

# SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

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THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
An Agency of the Division of Museums and History  
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

Winter 2009

## The Virginia & Truckee Railway and the Second World War

By Stephen E. Drew

In 1940 America began building tens of thousands of new locomotives, steam and diesel, and considerably more rolling stock in support of the worldwide war effort. America's Class I Railroads became accustomed to moving enlisted men and draftees to training camps throughout the U.S. They also moved soldiers to ports of embarkation and ensured a continuous flow of military and other supplies for America and its allies. Motor vehicles played a minor role on the home front during WW II compared with the railroads. According to the Association of American Railroads, 97 percent of military personnel and ninety percent of all freight involved in the U.S. war effort moved by rail. Rationing of gasoline and rubber threw onto railroads more passengers than many of them could handle. How did the War affect short lines like the V&T? Let's consider what was happening year-by-year on the V&T for a couple of years before, during, and immediately after the War.



*California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society excursion, June 5, 1938; approaching Mound House enroute to Virginia City.*

--William A. Pennington Photo.

Superintendent of the Nevada Copper Belt Railroad since December 1914. V&T Vice President Frank E. Murphy had started as a baggage master in October 1886. Secretary and Passenger Traffic Manager Samuel C. Bigelow's V&T career had begun in September 1908 as a Clerk and Ticket Auditor at Carson City.

### 1938

Since 1924, when the V&T had paid its last dividend, Ogden Livingston Mills had covered the company's financial losses. His death on October 11, 1937 left the company with little alternative but to file for receivership and bankruptcy protection in federal court. It did so on April 25.

*Moody's Manual of Railroad Securities* reported: "It was stated company owed \$109,000 in notes and that certain note holders demanded payment or a mortgage on its property. Although company had sufficient assets to pay its debt, it could not operate profitably . . . P.H. Cook, F.E. Murphy, and S.C. Bigelow appointed Co-Receivers."

All three were experienced Nevada railroad men. P.H. Cook had been

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**Please provide submissions for the Spring issue of the  
*Sagebrush Headlight* by Monday, March 2, 2009.**



If you have been to NSRM in the past few weeks, you've probably noticed two changes among the rolling stock parked outdoors. The yellow caboose, Union Pacific No. WP 449, has been transferred to NSRM - Boulder City in exchange for Kennecott Copper Company No. 19 (*above*), a 5000-gallon tank car which was used as a water car for fire-fighting. The car is believed to date from about 1900. It is equipped with early, cast-sideframe trucks that are fitted with poling pockets. The State of Nevada acquired the car from the Heber Valley Railroad in 1993.

**NSRM Welcomes Tara Whitney**



A Fremont, California, native, Tara came to Carson City at age twelve. She graduated from Carson High School, trained at Western Nevada Community College as a Certified Nursing Assistant, and worked at Carson-Tahoe Regional Hospital starting in 2001.

In July 2007, Tara became a Nevada state employee with the Department of Mental Health at Sierra Regional Center in Sparks. When that job ended in October 2008, Tara was referred to NSRM for placement in the vacant Museum Attendant II position last held by Dan Martinez. Though Tara hadn't worked at a museum before, she is adjusting quickly. We appreciate her people skills and computer background.

Tara is a part-time student at WNC and will transfer to UNR to study social work. She is very close to her parents, sister, and grandpa; and enjoys church functions and charity work. She also loves to surf and takes her board to Santa Cruz every few months for a few days of riding waves.

--Frank Ackerman

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we look back on the current year we can't help but anticipate positive changes in 2009. We hope that the economy will turn around and ease some of the financial limitations faced by the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the state's other museums. In a tight financial environment, the volunteer and financial assistance of organizations like the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum becomes even more important. The Friends have continued to "step up to the plate" in support of the railroad museum.

A project that holds promise for generating additional funds is the "Your Hand on the Throttle" program. Developed by Friends volunteers, this program is based on the very popular fundraisers that have been conducted by a number of railroad museums nationwide. Participants will go through a brief training period after which they will, under scrutiny of a qualified engineer, get to operate one of the museum's locomotives. And, yes, they WILL be able to blow the whistle.

With the Holidays approaching I want to suggest a gift that will benefit not only the recipient, but do much more. A membership to the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum can encourage the recipient to understand and become interested in what has been so rewarding for many of us. The new member will be granted free admission to all seven of the State Museums, as well as receiving a discount for items purchased at any museum store. Coupled with the great publications members receive – *Railroad History* and the *Sagebrush Headlight* – this is, indeed, a gift that keeps on giving. Both the giver and recipient will benefit in knowing that they are actively helping preserving history and supporting a wonderful museum.

