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Hampton Dunn
PRE-SPACE AGE RAILROAD SERVIED THE PLANETS

By HAMPTON DUNN

JUPITER --- A bit south of the modern day moonport at Cape Kennedy lies this community which many years ago was a terminal for the so-called Celestial Railroad. It was so-called because the line served the heavenly bodies of Jupiter, Neptune, Mars, Venus and Juno.

Formally named the Jupiter and Lake Worth Railway, it soon got its nickname. It operated between 1889 and 1895 and hauled freight and passengers from this town to the Lake.

The train usually consisted of a cabbage-head engine whose engineer reportedly could toot out "Dixie" on the whistler and a passenger car and several freight cars. It took a half-hour to run between the trio points, if it ran on schedule. Sometimes the crew and passengers liked to stop and hunt along the way.

Back in those days, Juno was the county seat of Dade County. In the early 1890s, the great Florida developer Henry M. Flagler busily extended his railroad down the East Coast. During construction, he was forced to use the Celestial Railroad to haul materials. This was costly. Flagler got revenge, bypassing the Jupiter-Juno peninsula. In 1899 it is alleged that the county records were stolen and the county seat was removed to Miami. The Celestial Railroad had gone out of business.

The Seminole Chapter of the Daughters of American Revolution has erected a Monument to the Celestial Railroad commemorating the eight-mile, narrow-gauge road.