

REPORT

of the

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RLY. MUSEUM ASSOC.

Issue 13

October 18, 1964

WELCOME ABOARD THE "M.V. MONTEREY"

Welcome aboard the "M. V. Monterey"! Welcome to Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc.'s third excursion, a Star & Crescent Boat Company ferry ride recreating the Point Loma and South San Diego ferry routes.

Welcome back to those of you folk who were with us on the "Last Of the Yellow Cars" or "Fallbrook Chief" excursions.

PSRMA Inc. offers a sincere thank you to the Star & Crescent Boat Company for cooperation received.

Aboard this ferry you'll find a soft drink concession, rest rooms, and deck space for viewing the sights.

Jerry MacMullen who was to provide the narration is ill and is confined to his home for a few more days. He sends his greetings and he has provided some background information for us. He'll also assist the Report editor in producing a more complete story of the Star & Crescent operations.

Narrator for today will be Phil Middlebrook, well known San Diego area railroad historian. He will be assisted by the editor of Report.

Excursion officials today include William Wootton, PSRMA president; Wally Duthie, excursion director; George Geyer and Charles Gerdes, finance; and Terry Durkin, refreshments.

TWO MORE EXCURSIONS ARE PLANNED

Next Sunday, October 25, the Railway Historical Society of San Diego, offers a charter bus trip to the Orange Empire Trolley Museum in Perris. Buses leave San Diego at 9 a.m. and return at 6 p.m.

At the Museum, guests can observe over 50 pieces of railroad equipment, including many streetcars and interurbans.

A former San Diego street car and a San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway Co. combination car will be there for you to see. Look also for a double-deck tram

from Ireland.

Fare is \$4.25. Call Corky Thomson, 3204 McGraw Street, San Diego 9. Telephone 276-3266 for reservations & information.

Excursion number two is set for Nov. 15. On this day you can ride the "Colorado River Express" from Mexicali to El Doctor. PSRMA sponsors this trip. Ask for a folder if you haven't one.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PSRMA INC.

To date, PSRMA Inc. has been long on excursion activity and somewhat short on progress toward museum construction.

PSRMA intends now to plan more meetings and step up museum activity.

When sufficient funds are available PSRMA will actively look for land. Profits, if any, from excursions will be placed in the land purchase fund.

You may join the Museum as a contributing member for \$1 a year. A regular membership currently costs only \$2 per year.

PSRMA members, to date, are few in number. You are hereby extended an invitation to join as a contributing or regular member.

If you are interested, please talk to a PSRMA official or write the Association, 7421 Tweed, Lemon Grove, Calif. and request a membership form.

PSRMA WILL MEET OCTOBER 24

Next regular PSRMA meeting is set for Saturday, October 24, 7:30 p.m., at the "Old El Cajon Library" building in the center of the triangle on Prescott St. just south of Main Street. The "Old Library" is in back of the "New Library."

Norman Johnston, Los Angeles railfan enthusiast, will be showing his films on the Pacific Electric Railway, Los Angeles Transit Lines, and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority. His films will bring back the days of electric traction in Los Angeles.

NEXT ISSUE - Local news summary and report of Museum activity.

REPORT is mailed to all regular and contributing members of PSRMA. 10¢ per copy, otherwise. Editor is: Eric Sanders. Mail to: 7861 Normal Ave., La Mesa, Assoc. mail to W. Wootton, 1828 Gateway SD

PSRMA MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.' READ THIS!

Do come to the next meeting, this Saturday, October 24, 7:30 p.m., in the "Old" Library building in the "triangle" on Prescott Street in El Cajon. Members and guests will view Norman Johnston's movies of LATL, PE and IAMTA. They are worth seeing. Do come. Let's have the best attendance yet. Notify your friends. Call interested persons. Write them

M.V. MONTEREY DIDN'T MAKE SOUTH S.D.

The only way to go to South San Diego is by rowboat. Silting is heavy and the M.V. Monterey just couldn't make it all the way.

The trip was a success and there was a profit.

The M.V. Monterey hugged the shores and went into Shelter Island commercial basin. Excursionists spent one half hour ashore at Ballast Point.

On the way out of Glorietta Bay, while the good ship Monterey was taking a short cut, the propellers and rudder bit into the silt and the ferry slid along the harbor floor or sandbar. Progress was slowed and mud was churned up but the ferry made it through.

Jerry MacMullen couldn't make it but Phil Middlebrook substituted for him and all aboard learned a lot about the past and the present.

Newspapers are loaded with political news so there wasn't much space for advance publicity. However, a San Diego Union reporter came aboard for a picture and the Evening Tribune requested a followup story.

EDITORIAL (The following comments are those of the editor and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Association members or the Association itself.E.S.)

Railfan activity in the San Diego area is not what it used to be. Folk do grow weary, excursions are difficult to arrange, and steam is gone.

The RHSofSD Newsletter declared recently that the only Museum in the area is the one in Perris. The Newsletter also reported concern about conflicts in excursion scheduling. All this is true.

