

SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

Vol. 29, No. 2, 104th Ed.

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

Summer 2008

Franklin Gerald “Hap” Fisher: Growing up on the Virginia & Truckee Railway, 1919-1938

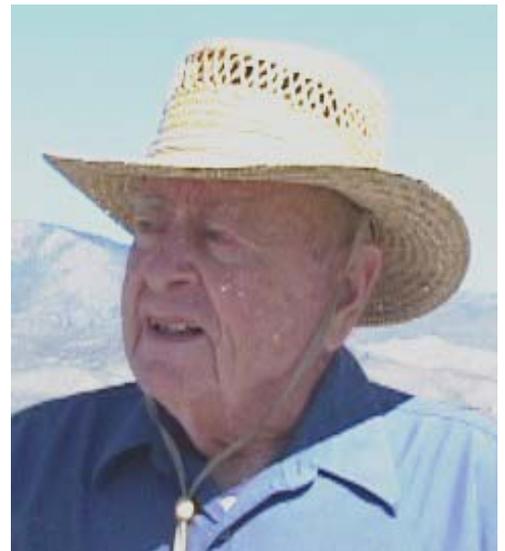
by Frank Ackerman, Curator of Education, NSRM

Colorado native Gerald Walter Fisher had come to Nevada at an early age. After working as a cowboy, he hired out with the Virginia & Truckee Railway in June 1907 as a Freight Truckman at the Carson City Freight House on Caroline Street where he later became Assistant Agent.

Alice Hazel Taylor had apprenticed to a tailor and was a seamstress in the mining towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff, Colorado. Her parents came to Nevada so that her father, who later died of silicosis, could find work in the mines. Alice began a tailoring business in her widowed mother's Carson City home, and occasionally clerked in her uncle's candy store. There she met Walter Fisher, a steady customer who liked licorice nibs. Walt and Alice began dating. After his mother died, Walt proposed and Alice accepted.

In March 1913 Mr. and Mrs. Walter Fisher set up housekeeping in Walt's home at the corner of Roop and King Streets. They put aside money as Walt's railroad career moved ahead. After a brief stint as V&T Agent at Gold Hill, he was promoted to Freight Agent at Carson City in October 1917. With their future secure, Walt and Alice planned a family. Lois Josephine Fisher was born December 5, 1916. Franklin Gerald Fisher, soon to be known as “Hap” followed on November 18, 1919. In 1921 Walter Fisher became a Clerk in the V&T General Freight Office, and two years later a Ticket Agent and Clerk in the General Passenger Office.

One of Hap's earliest memories is of spending time with Ebon Marr, who lived across King Street and operated a cabinet shop Hap liked to visit. If Hap weren't in the cabinet shop, he might be watching trotting-horse races at the Ruedy Ranch across Roop Street. In the late afternoon the whistle and ringing bell of a train crossing King Street as it came up Stewart meant Daddy would soon be walking the six short blocks back from work. Hap hurried home to be there when his father arrived.



Hap Fisher today, at age 88.

Hap remembers the day “Father came home and stated that the V&T had promoted him. Our family would be moving to Minden where he would be Passenger and Freight Agent, and concurrently, Express Agent,” Hap says. “Our furniture would be moved by boxcar to a siding next to our new house across from the depot.

“When we first got to Minden, Father hadn't seen the inside of the house. When he opened the door, brilliant red-velour wallpaper and red furniture on a red rug greeted us. Mother stated emphatically, ‘Walter Fisher, I am going back to Carson City! I will not live in this house!’ Father said to me, ‘Take your sister and slowly walk north up to the end of the line, turn around and walk back, slowly.’ He wanted time to talk to Mother about the house.

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

FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA
STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Executive Committee

President: Bill Kohler

kolrxing@clearwire.net

Vice President: Russ Tanner

tannerruss@aol.com

Secretary: Kurt Dietrich

kurtdmail-nstrm@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Vacant

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

**Please provide submissions for the Fall issue of the
Sagebrush Headlight by Tuesday, September 2, 2008.**

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM STEAM-UPS

Friday/Saturday/Sunday July 4, 5 & 6.

Also: see the Inyo in steam 9:00 am to Noon each day!

Saturday/Sunday July 26 & 27; August 16 & 17.

Labor Day Weekend - Saturday/Sunday/Monday

August 30 & 31, September 1.

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 cards, HALF FARE

CAB RIDES \$25.00 first-come, first-ride.

