

The Teltale

NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
BOX 4566, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87106

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 3

SPECIAL EDITION

NOVEMBER, 1974

Part one of;

"LOOKING BACK" by: Ernest W. Robart Historical Editor

The NGRRA was incorporated in May, 1971 and has been actively involved in the restoration and preservation of a unique and historic narrow gauge railroad. The railroad was purchased in July, 1970 by the taxpayers of Colorado and New Mexico from The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Co. as a last ditch effort to save the line from imminent abandonment. This is the story of how the NGRRA grew out of a group of hearty volunteers that helped "nurse" the "new" railroad owned by the two states into existence.

A vast network of diminutive NG railroads at one time criss-crossed the mountainous regions of Colorado, Utah and northern New Mexico. NG (Narrow Gauge) means that the 2 parallel rails of the railroad are closer together than as on a conventional "Standard gauge" railroad more commonly found throughout the United States. NG railroads were more economical to construct because of their generally smaller size. They were better adapted to the mountainous regions because they could negotiate sharper curves through rugged terrain. This system of NG railroads (with their rails just 3 feet apart) were built to serve the bustling mines and camps of Colorado during the 1880's. With the passage of time, the increased cost of mining and the U.S. Silver Acts, most of the mines closed. Consequently the need for the railroad began to dwindle. With less need the trackage was cut back so that by the 1960's all that was left of a once vast empire was a little over 300 miles connecting Alamosa and Durango, Colo. with branches to Silverton and Farmington, N.M. The railroad had been kept alive not by the mines but by the "Oil Boom" in the Farmington area which required hundreds of miles of pipe and other supplies to meet the needs. As business from the oil declined, eventually, as did the mine and cattle business before it, the RR made the necessary "cuts" in service. By 1967 only one train a week was necessary to meet the needs of the Farmington shippers. The D&RGW, owners of the 300 miles found that it could haul the remaining business with its "Rio Grande Motorways" truck fleet. Sad to say, the little RR, which had now become a veritable rolling museum was no longer needed. Finally, on Sept. 18, 1967, the "death notice" was filed by the D&RGW with the ICC in Wash. D.C., for permission to abandon the NG railroad except the Silverton branch which had by now become a popular attraction. Public hearings were held in Alamosa, Durango and Farmington in May '68 for people wishing to oppose abandonment.

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The ICC, after careful study of the hearing record, handed down its final decision on July 14, 1969, permitting the abandonment of the last vestage of Colo. narrow gauge (except the Silver-ton line).

A great deal of interest arose among individuals in NM and Colo. toward preserving this NG RR because of its uniqueness and the pending abandonment. One of the individuals most interested was a Santa Fe, NM architect, Terence W. Ross. In the fall of 1967, shortly after the "death notice" was filed, Mr. Ross formed the D&RGW Narrow Gauge Preservation Association. The purpose of this Assoc. was to explore the ways the RR could be saved. Some good prospects were private investors, the National Park Service and the States of NM and Colo. The Assoc. became quite prominent politically among legislators of the 2 states. It published much needed information on the RR for the legislators, thus arousing their interest in the project. Memorials were introduced into both N.M. and Colo. Legislatures asking for preservation of the RR. The National Park Service also became interested. On Nov. 23 & 24, '68 the D&RGW was persuaded into running a special train from Durango to Alamosa to permit officials of the NPS and the 2 states to inspect the RR. Needless to say, all aboard were impressed!

It became apparent that, although the NPS was very interested in the preservation of the D&RGW, it could not act soon enough to prevent the lines abandonment and removal. Thus the D&RGWNGPA turned its efforts to the 2 states. After months of diligent work, mainly on the part of Mr. Ross, RR Authorities were created by both states in Feb. '69. Through the 2 RR A's, the 2 states would be able to purchase all or part of the railroad. After the ICC decision in July '69 the Authorities began to meet. Progress was very slow, with difficulty arising in coordinating plans for the purchase of the RR by the 2 states. A mile-stone was reached when the '70 Legislatures approved appropriations to permit purchase of 64 miles of track from Antonito, Colo. to Chama, NM.

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Changes of address and membership information should be sent to the Membership Director, Bill Severns 9100 James Ave NE Albuquerque, NM Membership \$5.00 regular, \$6.00 Participating per operation season, June 1 thru May 31.

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CHAPTER REPORTERS: Chapter secretaries

WE'RE SORRY!

