

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB
P. O. Box 2391
Denver, Colorado 80201

October, 1964

Newsletter No. 62

The October, 1964 meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, October 14th, in the basement meeting room of the Western Federal Savings skyscraper - 718 - 17th Street, Denver, at 8:00 p.m. The program for this month's meeting will be one of the excellent 8mm color movie presentations by Club member Ron Ruhoff, complete with synchronized sound, and will cover a day on the Leadville-Climax run of the Colorado and Southern. This was made back in the days of steam, and Consolidation 641 is the star of the film. Ron also has started a new movie on Rio Grande narrow gauge freight operations, and will present a "teaser" showing of the footage he has shot so far between Durango and Gato -- old Pagosa Junction.

To round out the motion picture portion of our program, we have scheduled two 16mm color films loaned by Club member A. W. Erkind of Wilson, Wyo. One features a 1932-model RGS "Galloping Goose" filmed in 1942 on a run between Dolores and Ridgeway. The second displays lots of steam action on the D&RG Alamosa-Durango-Silverton run in the early 1940's.

The Club's 35mm slide projector also will be on hand, and members who made the excursion to Rawlins on September 13th will be given an opportunity to show the results of their work. Bring along half a dozen of your best slides for showing.

All members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and their friends are welcome.

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Last month's program of oldtime movies, presented by Club member Neal Miller of Longmont, really brought down the house. Andy Clyde, as a momentary dining car chef on the Santa Fe about 1910, solved his menu problems by fishing out the galley window while crossing a trestle but that "whale" was treacherous, indeed, once inside the car. Abbott and Costello, as successors to the Keystone Cops, seemed to meet more than the usual number of steam trains at crossings. Neal knew his subjects well, and his timely and humorous comments added just the right spice to the showing, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the large audience.

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At 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 13th, a nine-car special train sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, departed from Denver Union Station for a day's outing on the Union Pacific main line. With perfect weather for the entire journey, and 4-8-4 No. 8444 handling our train from Cheyenne to Rawlins and return (in charge of enginemen who were well acquainted with the interests of railfans), the day was ideal for photography, tape recording, and just plain watching and listening to a steamer in A-1 condition on fast track. The 237 passengers aboard, also enjoyed the efficient facilities and good food provided by the U.P.'s Las Vegas diner crew all through the day. Passengers came from 22 states, ranging from Oregon on the west to New Hampshire on the east, for this momentous occasion.

Three run-by photo stops made while climbing the eastern slope of Sherman Summit, with another -- the most spectacular -- at Red Buttes as we approached Rawlins that afternoon, presented sights seen all too seldom these days. After a short period for turning and servicing the 8444 at Rawlins, our engineer opened her up as the last car trailed through the yard's east switch on the return journey, and many of the ensuing miles were clocked at 42 and 43 seconds -- better than 80 miles and hour! Such music!

A "well done" to the Union Pacific and to Club officers responsible for arranging this entertaining and thoroughly enjoyable excursion.

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Club member Bill Kratville of Omaha, who joined us for the trip, tells us he lost three rolls of exposed 8mm color film and four rolls of 120 black-and-white film on the train. Bill is anxious to recover these missing films and would appreciate all possible help in locating them. Please contact him at 337 South 70th Street, Omaha, Nebraska, or get in touch with Trip Committee Chairman Ed Haley. In the "found" department, Ed advises that he has one Model RL-90 Midget recording cartridge entitled, "Climax - GW to Loveland - GW to Eaton." No name on the box, but Ed is holding it for the owner.

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The old South Park's legendary Alpine Tunnel continues to fascinate railfans -- and the general public alike. The September 8 issue of the Denver Post carried an interesting illustrated story of a recent exploration of the tunnel by a group of Leadville, Climax and Boulder people, prominent among whom was Rocky Mountain Railroad Club charter member Les Logue of Leadville. The "Empire" Section of the same paper for the following Sunday,

September 13th, published an excellent story on the same subject by Club member Dow Helmers of Pueblo. Dow is author of "Alpine Tunnel," a detailed history of this famous bore published this past summer by Sage Books of Denver.

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST TRAIN TO ROLLINS PASS

By Rev. Edward T. Bollinger

On September 2 a spry little man of 86 drove his car to Denver Union Station and walked out to the last track to be on hand for the departure of Rio Grande's Train No. 9 -- the Yampa Valley Mail.

