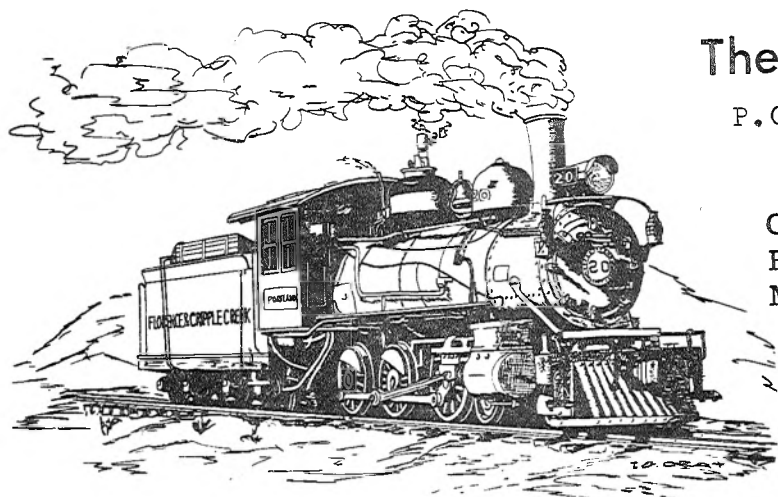


# Rocky Mountain Rail Report



## The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

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CURRENT NEWS AND HISTORICAL NOTES OF  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROADING PUBLISHED  
MONTHLY FOR ITS MEMBERS BY THE ROCKY  
MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

Editor ..... Ted S. McKee

MEETING NOTICE: Date ..... Wednesday, February 8, 1967  
Time ..... 8:00 p.m.  
Place ..... Western Federal Savings Bldg. (lower level meeting  
room), 17th and California Sts., Denver

PROGRAM NOTES: Bruce Black of Boulder will take us on an exciting journey north of the border as he presents slides of Canadian steam in action in Toronto, Winnipeg and through British Columbia. As an added attraction Bruce will present scenes of U.S. narrow gauge activity and some unusual engines (Shays, etc.)

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DISASTER STRIKES: ALL NARROW GAUGE EXCURSIONS The disaster we have all been dreading, and at the same time pretending would never occur, CANCELLED; NO POSSIBILITY FOR CLUB TRIP IN '67 has at last struck and the Club has been officially notified by the Denver & Rio Grande Western that there will be no more fan excursions over the Alamosa-Durango narrow gauge line. We have, in effect, had our last run without realizing it.

Rumors began to sift down to the Club several months ago that this turn of events was a distinct possibility. Our Board of Directors, acting to forestall such a move, authorized the 1967 narrow gauge excursion earlier than usual and instructed Trip Committee chairman Ed Haley to contact the Rio Grande immediately with our request for this coming Memorial Day weekend. A voluminous exchange of correspondence followed between Ed and Rio Grande president G. B. Aydelott. The final and absolute "no" was received just a few days ago.

Mr. Aydelott, of course, sympathizes with the Club and fully understands our reasons for wanting a 1967 excursion, even if it be the last. The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club has operated farewell excursions over just about every piece of railroad to be abandoned in Colorado in the past 25 years, and we would certainly like to have the opportunity to say good-bye to the Alamosa-Durango line. But it is not to be. Here are excerpts from some of the letters to the Club from Mr. Aydelott:

"We are very sympathetic with the members of your Club and their friends. However, we would be remiss in our obligation to these people should 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 rails has registered a constant decline. Therefore, we could not continue the same standard of maintenance that a high density 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 of the safety we believe is desirable for the operation of passenger service,"

And these additional reasons from a more recent letter:

"... the railroad would be bordering on risk if it provided completely adequate supervisory personnel for the excursion. The extraordinary demands of mainline transportation mean that we are running more trains and employing more operating supervisory personnel than at any time since World War II. To divert such personnel from the mainline to non-critical duties on the narrow gauge, before or after the regular season on the Silverton Branch, would be to forsake a paramount responsibility."

Finally, in answer to a question regarding similar risks to personnel operating freight trains on the line:

"... the freights are manned by experienced, seasoned railroaders who can handle themselves and the trains with utmost capability. But the situation is entirely different when these men are responsible for passenger cars filled with men, women and children. Even a minor mishap could spell untold problems and liability."