

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB
P. O. Box 2391
Denver, Colorado 80201

November, 1964

Newsletter No. 63

The November, 1964, meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be at 8:00 p.m. on the customary second Wednesday of the month -- November 11th -- in the basement meeting room of the Western Federal Savings Association building -- 718 - 17th Street, Denver. For the program at this meeting we will take a trip abroad with the first-prize winner of the recent Trains Magazine - Rocky Mountain Railroad Club photo contest, Club member Tom Gray, Jr. (whose excellent black-and-white work can be seen on pages 30 and 34 of the September, 1964 issue of Trains). Tom has prepared for this meeting a presentation on the railways of England, France, Spain, the Isle of Man, New Zealand and the Fiji Islands, with accompanying commentary on tape, which promises to be both educational and entertaining.

All members and their friends are invited to attend this program, which Tom has spent many hours assembling for our enjoyment.

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At our October meeting we again shared the pleasure of Club member Ronald Ruhoff in watching Colorado & Southern standard-gauge consolidation #641 back out of the Leadville enginehouse early one morning, put her train together, and proceed to the highest point in North America served by an adhesion railroad -- the tremendous molybdenum mining and milling complex atop historic Fremont Pass at Climax, Colorado. After observing the switching operations necessary to serve this extensive industry, we saw the train return to Leadville and set out the cars for interchange to the Rio Grande. Ron closed this presentation with some beautiful late-afternoon shots of coaling operations for the 641 in preparation for the next day's trip, the entire film being shown to the accompaniment of appropriate background music.

In addition, Ron gave us a preview of some of the material he is gathering for a new film on the Rio Grande's narrowgauge freight operations between Alamosa and Durango. Many fine shots are included in this new film, and we are looking forward to the time when he will be able to show it more at a club meeting.

To complete last month's program, two reels of 16mm color movies from the library of Club member A. W. Erkind's of Wilson, Wyoming, created a great deal of interest and many comments from the audience. Both prewar films, one covered a trip on the Silverton Branch when passenger accommodations consisted only of one combination car trailing a long string of freight cars behind the engine. The informality of regulations, and the freedom given passengers on the train in those days, were of considerable surprise to most of us.

Mr. Erkind's second film recorded a trip from Dolores to Ridgway on a Rio Grande Southern Galloping Goose in the early days before the modern bus-type bodies were installed. The primitive arrangements available, however, seemed to detract not one bit from the beauty of the scenery or the enjoyment of the passengers fortunate enough to have been along.

Our thanks to Ron Ruhoff and A. W. Erkind's for this interesting program.

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This issue of the Newsletter is the last opportunity we will have to remind you that November 30th will see the close of the \$12.00 pre-subscription offer being made by the Club on Morris Cafky's long-awaited history of the Colorado Midland. After December 1 copies of the magnificent new 475-page volume will be priced at \$14.00.

Orders are continuing to arrive in a steady stream -- circulation director Bryant McFadden has advised that 1,675 copies have been reserved from the 6,000-copy printing authorized by the Board of Directors. Time is running out, and this is the last reminder it is possible to send you.

Remember -- until November 30th -- orders at \$12.00 per copy will be accepted by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, addressed to 2561 South Cook Street, Denver, Colorado 80210.

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What is no doubt the largest single-engine passenger excursion ever operated on the Rio Grande's narrow gauge was handled between Alamosa and the summit of Cumbres Pass on Sunday, October 4th. Sponsored for the second year by Alamosa's Gamma Gamma Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha International Sorority, the 17-car train, powered only by engine 493, handled 528 revenue passengers, including a large contingent of Club members, on a picnic outing through the colorful fall aspen. For the benefit of camera-toting railfans, run-by photo stops were made at Phantom Curve and at Los Pinos Loop. A thoroughly enjoyable affair, to judge from the many enthusiastic comments we have heard.

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RAILS WEST -- 100 YEARS AND MORE AGO: A small item in the daily Denver "Post" a few weeks ago regarding the 112th anniversary of the first Rock Island train out of Chicago sent us searching through our archives for further information. In the course of our research we turned up a number of October and November railroad "anniversaries" that should be of interest to Club members. These dates are significant because of their eventual impact on the economy and growth of Colorado, and it is because of them that the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club exists today. We shall try to have a "Rails West" column in most future issues of the newsletter.

October 14, 1850 -- The Davenport and Iowa City Railroad Company was organized at Iowa City, Ia., to build tracks eastward to meet those of a proposed railroad to be constructed west from Chicago.

October 1, 1851 -- The first ads appeared in Chicago newspapers for laborers to build the CRI&P: "Good railroad work for the winter. Apply to Sheffield and Farnam, contractors, the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, at Twelfth Street."

October 10, 1852 -- The locomotive "Rocket" pulled the first scheduled passenger train into Joliet, Ill., some 33 rail miles southwest of Chicago.

