

Dispatcher

ISSUE 26

RAILWAY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

JUNE 26, 1959

OLD RAILROAD FRIENDS

Welcome!

Welcome to the Del Mar railroad exhibit! Organized by the Railway Historical Society of San Diego and supported by the 22nd District Agricultural Association and the financial contributions of rail-minded San Diegans and San Diego business firms, the exhibit brings back memories to oldsters and offers a reminder of our historic past to future generations.

Three exhibit pieces, SD&AE locomotive #104, SD&A private car "Carriso Gorge," and SDTS street car #528, have been installed at Del Mar, thus completing the first phases of the Society's project.

Already two other exhibit items have been acquired. Old time SDEry trolley car #54 is currently being restored and conventional-type San Francisco Municipal Railway street car #171 has been located at the Orange Empire Traction Co., a planned operating trolley museum at Perris, California.

Countless thousands of folk, young and old, have seen and will see the Society's museum pieces. To enhance your appreciation Dispatcher has prepared Issue 26 as a souvenir of the project.

SD&AE 104

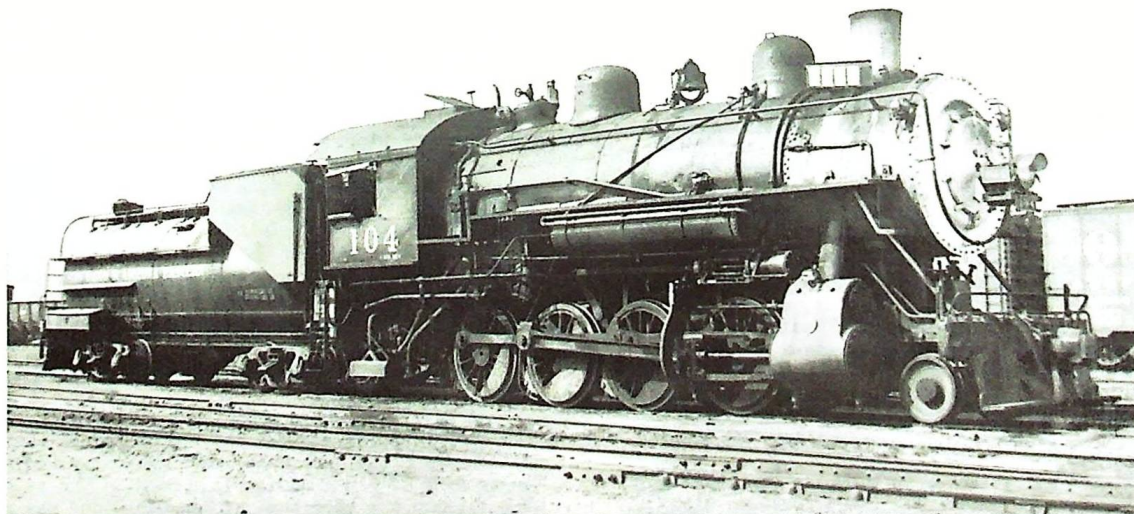
MEET THE MADAME - 104

by Richard V. Dodge

Why do they always refer to a big, black hulk of a locomotive as "she"? Undoubtedly the practice dates back to the early days when the little steam engines were trimly built and were adorned with polished brass and filigree. Or the reason may be that each steam engine wore a "petticoat" just below the smoke stack. Accepting the universal appellation, Number 104 is a Native Daughter of the Keystone State, Pennsylvania.

She was one of the offspring of the Baldwin Locomotive Works near Philadelphia in the year 1904. There she was christened 2720 of the Southern Pacific Lines.

22, 30, 57 were her measurements. The first numeral means that each of her two cylinders is 22 inches in diameter; the next - that the stroke or travel of the piston inside the cylinder is 30 inches; and the tread diameter of the tires on the driving wheels is 57 inches. With a steam pressure by the gauge of 210 pounds



SD&AE 104, at Bayshore, California, September 1, 1952 (D. S. Richter)

THE DISPATCHER

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per square inch, she could develop a theoretical Tractive Effort or pulling force of 45,470 pounds. To keep her from slipping or "losing her feet" on shiny or wet rails, most of her weight, 191,900 pounds of it, was applied to the driving wheels, of which there are eight, the remainder on a 2-wheel "pony" truck at the pilot or front end. In other words, the wheel arrangement is 2 - 8 - 0, since there are no small wheels behind the drivers. This type of engine, in railroad vernacular, is called a "Consolidation" and was the iron work-horse of the country's rail lines for many years.

