100,919			

Caboose are tallied as empty cars.

No. 236 handled average of 4 loads 3 empties 412 tons into Brenham.

Brenham to Austin • July 8 - July 23, 1979

Train	Between	Trains Operated	Train Consist			Average Cars Handled		
			Loads	Empties	Tons	Loads	Empties	Tons
Local 237	Brenham and Austin	6	112	403	20,892	22	81	4,178
HEAUY	Hearne and Austin	2	32	271	9,074	16	136	4,537
Turn	Giddings and Austin	3	29	293	10,059	10	98	3,353
Other	Hearne/Giddings-Austin	4	0	5	125	0	1	31
Totals		15	173	967	40,150			

Caboose are tallied as empty cars.

No. 237 departed Brenham with average of 2 loads 4 empties 218 tons.

"Other" trains into Austin are caboose only, including one HEAUY which set out all cars at Butler do to capacity issues at Yard Office.

Two trains arrived Yard Office in excess of 180 cars:

• HEAUY of July 9th with 19 loads 165 empties 5,047 tons

No. 237 of July 12th with 34 loads 149 empties 7,249 tons

Austin and five trains originating on line with power and cabooses set out by No. 253 or other rock extras. Tuesday turns operated from Austin handled empty cars and returned with loaded cars. Four units and a caboose were assigned to each train. The following units were used: B30-7s 7803, 7809, 7836, 7862, 7872, 7878, SD40-2 8462 and L&N 3019 (GP40).

No. 236 (Austin to Brenham) operated on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Six trains operated during the survey period, on duty at Yard Office between 3:00 a.m. and 4:30 a.m., departing between 5:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. The crew spent three or four hours at Giddings switching and eating, arriving Brenham between 3:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

On days when No. 236 operated it normally carried the rock loads to Giddings for pick up by No. 232 (the Flatonia-to-Hearne local), Train SAENY (San Antonio to Ennis) or Train ENSAY (Ennis to San Antonio). On one of the six day surveyed, Austin dispatched two loaded rock trains and

During the two-week survey period four extra turns handled loads from Austin and returned from Giddings

primarily with empty cars for rock loading (one picked up rock empties that were set out at Butler siding). Seven loaded rock trains originated at Austin, five for Lafayette, Louisiana, via Flatonia (AULFY), two for Flatonia (AUFNY) and one train for Hearne (AUHEY). The AUFNY trains operated as turns, setting out loaded rock cars at Flatonia then returning to Austin. Hearne operated three trains to Austin (HEAUY); one set out cars in Butler siding and arrived Yard Office caboose only.

In 1972 Southern Pacific approached the Santa Fe for trackage rights between Brenham and Rosenberg (59.6 miles) to avoid sending Austin area traffic through Hearne. Santa Fe initially agreed only to handle a single train daily in each direction with rock loads or empties only. This was modified through negotiation to include one train each way with no commodity restriction and extra trains as needed. At Giddings an interlocking would be installed and the crossing frog restored with a second-hand frog

No. 236 carried only local traffic. On days when rock loads were handled, No. 236 used three or four units, with one unit (a GP9 or GP35) going through to Brenham and the other units set out at Giddings with the rock loads. The crew tied up at Brenham to get their rest before returning to Austin with No. 237. (Operation at Giddings became more complicated on July 19, 1963, when the crossing frog was removed requiring the locals to use wye connections off the Dalsa main track.)

AUSTIN SUBDIVISION

EAST-WARD	STATIONS	WEST-WARD
SECOND CLASS	SIDING CAPACITIES AND FACILITIES	SECOND CLASS
254	Llano Branch	253
Local Freight		Local Freight
Lv Daily Ex. Sun	Mile Post Location	St. Daily Ex. Sat
AM	98.8 R	PM
8:00	LLANO	7:50
10:30	FAIRLAND	7:50
10:50	GANDY	10:50
11:00	BURNET	10:20
11:10	SUMMIT	9:05
11:35	BERTRAM	8:50
AM	McNEIL	7:50
1:05	AUSTIN	6:00
2:05	(97.4)	AM
At Daily Ex. Sun		Lv Daily Ex. Sat
254		253

Rule S-72. Exception: No. 253 is Superior to No. 254 Austin to Gandy.

