

# Dispatcher

Vol. 1, No. 1 Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Calif. June, 1955

LOCOMOTOR DODGINGS I

## RAILROADS OF CUBA

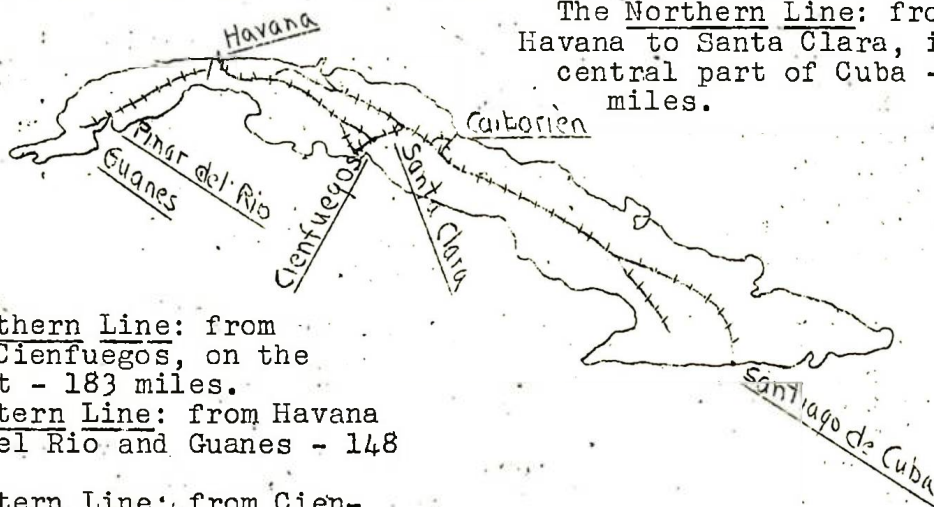
by Richard V. Dodge

Cuba Libre! That was the slogan during the Spanish-American War in 1898. Freedom for Cubans! But, today, the lowly photographer of steam engines does not find much freedom in Cuba. Policemen, armed guards and soldiers are everywhere to stop you. Even with permits, escorts are generally necessary.

There are two main railway systems in Cuba.

The one covering the westerly portion of the island is now named "Ferrocarriles Unidos de la Habana" (United Railways of Havana). It consists of four major routes:

The Northern Line: from Havana to Santa Clara, in the central part of Cuba - 179 miles.



The Southern Line: from Havana to Cienfuegos, on the south coast - 183 miles.

The Western Line: from Havana to Pinar del Rio and Guanes - 148 miles.

The Eastern Line: from Cienfuegos to Calbarien, on the north coast - 108 miles. of branch lines and interconnections.

The easterly railway is called "Ferrocarriles Consolidados de Cuba" (F.C.C.). It includes the former Cuba Railroad, the Cuban Northern Railway and numerous branch lines and operates the Guantanamo Y Occidente Railroad. The main line extends east from the junction with the F.O.C. at Santa Clara and trains are operated through to Santiago de Cuba, at the easterly side of the island - 356 miles.

The main lines are standard gauge. Freight cars are interchanged between Havana and Florida by a fleet of modern car ferries.

The F.O.C. has a 36 inch gauge branch, running from Calbarien south to a junction with the F.C.C. at Cumbre, about 20 miles east of Santa Clara. It also owns and operates two 30 inch gauge branches, one from Cruces, north of Cienfuegos, and the other with

## CUBAN RAILROADS CONTINUED

headquarters at Juragua, west of Cienfuegos.

The F.O.C. has the grandest collection of interesting steam motive power. The most prevalent type, of course, is the consolidation, 2-8-0, occupying the 200, 300, 500 and 600 series of numbers. But there are also 0-4-0, 0-6-0 and 0-8-0 saddle or side tank switchers and moguls, 2-6-0, numbered in the 100 series; American or Eight Wheelers, 4-4-0, some with low road numbers and others in the 700 series; Ten Wheelers, 4-6-0, numbered in the sixties and seventies and Pacifics 4-6-2, in the 400's.

The 36 inch gauge engines are consolidations with outside frames (mud hens) numbered in the 750 and 760 series. The 30 inch gauge engines are moguls and consolidations with numbers in the 770's and 780's. The 779 carries Baldwin plate with the year 1889. The two engines, stationed at Juragua, were coal burners. All the others burned oil.

