

North Texas Chapter – National Railway Historical Society



October Chapter Meeting

When: Tuesday, October 4th, NT Chapter Meeting @ 7:30 (Meet and Greet at 7:00)
 Where: Texas and Pacific Depot in downtown Fort Worth
 Program: Video: When Giants Roamed, Part I (We previously saw Part II in June)
 Location: 221 West Lancaster Avenue, Fort Worth, Texas 76102



Historic Texas and Pacific Depot (top left) and next to the T&P Tavern. Come early and dine at the T&P Tavern (former T&P Diner), pictured on the bottom left.

Link to Directions, Parking Info and Menu for T&P Tavern

<https://tptavern.com/home>

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Our October meeting will be held in the common area (covered Patio) inside the

San Antonio Rail Attractions – Part Two “The Cattleman Square Historic District”

By Wayne Smith (Including All Photos)

The Cattleman Square Historic District is a small collection of streets on the west side of IH-35 immediately west of downtown. The buildings within the district include a variety of late 19th and early 20th century commercial and industrial structures. The Cattleman Square Historic District is roughly bounded by Travis and Martin Streets to the north, Buena Vista and Commerce Streets to the south, Pecos La Trinidad (IH-35) to the east, and the railroad tracks to the west. Cattleman Square was designated a local historic district in 1985.

In 1881, four years after the first rail line was extended to San Antonio, the International and Great Northern Railroad (I&GN) opened its line from St. Louis to San Antonio. The first I&GN depot was constructed shortly thereafter at West Houston Street in what is today within the historic district boundary. The expansion of the railroad to this community led to a flurry of real estate activity in the area, including a mix of new residential, industrial, and commercial buildings.

Main Source of Text in this Article:

<https://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/scoutsa/HistoricDistricts/CattlemanSquare>



This is the front of the former **International & Great Northern Railroad Depot**, now occupied by **VIA Metropolitan Transit**. To the left is the former **I&GN Railroad Hotel** and to the right is **VIA Metropolitan Transit’s West Side Multimodal Transit Center**. Once upon a time, this **International & Great Northern Depot** was called the “**Taj Mahal of Texas**”.

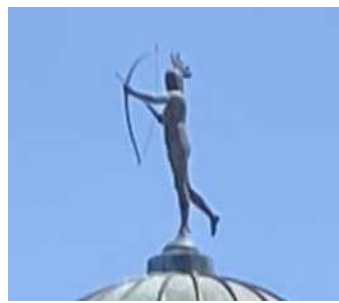
One of the most significant buildings within the district is the former I&GN Railroad Passenger Station at 123 N. Medina. The **I&GN Railroad Passenger Station**, later known as the Missouri Pacific Station, was designed in 1907 by architect Harvey L. Page. The majestic building is of steel frame construction in the plan of a Greek cross, with tan brick cladding, a central dome, bell towers, mission-style parapets, stained glass windows, and barrel vaults on the interior. The lantern over the dome features a bronze Indian figure. It is one of two remaining railroad stations in San Antonio, along with the Southern Pacific Depot or Sunset Station on the city's east side. The station was built to replace the earlier wood-frame I&GN depot constructed in the late nineteenth century on W. Houston Street. The railroad eventually linked Austin to Laredo, providing a route into Mexico. The depot closed in 1979 but has since been restored and is utilized as a banking facility by Generations Federal Credit Union. ***Editor's Note – Generations Federal Credit Union did indeed renovate the depot in the mid-1980's. However, VIA Metropolitan Transit bought the depot from Generations Federal Credit Union in approximately 2010 and eventually built the West Side Multimodal Transit Center across the street and currently offices out of the I&GN Depot. VIA also has plans to build a streetcar system in San Antonio.**

Another building of note within Cattleman Square is the former **I&GN Hotel (Heimann Building)** at 118 N. Medina. The three-story brick building was constructed in 1909 by noted San Antonio architect Atlee B. Ayres. Located across the street from the railroad station, the building was owned by businessman Silva Heimann and housed the International and Great Northern Hotel on the second and third floors. The intersection of Medina and Houston Streets was one of the busiest in the city with commercial and transportation activity. The area deteriorated after World War II, with many buildings demolished for construction of the interstate. In the 1970s, the Heimann Building reportedly had a cameo role in the movie "The Getaway" with Steve McQueen. The building remained mostly vacant until 2000 when it was rehabilitated for the national headquarters of Avance, a non-profit organization. Cattleman Square continues to boast a variety of late 19th and early 20th century commercial and industrial structures today. ***Editor's Note – The Avance name is still on the building, but the building is currently boarded up. However, the building does look like it is still being maintained. Look closely below and at least a dozen homeless people can be seen encamped along the front and side of the former I&GN Hotel.**





A close up of the front shows a lot of the former depot's remarkable features. As stated above, "The majestic building is of steel frame construction in the plan of a Greek cross, with tan brick cladding, a central dome, bell towers, mission-style parapets, stained glass windows, and barrel vaults on the interior. The lantern over the dome features a bronze Indian figure."



