

La Trochita – The Patagonian Express

Presented by Bill Jones April 9, 2019 • 7:30 рм

This program includes both slides and video of Argentina's 249 mile long "Patagonian Express" narrow gauge in November 2004. The excursion was the first to attempt running on the northern section of the line after closure in 1992. As a result, a number of difficulties were encountered but it added up to classic narrow gauge steam railroading complete with triple headers, stalled trains, doubling the hill, night running and adventure in this beautiful but remote part of South America.

Please join us for an enjoyable, educational evening at Christ Church at 2950 South University Boulevard (University Boulevard at Bates Avenue) where there is plenty of off street parking at the rear of the complex. Please bring a guest. **All programs are intended to provide an educational experience on railroading. The general public is welcome to attend. There is no charge for this meeting.**

RMRRC 2019 Calendar	
May 14:	Monthly Meeting and Program, "Update On RR Progress In Como" by the South Park Rail Society board members.
June 11:	Monthly Meeting and Program: "Contemporary Steam Locomotive Restorations" presented by Jim Wrinn of <i>Trains</i> magazine.
July:	No Monthly Meeting.
August 10:	Denver & Intermountain Interurban Car 25 Open House at the Federal Center.
August 13:	Monthly Meeting and Program.
Due to circumstances beyond our control, programs and dates are subject to change without notice. Please contact Dave Schaaf with program ideas at ds5280@comcast.net or 303 988-3456.	

La Trochita – The Patagonian Express



The first triple header operated on the line as far as anyone there could recall. - Photo © 2004 Bill Jones.

Patagonia's La Trochita Narrow Gauge By Bill Jones

In the 1920s, "light railways" were seen as a key to developing the huge untapped resources of Argentina's Patagonia region. An extensive network of 750 mm (29.5 inch) gauge was planned. The longest constructed was the 402 km (249 mile) line connecting Esquel in the foothills of the Andes with the Buenos Aries to Bariloche mainline at Jacobacci station. Construction began in 1922 and fifty 27 ton 2-8-2 locomotives were ordered, 25 each from Baldwin and Henschel. The order size is indicative of the large network originally planned. But construction was difficult and the 1931-1932 floods delayed completion. El Maiten, 237 km (147 miles) was reached in 1941 where the main shops were constructed. The line continued 165 km (102 miles)

For Rail Report 703, the masthead features C&IM 703 in Taylorville, Illinois, in September 1952. – Photo from the Tom Klinger Collection.

Patagonia's La Trochita Narrow Gauge



Children are still fascinated watching the locomotive on the turntable, just like children a century ago. – Photo © 2004 Bill Jones.

south and west reaching Esquel in 1945. The line was nationalized in 1948 and became the Esquel Branch of the General Roca broad gauge line.

Traffic was generated by the extensive sheep and cattle grazing in the region and declined in the 1970s as roads improved. But in 1979 novelist Paul Theroux wrote The Old Patagonian Express which introduced the line to a worldwide audience and gave it a catchy new name. In reality locals simply called the line "la trochita" meaning "the little gauge." After operations closed in 1992 and word of its demise got out, the publicity generated wide provincial, national and international interest in preserving La Trochita as a heritage railroad. The provinces of Chubut and Rio Negro took over the line and today it operates three hour excursions from both Esquel and El Maiten.

In November 2004 a Trains Unlimited charter attempted to run over the entire 249 mile railroad for the first time since closure. Baldwins #1 and #6 left Jacobacci Tuesday, November 2nd, with 13 cars racing up the straight three rail track for about 20 miles until heading south to climb the first of several divides. But the long disused track was weedy and a cold rain mixed with snow soon caused the long train to stall as the locos ran out of sand. The train was cut to "double the hill" and the crew resorted to walking along the locos shoveling dirt onto the rails to get traction. The train took 12 hours to limp the 127 km (79 miles) into Cerro Mesa to repair mechanical problems while passengers took refuge in the coaches using oil lamps and wood stoves! Busses were finally brought in and we arrived at our Esquel hotel at 4 AM!

