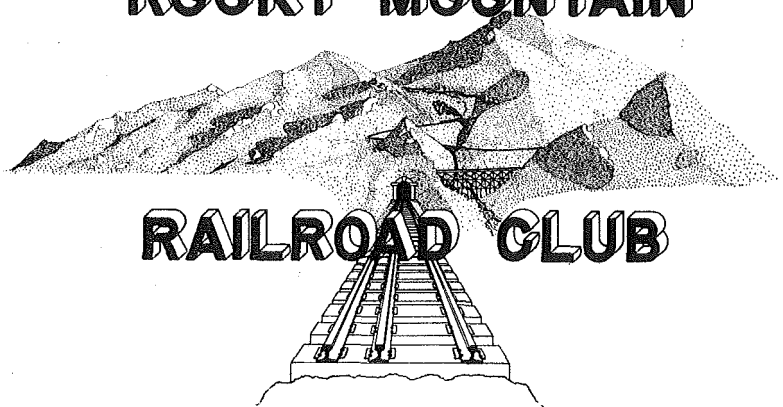


ROCKY MOUNTAIN

February, 1965

Newsletter No. 66



P. O. BOX 2391-DENVER, COLORADO 80201

The February, 1965, meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, February 10, 1965, at 8:00 p.m. in our regular place -- the basement meeting room of the new Western Federal Savings and Loan Building -- 718 - 17th Street, Denver. Charles Ryland will present what should be an enjoyable and fascinating program of 35mm color slides on the railroads of Greece. Don't miss it.

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It is with a sad and heavy heart that we bring to our membership the news of the loss of a dear friend -- our old-timer Bert Fullman. Bert devoted his time these last years with unfailing loyalty and diligence to the monthly mailings of these newsletters and to his participation in the affairs of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club as an active member of the Club and its Board of Directors. The old gentleman passed away in Denver General Hospital Thursday evening, January 21.

Bert, the youngest of 11 children, and the last of a family of 13, was born August 6, 1879, in Omaha, and proudly proclaimed himself a "Nebraska bug-eater" who had never been farther east than North Platte after he came west. The house at 527 Josephine Street in Denver, where he lived alone, is the one into which his family moved in 1881 when they came west. His tales of the town when he was a boy have been the subject of interesting conversation among his friends on numerous occasions.

Bert started railroading as an RPO clerk in 1902 on the C & S between Denver-Greeley, Denver-Silver Plume over the Georgetown Loop, and Denver-Clarendon, Texas. In 1908 he transferred to the Denver, Northwestern & Pacific run from Denver to Yampa, Colorado, when Dave Moffat's road was still building west to Steamboat Springs. He told us of a trip made during one summer long ago when his consignment of mail sacks contained somewhere a brick of limburger cheese. The combination of heat, cheese and confinement was overpowering, according to Bert, and he finally had to resort to tracking down the offensive package, which he proceeded to wrap securely with postoffice twine and hang outside the car. But the mail was delivered!

Perhaps this harrowing experience brought about his departure from the Postal service. In any event he went to work for the Moffat Road as engine watchman at Hot Sulphur Springs in 1911, then worked as a fireman out of Tabernash, and was promoted to engineer west of that terminal in July, 1917. His first trip as a hogger, however, was on mallet engine 214 in helper service east from Tabernash to Corona. On this particular trip he also fired the engine on portions of the run since his fireman had just been released from the hospital. They dropped down the hill light to Arrow, where they took coal and water, then worked back up the hill on a drag. And it was six weeks of this steady, back-breaking work before he finally had time to make his "student" trip as engineer over the line from Tabernash west to Phippsburg.

During his days as fireman he also worked on trains 1-2 using the little ex-Chesapeake Beach 4-4-0 engines 390 and 391 between Phippsburg and Craig -- the feebleminded run" he termed it.

Bert gave us all this information during the course of a Thanksgiving celebration last November. Bright, alert, cheerful, humorous and loyal to the end, this old fellow will be cherished in the memories of many of us as a genuine friend and true gentleman.

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Report on "Colorado Midland" -- Binding operations are going strong, and the initial copies of the book should be ready by the end of February, with the bulk of the volumes going to their buyers throughout the month of March.

Among some of the surprising historical facts you'll be reading about in "Colorado Midland" is the story of the unused construction on the east side of Hagerman Pass. The route, as originally planned, was to utilize a curving tunnel. This tunnel was actually started, but never completed. Instead, a new route for the "high line" was chosen, and the old, unused construction remained undiscovered until two years ago when its existence was verified by book editors Ed Haley and Dick Kindig and author Morris Cafky during an exploration trip up the pass.

