

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

P. O. BOX 2391

DENVER 1, COLORADO

May 1962

Newsletter No. 33

The May meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, May 9th, at the Farmers Union Auditorium, East 16th Avenue and Sherman Street, Denver, at 8:00 p.m. The program will be presented in two parts: Kenneth Crist will give an illustrated lecture about railroads in eastern Canada, and Jackson Thode will show slides and 8mm movies of the snow-fighting techniques employed by the D&RGW on Cumbres Pass in by-gone winters. Arrangements also are being made to present this latter material at Durango the evening of May 27th for interested passengers on the Club's Memorial Day narrow-gauge excursion.

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Our Annual Dinner was an eminently successful one, as evidenced by the large number who participated. Almost 300 members and friends, the largest crowd ever to help celebrate the founding of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, enjoyed the trip to Boulder behind C&S 2-8-0 #638, the filet mignon dinner, and the silent movie, "Roaring Rails".

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Tickets for the narrow-gauge excursion are selling rapidly, as usual. At the end of April over 250 tickets had been sold. If you are planning to go on this trip you'd better be notifying Treasurer Ane Clint soon. The round trip rail fare is \$21.00, not including meals or lodging.

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In 1899 the Colorado & Southern Railway took possession of the Union Pacific, Denver & Gulf Railway and the Denver, Leadville & Gunnison Railway. As the C&S now had 148 locomotives, it is hard to believe they still had no shops of their own. To quote from the Annual Report to the Stockholders of the Colorado & Southern Railway Co. for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1900:

"The Company has had no general shops of its own, but thought it wise to continue the arrangement previously made by the Receiver for use of the Denver shops of the Union Pacific Railroad Company. Under the terms of the lease either company could cancel the same by giving nine month's notice. On December 26th, 1899, the Union Pacific Company having arranged a lease to The Pullman Company of the plant referred to, served notice upon this Company to vacate not later than January 1st, 1901. The erection of complete new general shops by this Company was thus made imperative, and construction was commenced in the spring of 1900. It is expected that the new plant will be ready for occupation by November 15th, 1900, and as it will be admirably located upon ground previously owned by the Company adjacent to the Denver freight yards, and not far from the freight station, Union Depot, and transfers to connecting lines, considerable economies in repairs and other operations are confidently expected. The amount appropriated by the Board of Directors for this work is \$350,000.00, and while the necessity for this construction came at an inopportune time, so far as prices of material and machinery were concerned, yet it is a matter for congratulation that The Pullman Company is to inaugurate extensive work in Denver, and the return on this Company's new investment should prove very satisfactory on account of the saving in rental, as well as on account of the economy of modern machinery and favorably located buildings and tracks." The construction mentioned above included provisions for a 40-stall roundhouse. And it is this very roundhouse which today is all but disappearing before our very eyes. Crews have been chopping away at it bit by bit these past few years until today there are only 5 stalls remaining. Not a very impressive monument to what was once a very extensive steam empire."

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Colorado & Southern RR 2-8-0 #641 was the star of a recent television show which portrayed the trans-shipment of goods from Leadville to the Climax Molybdenum Mine. C&S Road Foreman of Equipment (and staunch Club member) Mickey Hansen piloted the engine for the event. Plenty of work in the future for #641 was assured by the Climax Mines' recent announcement of a \$20 Million development program. Unfortunately, how long the daily run of #641 will continue depends more on #641 herself--the old girl is just getting ;lumb wore-out. Fact is, the citizens of Leadville are already discussing where to set her this summer after she is retired-whether in a park or by the courthouse - sort of like putting up a tombstone before the patient is dead.

The Leadville-Climax run in the wintertime is anything but a "milk-run". The total snowfall of over 300" there this winter has left so much ice that derailments are not an infrequent occurrence. Just a few weeks ago #641 herself was on the ground for a couple of days. Routine switching by itself is a constant challenge at such altitude, due to the ice, snow, and frequent blizzards. Fighting derailments, in addition, really makes it tough.

The D&RGW is also active in the Leadville region. They have purchased the immense slag pile of the defunct AS&R smelter and are now using it as a source for ballast. The AS&R smelter, by the way, was the last big smelter operating in Colorado -- remnant of a once mighty mining industry.

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In view of recent publicity reporting sales of first edition "Denver, South Park and Pacific", published by the Club in 1949, we believe it should be known that Denver area dealers in rare books are anxious to acquire copies. Anyone with a copy available can negotiate on standing offers in the neighborhood of \$100 and up per copy, depending, of course, on condition - and bona fide inquiries are invited.

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Ever thought of buying an old caboose for your back yard? You may profit from the experience of William Phillips of Miami, Florida, who purchased a maroon caboose recently from the Atlantic Coast Line for \$750. After obtaining verbal consent from the zoning board, and from nearby neighbors, he moved it (for \$500) onto a \$1,000 hurricane-proof foundation. Within weeks, groups of neighbors began signing petitions protesting its presence. The County zoning board then ruled that Phillips could keep the caboose, provided he paint it green. However, a new coat of maroon paint was added, whereupon the zoning board said the caboose would have to go. Phillips has appealed the decision.

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The April, 1962 issue of "Model Railroader" magazine contains an interesting article about D&RGW narrow-gauge rolling stock, prepared with data provided by member John Maxwell. The same issue features an article by member Joe Myers explaining the construction of his models of the "Texas" and the "General", the two engines involved in the "Great Locomotive Chase" which occurred during the Civil War.

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Piggyback loadings in the United States totaled almost 9,000 cars in the last week of 1961. Total loadings were almost 600,000 for 1961, up 7% from 1960 and up 42% from 1959.

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The MoPac reports that of the more than \$9 million in property taxes paid by them in 1961 to the counties in the 11 states through which they operate, over half - \$5-1/3 million to be exact - went to the support of the public schools. This is another reason why railroads, which like any business must include this cost in the selling price of their commodity, find it difficult to compete with trucks, barges and airplanes, whose taxes on property are almost non-existent.

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Railroads in the U.S., 1948 through 1959, spent over \$91 million on railroad-highway grade separations and an equal amount on installation of grade crossing protective devices. Cost of maintenance of protective devices for the 12-year period is estimated at over \$300 million.

In an attempt to check the increasing automobile-train accident rate at grade crossings, the State of Michigan has placed the familiar octagonal stop sign at many urban and rural crossings. Findings of the Michigan Railroads Association has shown the new use of the stop sign to be highly effective. After compiling accident reports filed during the first 6 months of 1961 by railroads in the state, the Association reported that, in urban areas where 80% of the accidents occurred, only 5% were at stop sign crossings. Furthermore, stop signs appeared to be four times more effective than flasher lights or flagmen.

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Last November we mentioned that the KATY was planning to convert their diesel switch engine No. 1 from a diesel fuel burning unit to a propane fuel burning unit. Member Avery Von Blon now reports that the KATY has finally gotten it to run. The KATY plans to use it in regular operations after a few bugs have been worked out.

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Pen Pal wanted: Mr. Don Attwood, "Hillrise," Woolhampton, Reading, Berks. England. Mr. Attwood is a narrow-gauge fan in England, and is a member of the Talylyn Railway Preservation Society and the Narrow Gauge Railway Society. He would like to exchange information on narrow-gauge operations with some Colorado narrow-gauge fan.

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A father said to his daughter, "Your young man approached me and asked for your hand and I consented." "But father," cried the daughter, "I don't wish to leave mother." "I quite understand, child," the father said. "But don't let me stand in the way of your happiness. Take your mother with you."

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J. C. Thode, President
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