YES, WE ARE SORRY that some of you became so upset with the application and the stamp on the outside of your last issue to warrant sending the Editor and other members "notes" and copies of cards, checks and whatnot. As editor I'll take the blame for the stamping. I could have waited for the membership director and treasurer to single out those of you who needed a reminder that you hadn't paid yet, but, if I had done that you wouldn't be getting your October issue until now. The treasurer asked that I add the cards to the last issue as a reminder. True it cost money, but, it also costs time and money to drop you from the rolls and then add you again as soon as you wake up to the fact you are not getting your TELLTALES and your friends are. IF YOU READ the stamp correctly, it stated, "WILL THIS BE YOUR LAST ISSUE?" not, This will be etc. We are sorry for the hurt feelings and wish to inform all of you that your membership expires on the date on your cards.

The Editor 

"LOOKING" Con't.

There were still numerous items to be ironed out before the purchase would be complete. The NM-RR Authority wanted to make sure everything was right before it decided to provide its half of the purchase cost. Finally on July 16, 1970, the residents of Colo. and NM. became the proud owners of 64 miles of steam powered narrow gauge railroad! A dream had become a reality!

Citizens from all walks of life answered the plea by the Authorities for volunteer help to get the railroad in operation again. Little money remained from the actual purchase of the RR to get it running again. Included in the purchase were 9 locomotives and 140 assorted cars. All this equipment had to be moved from Antonito to Chama for storage, since no yard space was available elsewhere on the purchased trackage. Prior to the movement of any trains over the line the track had to be repaired near Chama east where rebuilding of NM state road #17 had damaged much of the roadbed. Drainage culverts had to be placed in 10 locations and track replaced at each. By Sept. 1st it was "GC" and the D&RGW began moving equipment to Antonito. Engineers for the "new" RR were Ben Greathouse of the D&RGW and Art Pugh and Sid McKinney of the Santa Fe. All other workers were Volunteers with little or no previous RR experience. By the end of Oct. '70 almost all of the equipt. had been moved to Chama by the Volunteers. Since no passenger equipment had been available with the purchase of the line, the volunteers, during the winter of '70-'71 converted a 1904 vintage box car into an open air excursion car (#200) following a design by Ken Pruitt of Albuquerque.

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad was the name given to the 64 mile section of narrow gauge RR between Chama & Antonito purchased by the 2 states.

The RR Authorities decided not to operate their railroad, but to look for a concessionaire to operate it for them. A 6 month "trial" lease was offered to any group that was financially able to operate the line. Ads were placed and the search began. The group of volunteers that had been running the C&TS in 1970 were, indeed, fortunate that no bad accidents or serious injuries had occurred during the movement of equipt. to Chama. One serious injury

or possible fatality could have spelled doom for the C&TS RR. A lawsuit could have dragged the RR into court and caused its owners to sell the line for salvage value. The volunteers thus saw the need to organize, to prevent the possibility of this happening in the future. One of the prominent volunteers

forsaw the chance that a strong, well organized group composed of people who had worked on the C&TS RR during the 1970's could be a prospective concessionaire to operate the RR. This fellow was Allen L. Stevenson. Another volunteer, F. Allen Stevens, thought that the group could establish a museum in Chama and continue restoring equipment and structures. Thus, the volunteers began to organize and early in 1971 a club was formed, which Mr. Stevenson named the Narrow Gauge Railroad Association. On May 4, 1971 the NGRRA was incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of NM, with the purpose of "furthering the preservation, restoration perpetuation and operation of narrow gauge railroading." The Incorporators were Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Stevens and Ken Pruitt, all of Albuquerque NM.

NEXT MONTH..PART TWO of "LOOKING BACK"

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

I very much enjoyed reading the October issue of the Telltale. Let me add a few corrections and notes in time for the next issue.
Pg 1. It was never planned to have the 2 tracks pass through the new enginehouse in Antonito as your plan on page 2 plainly shows.
Pg 2. That name is spelled Burggraaf! A couple of remarks read as if there was something questionable going on in the engine maintenance. Let me assure all Telltale readers that all locomotives are always kept in proper operating order and that no maintenance was ever carried out in the dark!
Pg 7. A report on a recent NM Authority meeting taken from the Alb. Journal was taken without adding the necessary corrections; the chairman of the NM Authority is NM Governor Bruce King. The Vice-chairman is Mr. Joe Vigil of Chama-he calls and presides over all the meetings in the absence of the gov. The gentleman erroneously designated as chairman in the report only one of the 8

"LETTERS" Con't.

members of the Authority.

P.S. The Rotary run is set for Jan. 11 and 12th, We will send you a leaflet with all the details as soon as we get it from the printers.