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At our January meeting, held on an unseasonably mild evening (Denver weather traditionally is abominable during the annual Stock Show) an extraordinarily large group of Club members and their friends gathered for the program of colored slides presented by Neal Miller of Longmont. Many welcome and familiar faces which had not been seen for a long time joined us in the pleasure of recalling Club excursions in years gone by. Neal covered operations using the Rio Grande's old Silver Vista observation over Marshall Pass, to Crested Butte, the Black Canon of the Gunnison, and Villa Grove via Poncha Pass.

Then, as an extra fillip to the program, Neal ended with a selection of most unusual pictures -- a tour of the abandoned Corona Pass line from Tolland to the Loop on the west side, with some beautiful scenes of the Giant's Ladder, Yankee Doodle Lake, Needle's Eye and Loop tunnels, and Corona Pass -- all taken from the air. An outstanding program, and much enjoyed by those in attendance.

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The Denver Mining Club, whose President is Club member Guy L. V. Emerson, held a noon luncheon meeting on Wednesday, February 3rd. The guest speaker was Ted S. McKee who talked on "Early Day Railroads in Colorado."

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Last month, the Newsletter mentioned difficulties experienced by West Coast lines during the violent storms of late December and early January. Some details of the damage, and subsequent repair activities have now become available, and illustrate, once again, the ingenuity, matter-of-factness, and speed with which the railroads meet the challenges with which they are confronted.

Southern Pacific, Western Pacific, Northwestern Pacific, Spokane, Portland & Seattle and the Longview, Portland & Northern reported major damage to facilities and disruption to services in the disaster areas. Northern Pacific and Milwaukee reported minor damage from washouts and slides.

While highway department officials in the west glumly predicted it would be months before anything like normal highway service could be restored to the area (only a few highways into the region were reported as passable), railroad crews were already restoring service. In Oregon's towering Cascade Mountains, SP engineering forces wrestled with the task of repairing a 130-ft. bridge over Noisy Creek that had been washed away by swollen floodwaters. The bridge is located between two tunnels which had themselves been affected and SP crews had a hard time getting in. Not far away, at Salmon Creek, teams of bulldozers worked to uncover hundreds of feet of right-of-way that had been buried 60 feet deep by slides on December 24. By the time the bulldozers had worked nine days around the clock, they got to the track -- and the work of restoring the railroad began.

Not far from Salmon Creek, between Cruzatte and Frazier, SP piledrivers finished driving piles January 5 on a 120-foot section of right-of-way which the flood had undercut so badly it couldn't be filled. Steel fabricated for a bridge to span the spot was already on its way as the piledrivers finished with the foundation.

Western Pacific's Feather River Canyon line, knocked out of service by slides and wash-

outs December 23, was repaired by crews and back in operation by January 2. The line was in service three days; on January 5 storms again knocked out the line and the California Zephyr was caught at Portola all night with 183 passengers. The train was "walked out" the next morning because of soft spots in the line, and WP crews went back to work, returning the line to service about January 8.

Hardest hit of the lines in the region was the Northwestern Pacific. NWP suffered extremely heavy damage all through the 125-mile section of its line along the Eel River valley, with many miles of line completely washed away. Engineers have not yet been able to assess the damage fully, but it appears it will take at least several months to restore service on the northern part of the line.

Weather experts were saying by January 7 that the flood threats had eased at last. The region began mopping up, but the railroads planned to be back in service in a matter of days. (The foregoing is extracted from the January 11 issue of RAILWAY AGE).

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Closer to home, the Rio Grande also was having a bit of difficulty with its narrow gauge line between Alamosa and Durango. With snow reported 20 feet deep on Cumbres Pass, the railroad has operated no through trains between the two cities since December 23; an east-bound caboose hop from Durango went to Chama and returned with a few loads during the first week of January, but company officials reported that such deep snow would make plowing unfeasible and travel dangerous to train crews over the top of the mountain. (Alamosa Rotary OY with its 9'8½" wheel would have quite a time tunneling through 20 feet of snow!)

When the tie-up was brought to the attention of Colorado's Public Utility Commission by San Juan Basin people, the PUC said the railroad appeared to be justified in temporarily closing the line, but added they were "going to watch it." Freight, meanwhile, was being handled by trucks over Wolf Creek Pass.

