

Evolution of The Davidson Yard

By: Bill J. Wright and Steve R. Waits

Additional Sources: Don Watson and Steve Brown, "Ox Teams to Eagles-Texas & Pacific," The Boston Mills Press 1978

Old Lancaster Yard

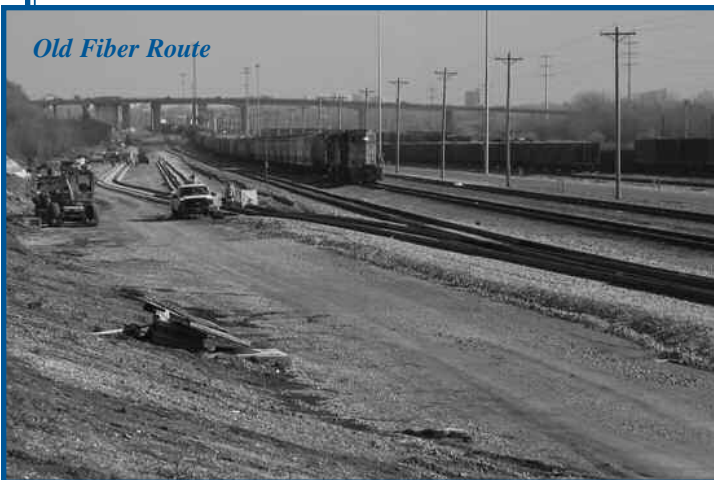


Built in the early 1900's by the Texas & Pacific Railroad and named "Lancaster Yard" after John L. Lancaster, president of the Texas and Pacific Railroad, Union Pacific's "Davidson Yard" has undergone continuous changes for nearly a century.

In 1963 the Missouri Pacific Railroad assumed control of the Texas and Pacific and soon began to modernize and improve the yard. On September 8, 1971, Lancaster Yard was renamed "Centennial" in recognition of the 100th birthday of the Texas and Pacific. Centennial became a part of Union Pacific following the merger with the Missouri Pacific in 1984. In 2007 the large hump yard facility located in Fort Worth, Texas was renamed "Davidson Yard" for then retiring Union Pacific CEO Richard K. (Dick) Davidson.

With the advent of fiber optic cable construction on Union Pacific rights of way in the early 1980's, the Telecom office at Davidson Yard became a major hub for railroad communications with the installation of last mile fiber into Union Pacific's telecommunications system. A number of Union Pacific's fiber optic customers built through Davidson Yard in route to their destinations as well.

Old Fiber Route



Continued on other side

Evolution of The Davidson Yard *Continued*

In 2009 Union Pacific began the largest changes yet for Davidson Yard. Plans were made for new bridges to be built over Rogers Road, the Trinity River, Fort Worth and Western Railroad, University Drive, and Forest Park Drive. New yard tracks were constructed and others reconfigured to add capacity and accommodate new overhead viaducts crossing the yard for a new toll road.

Construction of two new main line tracks would extend from near Forest Park Drive to the west end of the yard, a distance of approximately 4 miles. Previously the 4 main tracks westward from Tower 55 towards Davidson Yard converged into 2 tracks near Forest Park Drive. The addition of the new tracks will speed operations through Davidson Yard and add to operating capacity. One of the new main tracks was built on the north side of the yard and the other on the south.

West, from near Henderson Street, fiber cables had to be relocated for pending track and bridge work. The fiber projects were divided into two segments, east and west of Rogers Road. Delays were common due to constantly changing designs related to the varying requirements from a number of Municipal, Federal, and State authorities that were involved with construction plans. Project coordination between Steve Waits-Fiber Optic Construction Coordinator, Ted Haskell-Manager Construction Projects, and Blake Woodson-Manager Terminal Operations, were daily affairs. "The help we received from Ted and Blake was essential in getting the project done on time," said Steve Waits, Construction Coordinator.

At the Trinity River the Army Corps of Engineers controlled the levees. The Trinity River Authority controlled structures involving the river and access to the river. Toll Road Authorities were involved with the designs of new bridges crossing the yard and private industry along Union Pacific's tracks voiced concerns. New bridges over University Drive involved lane closures that were difficult to coordinate.

Union Pacific's own last mile fiber and local telephone service had to be relocated as well. New roads through the yard were planned and access to Union Pacific's telecommunications building had to be re-designed and new duct systems and cable installed to maintain communications while the entire yard area underwent construction. As a result of the changes, Union Pacific was able to improve its own telecommunication facilities with the addition of a new fiber optic cable, while expanding capacity and

providing diversity backup in the event of a cable cut on one of the existing fiber systems.

Many of Union Pacific's fiber optic customers had cable routes running on the north side of Davidson Yard in a generally undeveloped area of railroad right of way. As new tracks were planned in those areas a new route through the yard was necessary. The route chosen for Union Pacific's fiber optic customers was on the south side of the yard generally bordering the new yard access road from Rogers Road to the west end of the yard.

At the west end of the yard, a new entrance to the yard via "MOPAC" bridge was built and fiber cables were lowered to accommodate construction work. A new road was built from the west end of the yard to the Crest Tower and yard offices where several of the old 200 yard tracks had been, eliminating a grade crossing in-route. Future plans include the possible re-opening of the Kimzey Street entrance on the northeast side of Davidson Yard. The Kimzey Street entrance was closed in years past due to the construction of the former Santa Fe run-through track built on the north side of the yard.

On March 1, 2010, the last fiber optic cable was spliced completing the fiber move for the massive Davidson Yard project, but work is still continuing as bridges are built and track is laid. Construction Coordinator-Steve Waits said, "this has been the most stressful and yet the most rewarding project I have done since starting in the Fiber Optic Group 25 years ago. The evolution of Davidson Yard continues."

