

Retracing the Celestial Railroad

By Geoffrey Lynfield*

Prof. Shappee's memorable article on the "Celestial Railroad" in the April 1961 issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, pulled together for the first time a multitude of stray references and various short newspaper articles.¹ Dr. Shappee gives us an excellent picture of the contemporary scene but ends with the somewhat sad note that with the destruction of the historic marker in Juno the obliteration of the railroad was complete. Dr. Shappee should not have worried.

The writer has spent the last couple of months retracing the railroad and has in the process uncovered a number of items, some not previously recorded. There have been a large number of articles and news items published since 1961. The local historical societies and a number of individuals have respectable clipping collections. The sites of the termini at Jupiter and Juno have been visited and the writer has walked part of the original track. A number of individuals who researched the project from various angles have been interviewed.

It is the purpose of this paper to make an attempt to present this material in an up-dated review.

Prof. Shappee relates that the narrow gauge rolling stock for the line was obtained from the St. Johns and Halifax Railroad which had been converted to broad gauge. This presumably would have included the locomotive "Old No. 3".² When this broke down, according to

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Shappee, all transportation ceased until it could be repaired, the line never having more than one engine.³

It is possible that there is some confusion here. The engine in Shappee's article in the picture facing p. 336 bears the numeral "1" on the circular plate at the front of the engine. The photograph of this "No. 1" engine first appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* of May 25, 1959.⁴ This was sent in by Mrs. Margaret Noble Pleasant of Shreveport, La. This picture of the "wheezing wood-burning engine" had been unearthed by Mrs. Pleasant as a result of an earlier article in *The Christian Science Monitor* by Lt. Col. Caygill of Miami.⁵

Mrs. Pleasant has confirmed that the little girl standing on the cowcatcher is her mother, Dora Doster.⁶ The two girls in the cab are her aunt and a cousin. Dora Doster Utz has written in detail about *Life on the Loxahatchee*.⁷ Her father, Ben Hill Doster, had a store on the Celestial Railroad dock at Jupiter and later employed the black fireman Milton Messer after the line had been dismantled.

A picture of a second engine was subsequently located by Mrs. DuBois in the Library of Congress.⁸ The front of that engine bears "No. 2." The man alongside the engine holding the oil can has been identified as the engineer Blus Rice (or Reis). In the other hand Rice is holding his hunting dog, of which more later. The man polishing the headlights is Milton Messer. The conductor is Captain Matheson who is standing on the step of the half-passenger half-baggage car.⁹

Pettengill in his chapter on the "Railroads of the East Coast of Florida" relates in some detail the involved development of the Florida railroad system.¹⁰ The St. Johns & Halifax Railway Company was organized early in 1882 by Utley J. White as a three-foot gauge logging road from Palatka to Daytona.¹¹

The date of October 1, 1888 for the conversion of the line to broad gauge matches the date at which the narrow gauge stock was acquired by the new Jupiter & Lake Worth line.¹² The No. 3 engine according to Pettengill ended up in the Yucatan.¹³

Pettengill's very comprehensive survey of the Railroads of Florida includes 174 railroads which were actually built out of a total of 429 railroad companies chartered between 1834 and 1900.¹⁴ But it is curious that Pettengill makes no mention whatever of the Jupiter & Lake Worth RR which was to become the most celebrated of the discontinued lines. Its notoriety has been equated with that of the Barefoot Mailman.

The rolling stock was sold at public auction in Jacksonville in 1896.¹⁵ The eventual fate of engines Nos. 1 and 2 is not known but it seems certain now that the line had at least two engines.

It would be of the greatest interest to the railroad buff if one or both of these engines could be located or their eventual fate determined. This narrow gauge stock was used for logging railways. Some narrow gauge stock was used as a temporary spur track in the construction of the Florida East Coast's Key West Extension. For transporting his guests to a fishing camp on Long Key, Henry M. Flagler built a special half-mile narrow gauge track. Guests were picked up at dockside, seated on straw seats in the little cars, and taken by way of a tunnel to the Atlantic side where cottages awaited them.¹⁶

The rails of the narrow gauge are only three inches high and weigh thirty pounds per yard as compared with regular rail stock which weighs 75-90 pounds a yard. Some of the rails from the "Celestial Railway" were used in the construction of the old Harrell Building in Boynton.¹⁷ The writer as recently as February 1982 located two thirty-three foot lengths of the Celestial's rails in a dump at the back of the old Jupiter Town Hall.

The dock of the old Jupiter terminus has been replaced by a modern dock projecting into the river at the Suni Sands Mobile Home Trailer Park a few yards to the east from Clemons Street off Ocean Boulevard.¹⁸ The stumps of four or five wooden pilings of the old dock are clearly visible at low tide next to the sea wall. This tallies with the account we have from Dora Doster Utz.¹⁹ Mr. Ben Hill Doster had moved to Jupiter in 1894.

"At the base of our hill lay the right-of-way for the Celestial Railroad, which ran out onto the pier upon which Papa had his store, built on pilings over the River."

