

Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



Issue Number 51

San Luis Obispo, California, Winter 2014-15

www.slormm.com



Left to Right: Kristen Kopp, Arnold Jonas, Bill Schroll, Jim Anderson, Brad LaRose, and Andrew Merriam at the presentation of donation from Phillips 66.

Phillips 66 Donates to Museum

The Continuing History of Oil

The Pacific Coast Railway may have been the only narrow-gauge line that depended on three traffic sources other than mining or lumbering: agricultural products, passengers, and . . . oil. From the early 1900s to the present, railroads have been key in moving both crude oil and various petroleum products within and through the Central Coast region. The Museum has long planned to incorporate this significant industry into exhibits and displays. These efforts received very significant support when the Phillips 66 Company donated \$30,000 to the Museum. About half of the funds will be used for the purchase, restoration, and display of a 1940s Southern Pacific oil tank car.

Museum Curator Brad LaRose is following several leads in search of such a car. The rest will be spent in developing an historic portrayal in model form covering the extraction, transportation, and refining of oil on the Central Coast. In addition to the models there will be a video program using photos and narration. In December 2014, the Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Manager Bill Schroll formally presented the donation to Museum directors Karl Hovanitz, Arnold Jonas, Brad LaRose, and Andrew Merriam. Phillips 66 will be recognized as a model scene sponsor and a museum patron for this generous contribution.

Reported by Diane Marchetti and Glen Matteson



Photo by Glen Matteson

The Lark passes a string on Southern Pacific tank cars on the Museum HO scale layout.

Restoring Caboose 1886



Don Druse and Martin Flores of Rick Engineering presented Brad LaRose with a check to reupholster one of the chairs in the #1886 caboose.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED TO RESTORE SOUTHERN PACIFIC CABOOSE #1886

Your assistance is greatly needed to make this quickly evolving restoration take place this spring. This caboose was last operated by Southern Pacific Railroad on November 15, 1995 on the Lompoc/White Hills Branch. The museum is working hard to complete the interior restoration of the caboose and we are making great progress.

Preparation of the walls for painting is almost complete. Parts for the stove and refrigerator have been obtained and installed. Lighting fixtures have been removed and restored and the missing conductor's desk lamp has been replaced with an identical lamp that is new old stock! We are moving very fast so that this caboose can be available as our newest large exhibit. To be completed, we need your immediate help.

There are six chairs in this caboose along with the conductor's desk. All of

Continued on page 3



Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is a non-profit educational institution founded to preserve and present the railroad history of California and specifically the Central Coast. Collecting, restoring, and displaying relevant railroad artifacts, photographs and documents is its goal. This effort is supplemented by creating models, displays and graphics as well as operating historic railroad equipment to facilitate a better understanding of how railroads have affected our areas social, cultural and economic history.

SAN LUIS OBISPO RAILROAD MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karl Hovanitz..... *President*
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 Andrew Merriam *Secretary*
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 John Marchetti, Glen Matteson,
 Aron Kahn, Duane Powell,
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 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Bill Pyper, *Newsletter Editor*
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TIMETABLE

The following is a list of future meetings of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. Business meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Freighthouse, 1940 Santa Barbara Street, San Luis Obispo. Meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.

April 14 *Business Meeting*
 May 12 *Business Meeting*
 June 9 *Business Meeting*
 July 14 *Business Meeting*
 August 11 *Business Meeting*

BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

Every member in good standing is entitled to a copy of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum By-laws. For the sake of economy, we have not distributed them to all members automatically. To get a copy, send a #10, self addressed stamped envelope to SLORRM, Post

2 Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 or go online to www.slorrm.com under the **members only** section.

Renew your membership

The Museum exists thanks to continued member support. All annual memberships expire on December 31. If you have not already renewed, please provide your payment and any changes to your contact information: phone number, and U.S. mail and email address. You can renew online through the Museum's website or checks may be mailed to the Museum. If renewing online, you can provide updated contact information by phone message to 805 548-1894 or email to info@slorrm.com

The Museum will never share your contact information.

To renew your membership online using a credit or debit card, go to www.slorrm.com and click on MEMBERSHIP, then click on SUBSCRIBE and fill out the PayPal form.

Become a Member

Membership in SLORRM provides an outlet for anyone interested in railroad history, train travel, railroad oriented entertainment and the value of railroading to the community.