Later that day we bussed to El Maiten

Patagonia's La Trochita Narrow Gauge



The front view of Baldwin #1 – to me they look like baby-Mudhens. – Photo © 2004 Bill Jones.

where the main workshops are located and home to a boneyard of old locomotives and parts. Our train finally arrived at 3 PM and additional repairs were made to #6 while #1 took a short train for an evening excursion 73 km (45 miles) to Lepa. Passengers again bussed to Esquel. On November 4th, Henschel #105 and Baldwin #1 ran out of Esquel up the series of grade climbing loops to the village of Nahuel Pan where the tourist trains terminate. Snow topped peaks made for delightful spring time scenery but cold and very windy!

Friday, November 5th, had called for two trains, a photo "freight" with a following photographer's special. But the railroad refused to run trains so closely together for safety reasons, and instead coupled up all three locos (#105, #6 and #1) to run the first triple header known

Patagonia's La Trochita Narrow Gauge

to have operated on the railroad! #105 cut off at Nahuel Pan to return light to Esquel and the train continued to El Maiten shops as #6 had blown its piston packing. Passengers disembarked at Lepa for the return by bus.

Saturday the 6th saw relaxing excursions with #6 out of El Maiten with a real Patagonian barbecue on an estancia along the line. Beef and lamb was served on traditional wooden shingles. But the engine crew cooked ribs their own way by placing foil wrapped meat inside the steam dome cover at the previous water stop! Late afternoon sun made for some nice photography, and sheep on the tracks was the only "problem" that day.

The final day, November 7th, saw a nine car train assembled at El Maiten with #6 and #1 ready for the long 147 mile run back to Jacobacci. This time the train pulled the hills "smartly" with winding track and scrub hill scenery very reminiscent of the Rio Grande's Cerro Summit or Chile Line. The run up and down the hills was exhilarating, particularly when we finally realized the train's vacuum brakes were completely nonfunctional! A lubricator malfunction caused a delay to cool a hot cylinder, a bad pump caused a long water stop and a signal stop at the broad gauge resulted in a 15 hour trip to Jacobacci. Tired but happy, we bussed to the ski resort town of Bariloche to recover from our week long narrow gauge adventure!

Spring Thoughts From RMRRC President Dennis Leonard

In another view of the small mine at Galt, typical of the mountain areas, we appreciate the regular shippers on the narrow line that gauge provided the base of income for the railroad. We recognize the tenacity of the miners and business developers of our state and of our country and



The mine at Galt on Denny's model Lake City and Ouray Railroad. – Photo © Denny Leonard.

well known destinations. However, scores of other towns, with minriches. like eral Red Mountain, Animas Forks. Aspen, Telluride, Delores. Lake City, Ouray, Black Hawk, Brecken-Crested ridge, Butte, St. Elmo and many more had rail service which enabled

the railroads that tied them all together. Every small mining town in the state lobbied to obtain railroad service. Obviously Georgetown, Leadville, Central City, Silverton, Creede and Cripple Creek are

the economic growth in Colorado. In the early history of Colorado, all manufactured goods were imported from the east but slowly Denver became home to manufacturing concerns like CF&I,

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Gardner Denver (Denver Rock Drill), Card Corporation, Woeber Carriage Company, A.R. Wilfley and Son, Mine and Smelter, Hendrie and Bolthoff, and J.K. Mullen and Company (Hungarian High Altitude Flour). In the freedom of the boom and bust economy anchored by precious metals, retailers like David May, Golden Rule stores, J.C. Penney, the Denver Dry Goods Company and Daniels and Fisher (my grandfather worked there for 54 years) and many more were born and flourished. Please let me know others that should be noted.

Finance was important also with the First National Bank headed by David Halliday Moffat being of special note to our group. For someone like me, raised in Northern Colorado, the Great Western Sugar Company was a central economic enterprise and the fall campaign to harvest the beets and produce the sugar energized the northern front range. The railroads all met in Denver and shipped mineral wealth and other goods east and west.