Schedules Subject to Change



See President's Message, page 3. Steve VanDenburgh Photo

The 37th annual Nevada Railroad History Symposium
The Second World War and the Railroads of Nevada
will take place Friday through Sunday, October 17-19 at the Nevada Legislative Building and the Museum grounds. National Park Service historian Gordon Chappell will describe the course of the War in the Pacific and the role of western railroads; Jeff Asay, Bob Church, Stephen Drew, Don Hofsommer and others will cover wartime operations on the Western Pacific, LA&SL, Southern Pacific, V&T and their connections; and John Ryczkowsky will describe restoration of a Pullman troop-sleeper. As a special feature, Charlie Siebenthal will present results of his research on the Pioche & Bullionville. Sunday will feature a Restoration Shop tour and train ride. This year's pre-Symposium event, on Thursday, October 16, is a V&T history and modelers' workshop moderated by Charlie Siebenthal and Mike Collins. Brochures with registration information will be available in late July. Registration information is online at www.nevadaculture.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer activities are well on their way and the Nevada State Railroad Museum has already hosted the season's first event focused on attracting local residents to visit. On May 10 Museum staff and volunteers, with the assistance of the Nevada Civil War Volunteers, Horse Thief Canyon Desperados, and Pistols and Petticoats reenacted completion ceremonies for the first transcontinental railroad (*see photo, Page 2*). Actors in period dress and locomotives No. 22 and No. 25, posed pilot-to-pilot, commemorated the 139th anniversary of the joining of the rails.

The museum is planning events for local residents to enjoy without depleting their budgets at a gas station. The Board of Trustees of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum is working with Museum Director Peter Barton to attract local interest and involvement. If you know of better ways to serve the community, please let us hear from you. Which leads me to a subject that is of primary importance to the Friends' well-being. Soon, each member will receive from Election Chairperson Nancy Humphries a request for resumes from candidates for the Board of Trustees. As in most volunteer organizations, relatively few members participate in Friends decision-making and operations. While I feel that the current Board of Trustees has the best interests of the organization at heart, it's always positive to acquire the ideas and outlooks of new Board members.

I hear occasional comments, some of them quite critical, regarding possible improvements in Friends operations. My usual response is to encourage the person to become more involved, either by making their wishes known at the board meetings or, ideally, by running for the board. Usually the individual says, "I don't have the time." The board meets only six times a year and by utilizing email much of Friends business is conducted from home.

Three Board positions come up for election each year. In some past years it has been difficult to find three candidates to run for these positions. Please consider submitting your resume. New ideas are essential to keep an organization vital and all of the Friends members will welcome new faces and viewpoints. With your help we can provide the support that the Nevada State Railroad Museum so desperately needs in these times of economic hardships and budget cuts. I look forward to seeing your name on the ballot.

--Bill Kohler



Spotlight on Keith Hall

Originally from Canada, and retired after 27 years with IBM as a Customer Engineer in Southern California, Keith has been a volunteer at the museum since early 2005. He currently staffs the Annex on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and is also a member of the motor car crew. His wife Joan volunteers at the Carson Valley Museum in Gardnerville.

Keith, a National Model Railroad Association official, recently led layout tours of the Fresno area. He will be officiating at the NMRA national convention in Anaheim in July. He was a member of the Simi Valley Model Railroad Club in the former Southern Pacific station in that city. I have seen photos of his model of that station, and it's remarkably well-detailed. As a member of the Carson City Model Railroad Club, he has been

instrumental in the construction and trouble-shooting of this museum's model-railroad exhibit. And, speaking of station models, another of his graces our layout – take a long, close look at it sometime. He has also spent time as the Symposium Committee's Registrar and managed to secure the loan of audio-visual equipment for the 2006 Symposium.

It goes without saying that Keith is an avid HO scale modeler – although he has been seen operating On30 equipment of late. With more than 1,400 volunteer hours to his credit, Keith is the type of dedicated volunteer that this museum is known for.

--John Frink

THE LAST AMERICAN: A Personal Odyssey

THE HOMECOMING by Dan Markoff

Photos, of Eureka at Eureka, courtesy of the Author

About 250,000 people saw *Eureka* at Railfair 91. I couldn't begin to keep track of all who came by, but I remember everyone connected with Nevada or the Eureka & Palisade Railroad, including members of the Hawkins family. Their relatives worked for the E&P in the final years when it was the Eureka-Nevada Railway. Recounting the family's involvement with the railroad was wonderful. Eureka resident Eric Pastorino, who knows the history of the railroad very well, took a particular liking to the *Eureka*, because it represents one of the finest memories of the old line and carries the name of his home town.