The road has recently purchased some Diesel switchers built by Brissonneau et Lutz in France. The most unusual type of locomotive is a German Diesel Hydraulic.

In the Estacion Central of the F.O.C. in Havana, there is on exhibit a rare old engine. It is a 4-2-2 type with a small 4 wheeled tender. It is lettered "La Junta" No. 1 of the Ferrocarril de Matanzas, built in 1943 by Rogers, Ketcham & Grosvenor, New Jersey.

The freight terminal at Havana is operated with electric locomotives.

Most of the passenger cars in service are of wooden construction with truss rods, open platforms, windows that open (but some do not stay open) and signal cords. Dormitorios (sleeping cars) are operated between Havana and Santiago and between Havana and Caibarien. The railings on their platforms are polished brass. The road bed is a little rough and the little cars rock and sway. It was a joy to ride in the ancient equipment behind a neat eight wheeler or a light Pacific.

The road also has some gas

## DISPATCHER PAGE 2

motor cars, which pull trailers, on the short runs."

The F. C. C. (Cuba Railroad) is better equipped and the main track is in good condition. This road expected to be 100% Diesel by April 1, 1955.

Some steam engines were being used at Santiago, on branch lines and in switching service as of March 1, but more Diesels were being delivered at that time. Others were being stored "en buen estado" in the main yard at the Shops at Camaguey for emergencies. These consisted of Ten Wheelers with road numbers in the 30 series and the 200's; Consolidations in the 300 series and Mikados, 2-8-2, in the 350 series. The latter are the largest engines found in Cuba.

The road has acquired 16 Budd rail diesel cars and these operate through to Havana, single or in multiple.

In addition to the above described systems, there are many short lines and hundreds of sugar plantation railroads at the "Centrales". The most interesting of these was the Ferrocarril Cubano de Hershey (Hershey Candy Co. railroad). It operates an electric line with catenary suspension overhead and pantographs from Casa Blanca (across the bay from Havana) to Matanzas - 56 miles. The big sugar mill and shops are at Central Hershey. Some steam remains, including 2-6-0's, 2-8-0's and 4-6-0, which are used on some of the branch lines. They are standard gauge.

Some of the sugar Central roads are narrow gauge and many of the engines on these privately owned railways are beautifully maintained.

It will take you months, if not years, to cover all the railroad lines of Cuba. (4-19-55)

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED  
IN RHSofSD MEMBERSHIP, or

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED  
IN THIS NEWS BULLETIN  
Please write: Eric Sanders  
7861 Normal Ave., La Mesa, Calif.

## DISPATCHER

Published four to six times a year as the unofficial publication of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego. Mailing address is 7861 Normal Ave., La Mesa. Phone is HO 9-1288.

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Richard Dodge

### EDITORIAL COMMENT

Meetings of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego are few and far between. Doug Duncan, president, suggests that a meeting can and will be held anytime a member wants to organize one. Just speak up!

Activity is going on, however. Your officers have met with various people in regard to the SD&AE 104 preservation project.

This activity should be reported. Members should also have a regular means of communication. The RHSofSD Newsletter, previously published, seemed inadequate.

Doug Duncan agreed with yours truly that a regular publication might be helpful. So we went ahead with this unofficial RHSofSD publication. The name has been changed and the method of printing has been changed from ditto to mimeo.

Help was forthcoming. Dick Dodge and Doug have both promised contributions on a regular basis. The editor's wife came up with the "flag" for the publication. Copy is solicited from all members.

It'll cost something if it is to be continued. Interested?

Articles planned for future issues include the "Silverton In 1955," the rail phase of the new mole pier project, steam operations at Plaster City, and a report on Chicago electric operations.

Model railroad club news might be published if anyone is interested.

In the meantime who wants to call a meeting of the RHSofSD?

The Editor

## ALONG THE LINES <sup>3</sup>

From Here and There

By  
Douglas Ian Duncan

With increased loading of cotton and other materials and products in and around the San Diego area, it looks as if 1955 could be a near record peacetime year for both the SD & AE and AT & SF railways. New lineside industries have been constructed in National City, El Cajon and La Mesa and the first tracks of the new 10th Avenue mole pier are in service.