What can be done about this? This writer is always happy to offer suggestions - for others, that is. So let's offer a few.

1. PSRMA members - let's endeavor to see that our attendance at Saturday's meeting is the best ever. Enthusiasm comes with numbers. Come yourself and bring a friend. Seriously, ask others to attend.

2. Let's work for an educational-type programming. Home movies are fine. Much better, however, would be sessions devoted to the knowhow of railroading. There are folk around town who can offer very fine presentations that have a direct relationship with railroads and railroading.

3. Let's push this November 15 Mexico trip. PSRMA could make several hundred dollars on this trip. Volunteer to be a white shirt and black tie attendant. Offer to help with publicity. A few good ideas will go a long way. What can YOU do to help? Call Wally and offer your services.

4. Let's do even more planning on future excursions. Let's not just break even - let's make some money on them. PSRMA's affiliated excursions and its own excursions can be moneymakers. Let us set our first goal - a land purchase fund of \$2000. If we really want that \$2000, we can get it. The equipment is in town. Let's not dispose of railroad equipment. We have little enough now. Let's get that land and the equipment will stay.

To sum it up, let's have fewer ladies aid teas and instead let us plan meaningful activity and let's get a second museum in this area - one right in San Diego County. Museums, friends of mine in RHSofSD and PSRMA, are being established all over the country. Many are successfully operated. When RHSofSD back in the early days faced the task of raising \$1400 to move 104 and 050 into the Del Mar Fairgrounds members could have said, "Let's not!" Later, 10 members personally signed a note for \$800 so that 528 could be purchased and moved to Del Mar. Now we (or at least the RHS half of yours truly) are talking about selling the U.S. Gypsum car.

What's wrong with us? Let's set a goal. Say \$2000. Let's get going on it. And instead of fighting, let PSRMA and RHSofSD get moving. Do it jointly. Yeah! This is a call to arms! (*Upatdy, maybe.)

The Star and Crescent Boat Company is San Diego Harbor's "other ferry operator." Its ferries, less glamorous and less publicized than those which ply between San Diego and Coronado, are also important to the Harbor's economy and they, too, like the larger ferries, have a romantic past and an active present. Unlike the Coronado ferries, the vessels on Star and Crescent's North Island run may have a future that extends beyond the opening of the Coronado bridge.

Star and Crescent today operates not only the ferryboats on the San Diego-North Island run but also the excursion boats on the one and two-hour harbor tours and the tugboats, barges and other equipment used in general harbor service. S. & C. also has an interest in a water taxi operation, and an associate company is the San Diego Marine Construction Company active in shipbuilding and ship repair. S. & C. also has real estate interests. In years past the S. & C. folk through the Star & Crescent Oil Company handled the distribution of Tidewater Oil products in the San Diego area. At one time almost all the petroleum shipped into the area was transported via S. & C. barges and tankers. The company has also served the fishing fleet doing salvage work, rescue work and whatever else was needed. S. & C. owned at least one tuna clipper and has also provided services for the sports' fishing enthusiasts. The Star & Crescent Boat Company represents in fact the end result of a series of mergers and consolidations of numerous ferry and harbor services. Predecessor companies date back to 1892.

And it was in 1892 when ten acres of prime land on Point Loma were purchased by Captain Rufus M. Creswell. One year later the Captain purchased an iron boat, "Hercules," and with it he offered passenger service between San Diego and Ballast Point. A second vessel, the steam launch "Point Loma," was acquired in 1898 and was soon chartered to the United States Government to transport supplies and personnel to Fort Rosecrans, then under construction.

Captain Creswell's fleet soon included the "Golden West," "Fortuna," (registered as a ferry), "Point Loma," "Dolphin," "Comet," "Biz," "Bee," and "Owl." One was used in the Coronado Islands run; the others in local freight and passenger service. Creswell's San Diego dock was the foot of H Street (Market St.). For seven years Creswell was captain of the U. S. Government boat, "General De Russy." (Another government boat, according to Jerry MacMullen, was an artillery steamer, "Lt. George Harris"). Oakley Hall was active in the company. Land transportation to Point Loma was difficult in those days so the ferries hauled picnickers and pleasure seekers as well as workers and soldiers.

One historian states that the Point Loma Ferry Co. was incorporated in 1895 with Captain Oakley J. Hall as skipper. Another writer records the first ferry company as being the Roseville, San Diego & National City Ferry Company, one which transported San Diegans in 1888 to Roseville for connections with the Roseville and Ocean Beach Railway which opened on April 17, 1888. Mayor William (Billy) H. Carlson and Albert S. Higgins ran a steam train through Wabaska Canyon to Cliff House on the Ocean Beach bluffs. Visitors picked beach strawberries and gathered mussels. The train, powered by a diminutive steam "dummy-type" locomotive, operated for a relatively brief period.

MacMullen says a propeller driven steamer, "Roseville," was built in 1888 for the Point Loma Land & Town Company. It ran from San Diego to Roseville and then on to Ballast Point, where construction was underway on a new lighthouse and on Fort Rosecrans. This two deck ferry had a piano aboard at one time. A 1916 schedule suggests that San Diego revelers could go by ferry to the Roseville Pier and Ballroom for an evening of dancing. Operation of the P.L. ferry ceased about 1918.