Last, but certainly not least, is the result of the Board of Trustees election. Continuing on the board is Kurt Dietrich. Darlene Barry and Ron Allen have been elected to seats being vacated. I want to thank all who ran for election, and to encourage those who were not elected to please "throw your hat in the ring" again in 2009. A huge thank you is also owed to Mike Dunn and Russ Tanner for their board service. Both made contributions that strengthened the Friends as an organization.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy Holiday Season.

--Bill Kohler

### Spotlight on Bruce Armbrust

Bruce began to volunteer at the Nevada State Railroad Museum in the summer of 2006. Working primarily in the museum store, he was on duty Mondays and Tuesdays throughout July, August and part of September; a godsend during that busy season.

Bruce was born in Colorado and grew up mostly in Mt. Vernon, Washington. He and wife Laurel, along with sons Daniel (at left in the photo) and Matthew moved to Nevada in 2001. They live in Gardnerville.

A graduate of DePauw University in Indiana and of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Bruce earned a Master of Science in Mathematics at Colorado State University. He now teaches mathematics at Lake Tahoe Community College, where he occasionally teaches Physics as well. Bruce is an enthusiastic football fan, and son Matthew is in a youth football league--as well as being a budding railfan. Daniel is active in his school band.



Reports indicate Bruce did yeoman duty this past September (during the absence of a certain employee) helping to keep the museum store going. With more than 200 volunteer hours to date, despite a full-time job and responsibilities to a young family, Bruce is a guy we know we can count on!

--John Frink

*Continued from Page 1*

In May the receivers asked the Nevada Public Service Commission for permission to abandon all rail service on the Carson City-Virginia City mainline. *Moody's* reported: "Suspension would be in effect pending . . . company's application to the ICC for permission to abandon all its trackage. Petition charged that costs of repairs and maintenance to tracks, roadbed, and tunnels leading to the Comstock Region are so great that they do not warrant a continuation of service. Company stated it would handle passengers, mail and express in trucks and buses."

The *Poor's Manual of Railroads* report for the year showed revenues of \$92,208, expenses of \$93,510 and loans payable of \$109,849. The payroll consumed more than fifty percent of revenues. With the cost of fuel, ties, and very basic repairs, management had little discretionary money. To supplement the company's operating receipts, the receivers looked to sales of capital assets and the operation of extra trains.

Railfans had begun to "discover" the V&T. Otto Perry first photographed its equipment in 1931. David L. Joslyn did the same in 1933. Ted G. Wurm began staying summers with his family in Carson City in 1935. And Gilbert H. Kneiss visited the V&T in 1937.

On June 5 Grahame H. Hardy's California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society hosted an excursion train over the line with 226 paying riders. Locomotives Nos. 11 and 27 pulled the six-car consist. Nearly every passenger had at least one camera shooting 116 or 616-size black-and-white film. 1938 marks the beginning of the period of extensive photographic documentation of the V&T. A smaller Reno-Virginia City excursion took place July 17 for sixty members of the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. Delayed on their trip west, the Chicago Chapter R&LHS enjoyed a similar excursion behind the *Reno* on July 19.

Operations to Virginia City were suspended June 24 due to a caving tunnel. According to daily train sheets held in the library of the University of Nevada-Reno, 1921 motor car No. 99 (*right: at Gold Hill, with Motorman Grover C. Russell sometime in the late 1930s*) handled the last Carson City-Virginia City train on Wednesday, June 22. Retired to the Carson City enginehouse, No. 99 never operated again.

Hollywood also discovered the V&T. Studio purchases of the company's assets would augment day-to-day income. Ultimately 36 pieces of equipment would be sold to movie studios between 1937 and 1948. First to go, in March, was 4-4-0 No. 22, the *Inyo*, for Paramount Pictures' *High, Wide and Handsome*. Three Kimball passenger cars followed in June.

In anticipation of filming Cecil B. DeMille's railroad epic, *Union Pacific*, Paramount purchased 4-4-0 No. 18, the *Dayton*, and dozens of other pieces of equipment: passenger, freight, and maintenance-of-way cars, handcars, switch stands, and tools; and rented the *Reno*.

