

CCT 24 COMES TO PORTOLA

- Eugene John Vicknair, Editor

Over its lifetime, the Western Pacific acquired several subsidiary railroads that expanded the company's reach. One of these subsidiaries survives today and, in fact, is doing a booming business in the Central Valley of California. And now, the Feather River Rail Society is proud to welcome its first item of historic rolling stock from this railroad: the Central California Traction Company.

The CCT started as an electric interurban built to serve Sacramento, Stockton and points in between. In 1937, the Traction was jointly purchased by the WP, Southern Pacific and Santa Fe, an arrangement that lasted unchanged until the WP-UP merger. Today, the road is jointly owned by the Union Pacific and BNSF. While it no longer runs north of Lodi, it now operates all tracks at the Port of Stockton.

In 1964, the Traction purchased the first of three cabooses from the Santa Fe. This car came from the first class of steel caboose on the ATSF, built in 1927 by American Car and Foundry. Santa Fe 1547 became CCT 24 and the silver caboose began regular service on the Traction's trains.

By the 1990's, the CCT was experiencing a severe downturn in traffic. The other cabooses had been sold off leaving 24 as the sole survivor. When the line from Lodi Jct. to Sacramento was embargoed in August 1998, the 24 brought up the markers on the last train. By 1999, the 24 was parked at the shops in Stockton, never again to see regular service.

FRRS members and CCT fans David Epling and Tom Carter had long wanted to see the 24 preserved in Portola, filling a gap in our representation of WP subsidiaries. (While we do roster a locomotive from the CCT, Alco S4 50, this engine is displayed in its Western Pacific heritage as WP 563.) In conversations with CCT General Manager David Buccolo, they learned that the railroad wanted a bay window caboose to use as a "business car" to entertain perspective customers. In the last decade, the CCT has seen its traffic grow, a trend they are working hard to continue. A well-appointed car that would allow customers to really see the railroad was desired.

After some negotiation, the FRRS Board and the CCT approved a swap which would send one of our Southern Pacific bay window cabooses, SP 4107, to the Traction Company as CCT 100. In

CCT 24 in Portola, coupled to old stablemate WP 563 (aka CCT 50). - photo by David Epling





The 24's interior is still intact and mostly unchanged from its service days.

- photo by Eugene John Vicknair

return, historic CCT 24 would come to Portola as an interpretive display of a working shortline caboose.

The car was in fine condition and a team of FRRS volunteers, including David Epling, Russell Johnson, Tom Carter, Tim Carter and Eugene Vicknair, aided by CCT employees, got her ready for interchange to the UP. Fittingly, the train that delivered the 24 to Portola featured FRRS member and former CCT employee Dave Stanley at the throttle.

On Saturday, May 17, an FRRS crew consisting of Yardmaster Steve Habeck, Conductor Bill Parker, Brakeman Seth Adams, Fireman Ed Powell and Engineer David Epling pulled the 24 onto museum grounds. She was swiftly coupled to the WP 563, her regular companion when they both served the Traction Company. Plans are progressing to restore the 24 to her appearance following a 1978 updating. Exhibits will be created showing how the crew used a caboose and what roles they played in train operations. The 24 is available for tours by request and will be open as a regular exhibit in the future.

WP FAMILY CABOOSES IN THE FRRS COLLECTION

CCT 24	steel cupola	built 1927
SN 1642	wood bay window	built 1943
WP 428	steel bay window	built 11-1955
WP 483	steel bay window	built 5-1980
WP 484	steel bay window	built 5-1980
WP 614	wood bay cupola	built 1937
WP 645	wood bay window	built 1945

A RIDE FOR AN OLD FRIEND

- Dave Stanley

When I awoke yesterday morning, I stumbled into our closet and grabbed one of my favorite tee-shirts from the rack: my blue Central California Traction tee, with the cloverleaf logo on the front and the late Ken Tinker's quip "Ship Traction for Quick Action" on the back. No special reason for grabbing this one, although it does a good job of hiding my belly and associated flab. Little did I know at the time that I would become an integral player in getting an old acquaintance started on her final trip out of Stockton: CCT caboose 24.

Built by ACF in 1927 as the Santa Fe 1547, number 24 had called Stockton home pretty much since arriving on CCT property in August 1964. Six nights a week, she carried the markers on the rear of "The Local," the Stockton to Sacramento (and return) hauler, providing an office on wheels for conductors and flagmen the likes of Art Carmichael, Bill May, Adolph Reinert, Chris Clifton, and, from my era, Joe Tacke, Jack Jenkins and Charley Drew. Number 24 was my ride one Friday night in 1975 when I was called in emergency as conductor on the Local (two years before I was actually promoted). My roommate John Clark had recently hired out on the CCT and was my flagman on that memorable trip.

Now, 33 years later, my short time on the CCT is just a long ago memory chronicled in my old UTU timebooks. Today's assignment off the Roseville south engineers extra board is at the



The conductor's desk still has paperwork and log books on it. Other forgotten personal effects were found in the car and will be saved for preservation.

- photo by Eugene John Vicknair