Sixty years before he had written the train orders for Denver, Northwestern & Pacific Train No. 1 to run extra beyond Mammoth (Tolland) to Rollins Pass and return. Joe B. Culbertson's mind was overflowing with the memories of that year of high enthusiasm when the greatest piece of railroad construction in America was begun through a most difficult country and was being carried out on a magnificent scale -- a warning to the giants that David H. Moffat's undying efforts to locate Denver on a transcontinental main line were not to be trifled with.

Some days before Joe had read copies of DNW&P Chief Engineer H. A. Sumner's letters telling about the delay in getting the Rollins Pass Branch line opened to the top. The cause was a two-day rain and snow storm that prevented the last side bridge being completed 1,000 feet above Middle Boulder Creek. When asked how the track was laid beyond the bridge, and the wye begun, Joe dug into his memory and recalled that two carloads of rail had been snaked like logs across the barren mountain side above the bridge to complete the line to the pass.

Sumner had written that he expected the carpenters to complete the bridge by 8:00 that morning so rails could be laid across it in time for the first passenger train. At that time Joe knew that a name would have to be found for the wye and passing track, for regular train service would be established before the month was out. Before Time Card No. 2 was printed, Joe gave the name "Corona" to the place that became known as the "top of the world." Looking at the railhead some miles down the other side, he noted that on the maps it looked like an Arrowhead. And thus this point was named.

Now, 60 years later, Joe climbed aboard Rio Grande No. 9. He spent most of the trip in the baggage car talking with the crew, or gazing at the receding track from the rear vestibule.

Alco diesel unit 6001 was in the hands of E. R. Brown, who had gone to the Moffat in 1923. But the diesel, designed to haul the California Zephyr, was a poor answer to the two-percent grade -- not going over 40 -- and losing two minutes with its two-car train, so the dispatcher plugged the little train for a long, proud, symbol freight.

Mel Schieltz, Rocky Mountain News photographer, was enjoying his first ride in an engine cab, recording the trip for posterity. At Rollinsville, Ed Bollinger had given his cab seat to William Marvel, News writer. Thus, both men had a not-to-be-forgotten scare as a county plow truck, driven by an apparently blind and deaf driver, continued across the track at Tolland. Thanks to Engineer Brown's emergency stop, a miss by a razor's edge was witnessed.

At East Portal the train was pulled right up to the tunnel mouth for the ceremony for the photographers. Here, Joe Culbertson, the only living man known to have been employed by the DNW&P 60 years before, had his picture taken with the crew and another one-time Moffat man, Mr. L. H. Bartholomew, from California.

The group then joined a caravan of seven cars, including among its passengers Ranger Wayne A. Parsons representing the U. S. Forest Service, and drove from East Portal to Rollins Pass where hot coffee was waiting, thanks to the Clifford Millers of Hideaway Park who, with 50 residents of Middle Park; Miami Springs, Florida; Anaheim, California; and intermediate cities, welcomed the party. Everyone admired the Forest Service's new enclosed Rollins Pass marker with its scale model snow sheds and oldtime photographs. Deep appreciation was expressed by everyone for the work done by the Forest Service in marking the route. Officials revealed that a dream for a museum at the summit is on the drawing boards, although problems of ownership of parts of the right-of-way, as well as who will maintain the road and improve it, must be solved before more tourists can be encouraged to make the trip over this historic old route.

Since the route's official driving guide, printed by the Forest Service, has been out of print for more than a month, a revised edition is now going to press. New markers will be added on the west side of the hill, and an overlook constructed below Loop siding with enlargement of the nearby campground.

Letters of commendation to the Forest Service will go a long way toward helping those in the Department who are endeavoring to make this old line a firstclass historic attraction.

Club members are urged to participate in this effort by writing the U. S. Forest Service, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado.

(Editor's Note: Club member Ed Bollinger, long an ardent student of David H. Moffat's story and his railroad, prepared the foregoing narrative especially for this Newsletter. We are grateful that this authoritative information, marking an important historical event, has been made available to us for the record.)

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The fanciest steak served on the old Colorado Midland Railroad's diners back on a Christmas Day in the early 1900's went for \$1.10. The holiday menu is part of a collection of railroad memorabilia presented last spring to the Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum by Club member Henry E. Coupland of Colorado Springs, a retired pharmacist and railroad buff who has lived in the Pikes Peak region more than 50 years.