Our meeting on March 12 saw chronicles of the challenge of rebuilding of Clear Creek canyon to reach Georgetown and beyond and featured reconstruction projects for both the Central City and Georgetown Loop Railroads. The Loop and the line over the store buildings in Black Hawk are examples that the railroad builders of the nineteenth century did not recognize the word "can't."

On May 10, 2019, we celebrate the joining of the railroads who started with the Transcontinental Railroad Act being signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on July 1st, 1862. The struggle of building through the Sierra Nevada mountains and across the plains from Omaha are well documented. Along the way, the organization techniques learned from the Civil War honed railroad building skills such that in April 1869, the Central Pacific crews laid 10 miles of track in one day. From 1850 to 1871, the railroads received more than 175 million acres of public land – an area more than one tenth of the whole United States and larger in area than Texas.

Railroad expansion provided new avenues of migration into the American interior. The railroads sold portions of their land to arriving settlers at a handsome profit . In the race to gain the ground and the 30 year bonds offered by the Federal Government for each mile built, the two railroads graded scores of miles past each other so finally Congress set the meeting point. They met at Promontory Point, Utah territory on May 10, 1869, when the railheads of the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroads joined. See up.com/goldenspike for a great pictorial and remember for steam up information watch up.com/heritage/steam/club/.

At this time in history, I again encourage members to submit their own or others biographies for publication on our webpage and for archives purposes. We have such a wealth of history and knowledge in our membership which needs to be shared with us and posterity.

Please feel free to send comments to me by email at denny@amerm.com or call me at (303) 809-9430.

The Tour Schedule For UP "Big Boy" No. 4014 And No. 844

The commemorative tour schedule for the Big Boy No. 4014 and Living Legend No. 844 are now online at https://www.up.com/heritage/steam/schedule/index.htm.

The iconic steam locomotives will join together in a public display for the first time May 9, 2019, in Ogden, Utah, during Union Pacific's celebratory event marking the transcontinental railroad's 150th anniversary. The festivities include recreating the iconic photo taken May 10, 1869, when the last spike was tapped into place at Promontory Summit, creating America's first transcontinental railroad. Union Pacific no longer has tracks near Promontory Summit. They were removed to support the scrap metal projects during World War II.

No. 844 will leave Cheyenne, Wyoming, on April 27. It will make several brief whistle-stops in communities along its route, arriving in Ogden on April 28. The Living Legend will be on display at Ogden Union Station through May 11.

No. 4014 will leave Cheyenne May 4

Experience the Union Pacific Rail Car

Folks who visit the Heritage Fleet during the upcoming Great Race to Ogden Tour will have a chance to "experience" railroading like they never have before.

The Experience the Union Pacific Rail Car is a brand new, multi-media walk-through exhibition providing a glimpse at the past while telling the story of modern-day railroading. Through sound, images and interactive technology, visitors will see how Union Pacific is building America in their communities and throughout the world.

After entering the converted baggage

following a 9:30 AM MT christening ceremony at the historic Cheyenne Depot and arrive in Ogden for the May 9 celebratory event at Ogden Union Station. The Big Boy also will make several whistle-stops in communities along its route.

A comprehensive schedule for the April – May tour, including additional locations, display times and No. 844 and No. 4014 GPS location tracking information is available at http://upsteam.com. Due to the dynamic nature of these operations, running times and scheduled stops are subject to change.

The 150th anniversary celebration will continue throughout the year with No. 4014 visiting many states across the Union Pacific system. A tentative schedule with tour locations and dates will be published in the near future.

car, patrons will first learn about the investment, hard work and know-how that went into building the transcontinental railroad. The evolution of the locomotive, beginning with the world famous UP No. 119 and leading to the modern-day diesel powerhouses is featured.

The Car will be included in the Heritage Fleet consist during upcoming tours, beginning with a special tour to Sacramento and Roseville, California; Sparks, Nevada; and Ogden, Utah, that kicks off April 19 at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Check up.com for the upcoming schedule hours.



RGS 74 with the Club excursion before leaving Ridgway, Colorado, on May 28, 1949. – Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.

