

## Railroad Passenger Service Brown Co. Tx.

Brown Co., History Recopied by Carl Langford

Passenger service to Brownwood came with the first train into Brownwood on December 31, 1885 by the Gulf Colorado & Santa Fe Railway. The first passenger was Dr. James Johnson. There was daily service between Brownwood and Lampasas. The Fort Worth & Rio Grande completed its tracks from Fort Worth to Brownwood on July 1, 1891.

Later, as the rail lines were extended, passenger service went to and from the towns of Coleman, Ballinger, Brady, Menard, May, San Angelo, Temple and Fort Worth. At one time Brownwood was served by fifteen passenger trains a day.

**Ballinger, Coleman and Brownwood:** The Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway opened their new track to Coleman and Ballinger on April 1, 1886. Passenger service was immediately started between Brownwood and those two communities when the line was placed in operation on August 1, 1886.

**Fort Worth and Brownwood:** The first passenger train, of the Fort Worth & Rio Grande Railway Company, left Fort Worth on July 18, 1891 and arrived in Brownwood at 9:30 pm. Passenger service from Fort Worth continued in one form or another until July 1968.

**Menard and Brownwood:** The Frisco completed an extension of its railroad line from Brownwood and Brady on March 11, 1903. Several years later, the Frisco extended the tracks from Brady to Menard on February 25, 1911, and started passenger service to that town. In 1920, a new schedule for Train #5 between Fort Worth and Menard showed the train leaving at 11:35 p.m. and arriving in Brownwood at 7:15 a.m. The Brownwood train would depart at 8:45 a.m. and arrived in Fort Worth at 2:20 p.m. Trains #81 & #82 went from Brownwood to Menard up until passenger service was discontinued on April 30, 1954.

**May and Brownwood:** The first passenger train, on the North & South line of the Frisco, between Brownwood and May was a six coach train carrying some 500 Brownwood boosters to May on January 1, 1912. May celebrated the completion of the line by having a mock hanging of a man who had dared to doubt that May would ever get the railroad. Passenger service continued until around 1924-1925. The railroad to May was abandoned in 1927.

**Other Passenger Trains:** There was train service from Temple to Brownwood on trains #73 & 74 until late in 1956. During World War II troop trains travel to and

through Brownwood. The Red Cross, upon notified when a troop train was going to stop in Brownwood, would provide sandwiches, drinks and cookies for the men on the train. Troop trains also brought several thousand German Prisoners of War to the prison camp at Camp Bowie. They would get off the train at the Santa Fe Depot and march to the prison singing German songs.

**Known Named Trains through Brownwood:** There were three known named trains that came through Brownwood at one time or another. They were the "California Special," the "Texan," and "The Angelo." The last passenger train through Brownwood left the Santa Fe Station on July 21, 1968.

**The "California Special":** The Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe's new "California Special" service left Galveston for the first time Sunday morning, February 7, 1915, promptly at 6:30 a.m. The "California special sleeper" went to Houston where it was attached to the special train that had come from New Orleans via the Frisco rails. Thence the special went through Temple and Brownwood to Clovis, N. M. by way of the Sweetwater. At Clovis the Texas train connected with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe special from Kansas City, and thereafter went through straight to San Francisco. At first, the train operated every other day, but later became a daily train as more passengers rode the train.

In 1936, a timetable for Brownwood listed it as train #75 leaving daily from Brownwood at 7:50 a.m. to arrive in Sweetwater at 10:50 a.m. Starting in 1938, the "California Special" provided passengers with through car service to the West Coast from New Orleans to Clovis, New Mexico where passengers could then connect to the "Grand Canyon Limited."

In 1954, the "San Francisco Chief" that ran between Los Angeles and Chicago was inaugurated. So the schedule was changed so that the "California Special" left Houston at 6:45 p.m. each night and arrived at Clovis, New Mexico at 10:30 a.m. that next morning (two hours before the arrival of the Train # 1, the "San Francisco Chief," from Chicago to California). The train, now # 75, left Brownwood at 2:00 am and arrived in Sweetwater at 4:25 am.

The eastbound "California Special," #76 left Clovis at 4:45 p.m. (one hour after the arrival of Train #2 of the "San Francisco Chief," California to Chicago), arriving in Houston at 8:15 a.m. the following morning. The train #76 made its 12:25-12:50 a.m. in Brownwood.