Much of Coupland's collection, housed in a special case at the museum, was used on the Midland Terminal, Colorado Midland, and the Florence & Cripple Creek roads. There's a ticket punch marked "Rand McNally & Co., Chicago," used for a time on the narrow gauge Florence & Cripple Creek run in Phantom Canyon. There's a steam gauge headlight from Midland's engine #53, tallow pot, signal lantern, Keeley can (for cooling hot boxes), steam whistle, oil can, locomotive builder's plate, smokebox number plate, and a red flagman's lantern. Coupland also included in his donation a telegraph key from the old Divide depot, kerosene lanterns from the Florence & Cripple Creek, an operator's trainorder hoop, blackboard from the Midland roundhouse, two switch keys, freight car seals, and a Rocky Mountain Railroad Club trip pamphlet.

He also had a copy of the contract between the Colorado Springs & Cripple Creek District Railway Company and Wells Fargo & Company covering the handling of express. He added a roundhouse register of the Colorado Midland, inspection and repair reports, and Midland tariff sheets.

The Coupland Collection, including an earlier gift of a locomotive bell and a famous picture of Aspen in the old days, is in the museum's new addition at 25 West Kiowa Street, Colorado Springs, where other equally fascinating displays of historical items of the Colorado Springs region are also on display.

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Club members whose interests run to rosters of motive power of the various railroads will be glad to learn of a new mimeographed "Complete Index to Steam, Electric, Diesel and Traction Rosters of Railroads, Rapid Transit and Street Car Lines from Alaska to the Yucatan and Beyond," which have been published in North American railfan magazines over the past 30 years. This comprehensive index was compiled by F. H. Worsfold, and copies are available for 85¢ each, postpaid, from the author at Post Office Box 392, Grossmont, California 92030.

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Daily operation of the Silverton for 1964 is drawing to a close as this is written. The second section, as a regular operational feature, was discontinued Saturday, August 29th, although a surprisingly large number of excursionists showed up over the Labor Day weekend, requiring an unexpected second train that Sunday. The 906 passengers handled missed by only three people the all-time record for a single day set on August 18th, as reported in last month's Newsletter.

Through Thursday, September 24, the season's total was up to 63505 passengers -- 13,021 ahead of last year's aggregate on the same date -- assuring that the 60,000 set as a goal for this first season of real emphasis on the last of the scheduled common carrier narrow gauges will be far surpassed.

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Countering this enthusiastic public reception to the Silverton operation, however, is the regrettable news that Rio Grande has petitioned the Colorado Public Utilities Commission for permission to discontinue passenger train service on the Royal Gorge Route, specifically Trains No. 1 and 2, between Denver and Grand Junction. Public hearings by the Commission on the railroad's application were scheduled at Pueblo, Salida and Glenwood Springs in late September and early October.

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Also bringing sorrow to railfans in recent weeks were two other items of little importance to the general public -- one, news that the old South Park depot building at Pine, Colorado, built in the late 1870's to serve the little town in the middle reaches of South Platte Canon, was destroyed by fire early Sunday morning, August 30th. The second, not even publicized, was the loss by vandalism of the bronze marker placed several years ago by Rocky Mountain Railroad Club members on the granite monument to South Park Engineer Billy Westall who lost his life when DL&G engine 195 ran into a washin and turned over near Dome Rock on August 28th, 1898.

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S P E C I A L N O T I C E

As a special service to members the Club has purchased for resale a supply of the September, 1964, issue of TRAINS magazine which featured an eight-page "Photo Section" (and the cover) of winning photographs in the TRAINS-Rocky Mountain Railroad Club photo contest. The issue features 21 magnificent pictures by Club members, each representing the "best picture of the year" for those years we have operated excursions (1939 through 1963).

Such rare scenes as steam on Pikes Peak, Denver Tranway narrow gauge cars at Leyden, an RGS "Goose" at Vance Junction, UP's 9000 (4-12-2), D&SL 119 in Rock Creek Canyon, our long-time friend C&S 638 and many others are shown in a stunning portfolio of Colorado railroading that belongs in the collection of every railfan.

Copies of this issue (it may soon be a collector's item since newsstand supplies in the Denver area sold out in three days) are available from the Club, postpaid, at the regular price of 50¢ each; or they may be obtained at the meeting. Don't pass up this opportunity to own a copy -- or pick up a spare -- of this TRAINS issue featuring a quarter-century of Club excursions.

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For that tired, run-down feeling, try jay walking!

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Ted S. McKee, President

Fay L. McKee, Secretary

Herbert O'Hanlon, Vice President

Ane O. Clint, Treasurer