The I&GN dubbed themselves “The Texas Railroad”



Left: One of the stained glass windows is seen on the front of the building.

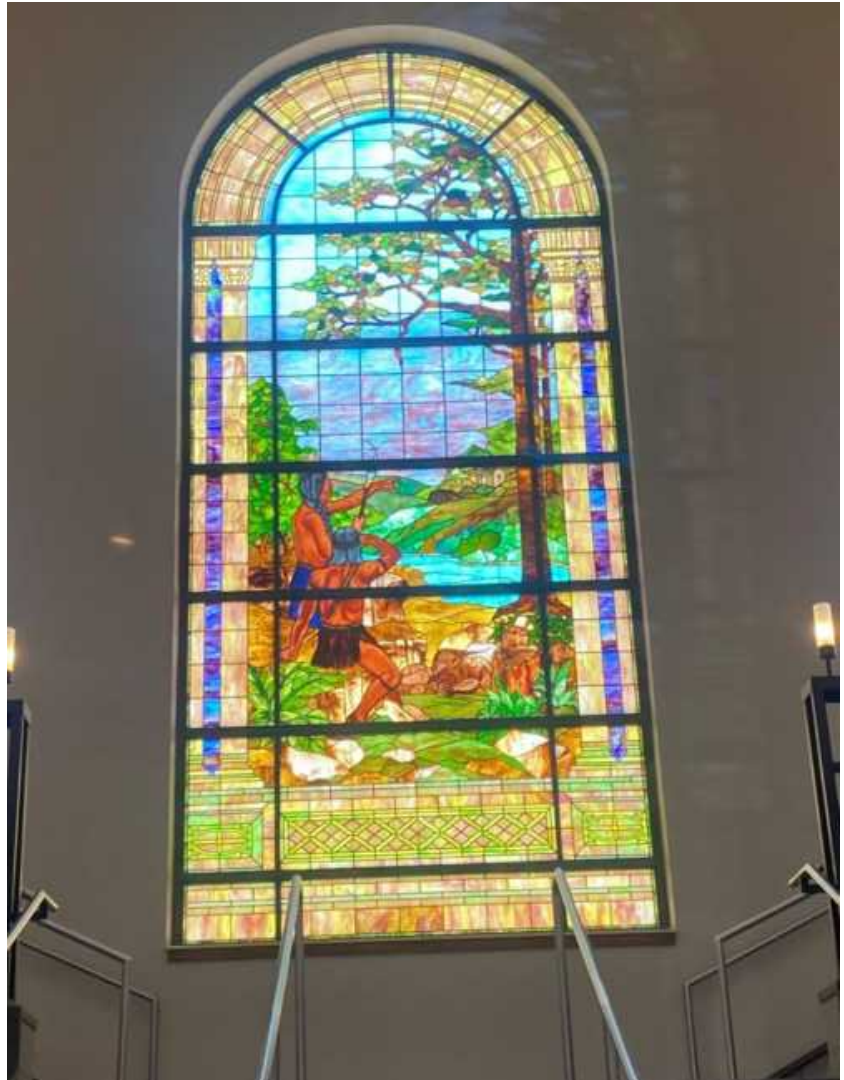
Below: One of the bell Towers.



We are looking at the depot from the north side with the central dome, bell towers and mission-style parapets in clear view. The largest stained glass window is seen from this side of the building.

The photo on the last page shows the stained glass from the outside. The photo to the right shows the brilliance of the stained glass window from the inside as we look up the stair case leading to the second floor. This famous art piece depicts two Native Americans looking across a river with one of them pointing in the same direction.

Below: This photo was hung on an interior wall near the front entrance with no captions. It is assumed that this is a scene from yesteryear at an Interurban facility in San Antonio. Pardon the extreme reflection of the editor in the photo.





Above is an interior shot looking toward the front door. The stained glass window on the second floor is seen from the outside that bears the railroad’s initials, “I&GN”.



The I&GN Depot is now occupied by VIA Metropolitan Transit. Unfortunately, the editor did not spot the plastic bag hung up in the tree (on the left) when this photo was taken!





Above is a more straight on shot of the International & Great Northern Railroad depot, which also shows a little more of the I&GN Hotel to the left. It is obvious that the hotel was a beautiful building back in its heyday. It was difficult to get a clean picture due to a steady stream of homeless people and bus riders crossing the road to/from the Transit Center on the right. Below: Miscellaneous Shots.



