



# RAIL NEWS

HOLIDAYS 1996

NUMBER TWELVE

## “HAPPY HOLIDAYS!”

### SOCIETY'S FIFTH YEAR HOLDS CHALLENGES AND MUCH PROMISE

EDITORIAL - 1996, for SCRVRHS, seemed like a late night slow burn in the fire box of old #51 waiting for the next day to come to build up a head of steam. The interest in the March Rail Festival made it the highlight of the year. Then SCRVRHS Attendants were met with aggressive week-end train schedules to staff. August increased their manpower pressure with Metrolink. Even the Bar-B-Que crew began to cool off. Agreements for reimbursement for services rendered to the railroad (called Society cash flow) apparently vanished. Relations between the Society and the railroad seemed to bounce up and down like sections of rail

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## 1997 Society Rail Festival Could Be A Real Winner!

FILLMORE - “110 Years of Railroad Heritage” will be the theme of the second annual Fillmore Rail Festival presented by the Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society (SCRVRHS). Scheduled for the week-end of March 15 and 16, 1997, Event Chairman and acting Society President Pat Askren said the theme is based on the anniversary of the Southern Pacific Railroad coming to Ventura County. Information and displays will depict the impact that the railroad played on the development of the local economy. The annual festival is a major fund raiser for the Society and its Railroad Interpretive Center (RIC) project.

Society committees have formed to bring the festival to life. Plans include providing one hour vintage *steam* train rides from Central Park in Fillmore west to Dudley. ‘Speeder’ rides, those small maintenance of way vehicles powered by gasoline engines, were very popular last year and are expected to return. The Society’s famous tri-tip barbeque will also be on hand. In addition, a railroad film festival is planned for the recently restored Fillmore Theater as well as Johnny Popper engines; private rail car displays; scale live steamer demonstrations; a railroad swap meet; and vendor booths. The Society hopes to have tours of Metrolink and/or Amtrak equipment as well.

Funds raised for this 501(c)(3) non-profit organization benefit the RIC. Phase one continues with plans to bring and install a 90 foot 1906 fully operational turn-table to Fillmore. SCRVRHS hasn’t been standing still. To date, the following has been accomplished toward this end: a property lease has been secured from the City of Fillmore; the City of Fillmore has also offered \$25,000. in matching funds; \$5,000. has been donated by a private family foundation; \$7,000. has been raised by SCRVRHS through personal and corporate donations or other fund raising events; the turntable itself was donated by the Gateway Western Railroad in Missouri; OST

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### SCRVRHS ANNUAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
& BOARD OFFICER  
ELECTIONS

Wednesday  
January 8, 1997  
7:00 pm  
Fillmore City Hall



### Taming of the West, Part 3

# THE RACE TO PROMONTORY: PROJECT, PLAYERS, AND PACIFIC'S

by Troy Helton

If the Rail wasn't still in existence, the tale would be considered a fable, half believed and endlessly interpreted. The Race to connect the west with the east was one of the largest achievements in history. The vast stage was taken over by two great antagonists, two companies racing toward each other in bitter rivalry, one from the east, one from the west, to meet some where in the wilderness. With great financial gain for every mile of track laid, each seeks to out build the other, sometimes destroying each others work. White men against the Indians, Chinese for the Central Pacific against Irish for the Union Pacific. These were armies, and this was war. The spoils of war being control of the west. There was wealth for some, death and poverty for others, with rewards not necessarily going to the deserving, as was a habit of history.

In 1974 New York Mayor Abraham Beam announced a 3000 foot connection from the Long Island Rail to the Kennedy Airport would be completed by 1980. In 1869 the Union Pacific located and laid 568 miles of track in one year; the Central Pacific once laid 10 miles from sun up to sun down.

When the tracks were connected in 1869, the country went wild with celebration, yet a few years later when the financial details became public, the mood changed. As respected Massachusetts senator, George Hoar, put it: "When the greatest railroads in the world, binding together the continent and uniting two great seas which wash out shores, was finished, I had seen our nation triumph and exaltation turned to bitterness and shame."

In 1845 Asa Whitney, a Connecticut Yankee, put before Congress his idea of setting aside a sixty mile wide strip of land from the Mississippi to the Pacific at the Columbia River. The project would pay for itself by selling land, timber, minerals, and by developing cities along the way. By the 1850's, after the Mexican War, the



acquisition of California and the southwest, and the gold rush, the fever for connecting the continent was on. Under Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, the Army topographical engineers surveyed five different routes. Northerners wanted northern routes, southerners wanted southern routes. No one could agree so no roadbeds were laid out.

