

# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

*January, 2012*

SHREVEPORT, LA

*Our 31<sup>st</sup> Year*



Northwest Louisiana was sparsely populated in the early 1900's, and railroads such as the Kansas City Southern and Cotton Belt (St. Louis Southwestern Railway Co.) had made significant investments in land, track and buildings to reach major shipping centers in the south such as New Orleans, Louisiana and Port Arthur, Texas. In order to promote growth along their routes, promotional booklets were prepared stressing the benefits of living and farming in "Dixie". The writers of these booklets made colorful and positive claims about the climate, business opportunities, low cost of land and labor, and natural resources.

On June 14, 1910 the Honorable Joseph E. Ransdell made a speech in the Louisiana House of Representatives containing these statements: "The lands of Dixie are cheap, her climate is unexcelled, and her white population as healthy as the people of the North. Every variety of crop, every form of

animal life, and every branch of industry thrives in the South. She would gladly furnish homes to every one of our splendid citizens who has gone to Canada or contemplates such a move...in no portion of the world are there as good opportunities for success as in the land of Dixie. If Horace Greely were alive today, his advice to young men would be 'Go South!'. When he said to them 'Go West' a great field opened there...but the scene has shifted. The great opportunities of the West have been seized, but there are innumerable openings in the South awaiting fertile brains and vigorous hands. Come, then, to the Southland, and make it your home; come to Louisiana." (*Politicians still make exaggerated claims to potential voters!*)

Examples of other claims from these booklets:

"The climate is mild in winter and in summer the heat is moderated by cool breezes from the gulf."

"Alden Bridge is an important cotton shipping point on the Cotton Belt Route."

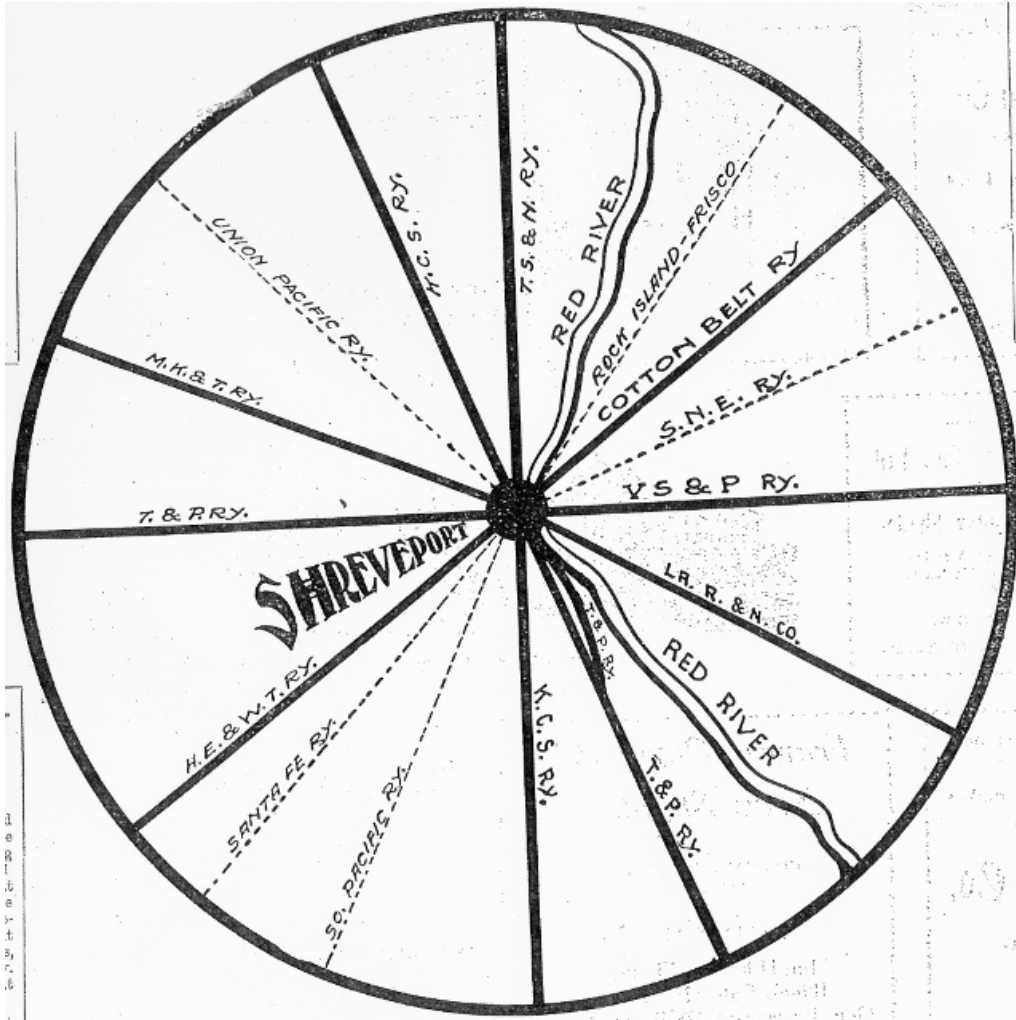
"Through miles of green alfalfa fields...the Red River is crossed and entrance made to the city of Shreveport, the train finally halting under the roof of the handsome passenger station. Here is a city of 35,000 people...eight big railroad systems bring eleven different lines into Shreveport...The city has a modern street railway system."



