

Dispatcher

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GRAND CANYON BY STEAM CARS

by K. Fritz Schumacher

A new treat is in store for passengers of Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad. Service has been extended to the rim of Grand Canyon and a new train has been added to the S T E A M -liner fleet.

Three trains are now in regular service on the route, which permits a breathtaking dioramic view of the largest canyon on earth. They operate on close headway and are scheduled to arrive at canyon rim at daybreak, regardless of their time of departure from Main Street depot of Disneyland, Anaheim, California. The trains enter a tunnel along the south rim. Passengers instinctively hang on to railings or seats as they look into the seemingly bottomless gorge carved by the Colorado River. The track is laid on a ledge on which the remains of Indian cliff dwellings are in evidence.

The train chuffs slowly along the entire 3,672 inch diorama, painted on a special seamless canvas. The illusion of depth is created by accurate perspective and true color shading on the 408 inch high canvas.

The weather in the high Arizona desert is subject to change without notice. Frequently, in early afternoon, violent thunderstorms vent their intense rage. Brilliant flashes of lightning threaten to rip the canvas from top to bottom. The inspiring strains of "Grand Canyon Suite," coming over the public address system, are momentarily drowned out by loud thunderclaps. The sky over the canyon seems to pour out lavishly the precious, life-giving, rain. The sight-seers on the train, however, are well protected from the elements by the overhanging rock ledge which roofed former cliff dwellings.

The storm ends as suddenly as it began. The sun comes out and a rainbow appears. A last glimpse of the canyon at sunset reveals the Colorado River at the bottom, winding its way to the distant

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SURVEYING FOR THE SAN DIEGO AND ARIZONA

by Mrs. Isabelle Ferguson

Soon after the Mexican War, more than 100 years ago, San Diego woke up to a demand for a direct rail line to the East, having its western terminus here. Two justifiable reasons provided the urge. One, a military necessity and the other to develop the port of San Diego.

Like all sizeable enterprises, it is one thing to build and another to make way for that building. So, before a railroad bed is determined and ties and rails set, the reconnaissance survey has to be made and the stakes set.

Experts had called this particular "dream" the "Impossible Railroad," on account of the dangerous and practically inaccessible terrain through the Laguna mountain range. So, to accomplish such an undertaking nothing less than just that -- the "impossible" must be tackled.

That is where this bit of history comes in, the story of surveying for that impossible railroad.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Isabelle Ferguson, widow of the late Frank Ferguson who was in charge of field engineering for the San Diego and Arizona Railroad, was recently acclaimed as the first teacher in the Miramar School. This school, permanently closed at the end of the 1957-58 school year, was opened as an institution of learning 62 years ago.

The only railroad into San Diego terminated at the Santa Fe depot at the foot of Broadway. Its passenger and freight business was seldom extensive enough to provide much interest among the citizenry. However, when the evening train on January 7, 1907 brought an unusual group of passengers, an aroused curiosity gathered inquisitive onlookers. Twelve young men,

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noticeable by their apparel as surveyors, made their way to a couple of cumbersome horse drawn buses which went clattering off up the hill to Hotel Robinson. Something tangible must be going to happen about the long awaited rail line to the East.

Presently, freight cars rolled up and a group of teamsters proceeded to unload horses. They mounted some and led the others off several blocks to the Granger Corral for the night.

Next morning, Frank Ferguson, first assistant, began setting up the San Diego and Arizona office for E. J. Kallright, Chief Engineer. It was in the Granger Building, then in the business section of town.

At the same time, down at the Santa Fe depot, the rest of the party were busy organizing carloads of equipment: one four horse wagon loaded with surveyors' instruments, tables, chairs, cots, sleeping bags, canteens, etc.; one six horse wagon contained tents, blacksmith and kitchen heavy items, nosebags and grain, with spaces on outside for bailed hay; a four horse wagon carrying food supplies and provisions left over from the last job at Salton Sea, with room for more to be purchased in San Diego before the take-off; then a two horse wagon with surveying apparatus, personal duffle bags, plus first aid kits, cameras, etc. The bags were so arranged as to provide comfortable (?) riding for the surveyors.