Membership is designed for those who love trains and wish to educate others, young and old, and who share an interest in railroad history and the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.

Single members pay \$36 per year. A family can join for \$60 annually, and a sustaining member pays \$100 per year. Mail to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3260. Go to <http://www.slorrm.com> to download an application form. You can join or renew on line at www.slorrm.com and click on MEMBERSHIP. This will allow you to use Pay Pal to make your payments.

Life Members receive an embroidered patch, enameled pin, the Coast Mail newsletter, and have voting rights for one person for life. Spouse and dependent children under the age of 18 are included as members. *Use current age to calculate amount due.*

40-65 \$1200 or 5 payments of \$275
 66 and older \$800 or 5 payments of \$180

If making payments, the life membership card will be sent upon receipt of final payment. Until such time as the life membership is paid in full, the member will receive a yearly membership card. All payments made toward a life membership are non-refundable and failure to make a scheduled payment by the due date will result in forfeiture of all funds paid toward the life membership. Payment plans include yearly member dues.

New Members

The following people have joined the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last Coast Mail was published. Dan Begalla, James F. Collins, Stanley H. Gitler, Bill Goodenough, Stephen Hager, Richard Harris, Jim Hawk, Henry Hubbard, Tom Machut, Matthew Metoyer, Stan Rothwell and Jay Wiese.

Individual Renewals

The following individuals have renewed their membership in SLORRM. Logan Bertolette, Jim Chernoff, Patrick Cully, Charles Davies, Paul Edwards, John Falkenstien, Peter Faxon, Aron Kahn, Kent Kenney, Brad LaRose, George R. Mach, Anthony Mello, Barry Pearce, Paul Remis, M.D., James P. Stalworth, Leslie Taylor-Snow and Ted Van Klaveren.

New Family Members

The following listed families have joined SLORRM. J. Matt Berkheimer, Steven and Jan Marx, Mark, Anna, and Connor Struven, and Dave and Dede Svetich.

Family Renewals

The following families have renewed their membership. Luther and Betsy Bertrando, William Bordeaux and Family, David and Aurelie Boyer, Robert and Kathleen Copeland, Paul and Dorothy Dies, Ryan Dora, Carl and Robin Dudley, Laura Frank and Eric Wier, Suzette Girouard, Harry and Mary Harlow, Karl and Stephanie Hovanitz, and Bernie and Susan Kempker.

New Sustaining Members

Marty Hurwitz, and Erik Rheinisch have become sustaining members.

Renewing Sustaining Members

Marilyn Darnell, Harry J. Garvin, Jr., James Keene, and Christian Rheinisch have renewed as sustaining members.

New Life Members

Aaron Bergantz and Hillary Amborn, Sheila Campbell, Kim Froom, Tom and Debbie Grozan, Dwight Hudson, Chris Hurd, Anita Walter and Karl Kvilvang.

Company Store

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum has a variety of items for sale for your enjoyment and to raise money for the Museum. T-shirts in both adult and children sizes, baseball hats, belt buckles, coffee mugs, enamel pins, embroidered patches, engineer hats and videos are all available by going to the Museum web site, www.slorrm.com and click on **Company Store**.



Reason to celebrate

This January, for the first time, the museum provided a venue for a birthday party.

Young partygoers and their parents and grandparents set up on the Museum platform in the warm sunshine, and excitement was felt by all as the Surfliner went by. While in the Museum, the children enjoyed the newly expanded play area while parents got to relax. The Museum's lounge-observation car was open for docent-escorted visits and picture taking on the car's platform.

The Museum is making the Freight-house, and eventually the observation car, available for events such as birthdays, anniversaries and informational meetings. Usage fees will help with funding Museum operations and restoration efforts. For availability and fees, contact Museum Manager **Diane Marchetti** at 805 548-1894 or by e-mail at media@slorrm.com

CABOOSE REHAB *Continued*

the upholstery on the chairs and on the side of the desk was slashed and destroyed by transients who broke into the car. We will only be able to salvage two arm rests. This is where you can help restore the caboose. We need members and friends to sponsor a chair or desk so these artifacts can be reupholstered. This is your chance to make a big difference in railroad preservation.