Working through Gilbert Kneiss, the Eastern Railroad Presidents' Conference purchased 4-4-0 No. 12, the *Genoa*, and 1874 combination car No. 16 for operation at Edward Hungerford's "Railroads on Parade" pageant at the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair. Working through Gerald M. Best, 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox purchased 1868 coach No. 17 for the movie *Jesse James*.

Frank Murphy resigned on October 31 after a 52-year career with the V&T. in deteriorating health, he died six months later.

### 1939

Paramount released *Union Pacific* on April 27. The UP underwrote a 14,000-mile publicity-train tour to promote their railroad and the epic production. The *Dayton*, as UP No. 58, and five refurbished V&T cars joined a passenger train headed by new UP General Electric steam turbine-electric locomotives, Nos. 1 and 2, for the April-May tour. Out on the road, the GE units pushed the *Dayton*. The five historic cars were attached to the rear of the passenger train. At the outskirts of major towns, the historic train was reassembled and steamed ahead of the modern passenger train into town, where both were placed on display. The GE's sometimes broke down, and on more than one occasion, the *Dayton* reportedly pulled the entire consist into town! The UP had reinforced all of the working wood members of the consist and cast new wheels for the cars and tender.



With Hitler's invasion of Poland and declarations of war on Germany by the United Kingdom, France, and the British Dominions, WW II in Europe started on September 1.

Scheduled V&T trains consisted of McKeen motor car No. 22 operating from Reno to Minden and return on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with a mixed train on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. If freight traffic warranted, an extra mixed train would replace the McKeen car. V-T Transit Company trucks and buses handled the decreasing Carson City-to-Virginia City passenger, mail and express business.

Ever looking for additional revenue, the receivers rented 1890 coach No. 18 to 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox. The car was back in V&T service the next year as a combination passenger and Railway Express Agency car.

Although loans payable had been reduced to \$93,849 at year's end, revenues were down to \$88,279 and expenses were \$77,266. There were forty employees. Receiver P.H. Cook resigned effective December 31. He died a year later.

#### 1940

America's railroads were starting to feel the impact of World War II. V&T shipments of gasoline and other petroleum to customers at Carson City, Minden, and the Stewart Indian School remained solid. Sheep and cattle continued to be brought to Carson Valley to fatten. Merchandise and farm-implement shipments were strong as were passenger, mail, and express traffic. Yearly revenue increased to \$91,159. Expenses were \$90,563. Between April and October, No. 27's wood cab was replaced with a steel cab from SP 4-4-0 No. 1458, which was being scrapped at Sacramento.

#### 1941

On June 18 the ICC approved abandonment of the Carson City-Virginia City line. Between October and December rails were lifted (*above: at Mound House, November 21*) and sold for scrap.

In June, Receiver Sam Bigelow was also appointed a receiver for the Nevada Copper Belt Railway.

When the U.S. Railway Mail Service no longer allowed "soft-belly" wood mail cars, the V&T purchased 1907 Nevada Northern steel-underframe mail-and-baggage car No. 21 for \$1,100 to replace all-wood 1874 mail-and-baggage car No. 13. Grahame Hardy's California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society hosted their second V&T excursion, for 150 members and guests, on September 21. Locomotives Nos. 11 and 27 double-headed a five-car consist from Reno to Minden and return.

At year's end, the company reported 46 employees with a payroll of \$52,561, amounting to 62 percent of annual expenses. Cash was still tight.

#### 1942

Revenues reached a peak of \$102,893; expenses were \$92,872. The V&T held onto its oil, livestock, general-merchandise and passenger traffic due to rationing of gas and rubber products.

The *Tahoe*, 2-6-0 No. 20, had been stored in the Carson City Enginehouse since 1928. With ten-wheelers Second No. 25, 26, and 27 handling mixed trains, V&T sold the *Tahoe* to the Clifford C. Bong Construction Company of Stockton, California, on August 21 for \$2,000.

Increased freight business caused operation of the McKeen car to decrease to only 38 operating days for the year. No. 26 handled most of the year's freight and mixed train requirements. The employees' timetable effective February 24 scheduled the motor car for Monday-Wednesday-Friday and a mixed train with one of the ten-wheelers on Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday.



#### 1943

According to *Moody's*, revenues dipped to \$88,720. Operating expenses rose to \$117,570 with 45 employees and a payroll totaling 52 percent of revenues.

