



INTERNATIONAL & GREAT NORTHERN RAILROAD DEPOT
I&GN
Built in 1906

THIS DEPOT WAS RESTORED BY THE
ROCKDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND ITS VOLUNTEERS

The Rockdale Historical Society was begun in 1998 by a handful of history minded individuals with the dream of restoring the local I&GN Depot which had been closed in the early 1970's. The building had been purchased from the Missouri Pacific Railroad by a local grocery and feed store adjacent to it and used for storage of feed and fertilizer. In 1999, the Rockdale Historical Society purchased it from the feed store and began to make plans for restoration.

A daunting task lay ahead, due to the condition of the interior of the building, although the main structure itself was basically sound. There had been a fire of unknown origin in the late 1970's that damaged some of the ceiling and roof structure above the baggage room, but valiant efforts by the local volunteer fire department saved it from destruction.

Cleanup of the facility began in the spring of 2000, with restoration efforts beginning shortly thereafter. These efforts continued on a part-time basis by volunteers and occasional paid help for approximately eight years. The building was sufficiently usable in 2006 to celebrate a 100 year anniversary with a partial "open house."

Restoration was done under the watchful eye of the Texas Historical Commission which provided some grant money to help with the restoration and upon completion, awarded it a Texas Historical Landmark designation. It is also listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. In 2009 it was designated as the best restoration in Texas by the Texas State Downtown Association.

In 1873 George Green, B. F. Ackerman, and Frank Smith sold 400 acres of land to the International-Great Northern Railroad, which was laying track from Hearne to Austin. A sale of town lots was held on September 3, 1873, and the track was completed to Rockdale in early February 1874.

The I&GN railroad began its westward expansion from Hearne to Austin. This stretch of railroad was built in two segments: Hearne to Rockdale and Rockdale to Austin. The Hearne to Rockdale segment spanning twenty-eight miles was completed in late 1874. The Rockdale to Austin segment was completed two years later (1876). During the two-year period when Rockdale was the end of the line, a great deal of railroad business came by wagon from towns west of Rockdale.

After completing the line, the I&GN constructed two wooden depots, one for handling freight and the other for processing passengers. The first passenger depot was located on the South side of Milam Street between Ackerman and Green Streets. Also, the first freight depot was located on the South side of Milam where Main Street now crosses the tracks. In those days Main Street ended at Milam. **As time passed, Rockdale and the I&GN grew and prospered creating a need for replacement depots.**

The new town was named by Mrs. B. F. Ackerman for a nearby rock, which was twelve feet high and had a circumference of twenty feet. Rockdale was incorporated in 1878 and established an aldermanic government. The first major railroad town in Milam County, Rockdale quickly developed as a shipping and supply point for area farmers, who produced cotton, wool, vegetables, fruits, grain, hides, and livestock. By 1884 Rockdale had 1,700 residents, five churches, two schools, two steam gristmill-cotton gins, a 250-seat opera house, a private bank, a weekly newspaper, and other assorted businesses. Several coal mines established near Rockdale in the 1890s provided the community with an additional economic boost. In 1891 the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway completed the section of track between Lexington and Cameron, giving Rockdale the benefit of a north-south railroad as well as an east-west one. By 1914 Rockdale was shipping 7,000 railroad cars of lignite coal every week.



THE ORIGINAL
BUILDING
WITH ITS
FREIGHT
DEPOT

(CIRCA 1912)

In 1889 a new red brick freight depot was built on the South side of Milam at Burleson Street. At this time the old freight depot was dismantled. In 1906 a new passenger depot was constructed on the corner of Main and Milam Streets.



THE TASK AHEAD
The Epitome of "Deplorable Conditions"



Preservation promotes respect for those that came before us, and those that will come after.



Three rail lines largely contributed to Rockdale's early commercial development, and of the three, the International & Great Northern (I&GN) made the biggest impact. This former I&GN passenger depot opened in 1906. It survived various changes to the rail company, including its transition to the Missouri Pacific line in 1956. **After years of declining rail use by passengers, the last passenger train left the depot on September 21, 1970, and the building served as storage for many years.** Restored at the turn of the 21st century, the depot is eclectic in design with elements of Italianate, Queen Anne and Prairie styles of architecture.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark - 2005 #13466 100 N Main St, Rockdale, TX, United States

SPRING OF 2000
BEFORE WE BEGAN....
(circa 1978)



2009
THE FINISHED PRODUCT...



TAKE YOUR TIME...

Wonder what it was like
to live during this period
of our history...

Value the simplicity of
what you see compared
to the technology of
today.

Contemplate how simple
yet complex equipment
and new innovation of
this era moved an entire
country into the future!

Why did so many men and women
work endless hours for years to restore
this once battered and dilapidated
depot?

They shared a common belief...

HOW CAN WE TEACH OUR
CHILDREN THE PAST IF WE LET IT
DECAY WHILE WE'RE LIVING IN
THE PRESENT... WONDERING HOW
THE FUTURE WILL FOREVER
CHANGE THE WAY WE ONCE
LIVED.



You're standing in a depot that was once
the center of activity
for locals and travelers...

People buying tickets to ride the rails to
near and far off towns and cities...

Some on their way to visit friends and
family, others on business trips...

Some were here simply to send or receive
a telegram...

Men and women dressed in their finest
clothes and children laughing and
playing...



Partial remains of a few leaded glass windows were used for duplication of 18 new ones.



Glass restored by
Jer Frankiney
of
Taylor, Texas



September, 2000

Work being done
on the front of the
building



The back of the
main building



INTERIOR CONDITION OF THE DEPOT

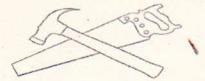
Image yourself faced with what most people would deem an impossible task.....
What kind of individuals would even what to tackle such an undertaking?



Dedicated men and women, many with deep personal memories of this depot, were willing to work long and tedious hours for years to restore one building in one small town for the purpose of preserving history and providing locals and visitors an opportunity to revisit the past and hopefully continue to appreciate the importance of preserving a very important part of the town's history long after those who worked so diligently on this building are no longer here to tell the tales of this quant I&GN Depot.