In 1854, Theodore Dehone Judah, a twenty seven year old engineer from Bridgeport Connecticut, moved to the Sierra foothills. He had surveyed railroads in New England and built one along the Niagara Gorge. So it was natural to ask, 'why take six months to sail around the Horn, or several months on a steam boat with a land crossing Central America (as he had done with his young wife), or risk the dangers of a wagon train or stage coach to get to California?' He preached his idea of a transcontinental railroad and was soon to be known as "crazy Judah".

In 1859 Judah struck off for the summer to survey a route from Dutch Flats into the Sierra Nevada Range. Near the Donner and Emigrant Pass, he followed an old wagon road through the Truckee Gorge down to the flatlands of Nevada's new mining strikes. With this information he returned to Dutch Flats. With the help of a druggist friend, Dr. Daniel Strong, drew up the Articles of Association of the Central Pacific Railroad

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Contributions are welcome! Send articles, photographs, drawings, or information (preferably on IBM computer disk) to:

RAIL NEWS

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## MEETINGS

Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at Fillmore City Hall. General membership meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Call for location information: (805) 524-1201.

## INTERNET ADDRESS

<http://www.fishnet.net/~johngart>

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this organization to assist in the preservation of the railroad corridor between Montalvo and Saugus, California, so as to maximize the economic, educational, environmental and recreational value of this unique historical asset to the residents of the Santa Clara River Valley and the surrounding area. To this end it is the intent of this organization to acquire, preserve, restore, exhibit and operate historic railroad equipment, and to acquire, preserve, display, and make available for study, artifacts, information and photographs pertaining to railroad equipment, structures and operations in the Southern California region.

# ***This is a plea for help! SO HELP!***

We desperately need volunteers for the BBQ at Kenny Grove Park.

Take time out and help the society.

We expect to feed 800 to 900 people.

This is a major fund raiser for the Society, so pitch in!

Give John Gartman a call @ (805) 652-1857

and schedule at least two hours,

Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup> beginning @ 10:00 AM

Don't forget the Christmas get together and awards ceremony December the 11<sup>th</sup>  
in the park, Fillmore. 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM.

Saturday January 25<sup>th</sup> & Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> the Seimans Rail Car will be on display  
in Santa Paula and Fillmore. Sunday is to include a kick off of 110 years of  
railroading in Fillmore and announce the Spring Rail Festival March 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>.

We may supply car attendants on it so call Paul Jacques @ (805) 386-4354, fax  
@ (805) 386-3280, or "E Mail" to paulj@rain.org, if you want to be part of history  
in the making.

While we're begging, how about signing up for the Christmas Tree Trains.  
We need car attendants which is to be scheduled with Paul, numbers above.

We also need muscles loading & unloading the trees on the train.

If you like to see happy customers and smiling kids, this is a must.

Last year was a great success and this year is slated to be bigger and better.  
Where else can one go take a train, cut a tree, and have it hauled back to your  
car? This too is a SCRVRHS fund raiser. Call Troy R. Helton Jr. for Tree  
helping schedule @ (805) 933-2524 or "E Mail" @ worldflyer@aol.com.

**SEE YOU THERE!**

We have a new member, Smiling Jim Breeding who is coordinating antique car  
displays at Santa Paula Airport's "First Sunday", and at the Fillmore 110 years of  
Railroading, March of 97. Anyone knowing of or having an antique automobile,  
contact Jim @ (805) 525-0440.



## RAIL FESTIVAL

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Trucking has offered crane and trucking services; Mainstreet Architects has donated a portion of their RIC project architectural design fees; and USA Petrochem has donated rail and switches. Work is still very much evident to bring the RIC project to its next level: that being bringing the turntable across country to Fillmore.

Society members or interested individuals who would like to participate in the 1997 Fillmore Rail Festival need only call SCRVRHS at 805.524.1201 anytime and leave a message stating your name and areas of interest. A Committee chairperson will contact you. Or you can do the same by leaving an E-mail message at the Society's World Wide Web Internet site (see page 2).

Committee Chairmen that you can help:

- Festival Logo - Tim Grush
- Permits - Pat Askren
- Signs, banners - Tim Grush
- Event Sponsors - Rick Swanson/A.J. Farrar
- Advertising/Public Relations - Troy Helton
- Parking - Joe Kern
- Budget - Joe Kern

Trash; barricades; toilets - Paul Haase

March 1997 is closer than you think! Some deadlines for action have already passed. This year's Rail Festival figures to be the best and biggest Society fund raiser to date. Says Askren, "Get involved, have some fun, and help the Society bring a turntable back to life! Why not contact the Society now while it's still on your mind!"

