



The TURNTABLE

April 2012

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK

Upcoming Events

March 31 & April 1

Opening of the train excursion season with No. 3

April 3

Ladies Luncheon @
Black Oak Café, 11:30am

April 7

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

April 8

Easter Trains

April 14

Wildflower Train
4pm Presentation
4:30pm Train

April 21

Fire Patrol Training
w/ Anthony LaNotte

April 22

Sierra Railway Modelers
Seminar
8:30am-Noon Senior Center
1pm Railtown Tour
3pm Train Ride
(see news article inside)

April 26

Wildflower Train
4pm Presentation
4:30pm Train

May 1

Railtown Ladies Luncheon
(TBA)

May 5

Fire Patrol Training
w/ Anthony LaNotte

May 16

Special train(s) during the
Amgen Bicycle Tour
More details to follow!

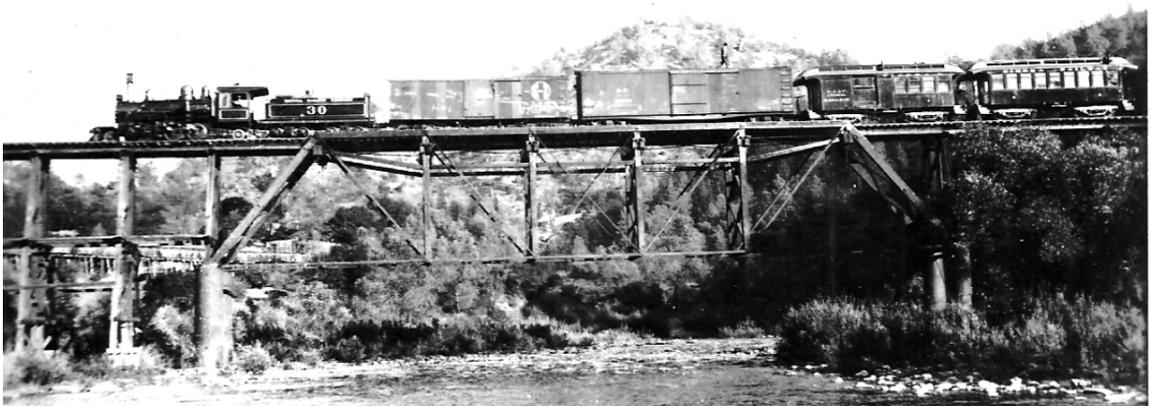
The Sierra Railroad's Angel Branch

by Dave Connery

The original Articles of Incorporation for the Sierra Railway filed on February 1, 1897 established the railroad to build from at or near Oakdale, Stanislaus County to the town of Angels, Calaveras County, with intermediate branches to Modesto, Knights Ferry, La Grange and Coulterville. Oddly, no location in Tuolumne County was mentioned and the only one of the five locations described at incorporation that was eventually reached was Angels Camp. Why and how did this happen?

Two of the early financial supporters of the Railroad, Prince Poniatowski and his brother-in-law, William Crocker, were the principals in the California Exploration Company, which had extensive mining properties in Calaveras and Amador Counties. It was their desire to use the railroad to enhance the profitability of these mines. They were married to the Sperry sisters from Stockton, whose uncle owned large tracts of timber in the area near Calaveras Big Trees and the family was interested in exploiting these timber resources. A railroad to Calaveras County met these two backers needs. At the same time Thomas Bullock was able to convince William Crocker and his cousin, Henry Crocker that the vast timber belt in the mountains of Tuolumne County offered an almost limitless potential for profit. Thus the railroad was first built to Jamestown with the promise of an early extension to Angels. In early December 1897 (a month after the line arrived in Jamestown), it was announced that Poniatowski and Bullock had leased the Columbia Marble Works for 10 years, thus providing another reason to work on a line toward Angels, which would pass closer to Columbia and provide a way to get the marble to markets by rail.

Work on building the Angels Branch was under way by the end of 1898, both building from Jamestown and also constructing the bridge over the Stanislaus River. Construction crews ran into difficulties early, especially creating the cut through Table Mountain that is still visible today from Rawhide Road. Although we often attribute the delay in construction to engineering difficulties, it is apparent the engineers and surveyors always knew how they



(continued from page 1) planned to design the branch, the slow down was one of difficult terrain coupled with heavy winter rains. Another factor was the availability of the needed right of way. Most of the right of way had been easily procured but one mine owner, who also owned Robinson's Ferry would not budge on the rights to cross his mining property. Naturally he knew his ferry business would suffer mightily once the railroad was completed. This delayed the completion of the line for several years.

