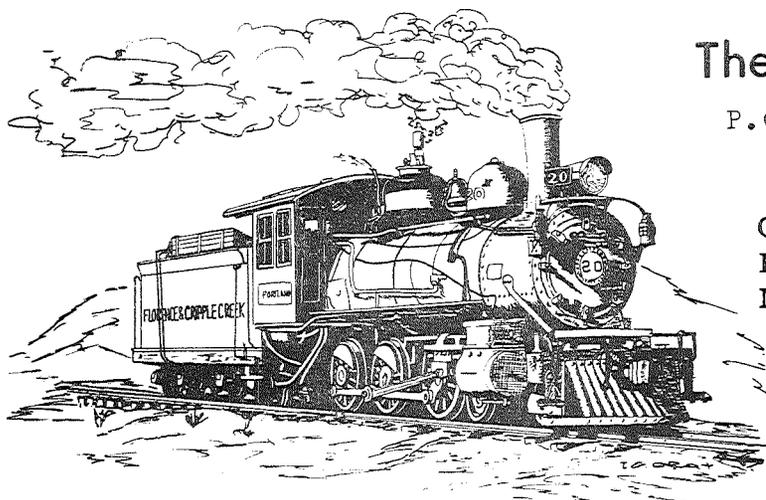


Rocky Mountain Rail Report



The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P.O. Box 2391 Denver, Colorado 80201

SEPTEMBER 1968 No. 109
CURRENT NEWS AND HISTORICAL NOTES OF
ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROADING PUBLISHED
MONTHLY FOR ITS MEMBERS BY THE ROCKY
MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

Temporary Editor - Ed Schneider

MEETING NOTICE: Date Wednesday, September 11, 1968
Time 8:00 p.m.
Place Western Federal Savings Bldg., (lower level
meeting room), 17th & California Sts.,
Denver

PROGRAM NOTES: The program this month will be presented by Al Voight. Al's program is a sound movie of the narrow gauge, and is an excellent production - another program that you'll be sure to want to attend.

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NEWS OF THE From the Silverton paper August 30, 1968, we noted the figures
NARROW GAUGE of "The Silverton" narrow gauge to date. At this time the
70,000-passenger mark for this year had been passed. The con-
ductor's count on the Silverton branch through August 29th was 70,862, com-
pared with 67,791 who had arrived in Silverton by rail through the same date
last summer - an increase of 3,071.

In addition much of the prior week saw freight activity on the Cumbres Pass line between Durango and Alamosa. It started when Engine 498 hauled 14 cars of lumber from Durango to Gato and returned. The following day, 498 took 40 cars from Durango, added the 14 at Gato and pulled all to Chama, returning to Durango the next day. A corresponding freight, hauled by Engine 483, came out of Alamosa to take the traffic eastward. No. 483 will have a motion picture role later this fall.

Both passenger trains Durango-Silverton have been sold out every day since, so the figures will be increased considerably. According to local (Durango) employees of the D&RGW, a cleanup or last train was run to Farmington and back on Saturday August 31st. One of the 480's brought in a string of empty flats and a few box cars.

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"A DISAPPOINTING RULING" A newspaper article dated August 23, 1968 and by-lined by Allen Nossaman, "A DISAPPOINTING RULING. The report of Interstate Commerce Commission examiner Robert N. Burchmore recommending the abandonment of the narrow gauge railroads connecting Alamosa, Durango and Farmington was a grave disappointment. Officially served to interested parties last Friday, the recommendation is technically an order of the hearing examiner, and unless serious exceptions are filed within 30 days

of that date and the commission sees fit to alter the order, Burchmore's decision will become the decision of the ICC upon formal notice to that effect.

'Perhaps the most interesting single thing about Burchmore's report and his findings is that they confirm almost precisely the contention of opponents of the abandonment down through the years: that the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad has consciously and purposely permitted and allowed the narrow gauge lines in question to deteriorate to the point of uselessness. The railroad, the report says, had every legal right to do so by slowly strengthening the pattern of substitute motorway service which eventually strangled the rail services so instrumental in building this region.

'Thus the Denver and Rio Grande has once again succeeded in killing another of its own lines, doing it within legal bounds and making it stick.

'We commend Burchmore's sole condition-that the railroad take adequate steps to insure future maintenance of the Silverton branch. But we can hardly help noting that it was subjective consideration which gave new life to the Silverton branch, and it was a total lack of such subjective consideration which has now cleared the way for total demolition of the other sections.

'In the face of the Rio Grande's thoroughly prepared case and bookkeeping wizardry, it can hardly be argued that the regions affected by the decision put up a valiant fight. Deeply interested individuals stood out like sore thumbs against a backdrop of the apathy and disinterest which has often characterized this area's concern both for its history and its future.

'Only the most eloquent of arguments in the month ahead will alter the final ICC ruling. As difficult as it was to muster public concern over the railroad during the past ten years, such arguments - even if they are made - will somehow have a hollow sound. Like the boiler of a scrapped steam locomotive."

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SWAP 'N SHOP Personal ads are accepted from members for items to be listed for sale or trade or wanted. We cannot enter into correspondence concerning an item, nor will we appraise items to be offered for sale. Send your listing to the Editor by the 20th of the month preceding publication.

Wanted - Trains magazines. Volumes 11 through 15. Robert A. LeMassena, 1795 S. Sheridan Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80228

Wanted - Signal or lantern lenses, 5-3/8 in. diameter, 4 white, 4 green. Also 2 D&RGW locomotive classification lamps. Harry Root, 845 So. Yates St., Denver, Colo. 80219

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THOT FOR TODAY Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns - I am thankful that thorns have roses. - Alphonse Kerr

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Ed Schneider, President
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