The aging 1910 McKeen car made 125 of the 156 scheduled round-trips over the 46 miles between Reno and Minden. Unfortunately, the car never did well in freezing conditions.

#### 1944

Revenues totaled \$87,472; expenses, \$110,776. Loans payable totaled \$89,157 without adding interest.

McKeen motor car No. 22 made 104 Reno-Minden roundtrips during the year. Petroleum, livestock, and general freight traffic remained strong.

**1945**

The McKeen car was in the Carson City Shops for an overhaul the first five months of the year. Spare parts for the car had not been available from McKeen/Union Pacific for more than 17 years. The car had the last operating McKeen engine in North America!

To raise additional operating revenues, 4-4-0 No. 11, the *Reno*, was sold for \$5,000 to Loew's, later Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, in March.

President Roosevelt died April 12 and was succeeded by Harry Truman. Adolph Hitler committed suicide the same month. After the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs, Japan surrendered on August 14.

The last Co-Receiver, 37-year veteran Sam Bigelow, suffered a heart attack in August and died October 30<sup>th</sup> in a Reno hospital. He was briefly succeeded as receiver by V&T Auditor Gordon A. Sampson, who, due to the age of the McKeen car, scheduled Reno - Minden mixed trains six days a week. The McKeen car's last run came on Nevada Day, October 31.



In a post-war celebratory spirit, the local Lions Club sponsored a Nevada Day special train (*above*) headed by V&T Second No. 25, fitted with an imitation diamond stack. It was trailed by four passenger cars, including 1869 construction car No. 8 (*inset*) converted for the occasion to a so-called "club coach" with "Julia Bullette" (*sic*) splashed movie-studio fashion across its flanks.

Yearly revenues were \$107,961 and expenses were \$123,112. Loans payable, with interest matured, had increased to \$127,346. The payroll totaled \$70,742 or 56 percent of the line's expenses.

**1946**

The company emerged from receivership January 18. Gordon Sampson was appointed Vice President and General Manager. The McKeen motor-car engine, trucks, and interior appointments were scrapped and the body was sold locally on August 29. Master Mechanic Arnold Gillie noted in his log that the car "Ought to have been sold 30 years ago." As backup for ex-Nevada Northern mail-and-baggage car No. 21, all-steel ex-Yosemite Valley mail-and-baggage car No. 23 was purchased for \$2,854 in October.

Revenues jumped to \$148,100 against expenses of \$157,368. There were 46 employees. The payroll of \$98,004 comprised 62 percent of expenses. Although revenues increased further in 1947, abandonment would come in 1950.

As with many a short line railroad, the effects of WW II were relatively minor on the V&T. Regulatory agencies were reluctant to permit the abandonment of significant trackage during the war. Although it did not handle troop trains or military shipments, wartime rationing kept the line dependably moving petroleum, livestock and merchandise shipments, and passengers, express and mail. Rationing-induced traffic levels forestalled abandonment of a number of western short lines. Besides the V&T, the Nevada Copper Belt, Tonopah & Goldfield, and the Yosemite Valley were among them.

Increasing motor-vehicle competition, wages, and its aged physical plant and equipment took their toll on the V&T's ability to compete in the western Nevada marketplace. Still, it is entertaining to muse if the V&T could have made it to, say, 1955, we might still be

enjoying the original Virginia and Truckee today.

**Photo Credits**

P. 4: Russell Family Photo.

P. 5: David J. Welch Photo.

This Page: F.B. Hearn Collection;

Author's collection (inset).

—This article originated as a talk by the author at the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual V&T/Nevada Railroad History Symposium on October 18, 2008 in Carson City.

## THE LAST AMERICAN:

### A Personal Odyssey A Rocky Mountain High

By Daniel Markoff

Years ago, I knew a young woman in the movie-casting business named Chris O'Rourke. A very attractive blond with a personality to match, Chris was someone you want to keep in touch with. In the early 1990s Chris moved her office two buildings down from me. I looked forward to visiting her every so often to see what interesting projects she was up to in the film industry in southern Nevada. One day while waiting in her outer office before going out to lunch, I happened to look at some of her trade publications. One, called *Location Update*, caught my attention. When Chris arrived, she asked what I was reading. I told her, and said I found it rather interesting. Off we went to lunch.

