

FRRS LOG TRAIN

Is a Big Hit at Loyalton Timberfest

By Mardi Langdon

October 9, 1993 - With horns blasting and bell ringing, Oregon & Northwestern #4 roared into the station siding of the old logging town of Loyalton, California, ushering in the first Annual Timberfest Parade in celebration of the lumbering industry in the Sierras. The Baldwin AS-616 headed up an impressive consist of 2 fully loaded Pacific Lumber Co. log cars and the freshly painted Oregon & Northwestern 300 caboose. The log train, the first to roll into Loyalton since 1958, brought back many memories to local residents and veteran loggers as they toured the locomotive and caboose which remained as a static display throughout the parade and Timberfest.

The brainchild of longtime FRRS member, Peter Langdon, the presence of this train in Loyalton was a great example of what we can achieve with the hard work of several of our members together with the generosity of sponsors such as Union Pacific and Sierra Pacific Industries' Loyalton mill. Last spring Peter had read about the First Annual Timberfest in a local newspaper. Thinking that the FRRS had the perfect consist for a demonstration log train, (having just recently acquired 2 log cars from Scotia, California) he approached the Timberfest committee with the idea of bringing a log train to Loyalton. They agreed that it would be a big hit if we could pull it off. As a result of this contact, initial work began in earnest to prepare our equipment for the event.

Errol Spangler, Bob Lindley, Al Estabrook, Mardi Langdon, Todd Orlando and Ken "Curly" Belavire got to work giving Errol's Oregon & Northwestern caboose a tune-up, new paint, and new lettering. Wayne and Jack Monger, Clyde Lippincott, and Bob Lindley spent several days giving the #4 a full pilot-to-coupler tune-up and cleaning. Peter Langdon, besides attending the Timberfest committee meetings and coordinating the transportation efforts, cleaned, oiled and prepared the 2 wooden, arch-bar truck log cars for hauling. And Norm Holmes came through again securing approval from Union Pacific for a round trip move for the Baldwin and the caboose from Portola to Loyalton via the old Boca and Loyalton right of way.

A special thanks should go to Sierra Pacific Industries for their contribution of truck transportation (thanks Randy and Rod) for the 2 log cars to and from Loyalton, the loader and operator to retruck the cars, and for the locally cut, very impressive log loads for display on our cars. (The top logs measured 92" in diameter!)

Not to be overlooked was the hard work and support of FRRS members involved, including the project coordinator Peter Langdon; Mardi Langdon who handled the log car loading/unloading and FRRS display table; Chief crane operator Jim Ley; riggers Clyde Lippincott and air brake specialist Hank Stiles; and last but not least the train crew: Engineer Peter Langdon, fireman Mardi Langdon, relief engineer/conductor/brakeman Gordon Wollesen, conductor/brakeman Jim Gidley, Sr., and car attendants Bob Lindley, Errol Spangler and Al Estabrook.

This train not only represented us as a part of this year's Timberfest Celebration of logging, but also brought back memories - echoes of the logging railroads of a bygone era: The Oregon and Northwestern of Southeastern Oregon; and the Boca and Loyalton and Clover Valley Railroads of the Great Sierra Valley over whose lines we traveled this week.

The cooperative efforts of all of those involved led to the success of FRRS' first full off-premises display train and paved the way for continued joint efforts in the years to come.



Top photo: The FRRS Log train with O&NW #4, 2 loaded log cars, and the O&NW 300 caboose pose for the camera on the siding at Loyalton. Bottom photo: (l to r) Al Estabrook, Bob Lindley, Jim Gidley, Sr., and Gordon Wollesen staff the FRRS sales table ready to answer questions about the FRRS for all who came by the terrific display. Photos by Peter and Mardi Langdon.