Photos by Chapter Members While Out And About



The above picture was on the wall at **Saltgrass Steakhouse** in Irving, TX. Submitted by Jon Shea.



Skip Waters reported that the railroad themed **Country Pride Restaurant** has finally reopened after closing during Covid. It is located at the TA Truck Stop north of Hillsboro.



Country Pride Restaurant in Hillsboro also has a meeting room. An idea for a future meeting or excursion!



Of course, Skip sat at the **Sunbeam Booth** at the **Country Pride Restaurant** in Hillsboro!

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“Views From” and “Guts Of” Tower 55
A Photo Essay by Wayne Smith



Below Left: Ken Fitzgerald (center) is ready for our tour of Tower 55. Below Right: Safety Equipment required to access the physical plant include: eye protection, ear protection, hard hat, safety vest and steel-toed shoes. Gloves also must be readily accessible.





A row of signals span the North/South Bound Tracks at Tower 55.



The top/third floor is now empty with cheap desks and trash being all that remains.



Looking South (including lines leading to Temple, Waco, Waxahachie and Ney Yard) through a third floor tinted window.



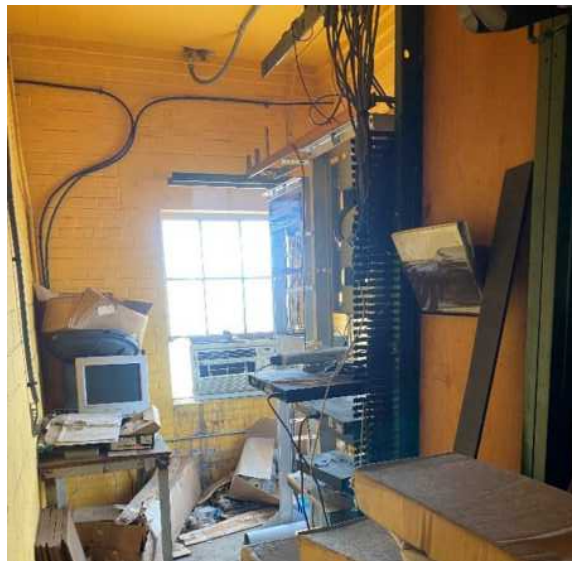
Looking North from the third floor. Tracks to Fort Worth Central Station and Saginaw Yard veer off to the left. See an enlarged photo below on page 14.



Looking West toward the T&P depot and Davidson Yard from the third floor with an east bound intermodal train moving through the physical plant.



Looking East toward Arlington and Dallas from the second story landing. The building on the top right is the former East Yard Office.



This room on the second floor looks like it once held computer servers for Tower 55.



In the same room as to the left, this second generation control panel/schematic was sitting on the floor and hopefully will be saved and moved to a secure location for public viewing. An enlarged photograph is found on page 17. Compare it to the map on page 18.