Other personnel consisted of teamsters, stable boys, cooks and helpers, and finally, the big saddle horse Black Boy, Ferguson's pride and joy for field duty.

Another day was spent at the corral assembling, organizing, briefing, etc. while some of the boys took in the "village" or made a rush to the beach. Contrast all this preparation with today's trucking transportation which could have handled the whole deal with a maximum of efficiency and with conservation of time and energy.

Connecting with the Santa Fe at the foot of Broadway and running a line to the Mexican border was simple procedure along practically level ground. Camp was set up at San Ysidro on the U. S. side.

Crossing the International Boundary next day, however, was quite tedious and complicated affair owing to much red tape and checking by meticulous Mexican officers at Tijuana.



Next day starting from the 100 foot elevation there, the climb to 765 feet at Valle de Redondo required a 1.4 per cent grade. Slowly, over a rutty dusty, dirt road the topography was not too rugged for the teams and camp was made in pleasant scenic surroundings in the valley of a Mexican cattle ranch.

For the field men, though, it was not that easy. Their trek was up the rough mountain side pursuing a low per cent where there had to be a turn in the shape of a horse shoe continuing up until almost parallel to the two lines below. Back and forth they worked through rocky brush land until satisfactory stakes could be set.

From Redondo to Tecate Valley progress slowed somewhat, going through a steep, narrow, rocky gorge called "La Puerto," the Door.

This opened into the lush meadow of another huge Mexican cattle ranch where the picturesque pueblo of Tecate looked inviting. Groups of adobe houses among grapevines and pepper trees sheltered Mexican and Indian families supported by Vaqueros (cowboys). Life there was typical - everybody sleeping or singing to a guitar, washing clothes or raising patches of beans and chile peppers.

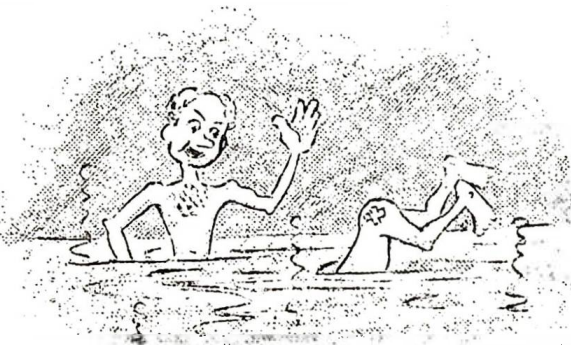
A restful place for a nearby campsite! Interesting too because it was only a couple of miles to the U.S. town of Potrero where everyone in the party crossed the line to get their first mail out.

Terrain in the region north and east of Tecate consisted of rough rolling hills so camp was not moved until the surveyors reached Campo, 13 miles farther at

at elevation 2690. On the way to Campo, the line had to provide for two tunnels aggregating 1214 feet in length. At another point which they named "Lindero" (meaning the line) they crossed the International line so that the future railroad would enter a tunnel in Old Mexico and come out in the United States, thus entering the United States underground. Recreation and romance came into the picture at Campo, a characteristic dance in the old stone store and a future wife for Frank Ferguson.

The highest elevation, 3660 feet at Hipass, was reached after a stiff climb and the crossing of Campo Creek. The 175 foot high bridge there is known as Ferguson's bridge because when about to be completed, an inspector noted it was a very slight degree out of alignment. Ferguson was consulted and came from another job but he determined that the error was on the contractor and thus the incident left his memory.

From Hipass to Jacumba was practically down hill and not too rugged. Jacumba at that time was a stopping place for the few travelers between Phoenix and San Diego. One such was an Italian produce peddler who made a monthly round trip from Yuma to San Diego with a two-horse wagon load of watermelons, etc. This is fantastic but true. The only inhabitants were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Foster. He, a tubercular case from Boston and she, a rough and ready pioneer character capable of handling any situation. Her greeting as the advance camp wagon pulled in before the half finished adobe house was, "Hey fellows! Heard you were coming. Does my heart good to see that many human beings here at one time. Have a drink!" Water cooled in canvas bags hung on posts of the "ramada" or open porch. "Have a bath in our famous sulphur water. Bath house yonder!"



