

THE SEARCH FOR A HOME

Land Search - Prospects Brighten - But Funds A Problem
By Dave Parkinson
Chairman, Land Committee

PSRMA FINDS POSSIBLE HOME

The Land Committee continued its active search for a suitable location to house our permanent museum facility. The Miramar lease is only temporary relief for our long-term problem of finding our own home. Results of the land search have been encouraging. Two possible sites near the community of Jacumba in East San Diego County are being seriously examined. Both are adjacent to the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway and are owned by the same private party.

The Land Committee and Museum Board of Directors have inspected both sites on a recent field trip to Jacumba. We were favorably impressed by the terrain and potential for an interesting museum operation, despite some problems to be overcome. The general membership was treated to a discussion and visual tour of the sites via color slides at the April general meeting. Preliminary negotiations with the land owner are underway although nothing had been formally resolved at this date.

DOWN PAYMENT SOURCE

While we actively negotiate to obtain our own site, the funding for such a venture remains a critical problem. Down payment is estimated at about \$7500, far in excess of the treasury at present. Several alternatives for raising the money are being explored including private individuals, loans and contributions.

FUNDS DRIVE STARTED

An intensive funds drive to raise all or part of the \$7500 is being initiated May 16th on the Puerto Penasco excursion. For those of you reading the REPORT on this trip you will notice a poster and donation container in your car for the purpose of raising funds to help PSRMA acquire a home. Since we suspect many of you are railfans or sympathetic with our cause of preserving vintage railway equipment, won't you help make that first important step into a permanent museum? A donation of any amount would be appreciated and is, of course, tax deductible. For those who wish to mail a contribution, please send it to: PSRMA Land Fund, P.O. Box 12096, San Diego, California 92112

Please mark all contributions "land fund". Meanwhile intense efforts are planned during the summer to raise the remainder of the funds needed for a permanent home. Hopefully, PSRMA will have a permanent home by the end of the year. Won't you help?

The REPORT is published monthly by and for the members of PSRMA. Editor is Jerry Winkle assisted by the REPORT Committee consisting of Karen Hathaway, John Hathaway, Bob DiGiorgio, Tom Matson and George Geyer.

TRACTION REPORT

PSRMA's Traction Committee, little more than a year old, was formed in an effort to bring together those persons in the museum who have a mutual interest in traction. The group has adopted for a work project, until they are able to locate a traction piece of equipment, former San Diego Electric Railway Car 508 which is at the Orange Empire Trolley Museum. In addition, the members hold a monthly meeting which is oriented strictly to traction topics. Member Tom Matson heads up the Committee and is eager to meet those who have an interest in traction. He may be contacted at 273-8951.

CALENDAR

- May
16 - Annual Excursion to Puerto Penasco
- June
2 - Board Meeting, 7:30pm, San Diego Trust & Savings
- July
7 - Board Meeting, 7:30pm, San Diego Trust & Savings
19 - General Membership Meeting, 7:30pm AT&SP Depot
- August
4 - Board Meeting, 7:30pm, San Diego Trust & Savings

NOTE: PSRMA activities during summer vacation months are held to a minimum in order not to conflict with the vacation plans of its members.

REPORT MISCELLANIA

EXCURSIONS - The May Board meeting was highlighted by the approval to schedule two more excursions during the current year. The first will be a Labor Day excursion for members only to San Francisco to tour the Municipal Railway lines. Using a chartered car, all the lines in the system will be covered. The three-day weekend will permit members to drive, fly or ride the train to San Francisco.

The second excursion will be via the Union Pacific to Kelso in late November. Highlights of the trip will be traveling over California's Cajon Pass and the beautiful Afton Canyon. Details on both excursions will be published in later REPORTS.

STEAM-UP - When our two locomotives join the equipment already located at Miramar, it will be necessary to move them across the base to our leased portion of track. Since the railroad will not switch on Navy Property and the Navy has no engine to switch the locos, the only feasible way to move them is under their own power. The Navy has agreed to let us operate the shay to perform whatever switching may be necessary. The distance from the railroad to our site is between two and three miles so this should provide some real training for our engine crews plus a great chance to see the shay under actual working conditions. As much advance notice as possible will be given to members prior to the steam-up.