The RGS – A Club Excursion 1949

70 years ago, May 28 & 29, the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club operated a two-day steam excursion over the Rio Grande Southern. Former C&S locomotive number 74

was chosen by Ed Haley to power this special. Ed had told the Receiver of the RGS about this locomotive sitting at the Morse Bros. yard in Denver. It had formerly been working on the C&S Leadville-Climax line until that was standard gauged in 1943.

The engine was not steaming well leaving Ridgway, however Club member Everett Rohrer, at one time a UP fireman, managed to get it steaming so they could continue the trip. The first night was spent in Telluride.

By Jim Ehernberger



On May 29th, under a clear sky, the train was pulled in reverse to the wye at Illium, where the locomotive was turned and continued on toward Trout Lake and Lizard Head.

The locomotive and business car were turned on the wye at Lizard Head, and once the train was back together it was backed a little over a mile to a location where Lizard Head peak could be photographed with the train. A famous photo by W. H. Jackson was made at this location during the 1890s.

The coach was borrowed from the Montezuma Lumber Company. The business car "EDNA" had been repainted by volunteer Club members.



The Club special posed with Lizard Head peak in the background near Lizard Head, Colorado on May 29, 1949.





The Club special on the return trip at Placerville, Colorado on May 29, 1949. – Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.

RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN RAILROAD' BLANK LOCAL TICKET STUB.-Not Good for Passage

Club Happenings



A large group of past and present Georgetown Loop Railroad employees attended the March meeting. – Photo © 2019 Dave Schaaf.



The Club's booth at the Rocky Mountain Toy Train Show. Thanks to Michael Tinetti, Debbie MacDonald, Nathan Holmes, and Keith Jensen for promoting and representing the Club. – Photo © 2019 Debbie MacDonald

Events of Railroad History: Colonel Redstone Revisited (by William J. Barker)

From the *Denver Post*, April 5, 1959 Research by Dan Edwards

March 15, the history of dynamic Col. Baldwin (Baldy) Ashcroft Redstone and his ill-conceived railroad, the Anthracite & Marble High Line Scenic Freight, was told here. Careful readers who moved their lips thoughtfully over the report will recall that in 1891 Redstone attempted to link the towns of Anthracite and Marble by constructing his rail line along the perilous canyon walls of the East River.

He completed the A&MHLSF road at a tremendous cost of dollars and lives, but his trains never set wheel to track. Reason: The Denver & Rio Grande RR, whose narrow-gauge road connected Pueblo and Anthracite, was unable to transport Redstone's big Japanese-built ultra-wide gauge 6-4-0 Samurai locomotive and other outsize rolling stock.

"Baldy," D&RG officials told the fabulous promoter, "It's impossible for us to carry your massive stuff through to Anthracite without busting your equipment all to smithereens." They showed him the obstacles along the route: abrupt curves, numerous snowsheds, menacing rocky protuberances along canyon walls.

Thus ended Redstone's dream. Our account of the misadventure excited several questions. One of the most persistent has been: What became of Redstone's four Samurai locomotives and all his assorted cars?

So far I've been unable to obtain an answer. First suspicion, of course, is that the exotic jobs wound up in the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. smelters at Pueblo.

Another story is that Redstone sold the locomotives to the Mexican revolutionary, Gen. Resbalosa Jabonera, who used them to replace the stone lions at the gateways of his vast estancia near Las Los.

The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, normally the authority on Colorado's

historic "high iron," has taken a kind of sniffy attitude towards Redstone and his A&M line. R.H. Kindig and E.J. Haley imply by letter that I am confused, and that it was the Elk Mountain RR and the Treasury Mountain RR which attempted to build the pike between Anthracite and Marble.

"Their roadbeds prove their actual existence," say these writers, underlining the word "actual." Thus with a cynical stroke of the pen they discredit the memory of the Colonel and all the men, money, etc., lost to his brave folly.

All right — we'll admit Colonel Redstone and his A&MHLSF railroad were imaginary. I invented the whole story, and here's why. Every time *Empire* magazine has a serious article on railroads, some member of the Rocky Mountain RR Club writes in and points out that we've mangled the facts.