At the youthful age of 17 she was adopted by foster parents and took the name: San Diego and Arizona Railway Number 104. The S. D. & A. Railway had been opened from San Diego, California, via Tijuana and a portion of Baja California, Mexico, through Campo and Carriso Gorge to El Centro, California, on December 1, 1919, a distance of 146 miles.

Beginning at tidewater, in San Diego, there was a climb to an elevation of 3,657 feet at the Tecate Divide. Dropping to 2,835 feet at Jacumba, the descent began, through the Gorge, then out into the vast Imperial Valley, ending at El Centro, 49 feet below the level of the sea.

El Centro was the junction point with the Southern Pacific system, providing a through route via S. P. to the International Border (Calxico-Mexicali), the Inter-California Railway in Baja California to another point on the International Border (Algodones-Cantu), and then the S. P. to Yuma and eastern points.

One of 104's engineers, Christian N. Brown, now retired, related that she was the smoothest riding of the consolidation type engines. For this reason, during the time (1922 to 1926) passenger trains numbers 101 and 102 made connections with the Southern Pacific's Sunset Limited at Niland, she was frequently given the honor of pulling "the string of varnish."

But, for most of her years, she just shugged along, heading the mixed or straight freight trains, moving all kinds of merchandise between Imperial Valley and the Harbor of the Sun.

In 1923, 104 was selected to star, as the leading lady, in a spectacular motion picture production with settings in Carriso Gorge. Elmer Hall, also retired, was her engineer and Howard de France, the fireman. Some of the breath-taking situations were a little too

real for comfort, according to Elmer.

A change in the corporate ownership occurred in 1933. The S. D. & A. Railway had been built mostly by the indefatigable efforts of John D. Spreckels, with the Southern Pacific Company as an unstable partner. John D. passed on in 1926. Negotiations were concluded between the S. P. and the Spreckels' heirs whereby the road became the wholly-owned subsidiary of the former. Then 104's name was lengthened to San Diego & Arizona Eastern.

Another serio-comic incident took place when she was pulling passenger train number #3, the west-bound Golden State. Chris. Brown was the engineer and the late Don. Diebert was firing. Don was usually very deliberate in his motions. Near Matanuco, a small station in Baja California 27 miles from San Diego, the left rear side rod suddenly broke close to the crank pin of the main or third driving wheel. The loose end was hurled around, knocking off the bottom of the air pump and striking the cab, right under Don's seat box. Don gave a spring across the deck and landed on top of Chris. Chris. says it was the fastest he ever saw Don move.

After World War II started, the Southern Pacific's freight business greatly increased and 104 was requisitioned in 1941. She then took her original number 2720. During the hostilities, she was a frequent visitor on the S. D. & A. E., doing her part to help win the war.

In 1948, she was restored to San Diego & Arizona Eastern number 104. The war emergency was over and she was getting old. Not only that but those internal combustion contraptions, named to give credit to the inventor of the engine, Rudolph Diesel, were rapidly forcing the steam locomotives off the rail roads. Southern Pacific deemed it advisable to end the active career of 104 and she was retired in September 1954.

At that time, members of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego were convinced that specimens of the steam era should be preserved. Negotiations were begun to save the engine. The Southern Pacific not only generously donated her to the Society but reconditioned the old girl and hauled her from the north to El Centro and over her home road to San Diego. There the Santa Fe contributed its share by moving her to Solano Beach, from which point she was trucked to her resting place in the San Diego County Fair Grounds at Del Mar. The ignominy of it, to think that she was too feeble to make the journey under her own power!

Throughout the agile span of years, Number 104 was very talkative, particularly when she was exerting every pound of her drawbar-pull, dragging her tonnage rating of freight cars up the steep grades and through the tunnels of Carriso Gorge.

Now she is cold and lifeless and old timers yearn for the sound of the staccotood voice that is still.