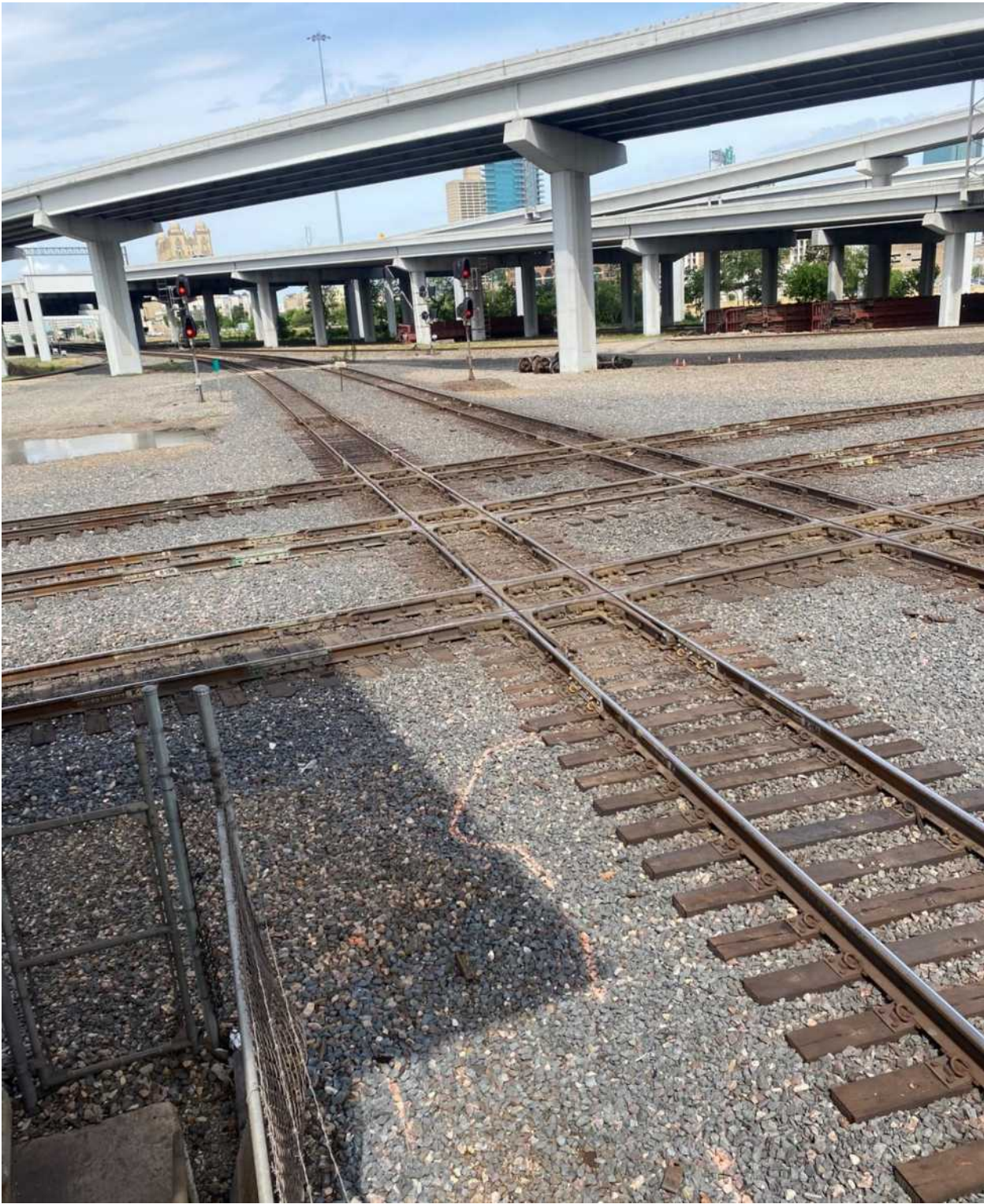
This closet on the second floor was full of electrical switches, relays and other electrical components. Another closet on the second floor held multiple large industrial batteries for backup to the physical plant and signals in case of a power failure.



This shot is looking down into the yard of Tower 55 from the second story landing. The building in the upper left hand corner is the former **East Yard Office**.



Here's a better shot looking north bound with tracks veering sharply left that feed into **Fort Worth Central Station** and on to the **Saginaw Yard**. Enlarge this photo to the full size of your computer screen when viewing online for best viewing.



This shot is from the second story landing with the five tracks that make up the busy diamond at Tower 55. The **T&P Depot** is seen in the upper left and part of **downtown Ft. Worth** is seen in the upper right.



