

Vandalia is in the northeast corner of Audrain County, 28 miles southwest of Louisiana. The Louisiana and Missouri RR built through here in 1872 on its way west towards Mexico, MO. The line would later become part of the Chicago & Alton Railroad, and subsequently the GM&O. On a cold day in 1969, GM&O F3 806A leads westbound freight # 97 through Vandalia and past the depot. Note the MOW car on the right. (Dave Ingles JR photo; Ken Donnelly collection)



Left - GM&O F3 # 805A leads an A-B-A-A set of F-units on train # 92 as it roars east past the Vandalia depot in October of 1970. This depot was constructed around 1902 to replace the original 1874-built depot. Happily it still stands today after restoration in recent years. (Joe Collias)



Right - Laddonia is a tiny town just 12 miles southwest of Vandalia on the GM&O. The town boasted a depot and a grain elevator with silos, which provided business for the railroad. F-units were the typical power on GM&O road freights on this division, and here F3 #806B is back, leading train #93 in 1970. (Joe Collias)





Right - Dropping down to Wells-ville on the CB&Q, we catch 2-8-2 #4960 again, this time leading an eastbound excursion headed for St Louis in October of 1961. This line ran from St Louis to Mexico, MO, where the Q had track-age rights to Kansas City via the GM&O. With very light traffic, the line was abandoned by the Burlington Northern in 1980. (Mike Haper photo; Jan Kohl collection)



Above - The trackage rights the CB&Q obtained at Mexico date back to an arrangement with the Chicago & Alton Railroad. By the 1950s, the CB&Q was running only 2 daily freights each way through Mexico: numbers 60/63 and 64/65, plus the Ozark State Zephyr passenger train. On April 12, 1958, a handsome set of A-B-B-A FTs are in charge of train 64 as it passes Mexico's Hotel Hoxsey. (WG Trefz photo, Ed Gray collection)



Left - As mentioned earlier, GM&O offered passenger service between Kansas City and Bloomington, IL with gas-powered "doodlebugs" as trains 9-10. These trains would take 12 hours to cover this route, making 57 stops, including flag and mail stops. The GM&O terminated this service on April 9, 1960, and here eastbound #10 is shown that day, stopped at the depot in Mexico, MO. (Ken Donnelly)







Above - Beginning at WB Jct outside of Carrollton, the Santa Fe and the Wabash shared 30 miles of track to CA Jct in Camden. For the first 16 miles, the tracks are on separate rights-of-way, but at Hardin they come together near the Highway 10 overpass. ATSF SD45 #5599 leads a westbound trailer train under Hwy 10 and into Hardin on June 5, 1982. (Dale Hearn)



Above - The two railroads operated in both directions on all three tracks. Again on June 5, 1982, the skies have lightened as high-hood N&W SD45 #1789 leads 2 run-through Union Pacific units into Hardin, and all long-hood forward. (Dale Hearn)



Below - The depot in Hardin was a combination of a station and interlocking tower. The tower operations were replaced by CTC, and the station & tower were demolished in the mid-1970s. Just prior to that, Santa Fe U28CG # 7909 leads a westbound past the station in June 1973. This unit was built for passenger service in the mid-1960s, but was re-assigned to freight in 1969. The 3rd track is out of view to the right of the photo. (Joe Collias)



Below - Henrietta is at milepost 411 on the Santa Fe, just a few miles north of the Missouri River in Ray County. Here the rights-of-way have separated again, as we see a westbound N&W freight led by 3 geeps on track 3 in the foreground, and the rear of an eastbound Santa Fe coal train on track 2 in the background on October 19, 1980. (Dale Hearn)







Left - By far the busiest carriers at Kansas City Union Station were Missouri Pacific and Santa Fe. The Santa Fe had 10 scheduled trains per day passing through the station, and yet another pair originating/terminating here. By June of 1970, Santa Fe's offering had been trimmed considerably, and would end completely is less than a year. On June 5th, Larry Thomas caught a pair of Santa Fe trains preparing to depart Union Station. First is train #211 with U30CG #8004 leading.

