

Rocky Mountain Express

Where preserving railroading in the Rocky Mountain States begins and will never end...

September 2014

Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society

Volume 2014, Issue 7

And Now It's Time to Celebrate: Como Depot Restored

Stay tuned for a detailed report of the DSP&P Historical Society restoration in the next issue of the Rocky Mountain Express.

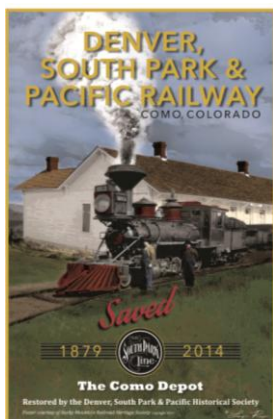


Above: Como Depot prior to restoration

Below: Como Depot in August 2014



Como Depot and Hotel in July 2014



At left is the first poster of a "saved" depot to be produced by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society.

It honors the restoration efforts of the Denver South Park & Pacific Historical Society.

The Arkansas Valley Rwy 1872-1877

submitted by Doug Cohn

The Kansas Pacific RR and Santa Fe RR were in competition to reach southern Colorado and New Mexico. The Rio Grande RR had already reached Pueblo from Denver. The Santa Fe was stuck in western Kansas after running out of money. The Kansas Pacific envisioned following the Santa Fe Trail, and published a map to show their vision - a grand line of 915 miles.

A huge quantity of freight was moving along the Arkansas River during the late 1860s into the 1870s. This was the busiest time for travel along the Santa Fe Trail, which connected New Mexico to the United States. There was a report the area around Las Animas town was filled with wagon trains every summer day. Freight was going both directions. New Mexico and southern Colorado were growing, and there needed to be a rail connection to the east. There was the opportunity to take a southern route to the west coast as well. It was a time of big dreams. Coal had been found near Trinidad. This was a huge deal since coal ran the whole economy at that point. Silver and gold needed to get back east. The people in the east were hungry for Colorado beef and thousands of head of cattle needed to be shipped. The southern Colorado towns were growing fast and needed all the supplies necessary for town building. The economies were strong. The great western migration was in full swing, and the railroads had thousands of acres of land to sell to ranchers and farmers and wanted people to come and settle in this new wide open country. Colorado would not become a state until 1876, and there were few laws governing activities on the frontier.

Businessmen in Pueblo wanted a freight road built from their town to the terminus in Kit Carson, and they were willing to pay for it. Fairly quickly, they decided a railroad was a better idea. They played the Santa Fe and Kansas Pacific against each other to see who could get to their town first. The Bent County people were interested in the Santa Fe; Las Animas was interested in the first road to get to their town as was Pueblo.

In 1872, The Kansas Pacific decided to build a railroad from Kit Carson to Pueblo, a distance of 76 miles. They incorporated the line as the Arkansas Valley Railroad and began construction. Bonds were sold to raise the money to build the line. (The Santa Fe incorporated another line they called the

Pueblo and Arkansas Valley Railroad. That line is also called the Pueblo and Salt Lake Railroad, and the similarity in names has created some historical confusion.)

By 1873, the track was laid from Kit Carson to Las Animas. Because of some serious disagreements with the town leaders, the railroad bypassed Las Animas and created a new town called West Las Animas. The first train reached the new town on October 17th. The folks in the original town thought the name was an insult, but there was not much they could do. Trains filled with building materials arrived at the new town, and cattle began moving in the other direction. The new town grew quickly, and a number of people from the old Animas moved their businesses to the new town.

By June of 1873, the Santa Fe had reached Las Animas. Both the Santa Fe RR and Arkansas Valley RR were laying tracks up the river. This got to be a big fight since they were using the same right of way. The Arkansas Valley Railroad got as far west as the current city of La Junta. The railroad was the creator of the town. The citizens of Pueblo voted a bond issue for the Santa Fe and not the Arkansas Valley, spelling the end of the line for the Arkansas Valley. The railway ran out of money in La Junta and the Santa Fe got all the freight along the river. This was the first railroad to be abandoned in Colorado.

