

A Publication of the National Museum of Transportation Trolley Volunteers

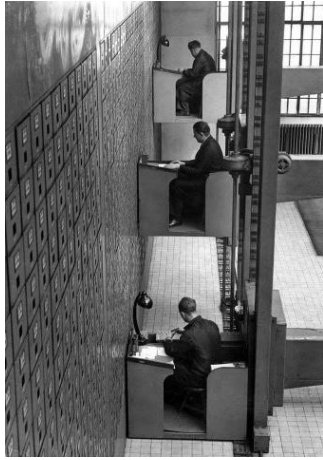
SCHEDULING TRAINING FOR CONDUCTORS & MOTORMEN SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

BASEBALL TRAINS - We're all disappointed that many events we enjoy have been cancelled. One of the most popular events here in St. Louis is, of course, Cardinals baseball. These days the season would be well underway by now, but back in the 1940s, baseball started a bit later in the Spring and ended a bit earlier in the Autumn. Here we have one of the railroad curator's favorite



baseball photos in the collection: "The Cardinals arrived back in St. Louis last night ready for the long season ahead after a spring training grind that finds most of the regulars ready to begin regular play. The three players pictured on the left, Ery Dusak (left), Harry Walker (center) and Stan Musial, are almost certain to see action in the spring series, which starts tomorrow against the Browns, who are due in town today. The picture was made as the trio disembarked at the Union Station." - Circa: April 11, 1947.

While train travel is far less common for sports teams today, in the late 19th Century and into the mid-20th Century it was very common for a baseball or football team to charter a train or a couple of sleeping cars for their road stands. Since there were no West Coast teams until the 1950s and most games were day games, it was easy for teams to finish up a game, pack up and head to the train station for their next game out of town. Players would enjoy a dinner in the dining car and then could unwind with a game of cards, reading or conversation in the lounge car before heading off to the sleeper for the night. The next day, the team could have breakfast on the train and be ready to head off to the stadium for another afternoon game. Once baseball became established on the West Coast, the Cardinals were forced to switch from trains to planes and the era of baseball teams taking the train came to a close.



FILE CLERKS working from their electric elevator desks in Prague, 1937. Over 3,000 drawers opened and closed electrically and were accessible by these desks which rose, fell and moved left or right at the push of a button.

VENICE ILLINOIS AND THE FERRY TO ST. LOUIS. - Before the bridges, the Ferry was one of the few ways to get across the Mississippi. When William Niedringhaus and his son, George discovered Granite City, Kinder, they had to take the North Street Ferry.



Dr. Cornelius Campbell and Charles Stamps, who were interested in the ferry business, platted the village of Venice in 1841. Its growth was slow because of the overflow of the Mississippi River. The land was covered with willows and cottonwood trees and was considered a swamp. Because the streets were flooded, the Village was called Venice.

As early as 1820, hand powered boats carried people across the river. By 1820, stage coaches traveled to the east side of the Mississippi River. Matthew Kerr, a merchant from St. Louis had established a horse ferry between the Kerr Island and St. Louis in 1826. The National Road terminated at the Kerr Ferry landing on the banks of the mile-wide Mississippi where it met the ferry boat called "Brooklyn". The Plank Road was 100 feet wide in this area and was called, "The National Way". There were two livery stables, three general stores, two blacksmith shops and a hotel. "The National Way" became a large trading center where people would stop before boarding the Kerr Ferry to take them to St. Louis. Matthew Kerr's horse ferry carried people, carts and animals to St. Louis. Later, Mr. Wiggins bought this ferry and





located at Ferry Street. He developed the control, of the river ferry traffic by running larger ferries that ran every hour. One ferry carried the travelers, stages, horses and wagons. Another ferry carried the cattle. By 1849, the Plank Road was completed between Edwardsville and Venice.

After the steamboat was introduced on the Mississippi River, a steam boat landing was located near the ferry. When the Chicago and Alton railroad was built through Venice, a railroad ferry went into operation. This railroad ferry discontinued after the railroad bridge was built in 1888.

Venice began to prosper. People traveling to the west stopped here before they crossed to St. Louis, the Gateway to the West. Venice became a center of trade and supplies. There was harness shop where harnesses could be purchased or repaired. Several blacksmith shops located near the ferry fitted the horses with shoes. A wagon shop repaired four wheeled vehicles, sold wagon parts and made wagons and buggies to order. There were several livery stables, where horses were boarded and feed for horses could be purchased. Travelers stocked up on supplies at several grocery stores in the area. Near every grocery store was a saloon where all men stopped for his supply of liquor and cigars.