ADDITIONAL STATIONS

Capacity in Feet and Direction of entry into Spurs	Mile Post	Name	Station Number
6250-E	90.5	Llano Branch	70531
570	79.1	Stolz	(spur)
15000	71.9	Kingsland	70518
1650-E	70.3	Scobee	70510
780	67.1	Snead Spur	70395
1400	64.4	Sudduth	70385
260-E	38.6	Demarco	70381
929	31.5	Liberty Hill	70356
738	27.1	Leander	70348
2785-E	10.7	Whitestone	70343
410	9.8	Magnesium Spur	(spur)
520	7.3	Fromme	70315
310-W	6.4	Abercrombie	70311
		Butler Kriest	70310

AUSTIN SUBDIVISION

EAST-WARD	STATIONS	WEST-WARD
Mile Post Location	SIDING CAPACITIES AND FACILITIES	Station Number
	Giddings Branch	
113.5	AUSTIN	70280
82.9	BUTLER	70230
55.7	GIDDINGS	70040
	(57.8)	
	Marble Falls Branch	
6.2	MARBLE FALLS	70410
4.0	GRANITE MOUNTAIN	70405
0.0	FAIRLAND	70390
	(6.2)	
BETWEEN FAIRLAND AND MARBLE FALLS, THERE IS NO MAIN TRACK AND OPERATIONS OF ENGINES WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULES AND REGULATIONS AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS GOVERNING MOVEMENTS ON OTHER THAN MAIN TRACKS. EXCEPT MOVEMENTS MUST BE MADE AT RESTRICTED SPEED.		

ADDITIONAL STATIONS

Capacity in Feet and Direction of entry into Spurs	Mile Post	Name	Station Number
230-W	109.1	Giddings Branch	70272
7820-E	103.1	Smoot	(spur)
1294	100.0	Decker	70266
1022	IP	Manor	70263
672-E	85.1	Elgin	70240
172-W	62.6	Stacks	70233
		Hills	70210

From San Antonio Division Timetable No. 10, October 26, 1980.



SP Train Dispatcher Stuart Schroeder captured local No. 253 working at Bertram, left, on September 1, 1980, and later that afternoon at MP 54, below, between Bertram and Summit. Austin was a home terminal with assigned regular crews for Austin-Llano locals 253-254 and Austin-Brenham locals 236-237. The H&TC board at Austin also covered all extra trains on the Austin and Llano Subdivisions and pool crews working between San Antonio East Yard and Hearne, and later to Ennis and Tyler, shared with crews based in San Antonio. The Austin crews covering San Antonio trains were afforded a 3½-hour call.

retired from T&P Junction in Dallas. SP would also replace the turnouts connecting the AT&SF at Brenham with power switches to interface with Santa Fe's Centralized Traffic Control. Engineering plans, estimates and a joint facilities contract were drawn up but SP ultimately decided not to pursue this option.

In 1980 Southern Pacific Transportation Co. sold trackage in Brenham between MP 18.7 and MP 21.9 to the Santa Fe. Effective February 20, 1980, SP abandoned 33.8 miles between Brenham and Giddings (2.7 miles between MP 53.0 and Giddings were retained as an industrial track for several years).

Southern Pacific posted a Notice of Intent to Abandon or Discontinue Service between Stolz (MP 90.5) and Llano on June 5, 1979. The notice was withdrawn on July 23rd when an internal audit showed this segment to be marginally profitable. On February 4, 1982, the Llano Branch was removed from service between MP 74 and Llano due to poor tie condition. Instructions were issued requiring three days advance notice to operate over this section and any movements to be accompanied by the roadmaster. This trackage remained out of service for the duration of SP ownership.

The Federal Railroad Administration and Southern Pacific conducted a joint inspection between Austin and Llano and between Fairland and



Hempstead to Llano • Abandonments and Line Sales

Year	Transaction	End Point	End Point	Miles
1951	Abandoned	Burnet	Lampasas	22.6
1961	Abandoned	Hempstead (MP 0.6)	Chapel Hill (MP 10.9)	10.3
1962	Abandoned	Chapel Hill (MP 10.9)	Brenham (18.7)	7.8
1980	Sold to Santa Fe Rwy.	Brenham (MP 18.7)	Brenham (MP 21.9)	3.2
1980	Abandoned	Brenham (MP 21.9)	Giddings (MP 53.0)	31.1
1986	Sold to the city of Austin and Capital Metro	Giddings (MP 57.0)	Austin (MP 113.5)	56.5
1986	Sold to the city of Austin and Capital Metro	Austin Jct. (MP 1.4)	Llano (MP 99.0)	97.6
1986	Sold to the city of Austin and Capital Metro	Fairland (MP 0.0)	Marble Falls (MP 6.4)	6.4
1987	Sold to the city of Austin and Capital Metro	Austin (MP 113.5)	Austin (MP 115.0)	1.5