The story gets complicated because the railroads had conflicting land grant easements. Both claimed they had the right to build their railroads. Philip Peterson's book, *The Arkansas Valley Railway*, discusses this problem in great detail and is a good book to read on this topic.

There is a very informative historic marker in Kit Carson, Colorado, that tells the story of the Arkansas Valley Railway. Included on the marker is a photo of the Kit Carson pumphouse, one of the railroad structures the RMRHS is helping to preserve.



Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society
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Durango Depot in August 2014 photo by Mike Walker

Newsletter Volunteer Staff
Editor: Sigi Walker
Photographer: Mike Walker

Note: All submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space allocation, and become the property of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society unless other arrangements have been made. Digital text submissions in .doc or .docx; photos in jpg, please. Submit articles and photos to the following address.

Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society
publishes this newsletter at
PO Box 969
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RMRHS has applied for 501(c)(3) status.



Interior of La Posada Hotel in Winslow, AZ, after restoration

Designed by Mary Colter and built in 1930 for Fred Harvey and the Santa Fe RR, the hotel closed in 1957. It was lovingly restored by Allan Affeldt over a number of years and re-opened in 1997. It features fine dining and accommodations and is an Amtrak stop.
website photo

Writers contributing to this edition:

Doug Cohn
Bret Johnson
Jim Jordan
Sammy King
Norm Metcalf
Mike and Sigi Walker

PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP: Please come!

You are cordially invited to the First Annual Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society Members' Meeting

Sunday, October 5, 2014

*McShane Room, The Inn at Palmer Divide
Social Hour at 11:30 AM; Lunch at Noon
\$15.00 per person*

*Awards Presentations and Board of Directors Meeting follow
Help us celebrate our Society's progress in saving historic
railroad structures in the Rocky Mountain West!*

Spouses, friends and guests are welcome to attend

Please RSVP by September 27th by calling

Jim Jordan - 303-269-9768

Jan Moore - 303-840-2150

Sigi Walker - 719-339-2794

Menu selections: (Please select one when you RSVP)

Cost: \$15.00 per person (tax & tip incl.)

- SALMON CAESAR SALAD** - Grilled salmon, hearts of romaine, parmesan, croutons, creamy Caesar dressing, assorted mini desserts, coffee, iced tea
- SHAVED PRIME RIB SANDWICH** - Hoagie bun, shaved prime rib, Swiss, caramelized onions, horseradish cream, chips, assorted mini desserts, coffee, iced tea
- CHICKEN MELT** - Sourdough, thin sliced chicken, caramelized onions, lemon aioli, chips, assorted mini desserts, coffee, iced tea

I'm looking forward to greeting you at The Inn at Palmer Divide!

Jim Jordan



Left: Resting up after delivering ties to the Western Museum of Mining & Industry
Gary Goodman photo

Right: Union Pacific employees loading ties in Limon for Rock Island depot in Calhan
Doug Cohn photo



Please ✕

or provide the information requested on a plain sheet of paper and mail with payment.

Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society

PO Box 969

Englewood CO 80151-0969

___ Individual \$25

___ Business \$100

___ Family \$40

___ Corporate \$500

___ Museum/Historical Society \$40

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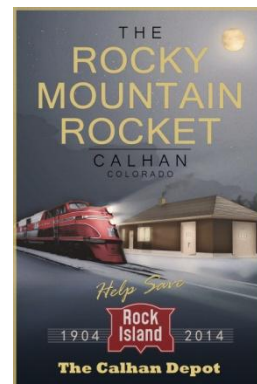
Date: _____ Venue: _____

Update on two of the Historic Depots and Buildings RMRHS is striving to preserve

The Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Society has assisted the Town of Calhan in obtaining a grant from the State Historical Fund to prepare a Historic Structure Assessment for the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Depot on Calhan. Located 38 miles east of Colorado Springs on the Rock Island's former line between Limon and Colorado Springs and constructed in 1906, it is one of only three CRI&P depots remaining on their original sites.

