# Arkadelphia Train Station

One hundred two years ago, in June of 1873, the first train arrived in Arkadelphia. The railroad's completion brought a major change in transportation in this area and all of Arkansas, establishing new shipping and travel connections with the rest of the nation.

On the big day, people came to Arkadelphia from as far away as fifty to sixty miles to be a part of the arrival of the Cairo and Fulton Railroad's first passenger train. The special train consisted of a locomotive, tinder, baggage car, and two coaches, all lavishly decorated with flags. The engine, named the "E Johnson," weighed about twenty-four tons.

After the train arrived, the passengers and townspeople gathered in a grove on the outskirts of town where dinner was served and speeches made. At the end of the day, the guests boarded the train for the return trip to Little Rock, and locals returned to their homes, having witnessed an event they would remember the rest of their lives.

The arrival of the Cairo and Fulton Railroad established Arkadelphia as a principal transportation hub in southwest Arkansas. The rail line later became a part of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern line that ran between Missouri and Texas. Then, it became a part of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, and even later, the Union-Pacific.

The Missouri-Pacific constructed a railroad depot in Arkadelphia about 1917, after the company acquired the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern line. The depot's construction was a part of the Missouri-Pacific's campaign to establish a corporate identity through the use of the Italianate/Mediterranean style of architecture for its passenger and freight depots. The structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. Today, it serves as the Clark County Historical Museum.