The photograph of the "Celestial" locomotive No. 1 shows the engine standing in the middle of three tracks.²⁰ This suggests the presence of a shunting yard at the Jupiter terminus and the use of at least two switches so that different cars could be coupled to the engine. This shunting yard must have been located in the parking area of the present trailer park. The lower end of the Indian River lies to the north from this area and enters at this point the Loxahatchee. When the old paddlesteamers rounded the bend on their approach to the Jupiter dock, the engineer, Blus Rice, who played the horn in the local band, would greet the passengers by playing *Dixie* on the whistle.²¹

Mrs. DuBois had located a picture of the Celestial Railroad dock taken in 1891 with three Seminole Indians posing on the edge of the dock.²² The Jupiter Lighthouse is clearly visible in the background. A similar view of the dock shows a black workman standing on the edge. This could be Milton Messer. In the background you see the lighthouse

and buildings of the keeper.²³ There is yet another view dated 1891 taken from a slightly different angle showing a few small boats tied to the dock and the Jupiter Lighthouse in the background.²⁴

In 1974, Alfred Simpson painted a series of six pictures on Palm Beach county history for a local bank. In one of these, the Celestial dock is shown as it supposedly appeared in 1889 looking west. The Indian River Line paddle steamer *Chattahoochee* is shown pulling away from dock and heading upstream into the Indian River. The lighthouse is shown in the right background. The Jupiter dock is shown to the left with the engine, for better effect, facing the wrong way towards the lighthouse. There is a small shed at the end of the T-shaped dock.²⁵

The location of the line itself can be plotted with some accuracy from contemporary maps. A full length map by G.R. Knight was first recorded in October 1890.²⁶ This map was re-published in the *Jupiter Courier*.²⁷

A most detailed view of the Jupiter end of the line can be seen from a 1930 plat on file at the Palm Beach County Court.²⁸ The right of way of the railroad is shown to run along Juno Street, one block east of Clemons Street, this being the area now occupied by the Suni Sands Mobile Trailer Park. The map on file is a reduction of the original and much of the descriptive material is quite illegible.

The line of the railroad as shown in the Knight map first runs due south for about 500 feet and then swings slightly east to parallel the coast line. It then continues in a straight line at an approximate angle of 15° to the north-south line. Part of the roadbed is shown on the Jupiter Quadrangle sheet of the U.S. Geological Survey map.²⁹ A broken red line, normally used to designate footpaths starts at Indian Town Road running due east-west, and continues for about three miles to a point level with Bench Mark 10 on the Federal Highway (Route 1).

The roadbed at this point is more accessible and closer to the Federal Highway than Ocean Boulevard (Route A1A). There is thick shrub and palmetto on the ocean side whilst the vegetation on the other side is not nearly as profuse. In February 1982, the writer visited the area between Federal Highway and Route A1A at the level of the public beach area on Ocean Boulevard just north of the Jupiter line. The ground was then being cleared for another development.

Modern machinery was required to strip the grounds of its dense growth. This gives us some idea of the task faced by the traveller in the 1880's who ventured below Jupiter. It is not surprising that the legendary mailman took the easier route along the beach.³⁰

The ground having been stripped, we did not have much difficulty

in locating the original roadbed roughly half-way between route A1A and the Federal Highway. It formed a slightly raised bank one or two feet above the generally level surrounding area with the suggestion of ditches on either side from which some of the material for the roadbed had evidently been obtained by the workmen in 1888.³¹ As the clearing proceeded, stretches of the roadbed for a couple of hundred yards became clearly visible.

A few scattered palms of mature size stand on either side of the roadbed and help to identify the general direction of the line.

Jupiter Light is not visible at this point. The workmen clearing the site were not aware that this area had at one time been traversed twice a day by a whistle-tooting steam engine. Once alerted, the men using metal detectors, had no trouble in finding a large number of spikes. The wooden sleepers had all but rotted away.

The spikes on the west side of the track, away from the ocean, seemed to be generally in better shape than the spikes found on the near side. The ground closer to the ocean evidently contains more salt which over the years could accelerate the corrosion rate.³²

The roadbed of the "Celestial" is also clearly marked on the large scale county plat maps. These maps are at a scale of one inch to 200 feet. On sheet 7-A for instance the old roadbed intersects the old Jupiter town line (which has since been moved) at a point approximately 800 feet east of the Federal Highway (Route US 1).

On the west side of Ocean Boulevard, one and a half miles north from Juno Beach Town Hall, there is a Historic Marker dated May 1, 1932. The Federal Highway (Route 1) then followed today's route A1A. The marker states "On this spot the Celestial Railroad once connecting Jupiter with Juno is crossed by the Federal Highway."

This portion of Ocean Boulevard runs along the old portage trail travelled by the earliest pioneers.³³ The old hack line must have followed this route, as indicated by Gardner and Kennedy in their *Business Directory*.³⁴

"Previous to the building of the line of the railroad a hack line was operated by Capt. U.D. Henrickson of Lake Worth and managed by his brother Alvin. The route was from Jupiter to a point inside the West Palm Beach City Park, in front where the Park Cottage Hotel formerly stood. The distance was 17 miles and the fare two dollars, one for trunks. The hack was a three-spring, three-seated wagon drawn by two mules, and passengers, baggage and freight used to be carried indiscriminately."