Marble Falls during February 4th and 5th, 1982. The inspections yielded 1,124 track defects. SP assigned additional maintenance of way personnel and 298 defects were repaired by February 11th. Southern Pacific Chief Engineer Harry Berkshire estimated restoring the poorest section between Austin and MP 64 to 40 mph operation would cost \$5,946,215. During the year 1981 SP incurred \$740,912 in derailment costs on the Llano Branch.

On May 20, 1984, Southern Pacific placed the public notice (right) in the *Austin American Statesman* newspaper (the notice also included a map which is not reproduced here). Faced with a deteriorating physical plant requiring rehabilitation the decision was to sell the 162-mile package and still retain a substantial portion of revenue through interchanging traffic at Giddings. Three railroad companies placed bids in July 1984 which SP rejected as too low to consider. The company asked for \$29.2 million for the right of way, \$17.4 million for downtown Austin real estate and \$3.4 million for structures (total of \$50.0 million).

The city of Austin began discussions with SP in 1984 to purchase the lines for potential commuter service. The Austin city council approved an agreement to purchase the right of way for \$8.8 million on July 11, 1985. The city council also agreed to negotiate with SP to purchase the downtown real estate. Capital Metro became a partner with the city in the purchase and the final price for the right of way was \$9.3 million (\$6 million from a Federal Transit Authority grant, \$2.7 million from Capital Metro and \$0.6 million from the city of Austin). The sale was effective August 15, 1986. Capital Metro bought the city's share for \$1 million on May 20, 1998.

The original sale did not include 1.469 miles between Canadian Street (MP 113.5) and Congress Avenue (MP 115.0) retained by SP to serve Brown Distribution Co. (beer distributor) and Paper Mill Fibers (scrap paper). SP abandoned this trackage January 12, 1987.

Following SP selling the Austin and Llano Subdivisions in 1986, the

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Southern Pacific Transportation Company that the following is a black and white copy of an amended system diagram map showing categories of its line in accordance with the regulations of the Interstate Commerce Commission (49 C.F.R. 1142.10-1152.15).

The Southern Pacific Transportation Company will furnish, upon request of any interested person, for \$1.00 prepaid a copy of this black and white amended system diagram map or a color-coded copy. Address such requests to Southern Pacific Transportation Company, Attn.: G.A. Laakso, Room 846, Southern Pacific Building, One Market Plaza, San Francisco, California 94105.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC TRANSPORTATION COMPANY DESCRIPTION OF LINES

Pursuant to the regulations of the Interstate Commerce Commission (49 C.F.R. 1152.21), the following is a description of lines of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company as shown on the system diagram map:

Lines Anticipated to be Subject of Abandonment Within Three Years

- (a) Designation of Lines: Llano Branch
- (b) States in which Located: Texas
- (c) Counties of which Located: Travis, Williamson, Burnet, Llano
- (d) Milepost Locations: MP 1.427 to MP 99.04
- (e) Agency of Terminal Stations on the Line: Austin (Map No. 20)

SOUTHERN PACIFIC TRANSPORTATION COMPANY DESCRIPTION OF LINES

Pursuant to the regulations of the Interstate Commerce Commission (49 C.F.R. 1152.21), the following is a description of lines of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company as shown on the system diagram map:

Lines Anticipated to be Subject of Abandonment Within Three Years

- (a) Designation of Lines: Giddings Branch
- (b) States in which Located: Texas
- (c) Counties of which Located: Lee, Bastrop, Travis
- (d) Milepost Locations: MP 57.00 to MP 115.01
- (e) Agency of Terminal Stations on the Line: Austin (Map No. 20)

SOUTHERN PACIFIC TRANSPORTATION COMPANY DESCRIPTION OF LINES

Pursuant to the regulations of the Interstate Commerce Commission (49 C.F.R. 1152.21), the following is a description of lines of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company as shown on the system diagram map:

Lines Anticipated to be Subject of Abandonment Within Three Years

- (a) Designation of Lines: Marble Falls Branch
- (b) States in which Located: Texas
- (c) Counties of which Located: Burnet
- (d) Milepost Locations: On Llano Branch, MP 8.231 - MP 00.00 to MP 6.428
- (e) Agency of Terminal Stations on the Line: None

displaced Austin crews worked out of San Antonio. In 1988 General Manager R.D. Bredenberg established a new home terminal manned by Austin crews at Georgetown (28 miles north of Aus-



Scrapping rail between Brenham and Giddings on January 6, 1982. -Mike McGinley

-Austin continued from page 33.

