



REPORT

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OCTOBER, 1969

CENTENNIAL ISSUE

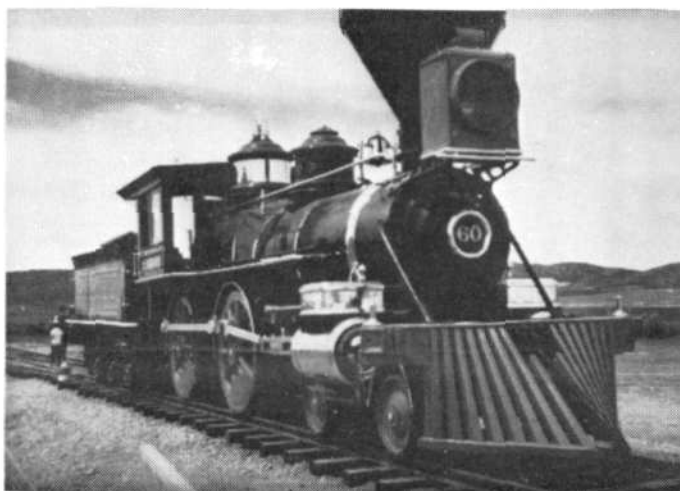
CENTENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

Election of PSRMA officers for 1970 and an outstanding program highlighting the 100th Anniversary of the Promontory Point completion of the transcontinental railroad will be the main features of the October General Meeting.

The show will get under way at 7:30 P.M. in the Safety Room on the second floor of the San Diego Santa Fe Depot. Please try to be on time, as the Depot is locked up at that hour and we must provide a doorman to let you in. Sunday, October 19th is the day, and the Depot is at Kettner and Broadway in downtown San Diego.

The evening's entertainment following the election will feature the official Union Pacific film of the Golden Spike ceremonies, *TRAILS OF THE IRON HORSE*. Our guest of the evening will be Bob Nelson of the U. P. Traffic Department.

Regular members who have not already mailed in their ballots must bring them to the meeting in order to vote.



Lake Tribune estimated 12,000; the Ogden Standard-Examiner 20,000; and the National Park Service on the following day announced an estimate of 28,400. Take your pick. They came from everywhere, and used every conceivable means of transportation, including helicopter. However, those coming by rail had to pick another means of transportation from Ogden, since the rail line was torn up many, many years ago. Only official cars were allowed at the dedication site because of limited parking space. All others parked on the airstrip owned by the Thiokol Company a few miles away, and were transported by local school buses. Hundreds were turned away.

The reenactment ceremony was presided over by Thomas M. Goodfellow, Chairman of the Golden

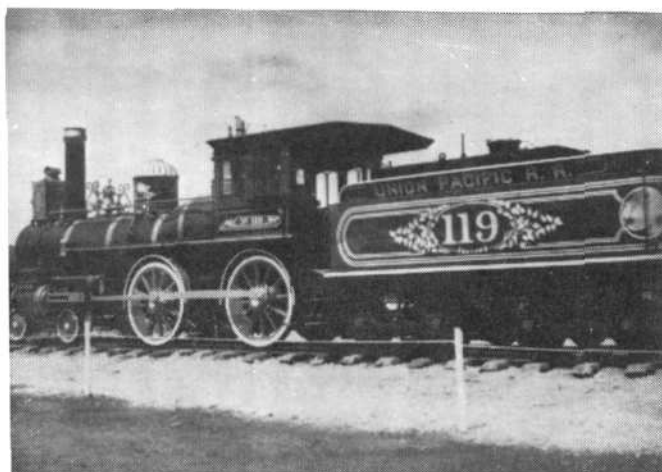
100 Years

by Dave Hobson

At exactly 1:47 p. m. on May 10, 1969, one-hundred years after the original event, another Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Summit to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad. (The original driving was at 12:47, but because of present-day daylight savings time, 1:47 was used for the reenactment.)

From the pictures I had seen, I had always assumed that Promontory was out in the middle of the desert. However, this is not true. The Promontory Mountains come down from the north and extend for a long distance southward into the Great Salt Lake. The present Southern Pacific railroad crosses the lake over an earthen fill running directly west of Ogden, and touches the southern tip of the mountains at Promontory Point. However, the original railroad went on a northerly route from Ogden to the end of the Lake, then turned west at a town called Corrine. It then went up and over the Promontory Mountains through a pass or saddle which I would estimate is some 1,500 feet higher than the Lake. The original site of Promontory is at the highest point in this pass on a plateau, and although it is fairly level at that point, there are hills both to the north and south. There is some farming on the plateau, and several fields of alfalfa nearby. In my own opinion, the correct name would be "Promontory Summit."

