

Dispatcher

Issue 21 Railway Historical Society of San Diego, California November 1, 1958

ENGINE SMOKE IN THE STANISLAUS

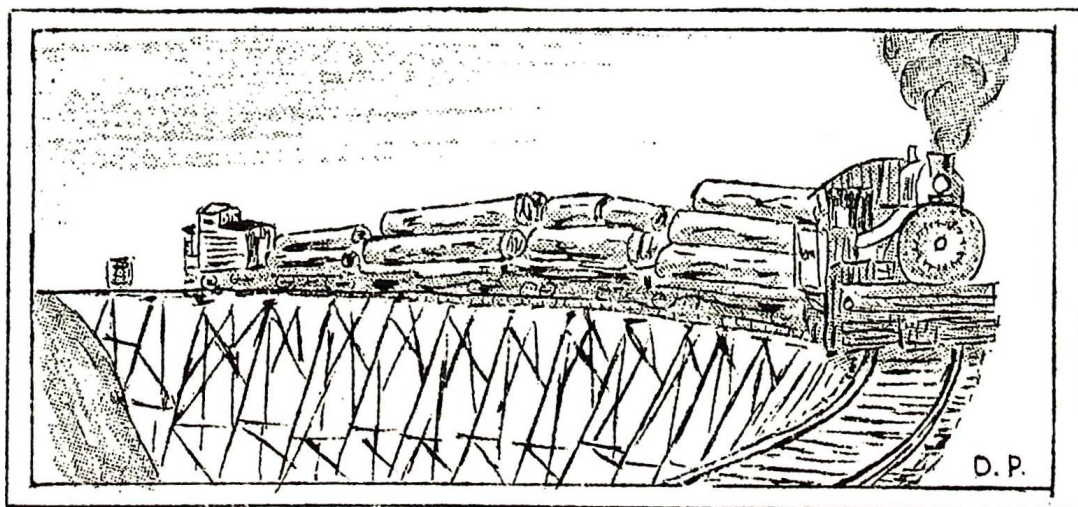
By DICK PENNICK

February, 1958, witnessed the final actions in the acquisition of the West Side Lumber Company by the larger, more modern Pickering Lumber Corporation of Standard, California, southeast of Sonora. Now known as the West Side Lumber Co. division of Pickering, the two companies continue to operate independently.

Many railroad enthusiasts are aware of the logging railroads operated by these two companies, one standard gauge, the other narrow, deep into the tall timber of the Stanislaus National Forest. Many other fans, however, are discovering these fascinating operations for the first time. The writer here wishes to present a summary of operations on the two lines, primarily the narrow gauge West Side line, as they exist at present.

Pickering, symbolized by a pick-on-ring insignia, owns 75 miles of standard gauge line north from Ralph, Calif., on the Sierra R. R. Tackling grades as steep as 4.7%, the track climbs from 2300 feet at Standard to a maximum of 4767 feet at Soap Creek Pass.

The log trains wind across forty-eight bridges and trestles, one of which, a long, curving timber trestle, was recently abandoned in favor of a route across the earthen Lyons Dam.



HERE IS A SKETCH WHICH WILL HELP THE READER CAPTURE THE FLAVOR OF THESE MOUNTAIN LOGGING OPERATIONS.

RHSofSD acquires San Francisco "Iron Monster" street car. See story on page six. Look for RHSofSD Calendar of Events on page three of this issue.

During the operating season, fifty section hands and fourteen bridgemen are required to keep this mountain network in repair.

Pickering has had two bright yellow diesels on its roster since 1957. However, five heavy shays, nos. 6, 7, 8, 11, and 33, are working daily deep in the woods about thirty miles north of the Standard mill. The diesels operate north as far as Schoettgen (pron: shotgun), which is the steam and diesel division point. Steam can also be seen at Beardsley's, on the Middle Fork of the Stanislaus River, near Pine Crest.

Schoettgen Pass is accessible by a winding dirt road, but Beardsley's would require a bit of hiking. Points accessible by road, or most nearly accessible are: Schoettgen Pass, Grohl, Sour Grass, and Beaver Creek Camp, not including grade crossings.

It was understood, according to the present schedule, that there is a steam train due at Schoettgen Pass about 3:30 P. M. during the week, however, a check with the Pickering dispatcher would be advisable before going in search of their trains.