Below - Next, train #1, the *San Francisco Chief*, departs Union Station, led by F7 #46C. The 2 bi-level cars are deadheading to Topeka, where they will be removed and taken to the Topeka shops. (Both - Larry Thomas)







Left - A year earlier on May 14, 1969, former Nickel Plate 2-8-4 # 759 is seen backing down to her train, the *Golden Spike Centennial Limited*. The train is returning to New York after the 100-year anniversary of the completion of the first trans-continental railroad in Promontory, Utah on May 10th. We saw the 759 previously on pages 64-65 at Airline Jct later that same morning. (Bill Gibson, photo; Lance Garrels collection)

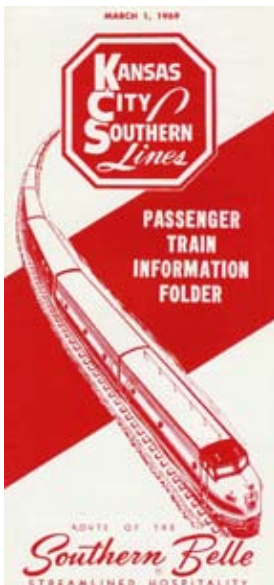






Left - Photographer Allen Maty chased E7 #12 south out of Grandview, catching it at the 195th St overpass south of Jaudon, and again approaching the station stop at Drexel (*above*) with train #1 in August 1969. The mainline is literally skirting the Missouri-Kansas state line through these areas, and will do so most of the way to Joplin.

Left - KCS maintained high levels of service on the *Southern Belle* right up to the very end of operations in November, 1969. While most other roads reduced services to just a coach or two, the KCS still offered dining services in the observation-diner to the very end. Northbound train #2 calls on Drexel, milepost 53, in August 1969. (*This Page - Allen Maty*)





Below - Eve, Missouri is at milepost 98.9 of the KCS' First subdivision. Here the railroad has a passing siding and interchange tracks with the MKT, which passed over the KCS at this location. Seen from the MKT overpass, a trio of KCS SD40s are in charge of a southbound freight at Eve on August 30, 1978. The crew is on the ground as the freight is setting out cars for interchange with the MKT. Note the tank car on the connecting track. (Robert King)



Below - We'll use the crossing of the KCS with the MKT at Eve as an opportunity to tour the extreme west end of MKT's line across Missouri. LaDue is in the southern part of Henry County, milepost 273 of the MKT's Sedalia subdivision. At one time LaDue was a crew change point and home of the Eastern Division Superintendent. On January 24, 1976, GP7 #96 is in town on a local freight, and is switching the grain elevator. (Rick Morgan)







Above - Four ½ years later at the same spot, 3 MP “Screaming Eagle” U30Cs lead a westbound coal train around the curve on October 11, 1975. The train is carrying southern Illinois coal to the Union Electric plant at Labadie.







Above - After crossing the river, the Frisco mainline curves west as it passes under I-44 and enters the town of Eureka. What was the eastbound main is now a siding as 4 GP40-2s again lead a westbound around the curve on October 10, 1980. (Mike Abalos, photo; Friends of Mike Abalos Collection)