The Rock Island declared bankruptcy in 1975 and ceased operations in 1980. A short lived renaissance began in 1981 with the formation of the Cadillac and Lake City Railway Company. The new firm began operating over the old rails from Limon to Falcon, Colorado. The depot in Calhan served as company headquarters and was the only depot along the route. The new company provided limited freight service and occasional passenger excursions, including some to the El Paso County Fair. Despite plans for additional service and diner-train excursions, financial success eluded the new line, and service ended in 1986. The depot was acquired by the Town of Calhan in 1993, and the track was removed around the same time.

The State Historical Fund is a statewide grants program that was created by the 1990 constitutional amendment allowing limited gaming in the towns of Cripple Creek, Central City, and Black Hawk. The amendment directs that a portion of the gaming tax revenues be used for historic preservation throughout the state. Calhan's grant, a Historic Structure Assessment, is a historic preservation tool that gives a comprehensive look at the condition of a structure. The assessment consists of three main components: **(1) The history of the structure, (2) A condition assessment of the structure, and (3) A preservation plan** for the structure.



The history portion of the assessment looks at the history of the building and site, and establishes the Period of Significance for the structure, that is, the time frame during which it acquired its historical significance, and the character defining elements of the building, or what elements make the building historical. It also looks at potential uses for the building. **The condition assessment** is a top to bottom look at the condition of the structure. It looks at the site, the foundation, structural system, roof, interior, mechanical system and electrical system. It describes each element and its condition. **The preservation plan** makes recommendations to correct the problems identified during the condition assessment, prioritizes those recommendations based on the criticality of the problem, and finally provides estimated costs to correct those problems. The preservation plan also provides phasing recommendations. The phasing will break the work into manageable chunks, and group the items together so work is done in a logical order.



The Historic Structure Assessment provides a basis for applying for future grants for the rehabilitation of the structure.

Reported by Bret Johnson, RMRHS Vice President

Good news has arrived from another front! The contract for the purchase and future move of the C&S Dumont Depot is close to being finalized. Congratulations to all who worked on this.

Norm Metcalf has provided an excerpt from Hol Wagner's book on the C&S, the 1900 chapter:

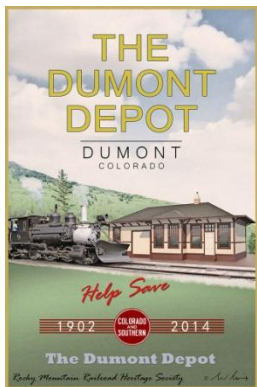
Back on December 8, 1899, the C&S board of directors had authorized the expenditure of \$1,300 for construction of a new depot at Dumont, between Idaho Springs and Georgetown on the Clear Creek line, where former Colorado Central coach No. 4, renumbered 181 in 1885, had been in use as a depot after being dropped from the equipment roster on August 5, 1897. Authority For Extraordinary Expenditure No. 17 was subsequently issued on April 17, 1900, but on June 29, Trumbull sent a note to general superintendent Dyer, saying, "In accordance with our conversation this morning, I think this expenditure had better be held in abeyance until further notice." This postponement proved fairly lengthy, however, and the new wooden depot was finally erected under a contract awarded December 10, 1901, to J.A. Hamman and W.E. Hodgson. It was painted in a substantial variation from the railroad's then standard structure colors – light gray with dark green trim – featuring light yellow fish



scale shingle upper siding above light gray vertical lower siding, all with white trim. A February 5, 1902, telegram from B&B foreman J.A. Hamman to chief engineer Cowan requested, "Will you kindly see that car 7425 is billed out and forwarded at once. Painters are here waiting for stock in car."