Some months after I got back to Las Vegas, Eric called to ask if I would bring *Eureka* to Eureka for a homecoming in 1992. It seemed like a good idea, but after Railfair I knew that transporting the locomotive would cost a small fortune, and I didn't want to take it 300 miles just to have it sit. As a condition of going there I wanted *Eureka* to run, but there had been no trackage since the scrapping of the Eureka-Nevada Railway in 1939. We would have to build a railroad, but where? Where would track come from, and who would build it? In early 1992 I had acquired enough 45-lb. rail for about a quarter-mile of track. But there were no ties, and the rail was in Carson City.

The prospect of taking the *Eureka* back to her namesake town inspired me. I flew my Beech Bonanza to Eureka to meet Eric and others interested in the project including civic leaders and Eureka County commissioners. We looked at several locations for the event. The old Eureka depot still stands – barely. It's a nostalgic location, but impractical. No spot on the old right of way met our needs.

The best venue would be the Eureka Rodeo and Fair Grounds during the annual rodeo in August. How would we gather rails, ties, spikes, bolts, nuts, and the labor to put them together? Bob Craddock, a public-minded man with a construction background, had been talking with Eric. Bob offered to build the railroad if the county would supply the equipment. That solved one problem. I couldn't have taken time off work to build track in

Eureka. There still remained the problems of getting rail and whatnot.

Diamond Valley, north of Eureka, grows some of the finest hay in America. Since trucks taking it to California deadhead back, Eric arranged for them to bring the rail from Carson City. But we still needed ties and other track material.

Mounds of ex-E&P ties were piled by a building in the center of Eureka. Someone had picked up thousands of them after abandonment. To my surprise, most were in fantastic condition – at least for my limited purposes. Eric knew who owned them. Soon thousands of original E&P ties were at our disposal. Now we had to arrange transport of the locomotive to and from Eureka and transportation for the rails after the event. Eric and



many Eureka people chipped in, along with the county commission, and funding was in place. For weeks, Bob Craddock practically lived in Eureka so he could get track built by August. With Eric and others from the county helping, our railroad for the homecoming was complete. Now it was my turn.

I got *Eureka* ready and loaded for the trip north. I didn't know till we were underway that Bob Craddock had arranged for us to stop in some of the little burgs across Nevada. One of these was Lund, which sits below majestic mountains and looks across a valley of ranches and farms. A crowd of school kids showed up when we got there. The looks on their faces showed that they never expected to see something like *Eureka* outside of books and movies. Yet, here was an 1875 wood-burning locomotive in Lund. They loved it.

We went on to Ely to connect with highway 50 for the trip west to Eureka. People all over town looked, pointed and took pictures of the locomotive as we rolled through. We traveled at 40 mph up mountains and down valleys, again and again: typical basin-and-range driving.

Heading down the last range I saw lights flashing in the distance and the highway blocked. Had there been an accident? Getting closer, I could see there was no accident, but the highway was blocked. What the devil could it be? A cold thought popped into my head. We somehow had screwed up our permits and were in for big fines, impoundments, and God knows what else.

Getting ready for this event had been downright leisurely compared with the mad rush for Railfair 91. Up to now, I had enjoyed myself. Apparently that was about to end. Instinctively, I went into lawyer mode: what the law was, what arguments could be made, who would be disappointed if we couldn't make it. We pulled up to the flashing lights of the Nevada Highway Patrol and Eureka County Sheriff's department with my paranoia in high gear.

As the sheriff and troopers approached *Eureka*, I thought everything was about to collapse on highway 50 in the middle of nowhere. I bit my fingernail waiting for the bad news. Then Bruce Rogers walked back from his truck and said, "They're here to give us a police escort into town!" I was thunderstruck. Not in my wildest dreams could this happen. A police escort for a locomotive. That's one for the books! Boy, was I relieved.

Going down the highway with police-cruiser lights flashing to clear the way made me think of a Presidential motorcade. It was an impressive sight that I'll never forget. At Pinto Summit above the center of town we saw another unforgettable sight. All of Main Street was roped off. There were platforms at the Courthouse with bands playing to a crowd that must have included everybody in town. The Sheriff directed us to park the rigs with the locomotive and tender in tandem. We were treated to the most wonderful welcome-home party that could have been given for *Eureka*. I knew then that I may own *Eureka*, but it's their locomotive. They were welcoming their hero home in grand style. The party must have gone on for two or three hours before we realized we had better get the locomotive and tender off-loaded onto the track at the rodeo grounds. The crew reluctantly headed off to work.