CONDOLANCES - PSRMA extends its condolences to the parents of member Floyd M. Roberts. Floyd, 18, was a regular member and was very interested in all aspects of railroading especially model railroads. He passed away May 2.

SCOTSMAN - Latest schedule for the Flying Scotsman's second tour of the United States shows it leaving its winter home in Slaton, Texas on June 14 and heading north through Temple, Waco, Dallas, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Parsons, Kansas; St. Louis, Chicago; arriving at Green Bay, Wisconsin on July 19th at the National Railroad Museum. Plans had been made to bring the Scotsman to the West Coast starting in San Diego, but problems with the railroads prevented this. J. Barrett Gilmer of Coronado who spearheaded the efforts to bring the famed English locomotive and train to San Diego had more than 500,000 in pledges, but when the trip was cancelled he found that he had more than \$1500 in bills. To pay these, he sold his model train collection he started when he was 6 years old, including the first engine he received in 1936 from his father which started him collecting the models.

CONGRATULATIONS - Heartiest congratulations are extended to the former Karen Lundquist and John Hathaway who were married on May 9th. Both Karen and John are avid railfans and have been active in the operation of the museum with Karen serving this year as Secretary and John serving on the REPORT committee writing the SOUTHWEST CORNER.

Work on the railroad began in 1923 and about 10 miles of track were laid to a point just south of the present station of Lobo. This road was known as the Ferrocarril Mexicali e Golfo. A 1926 map shows "end of track" 23 miles from Pascualitos. The operation of work trains was started and small amounts of cotton were hauled.

Subsequently an agreement was concluded with the Colorado River Land Company, which had obtained possession of the farm lands and constituted a monopoly which did not want the "comunicacion de Baja California-nia con el interior de Mexico," and the route was detoured to cross the Colorado River.

In 1929, the Ferrocarril Inter-California del Sur took over the project. The line was extended, through Rinto to just beyond Medanos. The revised railroad map indicates the end of track in March 1930 as there. The Southern Pacific purchased control of the Inter-California Southern in 1930, and according to its record, the line to Medanos was not opened until October 1931.

The rail front remained at Medanos until 1937. There was no intention prior to 1935 to connect it with Mexico's national network.

The Southern Pacific had acquired the Sonora Railway from the Santa Fe from Nogales to Guaymas in 1911. Using the name Ferrocarril Sur Pacifico de Mexico, it has extended the route to Guadalajara to connect with the National Railways of Mexico.

With the development of the Mexicali Valley, the urgent need for an all-Mexican rail route was now acknowledged. Shipments to the interior had to be made "in bond" with customs inspections at Cantu and Nogales. The creation of a railroad, which was destined to vitalize the northern part of Baja, through the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas, S.C.O.P. - or the department or Ministry of Communications and Public Works, in 1935. This was the origin of the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California, a wholly government-owned railway but not included in the Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico.

Beginning at Medanos, location surveys were started, heading for Puerto Penasco, on the eastern shore of the Gulf of California. The project was carried to completion in November 1936. When the town of El Doctor, about 58 miles from Pascualitos, the edge of the Desierto de Altar was reached and the task became a formidable one.

The rail head advanced to El Doctor and then plunged into the desolate region of sand dunes, heat and wind. At Kilometer 132 a camp, called El Alamo, was set up. It was felt that possibly the original survey could be improved by straightening and shortening the staked line. A party headed by a young engineer Jor e Lopez Collado started out on July 2, 1937. The men never returned, falling victims to the cruel desert. Today four stations between El Doctor and Puerto Penasco have been named in their honor: Sanchez Islas, Torres B., Lopez Collado and Gustavo Sotelo. In 1940, the rails reached Puerto Penasco and the transportation of freight and passengers began on May 5, 1940.



NATURAL STEAM...Natural steam wells are seen along the tracks as our special PSRMA train moves briefly inland.

Following the war, preparations were begun to complete the connection with the Southern Pacific of Mexico. The forbidding Altar Desert still had to be conquered between Puerto Penasco and Caborca, approximately 248 miles. Steam engines require water and this would have to be carried into the desert. However, by now the diesel electric locomotives had been sufficiently perfected and were rapidly replacing the steamers.