With best regards,
Fritz Baur
Manager C&TS

Editorial Comments:

Thanks for the note Mr. Baur. I'm glad you enjoyed the Telltale and thank you for renewing your membership in the NGRRA. In reply to your letter I would like to make a few comments of my own. (1) If you look closely at your Master Plan proposal booklet, from which the Antonito yard plan was taken, it does show both tracks going through. I "doctored" the drawing to show the bldg. as it now appears. (Sorry)! (2) my appology to Bob Burggraaf for the improper spelling of his name. I do not have a membership list with his name on it so I had to guess and hope for the best. Since my wife proofreads some pages, but doesn't know names of members, she couldn't catch that error. Thanks for correcting me. (3) I'm sorry you got the impression that I "implied" loco repairs were something other than proper. I was simply stating, and it is a well known fact, that the Chama enginehouse was NEVER intended to be a backshop for locomotive overhauling. Regular daily work, but, NOT the kind of work you are having to do in that building. I was stating the need for a better place in which to work, i.e. heated, non-leaking roof, well lighted (which Chama wasn't until J. Putz installed lights) and the drop pits for whole wheel sets. Your master plan refers the the poor conditions available at Chama for loco. work, I tried to point that out. I think you may be over-reacting to some statments made by others some place else to "read" what you did into my story. And (4) True I did not print the article from the Alb. paper with corrections. First I quoted it directly as was presented without rewriting except where the # of trains to be run was concerned and that change was made because another member pointed out that error only to me. I'm at fault for not catching the other one you pointed out, but, the way things happen so fast in Santa Fe, noone can be sure who is in charge of what anymore. Thanks for correcting the article.

LETTERS con't

Dear Sir,

I have been a member of the NGRRA for about 1 yr. now, and not living near by have not had anything to say, but, in the recent TELLTALE Sept. issue I read that the NGRRA is not only interested in preserving the D&FGW, but other lines such as the East Broad Top. Well, your not the only ones, we've been trying to get some action from the owners for about the last 5 yrs., but, even answering letters seems to be too much for them.

We spend about 2 to 5 weeks a yr. riding, walking and researching the EBT and hate to see it go under. Within the last 3 years the line has gone to "H--L" and thats going easy on them. We had 20 volunteers who were willing to spend weekends on their own time doing ANY jobs on the line. We wrote letters and even talked to one of the higher ups, (who was about the only one on the road who listens) and we were told "they had no plans for any repairs and didn't care what happened to it".

We have heard through reliable sources that the owers of the EBT have had offers into the millions of \$ to buy the line and have turned them all down. As of this writing, the dual gauge yard at Mt. Union is all but dismantled, the C-6-O switchers are for sale, the old coal cleaning house has been torn down and track is disappearing. Now I would like some suggestions from other people on how to go about getting interest in saving the line and getting the public officials interested, or else I'm afraid in about 3 yrs. the EBT won't be anymore. I would like to know who or what part of the state government to contact about a possible arrangement like the states owning the C&TS. I hope you keep up the good work on the TELLTALE. If you would like some present up to date pictures on the EBT and its facilities, let me know, between my friends and myself we could probably do an article for you.

Yours truly,
Fred Folk

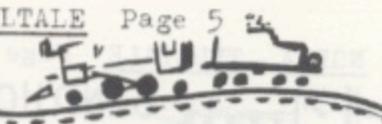
Ed:

Maybe one of our members would care to write Fred and help him with his NG problem. "Locking Back" this month might have some ideas too. We would be more than happy to have photos & a story on the EBT from you anytime.

For those of you interested in writing Fred his address is;

Fred Folk
464 W. Oley Street
Reading, Pa. 19601

SCENIC SAYS;



by Bob Smith

Scenic Railways Loco.#5 is now in Chama enginehouse. The Columbia type (2-4-2) was built by Baldwin at Philadelphia in 1925 as Hawaiian Railways #5. Until this yr. it served on Scenic's 1 1/2 mile tourist line at South Lake Tahoe, Cal. the Tahoe, Trout Creek & Pacific. Fritz Baur, Scenic Manager, said the company was unable to obtain a satisfactory lease on the land so Scenic sold the ties and rails and brought the loco. and rolling stock (ex D&RGW flats) to Chama.

The loco is in like new condition. Bought by Bob Keller, Scenic Pres., in '65, was restored in San Francisco by a volunteer organization which Keller then participated in. The boiler was unusable, so a new one was made at a boiler factory using the original as a pattern. New rod bushings were cast, driver crank pins were "hand-trued" The entire loco was then disassembled and sandblasted before repainting Mr. Baur said.

No. 5 has made a short run out of Chama once and may be used next yr. although it probably isn't powerful enough to "train" up the 4% grade.