The Eureka rodeo and fair grounds are north of

town on high ground with a panoramic view of Diamond Valley and mountains rising all around. I planned to set up camp at the northeast end of the track, among a few trees where I would park *Eureka* at night. The crew would stay at motels in town but I would be with the locomotive 24 hours a day. I would have water nearby along with other necessary facilities. I found a suitably flat spot at track's end, threw out my sleeping bag and other camp gear. Ah! Home sweet home!

The next day we steamed up the locomotive. Everything worked just fine. The grounds began to fill with cowboys, vendors, and ordinary folks; horses and cattle; cars and rides. A party atmosphere filled the air. We planned demonstration runs on the track about every half hour. In between we would park the locomotive near the front entrance and set up stairs so people could look into the cab. They loved it. To my surprise, not only were Eureka County residents there in abundance, but people from all over the West. Word was out that *Eureka* was home, and people wanted to see it there. Many commented how nostalgic it was to hear a train whistle all the way into town for the first time in more than half a century.

The townsfolk wanted a formal ceremony to mark *Eureka's* return. At the appointed time I spotted *Eureka*, and a number of beautiful young women showed up in Victorian dress. Wow! This would be a great picture! They gathered around the locomotive to the delight of everyone. More speeches were made and photos taken.

Wood-burning locomotives use up lots of wood. In order to keep *Eureka's* appetite satisfied, a fellow was asked to deliver our fuel supply. I thought he was just a local

Continued on Page 8



Continued from Page 1

“When we got back he told us Mother had agreed to let him remove all the red from the living room, then re-paper it in wallpaper of her choice with whatever trim she wanted if she would just remain with him in Minden. The atmosphere was tense for awhile, but true to his word he hung new wallpaper of her choice, with matching trim. After that, Mother agreed to stay.”

In Douglas County, the Virginia & Truckee Railway was a mile east of what now is US Highway 395. Right-of-way for the V&T Minden line had been the gift of H.F. Dangberg, Jr. It provided Carson Valley farmers and ranchers with a way to ship their cattle and produce.

The V&T proceeded south in a straight line to the Minden Depot pasture where it curved to form one leg of a wye that allowed a train of up to twenty cars to be turned. Oil company bulk-plants were at each end. The Union Oil plant at the northwest end had come first, in 1918. Four years later Standard Oil had built its plant at the southeast end of the wye.

“Immediately east of the red-and-white Minden Depot stood the Agent’s House. It was painted yellow, with white trim, and had been built with board-and-lap construction as was the depot. The depot and the house were built to standard V&T plans. They resembled those in other V&T communities,” Hap says. “In Minden, two tracks in front of the house gave flexibility for switching cars. The tracks ran northwest as far as the Union Oil bulk plant, which was located where the Carson Valley RV Resort is now. In September 1927, about the time I started second grade, the Richfield Oil Company built Minden’s third bulk plant. An office building for the Carson Valley Inn occupies that site today. V&T Railway tracks stopped at the Gardnerville Line as H.F. Dangberg, Jr. had specified.

“When Father became Minden Agent on October 1, 1924, trains brought livestock, passengers, farm implements, new automobiles, petroleum products, and less-than-carload freight. Trains out of Carson Valley hauled fattened beef and pigs, potatoes, hay, eggs, wool, fruit, vegetables, and milled flour.”

Hap also remembers that each spring the railroad hauled chicks to Minden from Petaluma, California on the Southern Pacific. The V&T brought them from Reno. When full grown they would supply eggs, propagate the Valley flocks, or become early fryers. “At the time of year the chicks were being shipped into Carson Valley, the winds blew hard enough for great kite-flying,” Hap says. “We built different types of kites; box kites for altitude, tail kites for fights, and various designs of kites just for entertainment using the reliable, prevailing spring winds.”

At about 9 AM on weekdays, Hap recalls, the V&T depot became the local meeting place. “That’s when the train brought newspapers from San Francisco, Reno and Carson City and mail for Alpine and Douglas Counties,” he says. “Warm in winter, a place to get out of the sun in summer, with a dice cup for games to pass the time while waiting for the train -- it was the communication hub of this part of Nevada and California. In the mid-1920s, communications were limited to expensive telephone lines, telegraph, and the mail and newspapers delivered by the railroad. Radio, television, and other electronic devices were non-existent.

“Minden and Gardnerville men mingled with those from Genoa, Markleeville, Hope Valley, Woodfords, Coleville, or Topaz. There might be someone from the Dangberg ranch, Mack ranch, Minden Butter Manufacturing Co., Minden Flour Milling Co. or Minden

V&T No. 27 with a mixed train at Minden. Agent’s House u



Wool Warehouse. Operators of the bulk-oil plants, Carson Valley Mercantile, Gardnerville Grocery, Miller's Meat Market or Minden Dry Goods might be there. Contractors could be awaiting building-supply shipments. Postmasters and Star Route operators were

V&T financially solvent through 1923. After 1925, truck transportation on steadily improving public roads made it uneconomical.