The Historic Marker plaque was originally mounted on an elab-

orate splith surmounted by figures in relief showing Seminole Indians doing the sun dance against a typical Florida background. The figurines and original bronze plate have disappeared. The present marker is less elaborate with the bronze plate mounted on a simple plinth set back a few feet from the highway. The marker inscription is not now correct as the road on which it is located is no longer the Federal Highway but route A1A.

Continuing south on Ocean Boulevard, one soon enters the community of Juno Beach with the Town Hall and Police Station on the right. Quite a number of the street names in this area have galactic associations, as Saturn Lane, Venus Drive, Mars Way, Neptune Road, Starlight Lane and so on. At Neptune Road, Celestial Way branches off to the left and passes between the shore and the east side of little Pelican Lake. This side road then turns at a right angle back towards Ocean Boulevard. There is a "Celestial Building" on Celestial Way with the "Celestial Travel Agency" and the "Celestial Realty." (The Celestial Travel Agency gives away ball pens inscribed "For Service out of this World!")

After continuing along the Federal Highway for about four miles, the old line swings further east in an arc towards the tip of Lake Worth and ends up in the grounds of the Twelve Oaks Condominium.³⁵

The terminal at Juno consisted of a T-shaped pier jutting into the shallow end of Lake Worth in a generally south-easterly direction.³⁶ Railway engineers at the time had the practice of filling in this type of pier with rock and gravel. An embankment type structure is also suggested by the 1892 Burchfiel (or Burchfield) plat.³⁷ The head of the T-shaped pier supported a freight shed. There was no room for the engine to reverse so that as reported by a number of contemporary writers, on its return journey, the train had to back up with the engine pushing the passenger or freight cars.³⁸

As the traffic on the line increased, some of its facilities became inadequate. In March 1891, Guy Metcalf writing in the *Juno Tropical Sun* had this to say about the terminal:

"...The building stuck on the end of the wharf at Juno that has to answer for the purpose of a waiting room for passengers, a storehouse for freight, a distributing room for mail, tickets, express and telephone offices, is one of the most unsightly buildings to be found in this entire country, and the matter appears worse when we think of the progressive spirit manifested by the company in other directions at other places.

“The house is very small, in the first place, being hardly adequate for a freight house, although it might do if used for that purpose exclusively. Persons obliged to wait in its stuffy confines for several hours, with all sorts of ill-smelling fertilizers and other freights, find it a very disagreeable resort, but as it is the only available room in which to spend their time when waiting for boats or train they have to endure and put up with what is furnished them—though it must be confessed they do it with very audible murmurs.”

Very little money was spent on improvements to the road or the equipment and the locals felt that the wood burned in the engine which at that time sold for \$2.25 a cord was the major outlay of the line.³⁹

Juno became the county seat following the celebrated election of 1889 but the Town of Juno was not incorporated until 1953.⁴⁰ In 1890, the settlement consisted of a small two-story courthouse, the office of the *Tropical Sun* newspaper and seven dwellings.

The *Tropical Sun* enjoyed the distinction of being the first and oldest newspaper between Melbourne and Key West.

During its Juno regime, the *Sun* building was located half-way between the courthouse and the dock of the railway. When the “Celestial Railway” had become defunct, the newspaper office was removed to Palm Beach in 1895. Some of the presses were actually taken by barge on Lake Worth as the roads at the time were very inadequate.⁴¹

A Historic Marker on the median of the Federal Highway a little below the Juno Beach town line gives the former location of the old courthouse about 300 feet east of the road. This area is now occupied by the Oakbrook Square Shopping Center, Palm Beach Gardens.

The Juno courthouse was the scene of the famous and only lynching in this part of Florida.⁴² Sam “Sure Shot” Lewis was a bartender in Lemon City and following a quarrel shot and killed two customers. Lewis escaped to Bimini in a small sail boat but returned to Biscayne Bay where he killed a third man. Lewis was eventually taken to the county jail in Juno. On the night of August 17, 1895 a group of twelve men from the Lake Worth area took the steamer *Lake Worth* from Lantana to Juno. They then walked along the road bed of the “Celestial Railroad” for about half a mile to the courthouse yard. The jailer Gustave Kaiser was killed by the mob. Lewis was dragged outside and hanged from the crosspiece of a telegraph pole.⁴³ The Celestial Railroad had installed a telephone line in April 1892 but it is doubtful whether

the eventual use of the telegraph pole had been contemplated by the installers.⁴⁴

There were two wayside stops. The first stop was Venus three miles south of Jupiter. The second stop was at Mars two miles farther south. No photographs of these stations remain. Mrs. Utz who came to Jupiter as a little girl in 1894 left us this account:

“These stations or stops along the Celestial, except Juno, were nothing more or less than a few shacks and pineapple patches, soon to be deserted when the Celestial ceased functioning.”⁴⁵