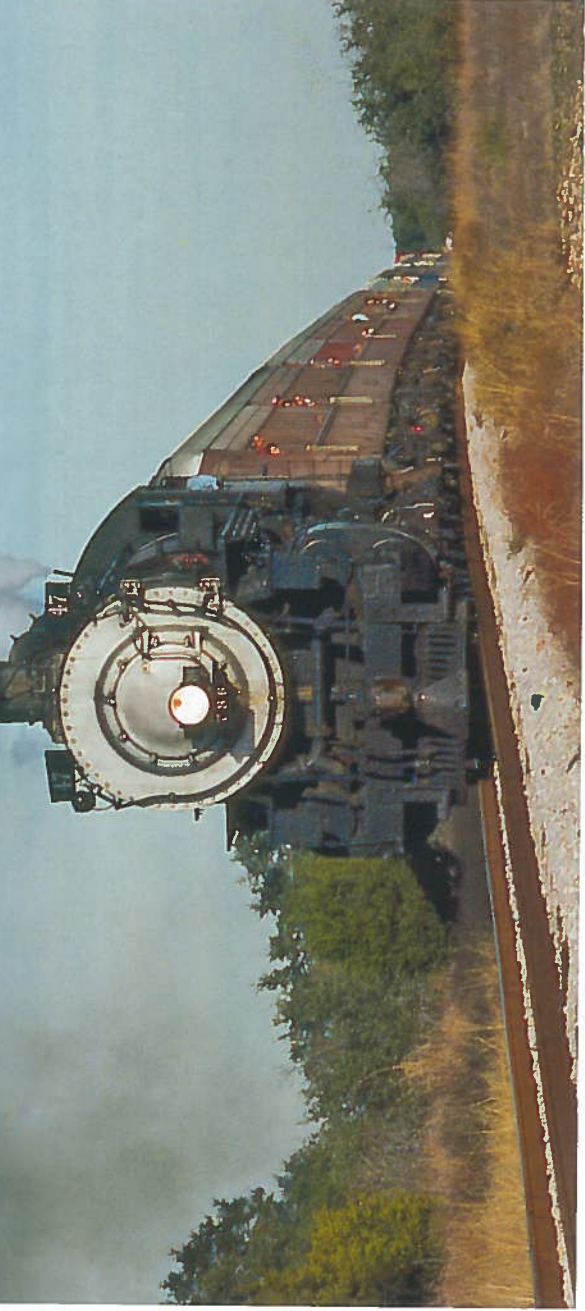
Epilogue

Several different entities continued freight operations on the Austin Subdivision after the merger with Union Pacific: between 1986 and 1995, RailTex, Inc., doing business as Austin & North Western Railroad,

between 1995 and 2000, Central Tennessee & Navigation Co., doing business as Longhorn Railroad, between 2000 and 2007, Trans-Global Solutions, doing business as Austin Area Terminal Railroad and finally, after 2007, Watco Transportation Services, doing business as Austin Western Railroad.

The original \$1.9 billion, 52-mile commuter rail proposal was narrowly defeated by voters in 2000. Four years later a 32-mile commuter service between Austin and Leander was approved. Commuter rail service began March 22, 2010, managed and operated by Herzog Transit Services. 🚂

Southern Pacific MK-5 786



Former T&NO Mikado No. 786 working the Austin Steam Train Association excursion train between Cedar Park and Burnet. —Tom Kline

In late 1955, F. Dale Morris, father of founding member and the first chairman of the Austin Steam Train Association, Joe Dale Morris, was approached by George Nalle and George Stautz of the Austin Rotary Club, and asked to contact T&NO officials in Houston about donating a steam locomotive to the city of Austin for display. Joe Dale related that, "Dad was happy to do so and when in Houston he spoke with the superintendent." As a result, T&NO management agreed to help, and donated MK-5 No. 786 for display in Austin.