Better roads and more automobiles cut deeply into V&T passenger revenues. The Nevada Department of Highways had come into being in 1917. The road between Minden and Carson City had been gravel-surfaced in 1920 and was oiled six years later. A concrete highway had been built between Carson City and Reno in 1921. The V&T had discontinued its scheduled passenger trains in June 1924. From then on, passengers were accommodated on mixed trains or in motor cars. Besides the 84-passenger McKen car (*below*) of 1910, the V&T



there for the mail. The Minden Night Watchman would be checking for itinerants. The University of Nevada Extension Agent often stopped in to talk with ranchers and farmers. Cattle and produce buyers traveled into the Carson Valley on the V&T, drawn by excellent Hereford cattle and prime fruit and vegetables."

Hap looked forward to the first day of school, "But I had to wait. To register for school in 1925 you had to be six years old before Labor Day, and my birthday wasn't until November 18. I spent most of that extra year with my dad at the Minden Depot."



was behind the trees at right.



Hap recalled that "Julian Maesterina used to bring in several carloads of livestock to go to summer range in Alpine County. One year, after his animals were unloaded, I helped him clean up the manure. In payment Julian gave me a couple of lambs to raise."

Animals were loaded or unloaded at Stock Yards, 1.8 miles north of the depot (*See photo, p. 9*). Seasonal livestock movements to and from Minden consisted mostly of sheep going between ranches in the San Joaquin Valley and eastern-Sierra summer range. This traffic had helped to keep the

had acquired a 25-passenger railbus in 1917, mainly for Carson City-Virginia City service. Between 1920 and 1925, the number of V&T passengers shrank by more than two-thirds. In 1926, the V&T bought another railbus. This one (*Photo, top left*), which seated 22 passengers, came second-hand from the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad.

Hap remembers the Minden Inn, where high school proms were held, as the place to go for dinner and dancing. The Inn hosted the Minden Rotary Club, which had been chartered in 1926. The Rotarians sponsored a Boy Scout troop, with Hap's father as chairman of the troop committee. Hap became a Boy Scout when he reached age 12, in 1931.

Meanwhile the Great Depression had set in. Life for the Fisher family was changing. The V&T, which hadn't turned a profit since 1923, had to reduce its payroll. It abolished some jobs and cut the pay of the rest. To bolster the family's reduced income, the V&T employed Alice Fisher as Assistant Agent from September 1934 until the job was abolished in June 1937. Alice also

ranch hand who had been told to drive the truck of
Continued from Page 5

wood to where we wanted it. He looked like he had been out on the range with cattle a bit too long. He had a beat-up, sweat-stained hat and a leathery, weather-beaten face. Yet he was all smiles and worked with unexpected enthusiasm. I was helping to stack the wood in the tender when Eric Pastorino told me that this man's grandfather had supplied wood to the E&P many decades before. He was as proud as he could be, getting to bring wood to a locomotive that his grandfather before him had supplied.

As often as possible I gave rides to anyone who wanted to go, and many did. One day Eric came by with an old lady (and I do mean old) who wanted to see the locomotive. Eric helped her up the stairs and into the cab. Obviously, this lady was very frail. Eric asked if I could give her a ride.

I backed downgrade to end of the track and opened the throttle. Working upgrade with sharp exhaust beats from the stack, *Eureka* sounded wonderful. As we neared the other end of track, I happened to look at my passenger. She was wiping tears from her cheeks. I thought she had a cinder in her eye, and asked if she wanted eyewash. She softly answered, "No." I asked if something was wrong. She shook her head. Then it dawned on me that she was actually crying. Many people get emotional when they see *Eureka* under steam, but this was different. It was long-ago memories coming out in tears. She said *Eureka* pulled the train that took her to school as a little girl. I was deeply moved. There has never been a time since then when I was more honored to have a passenger with me.

As it turned out, my passenger was more than 100 years old. For a short time at the twilight of her life, *Eureka* transported her back across the century to her youth, when all of life was ahead. Nothing since then has moved me as much.