LOCAL INDIVIDUALS
USED THEIR
DIVERSIFIED SKILLS
TO RESTORE THIS DEPOT
INCH BY INCH



ONLY
OCCASIONALLY
WAS IT
NECESSARY
TO HIRE
PROFESSIONALS





❖

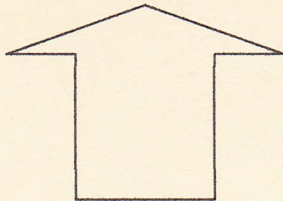
SIGN

UNCOVERED

DURING

RESTORATION

❖



NOTICE

TARRIFS OF THIS COMPANY ALSO
CLASSIFICATIONS OF FREIGHT
IN FORCE UPON THE LINE OF THIS
RAILROAD ARE POSTED FOR PUBLIC
INSPECTION AT THIS STATION AND
CAN BE SEEN BY ANY PERSON
INTERESTED THEREIN BY
APPLICATION TO THE AGENT





On the far left of the picture, notice the entrance of one of the restrooms.

Reminder From The Past...

Until 1960 this was a segregated facility.

Whites on one side...
"Coloreds" on the other...

During removal of the four interior restrooms, it was discovered that the ticket office originally had a three-sided front for its two ticket windows.

This was restored, minus its dividing wall.



LINGERING EVIDENCE OF BYGONE SEGREGATION

Fading letters...

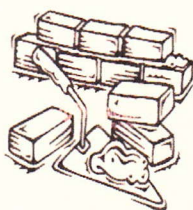
COLORED WAITING ROOM



OUR PLASTER AND BRICKLAYING "SPECIALIST" VOLUNTEER

LOUIE EDELMON

Restored many a wall



Relocated ticket window sockets – above picture

Replaced outside window ledge and wall – below picture



**ORIGINAL TRACKSIDE SIGN RETAINED BY
LOCAL VOLUNTEER NOLAN BLAND AND RESTORED BY HIM**
(Located on the outer wall facing the railroad tracks)



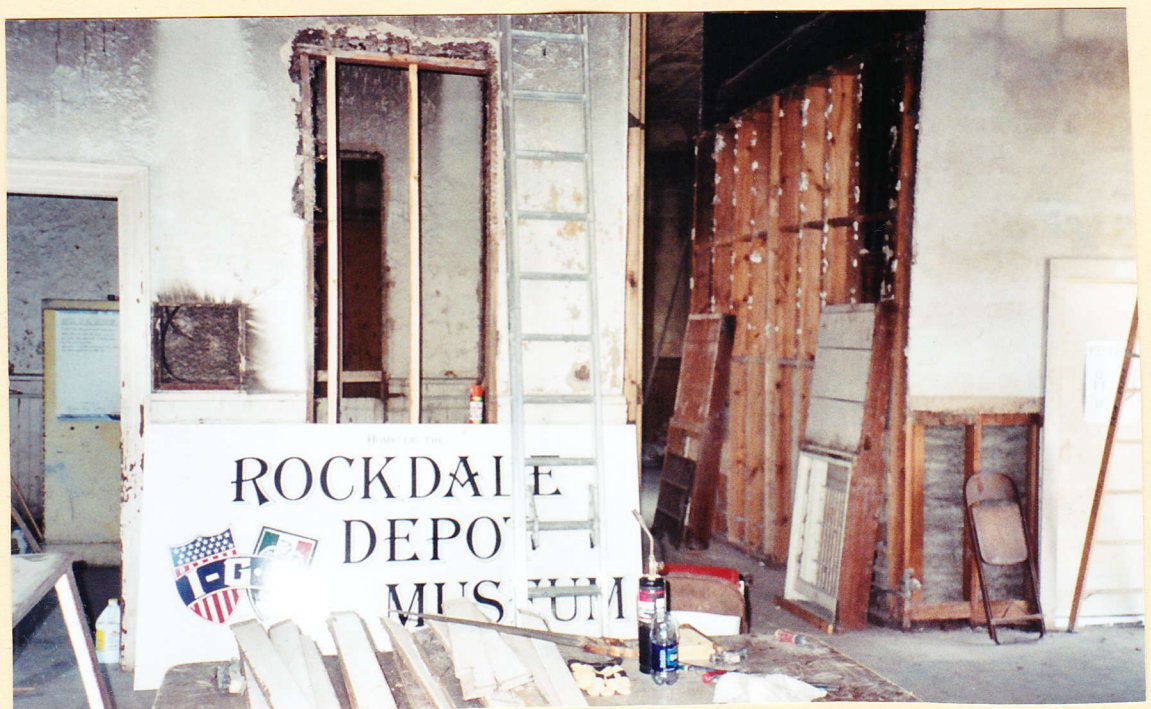
ROCKDALE DEPOT MUSEUM SIGN



The day this sign
was placed near
the street in front
of the depot
signified the
restoration of the

I&GN Railroad
Museum

had indeed
become a reality!



Picture taken in 2000



KEEPING
WORK AREAS
CLEAN & ORGANIZED
IS ESSENTIAL
DURING ANY
MAJOR RENOVATION.

Sheet Metal Picture
2005

METAL CROWN MOLDING

Working with any type of crown molding can be a difficult endeavor, but working with metal molding is an undertaking that requires patience, caution, excellent math skills and lots of experience!





CHRISTMAS BOW HANGING FROM THE WINDOW RAIL

A great deal of progress had been made since starting the project in early spring of 2000.

It's hard to comprehend what is needed to start and finish such a project!

Completing applications for Restoration Grants &

Insuring all stipulations of those grants are followed

City & State Regulations

Adhering to Texas Historical Commission preservation guidelines

Insurance
Blueprints
Accounting
Cataloging
Materials
&
SO MUCH MORE!

Something as simple as selecting paint colors must be approved!



A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

It took a lot of energy, determination and help by volunteers to pursue the restoration of this depot.

You have seen photos recording the progress, but have you thought much about other challenges encountered while refurbishing the outside and inside of the depot that required strength of mind, willpower and fortitude?

Such as...

Getting rid of all the "clutter" outside and inside the building

Removing the remaining bags of feed and fertilizers

Dealing with what field mice and rats left behind – not exactly a pleasant job

Coping with dust and other undesirable litter

Tearing down walls and building new ones

Repairing and replacing windows

GOING HOME TIRED AND DIRTY, BUT EAGER TO START ANOTHER DAY AND ANOTHER PROJECT

They dreamed of the day when the depot would open so that men, women and children could walk through the door and enter into a building filled with reminders of the past...



