

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB  
P. O. BOX 2391  
DENVER 1, COLORADO

November, 1962

Newsletter No. 39

The November meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, November 14, 1962, at the Coors Beverage Establishment in Golden, Colorado, as announced in our October Newsletter. Our train, powered by C&S 2-8-0 #638, will leave Denver Union Station at 6:00 p.m. sharp. Attendance is by ticket only and is limited to 200 persons. A few tickets are still available.

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The post card enclosed with this month's Newsletter was furnished by the Association of Western Railways at no cost to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. This reproduction of a painting of the New York Central's Twentieth Century Limited, was done by our member and current Director, Howard Fogg, of Boulder.

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Paperbound copies of "The Case of Train No. 3", Arthur Ridgway's well-illustrated story of the disastrous Pueblo flood of June 3, 1921, are still available at a cost of \$2.00, post-paid. Copies of this booklet, published by the Club in 1957, may be obtained by sending an order to the Club at 2561 S. Cook, Denver 10, Colorado.

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Sixty-four years ago, on August 28, 1898, narrow gauge Denver, Leadville & Gunnison engine 195, with Billy Westall at the throttle, rounded a bend in South Platte Canyon just west of Dome Rock, plowed into a wash-in and overturned, fatally injuring Engineer Westall. For his heroism in staying with his train, the American Order of United Workmen erected a monument on the site of the accident on Labor Day, September 4, 1899. The story behind this little known and sadly neglected historical marker has long been a mystery, even to people who live in the canyon, but this condition has now been remedied.

On Saturday, October 20, 1962, five past officers of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club devoted a day to the Westall Monument, accomplishing the following:

A bronze tablet, prepared by and at the expense of one member of the group, was permanently attached to the base of the memorial. This plaque fully explains the events that occurred here and states that the tablet was placed by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. All joints in the rock memorial were carefully caulked; its foundation rock was restored where missing; a rock retaining wall was built along three sides and the area between this wall and the monument base filled with compacted earth and sodded; the entire area was cleaned up, weeds cut, papers burned and cans and other debris buried.

We hope that this good beginning will provoke a campaign to locate and mark historical railroad sites in our Rocky Mountains.

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An Interstate Commerce Commission hearing examiner recently recommended that the D&RGW be allowed to discontinue the two daily passenger runs between Denver and Craig, Colorado. The examiner found that the railroad had been losing money on the operation of trains #9 and #10 and that continued operation "would constitute an unjust and undue burden upon the carriers' interstate operations." The railroad presented evidence showing that expenses exceeded revenues on the run by an average of \$162,654 over the past five years. The examiner recommended that the Commission approve the discontinuance when the railroad came to the ICC after being turned down by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission last December 22. It is expected that the train will be continued for a few more months pending additional legal procedures.

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Denver members may have noted the recent visit to our city of entertainer Jackie Gleason. Finding his original rail accommodations too cramped, Mr. Gleason rented an entire 7-car train, including 3 club cars. The cost, about \$90,000, included transportation for Mr. Gleason, 45 friends (including at least 5 "dancing girls") and a 5-piece Dixieland jazz band, complete with piano.

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Western range cattle are being given a fast ride to market this fall aboard express freight trains, dubbed the "Heifer Zephyrs", of the CB&Q. The Burlington announced that cattle to eastern points are being shipped via the Yellowstone Livestock Express from Billings, Montana, and the Box Butte Express from Alliance, Nebraska. Cattle intended for further fattening are riding into north-eastern Colorado on the Rocky Mountain Express.

Incidentally, the Burlington reports that passenger revenues are running more than a million dollars ahead of last year, and expectations are that 1962 will be the best passenger year since the end of World War II.