April 2, 1959

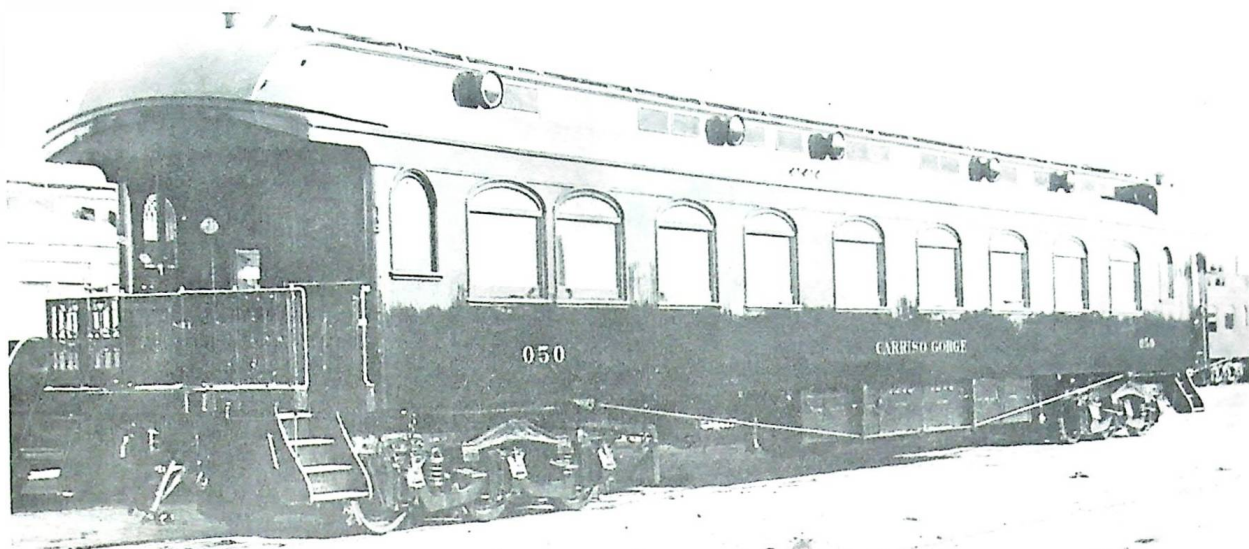
SD&A 050

SPRECKELS' PRIVATE CAR NUMBER 050

by Richard V. Dodge

And who was Spreckels and how did he rate a private car?

In answering these questions, it was along this wise: John D. Spreckels was the eldest son of the multi-millionaire Claus Spreckels, more generally known as the "Sugar King of San Francisco". Back in the year 1887, John visited the boom town of San Diego and was indelibly impressed with visions of a big, beautiful city developing along the shores of the finest land-locked harbor south of San Francisco. He adopted San Diego and poured



San Diego and Arizona private car 050, "the Carriso Gorge," railway home of John D. Spreckels.
Picture taken about the year 1920 in the San Diego yards. (Collection of Eric Sanders)

millions into the endeavors to build it into a great metropolis.

For years it had been known that what the community most urgently needed was a railroad running directly east and connecting with a transcontinental system. This would be a competing line which would break the stranglehold then favoring Los Angeles. Numerous were the schemes and the promotions but none survived to accomplish the desired result.

When hopes were at a low ebb, the thrilling announcement came in December 1906 that the Spreckels interests will build a railroad to Yuma. It was to be named San Diego & Arizona Railway. Southern Pacific was a silent partner at first, then reneged, leaving John D. to carry on alone or quit. He couldn't quit. He had promised the people of San Diego that they would get a railroad.

With a second change in management, the Southern Pacific became owner of a half interest in the undertaking.

Through financial depressions, Mexican revolutions, crippling desert heat, tunneling through solid rock, spanning deep ravines, fighting ravaging floods and landslides, and overcoming war emergencies, the stupendous work was carried on. Construction in the awful Carriso Gorge was one of the most difficult and spectacular line locations ever attempted.

Finally success crowned the efforts and the road was opened for traffic from San Diego to El Centro on December 1, 1919, meeting there with the rails of a Southern Pacific subsidiary. Connection with the S. P. main line could then be made at Niland, Calif., or via Calexico, Mexicali and through Baja California, Mexico, to Yuma, Arizona.

Now as President of the San Diego and Arizona Railway, John D. Spreckels rated a business car and the S.P. assigned one of its open platform observations, originally built by Pullman on February 14, 1910 as observation car SP 1733. It was sold to the San Diego and Arizona on December 18, 1919 and rebuilt as Business Car No. 050 by the Pacific Electric. This is the car now on exhibit in the San Diego County Fair Grounds at Del Mar as Number 050, coupled to locomotive number 104.