The use of switchbacks was not unique to the Angels Branch. It was a technique commonly used by logging and mining lines to negotiate seemingly impassible terrain. What was unique was the use of this technique on a passenger and main line freight railroad. Essentially the engineers created a large "Z" down the face of the steep banks on each side of the Stanislaus River, necessitating a back up move both going down to the river level and another one on the trip back out of the canyon on the other side. This slowed travel over the branch and assured it would remain a wonderfully bucolic route through the Mother Lode.

The branch was completed and trains began running into Angels starting September 15, 1902 and continuing until 1935. By that time business on the Angels branch was nearly non-existent, most freight and passenger traffic having converted to trucks and automobiles. The Sierra Railway (in receivership due to the down turn in business caused by the depression), was given permission by the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon service on the line and the rails were almost immediately removed. But while it operated, the Sierra's Angels Branch was legendary.

A special presentation on the Angels Branch will be provided by Steve Cope, past Railtown volunteer at the Sierra Historical and Modelers Seminar, April 22, 2012 at 9 AM at the Sonora Senior Center, 540 Greenley Road, Sonora. For information contact glennsutherland@sti.net



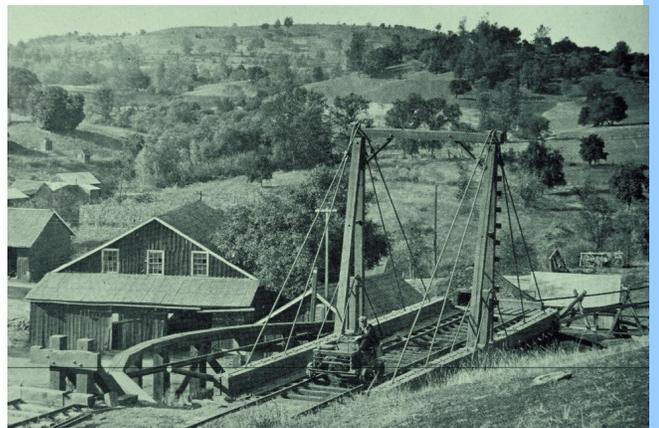
The Sierra Railways No.10 and engine house pictured

The Angels Branch at Carson Hill with Sierra Railways No.9 and coaches No.5 and No.6



Angels Camp Depot (left)

Angels Branch Turntable ca 1922 (right)

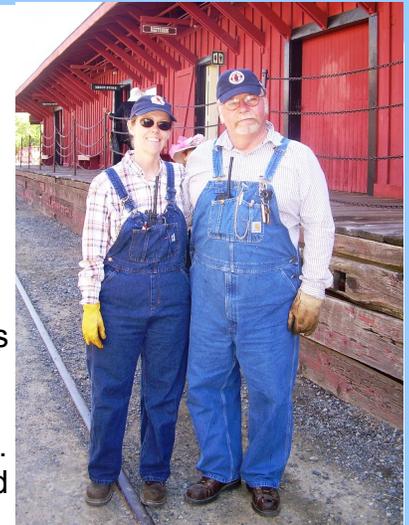


Volunteers of The Month—David & Stephanie Tadlock

A husband and wife team that loves steam locomotives, drives 164 miles roundtrip from Merced three or four days a week, logging at least 1300 to 1800 hours a year between the two of them, loves to hostle the engines and doesn't mind the oil and grease while they work on the locomotives? Is this some kind of addiction? No, it's just simply David and Stephanie's love for Railtown and the old time steam locomotives!

David joined us in 2005 beginning as a tour guide and maintenance worker. Soon after he joined the engine crew, working through the process (i.e. brakeman, conductor, fireman) and is on his way to be certified to operate as an engineer. Originally from the central valley near Madera, he grew up on a cattle ranch. He retired after 30 years in law enforcement. Realizing she wasn't seeing David enough on weekends, Stephanie joined us in 2007. She started on Fire Patrol and soon joined the engine crew process also. She is already certified as a fireman and soon hopes to receive engineer status as well. Stephanie still works full time as a government analyst but enjoys every minute of her time at Railtown. They both are die hard baseball fans, she for the St. Louis Cardinals and he for the Chicago Cubs. They do manage to stay civil and good hearted about the rivalry.