We need you to quickly step forward and send a check for \$400.00, marked CABOOSE CHAIR/DESK, to the railroad museum at: San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum P.O. Box 13268 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

Please do this today! We cannot open this great exhibit until all of the chairs and desk are reupholstered. You can make a big difference in the experience our guests will have in 2015 and beyond. Make this your late Christmas or New Year's gift to the museum. Then bring your family to enjoy it later this year!

Thank you,
Brad LaRose, Curator

New Board of Directors Seated

At the general membership meeting on January 13, 2015, two new Board members, Erik Rheinisch and Glen Matteson, were seated. They had been elected by the general membership to fill vacant positions. Both new Board members look forward to improving and expanding museum exhibits and programs.

The Board elected Karl Hovanitz President and Gary See Vice President. Both are long-time Museum members, Karl having a wealth of local and general railroad knowledge and Gary has provided first-class technical support and signal experience. Dave Rohr will continue to serve as Treasurer, and Andrew Merriam as Secretary.

The following chairmanships for working committees have been confirmed. Members with an interest in helping with any of these topics are encouraged to contact committee chairs through e-mail info@slorrm.com or telephone 805 548-1894. However, it's not necessary to be a committee member to participate. Additional docents and equipment restoration workers in particular are always welcome.

Budget and Finance - Dave Rohr
Facilities and Operations - Gary See
Membership Services and Board Development - John Marchetti
Exhibits - Aron Kahn
Events and Public Relations - Tom Mitchell
Curation and Archives - Glen Matteson
Equipment and Restoration - Ted VanKlaveren and Brad LaRose
Model Railroad - Andrew Merriam

At a previous meeting Brad LaRose was formally designated Curator, a position he has filled informally for many years.

We thank two long-time Board members who have stepped aside.

Brad LaRose is a founding member of SLORRM and has served as President for many years. He has retired from that position but will remain an active Board member. Brad will continue as the *Museum Curator*, which allows him to work tirelessly on

procuring and maintaining major artifacts for the Museum. If Brad is around the next time you come by the Museum, ask him to show you the work he has done on the #1886 Caboose.

Arnold Jonas has retired from the Board and becomes a *Board Member Emeritus*. Arnold has been our *Membership Chairman*, and additionally has guided us through the many negotiations with local government bodies. We are thankful for his knowledge and willingness to work tirelessly to bring the Museum to life.

We welcome to two new members to the SLORRM Board of Directors.

Glen Matteson is the Museum *Archivist* for some time. He has overseen the organization of the reference library. This involved many hours of studying historic and donated materials and arranging them in a way that allows them to be used for study. He is a major part of our "*Train Tales*" program. Glen puts much thought into his interviews of local railroad workers and finds a way to bring out their memories of "*what it used to be like*."

Erik Rheinisch, is the son of the late **Frank Rheinisch**, a former Board member. He has decided to continue a family tradition, and join us as a Board member. He owns Alpha Fire & Security Alarm Corporation which donated all the fire safety and security systems to the Museum. We are very pleased to have him join us.

Don't let this be the last Coast Mail that you see!

This is the last Museum newsletter issue to be mailed to members in paper form. You may request a paper copy by sending a message to the Museum by e-mail at info@slorrm.com or telephone 805 548-1894 and leave a message, or by mail to PO Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

This is an economy move, partly to avoid increasing membership dues. The Museum still plans to provide four online issues a year, each with interesting stories on recent and planned projects and events. Make sure the Museum has your e-mail address if you want to be notified when new issues are available. The Museum never shares email addresses with others.

Also, don't forget to renew your membership. When you do, update your U.S. Mail and e-mail information, and note your preference for receipt of the Coast Mail. Items such as ballots will still be sent to you by way of the U.S. Mail.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED!

The Board of Directors of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum wants to be sure that all members are notified of Museum events and operations in a timely manner. The best way to do this is by using e-mail. Using US Mail is not affordable.

Please e-mail your name and e-mail address to media@slorrm.com

From LaCondesa to . . .



Museum volunteers, Dave Rohr, on the ground, skilled craftsman Mike Fairbrother on the ladder, and Howard Amborn, out of sight inside the car, have invested many hours in restoring the lounge-observation car.

