

Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad Excursion  
October 22, 2005

Despite the short distance between the University and the Boone and Scenic Valley, we had never ridden the railroad as a club before. The club made the decision to change that this fall. We arrived at the Boone depot at 12 noon on Saturday. Once there, we purchased our tickets for the 4:00pm train. After procuring our guarantees to get aboard our desired train, we watched the crew put two extra coaches on the 1:30 train to handle the crowds that had gathered. It was good to see so many members of the general public out enjoying a day on the train.

After watching the loading of the train, it departed a few minutes behind schedule. Our first stop was at Pilcher's overhead. We weren't able to beat the train, but the going away shot was still worthwhile. There is no good way to get shots of the route and still make it to Fraser before the train, so we went straight to Fraser. The Wolf Dessert Train appeared shortly after our arrival, and pulled up to the east switch of the Fraser Siding to await the meet with the 1:30 excursion train. At about 2:20pm, the steamer came around the curve in the distance and pulled the train past the Fraser east siding switch.

After the 1:30 train cleared, the switch was thrown and the dessert train was on its way back toward Boone. Meanwhile, the BSV 8419 cut off their train and ran around through the siding. By 2:40pm, they were coupled back on, air tested, and ready to head back to Boone as well. We got this shot of them as they pulled back south (east). The photo opportunities of the high bridge from the west side of the river are extremely limited, but we were able to get this view through the trees, leaves and power lines.

Before coming back into town, the steamer was instructed to wait by the ash pit while the dessert train passengers were disembarking. After the dessert train backed away from the platform, the 1:30 train came into town. After they had arrived, we headed over to the east end of the depot to watch the action on that end. A bunch of folks with classic cars had made the trip to ride the train on that day. As they left, this shot with a 1940's-vintage Cadillac (please correct me if I am wrong) in front of the lineup was taken.

After the crews removed the two South Shore MU's that had been placed on the 1:30 train, the activity subsided and we got in line to board the train. Despite the chilly weather, we chose a windowless coach since we could get a better experience. A grand total of four people rode in the coach with us. That number dwindled to two on the ride back. We were there to ride the train, not to be warm and cozy! This shot shows us bundled up for the brisk ride ahead. On the northbound segment, the locomotive pulls tender first, since there are no turning facilities on the BSV. The Chinese-built steamer has faced east for its entire life on the Scenic Line.

At Fraser, as always, the 8419 ran around the train to head back south. According to the BSV website, the lettering on the fireman's side of the tender reads: "The locomotive bounds through the sky (as if flying) as it climbs the hill and passes through the valley with a loud whistle." The engineer's side reads: "The (locomotive is a) dragon that swims

through the blue ocean between two friendly nations." Crossing the high bridge is a fun experience, especially in the fall. On the weekend we went, fall colors were very nice in the wind-shielded Bass Point Creek Valley. In the windier Des Moines River Valley on the other side of the bridge, however, most of the leaves were already stripped from the trees.

Our train met the outbound Dinner Train once we got back into Boone. After that, it was just a short ride into the depot area before the trip was over.

The club would like to thank the many volunteers who work at the Boone and Scenic Valley for preserving a portion of the great railroad heritage of Iowa. It takes a lot of devoted people to make the operation run as smoothly as it does.