Other writers got a little carried away and allowed their imagination to run wild. “Three miles south of Jupiter was a freight-loading stop called Venus—for shipments of pineapples, tomatoes, etc. Two more miles south was Mars, where fish, turtles, and other seafood were hauled aboard. The trip north from Juno could be odiferous indeed; but tourists loved the little railroad with its three trips a day, its flower-picking along the tracks, its old smokey funnel and its cow-catcher—though there wasn’t anything bovine within miles of the tracks.”⁴⁶

Another writer somewhat exaggerated the speed of the service: “Over six decades back Floridians whizzed from Jupiter to Juno via Venus and Mars in a half hour not by space ship, but by rail.... A boon to shippers too, was the railway with the array of unearthly station names. Onto the Celestial’s box and flat cars, the Junoans loaded coconuts, the Martians fish and turtles and the Venusians pineapples and tomatoes.”⁴⁷

A copy of a detailed plat map of the town of Venus has been located in Palm Beach County Court House.⁴⁸ The plat shows an elaborate grid of streets laid out in upper quadrant of Section 21. The right of way for the Jupiter and Lake Worth RR runs at an angle of 25°N 45’W accross the map. The survey provides for thirty-foot roadways on either side of the track. Streets run north-south and east-west and each of the nineteen blocks in the development is neatly divided up into twelve or more lots. Curiously enough Venus station itself is not marked on this plat but this may have been located a bit further south as suggested by Fugate’s 1937 Map of the county.⁴⁹ This shows the abandoned track and the Federal Highway in its old location along the coast.

No similar layout for a township has been located for Mars. This is however shown on the 1889 map of The Tropical Trunk Line.⁵⁰

There are occasional references in the literature to a third wayside

station “Neptune.” Thus Marjory Stoneman Douglas mentions Neptune as one of the stations.⁵¹

“The most famous one on the east coast (of the narrow gauge railways) was the Celestial Railroad which began at Jupiter and ran through Neptune, Venus and Mars to Juno on Lake Worth, a sometime county seat of Dade County, where the mailmen started down along the beach to Biscayne Bay.”

Neptune was a post office in the Carlin House from 1895 to 1908 at the south end of Jupiter Bridge. The post office was then merged with the Jupiter office.⁵²

It is unimportant whether there were two or three wayside stations or stops, as the train stopped anywhere when requested by a passenger. These impromptu stops along the line were made so that gentlemen passengers could leave the train for hunting forays in the woods. Blus Rice would rent out his dog to the hunters.

The exploits of hunters along the “Celestial” line were recorded by Guy Metcalf in the columns of the *Tropical Sun* published in Juno.

“The largest ’gator seen in these parts for some time past was shot by Blus Rice Monday last. The boys of the Celestial RR saw him as they were going to Juno. On their return they stopped the engine long enough to put five bullets into him and haul him aboard the train. The ’gator measured 9 feet 6 inches.⁵³

Another hunting incident is reported the following week:

“A party of young men went deer hunting the other day. They say they did not see a deer, although they walked all over the woods between Jupiter and Juno. They went away from Jupiter on a crank car, and they came back on—the remains of the crank car. Did you ever hear of any one hunting deer on a crank car, anyway.”⁵⁴

The crank car was also used occasionally to bring down visitors from Jupiter when the engine was being repaired.

Mrs. DuBois quotes the following item from the *Florida Times Union* of October 10, 1890: “R.R. McCormack (sic) and family, bound for the lake, forced to travel by handcar, the Celestial’s one engine laid up.”⁵⁵

Robert R. McCormick, who owned the Denver Colorado Water Works and later founded the International Harvester Company of Chicago bought forty acres on Lake Worth from Albert Geer in 1886 for \$10,000 and built a winter home. The estate was later purchased for \$75,000 by Henry M. Flagler for the site of the Poinciana Hotel.⁵⁶

The lawyer C.C. Chillingworth, later a Palm Beach County judge, shared offices in the old Juno courthouse and made frequent trips on the "Celestial" line. In a talk given to the Harmonia Lodge in Palm Beach in 1932 he left us a detailed account of the scene at Juno and the railroad.⁵⁷

"The courthouse ... was located just a little less than a half mile north of the end of the lake just west of the right-of-way of the Jupiter and Lake Worth Railway.

"This little railroad had a total length of seven and one half miles and extended from the south end of Indian river at Jupiter southward to the north end of Lake Worth. The fare was 10 cents a mile. It had one little wood-burning engine, and if the engine should get out of order there was no train until the engine could be fixed. There were only two passenger cars and two or three freight cars, and when the train came to Juno from Jupiter with the engine at the head of the train it had to go backward to Jupiter as the engine could not be turned around at Juno.

"The genial conductor, Captain Matheson, was one of the most obliging of men. No one could be more accommodating than himself. The train would run at most any time to accommodate the public."