Photo by Glen Matteson

Not only the name is changing

As reported in the previous Coast Mail, the Museum's lounge-observation car, built by the Pullman Company in 1926 for the Santa Fe Railway, was moved in May, 2014 from the Santa Maria Valley Railroad to the Museum display track. Named *La Condesa* by the previous private owner, the car had been extensively modified from its original layout and décor, and had felt the effects of years of weather. Museum volunteers have been working on the car so it can be better enjoyed by members and visitors, and rented for events such as anniversaries and small group meetings. Rental income would help fund the significant materials costs of restoration and maintenance.

Recent work and tasks underway include: Repairing rusted exterior spots and making the roof, walls, and windows watertight; Removing partitions and fixtures that had created small sleeping compartments; Removing kitchen fixtures; Rewiring the dining area lighting and moving two light fixtures to the dining area; Replacing all large, lower windows in the dining area, while exposing the original small upper windows so their leaded glass is visible; Replacing the generator fuel line and testing the generator, which is now operational.

4

This car likely never traveled on the Coast Route. However, from the late 1800s through the 1950s, railroad executives and

Puttin' on the Ritz Dinner & Auction Gala Thursday, April 23, 2015



Join us for an evening of fun and entertainment resplendent in a Roaring 20's theme. Enjoy dinner along with both live and silent auctions and afterwards dance the night away. Trilogy at the Monarch Dunes in Nipomo is the speakeasy hosting this elegant soiree. Break out your best 20's glad-rags and look absolutely swell at this benefit for the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.

Santa Maria Valley Railroad will be presenting their first annual public safety award to a citizen who has exemplified public safety for railroads.

The Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad will run a campaign to fund education and equipment for the Santa Maria City Fire Department for first responders. Educating and equipping local fire departments allows them to be ready to respond to railroad disasters. The training and equipment will be used to respond to other events.

Capping the night, and giving us our theme for the evening, the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum will run a campaign to fund the restoration of the La Condesa, which will soon be renamed to fit its new Central Coast home. This lovely 1926 Pullman Observation car will be restored to its former grandeur, preserving the golden age of railroad passenger travel. The car will also be used for fundraising purposes for elegant special events and dinners. Sponsorship opportunities begin at \$500.00 and single dinner tickets are \$125.00 each.

So, gentlemen, break out your best bib and tucker and ladies, put on those feathers and frills. Bring all those guys and dolls who love to party to this fun-filled fete.

A significant part of the proceeds from **Puttin' on the Ritz** will be used to help renovate the Museum's 1926 lounge-observation car. SLORRM hopes to get additional support at the event by auctioning off items. Please Contact Museum Manager Diane Marchetti at info@slorm.com or 805 548-1894 if you have any items or a service that you could donate to be auctioned off to help raise funds. Items for the auction need not be railroad related.

captains of industry often used similar company or privately owned cars to visit throughout North America. Stations large and small had facilities to accommodate such cars for intervals ranging from a few hours to a whole season. The Museum's approach is to stage the car as if it were a private car, perhaps stopping on the beautiful Central Coast while the riders hobnobbed with their friend Mr. Hearst.

The car's new role merits a new name. The Board of Directors recently narrowed a wide range of nominations to a few to be voted on by general members. The members have voted. The car's new name will be unveiled at an official christening ceremony scheduled for National Train Day in May. The opportunity to swing the bottle is to be auctioned at the Spring Gala noted elsewhere in this edition.

*Reported by
Dave Rohr and Glen Matteson*



Don't stop here . . .
Go online to www.slorm.com
and click on Newsletter for more
pages of Coast Mail. Read . . .

Notes Along the Pacific Coast Right-of-way
by Andrew Merriam. Stories and pictures of
The Pacific Coast Railway. See more pictures
from the Grand Opening.

If you don't have internet access, send a #10
SASE to Bill Pypier, PO Box 885, Salem, OR
97308 for printed copies of pages 5-8.

Notes Along the Pacific Coast Right-of-way

By Andrew Merriam

20th Century Steam Locomotives

It was March 1904 and the first Pacific Coast Railway consolidation, 2 -8-0 #105, rolled out of the Baldwin Company for delivery to San Luis Obispo. It had been a decade since that last PCRY locomotive had been constructed and the little 2-6-0s with tractive effort in the 10,000 pound range were not adequate to the task of rail-roading in the new century.