BAGGAGE ROOM

EXTENSIVE BAGGAGE ROOM RESTORATION WAS NEEDED DUE TO
HEAVY DAMAGE FROM A FIRE THAT OCCURRED IN THE 1970'S



THE
BAGGAGE
ROOM
NOW
HAS
A
MODEL
RAILROAD
DISPLAY





2003

COPPER VALLEYS
INSTALLED
BEFORE
SLATING THE
ROOF



2003

SLATE
BEING
INSTALLED

(Only major job
contracted out)

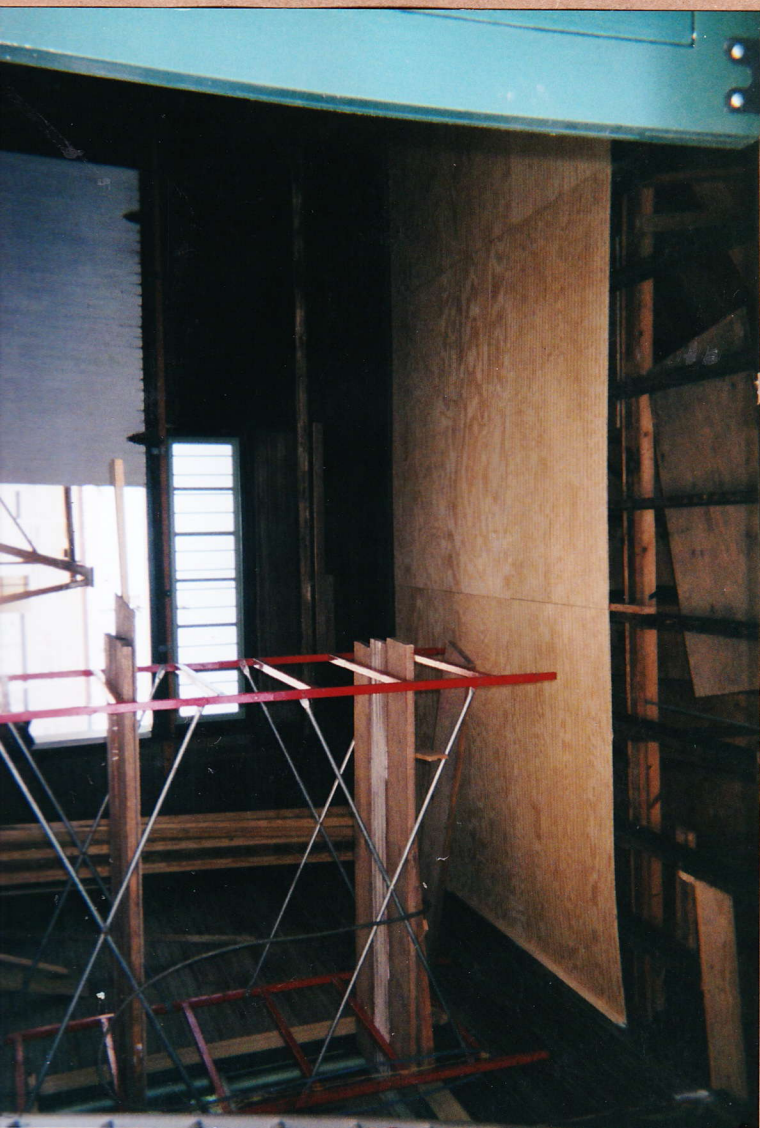
The original red brick
had been painted over
several times through
the years.

The only practical
solution was to repaint
the brick red.

NOTICE THE ROOF!



SNAPSHOTS OF PROGRESS
ON THE
BAGGAGE BUILDING



A Bit of History...

In the 1930's, the railroad
had on its payroll an
agent, a cashier,
a baggage man, and two porters.



Six passenger trains as well as
numerous freight trains
serviced the depot daily.

One of the finest trains in the country
"The Sunshine Special"
served Rockdale,
offering area residents
the finest travel accommodations.

***Please visit the Rockdale I&GN
Railroad Depot Museum
Website for more information.
Webmaster: Len Kubiak***



CEILING

&

WALLS



NEARING
COMPLETION

By the early 1960's, both freight and passenger business at the Rockdale station had fallen to a level that made operation of separate freight and passenger depot uneconomical. The Missouri Pacific decided to consolidate separate operations into one building. At this time, the brick freight station and platform were retired and dismantled.

2005





THE NEXT CHAPTER...

THE CUPOLA





Reporter/Mike Brown

Scale model of cupola's dome is becoming a reality in Gary Jackson's yard.

Flying saucer?

Neighbors curious as local man builds cupola for depot restoration project

BY MIKE BROWN
Reporter Editor

Notice to Bushdale area residents. Your neighbor, Gary Jackson, really doesn't have a flying saucer sitting in his front yard.

It just looks like one. Jackson, a dedicated Rockdale Historical Society volunteer, is painstakingly recreating the cupola for the old International & Great Northern Railroad Depot being restored by the society in downtown Rockdale.

The 2.5-year project is at the stage now where the cupola dome, which looks for all the world like it belongs in a 1950s science fiction movie, is too big for indoors and sits at the side of Jackson's home.

"There's not a whole lot of traffic on this road but my neighbors have made some comments about my 'flying saucer,'" Jackson laughed.

BLUEPRINTS—Jackson began work on the cupola not long after the historical society purchased the building at the end of 1999. The early part of the project was part engineering and part detective work.

"There's no plans, no drawings for the cupola," Jackson said. "All I have to work with are old photos and there are precious few of those."

Jackson first made a set of blueprints from

See CUPOLA, page 4a

Cupola

Continued from Page 1

the old photos. They're almost works of history themselves.

The cupola—and it's pronounced "cue-puh-la" with the accent on the first syllable, according to Jackson—consists of a 9-foot octagon, with eight windows, topped off by the dome.

Jackson even had to come up with his own wood bending device.

LANDMARK—The wood for the project even comes roughly from the era of the original cupola.

Billy and Joy Graham, historical society volunteers, salvaged the old funeral home in Round Rock for Jackson's use in the project.

The depot restoration has been a long and sometimes arduous project and the cupola has almost become a symbol for historical society volunteers, a sign that the depot museum will actually become a reality.

"It was a significant landmark in early Rockdale," Jackson said. "They'd go up there so they could see trains coming into town. It's really going to change the looks of the depot, like the bell tower completely changed the looks of the courthouse."

Jackson said the cupola and base, which will be lifted to the depot roof by a crane, will add 16 feet to the building's height.

There won't be public access to the new cupola.

MYSTERY—Jackson, and other historical society volunteers, would like to solve a couple of mysteries, when was the cupola taken down and why?

"We know it was up in the



Jackson is working from cupola photos like this one from the 1920s.

mid-1920s and we know it was already down in the mid-30s," Jackson said.

Most likely guess, according to Bert Dockall, historical society volunteer and lifelong train buff, is that the cupola came down in 1936 to reduce maintenance costs when a new roof was added.

