

A History Hike Along the Frisco Trail and the Razorback Greenway



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Washington County Historical Society





Lafayette Street Overpass

The Lafayette Street Overpass was built in 1938 across the Fayetteville cut and above the St. Louis & San Francisco Railway. Prior to its construction, a one-lane wooden bridge spanned the gap. The Fayetteville population was between 7,000 and 8,000 at the time.

The concrete bridge was built through a cooperative effort between federal, state, municipal and private organizations. Its construction style is a single continuous girder span, and the bridge is 120 feet long. The roadway is 24 feet wide with 4-foot-wide sidewalks on either side.

Both it and the Maple Street Overpass were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. The Maple Street Overpass is different in construction, being an arch over a narrower, higher spot.



Frisco Railway

The St. Louis & San Francisco Railway built a line from Monett, Missouri, to Fort Smith and eventually to Paris, Texas. They reached Fayetteville in July 1881 and thousands of people came to Fayetteville to celebrate the arrival of the first train. Regular passenger service began a year later.

The cut to the north of the station was excavated and most of it was used to fill both sides of Dickson Street.

The first depot was a frame structure built north of the cut but soon the building above was built on the same site as the current depot. It was razed in the 1920s and the current depot and baggage station were built in 1926 in a southwestern style, similar to other structures that the railway was erecting at the time. The building in which Arsaga's operates was used for freight transfer.

Passenger service continued in Fayetteville until 1965 and Frisco merged with Burlington Northern in 1980, which eventually sold the Monett-Fort Smith section to the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad. The current depot is on the National Register.



Two Depot Views from 1920

Top, looking south along the track and boarding platform toward the Dickson Street crossing. This end of the building was the baggage transfer portion of the depot. Below, the east side of the depot from Dickson Street.





The Modern Depot

Above, the freight yard from the Lafayette Street Bridge as it appeared in 1964. Below, an A&M diesel engine crossing Dickson Street next to the depot in 2009.



Dickson Street

Dickson Street has been a connecting thoroughfare since the middle of the 19th century. It was named for Joseph Dickson and his family. He was a prominent businessman in Fayetteville during before the Civil War, but especially moreso after it. He and his family lived on the street in house near the president-day United Methodist Church and were instrumental in helping the church build upon that site.



George's Majestic

George Pappas opened the Majestic Cafe in 1927 as small lunch cafe with a garden patio enclosed by a picket fence on the back. When it opened, of course, prohibition was still in place, so alcohol wasn't served.

It soon became a favorite watering hole for professors, students, railway workers and townspeople. George's claims as its

honors to be the first bar to integrate in the late 1950s, the first bar in Northwest Arkansas to offer color television, and the first pizza delivery service in Northwest Arkansas.

Pappas sold the business to Mary and Joe Hinton in 1947, and Mary came to be known by generations of patrons during the next 40 years. She sold the business to Bill and Betty Harrison in 1987 and they in turn sold it to Brian Crowne and Suzie Stephens in 2004.

It is believed to be the oldest live music venue in operation in Arkansas.

Electric Light Works

Fayetteville's first electrical power company, the Fayetteville Electric Light Works, was built where the Powerhouse Seafood now does business.

A spring underneath the building provided water for a single boiler used to generate steam and run an electrical generating turbine. The crew consisted of a fireman to keep the boiler operating and an electrician.

They would work what they called a daylight shift. When there was no daylight, they worked – from sundown to sunup and on cloudy days, whenever electricity needed to be generated to power the city's electric lights.

Carl Bennett recalled that after shutting down the plant in the morning, he would then spend the day wiring new homes or extending the mains on poles. He worked for about 16 hours per day for \$60 per month in the late 19th century.

He described the electrical situation in not the most safety-inspiring way. It was a series type of system, and every additional light was added to the same circuit and increased the needed voltage. With that setup, the voltage got up to the level of 2,000 volts flowing through homes.



The Jerpe Dairy

The Metro Building housed the Jerpe Dairy during the middle part of the century. It produced milk and butter as well other farm-related produce. The picture above shows the “egg-breakers,” a team in the 1940s made up mostly of women who cracked eggs that were shipped to troops during World War II.

Jerpe was eventually sold to the Swanson Corporation, better known today for the frozen dinners that they created during the 1950s and 1960s.

Spring Street

Although most people know about Big Spring near the corner of East Spring Street and Willow Avenue, the spring beneath the Powerhouse building was nearly as big. Running between the two springs, the road became known by its only logical choice: Spring Street.

