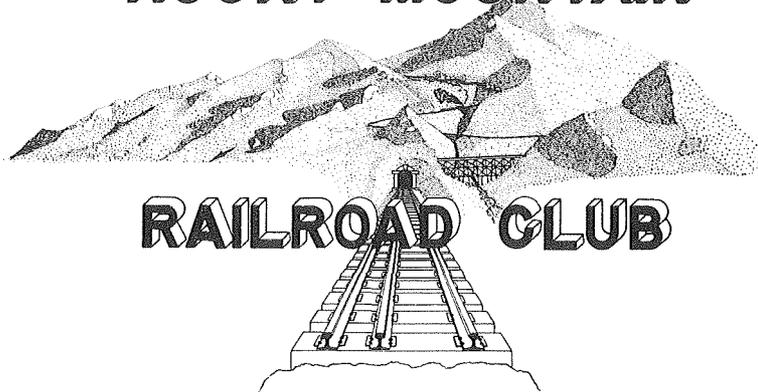


ROCKY MOUNTAIN

August, 1965

Newsletter No. 72



P. O. Box 2391
Denver, Colorado 80201

The August meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club is on the timetable for the usual second Wednesday of the month -- August 11 -- at 8:00 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the Western Federal Savings Association skyscraper -- 718 - 17th Street - in downtown Denver. Presenting the program for the evening will be Club member Carl E. Steele, whose special interest is oldtime movies. Many will remember Mr. Steele's 8mm movie program presented at last December's meeting; this month he will show for our entertainment a 1926 film starring Jean Arthur and entitled, "Block Signals." Two additional short features -- "Trestles of Ophir,"

made on the legendary Rio Grande Southern, and "Snow Fighting on the S.P.," relating the blockade of that road's streamliner, City of San Francisco, on Donner Summit in the Sierras some years back, will round out the program.

All Club members and their friends and guests are invited to attend this meeting.

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The movies presented by Club member Neal Miller at the July meeting were greatly enjoyed. Neal showed us many scenes of Union Pacific's noted 4-8-4 No. 8444, serving on passenger excursions over Sherman Hill west of Cheyenne in June, 1961; November, 1962; and September, 1964. He then treated our audience to a close examination of the excursion sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club to East Portal, Colorado, on May 2 this year. This latter film featured ex-Great Western 2-8-0 No. 51, owned by Club member John Birmingham of Boulder, handling full tonnage of three large coaches over the 2% grades of the first 50 miles of Rio Grande's Moffat Tunnel Route out of Denver.

To close the program in July, a short movie, made available by the U.S. Geological Survey through the courtesy of Club member Francis Rizzari, shocked us with the effects and results of volcanic eruption in Hawaii in the late 1950's. The spectacular film though void of railroad footage, left our audience gasping - and grateful that such scenes as those shown by Neal Miller can still be made in Colorado and surrounding areas without the terrifying hazards of hot flowing lava and blinding volcanic ash!

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Additional items of interest at the July meeting concerned the old Argentine Central, and again, Union Pacific engine 8444.

August 12th, 1965, the day following our next Club meeting, will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the chartering of the short-lived, narrow gauge Argentine Central Railway, which extended by switchback up Leavenworth Mountain from the end of C&S track at Silver Plume, Colo., to near the summit of Mt. McClellan. Although reorganized as the Argentine and Gray's Peak in 1912, the little 15.9-mile, Shay-powered line never met its expenses, and ultimately went under in 1918. Dismantling and disposition of equipment was handled by Morse Brothers of Denver.

As to Union Pacific 8444, Trip Committee Chairman Ed Haley announced that plans for another of the enjoyable excursions sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club from Denver to Rawlins, Wyoming and return, using this famous steam speed demon, have been making good progress. Thus, it is presently anticipated that a special train will be operated by the Club on Sunday, October 19th, and will feature not only steam at speed over the Union Pacific's main line, but also the renowned "Las Vegas Diner," where all food is included in the cost of your ticket (the diner is open from departure time until the train returns to Denver). Watch for the special announcement confirming date and time for this fourth excursion (and third steam-powered operation) sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club in 1965.