Eventually Chris and her husband had to move back east and we lost contact with each other. Nevertheless, when the mail arrived one day, there was a copy of *Location Update*. Chris had sent in a subscription for me. I looked through each month's issue as it arrived, fascinated by the efforts motion picture producers go through to get the right locations for their films. One day, I happened across an article that said Ken Burns and Steven Ives were preparing to film a documentary for Public Television called "The West." It was to be an in-depth look at the settling of the American West from the early days to about 1900. My God, I thought, what a huge project. I had seen Ken Burns' masterpiece "The Civil War" and figured this would be equally impressive and well done. The article said that one of the segments would concern railroading in the west.

Railroading? The proverbial light bulb went off in my head. I wonder if these guys had lined up any live shots of an operating steam locomotive from that period. It was at least worth a telephone call to find out. After some searching as to how to get in touch with the production company, I finally made contact with Steven Ives and asked what he had in mind for that segment. He said they wanted to cover the building of the transcontinental railroad and the hardships that were encountered, as well as the American Indian's view of the enterprise. I asked if they were going to use archival photos or if they would be interested in filming images of a fully restored steam locomotive from the period. He said to send them photos and history of the *Eureka* so they could judge the idea for themselves. I also told them where narrow-gauge locomotives can run. Soon after sending the information, I got a call from Steven. They were definitely interested in presenting images of what it must have been like to run through the Sierra Nevada with an 1870s locomotive. I thought, this is wonderful. Now all I had to do was arrange to run it

somewhere. The logical choice was the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. I wrote to owner Charles Bradshaw, explaining what I had and what "The West" producers wanted to do.

A week passed, then two, then three, then a month: Nothing. It looked like it wouldn't happen. Time for filming was running out, and it seemed as if the railroad didn't care for my proposal. Then one day my secretary told me John Nolan from the D&S was on the phone. John apologized that no one had gotten in touch with me earlier. Somehow my letter to Mr. Bradshaw had been misplaced until a day or two before his call. John said that the D&S was definitely interested in hosting *Eureka* and PBS, and what did we have to do to make it happen. WOW! I notified the producers of "The West" of the railroad's approval if they still were interested. They were. We settled on dates, financial arrangements and logistics. We would head to Durango in October of 1994 for filming.

My crew and I weren't exactly experienced at running a 129-year-old steam locomotive through the Rocky Mountains. I did some quick thinking. The only people I knew who had experience running a 19<sup>th</sup> century-type locomotive on a daily basis were Bob Dowty and his son Eric who ran the *Jupiter* and No. 119 at Promontory. I called to ask if they could help. They were more than happy to volunteer. Likewise, I was not familiar with the D&S, but the railroad promised to assign their most-experienced engineer to pilot us.

Ron Bunker, who had trucked *Eureka* to many other venues, was the trail boss again. We loaded up and headed to Durango, Colorado. On the first day of our journey, we got as far as Flagstaff, Arizona, where Bob Craddock had a friend who had a place where we could park the rigs overnight. The next day, I was full of apprehension as we neared Colorado, not knowing what to expect. To say that I was taking a risk was an understatement. I knew *Eureka* would perform, but in her more-than-a-century of history she had never confronted something as ominous as the Rocky Mountains. *Eureka* had been used on the Sierra Nevada Wood & Lumber Co. railroad, but that little road was nothing like the mighty former Rio Grande narrow-gauge line that conquered the Rockies.

Arriving in Durango, *Eureka* became the focus of attention. She was the oldest narrow-gauge locomotive to run in Colorado. The Rio Grande narrow-gauge line was formed in the 1870s, but none of their original locomotives remained. *Eureka*, now the oldest locomotive in the state, was stabled in the roundhouse with the venerable giants that charge up the grade daily with thousands of passengers. She shone like a little, delicate jewel surrounded by the black behemoths.

We discussed what the producer, director and cameraman wanted to do. Besides the pilot, John Nolan would travel with us himself. We were to pull caboose No. 0500 initially, and later pick up the *Nomad* business car. That doesn't sound like a very big train, but one look at the *Nomad* and my jaw hit the rail with a resounding CLANK. The *Nomad* was gigantic. I asked how much it weighed. John told me 35 tons! "35 TONS!?" I asked in a surprised voice. The caboose itself weighed some 15 tons. That meant that a Fifty-ton train had to be pulled up 3- and 4-percent grades. The passenger cars *Eureka* had pulled on the Eureka & Palisade Railroad were only 8½ tons each. The worst grade on the E&P was something like 2½ percent. On *Eureka's* first run in the Rockies, she would be pulling the equivalent of more than a six-car train up steeper grades than she had ever been on in her 129 years! My better sense made me speak up: maybe we should try her out first and see how we did with just the caboose.