The five new consolidations were rated at 19,340 pounds, nearly twice the mogul's tractive effort. Evidently the financial underpinnings of the Pacific Coast Rwy were as variable as always. Payment seems to have been stretched out over several years. It was not until January 1906 that the #109 was delivered. Baldwin had constructed 3,255 locomotives in the interim.

All five of the 2-8-0s, No's 105 through 109, arrived with extended smoke boxes and cap stacks. Figure 1 shows an early view of one of consolidations crossing the Santa Maria River toward San Luis Obispo with a mixed train probably prior to World War I. Over the years, the original capped stacks were replaced with straight stacks (see Figure 2) and sometime in the mid-1920's the old-style acetylene headlights were replaced with electric headlights and generators. The smoke boxes were shortened on all the consolidations except the #106. Additional braking capacity was required for the grades into Arroyo Grande and Los Olivos. This required additional compressed air tanks which were added to the locomotives at various locations. Sometimes there were two tanks and an additional running board. Evidently this led to an imbalance and the tanks were relocated to the opposite side starting in 1925 as seen in Figure 2. The wooden cabs as originally delivered were replaced by the mid-1920's on all the engines except #109, which kept its original cab until it was scrapped.

The 106 was destroyed in a collision with a gasoline tank truck in 1938. Three of the others, 107, 108 and 109, were retired in the mid 1930's, then often cannibalized for spare parts and finally sold for scrap. During the Pacific Coast's final years, only the much-photographed #105 and the two more recent 4-6-0's, #s 110 and 111, provided steam motive power for freight service.

The compact and relatively heavy weight 4-6-0's were the last locomotives bought by the company. They



Figure 1: Mixed Pacific Coast Railway train with consolidation crossing the Santa Maria River. Photo was probably taken prior to World War I from the old Highway 101 bridge facing southwest toward Santa Maria. From the collection of J. Sainz.

Figure 2, below: Consolidation 106. Smoke stack, air tanks, cab and headlight have been modified from the as-built condition and the electric generator added. The 106 still has the extended smoke box as delivered. San Luis Obispo, 1937. W.C. Whittaker Photograph.



came from the Nevada-California-Oregon (NCO) in May 1928. Heavier than the 2-8-0's numbers, their primary use was in hauling heavy gravel trains from the Sisquoc quarries. Their extra 8 tons of weight when added to the increase in driver diameter from 36" to 44" converted to greater speed rather than extra tractive effort. The 110 and 111 were built in 1910 and 1911 and were identical except for their crossheads and valve gear. These differences can be seen when comparing Figures #3 and #4.

The 110 has a more modern Laird crosshead with the older Stephenson valve gear while the 111 is just the reverse with the older style alligator crosshead bearings and the easier to maintain (since the linkage was accessible) modern Walscherts valve gear. It is unclear with the information at hand whether they were built this way or some accident on the NCO resulted in the change. Coming so late to the PCRY both engines led relatively uneventful lives after the roadbed and some of

the trestles had been strengthened to support their greater weight. This means that the number 110 broke through a small trestle right after its arrival on the property. The number 111 was sold to the Oahu Railway in January 1942 to support the war effort in the Pacific theater. It was scrapped in Honolulu in 1946. The number 110 was stored for sale at the San Luis Obispo roundhouse until 1948 when it was cut up for scrap along with anything else that was salvageable.

As a teaser, please answer the following question: What was the difference between the Pacific Coast Railway and the Pacific Coast Railroad? If you answered “*just a name change in corporate ownership,*” you get partial credit. If you answered that one was narrow gauge and the other standard, one was in California and the other about 1000 miles north in Washington, one died at the beginning of the Second World War and the other actually has trackage that is now part of the BNSF, and you knew that both companies were components of the Oregon Improvement Company founded by Henry Villard in the early 1880s, you should be writing this column instead of me.

Figure 5 shows consolidation number 15, formerly of the Columbia and Puget Sound whose name changed to Pacific Coast Railroad in 1916. I had not seen this photograph published and had to include this Alco-Brooks locomotive built in 1907 as a comparison with the San Luis Obispo cousins numbered 105 though 109.



Figure 3, above: PCRy #110, is seen here at San Luis Obispo in October 1940. The whaleback tender was common to both of the 4-6-0s. W.C.Whittaker photograph.

Figure 4, below: The PCRy #111 in San Luis Obispo in October 1940. Note the difference in valve gear between 110 and 111. W.C.Whittaker photograph.