Mrs. Utz has recalled the names of some of the other railroad employees.⁵⁸ Gus Miller, the train conductor and wharf agent was assisted by his brother Ed Miller. Many of the pioneer families intermarried and were related. The men working the railroad were no exception. Mrs. Gus Miller was the sister of Mr. Ben Hill Doster, Mrs. Utz's father.⁵⁹ Blus Rice or Reis was the engineer. Milton Messer, a black "man of all work" continued to work for Ben Doster after the line had been discontinued, as recorded by Mrs. Utz:

"Papa now secured a colored man-of-all work who had been employed on the Celestial. Old Milton was kind and gentle to us children, and very helpful to Papa in the store and hauling freight in the boat."⁶⁰

During the building of the Poinciana Hotel, the trains were running day and night and two crews were employed.⁶¹ Others made a living off the railway, getting the passengers from the Juno dock to points along Lake Worth.

The trains were met by steamers, Captain Hendrickson and Captain William Moore running to the south end of the lake or to Hypoluxo. With the completion of this road a new epoch set in. Tourists came by

the hundreds and everything in the shape of a hotel or boarding house was filled to the overflow point, many private houses giving up their spare rooms.⁶² The Cocanut Grove Hotel owned by Captain Dimick reported 1200 guests between September 1, 1890 and April, 1891.⁶³

One of those catering to the tourists was Henry J. Burkhardt who a few years earlier had been one of the "Barefoot Mailmen" who walked the mail in three days from Lake Worth to Lemon City. Burkhardt recalled some years later, "I made my headquarters at Juno living on my yacht the *Maud S.B.* I made a good living meeting the train from Jupiter and in competition with other craft succeeded in gaining my fair share of passengers at 50 cents a head landing them at Brelsford Dock, Palm Beach."⁶⁴ Brelsford Dock is the present location of "Whitehall" mansion, the Henry M. Flagler Museum in Palm Beach.

Theodore Pratt in *The Barefoot Mailman* gives a good fictional account of the trip on the Celestial Railroad.⁶⁵ Pratt who lived in Delray did his research carefully before embarking on his historical novels. His research notes are preserved in the Pratt Room in the Library of Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton. For *The Barefoot Mailman* alone, Pratt amassed 230 single-spaced typed pages of material.⁶⁶

Steven in the story is the legendary mailman who took a week off from his mail-walking duties to do some electioneering. He had taken the naphtha launch up the lake from Hypoluxo to visit the county seat at Juno. He was disappointed in Juno:⁶⁷

A tiny railroad station stood a short way back from the shore at the head of the lake. There was a dock for the launch, a warehouse at the foot of the dock, and five unpainted frame houses.

The train stood in front of the station. It consisted of a wheezy little wood-burning engine, a passenger coach, and a boxcar. It had come from Jupiter with the engine at the head of the train, and with no means of getting itself about, it had to run backward on the return journey.

Steven knew Captain Matheson, the conductor. For years before he turned to railroading, the genial old man was a fisherman, and Steven had often accompanied him. They hailed each other, and Steven asked if there would be time for him to register the people in the houses before the train left.

"Time?" asked the Captain. He tipped back his yacht cap, as faded as Steven's. He seemed puzzled. "Why, you go right ahead, Stevie, and let me know when you're ready to leave."

Steven obtained the names he wanted, and the promise of the people to go in to Jupiter on election day and vote. Then

Captain Matheson boosted him aboard the coach, and climbed on himself. The Captain jerked the signal cord running overhead along the length of the narrow little car. With a jerk, the train started, the engine snorting and issuing billows of acrid black smoke from its tall stack.

Again Steven was the only passenger. Captain Matheson, sitting beside him on one of the seats, said, "Lots more going down than the other way. The country is opening up. Stevie, yes, sir, it surely is going ahead. Faster than we can go backward."

Steven, looking out the window, his body rocking to the violent sway of the coach on the narrow-gauge track, felt he was on a toy train. Suddenly it came to a stop. On either side there was nothing except woods. Then he saw a small shack near the track. There was no sign of it being inhabited. "What's this?" he asked.

"This," announced the Captain, "is the city of Venus. One of our important stops, though nobody ever gets on." He reached up and pulled the signal cord and the train began to back up again. "Nobody ever gets on at the way stations," he continued, "You watch."

The Captain's word was good. After another mile had been covered, the train once again screeched to a stop. Looking out, Steven saw that it had passed a family consisting of a man, his wife, and child, who now walked down the track toward the train, which reversed itself to go to meet them. When they came aboard, Steven asked the man to register. He obeyed, saying surprisingly, "You're the fellow we've got to vote for to keep his island, ain't you?"

On its eight-mile journey the Celestial Railroad prudently took shelter behind the beach ridge. Only here and there did there come a glimpse of the ocean. When Steven saw the beach he compared his walking pace with the speed of the train. It would take him the better part of three hours to cover the distance on the giving sand. The train, if it ran steadily, could do it in half an hour.