Four steam engines, three of which, 1, 5, and 10, are Heislars and the fourth a Shay, 12, are rusting out of use at the Standard mill. It was reported unofficially that one of the Shays operating in the woods may soon be sold and has been quoted in the neighborhood of \$3000.

Another Pickering Shay, the two-spot, has been on display at Standard City for about two years. No vandalism of any sort is yet apparent and may never be.

On the other side of the fence, at Tuolumne (Pron: tu-walomy) several miles southeast of Standard, lies Pickering's West Side mill, better known as the West Side Lumber Company.

It is to this tiny lumber town, high in the Sierras, that an increasing number of steam narrow-gauge enthusiasts are trekking to marvel at this extremely rare operation.

West Side operates six three foot gauge Shays over 58 miles of 35-60 pound rail to the present terminus at Camp 45. In addition, the two-spot, a 60 year old Heisler, and No. 12, a Shay, are stored in the open at the mill.

The two-spot is one of two Heislars and is the oldest engine on the line. The other Heisler, No. 3, is similar to 2, but is equipped with standard-gauge trucks to shuttle loaded and empty freight cars between the mill and Sierra Railroad's Tuolumne Yard. Talk of a diesel has never been heard in West Side circles.

SOME FACTS according to West Side officials

Construction of the line began in 1898, and all work on the first 12 miles was performed by Chinese hand labor, supplies being hauled by pack animals, mostly burros. The next 26 miles were also the product of hand labor, though the Chinese were replaced by whites. The balance of the construction was done by machinery, first the gas shovel and later modern bulldozers and scrapers.

The railroad was originally incorporated as the Hetch-Hetchy & Yosemite Vy. R. R. (not to be confused with the Hetch-Hetchy Railroad operated by the Sierra R.R. However, this company was dissolved about 1937.

The Feather River Short Line Rail Road is planned for the Plumas County Fair at Quincy. Locomotive would be Hobart Southern-Clover Valley Lumber Co. No. 8. It is a 2-6-2 Prairie. Log cars and a caboose were also donated by the Clover Valley outfit.

Published four to six times a year as the official publication of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego.

Society officers include: Corky Thomson, president, and Tom Matson, recording secretary. Barbara Thomson is Newsletter editor. Society mailing address is Box 9351, San Diego 9, Calif. Dispatcher staff includes:

Editor and

Publisher: Eric Sanders

Associate Editor: Douglas Duncan

Associate Editor: Richard Dodge

Art Editor: Ellen Sanders

Circulation: Allan Copeland

Typing: Joe Strapac

Dispatcher mailing address is 7861 Normal Ave., La Mesa. Phone HO 9-1288. Separate subscriptions: 9 issues for \$1. A \$2.50 active or sustaining membership includes a Dispatcher subscription.

PICKERING-WEST SIDE STORY continued

Maximum mileage of the line was 72.0 miles, back in 1949. Roadbed is all dirt, no rock ballast used. Grades: 0 to 5%, mostly favorable, for the first 19.0 miles; the next 31.0 miles are level, and the last 8.0 miles are 2.5%, adverse to the loads.

Curves reach 60°!

Six foot ties are used, mostly local incense cedar.

There are four bridges on the line, all of which are timber trestles. They are located at Miles 7.0, 38.0 (the longest, 320'), 44.0 (the highest, 76'), and 49.0.

Watchmen are stationed at each of the bridges during the operating season for fire protection.

There are 18 passing tracks, 10 water stations, and 4 oil stations scattered along the line.

Four camps are located on the railroad; Camp 24, railroad maintenance, Camp Clavey, logging, Camp Niagara, logging, and Camp 45, logging.

The line rises from 2,650 feet elevation at Tuolumne to a maximum 5,170 feet at Camp Niagara.

Train capacity for first 19.0 miles is 19 cars loaded with approximately 90,000 board feet of logs. The capacity for the remaining 39 miles is 38 cars hauling about 180,000 board feet.

Usually six trains operate daily except Sunday in two divisions; two trains leaving shortly after midnight, and another two at about 7:30 A.M., returning in eleven or twelve hours. Average speed is 7-8 miles per hour.

West Side operates roughly from May 15th to November 1st, depending on the weather.

350,000 board feet of lumber are shipped daily via railroad, and an additional 100,000 board feet by highway, making the total daily production roughly 450,000 board feet. Yearly production is estimated at approximately 46,000,000 board feet.

For the photographer, there are numerous points along the line which are ideally suited for pictures, many of which are accessible by car.

