

SAGEBRUSH

HEADLIGHT

Vol. 29, No. 1, 103rd Ed.

THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
An Agency of the Division of Museums and History
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

Spring 2008

THE LAST AMERICAN: A Personal Odyssey

RAILFAIR '91

By Dan Markoff

Eureka was loaded on the trucks at last. Getting her to this point had been an ordeal I'll never forget. Each of us had an exhaustion that one night's sleep wouldn't relieve, but one night would have to do. Our trail boss, Bruce Rogers, gave orders to depart Las Vegas early next morning. Now I had to pack everything I would need for two weeks in Sacramento. I stumbled around, but got everything in the car. When morning came, I heard the deep rumble of semi-tractors out front and knew it was time. As has turned out to be my habit, I was behind time. Bruce didn't wait. He was off with *Eureka* on his trailer and his assistant with the tender on another. I would have to catch up. Eventually, I got everything ready enough and I too was on the road.

Our route was up highway 95 through Beatty and Tonopah, then to Carson City, over Carson Pass to Jackson, and on to Sacramento. I caught up with Bruce and the others in Beatty. They were getting coffee and breakfast for what was going to be a very long day. By the time I arrived, they were ready to go. Bruce went to see how *Eureka* was riding on the trailers. The way the tender was sitting looked a little odd. It had bounced enough on the road to lift off the center bearings of its trucks. Yikes! This was not good! We re-set the tender on the center bearings and tied it down by a method that wouldn't let this happen again. Following the trucks as we left Beatty were Bob Craddock, Doc and Nancy Craddock, Sue and Jerry Jerrems, and me.

We averaged about forty miles per hour. Baldwin had advertised that the locomotive was capable of forty on the railroad. If it could go that fast on its own and not do structural damage to the stack, headlight, cab etc., we expected to do the same on the road without taking off those components first. But, at about fifteen feet, two inches, we were over-height. We had to travel as a permit load, using routes that Nevada and California specified. We went through Nevada without difficulty and stopped at the Nevada State Legislature so Bob Craddock could show the locomotive to some of his fellow Assemblymen. I guess they heard what Bob was into with me and didn't quite believe it until we rolled up to the Capitol. We headed south on highway 395 to highway 88 over Carson Pass.

I'm not sure why we were told to go this way, but we did. I can recall no bridges, but it's a fairly steep road. In late April, the pass was still covered with snow but the road was clear. Flurries began as we climbed, and I got really worried. When we crested the Sierra Nevada and headed downgrade, it became obvious that we were in for some very slow going. The road started to get that glossy white look in places. I was directly behind *Eureka*. Bruce went very slowly, taking the turns with great care, when, MY GOD: the trailer began to turn sideways to the path of the tractor! I couldn't believe it. I expected to see *Eureka*, tractor and trailer slide over the side of the road and roll down the mountain. Words can't convey my despair as I contemplated years of hard work crashing down a mountainside. Bruce was on the crisis immediately, maneuvering his big rig with the care and skill that only decades of heavy hauling can develop. To him, it was just another day on the road. To me, it was my life! Instantly Bruce had the rig under control. We continued the slow descent into better conditions. Creeping down the mountain, we got way behind time. We had no permit to run at night, but there was no place to park the rigs except the middle of the road. That would have made lots of people unhappy, so on we went.

Continued on Page 6

The *Sagebrush Headlight* newsletter is published quarterly by the Nevada State Railroad Museum and distributed to members of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum as a benefit to their annual dues.

The museum is an agency of the
State of Nevada

Jim Gibbons, Governor

Department of Cultural Affairs

Michael Fischer, Director

Division of Museums and History

Peter D. Barton, Acting Administrator

Nevada State Railroad Museum

Peter D. Barton, Museum Director



Frank Ackerman, Editor
gfackerm@clan.lib.nv.us
775/687-4942

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friends of the

Nevada State Railroad Museum

Executive Committee

President: Bill Kohler

kolrxing@clearwire.net

Vice President: Russ Tanner

tannerruss@aol.com

Secretary: Kurt Dietrich

kurtdmail-nsrm@yahoo.com

Treasurer: John Schilling

finntrain@hotmail.com

Correspondence may be sent to:

Friends of NSRM

PO Box 1330

Carson City, NV 89702-1330

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

2180 South Carson Street

Carson City, NV 89701-5999

775/687-6953

www.nevadaculture.org

open daily 8:30 to 4:30

Except Nov. 27, Dec. 25, Jan. 1

Admission: Adult \$4, Senior \$3

Children younger than 18 FREE

Reminder: Please provide submissions for the Spring issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight* by Monday, June 2, 2008.

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM STEAM-UPS

Saturday/Sunday, May 10 & 11

Saturday/Sunday/Monday, May 24/25/26 Memorial Day

Saturday/Sunday June 14 & 15 Fathers Day

Trains depart from Wabuska Depot, 10:00 am till 4:00 pm.