Dumont Colorado, home of the Mill Creek Valley Historical Society (established in 1981 to obtain and preserve the old one room Dumont Schoolhouse, a fine brick building built in 1909), is located 33 miles west of Denver on the I-70 interstate corridor. Although a small community of about 200 people, it is an area rich in history. The area was well known to the early day mountain man and was an active Gold Rush site in the 1800s. The 1900s saw the advent of the railroad, and Dumont was one of the few Clear Creek County communities to have a fine depot. Now instead of ore wagons and mill sites, the area is home to numerous rafting companies who enjoy the thrill of riding the rapids of Clear Creek, which runs through the small town. Mill Creek, the giver of the society's name, flows through Dumont and empties into Clear Creek.

Two other structures are part of the schoolyard site: the Coburn Cabin, once located in Lawson and then used as a visitor center in Georgetown, and the Mill City House, a 2-½ story log cabin which at times housed 20 or more miners and is decorated with fine expensive wallpaper. Restoration on these structures is ongoing.



The posters shown above are available from the RMRHS for \$20.00. All proceeds will be used to further the activities of the RMRHS.

Errata: Vol 2014 Issue 6 (August 2014) incorrectly stated that the Santa Fe Depot in Las Animas is city-owned. Current information provided by Bent County Commissioner Bill Long is as follows: "The railroad owns both the land and building. Bent County leased the building about three years ago just days before it was to be demolished. Over the past 10-12 years both the city and county have made numerous attempts to purchase the site along with the building. The railroad has only been willing to lease the land and building with the right to terminate the lease with 30 days notice."

Train Treks with Mike and Sigi Walker: Depots along CO Highway 160

In mid-August, we were scheduled to spend some time in Pagosa Springs and then a few days in Durango during the True West Railfest. As we drove through Walsenburg, we decided to check on any depots still surviving between there and Pagosa Springs. Here's what we found.



Detraining at Fort Garland, Colorado's newest "depot"

From Fort Garland, we passed through Alamosa, where the 1908 depot serves the Rio Grande Scenic RR. It is the second depot there, the first having been destroyed in a fire on Dec. 25, 1907.

In Monte Vista, we found the unique 1907 depot vacant, with no railroad furnishings inside. Until recently, it served as the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce office. The depot replaced the 1896 depot located north of the tracks, which became a freight house and no longer exists.



Monte Vista depot with platform from track side

Just a short distance west, we were surprised to find the former Del Norte depot alive and well. Built in 1911, the Town of Del Norte has preserved the building and is using it as a well-kept town hall with a park on its south side.



Del Norte depot, now the Town Hall

As we neared South Fork, we kept an eye out for any signs of a depot, but found none. There is an 1893 depot where you board the Denver & Rio Grande Railway just west of South Fork. It came from Hooper, was moved to a ranch north of Monte Vista, and then brought here in 2008.

Finally, in Pagosa Springs, we found the old depot "lived in" - it has become a private residence!



Mike Walker photos

MIL GRACIAS, DOSCIENTOS, another Guatemalan rail adventure - Part III (final)

--- by Sammy King

While I was short of cash for Sr. Lopez, I always have done what I could for those who treat me well, especially if they are poor rail workers with families to support. I asked what would be a fair tip for the train crew, and then paid everybody triple the amount suggested, including the dispatcher and yardmaster. It still only amounted to a few dollars apiece, but it was like a couple day's pay extra for each of them. It didn't kill Bernardo and me to do it. For some reason it wasn't too difficult after that for me to arrange to use #200 on a work train that had been assigned to #700, a small GE diesel switcher. We had a pow wow, and everyone just added a tail onto the bottom of the 7 on their copy of the work extra's orders at the same time, including the dispatcher and yardmaster. Our job was to take two extra water cars to the workers living next to the giant trestle at Puente de Las Vacas. We now had use of the main line within yard limits, which extended from the far side of the bridge on the Atlantic side all the way over past Zone 12 on the Pacific side. I knew from previous visits which way the light was from, and asked that the engine be headed so she would face the sun, and that four boxcars and a caboose be added on behind the tank cars. This took no time to accomplish, with the yard crew using #700 to make up and air test our train, which was built on the tracks in front of the train shed in perfect sunlight. The train was still ready before the power.