## SOCIETY'S 5TH BRINGS CHANGE

(Continued from page 1)

with loose spikes. Society programs and projects saw the same selfless members helping out time and again on simultaneous projects to the point of near burn out (admittedly I also fell victim). With a few slight exceptions, overall Society interest seemed to wain and the turntable project coasted to a mere roll by like a freight car over a yard hump. But as 1996 closes,



things certainly seem to be changing.

Dave Wilkinson, our founding Society President changed jobs! In fact, he bought the Fillmore & Western Railway! His aggressive plans to make the railroad a success again sparked Society interest. The railroad paid monies due the Society for services rendered in the past. New F&W marketing strategies were implemented. Railroad equipment was spruced up and #51 was fired up in September for the first time in 1996. Dave needed help and asked the Society to pitch in with projects to keep the train running in the valley. He offered special projects with training opportunities for Society members. The F&W hosted a well attended November SCRVRHS Membership meeting by providing a private train ride for all members (something that hasn't been done for a long time). Finally, both cities, Fillmore and Santa Paula, are getting hot on their redevelopment projects and both tourist and business interest in the area is growing.

A Society holiday party, on board the F&W, is scheduled for December 11th. The 1997 Rail Festival looks like a public eye opener. And who knows, after two years of trying, that turntable in Missouri just might get yanked out of the ground and headed to Fillmore this summer!

Dave, having resigned as President and with other Board terms expiring, comes a new challenges: the possibility of the first change in overall Society leadership and a new process for which officers are chosen since our inception. 1997 appears to be a green flag year for the Society and hopefully the Fillmore & Western. The train is leaving the station. Will you be on board? *The Editor*

## PROMONTORY

(Continued from page 2)

of California. They then started out to raise money for the 115 miles of track from Sacramento to the Nevada state line. California law required \$1,000. per mile of track be raised. Some was collected from Dutch Flats but little elsewhere. One night in 1861, in a room over a hardware store, Judah made his presentation hoping to persuade merchants that rail would be a better way to deliver goods to the Nevada mines. A slow spoken wholesale grocer named Leland Stanford, an overweight dry goods man named Charles Crocker, and the two drug store owners, bookkeeper Mark Hopkins and his younger but chunkier partner Collis P. Huntington, risked their modest fortunes to make Judah's dream come true. They were soon to be known as the 'Big Four'. In the coming years they would turn the Central Pacific and its mammoth offspring, the Southern Pacific, into the so called 'Octopus'



Depending on the point of view, the Big Four either built or tyrannized California for the next four decades.

Judah was sent to Washington by the Big Four to lobby aid for the railroad project. With civil war on and no southern lobbyist opposition, plus the recognized need to keep the west in the union, a Pacific Railroad Act went through Congress and was signed by President Lincoln on July 1, 1862. The Act provided that two companies would build the great project: a new one called the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific. The U.P. would lay track westward from Omaha Nebraska while the Central Pacific would start in Sacramento and head for the Nevada border. Each company was given 1) a right

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# UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF THE PAST: MEET THE REAL FILLMORE & WESTERN

**POWHATAN** - This cafe-parlor car was built in 1928 for the Richmond Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad. This car carried passengers between Richmond, Virginia and Washington D.C. Even politicians rode on this car in a 'smoke filled' compartment that once occupied the space where the piano now sits. The *Powhatan* was later used for many years in various circus trains, traveling around the country with the Big Top. Finally it sat on dead track as an ice cream parlor in Florida. It was rescued in 1991 and today sports fancy red curtains, gold trim, and operating 'modern' ceiling fans. It also has air conditioning. The *Powhatan* has been 'set decorated' as an oldtime lounge, diner and private car. As with many of the cars in the Fillmore & Western stable it just got a coat of new green and silver paint.

**McKINNEYSBURG** - Pullman sleeping cars are frequently seen in films and this car is very typical of open section type cars. It was built by Pullman in 1925 for service on the Southern Railway. There is one private drawing room at the end (point) and two smaller first class compartments at the other end. But most of the car is open seating. The Pullman Porter folded down each open seating area to make a bed at night. The upper berths pull down and full length curtains provided privacy, sort of! Last year the car received new rose colored upholstery and fresh carpeting. It too has new green and silver paint with gold outside lettering that proudly reads: 'FILLMORE & WESTERN'.

# PROMONTORY: THE RACE IS ON

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of way strip of land; 2) land for yards and other facilities and; 3) and five alternating land sections or ten altogether. The arable land was considered worthless except by the Indians. The greatest value was in the thirty (30) year low interest first mortgage bonds offered each company based on a scale of track laying difficulty. \$16,000. per mile in the flatlands, \$32,000. in the intermediate areas and \$48,000. in the mountain areas was the deal. Each company had one mountain range to cross, the Rockies for U.P. and the Sierra's for the C.P. The race for promontory was truly on!

*(to be continued next issue)*



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