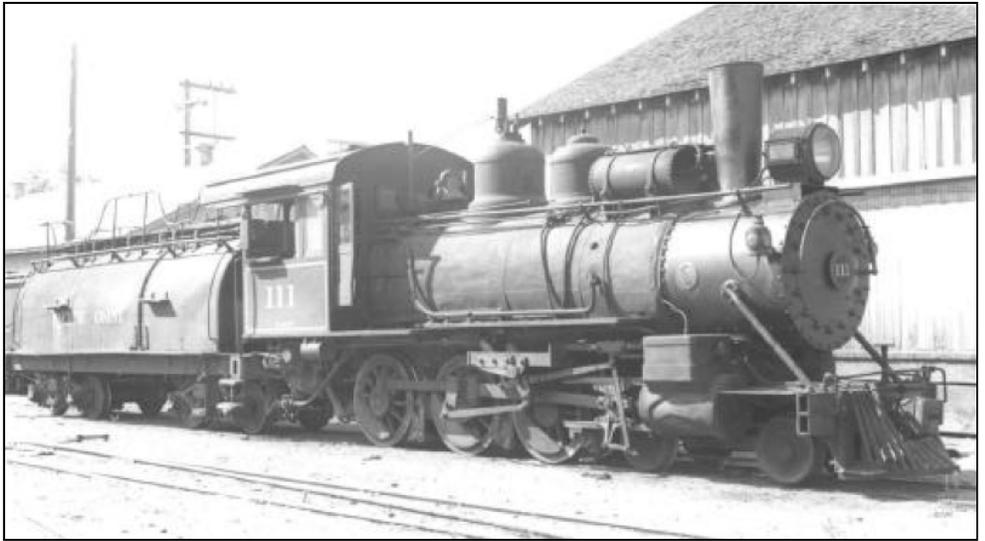


Figure 5



Central Coast Coal Hauler

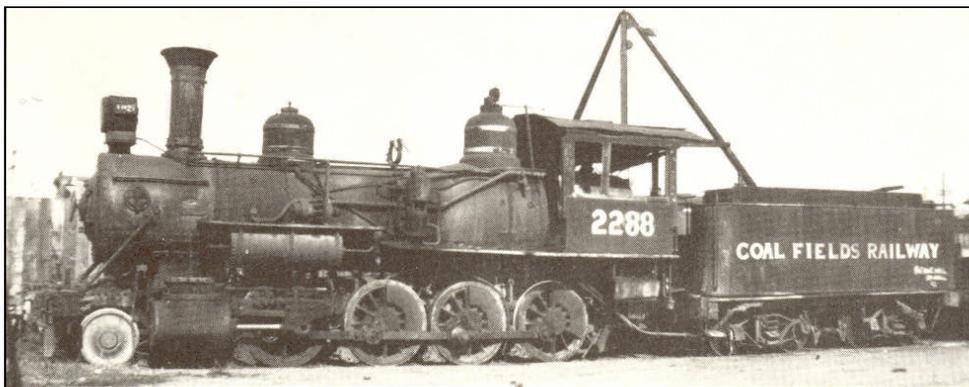
From their earliest days in England, railroads and the coal industry grew up together. Principal U. S. railroads in the East and the upper Midwest depended on coal for fuel and for revenue traffic. More recently, deposits in Colorado and New Mexico, and then Wyoming, justified huge investments in major branch lines and multi-tracking contemporary mainlines. But is there coal on the Central Coast?

Yes, starting in 1908 the standard-gauge Stone Canyon Railroad hauled coal about 21 miles to a Southern Pacific connection at McKay, near the site of what is now Camp Roberts north of San Miguel and just south of the Monterey County line. From there, the Southern Pacific moved the coal to the San Francisco Bay area. The mine had actually started operation before the short-line railroad, with steam tractors pulling wagonloads to Bradley.

The SCRR ran northeast from McKay and was nearly all within Monterey County. It gained about 1300 feet in elevation between McKay and the loading site at Big Sandy, just beyond Indian Canyon. The line was built by Sandercock Construction, using “200 head of horses and mules.” According to one worker’s account, “The track was never ballasted and was very rough.” However, the SCRR was classified as a common carrier by California regulators, and made some effort to carry passengers and agricultural products. Passengers from Indian Canyon could ride to McKay for 50 cents; if they made the connection with SP’s local, they could pay an additional 10 cents and ride to San Miguel.