Steam Train Fares: Adults- \$5.00, seniors (65 and above)- \$4.00, Children 6-11- \$3.00, Five and under FREE

FNSRM Members, with Membership Card, HALF-FARE.



See pages 8 & 9.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Plans have begun for the 37th Annual Nevada Railroad History Symposium, which will take place in Carson City Friday through Sunday, October 17-19, 2008. **World War II and Nevada Railroads** will be this year's theme. Speakers will include Jeff Asay, Gordon Chappell, Bob Church, Stephen Drew, John Ryskowsky and others. As this year's pre-Symposium event Charlie Siebenthal is organizing a V&T modelers' clinic. It will be held on Thursday, October 16.

Recent museum Acquisitions: Snapshots of a Trainwreck

Carson City resident Rudolf Ceragioli has donated eleven photographs to the Nevada State Railroad Museum. The images show cleanup activities that followed the horrific crash of the streamliner *City of San Francisco* in northeastern Nevada on August 12, 1939. Those views, recorded by an unidentified photographer, or photographers, belonged to Rudy's father Guido - a Southern Pacific car-repair specialist at Sparks who was among the employees quickly assembled at the wreck site to clean up the mess. In fact, one of the snapshots shows Rudy's dad standing on the platform of an SP railroad crane there. Rudy was 14 1/2 years old at the time, and remembers his father being gone for about two weeks during the lengthy recovery effort. We at NSRM are most grateful to Mr. Ceragioli for this important gift, and for his recollections regarding that accident nearly seven decades ago.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the arrival of spring we can look forward to more clear, blue skies - but this year may bring some clouds to the museum scene. Last year's tourist season saw a significant drop in visitors to the Nevada State Museums in general and the Nevada State Railroad Museum in particular. High gasoline prices and a slumping economy in general may mean another slow year for tourism. State budget cuts have tightened the belt. The museum administration and Friends volunteers are exploring ways to enhance visitor and member experiences in order to increase visitation and involvement.

Plans are underway at the museum to develop special events, with publicity aimed to increase local visitation. We want local residents to feel that this is their museum and we want to encourage repeat visits.

Starting soon, new or renewed memberships will receive a limited edition, dated pin each year as an incentive for members to show their continued support.

Revised Friends membership levels will provide incentives to upgrade. Plans are underway to develop a "Steam Engineer for a Day" program that will allow any Benefactor Level member to spend a day with the steam locomotive crew, from the break of day when the locomotive is fired up to returning the locomotive to the annex at the end of operations. And, yes, you get to blow the whistle. If you want to learn more about participating, please contact the museum for details.

Development of a Corporate Sponsorship program will encourage local businesses to support the museum. At an appropriate level of support, a sponsor will have exclusive access to the facilities and use of the equipment for company events.

Webmaster Mike Dunn is exploring ways to streamline the web site, making it more informative and easier to navigate. One of the links to be added will be access to Friends Board of Trustee meeting minutes, allowing members to find out what the organization is doing. Please email suggestions to webmaster@nsrcm-friends.org.

In these challenging times we have confidence that we are part of one of the greatest railroad museums in the country. Our challenge is to get the message out that we are here and prepared to educate, inform and entertain.

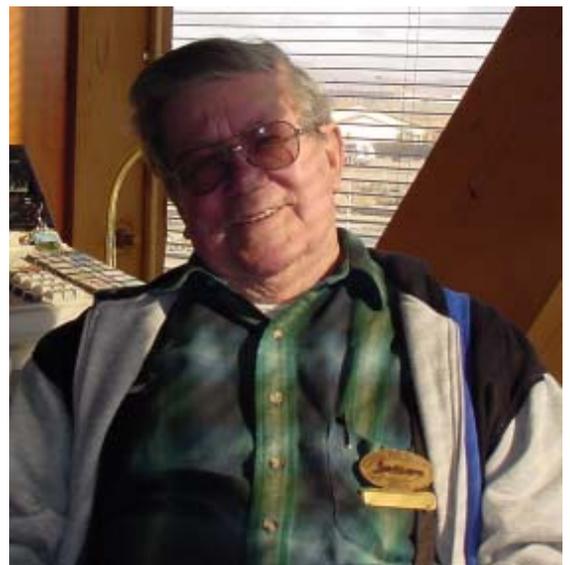
--Bill Kohler

SPOTLIGHT ON ED RUSHTON

Ed Rushton has been a fixture at the museum's front desk since 1995. Growing up in Los Angeles, Ed spent World War II as a Machinist's Mate on a Navy tugboat. Around 1950 he started with Flying Tigers Airline, piloting a Curtiss C-46 Commando aircraft: a plane that was a mainstay of flights over "the Hump" from India into China during World War II. Ask Ed about handling a war-surplus Commando on one engine! Later on, the airline got DC-6s and then, still later, Ed fell in love with the Boeing 707. He retired as a 747 Captain in the early eighties.