The next day, with *Eureka* fired up we picked up the caboose and the PBS crew. It was time to perform, come what may. I was at *Eureka's* throttle. Bob and Eric Dowty were firing. The rest of the people got in the caboose with the camera, tripods, story lines, and all their other stuff. We waited at the Durango depot. After our final checks, I looked to the rear of the caboose and saw that age-old signal from our conductor, HIGHBALL! I signaled with the whistle and eased open *Eureka's* throttle. Steam from the cylinder cocks jetted into the cold air with the roar of a geyser. Slowly, *Eureka* moved forward, then picked up a little momentum. I blew the whistle to cross the road as the flagman stopped traffic. People on the street couldn't believe what they saw: a bright, colorful locomotive from 1875 passing in front of them with all the life and power of the day it was made. They waved, and gave thumbs - up and V-for-victory signs. They were clearly impressed and smiles were everywhere.

As we cleared the first grade crossing my apprehension stopped. I realized I was about to do something truly memorable and unbelievable with *Eureka*. I turned to Bob Dowty and said, "Bob, I can't believe we're actually doing this. It must be a dream. Will you hit me or do something to wake me up?" Bob looked back with an expression of disbelief himself. We were not only heading into the Rocky Mountains in an iconic wood-burning American-standard locomotive well over a century old, we were doing it with the best documentary film makers in the United States.

It was twelve miles to our first water stop at Hermosa, where we topped off the tender and began our assault into the mountains. The ruling grade, from Hermosa to Rockwood, is about 2½ percent. *Eureka* charged up the six-mile grade like a duck takes to water, her exhaust strong and sharp. Bob kept a steady supply of

wood going into the firebox. At Rockwood, we took on more wood; then on to our first film location, the legendary High Line.

When we got there, I couldn't believe my eyes. It was the most spectacular panorama I had never seen from the ground. *Eureka* was rolling along a cliff that dropped 400 feet, straight to the Animas River. I prayed the sub-grade wouldn't give way under us. In places we were so close to the edge that if a fellow smoking a cigar dropped his ash out the car window, it wouldn't hit anything but the water at the bottom. I contemplated looking for an airsick bag, but this turned out to be just where Buddy, our cameraman, wanted to do his first shots. An amiable fellow, Buddy Squires had been a principal photographer of the "Civil War" series.

I stopped at the selected location. Buddy and Steve got off with their equipment. While I backed *Eureka* up, Buddy packed the camera and other stuff off somewhere. When we got the signal to come forward I saw that Buddy had managed to perch on a ledge jutting over the abyss with the camera rolling. I thought, if this guy so much as sneezes, he'll launch himself over the edge. But Buddy was happy. He had us repeat the run several times before we were off to other locations. At Elk Park the *Nomad* was waiting. I thought, Well, this is it: I probably won't be able to pull out of my shadow now. But to my relief *Eureka* pulled the load upgrade like it was an everyday thing. We spent much of the day checking different spots and doing runbys for the camera. After hours of traveling and shooting, we finally got near Silverton, Colorado. It was late afternoon, one of the best times to get spectacular shots.

Steve asked me to go to within about a mile of Silverton to set up for another series of takes. As it was starting to get toward dusk, I was asked if I could light the oil-burning headlamp. I said sure. With that we backed up a mile or so and waited for our call to come forward. At the signal I opened the cylinder cocks and the throttle. Great plumes of steam shot out to the side. A call came over the two-way radio we used to communicate with the director and cameraman: leave the cocks open. Buddy had set up the camera right in the middle of the tracks. Another call came in to keep the cylinder cocks open and pull right up to the camera, then stop (a good idea, no doubt). As I eased to a stop in front of the camera another call came, "Don't anyone move!! Squires is having an orgasm out here!"

When I asked what happened, Buddy exuberantly said he had never seen such a beautiful shot. As I pulled the engine forward to him he caught the silhouette of the locomotive and the amber glow of the headlamp against the backdrop of the darkening, towering peaks. He just had to film the scene for as long as he could.