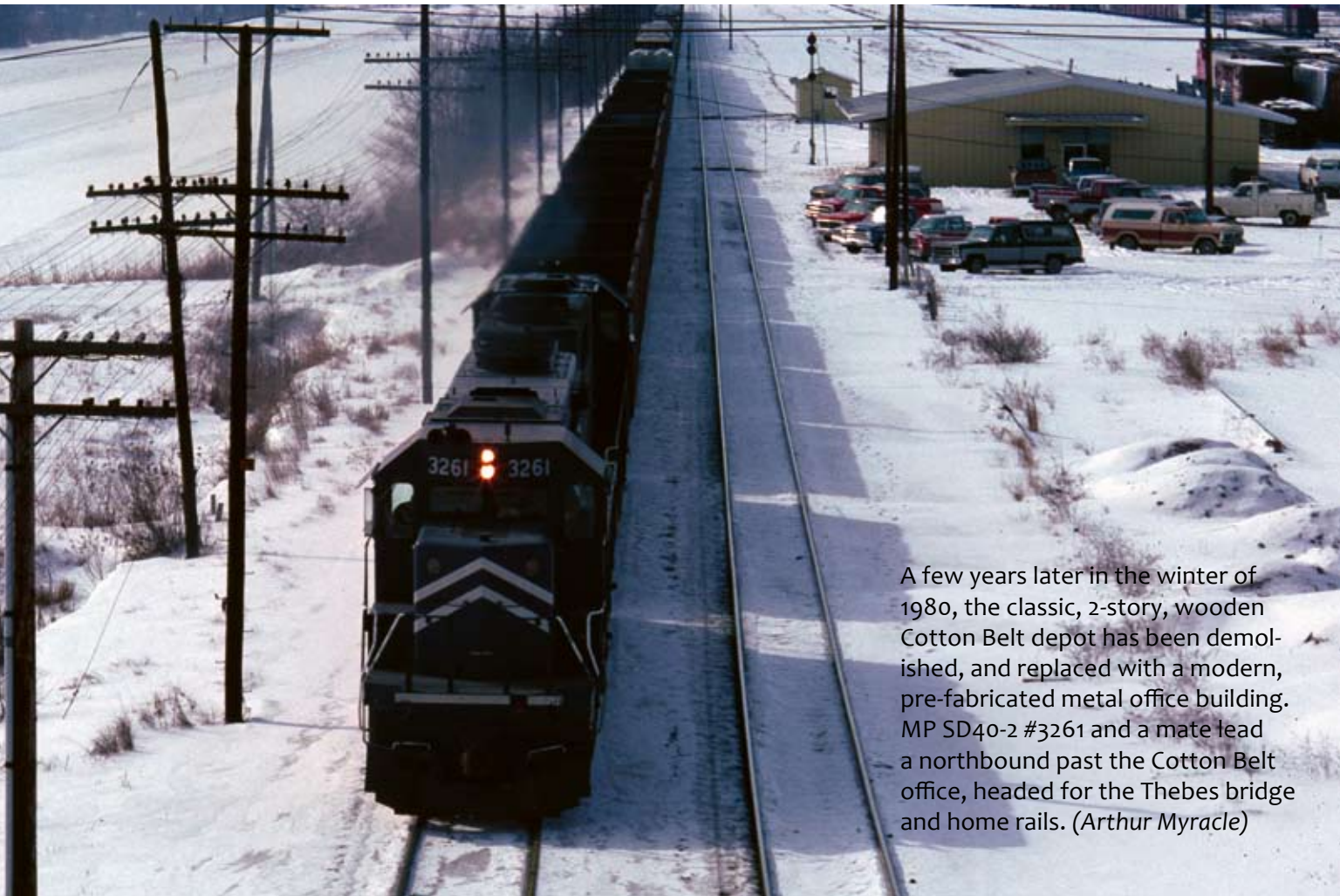
Above - As the two mainlines parallel each other through Valley Park and Eureka, the Missouri Pacific mainline also curves to the west after crossing the Meramec River. January 10, 1979 finds MP U23B #2259 and 2 other GEs leading a westbound around the curve and under I-44, entering the town of Eureka.

Left - Around the curve west of Crescent is the Frisco's 2nd crossing of the Meramec River on this deck & truss bridge. The line through here used was once double-track, evidenced by the wide piers as 4 GP40-2s lead a freight west across the bridge on June 7, 1980. (All - Paul Dalman)





Above - South of Cape Girardeau, the jointly operated MP-SSW mainline from East St Louis, IL to Dexter, MO crosses the Mississippi River at Thebes, just east of Scott City. Known as Illmo by the railroads, the Cotton Belt had a yard and a large, 2-story station and office building here. A northbound Cotton Belt freight gets under way after making a crew change at the depot in January, 1973. (Arthur Myracle) Left - In July 1978, MP GP38 #2130 leads a southbound past the depot at Illmo. MP trains did not stop here for a crew change, but instead ran through to Poplar Bluff where the crew change was made. (Camille Chappuis)



A few years later in the winter of 1980, the classic, 2-story, wooden Cotton Belt depot has been demolished, and replaced with a modern, pre-fabricated metal office building. MP SD40-2 #3261 and a mate lead a northbound past the Cotton Belt office, headed for the Thebes bridge and home rails. (Arthur Myracle)





Right - While the line from East St Louis to the Thebes bridge was owned and controlled by the Missouri Pacific, the line south of the bridge, through Illmo to Dexter belonged to the Cotton Belt. A trio of MP GP50s drift downgrade from the Thebes bridge and into Illmo in March, 1983. The tracks on the left lead into the Illmo yard. (Camille Chappuis)



Above - The Cotton Belt first laid rails into Illmo in 1904, and with completion of the Thebes bridge in 1905, abandoned the ferry operation at Bird's Point, roughly 40 miles to the south, near Cairo, IL. A southbound Cotton Belt freight makes its way out of the Scott City yard at Illmo on October 21, 1979. (Mike Wise, photo; Camille Chappuis collection)







Left - As seen from the walkway of a GP40 on westbound #73, a crew change is taking place on train #74 at Eldon on March 15, 1975. By the late 1970s, with 10mph speeds and frequent derailments, trains would routinely need 2 crews and more than 12 hours to cover the distance between KC and Eldon, as well as Eldon to St Louis.

