

INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. II

RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, INC.

JANUARY, 1963

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 \$500 each (scrap price). By the time the small group had acquired enough self-confidence to tackle such a project the prices 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 Stodolis 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, the Southern Pacific Company (owners of SD&AE) graciously donated loco #104, a 28-0 Consolidation type steam locomotive, and car #050, formerly the private car of John D. Spreckels, founder and past president of the railway, to the RHCSD. 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 Colona 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. (We regretfully note here that Mr. Dodge passed away late in 1962). 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 this 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 Pres.

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), one on the remaining interurban lines of the Metropolitan Coach Lines, for-

merly Pacific Electric in Los Angeles, and an annual excursion over the short narrow gauge track of the U.S. Gypsum Co. at Plaster City in Imperial Valley was started.

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 the by-laws and change a yearly dues. New officers were elected. Seth 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 at a token charge.

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 the 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 Glover of Logan Heights, San Diego, 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 Juad 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 frog farm at 46th and Imperial, San Diego, for restoration and was eventually to be moved behind the Whaley House in Old Town, San Diego, in August, 1962 after a temporary stay in the parking lot of the Star Machine Works on South Tenth Avenue. In early 1963 this is the prime restoration project of the society and help is most welcome from members and friends alike.

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

As of June, 1958, the Society had received national recognition as an active rail fan group with membership reaching toward 300.

The Society in 1958 hoped to start on a long dreamed of Travel Museum to be located in the San Diego area. This museum would display 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 overnight but with proper planning and cooperation we hope to have one of, if not the, best Travel Museum in the U.S.A. (In 1963 there is a museum committee working on this aim)

In 1958 the Society joined in meetings with the Orange Empire Trolley Museum at Perris, California and the Mt. Rubidoux Chapter of the Pacific Railroad Society to form a joint "United Railway Museum" for Southern California in the Perris to Railroad Canyon section of the former Santa Fe Railway right of way between San Diego and points North.

The unified project unfortunately fell through, but the Orange Empire Trolley Museum project began to take shape. (In 1963 the OET has 51 St. Cars and Ry. cars with operations.)

The year 1958 also saw a nine minute long Corral Gorge film produced and made available for rent or purchase. It was obtained from the railway itself. Our 54 made progress under chairman Charles Cordes. Oct 12th saw members making a trip to the Los Angeles Vicinity to observe and ride on two private roads: Placer Hill and Grizzly Flats Rys. In November we purchased San Francisco Municipal Railway Streetcar #171 for \$225. In December we had our first hobby Show on the 7th.

In 1959 Mr. L.W. McCleary was installed in January as President. In February we had an excursion over the narrow gauge of the U.S. Gypsum interests at Placer City. In March, car 171 was placed at the Orange Empire Trolley Museum at Perris, California after paying about \$500 moving costs from San Francisco. In May we had a successful public-attended Sonora Baja California excursion just below the border in Mexico. In November we helped give the Orange Empire Trolley Museum its first grand public opening by running an all-train excursion direct from San Diego to Perris and return. This trip was complete with a barbecue provided by the local populace, a free tour of a potato processing plant with free samples--not to mention the tour of the museum and the fact that some horseless carriages joined us in our sojourn.

The year 1960 saw us under the leadership of Tommy Mann as president. The Orange Empire Trolley Museum which we had now joined as an organization along with other railfan groups in Southern California operated the first streetcar under live trolley wire making it the first operating trolley museum in Western United States. This gave us the ability to operate our "standard" streetcar 171 under power.

In March we had a big, big, Sonora Baja California Excursion with 500-600 persons aboard our excursion train. In May we helped bid farewell to some of the last lines of the once largest interurban in the world--the Pacific Electric Railway of the Los Angeles Vicinity. October was excursion month with a trip on the 16th to Travel Town and the Grizzly Flats private Ry in Los Angeles. The 30th of October found us riding Union Pacific rails on a bus-rail-bus package to Calico. In November we were especially proud of our member Richard V. Deitz publishing the Rails of the Silvergate about S.D. Rys.