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Just before Christmas the people of Silverton learned that the old gasoline-driven home-built, narrow-gauge railbus constructed by the Sunnyside mine and mill in the 1920's to handle business over the Silverton Northern tracks between Silverton and Eureka, was being made available for disposition. On display in recent years back of the Durango roundhouse, as the property of Mr. Ralph Atlass, Durango radio-station executive, this original "Galloping Goose" is a choice historical item, and its sudden availability quickly prompted formation by the Silverton people of an organized effort to raise funds for returning it to Silverton.

Publicity in the SILVERTON STANDARD newspaper was quite successful, "Casey Jones" was purchased, and plans are now being formulated to return and display the little car at Silverton's new historical museum, whose opening is planned for this summer. While the fund raising campaign struck a note of sympathy in many places, the drive is continuing in order to meet requirements for moving and maintaining the little railbus at its new location, with contributions to the San Juan County Historical Society being received by the Silverton Standard at PO Box 187, Silverton.

Believing strongly that organized local efforts to preserve and display such historical items should be encouraged whenever possible, the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club was glad to make a contribution to the Silverton fund. Individual Club members likewise have participated in this effort, and we note the Silverton paper has acknowledged receipt of contributions from Club members Walt Steenstra of Lochmere, N.H., Fred Wolfe of Colorado Springs, Barney Murray of Wichita, Kansas, Lester Sherwood of Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Robert Christian, Jr. of Wichita, Kansas.

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Another loss from the ranks of the old timers was noted recently with the passing on New Year's Day of P. C. Moshisky, prominent civic leader of Montrose, Colorado. Coming to

Western Slope in 1909 as an employe of the Rio Grande Southern, Mr. Moshisky worked for many years in the Ridgway shops and served several years as Master Mechanic of the little line about the time of World War I. He was 81 at the time of his death.

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Club member Morris Abbott, spending the winter months in Arizona, sent us the following clipping from the Phoenix Gazette of January 1st: "Grange Park, England -- James Hutchings, 19, had an unusual hobby. He collected number plates from train locomotives. he already had 50 plates when police caught him trying to steal two more. He was fined \$84 in court."

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1881 News Item -- "Buena Vista, county seat of Chaffee county, is situated at the junction of Cottonwood Creek and the Arkansas River, 135 miles from Denver. The South Park Division, Union Pacific, and the Denver & Rio Grande Railways both pass through the city on their route to Leadville. Population 1,075. There are several hotels, chief of which are the Grand Park, and Lake House, with stores of all kinds, and one weekly newspaper, the Chaffee County Times, recognized as a very reliable paper on anything pertaining to mining and the country generally. There are four mining districts tributary to Buena Vista: Cottonwood, to the west; Clear Creek, northwest; Four Mile, northeast, and Free Gold, southeast. The ores are silver, gold and lead, low grade with few exceptions.

"The City is surrounded by a small forest of pine and cedar trees, and the streets paved with loose boulders of all sizes, from a piece of chalk to the Rock of Ages. Fare from Denver, \$11.65." --Crofutt's Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado, Omaha Herald, Printers, January, 1881.

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Interest in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club's annual Memorial Day Excursion over the Rio Grande's narrow gauge line from Alamosa to Durango and Silverton, is beginning to stir, and Trip Committee Chairman Ed Haley happily advises that arrangements with the railroad are nearly complete. The three days allotted for the journey in 1965 are Saturday, Sunday and Monday, May 29, 30 and 31. The fare remains the same as in previous years -- \$21.00 for adults, \$11.00 for childred 5 and under 12, for the round trip. Meal and lodging expenses are not included. Tickets, and a list of accommodations available at both Alamosa and Durango, can be obtained from Treasurer Ane Clint.

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The famous SOLID MULDOON, unique newspaper of olden-time Ouray, was started on September 5, 1879, but the Muldoon Publishing Company with David F. Day as editor. Day, who had served in the Union Army during the Civil War, settled in Ouray in 1878. He became sole proprietor of the newspaper in 1882, and early in 1892, moved his printing press to Durango and started the Durango Herald-Democrat, which he published until 1914.

During the ten years that the SOLID MULDOON was in operation it made newspaper history. Day was a sarcastic, witty type of editor, with a liking for bar-room stories, and his pithy remarks were widely quoted. For example, in one of his editorials he wrote, "The Mining Register of Lake City says that the jeweled garter craze has not yet reached Lake City. This information is entirely superfluous as the average Lake City woman's style of architecture requires no artificial stays or fastenings. They simply cut a hole in their stockings and button them over their knee caps." --Wilson Rockwell, in Ouray's Yesterdays, the Ouray County Herald, Thursday, January 7, 1965.

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