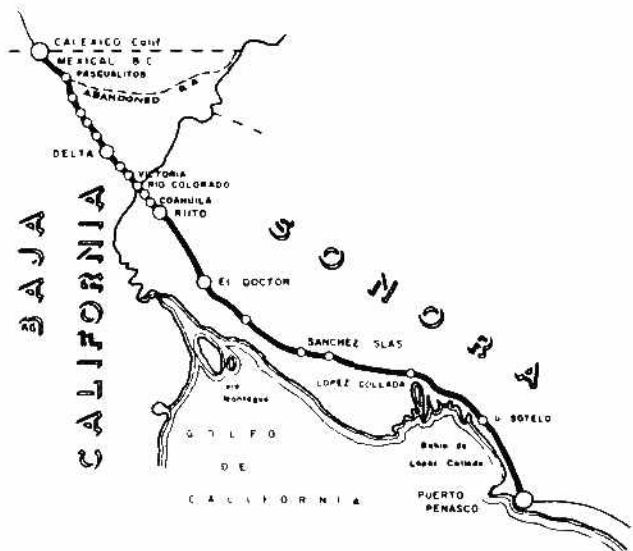
The desert held true to its history, the work had to be done only in the early morning and late evening hours. However improved methods and increased mechanization methods speeded the job of conquering the desert.

Original plans called for a junction with the Southern Pacific of Mexico at Santa Ana, in Sonora, about 65 miles south of Nogales. A later line change determined the meeting point to be at the hacienda de San Fernando, not even a flag stop on the SPdM. The junction was given the name Benjamin Hill. The railroad's shops have been built there and Benjamin Hill is the "new flower of the desert".

Finally came the long awaited day, amid wild jubilation of the workmen, at Kilometer 327 of 203 miles from Pascualitos, in the profundity of the awful desierto de Altar, the ends of the two tracks were joined together on December 16, 1947. For the first time the peninsula of Baja California was united directly by rail with the national network.

The Sonora-Baja California has broken the barrier of the Desert of Altar by binding it with two bands of glistening steel but it still bows to the torrid heat by operating its passenger service by night, despite the modern air-conditioned equipment.

(This history of the PSBC was condensed from an article by Richard V. Dodge which appeared in the March 20, 1960 edition of the DISPATCHER, a publication of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego.)



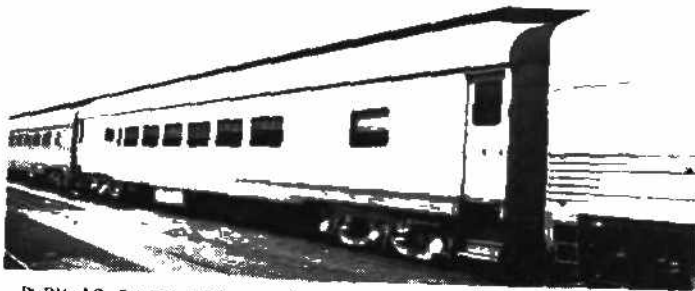
SEA OF CORTEZ...Wave breaks on the rocky shore at the edge of Puerto Penasco. The village lies on the coast.

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM

The Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association is an active group of railfans dedicated to the establishment of an operating railroad museum for the people of the city and county of San Diego.

The ultimate goal of the association is a permanent site for a museum which will include a mile or more of track to operate trains and trolleys on, other tracks for display of equipment not operating at the moment, an indoor museum for historical and technical displays, and maintenance shops for the upkeep of equipment.

Since its founding nine years ago, the PSRMA has acquired several historic pieces of railway equipment. Included are four steam locomotives: a 1923 O-6-OT saddle-tank engine from the E. J. Lavino Co.; a 1923 O-6-OT saddle-tank engine from the Mojave Northern Co.; a 1923 Shay type engine and a 1929 2-8-2T saddle-tank engine, both from the Georgia-Pacific Corporation.



PSRMA'S COACH 576 - A "modernized" heavyweight former Union Pacific coach. Now used for museum excursions.



PSRMA'S SHAY #3 - Donated by the Georgia-Pacific Co., the 1923 vintage loco in excellent mechanical shape is steam-ed up for member operation during the year.

