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FALL 2019
141th Edition

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By Dan Markoff

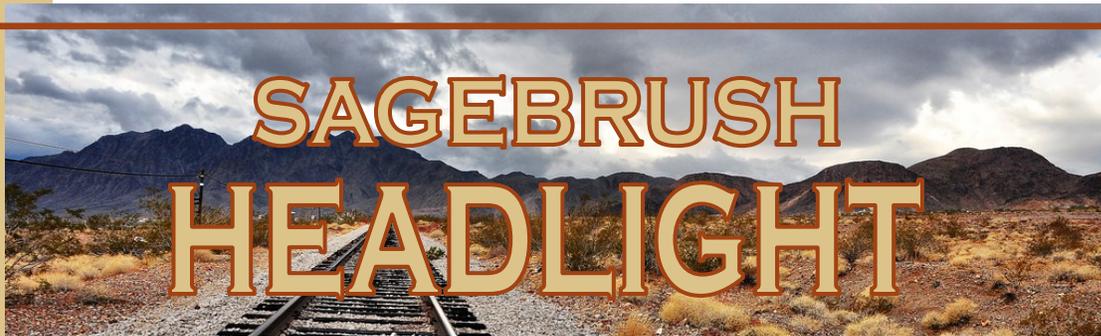
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**THE NEVADA STATE
RAILROAD MUSEUM**
An Agency of the Nevada
Department of Tourism
and Cultural Affairs



SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

The Last American: A Personal Odyssey

By Dan Markoff

How many of you have wondered what it would be like to live in a particular time of history? I know I have wondered that often. What would it be like to live in the time of the American Revolution? What would it be like to be a participant in the Civil War? How about the time of the Old West, or World War II? What about when man first stepped off Earth and landed on another
(Continued on page 4)



Dan Markoff's former Eureka & Palisade locomotive, the Eureka, hauls a train on the Durango & Silverton's ex-Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow gauge line near Hermosa, Colorado. (Jerry B. Day Photo)

Western Pacific's Venerable Bay Window Caboose

By Steve VanDenburgh

The Nevada State Railroad Museum's WP waycar no. 657 has "a new lease on life", thanks to its recent paint job.

But first, here's some historical background, from NSRM's comprehensive *Equipment Guidebook* (which is available at the Museum Store: 3rd edition, 2018, 53 pages, and
(Continued on page 3)



After her paint job was complete, the former boxcar glistened in the bright mid-autumn sun, with new lettering and a WP logo. (Steve VanDenburgh Photo)

VISIT THE MUSEUM

Open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Thursday through Monday
(closed Tuesday & Wednesday)

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

Museum Admission:

Adults 18 & Over - \$8.00
Children (Under 18) - FREE
Museum Members - FREE

STEAM TRAIN & MOTORCAR RIDES

Rides run every weekend May through September with select dates in October, November, and December.

The complete 2020 operating schedule is available at:
carsonrailroadmuseum.org

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SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT NEWSLETTER

Adam Michalski, Curator of Education: Editor

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NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
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Message from the President of the Friends of the NSRM, Barry Simcoe

We just completed another successful year at the museum including our second Rail Camp, a night photo shoot, our regular operating season, and three weekends of Santa Train.

We want to continue these events during 2020 and would like to add events in the future. All these events require significant volunteer participation. In some of our events, Santa Train in particular, it looks like we were at the limit of our volunteer participation.

For 2020 I would like to increase our volunteer involvement for both operations and other support. I have a couple of suggestions to help make this happen:

- Members that currently volunteer for events should talk with other members about helping with events.
- We must recruit non-members to help with events with the goal they become more involved with the museum and eventually become members.
- Increase participation in events planning meetings. Discuss volunteer involvement in future events.

Overall, this has been, thanks to your support, a fantastic year at the museum. Once again, I want to say how much the museum and the Friends organization appreciate all the time and thought you put into the museum. I hope every one of you had a fantastic holiday season and look forward to an even better 2020.

Thanks, Barry

FNSRM Board Meetings are scheduled for February 3, 2020 & April 6, 2020. All members of the Friends organization are encouraged to attend.

