

INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 1

RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, INC.

JUNE, 1958

The Railway Historical Society of San Diego was formed in 1949 by a small group of people interested in the preservation of rail equipment. There were six people in attendance at the first meeting. Eddie Junghans was elected President of the newly formed organization.

At this time the San Diego Transit System had for sale some old conventional type streetcars for \$300 each (scrap price). By the time the small group had acquired enough self confidence to tackle such a project the price had risen to \$1800 so this idea was abandoned.

The first excursion was a hike over the abandoned roadbed of the National City and Otay Railroad through Sweetwater Gorge in 1951. A brief talk on the history of the Railroad was given by lifelong resident, Richard V. Dodge.

In 1952 Douglas Duncan was elected President, in which office he served until 1956 when Jack Stodelle succeeded him. The meetings during the period of 1949-1952 were few and far between.

In 1954 it was learned that San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway was about to scrap some of the equipment that had served the San Diego area for years. After much persuasion Southern Pacific Company (owners of SD&AE) graciously donated SD&AE locomotive #104, a 2-8-0 Consolidation type steam locomotive, and car #050, formerly the private car of John D. Spreckels, founder and past president of SD&AE Railway, to the Railway Historical Society of San Diego. (This equipment is now on permanent display at the San Diego County fairgrounds in Del Mar, California.)

Even though Southern Pacific had donated the equipment, it was to cost approximately \$1500 to have it moved from the siding in Solana Beach to the Del Mar Fairgrounds by truck. The membership, now numbering about 15, started a virtual door to door campaign to raise the needed money. It was no small task but it was accomplished after much leg work by the loyal members.

At one of the earlier meetings of the Society a Newsletter, edited by Eric Sanders, was published to notify interested people of the meetings and activities of the Society. In 1955 it was decided by the membership that the rail fans in San Diego and vicinity would like a periodical bulletin published about San Diego's own Railroads, past and present alike. The Newsletter was set aside and a new publication, the "Dispatcher", was born. Eric Sanders was and is the Editor with Douglas Duncan and Richard Dodge serving as associate editors. The "Dispatcher" has since grown into a regular publication with subscribers throughout the United States.

In 1956 an excursion was run from Oceanside to Escondido behind the regular daily freight that serves that area. Three coaches were connected to the end of the freight.

In 1957 Ed Shedaker was elected to the office of President but soon afterward his work took him out of the city and the vacancy was filled by Lyle Judd, Vice President.

During 1957 the Society ran an excursion from Tijuana to Tecate on the regular once-a-day train which is a combination freight and passenger train (one passenger coach). Again in 1957 the Society ran an excursion on the remaining interurban lines of the Metropolitan Coach Lines, formerly Pacific Electric, in Los Angeles. For several years there has been an annual excursion over the short narrow gauge track of the U. S. Gypsum Co. at Plaster City in Imperial Valley.

Until 1957 the Society had met in private homes. By this time the attendance at these meetings had reached the point that it made it more than a little crowded to continue meeting in living rooms. At this time it was decided to find a public building in which to hold the meetings. A Park and Recreation Department building was rented for the purpose and it was decided to meet regularly every other month.

In 1958 it was decided that interest in the Society had reached the point that we were becoming large and well known enough to expand our membership and attempt to realize some of the long dreamed of projects that we were once too small to tackle.

At this time it was unanimously decided to incorporate as a non-profit organization, draw up by-laws and charge a yearly dues. New officers were elected. Seeth L. "Corky" Thomson became President. It was also decided to hold meetings the first Monday of each month.

The Safety Room upstairs in the Santa Fe Depot, Broadway at Kettner, downtown San Diego was leased from the AT&SF Railroad for the regular meeting place.

In the meantime, the San Diego Transit System sold the eight remaining ex-San Diego Electric Railway PCC cars to a scrap company. The Society decided to purchase #528, the last car bought by San Diego Electric Railway. The price was \$1200. This necessitated another fund raising drive. After much more hard work this was accomplished and #528 was placed on permanent display at the Del Mar Fairgrounds along with locomotive #104 and car #050.

In the early part of 1958 Mrs. Nellie Glower of Logan Heights donated the body of #54, an old time San Diego streetcar used in the early 1900's, to the Society. This relic had been discovered by Lyle Judd some years ago in her backyard. It had been used as a Real Estate office and later as a sewing room. It was moved to a suitable location for restoration and will be placed on temporary exhibit behind the Whaley House in Old town sometime next year.

The return of the Newsletter also came about in 1958 under the Editorship of Corky and Barbara Thomson. It is now being published monthly.

As of June, 1958 the Society has received national recognition as an active rail fan group with membership reaching toward 100.

The Society is just beginning to work on a long dreamed of Travel Museum to be located in the San Diego area. This museum would display any and every type of past equipment used for transportation as well as a large (we hope) display of different types of steam locomotives and other rail equipment. This is a long range project and cannot be accomplished over night but with proper planning and cooperation we hope to have one of, if not The, best Travel Museum in the U.S.A.

The Society is also working with the Mt. Rubidoux Chapter of the Pacific Railroad Society on their Rail Museum at Perris, California. This Museum will actually have rail equipment in operation if their plans work out. The citizens of Perris have cooperated to the utmost with groups and have gone out of their way to assist in any way they could. The name of this proposed Museum is the United Railway Museum.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc. meets the first Monday of each month in the Safety Room of the Santa Fe Depot, downtown San Diego. The business is kept to a minimum, most of it having been taken care of beforehand by the Board of Directors. A part of the meeting is devoted to the members and guests to give them an opportunity to tell anything of interest to the membership regarding railroading. Refreshments are served and the program for the evening consists of slides or movies of members or guests. A table is available for the members and guests to display their railroading. Besides rail excursions, activities of the Society include picnics, hikes over abandoned Railroad right-of-ways and various other activities pertaining to Rail transportation.

The sole requirement for membership in the Society is an interest in any form of rail transportation, past, present or future. Membership is available to persons of all ages.

Our various memberships and dues are:

1. Regular--for persons 18 years of age or older who are active in the affairs of the Society. (\$2.50 per year)
2. Sustaining--for persons who do not or cannot participate actively in the Society. (\$2.50 per year)
3. Junior--for persons under 18 years of age. (Must have the consent of their parents.) (\$1.50 per year)
4. Family--for the members of a Regular members family. (\$1.00 extra per year)

Along with other membership privileges a subscription to the Dispatcher and the Newsletter is included in the yearly dues. Also reduced rates on Society excursions.

During the year the maintenance of the Society's equipment gives the members who like to work on actual prototype equipment an opportunity to do so. During the Southern California Exposition and San Diego County Fair the members who wish to may staff the exhibits at the Fairgrounds. The Society operates at least one excursion each year.

ADDRESSES

Society Address: Box 9351, San Diego 9, California
Newsletter Address: 4228 Feather Avenue, San Diego 17, California
Dispatcher address: 7861 Normal Avenue, La Mesa, California