The negro fireman is evidently "Old Milton" Messer who later worked in Ben Doster's household.⁶⁸

Geoffrey Birt, a popular journalist, who had a regular column in the *Palm Beach Post* wrote an amusing eight-part series on the "Celestial Railroad."⁶⁹ At one point Birt began to have some doubts whether Venus and Mars stations ever in fact existed and suggested that the stations were purely mythical as there were no buildings to mark the places.⁷⁰ This view however is not supported by the evidence. The

stations may not have been overcrowded with shivering commuters as a suburban stop on the New Haven line but Venus and Mars were regular stops on the train's journey between Jupiter and Juno.

The stops at Venus and Mars were listed in the time tables which were regularly published in the local newspapers of the day.⁷¹

JUPITER & LAKE WORTH RAILWAY.					
Trains run on Tuesdays and Fridays (steamer days), as per schedule below.					
On other days trains run as specials on varying schedules:					
71	5			6	66
P. M.	A. M.			P. M.	P. M.
3 00	9 00	Lv.	Jupiter	Ar	1 00 4 35
3 15	9 25	Venus	12 40 4 15
3 22	9 35	Mars	12 15 4 08
3 35	10 00	Ar.	Juno	Lv	12 00 4 00
P. M.	A. M.			noon	P. M.
Connect at Juno with steamboats for Lake Worth landings.					

Lt. Col. Caygill in his original letter to *The Christian Science Monitor* reproduced a slightly more elaborate timetable with four trains a day making the Venus and Mars stops.⁷²

Northern tour operators were quick in incorporating a ride on the "Celestial Railroad" in a Grand Tour advertised in 1893 for \$114.95. The itinerary included going by rail from Jupiter to Juno. A stay in Lake Worth and then back by rail and Indian River steamer to Rockledge and Sanford.⁷³

An 1895 railway map showing the entire system of the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway, "The Tropical Trunk Line," lists all the subsidiaries of the line including the Jupiter & Lake Worth Railway. The four stations, Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Juno are clearly marked on the map, Juno being the southernmost point of the system.⁷⁴

Allen Morris in *Florida Place Names* has an entry under "Galaxy" for the short railroad linking these budding communities in what was then Dade County:⁷⁵

"Juno's newspaper, the *Tropical Sun*, disapproved of the nickname originated by travelers, thinking that they were poking fun which could obscure the worth of the area. When cold nipped the area, the editor wryly called the Celestial roll – Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Mars and the Sun – and said even Mercury had fallen there."

The traveler who apparently originated the nickname "Celestial"

was the British writer Julian Ralph who visited the area in the 1890's and reported on the trip in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* of March 1893 as follows:

“At Jupiter Inlet is found Captain Vail’s floating hotel – an old steamboat that serves well as a boarding house and that entertains not only fishermen, but many ladies that come with them. Beyond the termination of the tour is made by what is called the celestial railway system, so-called because it starts at Jupiter and passes stations called Juno and Mars.”⁷⁶

Another user of the line was Capt. T.M. Rickards, who is considered to be Boca Raton’s first settler. Rickards made a survey to determine whether the local rivers were suitable for navigation. Traveling by boat, Celestial Railroad and on foot, Rickards visited the area that would become his future home.⁷⁷

Rickards writing from Life Station 7, Biscayne, Florida reported on February 17, 1892 to an Ohio paper as follows:

“Next morning we took passage on steamer *San Sebastian* for Jupiter. There was quite a list of passengers, the table good, the officers courteous and pleasant, the weather delightful, scenery lovely and the river beautiful. The seven mile trip by rail from Jupiter (where the lighthouse looms majestically over the inlet) to Juno was through what appeared to me a rather barren waste, the monotony hardly broken by the flag stations Mars and Venus, (these latter planets, I can affirm confidently now, notwithstanding the opinion of other eminent astronomers, are not inhabited.)...”⁷⁸

In March 1896, following suspension of the service, foreclosure proceedings were brought against the line by one Stephen E. Rice.⁷⁹ In the Final Decree of Sale dated March 21, 1896, the property was ordered to be auctioned by C.C. Chillingworth, one of the local lawyers who had offices at one time in the Juno Courthouse.⁸⁰

Chillingworth was appointed a Special Master for the purpose of the sale. The property was described as follows: “That certain line of railway lying and being situate between Jupiter and Juno in the County of Dade, Florida, and also the equipment and rolling stock used by the defendant Railway Company in connection therewith; the same consisting of one engine and tender, one combination coach, one day coach, two box cars, two flat cars, all lettered J. & L.W. R.R. and also all depots, turnouts, hand carts, and material and tools and the lands and right of way upon which the depots and railway of the defendant railway company is situate...”⁸¹

On March 28, 1896 Judge John D. Broome ordered that all the real and personal property be sold by the Special Master in front of the Juno Court House door.⁸²

The sale took place on June 1st. All the property was bought by Mike and Alex Sabel doing business under the style of Sabel Bros.⁸³

Among the creditors was Ben Doster, the father of Dora Doster Utz, who succeeded in placing a mechanics lien on the property, presumably for work done on the railroad. Ben Doster was awarded the sum of \$67.50 after the taxes, cost of collection and advertising had been paid.⁸⁴

The later records at the Court are fairly complete and the title to the right of way can be traced to the present owners.⁸⁵

The Sabel Brothers sold the Right of Way of the railroad on March 21, 1933 to the Tennessee Company of Palm Beach for ten dollars and “other good and valuable consideration.”⁸⁶ The Tennessee Company was subsequently dissolved. The surviving directors acting as trustees on January 31, 1967 sold the Right of Way to an attorney practicing in West Palm Beach.⁸⁷

The astonishing fact is that the Right of Way of the “Celestial” is far from dead yet and the whistle is being blown on the developers of the land north of Juno unless they pay their dues to the present owner of the Right of Way.