"To many people the expression 'The Highlands of Louisiana' conveys a hitherto unheard of idea, but the highlands are there. A ridge extends northward and southward in De Soto, Natchitoches, Sabine and Vernon parishes...the elevation varies from 250 feet in Vernon Parish to over 400 feet in De Soto Parish...There are thousands of springs and numerous small streams...water is usually found at a depth of thirty to forty feet."

These booklets are very interesting to look at and contain some great photos of the area around Shreveport in the early 1900's, such as the "Shreve Island Stock Farm" with cows watering in what is apparently the "Duck Pond" bayou along East Kings Highway. The booklets can be seen in the LSU Shreveport Noel Memorial Library Archives and Special Collections. (MMss 296)

## Railroads Serving Shreveport in 1907



### Next RRVRS Meeting on January 20 at the Glen

The meeting will be held on Friday, January 20 at 7 p.m. in the library at the Glen Retirement Village, 403 East Flournoy Lucas Road. Please be on time for the beginning of the meeting so you won't miss anything. The Glen Retirement Village is located on the south side of Flournoy Lucas Road between Ellerbe Road and Youree Drive (Highway 1). For information or directions call Dave Bland at (318) 470-5933.

### Upcoming Events

- Jan. 20 RRVRS Meeting at the Glen – 7 p.m.
- Jan. 21-22 Dallas area Train Show at the Plano Centre  
Hours 10am-5pm Saturday, 10am-4pm Sunday

**Receive the Newsletter in COLOR and several days sooner !!**  
**Contact your Editor at [DDBland@aol.com](mailto:DDBland@aol.com) to get your name on the**  
**email distribution list**

## The President's Message – January 2012

Hello Railfans!

I hope that everyone had a wonderful Christmas and I wish all a Happy New Year.

We have been working at the McNeill Street Pumping Station and the museum is really taking shape. About the only thing left to do is to build the handicap ramp and add signs. Last week Dave finished designing the layout of all our 18 display cases and the rest of us moved the cases from the office building into the museum building. We also moved the HO model railroad that was donated by Jeff Little and his mother into the south end of the building and have been able to run a train around the layout. Jeff and his son came by Saturday and were happy to see it in place. We spent the day cleaning the glass on the display cases and moving everything around. It looks real good. Before our next meeting we are planning to paint and spruce up the outside of the cases. Several of us discussed the displays and we are planning to have an informal opening at the Spring Fish Fry, with an official grand opening sometime in the early summer.

Dick Melcher, Gary and Frank have been working on the outdoor riding railroad and have made progress in that direction.

At our last meeting Kelly Jo suggested that we look into filling the large pits south of the pumping station to make an area to display our rolling stock. I will have a meeting with Dale Ward to discuss this possibility.

Well, that's about all I have for now. Hope to see all of you at our next meeting.

Happy Railroading!  
Russell

**RED RIVER VALLEY  
RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
Shreveport, LA**

Russell Pedro – President      Kelly Jo Brunettin – Vice President  
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### **It's time to pay your 2012 Annual Dues !!**

Please send a check or money order for \$16.50 with this membership form to Bill Hasheider at 6813 Despot Road, Shreveport, LA 71108

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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