Guys from the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City came to the event, including Chris deWitt, Lee Hobold, Ron Allen, and Barry Simcoe, who took turns running the locomotive. Once, while I was firing and Chris was running, he said, after moving a few hundred feet, "This engine sure runs rough!" Instinctively I looked over the side. The locomotive had derailed! We were bouncing over the ties! We got out and looked. Locomotive and tender were both on the ground. I couldn't believe it. Going over the track, Chris and I found that the lead truck fell down at a boxed joint, rolled the rail and put everything down.

Word of what had happened spread quickly and all sorts of people came to look. Chris saw my agitation and said to get used to it, as this is just part of railroading.

He knew exactly what to do. After calling for jacks, binders and chains Chris lifted the locomotive one wheelset at a time. He pulled the rail back in place with binders and after a couple of hours got us back on track as if nothing happened. It was a first for me, and a valuable experience that gave me a confidence I hadn't had before. Locomotives are very durable.

I have fond memories of our homecoming: of a barbecue with some of the best meat I've ever tasted; of sudden, spectacular summer thunderstorms during the events, and of talking about the history of the E&P and how nice it would be to see part of it rebuilt. In the quiet of the night I would sit by my campfire, looking at *Eureka's* silhouette. I'd let my imagination run back to the days when it left town at 3:00am to head through the night blackness toward Palisade.

Eventually it was time to head back to Las Vegas. With regret we loaded the locomotive onto the trailers. Bob stayed behind to dismantle the track. The county shipped the rail to Las Vegas on hay trucks.

Eureka's return to her namesake hometown was magical. It wasn't the most crowded event we've been to, nor did we have much track on which to run. But it was in the land where *Eureka* helped build the American West. That made it by far the most memorable. Some sixteen years later I think of those days with warm memories of being home with *Eureka's* family and friends.

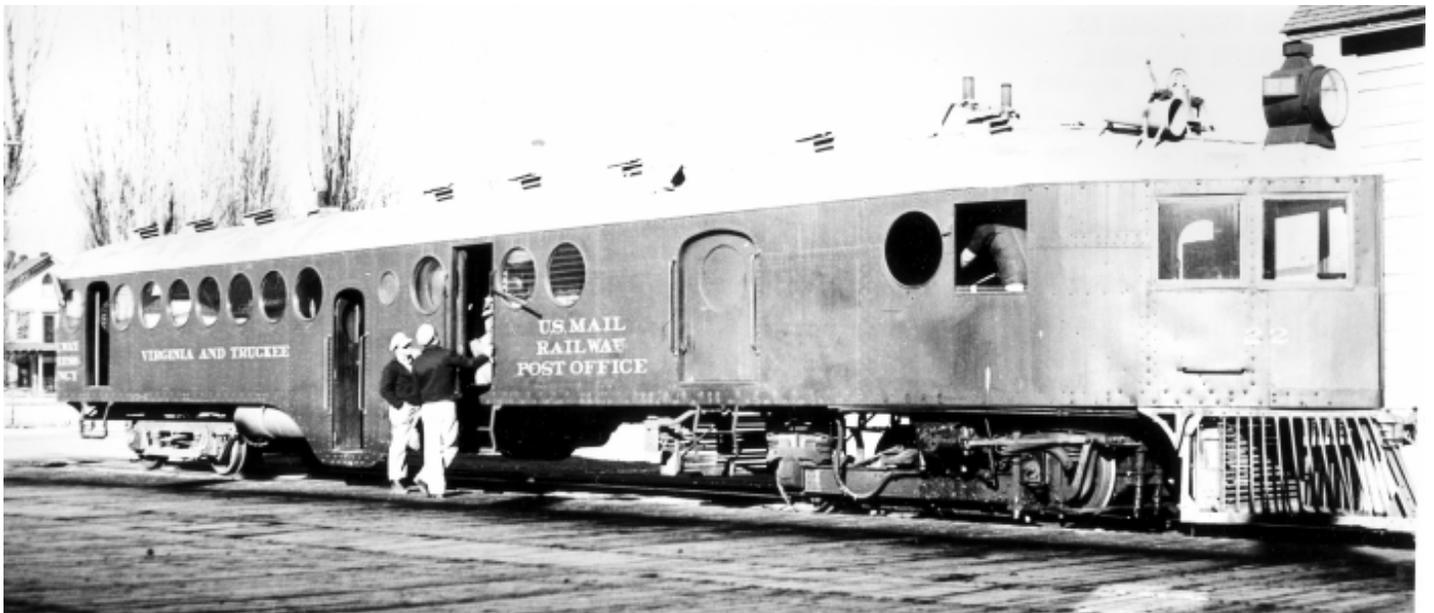
Copyright 2008, Daniel Markoff. Next: The Emerald City

Continued from page 7

worked when she could as an operator at the Farmers Telephone Company. Lois became cook and housekeeper. Hap did part-time work wherever he could around town during school breaks and after school, and farm and ranch work during summer vacations.