Behind a small paper and lath shed there was an oblong hole in the ground filled about waist deep with warm smelly sulphur water. This was edged with planks to give the appearance of a tub.

The swankiest pool of today couldn't have provided more fun than those boys had! Only room for four at a time so they disported and regaled themselves in nature's sun suits until all were refreshed. They even dunked their shirts and put them back on to dry in the desert heat.

Lady Foster had gone to Campo the day before and now surprised her visitors with a most welcome sack of mail. Then she and Joe entertained with tales of their experiences in this outpost of civilization. Every year Mrs. Foster made three trips via buckboard to San Diego to deposit the take of her lucrative business in the bank. A few miles across the line some of the boys (gringos) took in a Mexican dance in a small adobe ranch home. As many of the gathering as could squeeze inside danced in turn while the others waited outside and whittled sticks. You could pick a senorita off the wall but had to be careful not to monopolize anyone. Fresh barbecued beef, coffee and tortillas were to be had until sunrise.

That was the last semblance of "take it easy" for next camp was set up at the top of Carrizo Gorge. Reconnaissance from there down to the desert floor was to be the "piece de resistance" of the whole expedition. Looking from a view point it was evident that Mother Nature never intended a railroad should be built through such formidable terrain.

An administration house was erected at the site of the erstwhile headquarters, lumber and materials having been hauled these 90 miles from San Diego. An Engineers' office and living quarters and pharmacy for a resident nurse from Los Angeles. Miss Davies with her chaperone sister set up hospital facilities. (These ladies happened to be the Misses Davies of Campo.) Accidents could be expected until the bottom of the Gorge would be reached. There were cuts, bruises, broken and

sprained limbs, sore muscles, snake bites, various poisonings, fevers, colds, and such had to be cared for. Also Mr. Kalright's visits would be more frequent and even official field trips.

It was hard to realize the gruelling progress the men were able to make day by day. Truly, Carrizo Gorge could have been one of the Creator's dumping places. Nothing but rock formations of every conceivable size, shape and kind lined the sides of this thousand foot deep canyon. Establishing a railroad line through there, as we look at such a project today, was forty years too soon. Now, a whole reconnaissance is determined from a plane and the technical work done in the comfortable main offices. For some time, until an area about half way down the gorge was reached, the field men had to make daily contact with camp. They carried instruments, lunches, water, etc. They scaled huge boulders and sheer rock walls. Many times this would only be accomplished by rope, often slipping or falling---sometimes into a nest of yucca spikes or sliding down on their seats. At lunch time, they squatted on sizzling stone slabs to eat their hot melted sandwiches and drink, sparingly, hot water from the canteens.

Time came when they had to set up a temporary camp down in the very roughest and narrowest part of the gorge, where they could dig a water hole only big enough to fill up over night and where there was a growth of brittle bunch grass upon which, with a minimum of precious grain, the horses could subsist. They packed the horses with such essentials as a water barrel and dipper, a large tin wash tub with buckets, pots and fry pans, tin dishes and coffee pot, sleeping bags and a small tent for the kitchen, a supply of towels, and then stored all available cavities with canned goods and other required supplies. Each man had to stumble and scramble along, carrying his own bare personal necessities. Today, a family of five or six takes along more equipment for a week end camp than those 20 men had for a month.

The sheer enclosure of the canyon walls through living rock with burning sun overhead seemed the nearest to Hades as they might ever hope to see.

That was the camp where the cook cursed in his native Chinese as he fought flies by day and mosquitoes by night. Dishrag swatters hung all over the place. The shortage of water was "hellie bad." In fact, the men had to wash their socks in the water they saved from washing their faces, after a suffocating hot day's work.