Moving to Carson City in the early nineties with his artist wife Jeanne (a former school teacher, also from Los Angeles), he began holding down the front desk on Thursday mornings. Not having had enough travel in an airplane cockpit, he and Jeanne love to travel and have been all over the world.

With over 3,500 volunteer hours to his credit, Ed remains an extremely important asset to Thursday mornings at the museum. Not only that, he brings the donuts!



--John Frink

A Few Words from the Man Who Wears Two Hats

NSRM Director Peter Barton Continues as Acting Administrator, Division of Museums & History

The recent slowing of the national economy has impacted the Nevada State budget resulting in the need for all Nevada Agencies to reduce spending by 4.5 percent. In making the required budget reduction, all areas of State budgets were affected – including the ability to hire staff to fill vacancies.

While the Railroad Museum was able to hire staff to fill the vacant positions of custodian and retail storekeeper (more on that in a bit), the Department of Cultural Affairs is unable to hire a replacement Museum Division Administrator resulting the extension of my current assignment as Acting Administrator at least through June of this year.

In light of that, I thought it important that I communicate with you on some important matters affecting the Nevada State Railroad Museum.

First, some good news about a change that will help to protect the important assets and facilities of the Museum. The State Public Works Board has included the Jacobsen Interpretive Center and the Wabuska Depot in the statewide fire suppression and alarm program. A design effort is underway for a fire sprinkler and alarm system to be installed in the aforementioned buildings. If the timetable is met, we should see installation of the fire sprinklers and alarms by early June and completion before Labor Day.

Second, the Nevada Department of Transportation has given final approval for the museum to develop the Request for Proposals for the design and construction of new permanent exhibits in the Jacobsen Interpretive Center. Federal funding in the amount of \$600,000 has been allocated for this project.

This work has been much-anticipated for the past three years and should be underway by late 2008 and in place by mid-2009. These new exhibits will engage our visitors through the use of vignettes and multiple types of

interpretive media. The project will change the visitor entry dramatically. It will enable us to communicate our core message clearly and will use our artifacts as windows to tell how Nevada's railroads enabled settlement and the rapid and profitable exploitation of resources in a hostile environment.

Congratulations are in order to the *Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum* for their unwavering support of the museum and its program. In 2007, a total of 111 volunteers contributed 16,384 hours of service – roughly the equivalent of **eight** full time employees!

A “tip of the hat” goes to the newly elected President of the *Friends*, Bill Kohler. Bill and I have met and discussed common goals for the future. We applaud the *Friends* Board of Trustees for their commitment to review and amend the Bylaws and the undertaking of an independent audit of the organization's financial records.

Please join me in welcoming the two recent additions to the staff of the museum. Edward Fruend was hired as the new custodial worker in January. Ed brings many years' experience to the position and already I'm hearing positive comments about how good the museum looks. John Walker was hired as retail storekeeper, effective in early February. Some of you may recognize John – he formerly served as Director of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in nearby Portola, California. We wish both of these new members of our staff much success.

I invite you to keep watching our website at www.nevadaculture.org for news on some exciting programs emerging for 2008. A totally new look to the website is slated for unveiling in the coming weeks. Thank you, and be safe always!

--Peter Barton

The extremely popular “Become a Motorman” program is in its fifth year.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum, this event allows participants to learn to operate the museum's 1926-vintage motorcar in three days. Included in the \$125 package is a one-year new or renewal membership to the Friends, a hosted barbeque and a behind-the-scenes tour of the museum. By the end of the third day the participants are giving rides to the public. This year's three-day program takes place April 18, 19, and 20. The museum and the Friends look forward to hosting it again in April 2009.

Lamp & Lantern Exhibit Gets New Home; New Artifacts

Museum staff is relocating the lamp and lantern exhibit to the Jacobson Interpretive Center from its former location in the Annex. Advantage has been taken of the opportunity to change some of the items to make the exhibit more meaningful and to display some significant items from the Collections for the first time.

Among the newly exhibited lanterns are a Walton Brothers conductor's lantern (*right*) from the 1870s and a William Porter's Sons brakeman's lantern of the early 1880s. This latter lantern has a hand-blown globe marked "S.P.Co" for the Southern Pacific Company and was designed for burning whale oil.

Adams & Westlake lanterns exhibited include a signal-oil burning "Adams" (*below*) and a "Reliable", both of which are marked for the Virginia & Truckee. Three of Adams & Westlake's modern Kerosene-burning "Kero" lanterns from the 1920s or 30s are also exhibited.