Once in regular operation, the SCRR had one steam locomotive, a 2-8-0 built in 1890 by Schenectady, originally for a New York Central predecessor, one passenger car, and several gondolas. There were no turning facilities at the ends of the line. As cattle guards silted in over the years, ranchers installed gates across the track, which train crews had to open and close as they proceeded. The mine itself used narrow-gauge cars and battery-powered locomotives; a long, steep, downward incline with a cable and “barney” attachment car led to the loading spot.

As was common with lines that underwent bankruptcy and ownership changes, the line’s name was not constant. It was also known as the



Coalfields Railway. One SP map ended the name with “Pacific” (omitting the and); this may have been a draftsman’s poetic license. Sometimes the spelling was Spanish, with Cañon.

Reports on the characteristics of the coal differ, but apparently it was relatively low in heat value and contained substantial sulfur and ash. The coal had a hard time competing with coal from the Pacific Northwest. It appears that the SCRR volume at McKay was sometimes only six or seven carloads a week. So, like many railroads also plagued with washouts, fires, and intermittent traffic, the SCRR did not survive the Great Depression. In 1921 a long trestle over the Salinas River had washed out, and though replaced, that was a major setback. The line’s abandonment was approved in 1931. Scrapping followed soon after, with some excitement when a large pump fell in the mineshaft and along with a locomotive was left at the bottom.

Train Tails — more than reminiscing

With generous gifts of time from former railroaders, museum volunteers are video recording their recollections of working on the Coast Route. The first interview was with Bob McEntire, who fired Big Boy locomotives for the Union Pacific in Wyoming before coming to California’s Central Coast to fire Cab-forwards and other Southern Pacific steam engines. The second recording was of Vince Cippola, who told of running early diesels and dealing with “sabotaged” freight cars from the White Hills branch. Our third session was with Bill Walther, who worked during the transitional 1960’s and ‘70’s. While the stories are entertaining, they’re also a priceless record of the sometimes funny and sometimes harrowing details of life along the rails.

Apparently some of the old SCRR graded right-of-way can still be seen, if you know exactly where to look.

In an interesting twist, if railroad investors of the era had been even more enthusiastic, the Stone Canyon Railroad might have become a shortcut between the Salinas Valley and the San Joaquin Valley. Its eastern end was only about nine straight-line miles from Alcalde, which was the western end of Southern Pacific’s Coalinga Branch, named appropriately for Coaling Station A. It was the location of a similar coal deposit on the eastern slope of the Coast Range.

Reported by Glen Matteson

Thanks to Museum President and walking encyclopedia of railroad information *Karl Hovanitz* for remembering that, somewhere, the Museum had issues of *The Western Railroader*. They turned out to be August 1967 and March 1968 and provided most of the information reported here. More information can be found at salinasrockandgem.com/files/december-news.pdf

The museum intends to make the recordings available to members through the museum’s website. Planned are programs in which the oral histories would be edited for continuity and insertion of still images of relevant items in the museum’s collection, such as the breathing tubes used in the summit tunnel of Cuesta Grade.

If you, a family member, or a friend would like to share memories of being a railroader or of being part of a railroad family in the San Luis Obispo area, contact Museum Manager Diane Marchetti by email at info@slorm.com or by phone message at 805 548-1894.

Reported by Glen Matteson

Mystery Photograph

Can you help solve a mystery? The photograph on the right was recently donated to the museum by member Howard Amborn's sister. Remarkably, it shows a velocipede and a handcar like the ones displayed in the museum. The handcar is numbered SP XX279 with WO 9 9 15 in smaller characters below. The photo must have been taken somewhere on the Southern Pacific in the early 1900s. It's in mountainous territory, with a siding holding the vehicles and a main track curving to the left in the background. The vegetation appears to be chaparral and oak, with spindly or burned-over trees on the mountainside in the distance. Parts of three separate pole lines are visible. There are three sheds, one with a nearly flat roof, and all having rails and wide doors for setting off handcars. The closest shed bears the number 9, probably identifying this as Section 9.

By now probably all that remains is a main track with heavier rails. Any informed guesses on where this was? Special recognition if you can identify any of the men.