The North Island ferry service was reported to be an outgrowth of the Point Loma service. Sometime after 1900 these ferries or launches began transporting workers and visitors to Curtiss Aviation, Rockwell Field and later the Naval Air Station. The Point Loma Ferry Company became the Star Boat Company in 1908 when Captain Hall purchased the name and properties, including the Boat House at the foot of H Street from Captain Elmer E. Lutz. Service was expanded to include harbor excursions and trips to the Coronado Islands. Ralph J. Chandler entered the boat

business in 1910 when he took over the McKinley Boat Company and renamed it the Crescent Boat Co.

A small settlement had been built at Imperial Beach but because of the lack of railroad service by the San Diego Southern on its Coronado belt line branch, the South San Diego Investment Company (C.Y. Gay, E.W. Peterson, R.B. Thomas, R.A. Smith) was organized to construct a 1.2 mile railroad from a ferry landing to Imperial Beach. Ferry or launch service began in 1910 with a ferry running from the Foot of D (Broadway) to the head of the bay. There it entered the South San Diego ship channel and went up to a narrow pier, high on spindly legs and sporting a narrow platform. A gasoline mechanical-drive car of the South San Diego Railway carried passengers from the ferry to Imperial Beach. The line was abandoned either in 1912 when the railway, reorganized as the Mexico and San Diego Railway, negotiated trackage rights on the San Diego & South Eastern (successor to the San Diego Southern) so it could transport its passengers to SD&SE's National City Junction where they could transfer to mainline trains, or it was abandoned in 1916 because of property destruction caused by the floods. In an Evening Tribune story Capt. Axel J. Larson was quoted as saying he was a pilot on one of four cruisers operating in 1915 and 1916. Larson said the channel was six to eight feet deep at low tide and 75 feet wide. The boats were 40-45 feet long and carried up to 50 passengers. They were powered by distillate engines and the nine mile trip took 45-60 minutes. Larson said Hall and Chandler were associated with the operation. He reports that one boat was carpeted and that entertainment was provided for the passengers who were mostly San Diegans interested in surf fishing and other recreational activities. MacMullen recalls riding the "McKinley Jr." to South San Diego, and he said he believes the McKinley Boat Works operated the line. Ferries made a stop at Glorietta Bay (Tent City). "Grant" and "Imperial" were said to be two of the boats.

The Crescent Boat Company (Chandler) in 1914 was a rival to the Star Boat Co. (Hall). A merger was effected in 1915 and operations were centered at the former Crescent boat house at the Foot of Broadway to remain there until World War II when S. & C. moved back to the Foot of Market Street to a new terminal. The Foot of Broadway Wharf was torn down recently although Star & Crescent's excursion boats of today do use other facilities at that point. In 1916 S. & C. offered a \$1 round trip to the Coronado Islands, a twice daily harbor excursion on the "S.S. Crescent" for 50¢, and a daily trip to the U.S. Government and Curtiss Aviation centers on North Island. (The North Island ferry service and the Point Loma ferries were also in operation.)

In 1924 the Star & Crescent Boat Company began hauling petroleum to San Diego by barge, then by tanker and barge, and finally by large barges exclusively. Some years ago, however, S. & C. sold the oil distributorship to Tidewater Associated, and it also disposed of several of its tugs to the San Diego Transportation Company. The latter firm eventually pulled out of San Diego taking its tugs with it. Now Star & Crescent again handles all general harbor service. In the early 1960s Southern Pacific and Santa Fe joined forces to build a Los Angeles area-San Diego pipeline through which San Diego now receives its petroleum products. S. & C. from 1937 to 1952 operated the tanker, "San Diegan." The company also owned the tanker, "San Jacinto."

Down through the years S. & C. has owned and operated many ferries and excursion boats. "Estrella" was one of the latter. Presently it operates the excursion boats, "Silver Gate," the 500-passenger "Marietta" built in 1957, and the "Cabrillo" built in 1963. Tugboats now in service are the "San Miguel," "Laguna," and "Golden West." ("Challenger" was one of the best known tugs.) Oldest North Island ferries today are the large launches, "Victory I" and "Victory II." New and fast launches are the "43" and "44." Squareheads, used largely for the heavy rush hour civilian and sailor traffic, are the "Point Loma" (1943-47 tons), "Del Mar" (1944-47), "Glorietta" (1944-47), "Ramona" (1944-47) and "Monterey" (1952-76 tons). The "Juanita" (1942-47 tons) was sold and as the "Bahia Belle" now runs on the cocktail circuit in Mission Bay. Yes, you may ride the North Island ferry. Pay 10¢. Stop over on the North Island pier and return on another boat for 10¢ more. Service is 3-4 min. up to 20 minute headway, around the clock. (Meantime the Report staff will research, recheck and write until a more complete and accurate S. & C. story is available. In the final version readers will find a complete list of references. Will you help?)