Below - A week later, 3 GP40s and a geep bring train #73 to a stop at the Eldon depot for a crew change on March 22, 1975. Five years later after the line had been conveyed to the Cotton Belt, the Eldon depot was still serving as an office for the new Cotton Belt Roadmaster, but train service would never return.







Left - Skirting the northern foothills of the Ozarks, the St Louis line was built with four tunnels: 1 near Vale in the greater Kansas City area, and 3 relatively close together between Eugene and Belle, a span of 44 miles. Train #74 exits tunnel #3 behind GP40 #356 on March 2, 1975, headed for St Louis.

Below - The line also has several high bridges, including this one east of Henley over the Osage River near mile-post 144. GP40 #4719 leads westbound train #73 across the bridge on March 16, 1975. (All - Mark Nelson)







Left - In the heyday of passenger train operations in the 1950s, the Frisco operated 3 daily passenger trains each way through Neosho, mile-post 309: trains 1-2, *The Texas Special* to San Antonio, trains 3-4, *the Will Rogers*, and trains 9-10, *The Meteor* to Tulsa. By 1967, passenger operations on the Frisco were drawing to a close. In February, 1967, E8 #2013 brings westbound train #1, now *The Oklahoman*, into Neosho for its late afternoon station stop. Trains 1-2 will make their final runs on May 13, 1967. Sadly the stucco & tile roof depot is also gone. (Larry Thomas)

Right - Before the Mandarin Orange and white of the 1970s, Frisco freight power wore black with yellow stripes, as illustrated by Alco FA #5209 as it leads an Extra freight through Neosho on April 14, 1962. (Bill Gibson)



Left - Neosho is in the heart of Newton County, and 15 miles from the Oklahoma border. Here the Frisco crossed the Kansas City Southern at grade on the northeast side of town. (We covered the KCS in Neosho in Chapter 4.) On April 14, 1980, Frisco SD45 #904 leads train OBX across the KCS diamond, headed for Springfield, Memphis and Birmingham. (Ken Albrecht)





Above - Having reached the Oklahoma border, we'll shift to the Missouri Pacific's Carthage Subdivision, beginning at Branson and heading north towards Kansas City. On the morning of September 6, 1975, MP SD40 #3038 leads train #202 over Lake Taneycomo and around the curves approaching downtown Branson. Train #202 was carrying traffic from the Southern Railway connection at Memphis to the Union Pacific connection in Kansas City.



Left - A few minutes after the passage of train #202, the thrice-weekly Cotter, AR to Aurora, MO local, #506, passes through the same location, led by GP9 #1684. The train is about to pass under US65 and turn north into downtown Branson. (This Page - Steve McVey)

Right - In Branson, the Missouri Pacific depot also served as a train order office until the mid-1980s. On March 19, 1975, an executive train with MP Chairman Downing B Jenks on board passes by the Branson depot. Branson is dramatically different in appearance today than when these 3 scenes were photographed. A large convention center, hotels & condos now dominate the landscape surrounding the depot, and the railroad now belongs to the Missouri & Northern Arkansas. Excursions are offered in both directions by the Branson Scenic Railway.





As the sun sets back in Springfield, we've reached the end of our trek around Missouri. A pair of Frisco GP38s depart Springfield with train FRBY on February 3, 1980, bound for Birmingham. This train carried atomic waste water, and as such was accompanied by US Marshalls and extra crew members to ensure safe passage. (Ken Albrecht)





In this modern era of unit trains and locomotives that all look the same, I hope you have enjoyed this look at the railroads of Missouri before the days of mega-mergers and downsizing, when the railroads offered a variety of colors and motive power, and still served many small towns. Our bonus section features an alphabetical look at a variety of depots across the state, many of which are no longer standing.