A Standard Oil Company "Rayo", marked for the Southern Pacific, and two models of the Dietz "Vesta" are also on display, along with oil lanterns from Lovell-Dressel and Handlan-Buck; and a very early A-C Midget electric lantern produced by the Honeycutt Battery Corporation.



Locomotive classification lamps on exhibit include an Adlake lamp removed from Virginia & Truckee locomotive No. 26 following its 1950 fire in Reno, and an electrified Adlake from a Southern Pacific AC-3 class cab-forward locomotive. Both of these lamps have green slides inside to change the color of the lamps to indicate a following section of a scheduled train. Surprisingly, the older lamp from V&T No. 26 also has a red slide inside. This was probably to allow the lamp to be used as a tender marker, or on the front of the locomotive when backing. But, it may be a carry-over from the day when some railroads used a red classification lamp to indicate a following section.



Adams & Westlake, Handlan-Buck, and Lovell-Dressel marker lamps are exhibited, including one marked Virginia & Truckee and another marked Tonopah & Tidewater. The "green" lenses in these lamps are actually blue in color. Illuminated with a yellow-burning kerosene flame, however, they appear green.

Among the switch-stand lamps to be exhibited is a recently-acquired Handlan lamp from the Tonopah & Gldfield Railroad.

To round out the exhibit, the headlight from Virginia & Truckee locomotive No. 13, *Empire*, on loan to the Museum, has been moved to a more prominent location in the middle of the Interpretive Center. When it returns from exhibition at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, the large box-headlight will be added to the exhibit.

– Wendell Huffman
Both photos, NSRM archives

Continued from page 1

At dusk, a highway patrol cruiser closed in on the truck hauling *Eureka* to pull it over. Just then, a car tore by at great speed. The cop forgot about us running in the dark and roared after the speeder. We continued on our way and found a suitable spot to park for the night. The others went to a motel. I stayed in my car, parked next to *Eureka*. I wouldn't let her out of my sight. The next morning I learned that the car that rocketed past the highway patrol the night before was Bruce's wife. She decided to take one for the team, getting a speeding ticket rather than us getting nailed for traveling at night. What a gall!

Approaching Sacramento, I decided to go to the California State Railroad Museum ahead of the others. It was chaos there. Rigs were unloading equipment, trains were coming in, and construction workers were everywhere with hammering, order-shouting, and general commotion. I went to the CSRSM offices to find out what to do when *Eureka* arrived. Everyone was very helpful, but very busy. At the time I thought *Eureka* should arrive, it didn't. I waited and waited: still no trucks. I wondered what the devil had happened. Quite some time later here they came, with *Eureka* looking kind of odd. As it got closer I could see that her large smoke stack looked like a debonair hat cocked a jaunty angle. What had happened this time? Bruce said that our designated route into Sacramento included an underpass that he didn't think would clear our load. He stopped to measure some of the girders. Traffic backed up all around while he did, but he wanted to be sure. It seemed all right. Cautiously, he went ahead. One girder, about a half-inch lower than the others, caught the top of the stack and pulled it over. Bruce was crestfallen but all he could do was go on.

The trucks pulled into the unloading area and we got the locomotive and tender on the tracks. Yet all was not well. *Eureka's* tilted stack was disconcerting. We had to fix it. I borrowed a forklift and got on the forks. Bob Craddock hoisted me into the air to unbolt the stack and bring it down. Fortunately, the stack itself wasn't hurt; only the tie-down bolts were bent. While I was hanging from the forklift over the stack, some TV news crew began filming my high-wire act. Bob took the stack to the shop and repaired the bolts. When it went back up, the stack looked as good as ever.

To our amusement that night, TV stations all over California broadcast their footage of me hanging over the stack as "Getting ready for Railfair". The amusement was short-lived in some quarters. I heard next day that Walter Gray, Director of CSRSM, caught hell from California OSHA for letting an employee engage in such dangerous work. Walt said he took great pleasure in telling them to go pound sand because that was a private party – and a lawyer – not a state employee.

It was a priceless moment for Walt.

There is something almost human about a steam locomotive, with its air-pump heartbeat and breath of steam. At Railfair, CSRSM wanted locomotives under steam, giving the public an experience unavailable with locomotives that are stuffed-and-mounted in a museum. These majestic machines are almost living and breathing when there is fire in the belly and steam in the boiler.

Eureka, on a stretch of narrow-gauge track beside the Central Pacific depot, was the first locomotive people saw as they entered Railfair. The track had no ballast. It wasn't needed since we would move only back and forth for photos. The gates opened and thousands of people filled the area around the locomotives. At specified times we moved *Eureka* under her own power, to the delight of the public. Though we didn't move far, steam was used up. Eventually we needed to inject water into the boiler. When I opened the prime for the injector, a little steam-leak that I hadn't caught before would overheat it. I had to run the prime on the injector for longer than usual in order to cool it off. For those not familiar with steam injectors on locomotives, water flows through the system when it's being primed, then overboard through a pipe to the ground. All steam locomotives do essentially the same thing.