Nadine Baum Center

Across from the Metro Building, now known as the Nadine Baum Center, was McBride Distributing from 1974 to 1994. McBride then moved to the south part of town made their building available for use by the Walton Arts Center.

Charles “Mac” and Ruth McBride acquired the rights of an Anheuser-Busch wholesaler in 1949 and incorporated in February of 1950. McBride Distributing had one part-time sales employee, one truck, a station wagon and a 1950 Buick. According to the company, the annual sales that first year of about 9,600 cases and 300 kegs.

In 1964, Bob McBride took over the company at the age of 24. In 1974, this distribution facility was built. In 1994, McBride built a 70,000-square-foot warehouse on the south end of Fayetteville. At that point, the company had 37 employees, \$1.5 million in sales, and more than 18 different brands.

Nadine Baum Center is now the home to the Community Creative Center and TheatreSquared, the award-winning professional theatre company.

Porter Produce

John Porter operated a produce company at the corner of Spring Street and West Avenue. This part of Fayetteville was the industrial and wholesale part of town through most of the 20th century. From lumberyards to sand and gravel companies to commercial launderers to bakeries to ice houses.

Other food companies at the early part of the 20th century in this area included Ozark Foods, Armour & Co. Poultry, Swift Meatpacking and Shipley Bakery further up Dickson Street.

The Quonset Huts

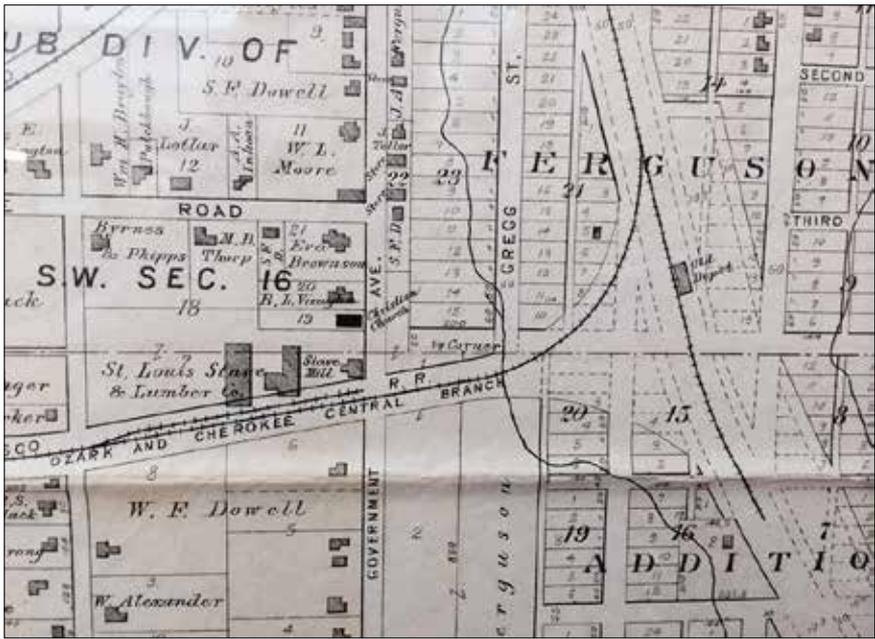
The Sweitzer Wagon Co. had lumber and manufacturing plants on this site until the early 20th century. The area between Meadow and Center streets was used by a variety of companies during the first half of the 20th century, including coal yards of the Fayetteville Coal Company, the Snowbird Coal Company and the Excelsior Coal Company; dairy operations such as the Buttermilk House creamery and the Ozark Dairy Products Company; and timber related businesses such as the Fayetteville Wagon Wood and Lumber Company; and even the Padd-Corley Iron Company.

The Quonset huts were built sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s. It first appeared in city directories in 1951 as the Sequoyah Feed and Supply. By 1955, it was listed as the home of Pillsbury Mills. Businesses moved in and out several times over the next decade, shifting toward use by roofing contractors and construction companies.

Denele Campbell acquired the property in the 1980s and rented out parts of it for a host of small business endeavors, including piano tuners, artist studios, sign painters, a cabinet shop among them. It was also used by an enormous number of local bands for rehearsal space, including Ultra Suede, Leah & the Mojo Doctors, Lucious Spiller, and Statik.