NOTES

1. Shappee, Nathan D., "The Celestial Railroad to Juno," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXX, April 1962, pp. 329–349.
2. Shappee, *op. cit.*, p. 340.
3. Shappee, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
4. Pleasant, Margaret Noble, "Dear Family Features..." *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, May 25, 1959, p. 13.
5. Caygill, Lt. Col. Harry W. "Riding the Celestial Line," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, March 18, 1959, p. 19.
6. Letter to the author, January 29, 1982.
7. Utz, Dora Doster "Life on the Loxahatchee," *Tequesta XXXII*, 1972, pp. 38-57.
8. DuBois, Bessie Wilson *A History of Juno Beach & Juno, Florida*, privately printed, 1978, p. 6.
9. This photograph was originally taken by Mr. Sam Quincey of West Palm Beach.
10. Pettengill, George W. Jr., "*The Story of Florida Railroads 1834–1903*," *Bulletin No. 86 of the Railways and Locomotive Historical Society Inc.*, Boston, 1952.
11. Pettengill, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
12. Shappee, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
13. Pettengill, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
14. Pettengill, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
15. Shappee, *op. cit.*, p. 347.
16. Parks, Pat, *The Railroad that Died at Sea*, Brattleboro, Vermont, 1968, p. 14.
17. Knott, James R. "Glimpse of Boynton Beach History," *Ft. Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel*, March 8, 1981.
18. DuBois, Bessie Wilson, *The History of the Loxahatchee River*, Stuart, Florida, 1981, p. 2.
19. Utz. *op. cit.* p. 48.
20. DuBois, *Juno Beach*, p. 6.
21. DuBois, *Juno Beach*, p. 10.
22. DuBois, "Loxahatchee," p. 2.
23. McIver, Stuart B., *Yesterday's Palm Beach*, Miami, 1976, p. 14.
24. DuBois, Bessie Wilson, *History of the Jupiter Lighthouse*, 1981, back cover.
25. Simson, Alfred Richardson, *The History of Palm Beach County*, a collection of six oil paintings sponsored by the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association. The pictures hang in the main office of the bank at 293 S. County Road, Palm Beach.
26. Knight, G.R., "Plat of the Jupiter and Lake Worth Railway" October 1890, recorded in Palm Beach County Court House, Book 1, p. 78.
27. Buckwalter, Roger, "Snyder Seeks Aid in Salvage of Engine of Celestial Railway," *Saturday Courier*, Jupiter, August 13, 1977, p. 1. see also Bush, Betty "The Story of Jupiter's Little Celestial Railroad 1889–1896," Section II, *Beacon News*, June 30, 1966, p.8.
28. Plat of Jupiter Inlet Estates, "An Amended Plat of Johnson's Addition to Jupiter and other Lands owned by Jupiter Inlet Estates Inc.," being part of Government lots 5 and 6 of Section 31, dated March 12, 1930, (now in Book 16, p. 25 Palm Beach County Courthouse, West Palm Beach).
29. U.S. Geological Survey, 7.5 minute series, Jupiter Quadrangle.
30. For a description of the ground conditions see: Mahon, John K., *History of*

the Second Seminole War, 1835–1842, Gainesville, 1967, p. 233. Conditions were virtually unchanged in the 1880's.

31. Pierce, Charles W., *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida* edited by Donald W. Curl, Miami, 1970, p. 240. "A large force of Negroes started work grading the roadbed for a railroad from Jupiter to Juno at the head of Lake Worth. They had the grade through to Juno in short order and were laying track with handcars while waiting for the rolling stock to come down the river from Titusville."

32. Conversation with Mr. Dale Alexander of Palm Beach, April 12, 1982. Mr. Alexander developed much of the land in south Jupiter traversed by the railroad.

33. Daughters of the American Revolution of Florida, *History 1892–1933*, pp. 247-250.

34. Gardner, C.M. and Kennedy C.F. *Business Directory, Guide and History of Dade County, Fla. for 1896–97*, West Palm Beach, p. 98.

35. Burchfiel, R.B., "Plat of the Survey and Subdivision of Sec. 4. Township 42 South Range 43 East," March 21, 1892.

36. Potter, Geo. W., "Plat of Juno," May 5, 1892. This plat map was reproduced in Buckwalter's article in the *Saturday Courier* of August 13, 1977.

37. On some of these old plat maps the name is spelled "Burchfiel" without the "d."

38. Utz, "Loxahatchee," p. 40.

39. *Beacon News*, (June 30, 1966).