Santa Fe local switching trains seem to grow longer each month as the National City Industrial Area expands with new warehouse facilities over the acreage which was once the tie treatment plant. SD&AE's new big customer, cotton from Lower California, will be even a bigger customer because of new lower rates from the valley which give our port the advantage over Los Angeles.

Several signs of older times were noted the other day. SDEr tracks seem to show through the black-top paving---at La Jolla, Bird Rock, Park Jct., along Imperial, Market and Pacific, and "F" street during new pipe line construction---all reminders of what was once the most modern electric railway in the United States in 1925. The last of it faded six years ago and today San Diego has transit problems like so many of the other cities with the famous "Safety-Courtesy-Service" system.

The Modern Tramway, a British publication, tells that the last remaining PCC (Class six) cars of SDTS\* have been sold to the street railway of Santos, Brazil, and will be the first cars of this type in South America.

For trolley fans! Autoprints has a swell series of Trolley Prints---a total of eight colored views---just a buck and suitable for framing. Quality Agency, P.O. Box 683, Grand Central Station, New York 17, New York.

\*(Ed. Said cars are still in town.)

# The S.D. & A.E.

Various SD&AE officials provided the Dispatcher with the following information....

A new cotton track will be built on SD&AE land between First and Fifth Avenues. Capacity will be 34 cars.....the new La Mesa team track has been built and is now in use. It's a two car capacity track on the west edge of La Mesa's Industrial area. It replaces a team track at the old La Mesa station. The station is gone and the loading area is no more.

Out in El Cajon a new General Mills spur has been constructed and is in use.

Mr. Eichenlaub reports that cotton traffic is expected to increase with the added facilities being planned on the mole pier to be built from harbor bond money. He also expected an increase in fertilizer and scrap iron traffic.

The SD&AE Roustabout goes to Coronado on Monday and Wednesday (extras as needed), El Cajon on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, Chula Vista daily except Sunday. Trips are made to San Ysidro as needed.

Doug Duncan reports that both former SD&AE observation cars #02 and #04 have been burned. SD&AE replaced this work equipment with two "new" old SP coaches. Coach #208 is now being used along with the two combines on the Calexico run. One car lays over each night in San Diego.

The El Cajon Valley News reports that SD&AE intends to extend its trackage to Broadway. Rumor has it that the track will also be extended to Gillespie Field. Shades of Santee and Lakeside!! Of course, all this depends upon what plans the State Division of Highways has for road access in this particular area.

Former observation car #03 plus one or two combines are located on the Carriso siding.

**BIG DEAL IN LA MESA.** Mrs. S. reports. that a train tied up two blocks of traffic including two Greyhounds. Big town!

## Society News Items

Your secretary is happy to report that RHSofSD has been invited to submit an application for membership in the Western Railfan Convention. The first convention is scheduled for early September in Fresno.

Gene Glenn (PRS) reports that those attending are expected to ride a special train from Los Angeles to Fresno.

Your Society officers have been working hard on the SD&AE locomotive preservation project. Four contracting companies have been contacted. Only one company reports that it can do the job. The price is impossible to meet. An attempt to interest north county communities in the project has also failed. Mr. Paul Mannen and the Board of Directors of the 22nd District Agricultural Association (Del Mar Fair) are checking costs. Very simply, the outlook is not good.

Elsewhere in the Dispatcher the suggestion is made that members are invited to help with the meeting schedule. If a member is interested in helping out, please contact Doug Duncan (AT 4-0333).

### TO FILL UP SPACE THE NEWS IN BRIEF

The RDC railcars used by ATSF between San Diego and Los Angeles now sport the familiar AT&SF locomotive color scheme.....rapid transit came to Cleveland on March 15.....On Sunday, June 19, rapid transit to Glendale from Los Angeles will be no more.....LATL's rail abandonment on lines F, 5, 7, 8 and portions of W and 9 took place during the early hours of Sunday, May 22.....Out-of-towners might be interested to know that Star and Crescent Boat Co. has petitioned the state P.U.C. to allow a 10¢ one way fare on the North Island run. Fare is still 5¢.....Margo-Pacific S.S. Co. this month inaugurates passenger service between San Diego and Mazatlan-Acapulco.