Email: barrysimcoe@sbcglobal.net

Phone: (775) 379-1353

Western Pacific's Venerable Bay Window Caboose

(continued from page 1)



WP caboose no. 657 looked a bit decrepit in early May 2019, before the major painting effort began. (Steve VanDenburgh Photo)

only about \$10): The caboose originated more than a century ago as an outside-braced boxcar (WP no. 15637, 1916); conversion to end-of-train service happened during World War II in 1943, and the car remained available for that use until its retirement in 1972.

Later, in its “third life”, no. 657 became a ticket office at the Cartwrights’ Ponderosa Ranch (of TV fame) in Incline Village, Nevada. She was donated to the NSRM in 2009.

To say that this well-weathered waycar was thirsty for paint by 2019 is an understatement. In fact, she guzzled nearly a dozen gallons of Rust-Oleum’s High Performance Tile Red (“Trusted quality since 1921”)

Currently, the colorful caboose, with its bright yellow and silver “safety trim”, new lettering, and classy Western Pacific logo, is on prominent display just south of the museum’s Jacobsen Interpretive Center. Give her upgraded exterior a look-over during your next visit.

A special thank you to NSRM volunteer Mark Reece, who spearheaded the effort to repaint WP Caboose No. 657. (Adam Michalski Photo)



So, what does the future hold for no. 657, now that she’s much more presentable? How about occasional “open-house” interior displays? Maybe rare, extra-fare, *in-train* service (but *after* she gets a brake job!)? And possibly even catered small-group birthday/anniversary rentals? Time will tell. Regardless, though, she’s a very welcome “re-addition” to Carson City’s rail-roading experience.

Steve VanDenburgh, a charter NSRM supporter, is grateful to museum volunteer Mark Reece, who initiated the arduous task of repainting no. 657; to Chris DeWitt and the NSRM Restoration Shop professionals, for information on the paint itself and the final coats of Tile Red; and to Adam Michalski, Wendell Huffman, and Dan Thielen, for additional input and encouragement. 🚂

The Last American *(continued from page 1)*

heavenly world? All these things have passed through my mind over the years. In my life, I have known people who have lived through some of those periods and have been fascinated by their stories. Even I have lived through some of them, like the Moon landings.

All in all, I have come to the conclusion that in spite of all the fascinating histories of these and many other events, there has not been another period of history that I would like to live than the present period of my life. I have come to this way of thinking because of my experiences with my locomotive *Eureka*. *Eureka* has given me a perspective that I would not otherwise have had. It did not come all at once to me, but in looking back over the 33 years I have spent with *Eureka* it evolved and I am as happy as can be that I live in our current period.

First, if it had not been for modern medicine, I would have been long gone decades ago. It was modern medicine

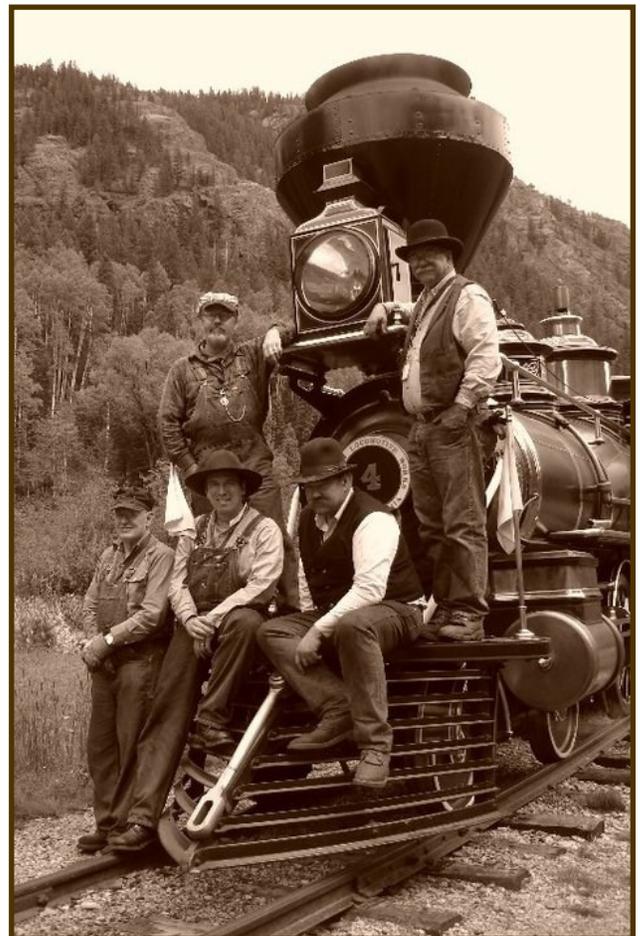
that allowed me to have a long and fruitful life and to experience things that would have never been possible in times in the past. So, from just that perspective I am thankful. But there is more. In spite of the fact that all those other eras have been fascinating, I have had the infinite pleasure of experiencing many of them regardless that they were long past.