About two days later I noticed a park ranger who would walk by *Eureka* as I was priming the injector. The water went overboard, ran through the unballasted track and down a drain in the street. This ranger eventually asked what I was doing. When I said, "Priming the injector to feed the boiler water," she said not to because it created a safety hazard. I paid little attention to her because CSRSM wanted us under steam and this had to be done to be under steam. Later the ranger came back, demanding that I stop. I said, "Look, CSRSM wants us under steam and this must be done to feed the boiler." She said, "Someone might slip and fall on the water running to the drain." I said, with my usual tact, "If that's so, why did they put a drain in the middle of the street where people walk? What do you do around here when it rains?" With that, she left. Soon she was back, demanding that I quit letting water go overboard or she would shut me down as a hazard to the public. I said, "Look, lady, this is a steam locomotive. The State of California has paid for it to be transported 600 miles to be under steam. I'm doing what the State told me to do. If I don't prime the injector and put water in the boiler this thing will blow up and level the depot." She said, in an instant, "YOU'RE SHUT DOWN, NOW!!"





I had had it with this tin-badge moron. We had been through too much to be treated like this. I went to Walt Gray's office and told him, "That's it! First, the State of California tells me to do one thing, then the opposite. We busted our rear ends to be here and this is no way to treat us." Walt had no idea what had happened. After I explained, he said to follow him. Back at *Eureka* a gaggle of rangers had gathered. Word spread that I was mad as hell and ready to leave this schizophrenic State. Walt talked to the rangers. Meanwhile, Chris de Witt came over from the *Inyo* and stood behind me. After a heated discussion with the rangers, Walt told me to stay under steam. That night CSRМ would spread ballast between the rails. I asked what good that would do: water still would come from the injector prime, run through the ballast to the same drain, and the rangers would be all over me again. I said "I'm out of here!" Chris grabbed me from behind and said, "Dan, cool down. It's a bureaucratic fix." I said "What?" He said again, "It's a bureaucratic fix." I said, "We'll see."

Overnight, CSRМ placed many tons of rock ballast between the rails of my track. I primed the injector as before. The water ran through the rock and down the very same drain. As my favorite ranger walked by, I braced for battle. She looked at the water and kept walking. Peace and fun returned. I was ecstatic that her concerns for public safety had been satisfied.

The remainder of Railfair was pure joy. The public loved all the locomotives under steam. It was historic, colorful and entertaining. The crews bonded wherever good fellowship could grow. One evening the crews gathered at Fanny Ann's, a three-story saloon in old town that held a huge crowd. We were relaxing, enjoying beer and the company, but the music was too loud to hear anyone. The management ignored a request to turn the music down. They were asked again, to no avail.

Eventually, one guy reached in his pocket, opened a knife and cut the speaker wire. In no time, out he went. Another guy – notably from Nevada – said, "Throw him out, and you throw us all out!" With that, the building emptied. We never had that problem again.

Another evening, word spread that Union Pacific was buying at an Old Sacramento pizza parlor. Everyone gathered there and ordered pizza and beer. When we had our fill, someone told Steve Lee how much he and UP were appreciated for buying. In a flash, Steve was on his feet, saying we were full of – well, let's just say, prunes. We all had a great laugh and paid for ourselves.

So much went on during Railfair it was hard to keep track. Even around *Eureka* I couldn't keep up. One morning I heard that the Today Show on NBC had interviewed Ward Kimball in front of *Eureka*. Some evenings the news and weather would be broadcast from my locomotive. Documentary filming also took place. Newspapers, magazines, and throngs of people wanted to talk about the locomotive's history. It went on twelve hours a day for ten days. About 225,000 people came by: an amazing, unforgettable experience. One of the best times was when Ward Kimball came by and talked with me in *Eureka's* cab for an hour or so. He said that *Eureka* was the locomotive he wanted in the late 1930s, but he couldn't afford what the Hobart Estate was asking for it. Instead he went to Battle Mountain and got *Emma Nevada* for \$200 less. I guess \$200 meant more in 1938 than it does now. Until his death, Ward and I stayed in touch to share our love for narrow-gauge locomotives and *Eureka* in particular.

After ten days in May of 1991, Railfair came to a close. It was an event I wouldn't have wanted to miss. I met an enormous number of wonderful people and had experiences I'll never forget. But it was time to go home. The night after Railfair, CSRМ threw us a big party. We gathered around UP 844 for hot dogs and beer, and swapped stories. Eventually it was time to get some rest before reloading the next day. Steve Lee climbed into the cab of the 844, preparing to pick up his twenty-car train. Steve sat in the cab like the King of the Rails and majestically opened the throttle. Clouds of steam jetted from 844's huge cylinders, then the drivers started flailing in place. The bluest kind of language burst forth from the cab. Apparently, someone tied the 844 down and greased the rails. Everyone roared with laughter – except Steve. Maybe he thought he should have bought the pizza a week before. With that, Railfair faded into memory and history.