In the fall of 1929, McKeen Motor Car No. 22 had begun a three-year period of infrequent use that would end in 1932 with its being remodeled (*Photo, P. 9, top*) to carry mail, express – and only 24 passengers. Its place on the active roster was shared between the two railbuses: cars No. 23 and No. 99. Unlike the two-man McKeen car, a railbus required only one employee.

"Before the depression, the V&T used to transport twenty or thirty farm workers from Reno who would help with the yearly harvest in Carson Valley and depart before the first large snowfall. The farmers depended on these men to bring the crops in. The men depended on summer work here and winter work in warmer climates. With more people out of work that pattern changed," Hap says. "Men hoping for temporary farm work congregated half a mile north of the depot in willows along the V&T roadbed. As the depression



deepened, many ‘soft-hand’ hobos arrived: men without calluses who had never done manual labor. As summer progressed, their hands would change or these men would go elsewhere.

“The hobos applied their own discipline and most were well behaved. When one had been told to go elsewhere, word reached the farm community immediately. Besides ensuring that living quarters were kept clean and orderly, the hobo leadership interacted with my father to be sure he was satisfied with everyone’s conduct. In bad weather he might let hobos sleep under the eaves after the depot had closed for the night.”

In high school Hap negotiated a deal with his father. Hap would get to travel on V&T passes if he had good grades and his summer work was done. “Traveling by coach meant you slept sitting up,” Hap says, “Unless there happened to be adjoining empty seats. But that was part of traveling on a pass.”

In the fall of 1938 Hap Fisher entered the University of Nevada. Anticipating the draft, he soon joined the National Guard, and left college in his sophomore year to go on active duty. He served for the duration of the Second World War on anti-aircraft artillery duty in Los Angeles. He married during the War and moved to Reno after VJ Day.

The author thanks Stephen Drew for providing the information from V&T Ry. employment files used in this article.

Hap’s father, Gerald Walter Fisher, remained Minden V&T Agent until his retirement on September 19, 1947 at the age of 62.

Hap had a long and successful career with IBM, much of it in San Jose, California. After his wife’s death, he returned to Nevada.

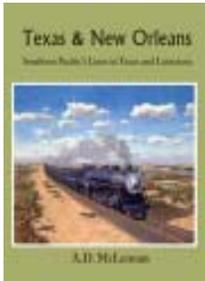


The only Stock Yards on the V&T were 1.8 track-miles north of the Minden Depot. The pens (see inset) provided a place to water or feed animals before loading or after unloading.

All photos: Nevada State Railroad Museum archives.

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 the Nevada State Railroad Museum to fund a variety of museum projects and public interpretive programs.



Texas & New Orleans: Southern Pacific's Lines in Texas and Louisiana (McLennan) \$70.00. Item #101955.

This latest release from Signature Press fills a gaping hole in the history of American railroading. The book is a long-needed full history of the T&NO, its territory, and its predecessors, from the earliest days up to the merger into parent SP in 1961, plus extensive locomotive and operating information. 325 photographs and 39 maps and drawings richly illustrate the 386 page book.

Tucson was a Railroad Town (Kalt) \$59.95 (Softcover). Item #102637

The story of the people who ran Southern Pacific trains in and out of this railroad metropolis in Arizona. Rather than an authoritative study of operations and wheel arrangements, this is a study of the impact of a railroad on a town and the region it served. The author does a great job of illustrating a time and place when nearly one out of every ten people in America worked either for a railroad or in railroad-related industry. The 335 pages are illustrated copiously with "people" photos, maps, and old advertising, in addition to some equipment and structure shots. This is an interesting and entertaining look at everyday life on the railroad, in a railroad town.

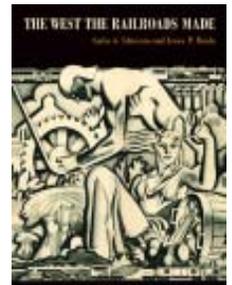
Guide to North America's Tourist Railways and Museums (Great Scenic Railway Journeys)

\$19.95. Item #102798.

If you're heading out on the road to visit other railroad museums, you'll want to take this book along. The easy-to-read format lists more than 300 of the nation's larger railroad museums with simple area maps, rosters, schedules, fares and contact information.

The West the Railroads Made (Schwantes and Ronda) \$39.95. Item #102016.

