

Material Arrives from SP Sacramento Auction

by Brian F. Challender

When the Board of Directors learned of the auction at Southern Pacific's Sacramento Locomotive Works, it was decided to send a representative to bid on anything that we would have a use for at the museum.

With Norm Holmes going to Kansas City for the TRAIN meeting, and the rest of the board otherwise engaged, I volunteered to represent the museum.

The following Tuesday I arrived in Sacramento with the museum's pick-up truck (in case I bought anything <grin>) to attend the pre-auction inspection in the afternoon.

What I saw was eerily reminiscent of documentaries on ghost towns.

- work stations that still had half-completed projects on them.
- snapshots of families taped to walls.
- hats and coats on chair backs.

On Wednesday morning at 9 AM, the auction began with the carpentry shop. With the help and advice of Dave Anderson, Jim Ley and Dick Hurlbert, I successfully bid on a radial arm saw, all the locomotive glass, and the entire inventory of locomotive seats and parts.

I won't go into a complete listing of all that was purchased during the next 2 days as there isn't room in this article. Suffice it to say, there was a lot!

Because I had to return to work Friday, Jim Ley, Dave Anderson and his father Ray Anderson volunteered to box up and consolidate the loose items Friday and Saturday. In the meantime, I had asked my brother, Bob Challender, to take stock of the equipment and advise us on the best way of transporting it. His eighteen years of trucking experience proved to be invaluable.

On Monday morning when I returned to Sacramento, I was informed that the air shop had been broken into over the weekend and thieves had stolen many items, including a

work bench with a vice purchased by the museum. Because of this and other incidents, I decided that our original plan to contract for an eighteen wheeler on Wednesday would leave our equipment vulnerable for too long.

Bob Challender called around and obtained a favorable rental rate on a 24' van truck and brought it down to be loaded with all of the loose items.

My brother and I arrived in Portola at about 11:30 PM Monday night, and after unloading the truck on the museum's loading dock, we stayed overnight in the "Silver Debris." Back on the road by 7 AM, we arrived in Sacramento at around 11:30 AM where we met Dave, Ray and Jim who again helped us load up.

By Wednesday, it became apparent that one truck was not going to move everything to Portola by Southern Pacific's deadline of Friday night. We contacted the truck rental yard and obtained the use of a second truck, and a small forklift. The moving went much faster from then on.

The last two trucks left Sacramento at 7:45 PM driven by Jim Ley and myself. We arrived in Portola at 12:30 AM and decided to wait until morning to unload.

For me it was one of the most exciting, exhausting, hectic, frantic and pleasurable two weeks I have ever spent.

I would like to thank Jim Ley for all of the help loading, and the use of his mother's pick-up and generator. (SP cut off power in the shops.) I thank Ray and Dave Anderson for their help in loading and for the use of Dave's hand tools throughout the week. I thank Bob Challender for rigging, loading and tying down the loads; he also ended up driving the majority of the seven truck loads to the museum. Finally I thank all of the members at the museum who unloaded the trucks and secured tarps to protect the equipment.

Thanks a million!



Jim Boynton passed away at his home on Chandler Rd. in Quincy on Wednesday, March 4, 1992.

Jim had hired on to the WP on September 14, 1941. During his early career, he had an opportunity to work with many employees who held seniority dating back to the beginning of the WP in 1909. He gleaned considerable knowledge of the early years of the railroad, which encouraged him to become a railroad publisher and historian.

While working on the railroad and studying the history of the railroads, Jim became responsible in resurrecting the Clover Valley logging locomotive No. 8 that had been sitting on a siding in the Quincy RR yard. In 1958, Jim and others began restoration of the locomotive. They obtained the locomotive through the Feather River Shortline Railroad, which is now 33 years old.

After 40 years as a WP locomotive engineer working the western division line from Oakland through the Feather River Canyon to Bleber and Winnemucca, Jim retired on September 30, 1981. Jim and his wife, Betty, then spent most of their time working on No. 8 along with maintaining and improving their extensive collection of railroad memorabilia. Betty continues to serve as Secretary and Treasurer of the Feather River Shortline.

Note: This article was condensed from notices that appeared in the Feather River Bulletin and the Portola Reporter.

Addendum: Jim was a charter member of the FRRS and served as a director for several years. The Feather River Shortline equipment was on display at our museum from 1984 to 1990.