Many of you know that one of my passions is aviation. I love to fly and travel around the country by just hopping into the airplane and cruising off to some far off place. That would not be possible in the 18th or 19th centuries. God knows, there were exciting times back then, but flying was not one of them. It was man's earliest dreams to soar with the birds, and that was not possible until the Wright Brothers took off at Kitty Hawk. But now, such a feat is a common every day experience for which I am eternally thankful.

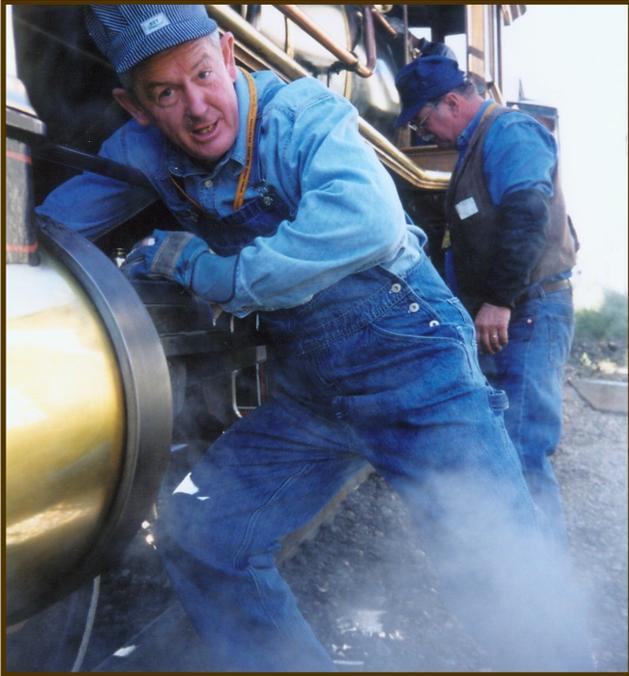
The American Revolution has always held fas-

ination for me. The smell of black powder, the fight for independence, the formation of the American Government are all periods I wish I could have experienced. But alas, I was not born then. Yet, in my life, I have had the grand experience of arguing life and death constitutional issues before the Supreme Court of the United

States, and thereby had a part in framing the perimeters of Constitutional law. In addition, I have had the joy of shooting and hunting with black powder flintlocks that were common during the Revolutionary period. The result is that what was experienced by our forefathers in terms of firearms, has been as common to me as it



The *Eureka* traveled to the Durango & Silverton in 2010 for an excursion run. The crew featured FNSRM members (left to right) Barry Simcoe, Loren Jahn (standing), Todd Moore, C. W. Craven, and Dan Markoff.



Eureka crew members (left to right) Major General (Ret.) Bill McCoy and Dan Markoff perform maintenance work on the locomotive. Major General (Ret.) McCoy, who passed away in 2018, was the commanding general for Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas. He was a valued friend of the author and dedicated member of the Eureka's crew.

would have been to them with the sights and smells and experiences of times long gone.

Back before the advent of the railroads, most people did not travel more than 20 miles beyond their home. Not only did the advent of aircraft shatter that limitation, but so did the railroad and the automobile. Now, traveling is not only possible, it is commonplace at speeds that would have been fantastic in an earlier century when the only thing available

was the horse. Oh, by the way, I was raised on a horse ranch in Arizona and was thoroughly familiar with the means of travel by one horse power. So, I have had the pleasure of travel not only by mechanical means, but by the four legged variety as well. I even got to ride my horse to school and then back home. Now that is a blast from the past in today's world.

Then there is reading. I am an avid reader of history and science and politics. I love the stuff. Reading is available

today much as it was in centuries gone by. Yet, there is one major difference. In today's world we have television, radio, digital communication devices that can provide information from around the world at the flick of a switch. That is pretty darn heady and something our ancestors could not even imagine. We now have the best of both worlds through reading books and communication that gets transmitted at the speed of light.