Points of special interest are the four bridges and the numerous balloon loops. The loop nearest Tuolumne is reached by a half-mile hike from the grade crossing, up the right-of-way.

RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 14	Picnic at Travel Town, Griffith Park, Los Angeles
September 16	Board of Directors at Thomsons' home
October 6	General Meeting, Safety Room, Santa Fe Station
October 12	Grizzly Flats and Pioneer Mill Railroad excursion

The first bridge, over the Tuolumne River at Mile 7.0, is accessible by road, and is a favorite with photographers. All bridges are built on curves. Camp 45 can also be reached by the narrow, winding dirt road.

A jeep is about the best conveyance in the logging country, but an ordinary passenger car, in good condition, would suffice.

The West Side management is most receptive to railfans. Arthur H. Ronten (pron: Ron-teen), Woods and Railroad Superintendent, is quite congenial and is prepared to answer any questions about the narrow-gauge line.

With reference to fans riding one of the narrow-gauge trains into the woods, restrictive insurance and the condition of the track makes this virtually impossible.

A trip of that sort would obviously be a complete sellout. The scenery is indescribably spectacular, and icy water fills the streams and rivers the year 'round.

It appears, however, that the famed West Side narrow-gauge may not be around for very much longer, according to Neil Vodden, treasurer of the Central Coast Railway Club, and others familiar with the West Side operation. Realistically, its demise seems overdue in this age of progress.

With this in mind, this writer intends to return to the big woods to capture again in picture and sound the fascinating three-foot gauge railroading of the West Side Lumber Company.

-- --

ROSTER of LOCOMOTIVES WEST SIDE LUMBER COMPANY

<u>Number</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Trucks</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Built</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
2	Heisler	2	35 tons	1898	Stored
*3	"	2			In service
7	Shay	2	65 tons	1911	"
8	"		80 tons	1922	"
9	"		80 tons	1923	"
**10	"		80 tons	1928	"
12	"		65 tons	1926	Stored
14	"	2	65 tons	1916	In service
15	"	2	65 tons	1913	"

* On standard gauge trucks.

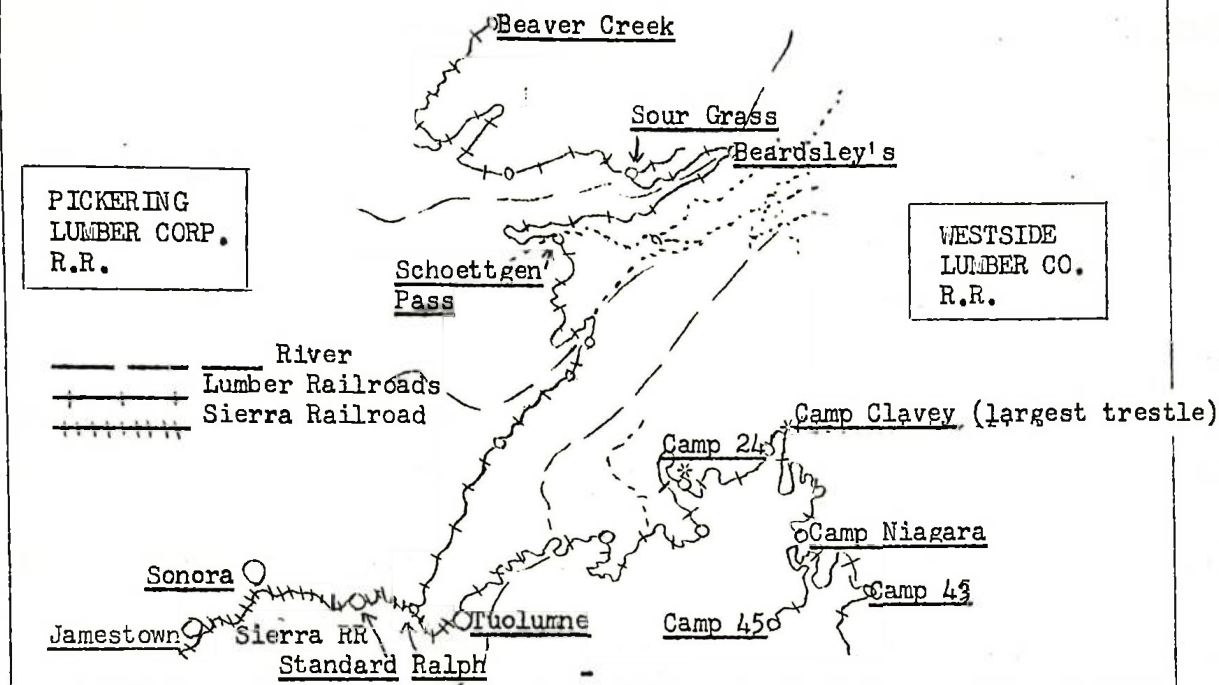
** One of the heaviest narrow-gauge Shays ever built.

