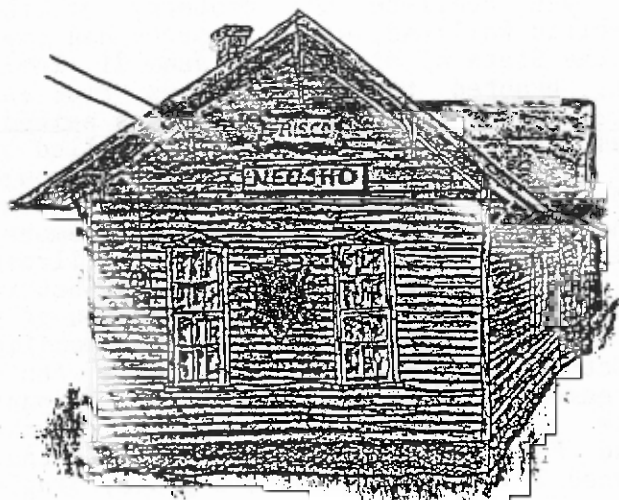


## The Legend of the Coonskin

FRISCO



In the late 1800's, Mr. G. H. Nettleton, then Vice-President of the railroad, was making an inspection tour of the system. As the train pulled into the depot at Neosho, Missouri, Mr. Nettleton's private car stopped in view of the west end of the building, on which there was tacked a coon hide to dry. When he saw the hide, he immediately summoned the local agent, Sam Albright, to the business car. "What's that thing doing tacked on the end of the depot?" roared the Vice-President, "and just what do you think you are doing using company property for tanning hides?"

Albright quickly replied that it was hard to support a family on the \$1.25 per ten-hour day salary he was receiving from the railroad, and that he was catching, tanning, and selling coon hides to supplement his meager paycheck.

Mr. Nettleton promptly reminded Mr. Albright that railroading should come first! When the agent agreed, Mr. Nettleton said, "Well, having a hobby is O.K. as long as company property is not improperly used." To the agent's surprise, the Vice-President then asked him how much he would take for the coonskin. When Albright replied, "two bucks," Nettleton agreed and the matter was settled. After the inspection of the Neosho facility was completed, Mr. Nettleton boarded the train and left with the coonskin in hand. As the train slowly pulled out of the depot, Mr. Albright stood and watched in amazement, wondering what on earth a company official would want with an old coonskin that he paid too much money for!

It wasn't long afterward that an ink outline of the tightly stretched skin began to appear on Frisco drawing boards in the St. Louis office, but instead of hanging up-side-down, the hide was turned horizontally. By early 1900, the emblem began to appear on many company documents with the letters... F R I S C O inserted inside the outline. The FR was taken from "Francisco" in San Francisco, the IS from the "Louis" in St. Louis, and the CO for "Company." While the company name officially remained the St. Louis - San Francisco Railway or Railroad Company, it became better known as the FRISCO. A photo of the original coonskin is on display in the museum and the skin on the drawing of the Neosho depot is an actual reduced reproduction of the museum photo.

FRISCO

### From the FRISCO library

Miner, Craig. The St. Louis-San Francisco Transcontinental Railroad - The Thirty-fifth Parallel Project, 1853-1890. Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1972.



"To the procession of success stories which constitute most of the published material on transcontinental railway enterprise, the history of the St. Louis-San Francisco project provides a welcome contrast. When there is no golden spike, no opening excursion, no junketing congressmen, and when the businessmen involved must face the transitory nature of a boom psychology from the wrong end, then and only then does self-deception concerning the stakes of the enterprise become impossible. This, combined with the element of high tragedy involved in the confrontation of the relatively ethical managers of this road with the relatively unethical managers of certain competitors, gives the study a kind of drama not found in smoother waters."

### THE ST LOUIS - SAN FRANCISCO

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

The Thirty-fifth Parallel Project, 1853-1890

Thus begins what is undoubtedly the most comprehensive written history of the Frisco Railway from its early inception up through the latter years of the nineteenth century. In eleven chapters, covering some 170 pages, Miner meticulously traces the development of the Frisco from the early Southwest Branch of the Pacific Railroad up to the organization of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad Co. in 1896. The book includes many photos and illustrations and a detailed 1896 Frisco System map showing construction steps. There is also included an excellent and well organized bibliography of railroad archives, printed sources, newspapers, public documents, books, and other related sources.

Miner's book is well written and a valuable source of information and enjoyment for the Frisco reader. It is available in selected book stores or may be ordered directly from the University Press of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas.

# THE FRISCO FAMILY

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**CLINTON B. FISK, Vice-Prest.**  
South Pacific Railroad Company, St. Louis, Mo.

The South Pacific Railroad Company was incorporated May 12, 1868, under the provisions of an act of the general assembly of Missouri approved March 17, 1868. The South Pacific Railroad Company was incorporated by Andrew Pierce, Jr., and Francis B. Hayes, of Boston, Mass., Clinton B. Fisk, of St. Louis, Mo., and certain of their associates, to take over and complete the property of the Southwest Pacific Railroad, which property had been seized by the State of Missouri on June 21, 1867, and in turn, granted to Pierce, Hayes, Fisk and associates. At the time its property was seized, the Southwest Pacific Railroad was controlled by the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company, through ownership of its entire outstanding capital stock, which company was controlled by John C. Fremont. At that time, the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company did not own any physical property, but it had a federal charter for the construction of a railroad from Springfield, Mo., to the Pacific Ocean. On October 26, 1870, in accordance with a previous agreement of June 11, 1868, the company conveyed its franchises and property to the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company. At that date, it owned 253 miles of standard gauge, single track railroad, located entirely in Missouri, extending from Franklin (now Pacific) in a southwesterly direction to Pierce City and about 39 miles of graded roadbed from Pierce City to Seneca, MO.

Next month... The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad

**FRISCO LINES**  
ST. LOUIS-SAN FRANCISCO BY

The Shortest Line Between  
**ST. LOUIS and MEMPHIS ...**

**TWO TRAINS DAILY**  
The Sunnyland


8:00 am Lv. St. Louis... Ar. 3:55 pm  
8:30 pm Ar. Memphis... Lv. 7:59 am  
Popular Seated Car Serving Meals with Budget Appeal

Memphian

11:30 pm Lv. St. Louis... Ar. 7:30 am  
7:15 am Ar. Memphis... Lv. 11:20 pm  
Sleeping Cars, Lounge Cars and Chair Cars.  
COMPLETELY AIR-CONDITIONED

**FRISCO**

**For Your Freight Shipments**



The All Aboard newsletter is published monthly for members of the Frisco Folks, a support organization of The Frisco Railroad Museum Inc., a not for profit corporation organized for the purpose of establishing The Frisco Railroad Museum in order to preserve, display, and educate citizens about, the history and memorabilia of the Frisco Railway. The museum facility is located at 500 Walker St. in Ash Grove, MO. Any correspondence should be mailed to P.O. Box 276, Ash Grove, MO 65604. The museum phone number is 417-672-3110. All material contained in the newsletter is copyrighted by the Frisco Railroad Museum Inc. and may not be reproduced in any manner without the expressed written consent of the museum President.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

June 1 to August 31

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Wednesday through Saturday

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday

The museum is closed Monday & Tuesday

September 1 to May 31

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday  
2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday

Other times available by appointment

### ADMISSION

"Admission FREE—Donations APPRECIATED"

The FRISCO Railroad Museum Inc. is not affiliated with the St. Louis San Francisco Railway Co., the Burlington Northern Railroad Co., or any of its subsidiaries.