This car, named Carriso Gorge, was used in 1923 for

a publicity campaign through the south and east, the purpose being "to sell San Diego to railroad men". It was featured at the Traffic and Trade Convention in New Orleans, where motion pictures, showing scenes taken in Carriso Gorge, San Diego and Coronado were projected in its lounge section. (This film has been preserved and a copy has been obtained by the Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc. It is available, on a rental basis, to interested organizations.)

John D. Spreckels passed on in 1926.

On August 7, 1940 the car was returned to the Southern Pacific. On April 13, 1945 it became SP Medical Examination Car 135 and in that capacity it saw service on the Southern Pacific system as far east as El Paso.

When steam locomotive number 104 was donated by the Southern Pacific Company to the Railway Historical Society of San Diego, the private car was included with the gift. It has been restored practically to its appearance as the rolling home of John D. Spreckels, President and Builder of the San Diego and Arizona Railway.

April 4, 1959

SDERy 54

STREET CAR NUMBER 54. WHAT IS IT?
CABLE OR ELECTRIC?

by Richard V. Dodge

San Diegans enjoyed the privilege of riding on genuine cable cars from June 1890 to October 1892. The line started at I St., on Sixth Avenue to C St., to Fourth Avenue, to University Avenue, to Normal St., to Park Boulevard, to the Mission Valley Bluffs, where a recreation park and pavilion were established.

Ten of the cars were quite similar to those still used on the Powell St. lines in San Francisco, narrow gauge, single end and they were built in Stockton, Cali-



Top
South on
Fifth
from E St.
About 1900.
Cars are:
L 54; M 51.

Historical
Collection
Union Title
Insurance
Co.
San Diego

Bottom
54 as it
is today.
(Fred Reif
picture)

fornia. They had a closed section or cabin with four windows on each side and longitudinal wood benches, facing out, with cross seats at the front dash in the open section. The gripman worked at his levers between the lengthwise seats. The ornate vehicles were described as "little palaces on wheels".

The San Diego Cable Railway Company, unfortunately, was soon in default and the road was kept operating by one of the receivers, who made an heroic effort to provide service to the "mesa" until the electric cars were ready. The San Diego Electric Railway began operating its single and double deckers out Fifth Avenue to University Avenue on September 22, 1892. Then the cable road was shut down permanently.

At a Receiver's sale, the remains of the properties were purchased by George B. Kerper, of Cincinnati, in August 1895. He organized the Citizens Traction Company and converted the road and the equipment for electric operation. Service began over the cable car route in July 1896. The recreation park was restored and named Mission Cliff Park.

But again the bills were much more than the income and a Receiver was appointed in 1897. He and his successor kept the cars running until early in 1898 when the system was sold, indirectly to the San Diego Electric Railway Company. The portion of the track from Fifth and University to Mission Cliff was quickly rebuilt to standard gauge and its single and double deck

cars then continued through to Mission Cliff.

That left the San Diego Electric Railway with eight of the former cable cars in fairly good condition but with narrow gauge trucks and electric equipment.

Following the practice of other California electric railways, the local company decided to build its own rolling stock. Four double end "California" type street cars could be made by using for each the open section and one-half of the closed section of two of the cable car bodies and joining them together on new sills. The ends were "vestibuled" with wood and glass fronts.

The rebuilding was completed, new trucks, wheels and motors arrived and, in 1903, four fine street cars, numbered 51 to 54 inclusive, were put on the road.

These continued in regular service until some new Center Entrance, Pay-As-You-Enter cars were delivered. Numbers 51 - 54 were retired by 1914.

Car 54 was stored for a while then it was dismantled. Thereafter the body was sold.

One day, Lyle Judd, a member of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc., discovered what looked like an old street car in the back yard of a dwelling on Kearney Avenue in San Diego. Upon investigating, he could discern number 54 on it. It was the body from San Diego Electric Railway car number 54 but it was in a sad state of disrepair. However, the energetic members of the Society could restore it to its pristine glory. The owner, Mrs. Nellie Glower, gladly donated the remains, as was, and it was moved to a lot at 47th and Nogal Streets.

There, it is hoped, complete restoration will be effected and the car which had been constructed from the parts of two cable cars will be placed on permanent exhibition, to perpetuate the memories of another stage of the era of electric traction in San Diego.

April 4, 1959

SDTS 528

Kindly see page 5 for a repeat of Issue 13, page one, which tells the 528 story. One correction: the 528, which is now on exhibit at Del Mar, did provide Sunday and evening service on Routes 7 and 11. RHSofSD members fondly hope that some day 528 will again ride the rails.