The Stock Yards became an important industry in Venice. The farmers learned that it was more profitable to drive their hogs and cattle to the Yards and sell them than to slaughter them themselves. Buyers with headquarters at the Western Hotel, in the "Kinder Area", bought and sold the animals. Then the herd would be transferred to St. Louis on the ferry to the meat packers. Here they slaughtered the animals and prepared the dressed carcasses. Some of the meat was sold fresh, some was smoked. In the winter, meat was placed in barrels and shipped, but during the summer the meat industry was slow because there was no refrigeration. - *Credit: "The Great American Bottom" by Georgia M. Engelke. Photos: Pinterest, and are not of Venice.*



Lawn mower built by the Indian Motorcycle Company.

NINE FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE SUEZ CANAL

1. ITS ORIGINS DATE BACK TO ANCIENT EGYPT. - The modern Suez Canal is only the most recent of several manmade waterways that once snaked their way across Egypt. The Egyptian Pharaoh Senusret III may have built an early canal connecting the Red Sea and the Nile River around 1850 B.C., and according to ancient sources, the Pharaoh Necho II and the Persian conqueror Darius both began and then abandoned work on a similar project. The canal was supposedly finished in the 3rd century B.C. during the Ptolemaic Dynasty, and many historical figures including Cleopatra may have traveled on it. Rather than the direct link offered by the modern Suez Canal, this ancient “Canal of the Pharaohs” would have wound its way through the desert to the Nile River, which was then used to access the Mediterranean.

2. NAPOLEON BONAPARTE CONSIDERED BUILDING IT. - After conquering Egypt in 1798, the French military commander Napoleon Bonaparte sent a team of surveyors to investigate the feasibility of cutting the Isthmus of Suez and building a canal from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. But following four separate excursions to the region, his scouts incorrectly concluded that the Red Sea was at least 30 feet higher than the Mediterranean. Any attempt to create a canal, they warned, could result in catastrophic flooding across the Nile Delta. The surveyors’ faulty calculations were enough to scare Napoleon away from the project, and plans for a canal stalled until 1847, when a team of researchers finally confirmed that there was no serious difference in altitude between the Mediterranean and Red Seas.



Left: Ferdinand de Lesseps

3. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ITS CONSTRUCTION. -

Planning for the Suez Canal officially began in 1854, when a French former diplomat named Ferdinand de Lesseps negotiated an agreement with the Egyptian viceroy to form the Suez Canal Company. Since Lesseps’ proposed canal had the support of the French Emperor Napoleon III, many British statesmen considered its construction a political scheme designed to undermine their dominance of global shipping. The British ambassador to France argued that supporting the canal would be a “suicidal act,” and when Lesseps tried to sell shares in the canal company, British papers labeled the project “a flagrant robbery gotten up to despoil the simple people.” Lesseps went on to engage in a public war of words with British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, and even challenged railway engineer Robert Stephenson to a duel after he condemned the project in Parliament. The British Empire continued to criticize the canal during its construction, but it later bought a 44 percent stake in the waterway after the cash-strapped Egyptian government auctioned off its shares in 1875.

4. IT WAS BUILT USING A COMBINATION OF FORCED PEASANT LABOR AND STATE-OF-THE-ART MACHINERY.

Building the Suez Canal required massive manpower, and the Egyptian government initially supplied most of the labor by forcing the poor to work for nominal pay and under threat of violence. Beginning in late-1861, tens of thousands of peasants used picks and shovels to dig the early portions of the canal by hand. Progress was painfully slow, and the project hit a snag after Egyptian ruler Ismail Pasha abruptly banned the use of forced labor in 1863. Faced with a critical shortage of workers, Lesseps and the Suez Canal Company changed their strategy and began using several hundred custom-made steam- and coal-powered shovels and dredgers to dig the canal. The new technology gave the project the boost it needed, and the company went on to make rapid progress during the last two years of construction. Of the 75 million cubic meters of sand eventually moved during the construction of the main canal, some three-fourths of it was handled by heavy machinery.