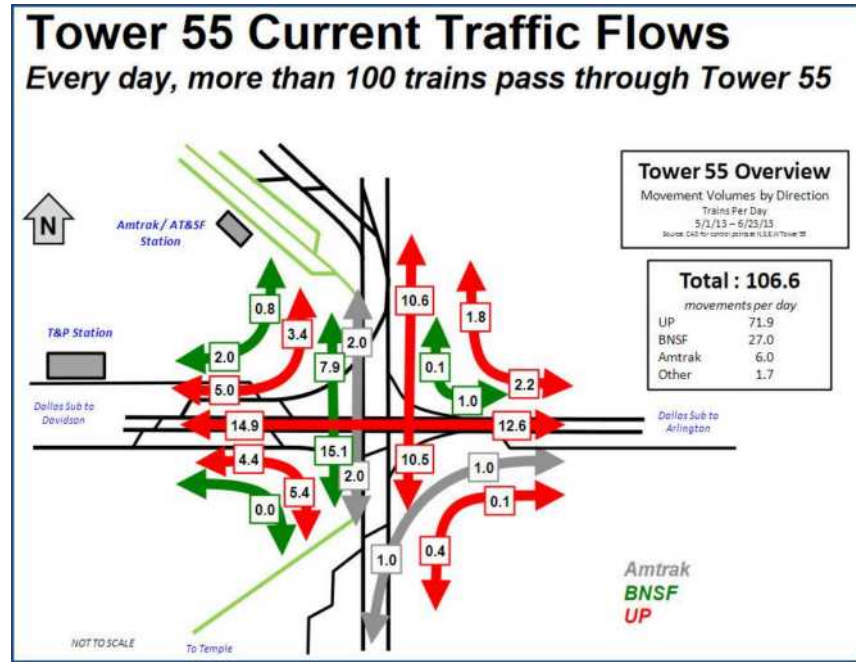
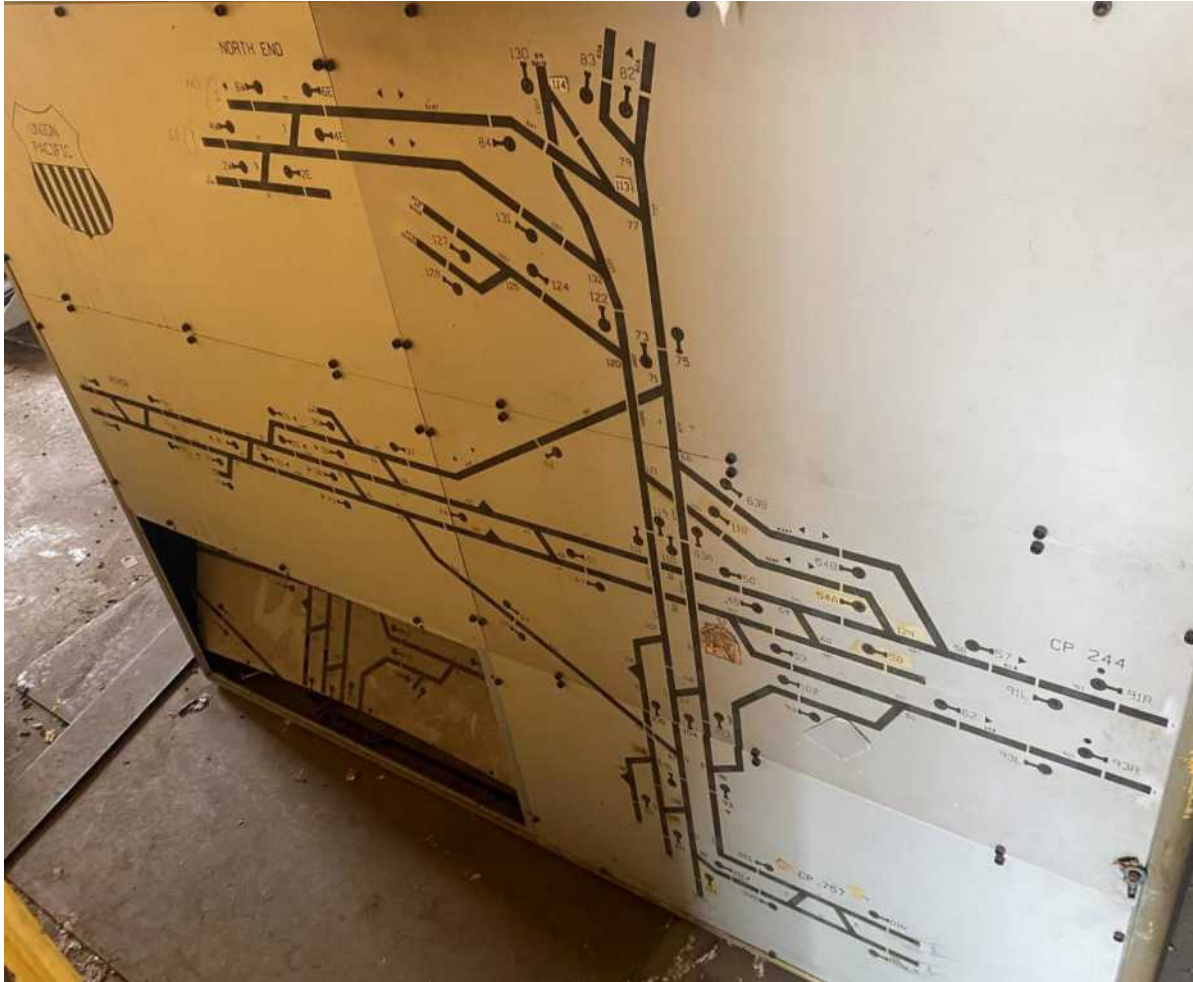
The first floor contained work benches with miscellaneous tools and spare parts. A drill press is seen on the left. In the picture on the right, a radiator can be seen. Also, the only restroom is located on the first floor.



Above: The door to the right leads to a room full of breaker boxes and then on to the outside yard.