"What I really like about Railtown, is not just that we're hostling the engines or working on the locomotives, but that we're living a dream. It's the visitors and the look on their faces when they get to see the locomotives up close. It may sound funny, but this is what feeds our 'addiction' to steam trains. It's really special to see the wonder in our two year old granddaughter's face when she see's her Grammy and "Pa pa" up there on the engines." This month we want to thank David and Stephanie for all their hard work and dedication!



Stephanie recently caught in the firebox helping to clean out sand

Movie Smokestacks

A special thanks is in order for Bill Vail and Allan and Dan Nordstrom (not pictured). They joined together two pieces of stack 4 from the movie Exhibit that had not been together in a long time. The result was the ability to recognize stack 4 as a cosmetic stack used on the Rio Grand Southern's No. 20 in *Ticket to Tomahawk* and then modified for use on the Denver & Rio Grande Western 473 in *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid*. George Niederaurer from the Durango Railroad Historical Society is looking for parts of the wooden model of Rio Grand Southern's No. 20 to restore the model to its *Ticket to Tomahawk* appearance. The model was moved from Jackson last summer. Through the Grapevine, Mr. Niederaurer had heard that our stack 4 was used on the wooden model. He made a trip to Railtown to see if he could take the stack back to Durango for his project. When Bill, Allan and Dan put the parts together, we discovered that the stack was not part of Emma Sweeney at all, and George took a friendly departure for Twentieth Century Fox to further investigate the whereabouts of the scattered parts of Emma Sweeney. Check out his project at <http://www.drhs315.org/blog/>



Hostling or Bringing the Locomotive to Life

By Dave and Stephanie Tadlock

Have you ever wondered what it takes to have the steam locomotives at Railtown up and ready for our weekend excursions? Typically, each Saturday or Sunday during the operating season, qualified members of the engine crew known as **hostlers** arrive at the roundhouse around 6:30 am to start the process of getting the steam locomotive ready for the day. It's dark and quiet there that early in the morning so the first task is to turn on the lights and open the doors in front of and behind the engine. Then they start by performing a walk around inspection of the locomotive checking for any broken, damaged, missing, or leaking parts such as broken stay bolts or cracks in the boiler or tender that would prevent the safe operation of the locomotive. This includes checking inside the firebox and that there is plenty of water in the boiler for steam. This is done by checking the water glasses in the cab.

Once they're satisfied the locomotive is in good order the next step would be to prepare for light off. If the locomotive were cold (most Saturdays), "house air" would be used to assist in lighting the fire. With the house air connected, the hostlers would test and set the firing controls, which consists of the Atomizer, Blower, Damper, and Firing Valve. With the firing controls working properly and blown free of water and other debris the next step would be to light an oily rag and toss it into the fire box, hopefully placing it in front of the burner allowing the atomized oil to ignite.

If the fire catches, the hostler will then spend the next 5 to 10 minutes watching and adjusting the firing controls to get the fire to the desired consistency. The other hostler in the mean time has started taking care of the rest of the locomotive by oiling and greasing all the rods, bearings, journals and other friction points in need of some form of lubrication. The hostler will also make sure both the sand dome and sand box are filled as well as making sure all the required supplies are in the cab (first aid kit, water for crew and needed tools). Since the locomotive was cold (meaning no steam pressure or warm water in the boiler) the hostler had to adjust the fire to slowly allow pressure to build, usually allowing 1 hour to reach a pound or so of pressure. After pressure is noticed on the steam gauge, it will start to rise a little more rapidly at which time the hostler gets busy filling and adjusting the hydrostatic lubricator drips to the steam cylinders and air compressor. When on house air and the pressure gauge reaches between 40 to 70 pounds of steam pressure, the hostler will cut out the house air and open the steam line to provide steam to the firing controls. This process is called **Switching Over**. If the locomotive had been used the previous day there would normally be enough steam pressure to have fired up the locomotive without the use of house air, skipping this procedure. Things really start getting busy now as the pressure starts to rise quicker and the hostler will have to adjust the fire, either spotting it back or increasing it depending on what time the schedule calls for the locomotive to be on station and ready for the days first run.