Usually the writer-inner is concerned about a tiny detail, like how tall was a tunnel or the exact location of the old siding at Indian Trickle, Colo. (Was it 100 yards east-northeast of town, or 75 yards northeast?)

Problems of the A&M line challenged former locomotive designer Otto Kuhler, now a rancher-artist at Pine, Colo. He says, "From my collection of old railroad prints I submit one of an engine which would have been far better suited to the needs of the A&M. This engine had a novel wheel arrangement, a most economical 0-2-0 type."

Anyway, I made up Redstone, his Samurai engines and the whole bundle just to see what the RR enthusiasts would do to him.

Unfortunately they didn't take him seriously, but went right along with the hoax. Meanwhile I've become very fond of the Colonel, and all I can say is, it's a pity he didn't exist.

Disappointment and Negotiations in 1967 – Part 1

By Dave Goss

On January 3, 1967, Trip Chairman Ed Haley received a letter from G. B. (Gus) Aydelott, President of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW) explaining why the railroad was not going to let the Club operate its annual Narrow Gauge Excursion that year. For the previous fifteen years the Club had offered a multi-day excursion from Alamosa to Durango (over Cumbres Pass) and then to Silverton, normally on the Memorial Day weekend.

In his reply, Mr. Aydelott stated:

You may rest assured that those of us who gained our railroad experience with the use of steam power had to overcome nostalgic pangs in arriving at a decision to discontinue the operation of passenger trains on narrow gauge lines other than the Silverton Branch.

We are very sympathetic with the members of your club and their friends. However, we would be remiss in our obligation to these people would we subject them to the hazards of a possible derailment in the rough terrain traversed by this narrow-gauge line.

During recent years freight traffic on our narrow gauge has registered a constant decline. Therefore, we could not continue the same standard of maintenance that a highdensity line would justify. We have now reached the point where our level of maintenance will accommodate the few necessary freight trains, but which does not assure us the safety we believe is desirable the operation of passenger service. We are cognizant of the popularity of this annual trip and realize we have no comparable substitute. Nevertheless, we do hope something may be worked out with our Passenger Department in conjunction with the Silverton operation that will help fill in the gap...

Ed's immediate response was to send a letter to the Durango Chamber of Commerce reporting to them the railroad's decision and encouraging the Chamber and local businesses "... to put pressure on the D&RGW to operate this excursion for our group ..." He noted that the usual complement of 400 passengers had a significant impact on the city's business. As a result, the Chamber organized a letter writing campaign to Mr. Aydelott about their concern of the planned suspension of all special excursions over Cumbres Pass from Alamosa to Durango. The Chamber's letter states:

In the best interest of the Rio Grande Railroad, the business concerns of Durango, the passengers and persons connected with the Excursion Clubs, we strongly recommend that the Rio Grande Railroad Officials re-consider their action and allow the Railroad Clubs to have at least one more run this year.

The "Clubs" mentioned in the letter include not only the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club but also the Illini Railroad Club, the Color Caravan and the Kiwanis Special Train.

Ironically, at the same time as these

Disappointment and Negotiations in 1967 – Part 1

were being exchanged, the letters Albuquerque Journal, on January 18, published a lengthy article headlining "Passenger Train to Run Again Between Chama, Alamosa, Colo." It stated that a steam driven passenger train will be back on the narrow-gauge line between Chama and Alamosa this summer, offering daily round-trip service over the 92-mile scenic route. It explained that a certificate of public convenience and necessity had been filed by the Rio Grande & San Juan (RG&SJ) Railway by Thomas Hinman of Denver, company president. The RG&SJ was recreating the "San Juan Limited" complete with parlor cars, coaches, open observation and modified baggage cars reminiscent of the area's early cattle and mining days – in the grand Victorian manner.

By the middle of January, the stage had been set for many more months of letters, discussions, political shenanigans, negotiations, proposals, rejections and flaring tempers. The next part of the story will continue in a future issue of the *Rail Report*.