Shay type locomotives were built by the Lima Locomotive Works, Lima, Ohio. This company merged with The Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1950.

Heisler type locomotives were built by Heisler Locomotive Co., Erie, Pennsylvania, until 1941. In that year the patents covering this design of locomotive were sold to the H. K. Porter Co. and the Heisler Co. was dissolved. Porter, however, never built any Heisler locomotives, as the market for geared logging locomotives fell through during the depression. Scattered orders for Shays continued until 1945, when the last one was built for the Western Maryland. --JS

NEWS IN BRIEF: Carl Helfin, new owner of the Narrow Gauge Motel, reissued the Narrow Gauge News. Your editor received Number 80, July, 1958.....Donald Duke wants information about McKeen cars. An eastern group wants information on Mack rail cars. We'll forward items submitted.....Orange Empire now owns LATL 1201, BCER 1225, SDTS 508, MCL 00150 and MCL 00157.....Tom Sefton wonders if readers have noted the former SDEry Class 8 car body to the north of Alvarado Parkway?.....Pennick suggests that readers note rail news in Arizona Highways: 7-44; 11-48; 6-49; 6-50; 11-50 and 5-55.

WEST SIDE LUMBER COMPANY
 PICKERING LUMBER CORP.
 Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties



Roster of Locomotives
 PICKERING LUMBER CORPORATION

No.	Type	Trucks	Driv.	Cyl.	Weight	Boiler Press.	Tractive Effort	Builder, Date	Disposit.
1	Heisler	3	40	18x16	170000	180	32500	Heis. 1913	Retired
2	"	3	38	16x15	150000	180	26000	" 1917	Trav. Town
3	Shay	2	36	12x12	125000	180	24000	Lima 1910	Display
5	Heisler	3	40	18x16	172000	180	32500	Heis. 1912	Retired
6	Shay	3	36	13x15	198200	200	35100	Lima 1921	In Serv.
7	"	3	36	13x15	196000	200	35100	" 1925	"
8	"	3	36	14x15	209800	200	40400	" 1924	"
10	Heisler	3	40	18x15	166000	180	30000	Heis. 1912	Retired
11	Shay	3	36	13x15	193300	200	38200	Lima 1929	In serv.
12	"	3	36	14x12	159600	180	29100	" 1903	Retired
33	"	3	36	14x15	202600	200	40400	" 1922	In serv.

NOTES:

- 1 Ex Sunset Timber Co. 1, Dempsey Lbr. Co. 1
- 2 Ex Hetch Hetchy R. R. 2
- 3 Ex Sugar Pine Ry. 3, Standard Lbr. Co. 3; both lines were predecessors of Pickering.
- 5 Ex Sugar Pine Ry. 5, Standard Lbr. Co. 5; last used on CCR Club excursion 10/57.
- 6 Ex Hetch Hetchy R. R. 6
- 7 Ex Fruit Growers Supply Co. 5, Standard Logging Co. 80
- 8 Ex Cascade Timber Co. 108, Long-Bell Lbr. Co. 1008
- 10 Ex Blue Jay Lumber Co. 10
- 11 Ex Forest Lumber Co. 5
- 12 Ex Sierra Ry. of Calif. (Orig. name of Sierra R. R.) 12, purchased 1924.
- 33 Apparently built new.

LOGGING RAILROADS

Operating in California
1958

COLLINS PINE CO., Chester, operating common carrier Almanor Railroad

DIAMOND MATCH CO., Sterling City, Chico

FEATHER RIVER PINE MILLS, INC., Feather Falls, operating common carrier Feather River Railroad

FRUIT GROWERS SUPPLY CO., Hilts

HAMMOND LUMBER CO., Samoa

LONG-BELL LUMBER CO., Weed, Tennant

McCLOUD RIVER LUMBER CO., McCloud, operating common carrier McCloud River R.R. Co.