And a side note: The story of Sheffield velocipede development that the Museum has been providing may be more folklore than fact. The Autumn 1972 bulletin of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, recently brought to light in the Museum



An unknown photographer made this carefully posed image somewhere on the Southern Pacific. Could it be Cuesta siding on the north side of the summit?

archives, includes an extensive article on velocipedes, push cars, handcars, and "speeders." The inventor of the velocipede on display, George Sheffield of Three Rivers, Michigan, probably got the basic idea from a three-wheel track car described in a publication at least 17 years before his model was revealed. Also, a mechanic by trade, Mr. Sheffield had acquired patents for bicycle-to-velocipede conversions several years before the reputed date of his invention. The popular story involving Mr. Sheffield's inventiveness and hero-

ism may have been a marketing ploy first used by Mr. Sheffield and then the Fairbanks Morse Company, which later acquired his business. In any event, Michigan must have been a hotbed of velocipede development, because the Kalamazoo Company produced its own version of a three-wheel, crank-powered vehicle, just different enough from Sheffield's — one difference, the seat was centered rather than on one side—to avoid infringing on what was by then Sheffield's patent.

Reported by Glen Matteson

Too many cooks?

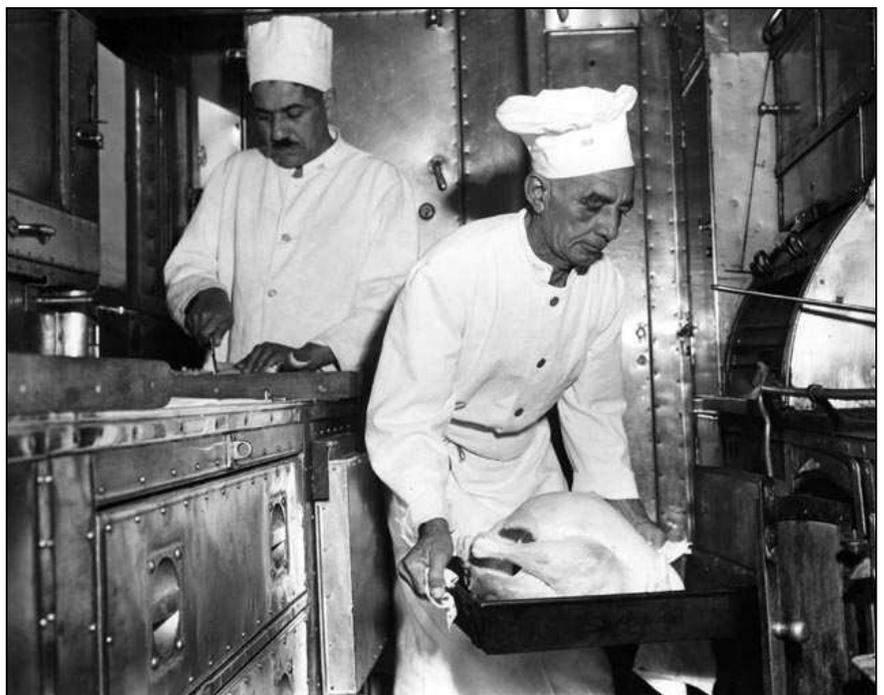
A dining car kitchen was a crowded and at times hectic place. Movements had to be carefully coordinated so passengers promptly received the meals they requested and food did not wind up on the floor.

Once in awhile the Museum's acquisition activity can become like a dining car kitchen, especially if a major item or large private collection is known to be available or, of most concern, almost available.

Several Board members or Board appointees strive to stay aware of potential donors and make special efforts to represent the Museum in line with direction from the Board. Often early contacts are made with potential donors without a lot of fanfare. This may be important for the privacy and trust of a potential donor, or their family members. Sometimes several people may have an ownership or emotional interest in potential donations. Hearing different proposals or requests from different people, each claiming to represent the Museum, can be stressful and counterproductive. It's important that prospective donors not feel pestered, or faced with donation options that may not follow previous Board direction.

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For all of these reasons, members wanting to initiate or help with specific potential acquisitions they learn of are encouraged to contact first the Curator, Brad LaRose, or if he is not immediately available the Chair of the Curation and Archives Committee, Glen Matteson.



Southern Pacific Railroad dining car kitchen.