In 1953, the Koppers Company of Pittsburgh donated a Porter Engine to the Salida Museum. Built in 1926, according to records, only 130 of the 24-inch gauge tank engines were made by Porter, compared to a larger number of 36-inch models, a fact, which if true, makes the Salida Museum's engine quite rare. The Salida History Museum received 2018 Foundation grant funds to help them sandblast and paint their small Porter 0-4-0. – Photo courtesy The Salida History Museum.

2019 Mini Grant Applications Due This Month

Do you have a railroad history-related project that could use a small grant for this summer? The Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation is looking for up to five individuals or organizations who have a summer project that could use up to \$1000.

Full details and the application

form can be found on our website: www.rockymtnrrclub.org/index.htm

Applications must be received by USPS or email no later than April 30, 2019. The board will review applications at the May board meeting, and the 2019 recipients will be announced in the June 2019 *Rail Report.*

Swap And Shop

Rocky Haimowitz has a collection of *Trains* and *Railroad* magazines from the 1940s to the present. These magazines are available for the cost of handling and shipping or you can pick them up in Aurora, Colorado, at no cost. If interested, call Rocky at 303-750-6574.

In Remembrance Jim Lingenfelter

Jim Lingenfelter passed away on December 7, 2018. Here was a 35 year member of the club, joining in 1984, and held seniority number 131 last year.

In Remembrance Gearld W Deucher

Gearld W Deucher passed away on January 7, 2019. Here was a 42 year member of the club, joining in 1977, and held seniority number 81 last year.

Colorado Railroad Museum 2019 Special Events

Each Friday, join us for an hour of exploring a different aspect of Colorado's railroad history. Each tour covers a specific theme and focus. Friday Tour Tickets are \$3 each plus General Admission (\$10 adults, \$5 kids 2-15, \$8 seniors). Tickets are available for purchase at the door, no reservations required.

Friday Tour Dates And Topics:

May 31, June 28, August 30, September 27, October 25, and November 29 – Cabooses. May 10, July 12, September 13, and November 8 – Kitchens. June 14, July 26, August 23, October 11, and November 22 – Locomotives.

April 12, May 24, August 9, and December 13 – Railroad Post Office Cars.

New Exhibits Now Open

Images From the Tracks: Photographs of William Henry Jackson Got Style? Railroads & Interior Design – Ski Train: A Colorado Tradition

For information call 303-279-4591 or visit http://www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org

Colorado Railroad Museum Admission

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Members in good standing, and upon presentation of a current membership card, are entitled to free admission. Members are invited to join the Colorado Railroad Museum (a Museum membership provides certain merchandise discounts), and members may participate in restoration or other maintenance programs as volunteers.

Intermountain Chapter, NRHS Events

For information call 303-883-2435 or see http://www.cozx.com/nrhs.

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Club Information

Club and Foundation Officers

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club PO Box 2391 Denver, CO 80201-2391 Web: http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub President Vice President Secretary Treasurer Dennis Leonard Dave Schaaf Andy Dell Keith Jensen

Club and Foundation Directors

Nathan Holmes, Ron Keiser, Pat Mauro, Debbie MacDonald, Steve Subber, Michael Tinetti.

Membership Information

Membership in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club may be obtained by sending the annual dues to the Club address listed above.

Regular membership dues are \$35.00. Overseas regular membership dues are \$45.00.

Contributing membership is \$50.00. Sustaining membership is \$70.00.

Patron membership is \$100.00. Golden membership is \$500.00.

An associate membership for spouses and children is \$25.00 additional.

Members joining after April may send a payment of \$3.00 for each month remaining in the year. New members who join in-person at a meeting will be given a free copy of the Club history book

Members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club are also members in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

Board Meetings

Members are always welcome to attend any board of directors meeting. Please contact any Club officer for the date, time and location.

Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter contributions and items for publication should be sent to:

E-mail: selectimag@aol.com

Bruce Nall, Editor Rocky Mountain Rail Report PO Box 620579 Littleton, CO 80162-0579

Items for the May 2019 Rail Report should be sent by April 19th.



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