MICHIGAN-CALIFORNIA LUMBER CO., Camino, operating common carrier Camino, Placerville and Lake Tahoe Railroad

PICKERING LUMBER CORP., Standard, Tuolumne (n.g.). Narrow-gauge formerly West Side Lumber Company

QUINCY LUMBER CO., Quincy, operating common carrier Quincy Railroad

RALPH L. SMITH LUMBER CO., Canby

SIMPSON REDWOOD CO., Korbelt, operating common carrier Arcata & Mad River R. R.

THE PACIFIC LUMBER CO., Scotia

WINTON LUMBER CO., Martell, operating common carrier Amador Central Railroad

...this information may not be wholly up to date, but is as complete as present information allows.

DP

FLASH=RHSofSD TO ACQUIRE SF STREET CAR

At press time (Sep.20) it appeared certain that the Railway Historical Society of San Diego would acquire a San Francisco street car. Car would be one of the remaining "Iron Monsters" (170, 171, 176, 181, 184 and 186).

The Board of Directors which had prior approval to arrange for purchase of a Los Angeles Transit Lines narrow gauge street car upon hearing of the availability of a San Francisco car decided to arrange for the purchase of the latter type car. The San Francisco cars are standard gauge and are in operating condition. At a previous meeting RHSofSD members although deciding not to spread themselves

too thin did decide to authorize Society officers to search for one piece of operating equipment which would remain in Society hands.

Location for the car is as yet undetermined. Being considered are sites at Del Mar and the United Railway Museum at Perris, and a rental location at the Orange Empire layout, a subsidiary group at Perris.

The Society also has ownership of SDery car body #54 and a degree of control of SDES 528 which was placed on permanent display at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

The project will be discussed at the October 6 general meeting.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Supplement to Issue 21

The Dispatcher has had to take a back seat this summer. Dick Dodge has been out of town, Doug Duncan has been working overtime or traveling back east, and your editor has been busy helping tend a new baby and adjusting to a new school job. But, somehow, Issues 20 and 21 have been put together. And we'll begin working on Issue 22.

Now here's some homework for all loyal readers. What is your answer to the question, "What features do you want to find in the Dispatcher?" In other words, what are your likes and dislikes?

Credit Trains Magazine staff with good editorial judgment. Did you note that Trains for October featured the West Side Lumber Company---the subject of this issue of the Dispatcher. Just a coincidence, but sort of an interesting coincidence. The Dispatcher staff, like the Trains Magazine staff, had noticed that western railfans are becoming more and more interested in the logging railroads. BHSofSD Member Dick Pennick is noted for his interest in these mountain lines - - - so...

The California Public Utilities Commission has approved Santa Fe's discontinuing the morning northbound Golden Gate and the southbound mail train number 6---subject to certain conditions. More clarification later. (Western Railroader)

Back to the feature story, "Engine Smoke in the Stanislaus." Please make two corrections as follows: 1. On page one change "Lyon's Dam" to "Beardsley's Dam." 2). On the map, page 5, please add this identification, " - - - abandoned trackage."

Latest issue of the Pacific Railway Journal, a direct reprint of the Baldwin Magazine on the Milwaukee Road, is now available. Steam and juice operations on this transcontinental road prior to World War II are thoroughly covered, and additional pictures have been added to the work to bring it up-to-date. Price is \$2.00 a copy from the Pacific Railway Journal, 2304 Melville Drive, San Marino. Proceeds from the sale of this issue will be used in part to finance Richard Dodge's "One Man's Town Electric Railway."

- For sale:
1. Science of Railways, World Railway Publishing Co., 1902. 12 Vol. Fine condition. \$15 (fifteen dollars)
 2. Olin D. Wheeler, Wonderland. Illustrated with photographs. Northern Pacific Railroad, St. Paul, 1906. Paper covered pamphlet, 75 p., very fine condition, \$1.50.
 3. Wall Map of the Union Pacific System. 5' by 4' \$4. About 1910.

For the above please contact the Dispatcher.

The National Railway Historical Society, Inc., Lehigh Valley Chapter, will sell: 1. "The Liberty Bell Route's 700 Series Interurbans." 16 pp., 14 photos., etc. \$.50. 2. "Railroads in the Lehigh Valley, Steam Operation 1836-1953. \$1.25. 3. "The Liberty Bell Route's 800 Series Interurbans." \$1.00

Coming up in the Dispatcher: Fritz Schumacher describes the Disneyland Railroad. News about the Rogue River Valley and Dale Gentry's Railroad. Also story of Charles Gerdes' work on SDery car body #54. Help needed!