

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- The next meeting of the Southwest Chapter will be Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2011 at 6 pm at Avila's Restaurant at 6232 N. Mesa. Visitors are welcome.
- Don't forget the holiday Potluck at the RR Museum on Dec. 4. See page 4.

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# El Paso & Southwestern Flyer

Southwest Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

NOVEMBER, 2011

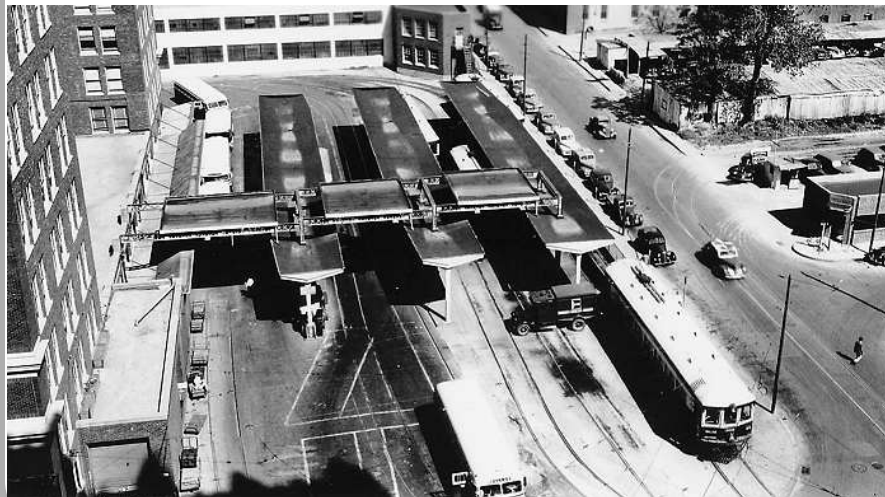
## *The Straw That Broke the Camel's Back—the Demise of the Texas Electric*

From 1916 until 1948, the Texas Electric Railway provided passenger and freight service to the citizens of North Central Texas. The railway combined the operations of the Texas Traction Company and the Southern Traction Company. With Dallas as its center, the railway operated three lines: one to Sherman and Denison, one to Ennis and Corsicana, and one to Hillsboro and Waco. These routes gave the Texas Electric 226 miles of track, making it the longest interurban west of the Mississippi River. While primarily a passenger line, Texas Electric Railway also offered mail and express service. In 1928, it began to haul freight as well, but was hampered by its inability to handle freight cars through Dallas. Although it had extensive private right-of-way, it used Dallas streetcar lines to get in and out of town. It also provided local streetcar service in several towns that it served. In 1941, the light traffic Corsicana line was abandoned, having passenger traffic competition with the Southern Pacific. While the lines operated throughout World War II, ridership declined after the war due to the surge in private automobiles, buses, and trucks. The last run of the Texas Electric was on December 31, 1948.

There is a consensus of opinion that the head-on collision of two passenger motors, No. 365, operating as southbound Train No. 3 and No. 366, operating as northbound Train No. 6 just north of Kirkland, Texas on April 10, 1948, was a significant factor in the decision of the company to cease passenger operations on Dec. 31, 1948. The two trains were on the Dallas to Denison line, the collision occurring about 7:40 in the morning. According to the ICC accident report, operations on the Denison Division were by timetable and train order,

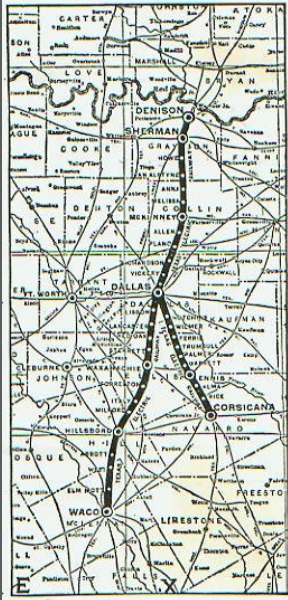
there being no block system on the line. The rules required that, when a train is five minutes or more late, it must stop at the nearest siding and telephone the dispatcher for train orders.

(cont. p.2)



Overhead view of the Interurban Terminal in Dallas (photo courtesy of the U.T-Arlington Special Collections)

# Texas Electric (cont)



There was  
apparent  
confusion  
between  
"Kirkland" and  
"Perkins"

These orders are given orally over the phone, the trainman then repeats the order back to the dispatcher.

The dispatcher then initials the order as being repeated correctly. On this occasion, the timetable called for the meet at Jenkins, 1.0 miles south of Kirkland, at 7:38 a.m.

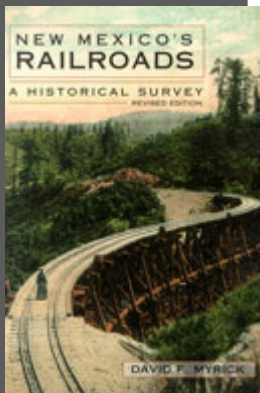
At Turner, 1.4 miles north of Kirkland, No. 3 was about 5 minutes late on its schedule, and the motorman called the train dispatcher by telephone for instructions. The train dispatcher sent train order No. 14, which established Kirkland as the meeting point between Nos. 3 and 6, to the motorman of No. 3, and it was made complete to No. 3 at 7:35 a.m. Later, the dispatcher sent the order to the motorman of No. 6 at Jenkins, 1.9 miles south of

Kirkland, and the order was made complete to No. 6 at 7:38 a.m. No. 3 departed from Turner at 7:36 a.m., and No. 6 departed from Jenkins at 7:38 a.m. These trains collided on the main track at a point 972 feet north of the spur-track switch at Kirkland.