A person, who rode the "California Special" in 1966, said that it had a full lunch counter diner and dormitory lounge. During 1968 Santa Fe received permission to drop ten trains; one of them was the "California Special. The train

was discontinued on July 18, 1968. The "San Francisco Chief" itself was discontinued on April 30, 1971 after seventeen years of operation.

**The "Texan":** "The Texan" started as a named passenger train that was Train No. 80 eastbound, which was applied to the eastbound train from Clovis to Temple, as part of the "California Special." This special train started at the same time as the westbound California Special on February 7, 1915. About 1954, "The "Texan" name was dropped in favor of the "California Special." In 1936, the train left Sweetwater at 7:45 pm and arrived in Brownwood at 10:30 pm.

**"The Angelo"** "The Angelo" was a new named train between Dallas...Ft. Worth and San Angelo began November 13, 1931. It ran to and from San Angelo and from San Angelo to Fort Worth daily. Train No.77 was the east bound train and Train No. 78 was the westbound train. It arrived in Brownwood at 8:30 a.m., having left Dallas at 9:30 p.m. the previous night. Some cars from "The Angelo" were switched on to the "California Special" at Brownwood providing through service from Dallas to California. It then continued on to San Angelo. It then left San Angelo a 8:30 p.m. that night and arrived back in Dallas at 8:30 a.m. the next morning.

The train carried a diner and lounge. In the late 50's two Alco 51 Class locomotives would bring the Fort Worth and Dallas train #77 to Brownwood, while two more of the class diesels would bring train #46 up from Houston. At Brownwood, three of the units would couple to train #75 to Clovis, New Mexico, while the third diesel could take the heavyweight stub on to San Angelo.

By 1942 the train was leaving Dallas at 10:00 p.m. and arriving in Brownwood at 4:00 a.m. in the morning and in San Angelo by 8:55 a.m.

As one person remembered, the train consisted of five cars including the Pullman. Towards the last, it was reduced to three cars. It always had a baggage-PRO and at least a baggage-express car plus the passenger equipment. In June 1965, service on the 94-mile stretch between Brownwood and San Angelo was ended and the rest of the route became "freight only" in July 1968. Note that the "California Special" and "The Angelo" all stopped in Brownwood in the middle of the night.

**Special Trains:** There were, from time to time, several special trains that came through Brownwood or originated in Brownwood. Here are a few that we know about.

**Four Different Special Boy Scout Jamboree Trains”** On Thursday, June 24, 1937, twenty-five Boy Scouts entrained for Washington at 12:30 a.m. from Brownwood. The troop traveled in a special car on the regular Santa Fe train from Brownwood to Fort Worth, where it was attached to a special Jamboree train at 3:30 p.m. to Washington. Other cars on the special train out of Fort Worth had Boy Scout troops from Abilene, Lubbock, Sweetwater, San Angelo, Fort Worth and finally Texarkana. They arrived in Washington Saturday, June 26, and returned to Brownwood on July 12, 1937.

Again, on Saturday, June 24, 1950, seventy Boy Scouts and Scouters boarded a special Santa Fe passenger train at 1:45 a.m. for Fort Worth. Several cars of the train were then hooked to a larger special to the National Scout Jamboree in Valley Forge, PA., which included a total of 22 cars. The special out of Brownwood also included Boy Scout groups from Lubbock and San Angelo. Their cars were added to the special out of Brownwood. They arrived in Washington, D. C. 8 hours late. They took a steam engine train to Chicago, and then out of Chicago a diesel engine took them to Pittsburgh, PA where a steam engine added on in front of the diesel to get them over the Allegheny Mountains. From Harrisburg, Penn. They took an electric engine into Washington, C. C., via Baltimore, Md.

On Saturday, July 24, 1953, 1:45 a.m., Boy Scouts and Scouters boarded a special Santa Fe train for Fort Worth where additional units were attached to the train for its trip to the National Jamboree at Valley Forge, PA. Regular Santa Fe trains, arriving from San Angelo and Lubbock after midnight, switch cars to the local Scout special. They arrived in Fort Worth at 6:15 a.m., Saturday, where additional cars were added. Another car was picked up at Ardmore, OK at 9:45 a.m. Another section was attached to the special at Newton, Kansas at 6:15 p.m. The special train arrived at Washington, D.C. at 6:30 a.m. Monday, June 26.