The next day, we loaded *Eureka* to return home. On the way back I had a perpetual smile on my face: nothing could top Railfair – or so I thought.

Copyright Daniel Markoff 2008. Photo courtesy of the author. Next time: **A Spectacular Homecoming.**

Book Review: *Sierra and Desert Rails* by Fred Matthews. Xlibris, 2006; soft-cover, 95 pages, \$32.99. This book is available in the NSRM store, Carson City. (Please see page 11).

First, the other “vital statistics”: the book contains 84 captioned black-and-white photographs (64 of which are full-page or even two-page spreads), along with about ten aggregate pages of supporting text and two maps.

Topics include Southern Pacific’s Sierra Nevada crossing from Roseville to Reno (20 views); Western Pacific’s “canyon line” between Oroville and Portola (11); operations of the Sierra, Pickering, and West Side railroads near Sonora, California (17); Nevada’s Virginia & Truckee (6); the SP narrow gauge in Owens Valley (28); and single views of action on SP’s Modoc line near Madeline, California, and the Great Northern at Bieber, California. Most of these images were recorded during 1947-59, and all but one of them came from the author’s camera. The collection boasts thirteen Nevada scenes: the six V&T photos, from 1948-50, and seven views of the SP in and near Reno (including the cover shot), taken between the late 1940s and 1958.

Steam locomotives dominate the overall array. Only five diesel-electric images are included – a nice 1952 view of a WP freight descending the North Fork Feather River canyon, three 1959 shots that incorporate



Inscribed “To my good friend J. Sterry Lamson, attorney for Nevada Copper Belt Railway Co. Fred D. Parr – President. Wabuska – 8-12-41”, this photo was brought to NSRM’s attention by its owner, the Hewlett Library. David F. Myrick notes in *Railroads of Nevada* (pp. 898-899) that NCB No. 5 (Richmond, 1925) was designed as a 2-8-2 but its trailing truck was never installed. The Virginia & Truckee Railway acquired the locomotive in April 1947. It was the last locomotive to operate over the V&T, on November 2, 1950, five months after abandonment. Note caboose No. 3 and the depot at right.

Photo courtesy of the William Redington Hewlett Library.

A southbound freight on the Southern Pacific narrow-gauge line in Owens Valley crosses the Owens River 21 miles south of Laws, probably in February 1952. A third of the photographs in Fred Matthews' recent book depict this diminutive 70½ -mile railroad in east-central California.

--Fred Matthews
photo, NSRM.



SP's miniature narrow-gauge "critter" in Owens Valley, and a 1986 scene at Truckee with an approaching westbound freight in the distance.

Some of the photographs in Matthews' new book (I counted 37 of them) were published previously by the same author, in a comprehensive two-volume set that was released in the 1980s (*Northern California Railroads*, Sundance publications, 448 pages and 490 photos). However, the reproduction quality of the repeated images is generally superior to that of the 1980s versions. If I had known about all of this, would I nonetheless have purchased *Sierra and Desert Rails*? Without a doubt.

The book does have several generally minor flaws. Five of the photographs are formatted to fill facing-page spreads, which work fairly well for three of them but not for the other two: the locomotive on pages 48-49 barely escapes the mid-view gutter, and the one on pages 58-59 is all but swallowed by the somewhat-fragile binding. A few typographical errors also emerge, mostly within the photo captions. My favorite, as a "hair-challenged" person, is the locomotive builder noted on page 28: "Balding". Almost as entertaining is the "65-6" in place of SP engine-class designation GS-6, on page 26.

Likewise, some factual errors have crept in. For example, the captions on pages 86, 87, and 93 refer to the Mount Whitney station/siding in Owens Valley (almost due east of Lone Pine), yet the three photographs were taken more than five miles southeast of that site. And the upper V&T scene on page 65 was taken at Steamboat hot springs,

about five miles north of the caption's stated location (Washoe, at the northern end of its namesake valley).

Photographic subjects and compositions are largely a matter of personal preference: for this reviewer, most of the published scenes are enjoyable and about a dozen of them are special treats (see final paragraph), whereas another half-a-dozen or so could have been omitted without negative impact. Only one of the 84 views is "soft" – or slightly out of focus. Another matter of personal preference is the distracting (to me) mix of bottom-facing and side-facing photographs throughout this publication. The

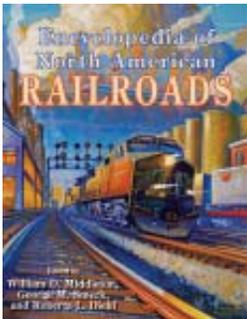
book is in vertical format (11 inches tall, 8½ inches wide), yet 61 of the images are composed horizontally (wider than they are tall). As a result, all 39 of the full-page horizontal scenes are right-facing: that is, their pages must be rotated ninety degrees clockwise in order to view the photographs properly. This is especially distracting where bottom-facing and right-facing images are positioned across from each other on a two-page spread, which happens in nine places. Because horizontal views considerably outnumber the vertical ones, a horizontal format – with all images bottom-facing – would seem to have been a more logical choice, at least on behalf of the viewer.