Prairie Street

At the turn of the 20th century, Prairie Street was known as Bridge Street because it provided the only bridge across what is known today as Tanglewood Creek.



Pacific & Great Eastern

Efforts to create the Pacific & Great Eastern was organized in 1870 in hopes tying into construction of a railway along the 35th parallel. Such a line might also connect the “waters of the Mississippi with the waters of the upper Arkansas” and points westward. Actual organization didn’t occur until 1884, with Benjamin and Perry Davidson among those incorporating the line.

The line was undercapitalized and only built as far as Wyman, where a small station was built. The nearby St. Paul Branch on the south side of the White River proved too much competition.

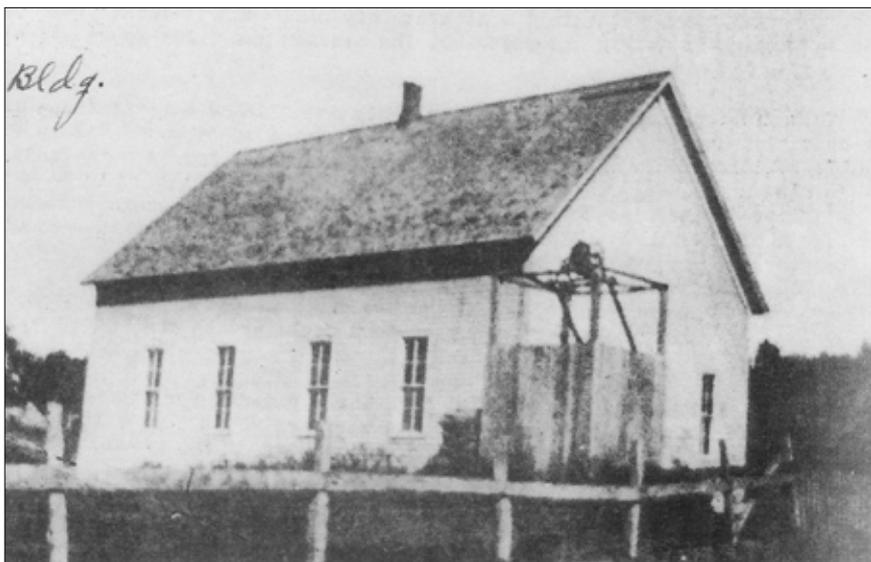
By about 1897, the citizens of Fayetteville had purchased the franchise, which entailed about 7 miles of track, and offered to donate the line and \$40,000 to the White River Valley Company on condition that work on the new road begin within the year with the objective of reaching the zinc fields to the east in Boone County. It didn’t pan out, and the line was eventually abandoned.