Also in Chama is the tender of #12, a privately owned 2-6-2 which is sitting in pieces on several flats. The loco. was designed to run equally well in forward as well as reverse. The tender is a whale back similar to SP Keeler branch locos. Both #5 & #12 are oil burners

MEMBERSHIP CLOTH PATCHES are \$1.00 ea available from the Editor.

Thank you for your letter of Sept. 18. We will certainly take all your (NGRRA Board of Directors) suggestions into consideration whenever possible and as much as can be done. (Re: restoration of buildings and cars after a movie) Thank you for letting us know your thinking directly and first hand!

(Letter was sent at direction of BOD) On the same subject: the snowplow train for the excursion of January 11/12 is now set up in the Chama yard. The consist is: Rotary OM, tender, water car, locomotive 487, cook car OY, one crew car, caboose O503, second crewcar (optional).

The first crewcar needs roof repairs and painting (is presently painted light off-yellow from movie), the cook car needs some repairs and painting (also scraping and priming), the 2nd crewcar needs painting only (presently off-grey from movie use).

To finish the snowplow train is a challenging task for the NGRRA! There are only 3 or 4 weekends left with reasonable mild weather! This is an opportunity for the NGRRA members to do a well defined, reasonably large and needed job. The result will be visable in many pictures and films from coast to coast! Can we count on you?

With best regards,
Fritz Baur
Manager C&TS RR

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SANDHOUSE CHATTER:

NGRRA volunteers & Scenic employees working on their own time prepared 2 cars Oct. 26 for the upcoming rotary run.

One of the four section cars, which had been lettered GD&C for the movie, "Bite the Bullet" was given a new roof. The other section car in Chama had a metal roof, but this had been reroofed by the D&RGW by nailing 1"x6"'s on stringers over the original roof. The weathered outer roof was quickly removed with pry bars and the wood saved for kindling in the rotary. Ted Reed, Bernie Watts and Bob Smith soon had the outer roof nailed in place.

Meanwhile, Doug Cheaney, Rich Braden, John Coker, Greg Palmer, and Clovis Butterworth put in a lot of elbow grease by wire brushing and scraping the sides of Rotary OY's cook car, formerly a "Chili Line" RPO car. Painting of the cars and installing new roofing paper on the section car was planned for the next day, but, the day dawned with rain that soon turned to snow which lasted 'till afternoon putting a damper on these activities. John Olberg looked like a British chimney sweep Saturday after cleaning out the smokebox of "OM" (which hadn't been done since it left the erecting shops if the contents is any factor to judge by). He and Gary Getman then sandblasted the firebox end of the boiler in preparation for an upcoming inspection.

The boiler had already been static tested in excess of 200lbs., but a Colorado inspection was requested by Scenic so it could be certified in that state, although present plans do not call for the run this year to go into Colorado. Colorado classifies OM as a stationary boiler. Neather NM, or Colo. Dept. of Transportation require an inspection of the rotary boilers.

The consist of the planned rotary run is outlined in a letter from Fritz Baur earlier in this newsletter.

Plans call for the run to go out Sat. part of the way (to what, hasn't been decided) then return and then on Sun. to return to the point of Saturdays run and begin from there. This will give all of you two days to photograph as the run is parallel to NM State Road # 17 all the way to Colorado.

Jay Putz from Boulder rewired the oilhouse during the weekend of Oct. 26th along with the help of Mike Taylor. Jay has donated much of his time and materials rewiring buildings in the Chama Yards this year. How about a honorary participating membership for Jay for his many contributions to the continuation of the railroad? Jay, is an electrical contractor in Boulder, Colorado and has donated all of the materials needed to do the rewiring of the bunkhouse, new lighting fixtures, the outside security lights and the enginehouse interior lights.

Ken R. White Company of Denver, Colo., an engineering firm, has completed a survey of track and bridges on the C&TS RR. Two inspectors spent most of the month of October "walking" the 64 miles of track from Antonito to Chama to check its condotion. Their written report will be submitted to the two state Authorities by the end of the year. This will be the first time this group will have some actual and factual data for use in planning an comprehensive maintenance program for the C&TS RR.

A photo of the former T.T.C.&P. loco #5 taken in 1971 can be found in the Steam Passenger Service Directory. Related story on Pg.5.

SWITCH STAND TARGETS:

by Bill Luxford



Much talk has been heard of late about the repainting of switch stands and the targets on them in the Chama, Cumbres, Big Horn, Sublette and Antonito areas. Some people have felt that all targets should be reflectorized. While the idea is nice in theory, in practice the expense rules out a major project for some time.