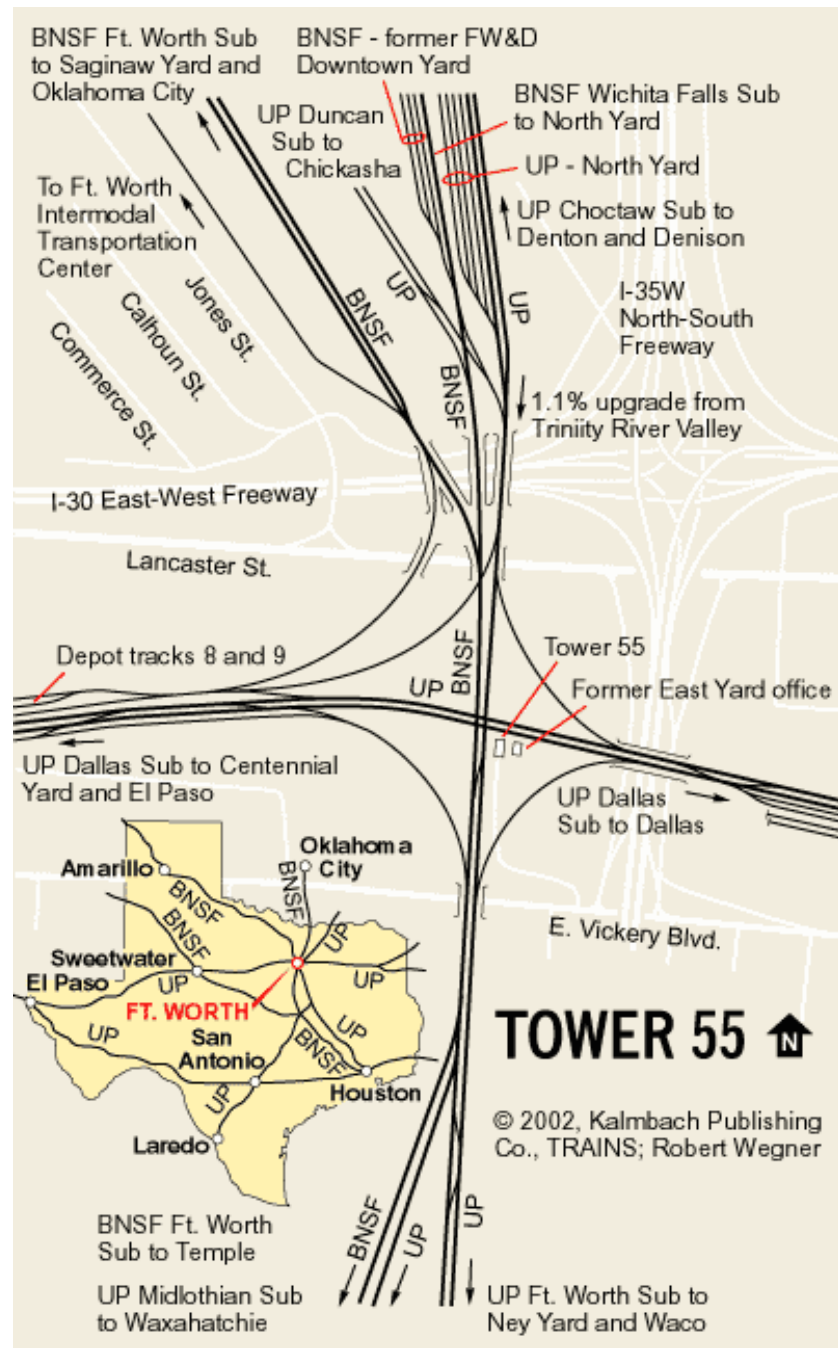
Maybe this homemade emblem was made in the shop on the first floor? This T&P emblem was mounted on one of the closet doors in Tower 55.



Tower 55 is one of the nation’s busiest and most congested rail intersections. Located just south of downtown Fort Worth, Texas, Tower 55 holds vital national and international significance, connecting freight and passenger travel between the West Coast, Southeast, Midwest, Gulf Coast, Mexico and Canada.

At and around Tower 55, multiple rail movements converge. As many as 100 passenger and freight trains travel through the area every day, carrying high-priority intermodal goods, agricultural products, low-sulfur coal, and industrial and manufactured goods.

Source: Tower 55 Fact Sheet - Union Pacific



Even though it is from 2002 (and doesn't show the third north/south track added later), this map from *Trains*/Kalmbach Publishing is one of the best comprehensive directional maps of Tower 55 that can be found. Some of the names have changed. The UP Centennial Yard is now Davidson Yard. Remember when the Davidson Yard was called the Lancaster Yard before being changed to the Centennial Yard?

The Lancaster Yard was named after John Lancaster, former president of the Texas and Pacific.

Here is a nice link regarding the early history of Tower 55. <http://txrrhistory.com/towers/055/055.htm>

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Chapter members Skip Waters, Bill Long and AJ Roquevert attended the **2022 NRHS National Convention in California** this past spring. They took a side trip in Anaheim to ride the **Disneyland Railroad**. They are pictured on the left after stopping for a bite to eat while at **Disneyland**.