In addition to the motive power, the museum owns an array of railroad equipment including a Santa Maria Valley railbus, a former Union Pacific passenger coach, a wooden sided boxcar, two vintage tank cars and two truss rod flatcars. Other items such as depot signs, lanterns, baggage carts plus numerous related railroad items are waiting for display in the museum.



PSRMA'S #11 - Latest acquisition from the Georgia-Pacific Co. is this 1929 saddle-tank oil-burner which will be operational after minor repairs to the boiler.

PSRMA is an active group. Yearly events include periodical steam-ups of the operating locomotives and the training of members in operating the equipment. Monthly board meetings plus quarterly general membership meetings are held. Rail excursions are held each year using museum equipment or specially chartered cars or trains. A railroad film festival is an annual event.

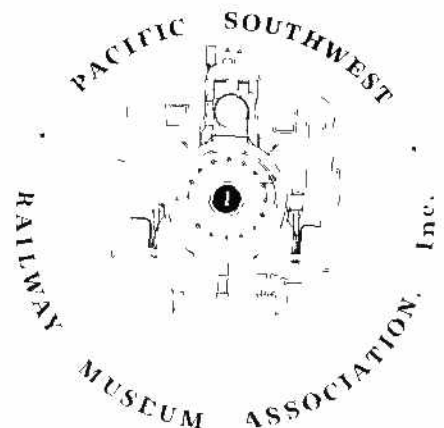
Membership in PSRMA also entitles the member to receive a monthly newsletter which not only provides up to date information on club activities but also word on railroad ing in the Southern California area. The newsletter which features high quality photographs and feature stories is well worth the price of membership.

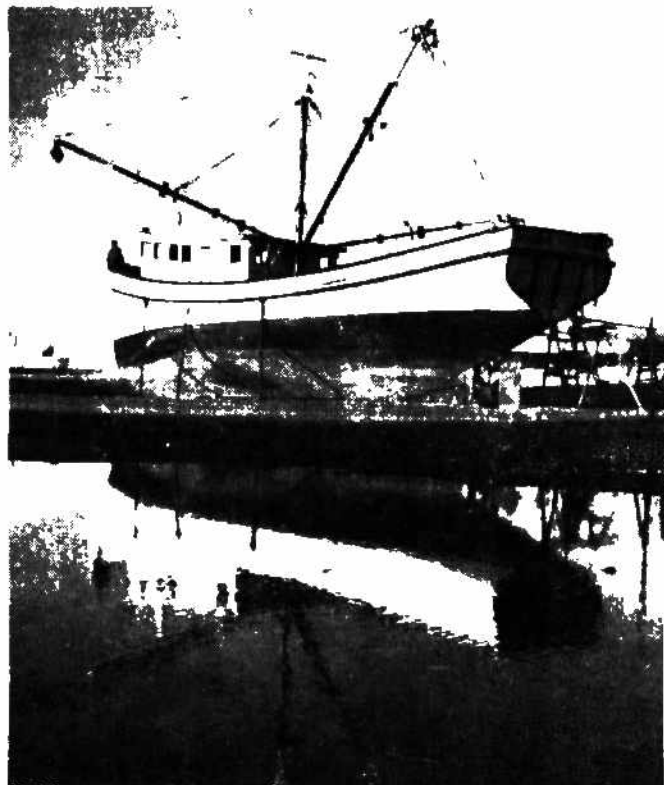
Two classes of membership are available. The regular membership is \$10 a year and includes all privileges, the monthly newsletter plus the right to vote and hold office. The contributing membership at \$3 a year is identical to the regular with the exception of voting and office holding rights. All members are eligible to participate in the equipment operating classes held during the year.

If you are interested in trains of any form or power. If you want to become involved in an active group. Then PSRMA is designed for you whatever your interests. From clerks to steam mechanics, we can use everybody. Why not join today and be eligible to participate in this year's activities?



PSRMA'S #10 - Former E. J. Lavino Co. 1923 saddle-tank coal burning engine in operating condition is in storage at the Grange Empire Trolley Museum in Perris, California.





PUERTO PENASCO - On the Gulf of California, the village is headquarters for both commercial and sport fishing.