*Continued on Page 10*



**SELECTIONS FROM OUR MUSEUM STORE . . . .** *The store specializes in railroad books for adults and children, Nevada history books, train videos, audio recordings, toys, train models, hats and apparel, railroad pins and jewelry, train novelties and souvenirs, note cards, artwork and calendars. We encourage you to visit the store in person. For those of you who won't have an opportunity to visit soon, the new merchandise selections below, along with many others, are available by mail-order. Proceeds from sales are used by the Nevada State Railroad Museum to fund a variety of museum projects and public interpretive programs.*

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Call (775) 687-6953 (9 am - 4 pm). Write to: Nevada State Railroad Museum, 2180 S. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701. Please include your name, street address, city/state/zip code, and your daytime telephone number. Members of the Friends of NSRM are entitled to a 15 percent discount off all merchandise. Please add \$5.00 for shipping charges. If paying by either Visa or MasterCard, include your credit card number and expiration date. Orders are shipped via FedEx.

*Continued from Page 8*

The next few days we worked in and around Silverton. The first night in Silverton left a light covering of snow that offered special visual opportunities. Finally it was time to head back to Durango. We would film on the way, but from different angles than going to Silverton.

Somewhere between Silverton and Elk Park, Buddy wanted to mount the camera on top of *Eureka's* cab. He said it would be an interesting perspective. I didn't think it would be a good idea because of cinders, smoke, steam, the whistle, and the side sway of the engine magnified by being higher up. He said he didn't care. and insisted on getting the shot. I said not to blame me if he got pitched off the cab into the river, but there was no telling him. He climbed up with all his gear and told us to go forward. He called periodically for whistle signals, a bit more speed, smoke, and stuff like that. After a half-hour I heard banging on the cab roof. He climbed down, looking kind of bug-eyed, and said that in his film career he had been chased by buffalo, endured storms and hung out of helicopters by one hand at 10,000 feet. Nothing had compared to the excitement of riding on top of *Eureka's* cab.

By the time we reached Hermosa it was getting dark. We were low on fuel, so there was lots of room in the tender. I asked if the film crew wanted to ride back to Durango in the cab. They all said yes. Night closed in as we headed back. I lit the headlamp. We were utterly exhausted after working hard and getting many spectacular scenes on film. *Eureka* had performed flawlessly. In the last hours of our journey the cab lit up each time her fire-door opened. Her heartbeat was strong and regular and she put on a grand show of

orange cinders shooting high from her stack and drifting behind the train. It was as if *Eureka* knew she was the star, and would perform until the very end of the show: the finale to our Rocky Mountain High.

The next day the PBS boys had to head back east, and we had to load up and head west. We said goodbye, and hoped we'd get to work together again some day. Months later I received a thank-you letter and a video in the mail. The video contained all the raw footage we filmed in October 1994. It was great photography. After about a year, "The West" aired as an eight-part series on PBS. *Eureka's* footage appeared in the opening scenes of, and throughout, an episode called "The Grandest Enterprise Under God". Although *Eureka* is narrow gauge and we filmed the scenes in the Rockies not the Sierra Nevada, it made no difference. Through the magic of film and the use of narrative, the scenes represented not just the transcontinental railroad, but all railroads in the west; the progress they brought and the changes they caused. I loved it.

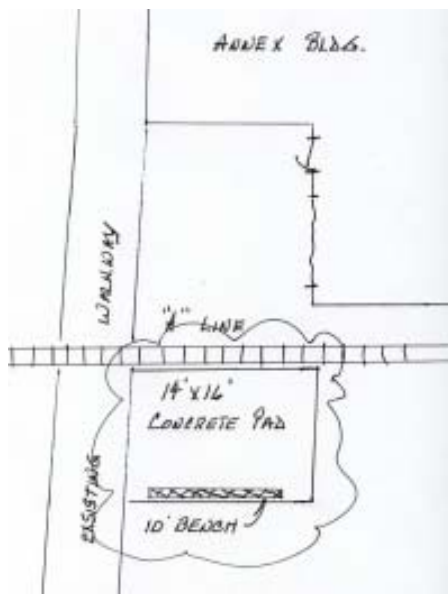
Years later I happened on the PBS website for "The West", and an interview with Steven Ives and Ken Burns about making the documentary. They noted that production had taken three years and covered every corner of the American West. They discussed people they met, places they saw, and the train they filmed in the Rockies. And then they said that the most memorable time in that three-year period was the night ride back to Durango in the cab of *Eureka*. It was history that was alive. They live to portray it, and we got to experience it firsthand. You can't do better than that.

*Next time:* Apple Pies.