There's still lots of work for Jackson to do but there's no definite deadline yet. Volunteers got some good news recently when the Texas Preservation Trust Fund approved a \$25,000 grant to restore the building's slate roof.

HISTORY—The I&GN Railroad constructed the passenger depot in 1905. It was the town's third depot in its 31-year history.

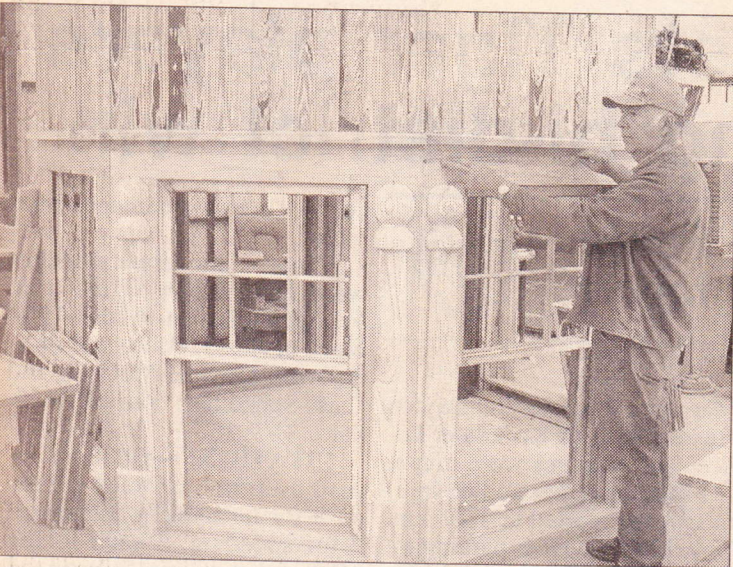
In 1925, I&GN was leased by the Missouri-Pacific Railroad and was operated as a division of that railroad until 1955 when the lines were officially merged and the I&GN named disappeared.

An adjacent freight depot was torn down in the early 1960s.

The last passenger train pulled out of Rockdale at 4:50 p.m. Sept. 21, 1970, ending 96 years of passenger service here.

Rockdale Reporter
Nov 21 - 2002

Page 4a



Reporter/Mike Brown

Gary Jackson eyes cupola's eight-sided base. Completed structure will add 16 feet to height of depot.

School trustees hold meeting

Rockdale school trustees were scheduled to hold a regular monthly meeting at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20 in the Central Administration Building's board room, 520 Davilla Street.

Campus reports, athletic equipment/supply bids, a budget amendment, bus purchase, playground equipment and other items comprise the agenda.

Rockdale Reporter. (Rockdale, Tex.)

Vol. 13, No. 10, Ed. 1, page 5

Thursday, May 3, 1906

The I. & G. N. Depot

The new I. & G. N. depot is an accomplished fact, and stands an edifice of which Rockdale will always be proud. The first ticket was sold from the window at noon Tuesday, No 8 being the first passenger train to stop here.

Its proximity to the freight house is a great convenience. The telegraph offices have been moved from the tower to the freight offices, which is a better arrangement than heretofore existed.

This handsome edifice is veneered with red pressed brick trimmed in cement, and its handsome slate roof is capped with a dome of flaming red, which can be seen from all parts of the town.

The spot on which the depot stands is filled in with gravel. The building is lighted and ventilated with large plate glass windows, the upper sashes being in clear leaded glass.

The porch supported by red pressed brick pillars, with bases and crowns of cement, like the passage between waiting room and baggage room is paved with vitrified brick.

The exterior wood work is painted in pea green. The interior finish and furniture is up to date in every particular. The floors are laid in portland cement and wainscot doors and wood work are in natural finished yellow pine.

The walls are plastered upon a steel lath, and have a cement finish, tinted dull gray. The steel ceiling painted light green and cornice terracotta. The highly polished wickets at the ticket window are of highly polished brass and the rooms are lighted with oxidized copper electroliers.

Furnished in comfortable benches in natural pine and mahogany finish, well lighted and ventilated, and arrangements for heating in winter, the waiting rooms are all that could be desired.

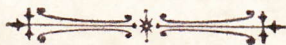
The commodious baggage room is paved with concrete and portland cement, and finished in yellow pine painted green.





PICTORIAL
ILLUSTRATION
OF
CHALLENGES
GARY JACKSON
FACED
DURING
CONSTRUCTION
OF THE
CUPOLA

2002



RESIZING
OF DONATED
WIDOWS
FROM AN
OLD BUILDING



Windows were reduced from
larger windows donated
specifically for this project.

Mullions were also added

*A mullion is a vertical bar
between the panes of
glass in a window.*



THE CUPOLA

"The Gary Jackson Project"

The original structure had a cupola atop it, presumably for esthetics and also for air flow by draft to help in cooling the depot. Due to unavailable information about its removal, it is presumed that it was removed during a remodeling effort in the early 1930's when interior restrooms were installed.

Dimensional drawings of the cupola were unavailable so those dimensions had to be calculated from the photograph of the original structure pictured in the front of the album.

This task was undertaken by local volunteer, Gary Jackson. A small model was made to determine construction techniques. Evidence underneath the roof indicated an approximate size, so based on that and to be assured of structural integrity; framework was designed and built to extend down inside the attic to secure to the ceiling joists, resulting in a 9 ft. octagon.

The base structure was built atop the building by daring volunteers and the housing walls and domed top were made in the Jackson shop and transported to the depot in sections. The domed top had to be transported to Temple Texas by trailer to have the copper roofing applied.

After returning to Rockdale, the structure was assembled on the ground and then lifted by crane supplied by a local contractor to be secured to the base frame atop the depot.

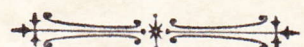
Rather than having a bare copper roof, it was painted bright red to comply with an article in the Rockdale Reporter of 1906 describing the new Depot and its cupola with "flaming red roof."

Thus, the I&GN Depot was once again adorned by its unique landmark.