D&RGW specifications call for targets to be 1'6" in diameter on at least a 1/8th inch thick steel target backing.

In a recent check with the 3-M Comp. rep. in Albuquerque, the following information was obtained.

(1) all current targets would have to

ROUTE OF THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD

Between Chama, New Mexico
And Antonito, Colorado

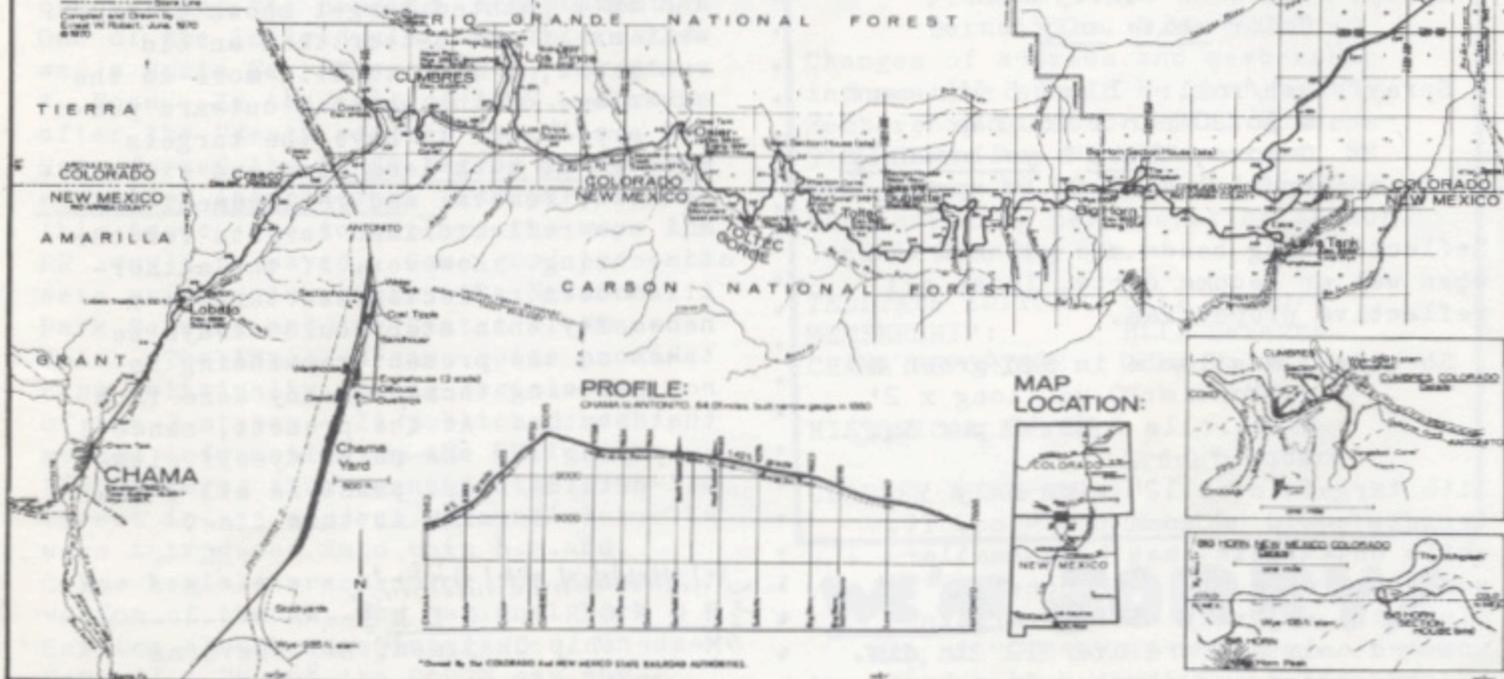
1 0 1 2 3 4 miles
SCALE

..... Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR.

..... Chartered Railroad
..... High Water Course
..... Highway

..... State Line

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C&T'S NON-REVENUE EQUIPMENT: partial listing:

TYPE	NUMBERS	LOCATION	CONDITION
Flangers	OK, CJ, OL	Chama	Unrestored
Pile Driver	OB	Chama	Unrestored
Rotary Snow Plow	OM, OY	OM Chama OY Antonito	Restored Unrestored
Jordan Spreader	OU	Chama	Under restoration
Water Cars	W-462, C471, C472	Chama	
Coal Outfit Car	C9410	Chama	Unrestored
Construction Derrick	OF	Chama	Unrestored
Rail and Tie Car	C6C51	Chama	Unrestored

THE NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD ASSOCIATION INC.

THE TELTALE

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POSTMASTER:

Please forward

Address correction requests

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