This 228-page book recounts the stories of visionaries who imagined the railroad as a new Northwest Passage, an iron road through the west to the Orient. If the railroads brought the West into the rest of the world, they also brought the world to, and shaped the development of, the American West. The book is richly illustrated with beautiful drawings, maps and color advertisements from the era. Early photographs are nicely enriched to make this a pleasing study of pioneer railroads, travel and the development of the early west.



SP Passenger Cars Volume One: Coaches & Chair Cars \$100.00. Item #101006.

SP Passenger Cars Volume Two: Sleepers & Baggage Dorms \$125.00. Item #101005.

SP Passenger Cars Volume Three: Head End Equipment, \$125.00. Item #101003.

SP Water Lines--Marine, Bay & River Operations (Myrick) \$60.00. Item #101002.

Ghost Trains of SP's Overland Route-Train 21-22, Mail, 1947-67 (Cape, McKeen) \$42.95. Item#100805.

Bob Knoll's Southern Pacific-SP Railroad Photos of J.R. Knoll (Knoll) \$40.00. Item #101007.

Southern Pacific Steam Pictorial Volume Two (Dunscomb & Pecotich) \$75.00. Item #101008.

Sunset Limited-SP's Premier Train with a Southern Accent (Jarel, Ryan, Signor) \$60.00. Item #101004.

DVDs

Westinghouse \$24.95. Item #102795.

An entertaining and nostalgic documentary of this historic company and its founder. George Westinghouse built an empire on railroads, electrical power and innovation. This program also includes clips of great inventions and household-product advertising from the early years of black-and-white television. 112 minutes.

Johnny Cash, Ridin' the Rails! \$19.98. Item #102466.

An "oldie but goodie" returns in a program originally filmed in 1974. It features Johnny Cash singing classic railroad songs in 5.1 Surround Sound. 52 minutes.

The museum store now carries the Emmy award-winning PBS Series *Great Scenic Rail Journeys*, including:
Celebrating North America's Steam Railways \$24.95. Item #102797.
 Eighteen scenic and historical steam railways. 120 Minutes.
Celebrating 175 Years of the American Railroad \$24.95. Item #102800.
 21 scenic and historical tourist railways. 120 Minutes.
The West \$19.95. Item #102801. Seven scenic tourist railways. 62 Minutes.
 Each DVD includes a trailer that describes how the train wreck in the movie *The Fugitive* was filmed.

TO ORDER BY TELEPHONE OR MAIL

Call (775) 687-6953 (9 am - 4 pm). Write 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 charges. If paying by either Visa or MasterCard, include your credit card number and expiration date. Orders are shipped via FedEx.

Friends of NSRM FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

An excellent fundraising opportunity is open to us, and it doesn't commit our members to hours of contacting and attempting to "sell" the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum to a particular activity or program. The Scolari's Food and Drug Company "Friendship Fund" lets qualified non-profit organizations share the proceeds of Scolari's customer purchases. The program is very simple. Anyone with a Scolari's Club Card, FNSRM member or not, can participate. Please encourage your family and friends to join in. Just complete the form shown below and submit it to any Scolari's Store. *Be sure every completed form includes our Organization Code, 2747.* Each month we will receive a percentage of Scolari's income from your purchases. Your support in this program will benefit the FNSRM treasury and make it possible to continue, and improve, our monetary support to the Museum with possible expanded programs and activities. Thank you for your anticipated participation. If you don't already have a Scolari's Club Card, you can apply for it at any Scolari's Store.

--Ronald J. Allen, Fundraising Chairman

Friendship Fund Enrollment Form

IMPORTANT: Please fill out the following information with your CURRENT Scolari's Club Card file information.

4	5	0	0								
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

SCOLARI'S CLUB CARD NUMBER



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

LAST NAME

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FIRST NAME

--

MI

CUSTOMER SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

NEW FRIENDSHIP FUND INFORMATION

All Scolari's Club Card members enrolled in the Friendship Fund may designate a Non-Profit Organization from the current list of participating organizations.

ORGANIZATION CODE

2	7	4	7
---	---	---	---

Please complete and give to Store Manager.

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

Address Service Requested

UPCOMING EVENTS

See the *Inyo* in steam! July 4, 5 & 6, 2008

37th Annual Nevada Railroad History Symposium
The Second World War and the Railroads of Nevada
Friday through Sunday, October 17-19, 2008 in Carson City

Monthly Wednesday Evening Programs

July and August	<i>Summer Break - No Programs</i>	
September 10	The Reno ReTRAC Project	<i>Produced by Bruce Blackadar</i>
October 8	Nuclear Railroad: the Jackass & Western	<i>Presented by Peter Barton</i>

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