1961 found us with two Presidents, first Dick Pennick and then after he was called into the service, Mr. Wendel Byers accepted the helm. March saw us help bid farewell to the last of the Pacific Electric System.

During this year we added to our equipment roster by obtaining from the U.S. Gypsum's narrow gauge railway their crew or caboose car which was originally built in 1947 for a trip on the narrow gauge line by Soule Avery, chief officer of the company. It cost us \$200 to purchase, \$150 to locate it at Gillespie Field in El Cajon (where it still runs in 1963), and about \$60 in rail expense for storage. April found us taking a trip by train to the San Bernardino Orange Show by train. Worthy of mention in September a local group of San Diegans including some members of the Society formed an independent corporation and purchased a private railway from the Los Liv. December saw us taking another Sonora-Baja California excursion to El Doctor, Mexico, and in Dec. we had a New Year's Holiday trip via the same Ry. to Guymas Mexico.

In 1962 Wendel Byers continued his leadership as President. In March we operated an excursion to the National Orange Show at San Bernardino by Santa Fe and in August the Star & Crescent Boat Company's V.V. Glorietta took 75 RHSOESD members and friends on an August 18th moonlight cruise around San Diego Bay. In September we sponsored a 36-passenger bus trip to the Los Angeles County Fair where a "Big Boy" and the new rail were top attractions. This year also saw the Society Library established at

Unbarger's Model Train Headquarters, 3886 Fairmont, San Diego 5, Phone AT 4 3449. Gladys Sheen, member, officer, and owner of the shop would welcome contributions to it in addition to welcoming members to browse through it. The membership approached 150.

1963 sees us starting out under the leadership of Earl Swaine. Those of you that read this bulletin and that volunteer to help on various projects will determine how much progress a future historian or information bulletin writer can put down in this year. Earl and I hope it can be one to compare with or better our best (coming-of-age year--1958).

Sincerely, *Tom Watson* Info. Bulletin Reviser; 1st V.P.--Public Relations

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

at 7:30 P.M.

The Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc. meets the first Monday of each month in the Safety Room of the Santa Fe Depot at Kottmar and Broadway, San Diego with the exception of January when the regular meeting is replaced by an officers installation banquet and in July when the S.D. County Fair is in progress and our commitments with our exhibits there make too much confliction. 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 regarding railroading. Refreshments are served and the program for the evening generally consists of slides, movies, or talks of members or guests. A table is available for the members and guests to display their railroadiana. Besides rail excursions, activities of the Society may include picnics, hikes over abandoned railroad right-of-ways and various other activities pertaining to rail transportation. Let us know what your pleasure is at a regular meeting or a board of directors meeting planned to be held in 1963 at least, on the Wednesday preceeding the regular monthly meeting at the same location (S.F. depot) and time (7:30). 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 applicable 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 or more if the person wishes to help materially.
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 member's family, \$1.00 over regular dues or \$3.50 total. Any number of family members may be included but about the only membership privilege they have is the right to have an individual membership card.

Membership privileges include a subscription to the "Dispatcher" and the "Newsletter" plus 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 (on a 1/2 equals 2 basis) an opportunity to do so. During the Southern California Exposition and San Diego County Fair, members who wish to staff the exhibits located there. The Society operates several excursions each year.

This bulletin (No. II) is a revision and updating of Info. Bulletin No. I published in June, 1958. Additional copies should be requested from the Society's address below. Corrections or suggestions for improvements will be welcomed. Applicable addresses follow:

Society Address: Railway Historical Society of S.D., Inc., P.O. Box 9351 San Diego 9, Calif.
Newsletter Address: % of Corky and Barbara Thomson, 5204 McGowan, S.D. 17, Calif. PH 273 6286
Dispatcher Address: % of Eric Sanders, 7461 Normal Avenue, La Mesa, California 92040
Library Address: % of Gladys Sheen at Unbarger's Model Train Headquarters, 3886 Fairmont, San Diego 5, California AT 4 3449