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DCTA and DART Approve Joint Rail Operations Facility

DCTA NEWS RELEASE, August 31, 2022

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Board of Directors approved an inter-local agreement with Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) for a Joint Rail Operations Facility (JROF) for testing, operations and maintenance of the new Stadler Fast Light Intercity and Regional Train (FLIRT) commuter rail vehicles for the DART Silver Line regional rail project currently under construction.



Located in Lewisville, TX, the joint facility is an expansion of the DCTA A-train Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF).

“The joint rail operations facility is an example of transit agencies working together to optimize use of public resources for enhanced efficiency across the region,” said Denton County Transportation Authority Interim CEO Paul Cristina. “Building relationships through projects like this enables the commuter railroads to move more people at lower cost. In short, increased connectivity means increased ridership.”

Scheduled to begin construction in the first quarter of 2023, the facility will be funded by DART, with DCTA providing design, construction and project management services.

“The JROF partnership between DCTA and DART furthers the region’s goals of collaboration and partnership that leverage infrastructure investments to better support regional mobility across North Texas,” said Deanna Leggett, DART EVP of Growth/Regional Development. “We supported DCTA in launching their A-train service over 10 years ago and they are returning the favor in supporting us in implementing Silver Line service. Our hope is that this partnership advances to include track upgrades that allows DCTA to connect in with our Silver Line service in Downtown Carrollton.”

The 26-mile DART Silver Line project will traverse seven cities between DFW Airport, Grapevine, Coppell, Dallas, Carrollton, Addison, Richardson and Plano. The primary purpose of the Silver Line is to provide passenger rail connections and service that will improve mobility, accessibility and system linkages to major employment, population and activity centers in the northern part of the DART Service Area.

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ANNOUNCEMENT!!!
To FALL PLANO TRAIN SHOW ATTENDEES

The Fall Plano Train Show (Plano, TX) will be October 1-2, 2022.
It will be held at the Plano Centre. 2000 East Spring Creek Parkway.
Go East from Central Expressway (Exit 31)
Hours 10am-5pm Saturday, 10am-4pm Sunday.

More info at:
<http://www.dfwtrainshows.com>

THEN on Saturday Night, October 1st, 2022.
The North Texas Chapter, National Railway Historical Society,
will host the Fall Plano Area Media-Slide Show and
NRHS Open House.
SHOW LOCATION: - NEW LOCATION!!!!
Interurban Railway Museum
901 East 15th Street
Plano, TX 75074

Show Time: **6:00pm until 9:00pm**
(the Train Show closes at 5:00pm).

SEATING MAY BE LIMITED, SO GET THERE EARLY!

Show Admission is free!
RETURN of the PIZZA PARTY!!!
We will pass the hat for PIZZA and have it delivered midway through the show!

**If YOU would like to be a presenter, please reply directly to me,
Skip Waters <wgcrush@swbell.net>, NOT to any email or Facebook group,
NO LATER THAN 12:00 noon CST on Sunday, September 25th, 2022.**

If you know the subject of your presentation, please tell me
(having a subject is not mandatory).

List type of media you plan to show:

1) Slides, 2) Digital photos, 3) Videotape or 4) DVD.

After all presenters have identified themselves, I'll let them know
A.S.A.P. how much time each will have at the show. You can go ahead
and start putting your material together now, but keep it adjustable so
you can make it fit the time allotted when I announce it after January
10th. You'll still have about one week to finalize it after I make that
announcement.

One program note: Please limit Video or DVD to 15 minutes.
Slides will only be limited by the available time divided by the number of
presenters.

Remember, the DEADLINE for getting your name on the PRESENTATION LIST
is 12:00 noon CST on **Sunday, September 25th, 2022.**

Don't miss the train, let me know today!

Thanks for your interest!

Please pass this on to anyone that might be interested in this show.

Best regards,
Skip Waters
Show Chairman
North Texas Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
214-987-2888 office
<http://ntxnrhs.org>

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Minutes of the September 2022 Meeting of the North Texas Chapter of the NRHS

The September 2022 meeting of the North Texas Chapter of the NRHS meeting was held on Tuesday, September 6 at the Spring Creek BBQ in Lewisville, TX. There were 18 attendees.

President Wayne Smith called the meeting to order at 7:14 PM. The first order of business was to recognize special attendee Ron Anderson, past Secretary and President of the North Texas Chapter. It has been some time since he last visited, and he was invited to visit again soon.

Wayne said he will publish the photos taken when he recently visited Tower 55 in Ft. Worth, TX. Many of these photos were taken inside the tower, which has been unoccupied for some time. With the tower's future uncertain, these could be valuable photographs.

The Plano Train Show will take place Saturday and Sunday, October 1 and 2, at the Plano Event Center in Plano. There are some open shifts for the Chapter to fill, so anyone willing to cover should contact Wayne.