Seventy-four Scouts from the Concho Valley Council, San Angelo made the trip to the 1957 National Jamboree by special train to the event. Special coaches and a baggage car on the train accommodated the Scouts. Jackie Jones relates that he went by car from Del Rio to San Angelo to the train station. He remembers there being an engine and two passenger cars. In Brownwood, they joined a delegation of forty-eight Scouts, Explorers, and leaders of the Comanche Trail Council who boarded the train at midnight for the fourth annual National Jamboree. The special train, which made the trip to Valley Forge, was organized in Fort Worth. Houston-Galveston coaches were added to the train and more cars were added at St. Louis. They arrived at Valley Forge at 7 a.m. on a Tuesday, three days prior to the official opening of the Jamboree on Thursday. This was the last time that the Boy Scouts went to a Jamboree by train.

**"Texas Aggie Band Special":** On October 6-7, 1961 when the "Texas Aggie Band Special" operated to Lubbock for a Southwest Conference match up between cross state rivals Texas A&M and Texas Tech. This was a 350 piece marching band, with all their band instruments, including something like two dozen tubas, percussion equipment, uniforms, and chaperons across the state of Texas. The train, consisting of a baggage car and five, 72 seat El Capitan Hi-level chair cars, operated 437 miles to Temple, Brownwood, Sweetwater and Lubbock as a second section of Train No. 66-75, the "California Special."

**"Football Special":** On September 21, 1962, a twenty-car Santa Fe "Football Special" train ran from Brownwood to Cleburne for the opening high school game of the season. The train traveled to Cleburne via Comanche, Dublin, Stephenville and Cresson. Each car carried from 48-66 passengers. The train left Brownwood Santa Fe passenger depot at 3:30 p.m. and returned to Brownwood about 1 a.m. in the morning. Eighteen of the cars were for passengers, one for baggage and one for concessions. The Brownwood Lions Club sponsored the trip and manned the concession car. During seven hours on the train over 2,500 soft drinks were consumed.

Sold on the train were 30 boxes of candy; 1,200 sandwiches of 1,300 made; 36 dozen boiled eggs; 88 pounds of hot dog wieners and 120 packages of buns. Over 900 tickets were sold for the train. The Brownwood Bulletin published a "Lion Special Souvenir Edition" on September 21, 1962. Ten school buses at Cleburne transported passengers from the cars to the stadium and then back after the game. The first group transported from the train to the game was the band, drill team and cheerleaders. Brownwood Lions won the game 20-0 under Coach Gordon Wood.

**Locomotives Used in Passenger Trains:** Of course, the first locomotives were the old steam ones that were required to stop often to replenish their water supply in the tender. This created many new communities on their route and depots to be serviced by the passenger train. They were required at first to stop at least 10 minutes at each community that had a depot. Steam locomotives were later replaced by other more cost efficient means of moving passenger trains. The Diesel Locomotive was the most recognized, and still in service today. But, there was also the gas electric Motor Cars, known as the "Doodlebug."

**Doodlebug:** On short runs, when it became too expensive to use steam locomotives, the railroad used gas electric Motor Cars (Doodlebugs) which were locomotives that included in one piece, the locomotive, a freight section, and a passenger section all in one car. Doodlebugs were used on trains No. 75 & 76

in 1930 that ran to and from San Angelo and Brownwood. By 1932 the Doodlebugs ran from Temple to San Angelo. Apparently that was too long a stretch for the Doodle Bug as the next year it was from Brownwood to San Angelo only. By 1934, that was shortened to run only between Coleman and San Angelo. Once again, in 1936, the Doodlebug pulled trains from Temple to Brownwood. This continued until 1956.

Starting in 1940, the Doodlebug ran trains from Brownwood to and from Menard on trains No. 81 & 82. This continued until April 30, 1954, when passenger service was discontinued between the two communities.

Motor Cars numbered M150 and M151 were eventually discontinued and laid up in Brownwood at the roundhouse as of November 6, 1959. They were later scrapped.

**Diesel Locomotives:** A story in the *Brownwood Bulletin*, February 21, 1949, said "Operation through Brownwood of Diesel semi-streamlined Santa Fe passenger trains on new, faster schedules was launched last night with a group of eight Brownwood men on the inaugural run out of Houston. Pulled by a 720-ton Diesel locomotive, the nine-car train left Houston on its inaugural run at 6:50 p.m. Sunday, arriving in Brownwood at 2:38 a.m. today; one hour and thirty minutes faster than the old schedule. On the inaugural run the train was composed of three Pullmans, two chair cars, one coach, a diner, lounge and baggage car."

09/06/2010