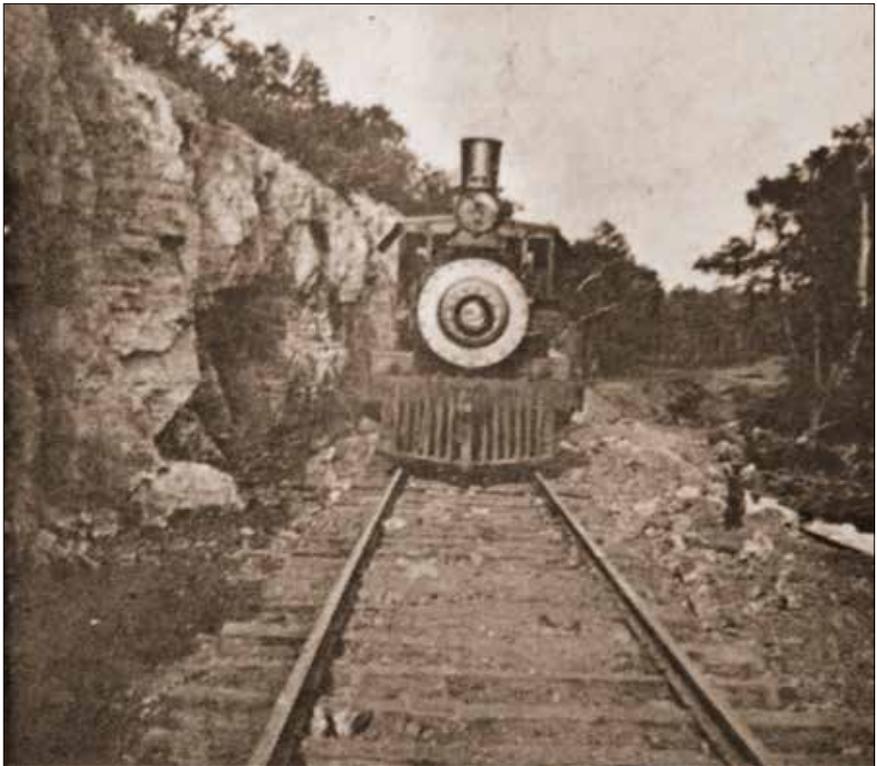
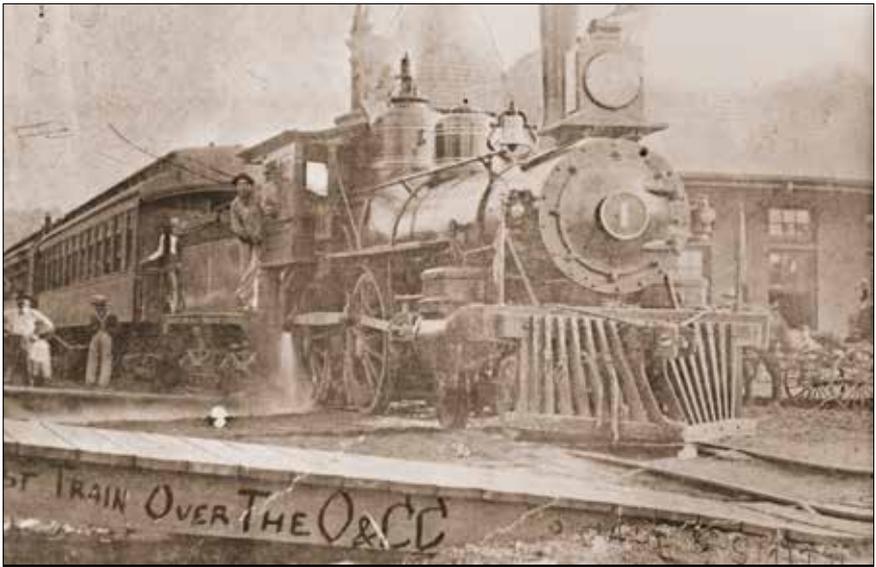
Quicktown

The part of town near the intersection of present-day Government Avenue and Prairie Street became known as Quicktown during the the end of the 19th century and remained known by that name into the early 20th century.

It was named after the Quick family — James W. Quick, a blacksmith, and his son William R. Quick. Quicktown rose and fell between 1883 and the early 1900s, according to Denele Campbell's history of the area. "During its prime, the 'town' hosted residences and businesses offering supplies, smithing, and other necessities of the day," she wrote.

Businesses in the area included machine shops, grocers and mercantiles, barbers, and drug stores. The First Christian Church also built a mission church on Cemetery Road, now known as Government Avenue. Known as the White Church for its whitewashed clapboard, it eventually became the first home of the Fayetteville Church of Christ after members of the Christian Church split over the use of music in church services.





Ozark & Cherokee Central

The Ozark & Cherokee Central Railway was organized in 1904. When finished, it ran from Fayetteville to Okmulgee, Oklahoma, running out through Farmington, Lincoln, and Summers to Tahlequah.

The engine above left was the first train to run the O&CC road, pictured in front of the Fayetteville Depot on Dickson Street. The fireman standing aboard the engine is Hobart "Harry" Dutton, who made many runs to bring supplies, food and water to the gandy dancers and civil engineers laying track westward. Dutton later became an engineer for the railway.

The O&CC track was also used for an interurban dinky that ran back and forth between the Fayetteville Depot and the fairgrounds, which were then at the northwest corner of present-day Razorback Road and MLK Boulevard.

The Tsa-La-Gi Trail follows the O&CC railroad bed as far west as Razorback Road.

Trail of Tears

The Tsa-La-Gi Trail is named for a truer phonetic spelling of "Cherokee," itself an earlier phonetic spelling. The trail was named in honor of the group of 1,100 Cherokees led by John Benge who came through Fayetteville on Jan. 13, 1839. They were part of more than 13,000 Cherokees forced from their homes in the Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, as well as other nations such as the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole. Their paths became known as the Trail of Tears.

The Benge group camped a night near the present-day high school, mended wagons and purchased food from a grocery on the Fayetteville square. They headed west on the Cane Hill road the next day, arriving in Indian Territory on Jan. 17, 1839.

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