Where rattlesnakes abounded and even found comfortable rendezvous when they discovered what nice cosy spots could be had under the sleeping bags at night. By the way, one of the boy's hobby was the collecting of venom to sell, if and when he ever got back to town. And once, when a man was bitten and his buddy had applied first aid, the poor fellow had to be carried on a horse behind the saddle to headquarters. The jerky scrambling of the animal caused torturous pain but after treatment, Lady Foster's "taxi" brought him to the hospital in San Diego where he recovered.

For evening relaxation or occasional recreation, some of the party would attempt to recline comfortably on solid rock daybeds, others practiced shooting at chollas cactus targets, some took pictures. One of the pictures shows a fellow sprawled out on a boulder and another bent over him giving his buddy a barbar job. Another picture shows a college graduate with a big bar of soap doing his laundry in the tub.

One Saturday, Ferguson, tormented with a wild toothache, climbed to headquarters at the top of the grade and rode Black Boy to a ranch some 30 miles over where the reputed dentist extracted the offender with his professional contrivance (pliers). Not an agreeable round trip but by that time, Black Boy was somewhat used to occasional trips to Campo on more pleasant business. There were thunder and lightning storms, cloudbursts, hot east winds and many catastrophes more or less dangerous.

At last the day came when they all treked back up to headquarters. After a day of orientation, the whole equipage trundled down Mountain Springs grade to a campsite at the mouth of the gorge some miles north of the highway. The grade was not a highway then. It was all the sturdy wagons could do to keep from falling apart as they crunched and slid and bumped along down that steep, rocky, sandy and windy creek bottom. The drivers could not even see their lead teams for the billowing dust.

Anyway, the campsite in a desert wash proved to be a genuine oasis with water and palm trees.

From this more civilized spot, they worked the remaining still torturous mountain terrain until the first stake was set on the trackless desert floor. There were such interesting incidents while there as, when a "manada" of wild burros raised their long ears out of the bunch grass, snorted and fled before "Johnnie could even get his gun." And the night when a couple of swifts (little weasel-like desert animals) raided the food caches. And the family of bighorn sheep that appeared high up among the boulders just long enough to see and be seen. And the time cattle men burned the dead palm leaves on the palm trees, a seasonal practice of controlled burning.

From there to El Centro was nearly a straight line and practically on the level. Thus was finished the survey for the "Impossible Railroad" which was completed in 1919, from 3660 feet above sea level to 49 feet below with 21 tunnels.

Some Old Timers can still hear the loud clanging music of the steam caliope that rode the first engine across the desert (now Imperial Valley) on the memorable day, November 15, 1919, when John D. Spreckels drove the golden spike.

GRAND CANYON BY STEAM CARS (CONTINUED)

Gulf of California. In a few memorable minutes the passenger spends an unforgettable day at Grand Canyon.

The train leaves the tunnel through a covered wood truss bridge. The round trip, all around Disneyland "the happiest place on earth", is completed at nearby Main Street depot. Return to the point of departure is made without retracing a single foot of outbound trackage.

A wide variety of accommodations is offered by the trains of Disneyland's Grand Canyon Line. The "Limited" is famous for cheerfully decorated gay nineties coaches with ventilated vestibules. It is headed by an American type 4-4-0 engine with tall cap stack. On its cab is lettered the name E. P. Ripley, well known in the history of the standard gage Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway.

A freight train offers most unusual first class stock car accommodations. The passenger should not throw up his hands in horror, because the slatted sides of these cars provide the original, fool proof, fresh air conditioning. The slats are removed for the canyon side of the cars. The benches, placed from front to rear, make each car a grandstand on wheels to view the canyon. The motive power for this train is another 4-4-0, American type engine, complete with diamond stack. It is named C. K. Holliday in honor of the first president of the Santa Fe Railway.

The most recent addition to the steam train fleet is a Forney type engine followed by a train of "Narragansett" cars. These open-air passenger cars have no sidewalls or central aisle. Benches across the cars are reached from platforms along both sides.