At around 150 lbs. of steam pressure, the water injectors are tested to ensure they work properly. The oil drips (which were set earlier) are started to the air compressor, which is then opened slowly. This is the pumping sound you hear as the locomotive is building up air in the air tanks and brake lines. Once 150 lbs. of steam pressure is reached, the locomotive is almost ready to be brought out for testing of the engine brakes and the Dynamo is warmed up to provide 32 volts of electricity for the cab and headlight. You know the engine is just about ready to be brought out when you hear the winding up sound of the Dynamo. As the locomotive is being moved out of the roundhouse the hostlers will be visually, inspecting the running gear and brakes again, making sure all is in working order.

On most days, the hostlers are also part of that days train crew, either in the engine or part of the ground crew so by the time the first train departs at 11 am the hostlers will have already been working for four and half hours making for a very long and sometimes hot day!! Engine crew/ hostlers will tell you the most rewarding and fulfilling job is being in the roundhouse early in the morning and bringing the locomotive to life. Feel free to come down to the roundhouse and learn more about hostling from the hostlers. They will be more than proud to explain the joys of hostling.



(left photo) Dave Tadlock adjusting the fire in the fire box of the #3 and
(right photo) Lenny Guitelli setting the drips on the hydrostatic Lubricator

Railtown News

Sierra Historical & Modeling Seminar

On April 21st and 22nd the Sierra Historical Modelers will be holding their event. Saturday the 21st will be at the Sonora Elks Lodge from 9am to 5pm, the Logging Modelers Convention. On Sunday the 22nd, activities will begin at the Senior Center on Greenley Road. Topic and sessions will include the Sierra Railway, Freight Service, the Depots and the Angels Branch. Participants are encouraged to bring their modeling projects, documents, artifacts and photo's to display. A visit and tour of Railtown is planned at 1pm with a train ride at 3pm. For more information you can contact volunteer Dave Connery at dgconnery@sbcglobal.net.

Training Sessions a Great Success

Our March training sessions Telling The Railtown Story were well attended and well received by many of our new and returning volunteers. We want to give a special thanks to all our presenters: Paul Hammond, Kim Baker, BZ Smith, Leroy Bushart, Kyle Wyatt, George Sapp, Monty Youngborg, Bob Gibson, Dave Connery, Wayne Penn, Laverne Coon, John Rand, Lisa Smithson, David Deutsch, Joe Sparagna, Joe von Herrman, Tommy Johnson and Dave & Stephanie Tadlock and David Ethier who stepped in to give a special session on Interpreting A Steam Locomotive. Two Fire Patrol training days are scheduled with presenter Anthony LaNotte on April 21st and May 5th.

Excursion Train Days

Visitors are invited to come early on any day we are running the steam train to watch our engine crew as they light the fire box and hostile the engine. It's a great interpretive moment. How often can one have the opportunity come and watch them fire up a steam locomotive?

Easter Egg Hunt Volunteers Needed

April 7th we are having our annual Easter Egg hunt. This is always a well attended event and fun to watch. Volunteers are asked to come early on Saturday the 7th to help with set up at 9am.



RAILTOWN 1897
State Historic Park

PO Box 1250

Jamestown, CA 95327

Return Service Requested



TO:



Depot Store- (209) 984-3953

Volunteer Desk- (209) 984-4408

Docent Site- <http://railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers>

Railtown Blog- www.railtown1897.wordpress.com

Crew Caboose- (209) 984-0352



Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information

Newsletter submissions: RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov

(all area codes are 209)

Kim Baker , Park Superintendent	984-4622	kbaker@parks.ca.gov
George Sapp , Railroad Restoration Lead Worker (DSLE)	774-6368	gsapp@parks.ca.gov
Lisa Smithson , State Park Curator I (DER)	984-3119	lsmithson@parks.ca.gov
Ryan Richelson , Maintenance Supervisor	984-3115	rrichelson@parks.ca.gov
Rob Buchanan , Park Maintenance Worker I	984-3115	rbuchanan@parks.ca.gov
Danny Taylor , Park Maintenance Assistant	984-3115	dtaylor@parks.ca.gov
Dave Rainwater , Park Aid & Volunteer Coordinator	984-4408	darainwater@parks.ca.gov
Ron White , Stationmaster and Asst. Crew Caller for Car Hosts	551-7087	rbarryw@att.net
Carl Rudolph , Crew Caller Fire Patrol	586-9905	cakr@sonnet.com
Laverne Coon , Office Assistant and Ticket Agent Caller	533-4080	lavernecoon@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Available in Alternative Format on Request