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In the December, 1964, Newsletter, we mentioned a brief note received at the time from Club member Dr. Richard C. Overton, the eminent professor of American history and official his-

torian of the Burlington, regarding the progress resulting from his 14 years of toil on a single-volume history of that road. We are pleased to announce that this monumental work, entitled "Burlington Route," now is in the book stores. The volume, published by Alfred Knopf, is priced at \$10.00. It is our hope that a review of this fine, authentic work can be included in a future newsletter.

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Another new book, recently co-published by Club member Jim Ehernberger, also is now available. "Smoke Over the Divide," following the general style of the earlier "Smoke Across the Prairie," has been prepared by Mr. Ehernberger and Francis Gschwind. An attractive cover drawing by Club member Howard Fogg sets the tone of the book by showing a U.P. 4000-series "Big-Boy" in typical Wyoming scenery. Beginning with a brief description of the Wyoming Division main line and branches of the road, the book then illustrates this important section of the Union Pacific with views of steam-hauled trains at important or scenic locations between Denver, Cheyenne and Ogden. Views of the various classes of Coal- and oil-burning engines used on the Wyoming Division during the last 25 or so years of steam operation also are included.

This well-produced, 64-page, hardbound publication may be obtained at \$4.95 per copy from E & G Publications, P.O. Box 101, Callaway, Nebraska 68825.

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Interest is beginning to stir in connection with the forthcoming centennial, a few years hence, of the joining of the rails at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. The historic location, presently encompassed in a seven-acre Golden Spike National Historic Site west of Ogden, Utah, soon is to receive additional attention with expansion into a 2,176-acre memorial to the nation's first transcontinental railroad. Authorization for this action was incorporated in a bill passed by the House of Representatives on July 12, after having been previously cleared by the Senate on June 18. The bill will expand the present site at a cost exceeding \$1-million, according to the Interior Department.

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Much interest has been shown by our members in last month's report of damage caused by the June 16 flood of Plum Creek and the South Platte River through Denver and environs. Considerable progress has been made in reconstruction, with the Rio Grande's line through Castle Rock, used as the northbound track from Palmer Lake, having been returned to service on July 9 -- 23 days after the damage first occurred. Rock Island trains between Denver and Colorado Springs continue to operate over this trackage, since the Union Pacific's line east from Denver to Limon still is in the course of rebuilding bridges. Over Bijou Creek, steel piling is being driven 100 feet beneath the creek bed as foundation for the new bridge, with completion not expected until about August 15. (Incidentally, last month's newsletter should have read 1928 as the cancellation date of the joint D&RGW-CRI&P trackage agreement.)

Continuing heavy downpours every night have occurred in the area since the first of July, causing additional problems. On Saturday evening, July 24, four inches of rain again hit the headwaters of Plum Creek, and the resulting torrent dislodged three bents of the temporary trestle on the Santa Fe line just south of Sedalia, mentioned in last month's newsletter. Repairs were completed quickly, however, and the line reopened to traffic Sunday evening, the 25th.

Through the kind cooperation of Verne Immroth, Editor of Rio Grande's Green Light, the Club has purchased and is sending under separate cover to each member a copy of the July, 1965, issue of the paper. The center spread of this issue contains a vivid photo display of the flood and its aftermath, and it is hoped this information will be of interest to our members.

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Flood news also continues to occupy top attention elsewhere in the country. Of particular interest, for example, was a recent column in one of the Twin City newspapers, regarding railroad operations between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago:

"One passenger train a day leaves for Chicago from the Great Northern station in Minneapolis at 8:00 a.m. It is the most ecumenical train in history. One day it consisted of the Northern Pacific North Coast Limited, hooked to the Great Northern Empire Builder, operated by Burlington Zephyr crews over Chicago & North Western tracks to Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, and the rest of the way via the Milwaukee road. A few blocks away at the Minneapolis Milwaukee

station, one Hiawatha and the Pioneer Limited also are operating on the same route. And only a few have caught the extreme irony of the fact that never in history have so many passenger trains run on the Chicago & North Western -- which doesn't operate any passenger trains of its own!