While at the original ceremony only a few hundred people were present, several thousand were present a hundred years later. The Salt



southwest corner

by John Hathaway

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And finally the "Night Coast" shows up from Los Angeles. Its time of arrival is very erratic and can range from nine at night until nine the next morning. It is this train that ties over until the next day when it departs as the First San Bernardino Extra.

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Across the way on the SD&AE, Southern Pacific runs one train a day between El Centro and San Diego. These are powered by three or four of SP's older road units and sometimes exceed 60 cars in length. The eastbound train leaves here around nine in the morning, while the westbound freight usually arrives in San Diego in the late afternoon.

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Spike Centennial Commission, and president of the Association of American Railroads.

The principle speaker was John A. Volpe, U.S. Secretary of Transportation who praised the courage and determination of the original builders of the railroad.

The educational television station located at Brigham Young University recorded the whole proceedings on video tape, and spent two hours that evening showing a repeat performance. It is hoped that this will be available for showing in future years.

Back in 1965, 2,169 acres of ground and 15 miles of the old railroad bed were designated by Congress as a National Historic Site. A museum of wood and native stone was recently completed and dedicated earlier on the same day as the reenactment ceremony.

The original rail line west from Corrine was abandoned in 1906, and the rails were ripped up and used for scrap in the war effort of 1942. However, much of the original roadbed is still visible from Corrine, and the National Park service has reconstructed 3,800 feet of line on the Summit, using the original roadbed.

Although all of the details of the original ceremony are not known, the 100th Anniversary reenactment was supposedly a faithful repetition. The actors were from the Golden Spike Association of Box Elder County. They apparently researched the records carefully and attempted to repeat the original speeches as closely as possible. There was even a telegraph operator with an authentic piece of equipment sitting by to inform the rest of the nation when the last spike was driven. The actors faithfully repeated such details as the announcement that the president of the Union Pacific, T. C. Durant, had retired to his private car because of a "severe headache," after which he returned to the ceremony and missed the spike by a mile.

The Golden Spike Association of Box Elder County has been in existence for a number of years, and consists of citizens from neighboring communities of Brigham City, Tremonton, and Corrine. For the previous seventeen years they have been going up to the site at Promontory Summit on May 10th, dressed in the authentic costumes, and reenacting the original ceremony. The ceremony on May 10, 1969, merely represented their eighteenth repeat performance. The guiding light of the group has been Bernice Gibbs Anderson, and her principle goal has been to preserve the original site, and to see that the 100th Anniversary celebration was held there instead of some other location. The group has also been active in having the site designated as a National Historic Site, and in persuading the National Park Service to construct a Museum facility.

After the ceremony the two locomotives were supposed to come together as they did originally but since they were about 100 years old, and probably had rusty flues, they couldn't be fired up. The Park Service had originally intended to move them together with some sort of cable mechanism. However, this device was not operable, and so the motive power was furnished by a dozen or so husky park rangers behind each tender who pushed them together while the bells clanged loudly.

The engines themselves were painted in a bright red and black color, and has shiny brass trimmings. I suggested to one of the officials that the colors were a bit too gaudy, but I was assured that they had researched this carefully, and that the colors were truly authentic.

The track at the site was also authentic. The Union Pacific was building from the east and obtained its ties in the Wasatch mountains east of Ogden. They were cut and shaped with hand axes, and had pointed ends. They were mostly round with the bark still on and had a flat spot cut into the top for the rails to fit into. On the other hand, the Central Pacific, which was building from the west, obtained its ties in the Sierras, and these were cut and finished by machine, and were almost identical to present-day ties. This difference in ties is faithfully duplicated in the track relaid at the Summit. Across much of Utah and Nevada the original competing railroads had built about 200 miles of parallel roadbed, and this second roadbed has also been preserved some 100 feet south of the main line.

The museum itself is also interesting. It contains a small auditorium which shows a movie covering the original building of the railroad. It also has a fine exhibit showing the tools, equipment, and material used in laying the original track. Also on exhibit is one of the original signs which designated the site of "Ten Miles of Track Laid in One Day" which took place in the desert west of Promontory. This was accomplished by Central Pacific's Chinese coolies a few days prior to May 10, and still stands as the all-time record for putting down railroad track.



In my opinion the Museum is rather sterile, and not the usual sort of thing which would appeal to a genuine railroad fan. However, at the nearby town of Corrine, through which you must pass on the way to the site, there is an excellent railroad museum. Two old locomotives plus a number of cars are on display. There is also a fine exhibit of just about every kind of railroad equipment, particularly the type used around the turn of the century.