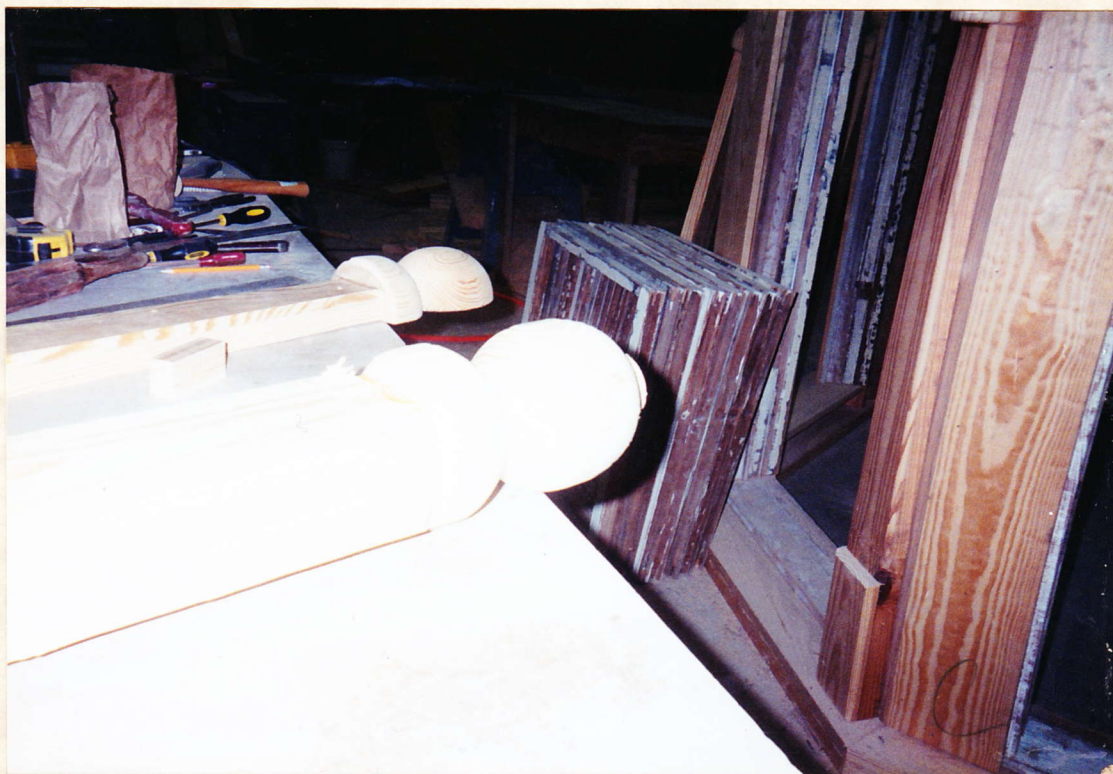


THE ORIGINAL DEPOT

FREIGHT BUILDING DIRECTLY BEHIND IT



TURNING OF WINDOW FACING PILLARS





JULY 2002



OCTAGONAL
FRAMING
OF THE
CUPOLA



COMPLETED ASSEMBLY
OF ONE SECTION OF THE
EIGHT SIDED
STRUCTURE

Notice the prototype of the
cupola located in the
background of the picture...

FINISHING TOUCHES



FROM A PILE OF RAW MATERIALS...

People around town will tell you Gary Jackson is a master at transforming wood or metal into sound construction and flawless design of small or major projects.

His work consistently invokes respect and admiration for his creative expression and finished product.



THE PICTURE ILLUSTRATES THE CRAFTSMANSHIP THAT WAS REQUIRED TO CONSTRUCT THE LOWER WINDOW SECTION NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE CUPOLA.



Cupola

In architecture, a cupola is a small, most often dome-like, structure on top of a building. Often used to provide a lookout or to admit light and air, it usually crowns a larger roof or dome.

July 2002



CONSTRUCTION OF THE CUPOLA FOUNDATION



JULY'S CHECK LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ The foundation was completed...
- ✓ Hand bent steel framing had been incorporated into the framework of the cupola...
- ✓ Installation of ½ inch plywood decking to the structure...





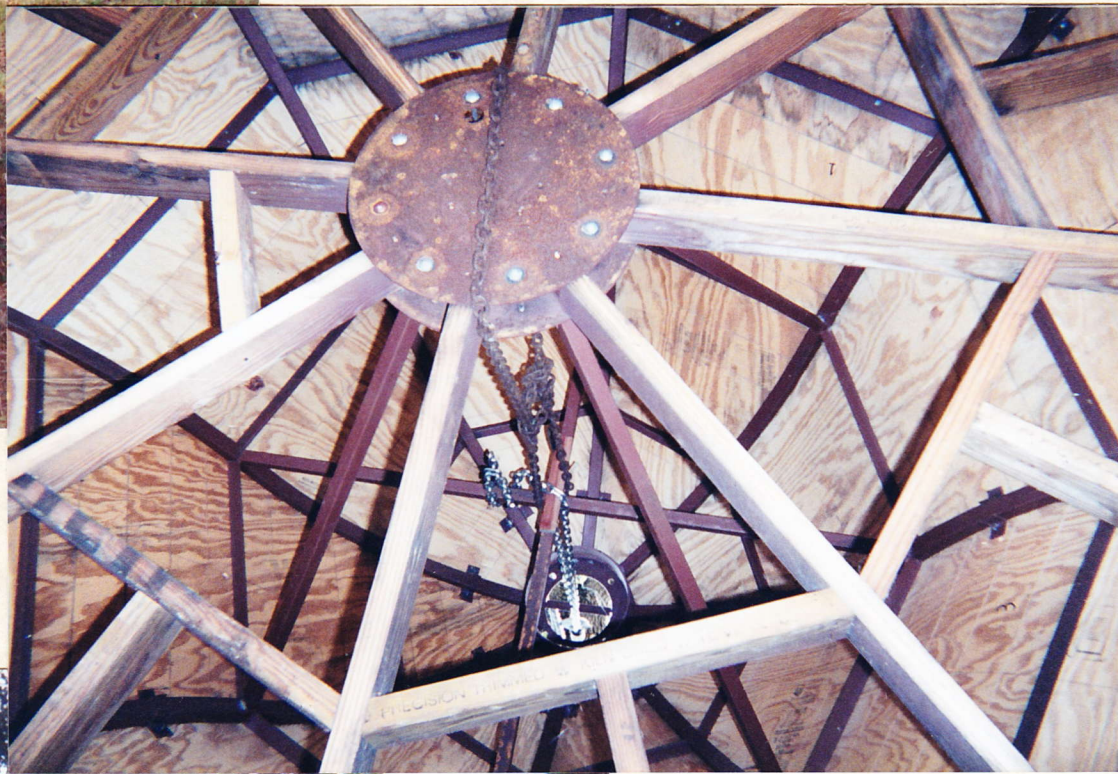
June 2002

FRAMEWORK OF THE DOME



HAND BENDING STEEL TUBING

The old fashioned way!