October 29, 1863 -- The first Union Pacific stockholders meeting was held in Chicago. Thirty directors were elected and from these the board named the line's first officers. John A. Dix was chosen president and Thomas C. Durant was named vice president. An interesting sidelight of the initial UP stock issue: Wells Fargo and Company was in charge of sales in Carson City, Portland and San Francisco, while Brigham Young himself handled stock orders in Salt Lake City!

November 18, 1863 -- President Lincoln issued a proclamation designating the point at which the Union Pacific would start construction: "I Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do hereby fix so much of the Western boundary of the State of Iowa as lies between the North and South boundaries of the United States Township, within which the city of Omaha is situated, as the point from which the line of railroad and telegraph in that section mentioned, shall be constructed."

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From the September, 1964 issue, of The Western Railroader, publication of the many railfan organizations headquartered in the San Francisco Bay area, we learn that the extensive collection of historic railroad equipment acquired over the years by the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, is being readied for exhibit at the new Maritime Museum being planned for the Bay area.

Previously stored at Western Pacific shops in Oakland, this collection is being moved into the former interurban Key System maintenance building adjoining the toll plaza of

the Bay Bridge for safe storage until the museum is ready. The modern steel building, now owned by the Toll Bridge Authority, has seen little use due to having inspection pits under elevated track, but it is ideal for car and engine storage.

Equipment moved on August 11th included the private car "Gold Coast"; Dollar Lumber Co. 2-6-2T #3; Virginia & Truckee 2-4-0 #21, the "J.W. Bowker"; V&T 4-4-0 #12, the "Genoa"; and two Nevada Central narrow-gauge engines -- 4-4-0 #5 and 2-6-0 #6, as well as two Nevada Central coaches. Key System interurban unit #187 and Northwestern Pacific 4-6-0 #12 are now being worked on and will be moved in soon. V&T 2-6-0 #13 and Dollar Lumber Co. shay #2978 are undergoing extensive rehabilitation prior to moving from the Western Pacific yards.

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The final-day run of the Silverton on Wednesday, September 30th, handled 367 passengers, bringing the final official conductor's count for the 1964 season to 65,240 passengers. Conductor Alva Lyons chalked up the record on that day with the excursion of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Rocky Mountain section. The geologists, on an annual assembly in Durango, were joined by a number of last-minute enthusiasts to record the biggest single train total since September 15th, and push the conductor's official count over the 65,000 mark for the season.

The figure tops last year's total -- the old record of 50,988 -- by 14,252 passengers, a mark made possible by the extension of the season and the addition of new rolling stock to the line this summer.

As an aside, Railway Age, in its September 28th issue, observes: "Four bridges (on the Silverton Branch-Ed.) are scheduled for rebuilding -- mainly because of Rio Grande's preoccupation with the safety of the people who come to ride, but also because reconstruction of the spans will permit operation of heavier power, of which the narrow-gauge line has quite a bit". Incidentally, one of these bridge reconstruction projects involves 2,806 feet of line change, bringing the railroad, and the new bridge, to a more perpendicular relationship with the channel of the Animas River below Elk Park. The four 55-foot I-beam spans will replace three of the old wooden Howe truss bridges (among the last still in service in the United States), and an iron girder truss.

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Many Club members are acquainted with the imaginative writings of the well-known Cy Warman, numbering among the collector's items in their libraries one or more volumes of the stories of early western railroading written by this outstanding author. Recently we encountered an interesting thumb-nail biography of Mr. Warman in the October 17, 1955, souvenir issue of the Salida Mountain Mail, and the item is quoted below:

"One of the best-known railroad men of the 1880's was Cy Warman, who did his railroading on both the throttle and the typewriter.

"Warman in 1880 was a young man, so far a failure, and so he left his home in Chicago and came to Salida, a brand new town along brand new railroad tracks. He was in town a month before he got the good word from the railroad, and started as an engine wiper and general roundhouse laborer. Before long he was fireman, and in three short years, was sitting on the right-hand side of the cab.

"For some years Warman edited a labor newspaper, The Frog. When, in 1890, he left Salida to go to work on the new Western Railway magazine, the (Salida) Mail editor observed, 'The Frog has uttered its last croak and hopped into the soup.' The new magazine did not prove to be a financial success, but Warman nevertheless was an eyewitness (or right near to it) of some of the most thrilling railroad history which occurred in this country.

"Warman also wrote some original verse, and the most famous probably was 'Sweet Marie,' which later was put to music. This poem was dedicated to his second wife, a Salida girl of Canadian extraction, Myrtle Marie Jones.

"Warman spent some time as editor of the Creede Chronicle in 1892. Eventually he went back east, doing writing for McClure's magazine. Warman also did publicity work for a number of railroads, especially the Grand Trunk Railway system.

"As death neared, he recalled a poem he had written while an engineer on the little narrow gauges in Colorado:

'Swift toward life's terminal I trend,
The run seems short tonight.
God only knows what's at the end --
I hope the lights are white.'

"And Cy Warman's many friends, when he died April 7, 1914, felt sure he had a clear block."

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