Treasurer Bob Kennedy said that National Chapter dues renewal notices should be issued soon by mail. Remember that National and Local Chapter dues are paid in two entirely different processes. Do not try to pay Local dues with National dues, and vice versa. Local Chapter dues notices will be issued in an October-December time frame. Local Chapter dues can be paid by check (\$16.00) or on-line (\$16.50). If paying by check (or cash), one can pay at one of the Chapter meetings (HIGHLY recommended if paying by cash). Or mail a check to Bob Kennedy. Since he only checks the Chapter mailbox infrequently, mail the dues to 3304 Cross Bend Rd., Plano, TX 75023.

Member Elden Baker noted that the concrete platform for the steam locomotive display at the Anna, TX depot and museum may be poured in late October.

The October Chapter meeting will take place at the T&P Station in Ft. Worth, TX. We will meet in the courtyard just outside the T&P Tavern.

If driving in, free parking should be available in the Trinity Metro Park and Ride lot under the freeway. Going westbound on East Lancaster Ave., turn left (south) on Main St., go under the railroad tracks and freeway, and turn right (west) on Vickery Blvd. Enter the lot through a large driveway on the right. Enter the station through glass doors, and walk along the breezeway under the tracks until you reach the courtyard and tavern. **(Editor's Note – According to the T&P Tavern, "There is PLENTY of FREE parking in the back of the T & P Building in the TRE/Textrail commuter lot located at 200 W Vickery Blvd. Walk north through train tunnel and arrive at our patio.")**

If arriving by train, use the stairways or elevators to reach the breezeway and the courtyard and tavern.

The evening's program was the video "Vintage Cab Units". The meeting adjourned about 8:30 PM.

Jerry M. Nunn, Secretary, North Texas Chapter, NRHS

Chapter Directory

North Texas Chapter Officers, 2022

- *President, Wayne Smith, 940-300-4407
- *Vice President/Programs, Jon Shea, 972-948-2413
- *Vice President/Trips and Events, Skip Waters, wgcrush@swbell.net
- *Vice President/Communications, Vacant
- *Secretary, Jerry Nunn
- *Treasurer, Bob Kennedy
- *National Representative, Bill Long
- *Webmaster, Kim Hays, kimhays516@gmail.com
- *Zephyr Editor, Wayne Smith

Chapter Business Address: North Texas Chapter, NRHS, P.O. Box 600304, Dallas, Texas 75360

Chapter Email: northtexaschapternrhs@gmail.com

North Texas Chapter site: <https://ntxnrhs.org/>

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/409467244127/>

North Texas Zephyr (current issues): [The Zephyr Newsletter - North Texas Chapter, NRHS \(ntxnrhs.org\)](http://TheZephyrNewsletter-NorthTexasChapter,NRHS(ntxnrhs.org))

Zephyr Archives: [Rail History Newsletters \(gogeocaching.com\)](http://RailHistoryNewsletters(gogeocaching.com))

North Texas Chapter History

Founded and chartered in 1996, the North Texas Chapter is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Texas. Emphasis of the chapter is activity, history, and enjoyment of railroading past and present. Meetings are usually held 7:30-9:30 PM, the first Tuesday of each month. Visitors and newcomers are welcome.

Chapter membership includes our monthly chapter newsletter, the North Texas Zephyr. Currently, chapter dues are \$16, plus \$2 per additional family member. Payment may be made by check or paid online. By check - Mail a check payable to "North Texas Chapter NRHS" for \$16 (individual) or \$18 (family) and mail it to North Texas Chapter NRHS, PO Box 600304, Dallas TX, 75360. If your check does not clearly indicate who the member is, please add a note with the member's name.

Online - Visit the chapter's on-line store at <https://ntxnrhs.org/store>

to pay by credit card or PayPal. A small service charge (50 cents for individuals, 75 cents for families) is added to your dues payment to cover processing fees.

Learn about the National Railway Historical Society at www.nrhs.com

Doodlebug News Briefs



MKT doodlebug M10

**October 1-2, Fall Train Show - Plano Centre/
October 1, Fall Plano Area Media-Slide Show and
NRHS Open House @ Plano Interurban Museum**

**October 4th, NT Chapter Meeting – T&P Tavern @
T&P Station Fort Worth. Meeting begins at 7:30 pm.**

**November 1st, Texas and Western Model Railroad
Club – Annual Chapter Auction. Details TBA.**

**December 6th, Chapter Christmas Party – Babe's
Chicken House @ North Richland Hills location.**

**January 3rd, Chapter Elections and Annual Show and
Tell. Location and details TBA.**

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Wayne Smith, North Texas News Editor.
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