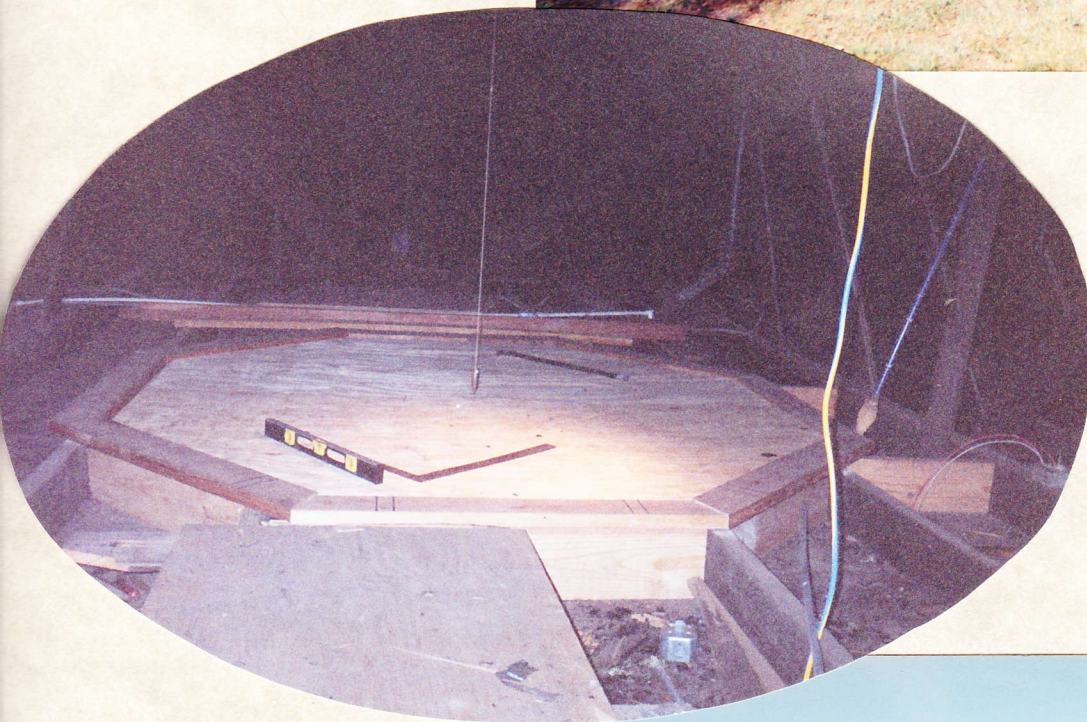
July 2002



The dome was later transported to Temple, Texas for installation of copper panels to the roof's surface



BACKYARD
ASSEMBLY
OF THE
CUPOLA



BACK AT THE
DEPOT

CONSTRUCTION
OF THE
ATTIC FOUNDATION
BEGINS



BUILDING THE
SUPPORT
STRUCTURE



The finished cupola
was attached after
this phase of the
project was
completed





READY FOR TRANSPORT



Gillmeister Roofing
Company
Temple, Texas



Installed copper to
roof of the cupola

RETURNED
TO
ROCKDALE



ARRIVES AT
THE DEPOT



FINISHING TOUCHES 2003



Before it could be
placed on top of the
depot...

It was painted red
&
The copper finial was
attached



DEPOT CROWNED

Photo courtesy of the Rockdale Reporter
Reporter Mike Brown

2003

Visit Milam County Historical Commission Website
to see step-by-step pictures of how each section of the
cupola was hoisted to the top of the depot



Painted Red by Hairston Body Shop - Rockdale, TX

Copper Finial Courtesy of J. T. Talley, Rockdale, TX



Depot 'crowned'

Reporter/Mike Brown

Tuesday was the day Rockdale Historical Society members have been dreaming about. The century-old International & Great Northern Railroad depot again has its cupola and tower. The "depot toppers" were built by Gary Jackson, Historical Society volunteer. The depot is being restored for use as a museum by the society. A crowd of more than 50 gathered as a crane lifted the tower and cupola into place.



TRANSFORMING VACANT LAND INTO WHAT IT IS TODAY



**THE VISION OF TRANSFORMING THE EXISTING DEPOT AND BAGGAGE BUILDING CONTINUED
AT A STEADY PACE, BUT THE VISION DID NOT STOP THERE!**

THEN CAME....THE TRACKS...CABOOSE...DINING CAR...RECENTLY, THE RAILROAD MOTORCAR

THE RESTROOM BUILDING BECAME THE NEXT PROJECT

THE BLACKSMITH SHOP WAS ADDED TO THE GROUNDS

The Rockdale Historical Society is combining history with a living museum in the form of a replica blacksmith shop constructed in 2009 by historical society members.

Using antique board and batten siding, the reconstructed shop is typical of many of the blacksmith shops operated in Rockdale since its founding in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Tools for the blacksmith shop came from donations by the following Rockdale area families: Frank Dockall, John Timberman, Julius "Bose" Moultry, Charles Stolte and Harrison Lanham.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to see the shop in operation, you have missed a historical treat courtesy of the Rockdale Historical Society.

It all started with a few people talking about their desire to save the depot...then the talk turned into a dream....the dream turned into a vision....the vision turned into reality!

THE CABOOSE



The Missouri Pacific Caboose #12263 was built in 1948 by the Sedalia, Missouri Shops and continued in service until the demise of all cabooses due to reduction of forces and to the coming of age of the "End of Train" device.

The Rockdale Historical Society acquired this caboose from a ranch near Kyle, Texas and it was transported by RHS volunteers to its home here at the I&GN Depot Museum.

Following is a pictorial record of the track preparation, transport and installation of this caboose.



THE TRANSPORT CREW

Gary Jackson ▾ J.T. Talley ▾ Alan Edmonson ▾ Loy Edmonson

Earl Seelke ▾ Bert Dockall ▾ Alden Doss

TRACKBED CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

TRACK BALLAST

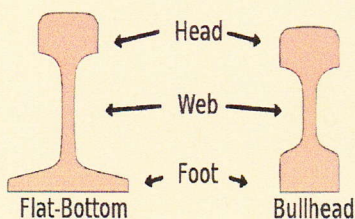
Forms the trackbed upon which railroad ties (sleepers) are laid.

RAILROAD TIES

Railroad ties, also known as crossties or sleepers are the primary lateral support for the rails themselves, anchoring the track and giving it a solid, sound base upon which trains can pass over

RAILS

Early rails were made of wood, cast iron or wrought iron. All modern rails are hot rolled steel of a specific cross sectional profile.





THE FADED RED CABOOSE BEING TRANSPORTED TO ITS NEW HOME



Bert Dockall, retired locomotive engineer and local volunteer, was responsible for securing the donation of both the caboose and the dining car.
He also supervised the track laying and transport of both units to the site.