"Meanwhile, the Rock Island has been bussing its passengers from Minneapolis to Rosemount, which tiny depot suddenly has become the northern terminus of the Rock Island line -- pretty heady stuff for a village where a passenger train hasn't stopped in this generation. Through it all the rail riders have been considerate, understanding, thankful and voluble in their praise of the men who have learned how to run railroads through disaster.

"We had all kinds of calls and visits from travelers who either said they'd postpone their trips until things got back in shape ... or said they didn't mind a little adventure," said Dave Lewis of the Great Northern. "I had a lot of school tours going to Chicago," said Marty Schember of the Burlington. "I called them all and said I'd be delighted to reschedule them in June, but they said, no, they'd just as soon go now as planned ... And they did. And I have 400 letters of thanks for a wonderful trip on my desk now. Those kids and their teachers were wonderful."

"The same might be said for the crews of the trains who, although detouring far and wide, have managed to bring their trains from St. Paul to Chicago in eight hours or less rather consistently -- which is only about an hour longer than regularly scheduled runs in drier times on their own tracks. One can even sympathize with the Burlington Zephyr, which was feted on its 20th year of service April 15th in a gala at Chicago. It was a great party, with only one thing missing..... The Guest of Honor couldn't get there!"

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On the West Coast, good news was celebrated with a special Golden Spike ceremony on June 16th, when the Northwestern Pacific reopened 100 miles -- one-third of its total mileage -- after expenditure of \$10-million and 177 days of work by 800 men and 500 pieces of equipment to repair flood damage caused to the line last December in the Eel River Canon in northern California. The historic golden spike used in the ceremonies had rested for more than 50 years in the archives of the Southern Pacific. Originally presented to the N.W.P. by the citizens of Humboldt, the spike was the last one driven on the N.W.P. to connect Humboldt County and the North Coast "Redwood Empire" with the San Francisco Bay area when the railroad was first completed October 23, 1914.

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If you've ever wondered what became of the old synthetic replica of the narrow gauge engine (Rio Grande Southern #20, now the property of the Club and displayed at the Colorado Railroad Museum near Golden) used in the Silverton filming of "Ticket to Tomahawk," it's being used for still shots on the television series "Petticoat Junction." Built 14 years ago for the Silverton shooting at a cost of \$80,000, the replica is now cast as the Hooterville Cannonball on the TV series, utilized for all motionless shots of the train while a live engine hundreds of miles away is used for the moving shots.

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Since mailing the last issue of the Newsletter, all Club members also have been sent a copy of the 1965 Membership Roster of our organization. Now containing 34 pages of members' names, it is the largest ever published by the Club, and lists 949 members. If you have not yet received your copy of this new roster, please notify the Secretary.

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"NOVA SCOTIA RAILROAD PIGGYBACKED IN 1855

"Kentville, Nova Scotia--The idea that piggybacking is a modern mode of transportation has been punctured.

"George Powell, manager of the Dominion Atlantic Railway, subsidiary of Canadian National, points out that the old Nova Scotia Railway engaged in piggyback operation 110 years ago. It carried teams and wagons on flatcars between Halifax and Four-Mile House in 1855, and between Halifax and Windsor three years later.

"A flatcar was needed for two wagons, a boxcar for four horses, and a coach for the drivers. Considerable delay was encountered at every road crossing because of the loading or unloading of the wagons.

"The service was dropped when it was found that 2 cents a mile for the horse, 12 cents a hundred-weight for the wagon, and a free ride for the drivers, was not very profitable."

-Transport Topics - 6/65

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It is never good for a wise man to argue with a fool. Bystanders can't always tell one from the other.

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