Once we got working pressure, topped off the tender with water, and tied on, we had to wait to use the mainline until an inbound container train arrived. Not wanting to waste a minute of sunlight and steam, we made the short run to Pamplona, the summit of the coast to coast profile. It is such a poor and dangerous neighborhood that I was not allowed to get off the engine even in broad daylight because I would have been instantly robbed, raped, and killed. We did manage to make a nice runby inside the terminal compound before the containers cleared, we headed backwards toward Ermita and the Puente Belize barrio. As always, when we run a steam engine in Guatemala, we lay on the whistle and wave at everybody. Most often our steam excursions use the mainline of the Atlantic Division which runs through the center of Guatemala City's red light district, consisting largely of cubicles and stalls built on both sides of the tracks. The resulting infrastructure is appropriately named "Avenida del Ferrocarril", or Railroad Avenue. This fine day was no exception, and the residents made a lovely sight as they crawled out of their holes wearing their work clothes and waved back at us. All the train and enginemen always get a big thrill out of this.

The first thing we did at Puente de Las Vacas was to unload our tankers of drinking water. While the train crew took care of that, I hunted unsuccessfully for a good place to set up my video gear. The view, train, and lighting were all perfect, but only a narrow easement on the roadbed was accessible to me. Next to the bridge, a large settlement of shanties and shacks cling to the sheer sides of a 200 foot deep canyon, and I was afraid to go poking around by myself. No time had passed before a friend of mine from the FEGUA diesel shop appeared from a well hidden opening in the wall, and greeted me. He immediately knew what my problem was, and led me through a narrow path down into the depths of poor Guatemala City. This opened up onto a cobblestone-paved over

look built in the perfect location on the cliffside for pictures of trains on the trestle at this time of day. This location has never been used by the many tour groups that have stopped at the Vacas bridge over the years, but I clued our visitors in during my last trip to Guatemala in January 2002.

The first runby was spectacular, the best ever of my video experience. The view was the same as that in the title shot of the "Wayward Tenders" story, only with engine #200 on a freight train. It was impossible to improve on it, so I set up again on the bridge abutment for a different view, and #200 gave another fine showing of smoke and whistle music drifting into the depths of the canyon. Then I moved to the backlit side of the bridge and set up for a third angle. This time, nothing happened, and I waited for awhile. The switch foreman walked out on the bridge to check on me, saw I was OK, and returned to the caboose. Still nothing happened, and it was looking more and more like nothing else was going to happen.

I finally packed it in and walked back up to the head end. We had little steam and less water, and the hissing in the smokebox continued. The entire train crew, Bernardo, Sergio, and I tried to start the injectors, but nobody could do it. There was no choice other than kill the fire and call a diesel. Sergio was somewhat unhappy, but on a Sunday there was very little of anything happening on FEGUA, and it wasn't really a big deal to get #700 to come out and tow us in. We watched the instant replay on my video camera while we waited to be rescued, and all agreed that this trip had been worth the trouble. Our trip back to the shop was less raucous than the trip out to the bridge, but was notable because Bernardo spotted the tender #951, which belonged to one of the ex Sumpter Valley RR (SVR) articulateds at one time. I got the evidence on video, and was to return to Guatemala two years later for both SVR tenders.

Number 200 should never have been used, and we all knew it at the time, but her tubes quit leaking chronically after we fired her up. Frequently a leak in either a boiler or steam fittings will pass water or steam at low temperature but will seal up when all the metal parts have heated up and expanded, forcing the leak shut. This was the only way that we squeezed one more trip out of poor old #200 after she had been parked for repairs, and it was a bona-fide miracle that she ran for us at all. FEGUA went belly up before those repairs could be made. She has never run since, and has slowly been stripped of most of her appliances, one of her dry pipes, and one of her trailing truck springs. Recently there has been talk of retubing her, and she would be a good candidate for returning to service, with new patches in her firebox, and plenty of wear left on her wheels and running gear. We'll see what happens, but it's a long shot considering the serious troubles the railroad faces.

Locomotive 200 on FEGUA turntable