THE MAN IN THE LOCOMOTIVE...

Bert Dockall was a young boy when his mother, Mattie Dockall, purchased the A.A. Wolf house located near the City Hall. The Rockdale Beauty Shop was the first in town...not only did it change her life, but the life of her son as well.

The Depot was an easy walk from his mother's shop, and his curiosity was a strong motivation for making that short journey many times during his formative years from youth to a young man. His fascination with locomotives continued to dominate his thoughts each time he watched as one would approach the Rockdale Depot. His mind would be filled with the sights and sounds that only a giant beast on rails could make. The sound of a train's whistle was as impressive as any musical instrument he had ever heard.

The last Station Agent, Mr. Oscar M. Brockman, had also noticed the young boy who appeared to spend a lot of time hanging around the depot. Gradually, he started giving him little jobs to do, and as he grew older, so did the jobs. The assignments given to him over the years shaped his future and instilled ethics he lived by during his career, including each day of his personal life.

His childhood curiosity combined with the knowledge he acquired from working at the depot progressed from a childhood dream of becoming a locomotive engineer into many years as one. His interest didn't stop there...his passion for knowledge continued to accumulate making him a well-informed authority of railroad history.

FROM THE PASTURE

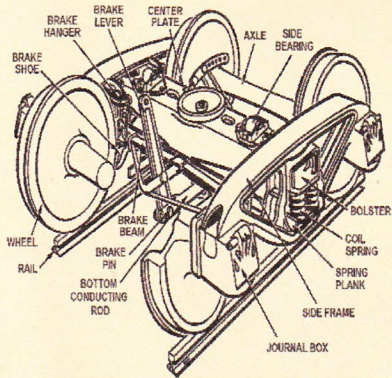
Bert Dockall (white shirt) contemplates what would be the best procedure for securing and loading the caboose onto its transport tires.



LOADING THE TRUCKS

A wheelset is the wheel - axle assembly of a railroad car.

The frame assembly beneath each end of a car, railcar or locomotive that holds the wheelsets is called the bogie (or truck in North America)



The flatbed used to transport the caboose to the depot



TO THE TRACKS

The 85 mile trip from Kyle, Texas to the depot has been completed...

Planning and teamwork was essential during the process of preparing and transferring the caboose to the railroad track where the caboose would be restored and painted.

The faded red caboose had been rescued from a pasture where it could have eventually rusted out, but destiny intervened...

THE NOW BRIGHT RED CABOOSE WAS GIVEN A NEW HOME

Where memories can be renewed for those who can still remember the magical wonderment of waving at a little red caboose as it passed from sight...

The mere vision of a little red caboose has a way of captivating, enchanting and delighting the young and old...

DINING ACROSS AMERICA...

During the golden age of American trains, their sleek, opulent interiors featured plush seats, porters for your every need and gleaming dining cars. The dining car was the heart of train life, a place for passengers to relax and enjoy a meal in the company of newfound friends.

The earliest days of train travel, however, were anything but posh. Even on longer hauls, in the 1840s passengers were expected to bring their own food aboard or eat at boarding house restaurants along the line. Often these restaurants were located at "water stops," so called because, in the days of steam locomotion, trains would have to take on water at regular intervals. Isolated water stops were frequent targets of attack by bandits, so it's no wonder that rail companies quickly adapted to create sanctuaries on the train where passengers could dine in peace.

By the 1870s, the Transcontinental Railroad stretched all the way to California, and with it came a new era of railway dining. The most detailed account of train foods comes from an article in Harper's Magazine published in 1872 and written by Charles Nordhoff, a prominent journalist of the era. In his travelogue, aptly titled "California: How to Go There, And What to See by the Way," Nordhoff spoke of train dining in glowing terms: "The cooking is admirable, the service excellent, and the food is various and abundant." A passenger could dine on broiled muttonchops, breaded veal cutlets and freshly hunted buffalo, washing it all down with a glass of real French champagne. On board the Nickel Plate Railroad, which stretched over the mid-central United States, diners could choose the meal and budget that fit them best, from a 55-cent special of sliced tomatoes and baked beans to finnan haddie à la Delmonico (a smoked haddock dish) for 90 cents.

By 1927, the dining car had become a routine part of passenger rail service. The Pennsylvania Railroad Dining Car School was opened that year to teach "deft and courteous service," as well as the proper preparation of meat, soup stock, salads, relishes, breads, desserts, and beverages. The PRR Dining Car Department put out a 109-page booklet of cooking instructions for the preparation of dishes served in the railroad's dining cars. It was not unusual for the well-designed kitchens in the dining cars to serve 300 or more meals a day. By 1938, the PRR was serving 3,000,000 meals a year in its dining cars, with patrons annually consuming 2,500,000 eggs, 550,000 pounds of fowl, 390,999 pounds of beef, 490,000 pounds of pork products, 300,000 pounds of fish, 1,000,000 pounds of potatoes, 350,000 heads of lettuce, 1,300,000 oranges, and 2,000,000 cups of coffee.

From the 1900s on (until Amtrak), hundreds of passenger trains in the United States carried dining cars, providing travelers with a wide variety of foods and as excellent service as may be obtained in a first-class hotel or restaurant.

The interiors of the modern dining cars in the 1950s and 1960s were decorated in attractive style, many of them in gay pastel shades. Some have novel seating and table arrangements, including built-in lounge seats. Diffused lighting, colorful window drapes, and soft carpets suggest the friendly atmosphere of a neighborhood club or a home dining room.



During the heyday of American passenger's trains, railroads of the United States served nearly 25,000,000 meals to their patrons.