The wheel arrangement of the engine is 2-4-4. The short tender is mounted on a rigid extension of the engine frame behind the cab. It is supported by the 4-wheel trailing truck. This type of engine was extensively used on both elevated

and surface commuter lines. The abbreviated tender carries enough fuel and water for short trips. Excellent visibility to front and rear eliminated the need for turning at the end of the line.

This engine carries the name Fred Gurley. Mr. Gurley, formerly president of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, is now Chairman of the Board of Directors. He was present at the dedication of the Disneyland Grand Canyon diorama in May 1958. The distinguished engine crew of Gurley and Disney ran the first excursion train over the new Grand Canyon Line.

All of the Santa Fe & Disneyland R. equipment is built to plans of similar equipment formerly used on big brother A. T. & S. F. Ry. The scale: 1 inch on ATSF equals 5/8 inch on SF&D. The life size railroad book of rules governs train movement on both roads. Scale automatic color-light block signals along SF&D tracks are not mere ornaments. They perform the useful function of keeping three trains safely spaced on 1 1/8 mile of mainline track. The sound of melodious steam whistles is not idle "get off the earth" tootling. It is the proper blowing of whistle signals as prescribed in the railroad "bible."

Walt Disney has earned the undying gratitude of steam-starved railfans for creating this oasis of steam in a desert of dieselitis. The day at Grand Canyon of Disneyland passes all too quickly in the few minutes from dawn to dusk. It invites serious consideration of a pilgrimage to the original Grand Canyon on one of the streamliners of the standard gage Grand Canyon Line.

(Editor's note: Thanks to one-time RHSofSD member Fritz Schumacher for the above story. Mr. Schumacher, formerly of La Mesa, now resides in Sierra Madre.

SHOP TALK

RHSofSD has purchased San Francisco Municipal Railway Car 171. Plans call for the car to be located at Del Mar with ownership being retained by the Society.

Four sets of wheels once used on a small-type Santa Fe work car are to be placed in homemade trucks and used under Car Body SDERy 54.

RHSofSD's first Hobby Show on Dec. 7 drew both exhibits and visitors.

See the Winter Issue of "Ships and The Sea" for a feature on the San Diego-Coronado ferries.

Dispatcher's first bull session wound up with Dick Dodge turning in an article on San Diego's horse car lines for a forthcoming issue of the Dispatcher. If you are interested in attending Bull Session #2 let the editor know. Topic will be "Coronado's Railways."

Corrections and additions coming up for Issue #20 discussion of Mojave Northern, S.F. Myny and LANTA. Also for the "West Side" story in Issue 21. Corrected LN roster on page eight this issue.

NEWS BRIEFS

Opposition to a proposed publicly operated Transit Authority for the San Diego area featured a hearing before the Assembly Transportation and Commerce Interim Committee on Nov. 19. Pro-Authority speakers failed to appear. Jesse L. Haugh, SDTS prexy, asked for elimination of the state weight fee (\$48,000 a year), dropping of city franchise fee of \$100,000 a year, revision of state rules about bus types, and quicker PUC action on fares.

The Metropolitan Transit Fact-Finding Committee recommended park-ride facilities with express bus service, underwriting of express service to selected areas, development of bus lanes, underwriting of bus extensions to new residential areas and a public opinion survey.

The San Diego Transit System has earned recognition for outstanding maintenance of its bus fleet. SDTS is the only western system ever to receive this Annual Maintenance Efficiency Award.

Passengers passing through Lindbergh Field in October totalled 61,395 as compared to 57,000 in October 1957.

Injuries were few to the 130 passengers or to the train crew when a southbound Santa Fe San Diegan crashed at 3:20 p.m. Nov. 19 into a Marine jet fighter plane at El Toro. Plane came in too high, missed an arresting cable, and plowed across a field and onto the Santa Fe tracks. A few seconds later the train, emergency brakes applied, ploughed into the major section of the plane. Train had been traveling 75 mph and hadn't slowed much. The rear brakeman at great risk to his life pulled the pilot lying on the ground away from some of the wreckage. Fire broke out just as the two cleared the wreckage. The train hit a wing and threw a section of

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