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The D&RGW last month completed construction of the 36-mile long spur from the \$20-million potash development near Moab, Utah, to the main line at Brendel siding near Crescent Junction. The spur is the longest industrial track in the railroad's history, and is the second major industrial spur to be completed on the D&RGW in two months - the other being the 12-mile long Energy Coal spur west of Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

The potash spur leaves the mainline at the Brendel siding near Crescent Junction and parallels US Highway 160 over the desert flatlands for the first 15 miles. From there the terrain changes to mountains and canyons as the grade crosses Courthouse Wash, Cedar Ridge Cut, Moab Canyon, Bootlegger Canyon and finally leads into the famous Colorado River Canyon. Near Moab the spur takes a sweeping curve, tunnels through sandstone bluffs for a mile and a third and emerges in Bootlegger Canyon. From there it follows the canyon cliffs for five miles past the mouth of Gold Bar Canyon, Little Canyon, Day Canyon and Long Canyon.

Construction of the spur called for 36 miles of 18'-wide roadbed, five steel and concrete bridges, one highway overpass, 8,570' of culvert pipe and 7,068' of 16'x24' railroad tunnel. The first 32 miles of the grade were built by Morrison-Knudsen under a contract awarded in August, 1961. The lower section of the line was built jointly with the highway grade in close cooperation with the Utah Highway Department. Contract for this section was awarded to W. W. Clyde Co.

The "Big Cut" at the top of Moab Canyon is 8,000' long, 122' deep, and required removal of over one million cubic yards of rock. The "Big Cut" was necessary to maintain a 1.2% ruling grade from the Colorado River, through the tunnel, to Moab Summit. Maximum curvature on the line is five degrees and all curves over two and one-half degrees are compensated.

The tunnel was started November 6, 1961 from the Moab end and was holed through into Bootlegger Canyon at 2:30 p.m., June 23, 1962.

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Our August, 1962 Newsletter #36 reported the acceptance by the Illinois Central of the substitution of wrist watches for pocket watches for trainmen. Word has now reached us that an electronic wrist watch has been approved for use by train crews on the Southern Pacific. Made by Bulova, the Accutron watch uses a tuning fork and a small power cell in place of conventional movement.

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The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company was 110 years old on October 10, 1962. On that date in 1852 the first train chugged over the newly laid 57-pound iron rails between Chicago and Joliet, Illinois, a distance of 40 miles. This was the first Rocket train of the Rock Island Lines, and was made up of six new yellow coaches pulled by an American-type (4-4-0) wood burning, steam locomotive. Eighty-five years later the Rock Island introduced the first of its diesel-powered fleet of Rocket streamliners. Among the more notable "firsts" claimed by the company are the first use of microwave in its communications network and the introduction of especially adapted electronic computers in its automated yards.

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Pacific Fruit Express Company announced it has placed orders for 200 40-foot mechanically refrigerated highway semi-trailers. Most of the 200 trailers are expected to be in service by the end of the year, and will be equipped with nose-mounted diesel refrigeration units to permit carrying commodities at temperatures from below zero to 70°. Trailers will be of light weight and high cube design and have wheel assemblies which may be detached should the trailers be used in container-on-flat-car service. These 200 trailer units are part of a \$12 million program for new piggyback equipment announced earlier this year, and will bring PFE's fleet of refrigerated trailers to 625 units, representing an investment in piggyback trailers of over \$8,400,000 during the past year. This equipment will augment and supplement the PFE fleet of railroad refrigerator cars, largest in the nation.

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Quoting from the Missouri Pacific:

Believe it or not, the nation's railroads financed the 30-day strike of Northwestern Railroad employees. The 1,000 telegraphers who called the strike and the other 13,000 to 14,000 who refused to cross picket lines are regarded as unemployed under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act. Only the railroads contribute to this fund. They are required, under the law, to pay an amount equal to 4% of the first \$400 of the employee's monthly earnings--\$16.00-- into the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The employee pays nothing but can receive benefits up to a maximum of \$10.20 per day. It can be conservatively estimated that the strikers received from the railroads more than \$2.5 million.

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A good day's work never hurt anyone, but neither did a good day's rest.

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J. C. Thode, President

E. R. Lewandowski, Secretary

J. L. Morison, Vice-President

Ane O. Clint, Treasurer