

Report

Of San Diego County Rail Museum Activity

Issue 1

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January 5, 1960

50 IS STILL AROUND

As recently as one year ago San Diego & Arizona Eastern locomotive #50 was in the Bay Shore yards. Even today this locomotive may still be around - although in a junk yard. In December usable rail was removed from San Diego streets.

With the passage of time acquisition of railroad equipment becomes increasingly difficult and prospects for a San Diego County Travel Town and/or an operating rail museum appear to dim. It appeared to Douglas Duncan, Charles Gerdes and Eric Sanders that interested persons should meet and review the Museum situation. A letter of invitation was written and a mailing list was hastily compiled. If YOU did not receive a notice please consider this report as a belated but cordial invitation.

MEETING NUMBER ONE

Twelve persons on October 18, 1959 met in the Balboa Park Organ Pavilion Office and reviewed rail museum activity available to San Diego County railfans. Discussed also was the feasibility of establishing an operating rail museum in this area. The group agreed that a second meeting should be held and that there should be a further exchange of ideas. Certain individual assignments were made.

Discussion concerned the problems and challenges inherent in a museum project. It became apparent that the establishment of and the operation of an operating rail museum is a monumental undertaking. On the other hand it was also clear that a local operation did not need to start from scratch. The Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc. now owns two operating street cars and the body of a third. A few lengths of rail and some ties are also on hand. One of the members present owns the body of Birney street car.

All present at the meeting agreed that the RHSofSD would be and should be

involved in a museum project if one should be initiated. Many felt that a museum should be within the RHSofSD framework; some felt that results would be better obtained through the organization of a separate single-purpose group.

Land acquisition appeared to be a prime problem. Railroad access was deemed to be highly advisable. Sites suggested, including line and off-line locations, were: National City waterfront, Rose Canyon locations, former NC&O roadbed above Sweetwater Dam, former San Diego & Phoenix roadbed in Otay Valley, an Otay gravel pit site, and former Balboa Park street car right-of-way.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Second meeting for those who are interested in San Diego Rail Museum activity is scheduled for Sunday, January 17, 7:30 p.m. in the Balboa Park Organ Pavilion office. YOU are cordially invited. Come and bring a friend. Notify interested persons.

Rolling stock discussed at the meeting included the previously mentioned street cars, Salt Works equipment, and other "light railway" equipment. Jack Stodelle stated that one group of San Diego railfans was actively interested in acquiring an operating steam locomotive.

Problems in powering a street railway system were outlined. Role of the Orange Empire Traction Co. trolley museum at Perris in local planning was discussed. Street car 171 is at Perris, RHSofSD has contributed financially and several San Diego area railfans are members.

SINCE THE MEETING

Dick Pennick reports that the Sweetwater Canyon roadbed may be taken over by a governmental unit for highway purposes.

Doug Duncan and Jack Stodelle report that a Rose Canyon location is desirable and also that a Mission Bay site should be investigated.

Eric Sanders reports that Mr. James Reading, official of the San Diego Historical Shrine Foundation and RHSofSD member, stated that a recent survey for an on-line site for a Travel Town produced negative results. Reading stated that a site in the proposed Sycamore Canyon Park would be ideal but it is unlikely that the land would be made available. He also stated that an operating museum is a project which deserves study. He added that it would be a project of considerable magnitude but one that should not be regarded as impossible of attainment.

Bill Morrison, Douglas Duncan and Jim Reading have suggested possible sources of power for an electric operation. Charles Gerdes also told the Report that he felt the power situation is possible of solution.

An Orange Empire Traction official contacted by the Report indicated that his group welcomes support from San Diego area railfans. He stated that several San Diegans are now members and that the museum is closer to San Diego than it is to Los Angeles. OET is a going concern, he said, and is, even now, preparing for operation.

It should be noted that Mayor Hodge of National City at one time met with RHSofSD officials to discuss the possibility of railroad operation in a National City Park.

It would appear that interested persons have several choices. They are:

- a. Limit activity to more adequate "caretaking" of presently owned equipment.
- b. As a group or as individuals offer active support to the OET museum.
- c. Study the National City project.
- d. Initiate long range study which might lead to the establishment of a San Diego area Travel Town with or without operation. This might be at Del Mar or at some other site.
- e. Plan definite work schedules at Del Mar or at private projects.
- f. Meet on a continued study basis.
- g. Or, plan for the establishment of a San Diego area operating museum.

Present at the October 18 meeting were: Fred Reif, Dick Dodge, Lyle Judd, Eddie Junghans, Wally Duthie, Jack Stodelle, Dick Fennick, Bill Morrison,

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AN EXPLANATION

In Issue 1 of the Report an attempt has been made to record the discussion that took place at the October 18, 1959 meeting of individuals who have expressed a varying degree of interest in railroad museum activity. The Report has also attempted to bring the problem up-to-date. Here's hoping that no individual has been misquoted.

Interested persons are urged to attend the January 17, 1960 meeting.

Continued from column one

Dwight Couch, Charles Gerdes, Douglas Duncan and Eric Sanders. All but one of those present were RHSofSD members. The moderator made it clear that any interested person is invited to attend the next meeting.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Canadian Railroad Historical Association has adopted the name "The Inter-provincial Railway of Canada" for its museum operations. Acquired on Nov. 21 were Canadian Pacific 4-4-0 #144 and Courtaulds' (Canada) Limited electric locomotive #7.

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society Inc. has acquired Dept. of Public Transport, New South Wales, Sydney tram #1187. (The editor rode this type tram as a boy in Manly Beach, N.S.W.)

AS SPACE PERMITS

For a three dollar contribution OERHS offers a regular membership with several items including a picture of the Sydney tram.

Subject to ICC approval the D&RGW has sold the Silverton line to a non-profit group. Sale includes one locomotive, 10 passenger and some work and freight cars.

Four unit locomotives now pull SD&AE freights averaging 70 cars per train. A caboose has replaced comb #208. It alternates with combines 174 and 175.