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## FNSRM Begins Directed Giving Campaign

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum have launched the **Directed Giving Campaign**. It will enable Friends members to contribute to specific projects they find worthwhile and of personal interest. These projects represent museum needs for which, given current budget constraints, state funds are not available. This is the first effort of its kind to be attempted by the Friends. These projects will provide much-needed improvements that the museum otherwise would have to forego.



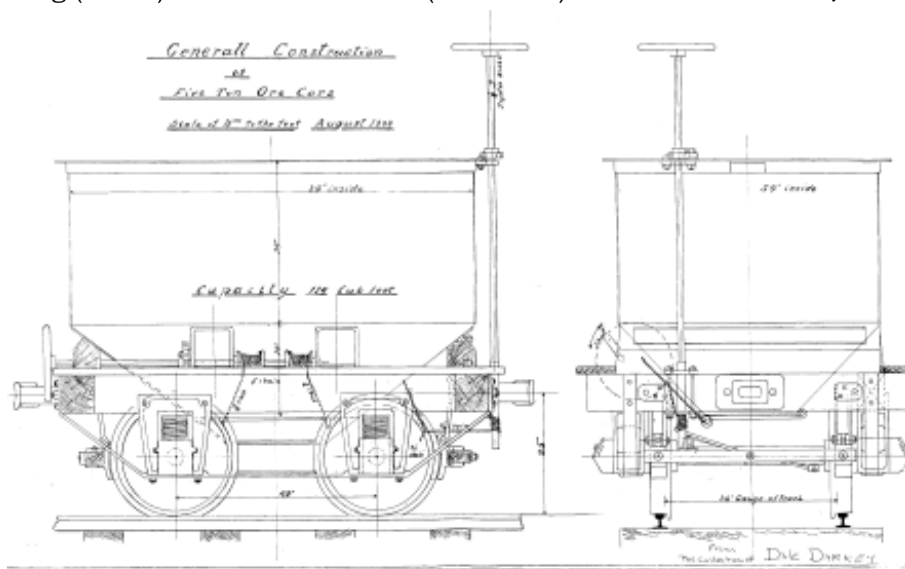
The three projects initially targeted, with current cost estimates, are:

1. A **passenger-boarding platform** near the annex. This concrete platform with benches will provide for safer, more efficient loading of tour groups who are riding the motorcar. Please see the sketch at left. **\$1,000.**

2. Reproduction of narrow-gauge **ore cars** for exhibit. Please see drawing (below) and Parts & Prices (below left). **Each car: \$22,851.**

### Ore Car Parts & Prices

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Bin, 10 ga. hot-rolled.      | \$1,100. |
| Frame, Douglas fir.          | \$672.   |
| Cast steel wheels, set of 4. | \$7,200. |
| Axles, two.                  | \$2,210. |
| Pedestals, set of 4.         | \$2,520. |
| Springs, set of 4.           | \$395.   |
| Coupler pockets, two.        | \$1,640. |
| Bin brackets, set of 4.      | \$1,360. |
| Brake rigging                | \$1,578. |
| Hand wheels, two.            | \$426.   |
| Boxes and brasses, set of 4. | \$1,540. |
| Fasteners, paint, etc.       | \$2,210. |



3. A programable, electronic **entrance sign** to display current museum events and activities. This sign will help to attract passers-by, particularly on holiday weekends. It will be vital for communicating with visitors from outside the area who don't see local news media. **\$70,000.**

Funds donated to these projects will not be used for any other Friends project or activity. You may make a lump-sum donation or a pledge using a periodic credit card or Paypal charge. For more information, or to donate, please go to [www.nsrsm-friends.org](http://www.nsrsm-friends.org). Your help is vital in these difficult economic times.

--Bill Kohler

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## *UPCOMING EVENTS*

### Monthly Wednesday Evening Programs

- |             |  |                               |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| January 14  | <b><i>The Southern Pacific Railroad in Iran: 1943-45</i></b> | Presented by Frank Ackerman   |
| February 11 | <b><i>A Century of Pullman Cars</i></b>                      | Presented by Frank Ackerman   |
| March 11    | <b><i>Railroad Rhythms</i></b>                               | Presented by the Little Toots |

Evening programs are held at the museum's Jacobsen Interpretive Center on the second Wednesday of each month except as noted. Programs begin promptly at 7:00 PM (or as noted) Regular museum admission charges apply.