<u>MILES FROM K. P.</u>	<u>MEXICALI</u>	<u>STATION</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
0.00	Mexicali		Line from the International Border past the station to Pascualitos is the old "Inter-Cal"
5.59	Pascualitos		Former junction of FSBC and the Inter-Cal. Pascualitos is a maintenance-of-way facility
17.40	Cerro Prieto		
18.02	Canal Crossing		
25.17	Delta		
32.31	Victoria		Look to your left. It's a quaint town
34.49	- - -		Curve to left, then right for pictures
36.04	Rio Colorado		Colorado River one-lane rail-highway bridge
41.07	Coahuila		Market town - included on short trips as a stop
42.87	Baja-California State Line		
44.49	Riito		Short excursions turn back here
63.2	El Doctor		Railroad whistle stop
80.30	Kilom. 121		Railroad facility
85.07	Sanchez Islas		Railroad facility
?	The Crosses		No station, but crosses beside right-of-way mark the graves of surveyors who lost their lives during construction of the railroad
93.07	Torres B.		Railroad Facility
113.97	Lopez Collada		Railroad Facility
133.86	Gustavo Sotelo		Railroad Facility
153.46	Puerto Penasco		Passengers will disembark at the station and board busses for a short ride to the town

EXCURSION EDITION

For more than 67 years, the cruel and forbidding Altar Desert had prevented man from establishing vital lines of land communication between the Territories of Baja California and the Interior of the Republic of Mexico. Not until the advent of the diesel-electric locomotive would the building of such a railroad be practical and air conditioning to make the journey fairly comfortable.

On April 7, 1948, Mexican President Miguel Aleman drove the final spike to complete the 325-mile Sonora-Baja California Railroad to join Mexicali via Puerto Penasco to Benjamin Hill, the northern terminus of Mexican rail traffic. For the first time the peninsula of Baja California was united directly by rail with the national network. The building of the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California Railroad, the FSBC, was no easy task.

In 1881-2, the first railroad was proposed from San Diego via Tijuana, Port Isabel in the state of Sonora, across the Altar Desert to a connection with the Sonora Railway, which the Santa Fe was building north from Guaymas. This plan died on paper.

First rails were laid in 1887 when an English Corporation the Mexico Land Colonization Company planned rail lines from San Quintin, a Pacific Coast Harbor about 195 miles south of San Diego, to San Felipe on the Gulf of California; to Tijuana and San Diego and to Yuma. The Peninsular Railroad was actually built for about 18 miles from San Quintin in 1892. There the railroad ended.

Then came a bold plan of the California Development Co. to irrigate the valley south of the Salton Sink in California with Colorado River water and the Imperial Valley came into being with irrigation in mid-1901. Towns sprang up, Calexico and Mexicali, among others. This caused the importance of the northern part of Baja California to increase.

E. H. Harriman, President of the Southern Pacific Co., sensed the future value of the valley and a rail connection was built from Old Beach, now Ailand, junction with the main line between Los Angeles and Yuma to Calexico. Regular service began on June 29, 1904. In December 1905, the Southern Pacific placed a box car on a side track at El Centro to be used as a station.

In the meantime, the San Diego and Arizona Eastern railroad had been formed by San Diegoan John D. Spreckels and E. H. Harriman to build from San Diego via Tijuana, Campo Carriso Gorge, El Centro, Mexicali to Yuma. However the SP organized the "Campania del Ferrocarril Inter-California" and constructed the railroad from Mexicali via Pascualitos to Algodones, Baja California. There the track crossed back into the United States with an extension to the SP main line. Completed in 1909, this road formed a more direct route for shipments from Mexicali Valley to points on the Mexican mainland but round about via Tucson and Nogales or El Paso. This relieved the SD&AE from building from El Centro to Yuma. The SD&AE opened December 1st, 1919, providing service from San Diego and the Tijuana area to cities in the interior of Mexico.

A series of revolutions broke out in 1910 and a new regime took over. In 1917 the construction of highways from Ensenada to Tijuana and to Mexicali and a railroad from Pascualitos, the junction point with the Inter-California Railway to San Felipe, on the gulf, connecting with the steamer lines.