As No. 3 was approaching Kirkland the speed was about 30 miles per hour, the controller was notched open, and the motorman was maintaining a lookout ahead. The first he motorman was aware of anything being wrong was when his car was moving on the curve north of Kirkland and he saw No. 6 rounding the curve about 1,000 feet distant. Because of trees on the inside of the curve, the view ahead was considerably restricted. The motorman immediately moved the controller to off-position

and applied the brakes in emergency. The speed of No. 3 was about 25 miles per hour at the time of the collision. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

The motorman of No. 6 said that, when he copied train order No. 14, he thought the train dispatcher gave the name "Perkins" as the meeting point station, and he copied and repeated the order accordingly. Perkins is 19.7 miles north of Kirkland. No. 6 was moving on the curve on which the accident occurred at a speed of about 30 miles per hour when the motorman saw No. 3 approaching about 1,000 foot distant, and he immediately moved the controller to off-position and applied the brakes in emergency. The speed of



## David Myrick, Noted Author and Rail Historian

David Myrick, the author of 17 books and numerous articles about railroads in the southwestern US has passed away at the age of 93. Best known for his celebrated 6-volume set of books detailing the history of

railroads in Arizona, David's work also covered New Mexico, Nevada, northern California and even a Bolivian railroad.

Known for his meticulous research and enthusiasm for railroad lore, he was

nearing completion of 'Railroads of Arizona Vol. 7'. Word is the volume will be published posthumously, title or publishing date are yet to be announced.

## (Conclusion of Texas Electric article)

No. 6 was about 25 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The train dispatcher said that, when the motorman of No. 6 repeated the train order, he understood the motorman to pronounce the word "Kirkland" and so underscored it in the train order book. The assistant superintendent said that he was in the train dispatcher's office when the train order was transmitted and he heard the train dispatcher distinctly pronounce the word Kirkland. Examination of the train-order book after the accident disclosed that the word Kirkland was written in the body of the order and that it had been under-

scored. The motorman of No. 6 said that he had placed his copy of the train order on a clip in the control compartment of the traction car. At the time the investigation was completed the motorman's copy of the order had not been found. Under the rules, it was not required that the name of the meeting point be spelled aloud.

The motorman of each train was injured as were 30 passengers. The report concluded: It is found that this accident was caused by an error in copying a train order. It is recommended that the Texas Electric Railway Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

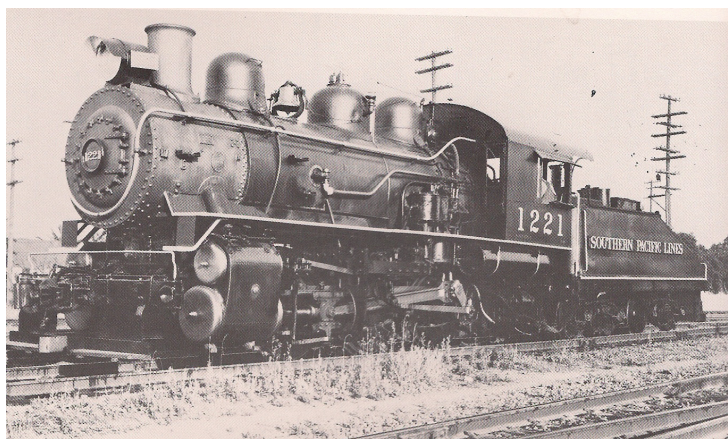


With dwindling passenger traffic, the cost of installing a block system, and the anticipated liabilities resulting from the wreck, the decision was made to close passenger service. Freight service continued until 1949.

Reference: ICC Accident Report No. 3177.

*"Under the rules, it was not required that the name of the meeting point be spelled aloud."*

## Deming, NM's SP 0-6-0 No. 1221



Deming's ex-Southern Pacific 0-6-0 switcher is on display at the Visitor's Center on Pine St. in Deming. 1221 in earlier days was spruced up with chrome accessories and a fancy paint job in its assignment as a switcher at the San Jose, California passenger station. With 51 in. drivers, she was built by Baldwin between 1913 and 1918 as one of the Class S-10 locomotives.

References: Deming Visitor Center & "Southern Pacific Steam Switchers of the Pacific Lines" by Gene Deimling.

No. 1221 in 1938 sporting chrome cylinder covers and lined running boards. In later years she received a different tender. (photo by Larry Harrison)



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# Museum News

## Christmas Potluck

The Harvey Girls Association will host a Christmas Pot luck dinner at the Railroad & Transportation Museum on Sunday, December 4th at 3 pm. SW Chapter members, Friends of the Museum and guests are invited. Bring a dish or if not, add \$5 to the kitty. Hope to see you there!

## Downtown Walking Tour

The next downtown walking tour will be Saturday, November 12. Meet in front of the History Museum at 10:15. The tour will begin at 10:30 am. Cost is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. The tour will visit historic downtown sites, the Railroad Museum and Union Passenger Station.

## Amtrak Excursion Report

Eleven supporters of the Railroad Museum made the Amtrak excursion to Deming followed by a bus tour of the Santa Rita, Hurley, and Bayard. On the second day, there was a reception at the Deming Art Museum honoring western artist Jim Ward. The group also visited the Deming Visitor Center where ex-SP steam switcher No. 1221 is displayed.