All these things, and many more, did not come to me all at once. I kind of thought of them, but beyond that, I continued to dream about what it was like "back then." But, there was one event that made it all gel into a coherent articulable frame of mind back in the 1990s. One day I got a call from Maj. General Bill McCoy, who was the former commander at Nellis Air Force Base. Bill and I knew each other from our aviation ties. He asked me if I would like to meet him for lunch at the Officer's Club at Nellis, to which

I said "you bet." I drove to Nellis and met Bill at the club. While we were chowing down, Bill introduced me to another man. His name was Colonel Tom Henricks. Now, I did not know this guy from a hill of beans, but Bill was telling Henricks about *Eureka*. I chimed in and started telling him stories about the locomotive, and our adventures with it. By and by, Henricks asked if he could see it. I told him of course. A time was agreed to, and after lunch I went home.

Later, General McCoy, his wife Linda, Col. Henricks and his wife, and his parents showed up at my home where I keep *Eureka* in my shop. Henricks was fascinated by it, jumped in the cab with his wife, and we spent hours talking about the history of the locomotive. Somewhere in our conversations, General McCoy told me that Henricks was a Commander of the Space Shuttle, and had more time flying it than any other person at that time. The thought

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Historic Convoy Visits NSRM

By Guy Clifton and Adam Michalski



Visitors inspect the MVPA Convoy in the NSRM parking lot on September 12, 2019.

A convoy of vintage military vehicles, making its way cross country to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first U.S. Army Transcontinental Convoy from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco, visited the museum on September 12, 2019.

The original convoy in 1919 was used as a method to test military vehicles and to encourage construction of highways. It was also the opportunity for the U. S. Army to thank the American people for their support of the U. S. initiative during The Great War, known now as World War I. It was the first motor transport convoy ever to cross the U. S. One of the officers on the convoy was then Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the future general and U. S. President.

The convoy was made up of about 70 vehicles from the Military Vehicle Preservation Asso-

ciation. It left the Ellipse in Washington, D.C., on August 11 and arrived at Lincoln Park in San Francisco on September 14, exactly 100 years from the arrival of the first convoy.

The entire trip lasted 36 days and spanned more than 3,200 miles. The convoy crossed Nevada on U.S. Highway 50, staying overnight in Ely and Austin before spending two rest days in Fallon. The convoy participated in Fallon's Patriot's Day ceremony on September 11.

On September 12, the convoy departed the Churchill County Fairgrounds in Fallon and continued to the Nevada State Railroad Museum for its lunch stop. The convoy visited the museum for approximately 90 minutes.

The public had an opportunity to view the historic military vehicles and talk with the owners about them. 🚂

After lunch, the MVPA convoy prepared for departure from the museum. The historic convoy's destination on this date was Placerville, California.



The Last American *(continued from Page 5)*

raced through my mind that this guy flew the fastest thing of the 20th century (and the 21st) and here he was sitting in the cab of one of the fastest machines of the 19th century. Holy Cow! I have, as noted above, been fascinated with flight, but never thought I would have the opportunity to sit in a 19th century locomotive cab with a Shuttle Commander. My mind went to racing! I told Henricks that they needed a lawyer (me in particular) in space aboard the shuttle. Colonel Henricks got a rather puzzled look in his eyes, and asked, "why is that?" I responded that you guys at NASA may think you understand the law of gravity, but as a lawyer, I know all the exceptions! Everyone got a laugh, but the answer was NASA would probably not go for

that. Gee, I wonder why.

Henricks did say that on his last flight in the Shuttle, he had his personal video camera with him in the cockpit. He took footage from launch to orbit and then back down to landing. He said he would make me a copy, which he did and sent it to me later. It is one of my prized possessions.

Since then, I have had other shuttle commanders to my home to see *Eureka*, including one who became head of NASA.

On top of that, General McCoy became a regular on *Eureka*'s crew and one of my closest friends.

Now, what has all this got to do with what I wrote about earlier? It is simply this: Our present time is the best of times. We can experience all the things that our forefathers experienced, plus all

the really incredible advancements that occurred since then. And it all was driven home to me in *Eureka*'s cab. So, the next time you are at the Nevada State Railroad Museum and see *Inyo* or *Glenbrook* running be thankful that you live today where we can experience the history in motion of a bygone era, along with the incredibly fascinating things that the present brings us.

In closing, I have but one regret. That is, I would really like to see what the future holds for us. Going to Mars would be a step in the right direction. 🚀



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