

A New Home For The Feather River Shortline

A long standing dream came true when the Feather River Shortline engine and cars were finally moved from the Quincy Fairgrounds to our Pontola facility. The equipment was badly vandalized over the years and no doubt would have had to be junked in a few years as an eye-sore. Engine 8's cab windows and doors were smashed each time they were re-applied. All cab gauges were smashed and the needles twisted off and attempts to break the water glass were made. All loose parts were stolen and the firebox was filled with beer cans and whiskey bottles. The journal boxes were filled with sand and gravel and the tender water and oil compartments were filled with debris. A new sandblasting unit and most of the tools stored in the bunk car were stolen.

Yes, F.R.S.L. 8 and the other equipment will live again thanks to the Feather River Rail Society and it's hard working members. On May 14, Iver Gregory and Jim Boynton started to prepare the equipment for the move by disconnecting the valves, removal of the cylinder heads and complete lubrication of the units. The tender and locomotive were separated for the move which was made in four trips.

On May 25th C&M Trucking of Quincy moved a low-boy" trailer into position behind the display track and the caboose was pulled back into place for loading. We then proceeded to dismantle the head of the train order signal using the caboose as a base for an extension ladder. After removal of the lenses and semaphore arms the nuts were removed at the signal base and the mast was shoved over by hand. Norm Holmes, Mel Moore and Ken Roller had arrived earlier with a truck load of ties, rails and other tools and equipment. A short section of track was built onto the "low-boy" trailer. Ties were then stacked with other cribbing and a ramp was built connecting the trailer with the track the equipment had rested ^{ON} for over 20 years. After the caboose was pulled onto the trailer the ramp was dismantled and removed so the tractor could move into position and couple up to the trailer.

The morning of May 29th saw the caboose moving up Highway 70 toward Pontola. The coupola had been removed because of overhead clearances. Once at our Pontola facility, the trailer and caboose were disconnected from the tractor and again a ramp track was built to connect the trailer to one of our museum tracks. W.P. 921 was available and after picking up a water car as an idler, we slowly inched the caboose from the trailer. The caboose was then

carefully spotted in our museum building probably being under a roof for the first time in its career. The ramp truck was disassembled again so the tractor could couple up and return to Quincy for another load.

This entire process was repeated three times in order to move all the equipment except engine 8. The Army ammo. car was loaded the afternoon of May 29th and unloaded at Pontola on May 31st. Engine 8's tender was loaded as soon as the trailer returned to Quincy and was spotted. The tender was hauled and unloaded the next day. It was not until June 13th that a special heavy duty low bed trailer was available for loading. Earl Casazza Trucking of Reno furnished the rig and driver who incidentally did a masterful job of handling 8. The Little Prairie engine sailed up Highway 70 much to the amazement of startled motorists. Once at Pontola, the rig was stopped on the main street creating a mini celebration. First time in Pontola history a steam locomotive moved down Commercial Street!

Clover 8 was finally shoved into our museum building as the skies opened up with a display of lightning and thunder. Hail and heavy rain pelted the museum roof and someone said that they heard a faint gasp as 8 settled down in a nice dry comfortable place she could call home. Yes! Out of the storm for the first time in over 20 years.

The Society is greatly indebted to the following members who labored so hard to make this dream come true. Lifting heavy ties and rails is no job for the faint hearted but motivation made the task seem like an easy chore. The warm weather didn't ease the work and if it were not for the gallons of ice-cold lemonade supplied by Barbara Holmes, our "gandies" certainly would have dried up and blown away. Our sincere thanks to these devoted members: Bill Cripe, Iver Gregory, Bob Harlow, Frank Hibbs, Norm Holmes, Bob Larson, Roy Lopez, Hap Manit, Dave McClain, Steve Milward, Mel Moore, Glenn Mosley and son, Jack Palmer, Ken Roller, Ken Shipton, Bill Spier and Bob Wakefield. Forgive me if I have forgotten anyone and my only excuse would be that the distraction of the job at hand derailed my memory.

Engine 8 is now project Sequoia and plans are being made to put her in steam, again. I appreciate the job as project manager and am also extremely happy to know that vandals will no longer be pulling the Little 2-6-2 apart. As project members I have Society members Dennis Lemmins, Iver Gregory, John Marvin and Ken Roller helping to renovate the diminutive engine. The love and attention she has so badly needed has returned again and soon 8 will respond wearing a flashy new jacket and a plume of steam in her bonnet.

Jim Boynton