MK-5 786 is a 2-8-2 Mikado-type locomotive built by American Locomotive Co.'s Brooks Works in August 1916 and placed in service on the Houston & Texas Central Railroad in September 1916.

No. 786 arrived in Austin dead-in-train ahead of the caboose of freight train No. 239 from Houston on March 25, 1956. It was stored at the Austin roundhouse until the display site and a temporary track on 4th Street was ready in April. Old 786 was moved down 3rd

Street by a T&NO switch engine to the Missouri Pacific interchange track west of Congress Avenue on 3rd Street. The MP took it to their track on 4th Street and put it on spot, and when the locomotive and tender was separated a road grader and a truck pulled 786 about a half block to make ready for the 45-degree turn to the north to access the display track on city-owned land behind the Central Fire Station, 786 to the city. The T&NO delegation

between East 4th and East 5th Streets, bordered by Trinity and Neches Streets. There was considerable press coverage in the *Austin American Statesman* newspaper about the move and dedication of No. 786 to the city. A ceremony was held on the afternoon of Tuesday April 17, 1956, at the display site where T&NO Executive Vice President Bernard Sines formally presented No. 786 to the city. The T&NO delegation



Houston to Austin train No. 239 passing Pershing on March 25, 1956 with 786 moving dead-in-train ahead of T&NO caboose 346. —F. Dale Morris courtesy of Joe Dale Morris



Above: A road grader and truck pull the 442,000 pound locomotive on the temporary track to the display site in Austin. Right: Dedication ceremony of No. 786 to the city of Austin on Tuesday April 17, 1956. —F. Dale Morris photos, courtesy of Joe Dale Morris

numbered 19 people, including Division Superintendent Fred Hoefler, Division Engineer Lee Loggins, Passenger Traffic and Public Relations Manager H. H. Gray and H. H. Waghalter of Austin, the last locomotive engineer who operated No. 786. There 786 remained as a static display for many years.

On July 11, 1989, the Austin Steam Train Association (ASTA) was formed and the city of Austin agreed on November 11, 1989, to lease 786 to ASTA for \$1 per year for 25 years. The 73-year-old Mikado was moved to the Westinghouse plant in Georgetown, Texas, for restoration which was completed in 1991 at a cost of approximately \$800,000. No. 786, now operational, returned to Austin for a short demonstration run on December 14, 1991. No. 786 also participated in the celebra-

tion of opening the Austin Convention Center on July 3rd and 4th, 1992.

The Austin Steam Train Association began regular passenger train service on July 25, 1992, with the *Hill Country Flyer* between Cedar Park and Burnet using seven ex-Pennsylvania Railroad P-70 coaches. The trains operated Saturdays and Sundays, departing Cedar Park at 10:00 a.m. and returning at 5:30 p.m. with a three-hour layover at Burnet. ASTA trains were branded as the Austin and Texas Central Railroad.

Initially, during the layover, No. 786 returned from Cedar Park to Austin Junction to be turned on the wye after each trip, however residents complained about the locomotive whistling for crossings.

The Texas Department of Com-

merce funded a \$273,900 grant to the city of Cedar Park for a new passenger platform, utilities, roads and 1,000 feet of storage track on a 16.7-acre site donated by Texas Commerce Bank. A wye funded by loans and private contributions was constructed and placed in service in August, ending the necessity to turn the locomotive at Austin Junction.

The Texas Department of Transportation granted \$821,307 in 1996 for rehabilitation of the line between Austin Junction and McNeil. These funds were matched with \$164,261 by the city of Austin and \$41,000 from the Austin Steam Train Association. On March 2, 1997, ASTA initiated the *River City Flyer* passenger train between Cedar Park and Austin.

Unfortunately, in July 1999, No. 786 was removed from service due to cracks in the cylinder saddle casting. The locomotive has been out of service ever since undergoing a complete rebuild. ASTA continues to operate passenger trains as of this writing but has resorted to using a variety of leased diesel locomotives, including a former Santa Fe Alco RSD-15. More recently ASTA has leased a GP40-3 from Horizon Rail.

Members of the Austin Steam Train Association pose proudly with fully-restored Southern Pacific 2-8-2 No. 786 in Austin in December 1991. —SPH&TS Collection