THE DINING CAR

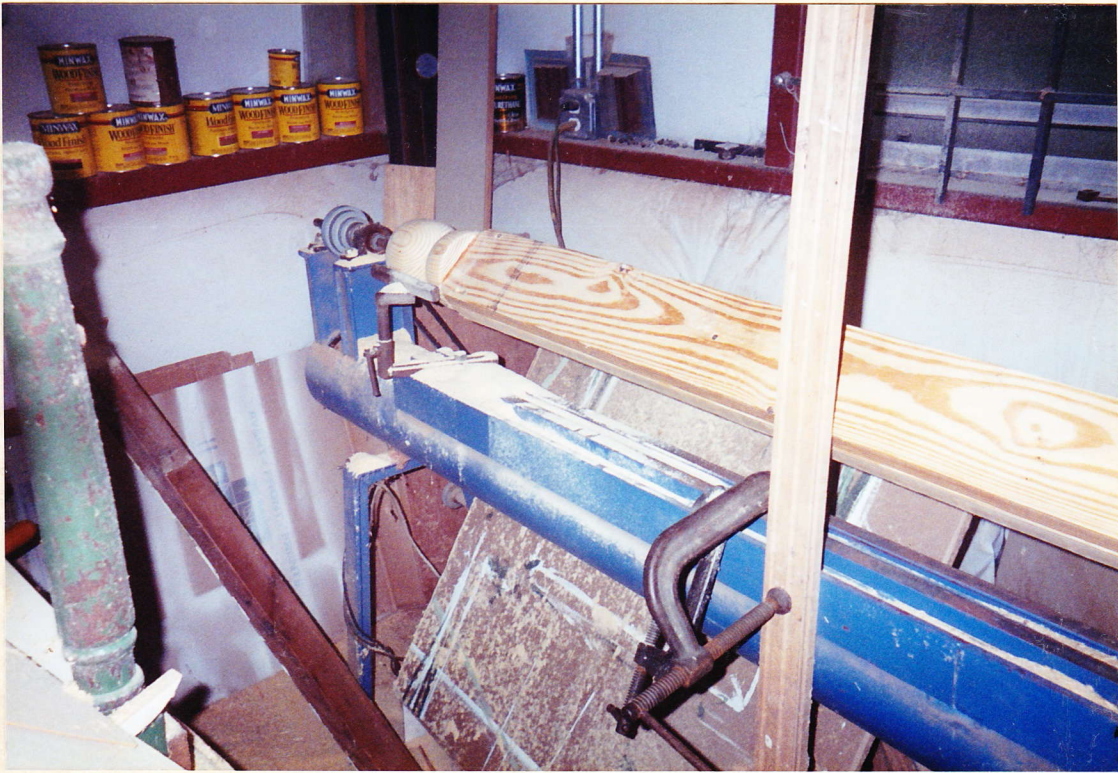


This Railway Dining Car was built by the Budd Company located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1942 of mostly gleaming stainless steel and served the Missouri Pacific Railroad for many years.

It was dubbed the "Cheyenne Mountain"

The Rockdale Historical Society acquired the car from a ranch near Laredo, Texas, and transported to its present location by volunteers.

A pictorial record of its transport and set-up follows



TURNING OF WINDOW FACING PILLARS





MISSOURI-PACIFIC DINING CAR

The 36 "Cheyenne Mountain" was brought to Rockdale in June 2005.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOW RAILROAD SIGNALS EVOLVED....

The first U.S. signal installation was on the New Castle & Frenchtown Railroad in 1832. The NC&F signals were peach baskets suspended from masts by pulleys. By their position (high, middle, or low) and color (black or white), they conveyed information to trains and stations, whose staff observed them with telescopes. With refinements, this "ball" type signal became widely used, its aspect for "proceed" giving us the stirring term "Highball!"

Later, electricity was used to actuate signals powered by clockwork mechanisms. There were also electro-pneumatic types. All electric designs came to be standard for automatic signals.

Perhaps the most classic of all railroad signals, the semaphore, came into general use in the 1860's. This type, based on an ancient form of communication that used a moveable "arm" or "blade," soon became by far the most common signal. Semaphores were constructed with castings in which were set red, yellow, and green lenses, which were moved in front of a single white light (oil at first, later electric) as the blade moved.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the three-position (vertical, diagonal, horizontal) upper-quadrant semaphore was introduced. It had three aspects: horizontal for stop, 45 degrees above horizontal for caution, vertical for proceed. In 1908 this type became the standard for new installations.

Color-light signals consist of three bulbs shining through three lenses, or "roundels," one each red, yellow, and green. Typically, the lights are grouped vertically with green at the top, exactly opposite of the highway traffic signals that protect road intersections. Next most common is the triangular arrangement.

The searchlight signal - which uses a single lamp with a system of movable lenses to project three colors - first appeared in 1920. Lens improvements in 1930 made signals with a 1-mile range and low power consumption possible, and the searchlight found widespread use.

Relay-type mechanism moves colored lenses in front of a white light, not unlike a semaphore. To achieve long range, the light beam is very intense and narrow, and must be precisely aimed for best visibility from approaching locomotive cabs.

First used in 1921, color position-lights are as identified with Baltimore & Ohio and its related lines (chiefly the old Alton lines) as the position-light is with the PRR. Unlike the position-light, this type has no center lamp and uses larger lenses of three colors. The two lamps in each row are green (vertical), yellow (diagonal), and red (horizontal). The basic design often is modified with lunar white or yellow markers above and below the main head.

Some railroads use cab signals (small signals in the locomotive cab) to supplement or even replace wayside signals. These may be associated with an Automatic Train Stop System (ATS), which requires acknowledgment and/or observance of signals. Cab signals and ATS are yet other types of protective overlays, created to keep trains apart and operations safe.



INSTALLATION OF OUR RAILROAD SIGNALS

Later made operational by retired
railroad signalman and volunteer

Glen Banzhaf



Our Restroom

In order to return the Depot to its original state inside, new restrooms were built outside and designed to simulate the shape of a small rural depot



The Blacksmith Shop

Designed to stimulate the several blacksmith shops native to Rockdale in the early years, it is a working blacksmith for the purpose of demonstrations of an almost lost art.

Demonstrations are done at special events and on occasional weekends by local master blacksmith artist **ABE DOSS** and occasionally others with like skills.



INSTALLATION OF OUR SIDEWALKS

The below picture of the brick layout will contain memorial bricks



The bottom picture shows the utility sidewalk for southbound traffic



DEPOT WALKING DECKS INSTALLED BY
BOY SCOUTS AS AN EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



SIDEWALK FOR "SAVE OUR SCHOOL" MEMORIAL BRICK



A FEW OFF SITE RESTORATION PROJECTS BY VOLUNTEER

LOUIE EDELMON

PASSENGER TRAIN
STEPSTOOL

&

EXPRESS SIGN



TWO
CABOOSE
END DOORS

RESTORATION PROJECTS BY VOLUNTEER

LOUIE EDELMON



RS&S BELL

DONATED BY
ROCKDALE
SANDOW & SOUTHERN
RAILROAD

PREVIOUSLY
USED AS THE
"VICTORY BELL"

BETWEEN
ROCKDALE & CAMERON
FOOTBALL TEAM

OLD SAN ANTONIO
&
ARANSAS PASS
(SA&AP)
DEPOT BENCH



RESTORATION PROJECTS BY VOLUNTEER

LOUIE EDELMON



RAILROAD
YARD SIGNS

RAILROAD EXPRESS
BAGGAGE WAGON

BY

GARY JOHNSON