And finally, still within the realm of personal preference: several of the photographs presented in *Sierra and Desert Rails* are emotionally captivating to me, from the standpoint of what they show and how they depict it. Examples include the backlit brake-shoe smoke at Truckee (page 29); the awe-inspiring struggle of massive WP articulated No. 259 at Williams Loop (pages 32-33); the ferocious intensity of cab-forward No. 4290's westward assault on downtown Reno (page 62); V&T locomotive No. 27, dwarfed by the canyon of Steamboat Creek north of Washoe Lake (page 66); and the near-daintiness of "slim princess" No. 18 as she takes water at the Kearsarge tank in Owens Valley (page 82). These scenes and several others go right to the soul. I'm quite envious, and wish I'd been there in person to see, hear, feel and savor the drama of each brief encounter so long ago. Thanks for the special treats, Fred. That's what photographic art is all about.

—Steve VanDenburgh

SELECTIONS FROM OUR MUSEUM STORE *The store specializes in railroad books for adults and children, Nevada history books, train videos, audio recordings, toys, train models, hats and apparel, railroad pins and jewelry, train novelties and souvenirs, note cards, artwork and calendars.*

We encourage you to visit the store in person. For those of you who won't have an opportunity to visit soon, the new merchandise selections below, along with many others, are available by mail-order. Proceeds from sales are used by NSRM to fund a variety of museum projects and public interpretive programs.



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NORTH AMERICAN RAILROADS

(Middleton, Smerk and Smerk, eds.) \$99.95 Item #100735.

The theme of this authoritative reference work is the evolution of the railroad industry and its historical impact on the North American continent. Some 500 alphabetical entries cover myriad subjects. "To distill all of North American railroading into 1,312 pages is a feat in itself; to do it well is phenomenal. This could be the most ambitious railroad book to appear in 100 years! Whether you're a railroad professional or an enthusiast, you'll find the answer in this encyclopedia."

—Kevin P. Keefe, *Trains magazine.*

WIRED FOR SUCCESS: The BA&P (Mutschler) \$31.95 Item #100075.

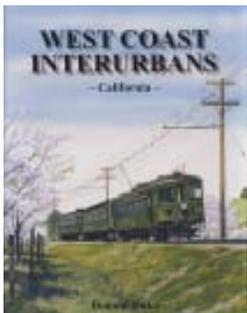
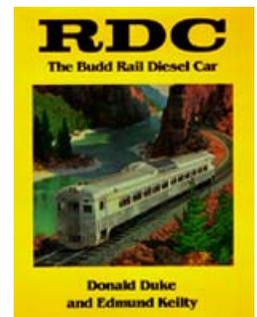
A lavishly illustrated description of the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Railway's hauling of vast amounts of copper ore from Butte Hill, Montana, to smelter operations 26 miles west. Also delineated is BA&P's essential role in the development of US electric railroads. Illustrations, photographs, maps, bibliography, index. 192 pages.

ACROSS THE COLUMBIA PLAIN (Lewty) \$21.25 Item #100059.

Continuing the saga that he started with *To the Columbia Gateway: The Oregon Railway and the Northern Pacific, 1879-1884*, Lewty traces the rivalry and expansion of the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific railway systems in the interior Northwest, 1885-93. Photographs, maps, index. 344 pages.

RDC – Budd Rail Diesel Cars (Duke & Keilty) \$57.95 Item #102063.

This book chronicles the search for a self-contained, self-propelled car to reduce the costs of operating secondary passenger runs. For carriers like the Western Pacific, the RDC was a valuable innovation. The appendix records every operator of RDCs, with description of how the cars were used, route maps and rosters.



WEST COAST INTERURBANS - California (Duke) \$59.00 Item #102068.

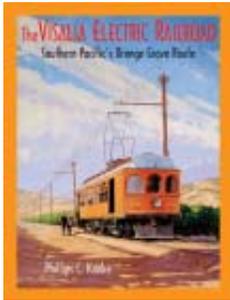
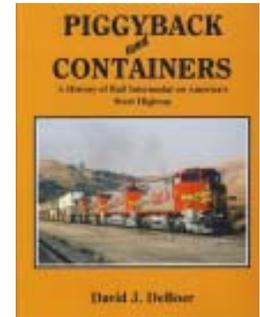
This pictorial history features sixteen interurbans from San Diego to the wine country north of San Francisco. The hardcover book includes 579 photographs, map and timetable reproductions and a bibliography.

VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE 1940-1950 (Bartel – Thomsen). \$29.95 Item #101621.

This 58-minute DVD presents the final decade of a railroad that changed little from its 1880s Bonanza years. Historic footage of V&T trains, both on-board and trackside, accompanied by well-researched, authenticated narration, forms the core of this video.

PIGGYBACK & CONTAINERS – A history of Rail Intermodal on America's Steel Highway (DeBoer) \$49.95 Item #102058.

This book presents the complete intermodal story, including the Rail Trailer Company, Southern Pacific's Los Angeles – San Francisco experiment with Pacific Motor Trucking trailers, the emergence of Trailer Train, development of RoadRailer technology, and the influence of United Parcel Service on rail-piggyback.



THE VISALIA ELECTRIC RAILROAD (Kauke) \$55.00 Item #101012.

Orange interurban cars operated on this Southern Pacific-owned, 30-mile line from 1904 to 1924. Freight operations were electric until 1944, and diesel until loss of perishable traffic led to abandonment in 1992. Locomotives, motor cars, cabooses, and other rolling stock are presented in photographs and rosters. Fifteen maps and 249 photographs, most previously unpublished, enrich the book.

SIERRA AND DESERT RAILS (Mathews) \$32.99 Item #101999. Please see review on Pages 8 and 9.

ADDITIONAL TITLES -- BOOKS

B&O's Capital Limited and National Limited Passenger Trains (Welsh) \$36.95 Item #102042.

C & O Railway Coal Trains of West Virginia and Kentucky (Dixon) \$29.95 Item #102050.

Dining Cars & Depots (Cookbook) \$3.95 Item #101273.

Encyclopedia of Western Railway History V.. 3: Oregon/Washington (Robertson) \$34.95 Item#100597.

The Milwaukee Road Revisited (Johnson) \$29.95 Item #103551.

North American Railroad Bridges (Solomon) \$36.95 Item #102049.

North Bank Road – Spokane, Portland & Seattle (Gaertner) \$21.25 Item #101444.

Orphan Road – The Railroad comes to Seattle (Armbruster) \$24.95 Item #102023.

Railroad Shutterbug (Fredrickson) \$29.95 Item #102038.

Railscapes (Fredrickson) \$29.95 Item #102024.

Santa Fe Passenger Trains in California (Durin) \$29.95 Item #102051.

Southern Pacific Railroad (Solomon) \$36.95 Item #102039.

Southern Railway (Murray) \$36.95 Item #102043.

Steam to Diesel (Northern Pacific) (Fredrickson) \$29.95 Item #102037.

Stevens Pass – Gateway to Seattle (Roe) \$12.95 Item #100878.

ADDITIONAL TITLES -- DVDs

Daylight Express (103 Minutes) \$29.95 Item #102180.

Ghost Trains (Nevada State Railroad Museum & Nevada Northern Ry) (73 Minutes) \$29.95 Item #102184.

Giants of the Rails (60 Minutes) \$29.95 Item #102185.

Living Steam – The Virginia & Truckee at Nevada State Railroad Museum \$21.95 Item #100134.

Steaming up the New River Gorge (70 Minutes) \$29.95 Item #102173.

Steam Clouds (SP 4449) up the Columbia River Gorge (98 Minutes) \$29.95 Item #102170.

TO ORDER BY TELEPHONE OR MAIL

To place phone orders, please call (775) 687-6953 (9:00am-4:00pm daily). Mail orders to: Nevada State Railroad Museum, 2180 S. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701. Please include your name, street address, city/ state/ zip code, and your daytime telephone number. Members of the Friends of NSRM are entitled to a 15 percent discount off all merchandise. Please add \$5.00 for shipping to US addresses. If paying by either Visa or MasterCard, include your credit card number and expiration date. Orders ship via FedEx.

4216
NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
2180 South Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5999
775-687-6953

PRSRTSTD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Carson City, NV
89701
Permit No. 15

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Fifth Annual “Become a Motorman” Weekend
Friday through Sunday, April 18 - 20, 2008**

Wednesday Evening Programs

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------|
| April 9 | <i>Japanese Streetcar Sampler</i> | Presented by Phil Stephenson |
| May 14 | <i>The Trains We Rode</i> | Presented by Russ Tanner |
| June 11 | <i>San Andreas: Ain't no Fault of Mine</i> | Presented by Bonnie Stone |
| July and August | <i>Summer Break: Next Program September 10</i> | |

Evening programs are held at the Museum's Interpretive Center on the second Wednesday of each month except as noted. Programs begin promptly at 7:00 PM (or as noted). Museum admission applies.