40. DuBois, *Juno Beach*, p. 5.

41. Bellamy, Jeanne, "Newspapers of America's Last Frontier," *Tequesta XII*, 1952, p. 3.

42. Chillingworth, C.C., "Pioneering in South Florida," *Palm Beach Post*, November 27, 1932.

43. Peters, Thelma, *Lemon City*, Miami, 1980, p. 163.

44. DuBois, *Juno Beach*, p. 8.

45. Utz. "Loxahatchee," p. 48.

46. Mowbray, James, "The Celestial Railroad and Old Port Village," *Social Spectator*, April, 1960.

47. Van Smith, Howard, "Railroad in the Sky," n.d., *Florida Living*, copy in Archives, Henry M. Flagler Museum, Palm Beach.

48. Geo. W. Potter, "Map of Venus, Dade County Florida," February 16, 1893, recorded May 15, 1893, Plat Book A, p.14. Copy now in Book 1, p.13, Palm Beach County Court House, West Palm Beach.

49. Fugate & Brockway, "Map of Palm Beach County," Sheet 3, Townships 40 and 41 South, Range 43 East, Dolph & Stewart New York, 1937.

50. Matthews-Northrup, "Map of Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West System and Connections—The Tropical Trunk Line," Buffalo, N.Y., 1889. Copy in the collection of Mrs. Bessie Wilson DuBois, Jupiter. See also Prince, Richard, *Atlantic Coast Line Railroad*, 1966, p. 32.

51. Douglas, Marjory Stoneman, *The Everglades River of Grass*, New York, 1947, p. 287.

52. Bradbury, Albert G. and Hallock, E. Story, "A Chronology of Florida Post Offices," Handbook No. 2, The Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, 1962, p. 58. See also *Tropical Sun* (December 5, 1895) "Neptune is the name of the latest post office established in Dade County. It embraces the region occupied by the majority of the Jupiter Reservation settlers." In the Jupiter Lighthouse Museum, there are two letters addressed to "Neptune" post office.

53. *The Tropical Sun*, October 18, 1894.

54. *The Tropical Sun*, October 25, 1894.
55. DuBois, *Juno Beach*, p. 12.
56. Hanna, Alfred Jackson and Hanna, Kathryn Abbey, *Florida's Golden Sands*, New York, 1950, p. 222.
57. Chillingworth, C.C., "Pioneering in South Florida," *Palm Beach Post*, November 27, 1932.
58. Utz, "Loxahatchee," p. 50.
59. Utz, "Loxahatchee," p. 38.
60. Utz, "Loxahatchee," p. 50.
61. *Indian River Advocate*, July 28, 1983.
- Gardner and Kennedy, *Business Directory*, p. 98. "During the summer the large hotel was built and the material was transferred between the two places and the freight bills were in the neighborhood of \$68,000. Some days it transported from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty passengers at 50 cents each, besides its regular freight traffic for the Lake people."
62. *Palm Beach Post*, June 26, 1933.
63. *The Tropical Sun*, April 22, 1891.
64. H.J. Burkhardt, the last of the barefoot mail carriers, ran in the West Palm Beach election of 1894 and was elected alderman.
65. Pratt, Theodore, *The Barefoot Mailman*, New York, (1943), p. 184.
66. Montague, Margaret Ester, *Theodore Pratt: The Florida Trilogy*, Masters Thesis submitted to Florida Atlantic University, 1978, p. 3.
67. Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
68. Utz, "Loxahatchee," p. 50.
69. Birt, Geoffrey, "Celestial RR is Built," *Palm Beach Post*, April 25, 1963.
70. *Palm Beach Post*, May 4, 1963.
71. *Indian River Advocate*, June 30, 1893.
72. *Christian Science Monitor*, March 18, 1959.
73. A copy of this itinerary was found pasted inside a scrap book preserved in the Florida Room, West Palm Beach Public Library. There is a handwritten notation "Maps, Florida The Far South, Tours, Sporting 1893." Immediately next to it is pasted in a map showing Jupiter, Mars and Juno. A curiosity of the map is that it also shows the stage line from Hypoluxo to Miami (Lemon City).
74. Matthews-Northrup, "Map of Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West System," Buffalo, 1889.
75. Morris, Allen, *Florida Place Names*, Miami, 1974, p. 65.
76. Ralph, Julian, "Our own Riviera," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* LXXXVI, March 1893, p. 507.
77. Curl, Donald W., "The Spanish River Papers," Vol. VII, Boca Raton Historical Society, February, 1979.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
79. Dade County Chancery Order Book AA, p. 79.
80. DuBois, *Juno Beach*, p. 8.
81. Dade County Chancery Order Book AA, p. 79.
82. Dade County Chancery Order Book AA, p. 357.
83. Dade County Deed Book X, p. 189.
84. Dade County Chancery Order Book AA, p. 95. (Mr. Doster had been commissioned to dismantle the railroad, see Utz, p. 49).
85. Rickards, T.M., Oral Interview, April 27, 1982.
86. Deed Book 488, p. 291.
87. Conversation with Mr. Dale Alexander, Palm Beach, April 12, 1982.