So, if you're planning to get up into Utah in the near future, drop by Corrine and Promontory. You'll be able to see a couple of old-time locomotives and displays and actually stand on the site where the greatest single event in railway history took place. (DH)

OCTOBER

CALENDAR

- 19 - LOCOS OPEN to the Public, George Boyd is Host.
- 19 - GENERAL MEETING, 7:30 P. M. at Santa Fe Depot Election of 1970 Officers & U. P. Centennial Program
- 20 - LAND COMMITTEE Meeting at Pennick's, 7:30 P. M.
- 26 - LOCOS OPEN to the Public, Dick Pennick is Host.
- 26 - JOINT BOARD MEETING, R. H. S. of S. D., P. S. R. M. A. & S. R. L. board members only. 7:30 in U. P. Car 1531
- 27 - MECHANICS TRAINING CLASS, 915 W. Grape, S. D. 7:30 P. M. Subject: Locomotive Air Brakes.

NOVEMBER

- 1 - LINE TRUCK WORK PARTY at DiGiorgio's, 9:30 A. M.
- 2 - LOCOS OPEN to the Public. Dave Parkinson is Host.
- 4 - BOARD MEETING, 7:30 P. M., San Diego Trust Bldg.
- 9 - LOCOS OPEN, Sundays 1-4 P. M., Crosby at Harbor.
- 16 - LOCOS OPEN to the Public, Jerry Windle is Host.
- 23 - LOCOS OPEN to the Public, Bill Richards is Host.
- 30 - LOCOS OPEN to the Public, Stan Kerr is Host.

MAINTENANCE DEPT

A three-man work party on Oct. 11 finally began work on our ex-San Diego Electric Railway line truck. The minor engine repairs needed were started as well as a beginning to the big task of preparing the wood for refinishing. Although the wood body and superstructure of the 1926 White are still sound, they are badly weathered and a lot of work is ahead to give it a beautifying and protective finish. Tom Matson, Jim Lyerla and Bob DiGiorgio showed up. We hope there'll be more at the next session, November 1. The truck is at DiGiorgio's home in Santee, 10158 Buena Vista Avenue.

TRAINING CLASSES for those who would like to learn railroad mechanics will begin October 27 at Bob DiGiorgio's office, 915 W. Grape, San Diego. Welcome!

MEMBERSHIP POLL

We've been growing! Our regular membership is now almost 50, and our contributing membership is over 70. But many of you have't been active in Museum affairs. If we're going to succeed with our goals, we need more help.

We think many of you are interested in helping, but don't know where to begin. So we're printing a questionnaire below. We'd like to know what your interests are, so we can provide the activities YOU want and can contact you if we have something going we think you'd like.

If you can't be active in our activities, please fill out the form anyway so we'll know not to bother you needlessly.

COACH 576 EXCURSION

Save Saturday, December 6, 1969, for a fan-trip with our Union Pacific Car #576 to Los Angeles and return. The schedule calls for departure from San Diego at 11:30 a.m. on San Diegoan #75 and return to San Diego at 10:40 p.m. on #78. The fare will be \$10.50 per person, so if you're interested in a short, enjoyable one-day trip, send your fares to PSMA, in care of Eric Sanders, 7861 Normal Ave., La Mesa, Calif., 92041.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

With the last quarter of the year, membership renewal time has come around again. A large portion of our income is from dues, and by renewing early you can help us estimate our 1970 potential as soon as possible.

Now is a good time for you Contributing Members to step up to Regular Memberships. As you're aware from reading REPORT, 1969 has been a busy year and 1970 looks even better, but we need the full support of as many members as possible to take advantage of the many opportunities. Also, Regular Members enjoy the privileges of equipment operation and office holding. Send in your renewal NOW!

ROBERTS HOSPITALIZED

Floyd Mike Roberts is in Mercy Hospital following a string of serious operations. Mike would appreciate your dropping him a card. He required many pints of blood in his operations, and donations of blood in his name would be appreciated.

HELP YOUR MUSEUM!

As a result of a request in the September REPORT, about \$85.00 has been donated. We thank those who helped, including Andert, McLean, Calkins, Richards, S. Kerr, Munster, Pennick and Barber. Can YOU help this time? As of Sept. 30th we had \$537.35 in the bank, but \$1,650.00 in outstanding debts. So we need your help! We're again enclosing an envelope for your donations and/or dues. If you put a 6¢ stamp on it, you'll save the Museum 8¢.

Checks should be made payable to Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc. All donations are state and federal tax deductible.

southwest corner

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