5. THE STATUE OF LIBERTY WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR THE CANAL.

As the Suez Canal neared completion in 1869, French sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi tried to convince Ferdinand de Lesseps and the Egyptian government to let him build a sculpture called “Egypt Bringing Light to Asia” at its Mediterranean entrance. Inspired by the ancient Colossus of Rhodes, Bartholdi envisioned a 90-foot-tall statue of a woman clothed in Egyptian peasant robes and holding a massive torch, which would also serve as a lighthouse to guide ships into the canal. The project never materialized, but Bartholdi continued shopping the idea for his statue, and in 1886 he finally unveiled a completed version in New York Harbor. Officially called “Liberty Enlightening the World,” the monument has since become better known as the Statue of Liberty.



Left: The opening of the Suez Canal on November 17, 1869.

6. ITS CREATOR LATER TRIED—AND FAILED—TO BUILD THE PANAMA CANAL.

Having silenced his critics by completing the Suez Canal, Ferdinand de Lesseps later turned his attention toward cutting a canal across the Isthmus of Panama in Central America. Work began in 1881, but despite Lesseps’ prediction that the new canal would be “easier to make, easier to complete, and easier to keep up” than the Suez, the project eventually descended into chaos. Thousands died during construction in the sweltering, disease-ridden jungle, and the team burned through nearly \$260 million without ever completing the project. The company finally went belly up in 1889,



triggering a massive scandal that saw Lesseps and several others—including Eiffel Tower designer Gustave Eiffel, who had been hired to design canal locks—convicted of fraud and conspiracy. It would take another 25 years before the Panama Canal was finally completed in a decade-long, American-led construction project.

7. THE CANAL PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN A COLD WAR-ERA CRISIS.

In 1956, the Suez Canal was at the center of a brief war between Egypt and the combined forces of Britain, France and Israel. The conflict had its origins in Britain's military occupation of the canal zone, which had continued even after Egypt gained independence in 1922. Many Egyptians resented the lingering colonial influence, and tensions finally boiled over in July 1956, when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, supposedly to help fund a dam across the Nile River. In what became known as the Suez Crisis, a combined British, Israeli and French force launched an attack on Egypt in October 1956. The Europeans succeeded in advancing close to the canal, but later withdrew from Egypt in disgrace following condemnation from the United States and the threat of nuclear retaliation from the Soviet Union. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned in the wake of the scandal, and the Suez Canal was left under Egyptian control.

Sunken ships during the 1956 Suez Canal Crisis (Credit: Fox Photos/Getty Images)

8. A FLEET OF SHIPS WAS ONCE STRANDED IN THE CANAL FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS. During June 1967's Six Day War between Egypt and Israel, the Suez Canal was shut down by the Egyptian government and blocked on either side by mines and scuttled ships. At the time of the closure, 15 international shipping vessels were moored at the canal's midpoint at the Great Bitter Lake. They would remain stranded in the waterway for eight years, eventually earning the nickname the "Yellow Fleet" for the desert sands that caked their decks. Most of the crewmembers were rotated on and off the stranded vessels on 3-month assignments, but the rest passed the time by forming their own floating community and hosting sporting and social events. As the years passed, the fleet even developed its own stamps and internal system of trade. The 15 marooned ships were finally allowed to leave the canal in 1975. By then, only two of the vessels were still seaworthy enough to make the voyage under their own power.

9.-IT'S ABOUT TO GET A MAJOR OVERHAUL. - The Suez Canal has enjoyed increased traffic in recent years, with roughly 50 ships passing through its waters every day. Shipping tolls allow Egypt to rake in around \$5 billion annually, but the canal is still hampered by its narrow width and shallow depth, which are insufficient to accommodate two-way traffic from modern tanker ships. In August 2014, Egypt's Suez Canal Authority announced an ambitious plan to deepen the canal and create a new 22-mile lane branching off the main channel. Preliminary work has already begun on the \$8.5 billion project, which Egyptian authorities claim could more than double the canal's annual revenue by 2023.

RAILROAD ENGINEERS REDEFINE WARFARE - The Civil War brought about many new weapons, including changing railroads from a form of transportation to armored weaponry. Second only to waterways as a way to transport troops, railcars also used to scout terrain, gain information on opposition troops, ram enemy trains, and even deception. Because of the threat, trains soon became a target themselves. To thwart sharpshooters, engineers outfitted locomotives with armor.

Mines placed under the railroad tracks countered that precaution, which led to the use of flatcars that were sent over tracks to test for hazards before the locomotive passed. These technologies contributed to the development of armored tanks.
