

This is a story of something that happened about thirty years ago.

The writer was appointed Assistant Trainmaster at Tobin, California at Mile Post 253 in the Feather River Canyon, on the Western Pacific Railroad, on Sep. 1, 1948. Had previously been their Chief Dispatcher at Sacramento since 1943. The reason for putting me in charge of the project was due to my experience in running the Six Companies Railroad at Boulder City in connection with the construction of the Dam. Much of their hauling was done in air dump rail cars.

This was at a time when the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. decided to build the Cresta and Rock Creek powerhouses, with diversion dams about seven miles upstream. The Cresta Dam was located at MP 247 or just west of Merlin and the Rock Creek Dam was located at MP 257, where the dam was toed into Tunnel 17, or the westerly tunnel of the so-called Honeymoon Tunnels. The project was completed in two stages. Sep. 1, 1948 to Apr. 1, 1949 and from June 15, 1949 to Sep. 15, 1949.

Because the Western Pacific had the right of way through this area first, and because the right of way was mostly on decomposed granite fill, it was necessary to stabilize this fill with rip rap for the approximate distance of one mile upstream from each dam in order to keep the rise and fall of water from eroding the right of way fill. The rip rap came from the quarry at Tobin.

Therefore, a camp was established at Tobin and Morrison and Knudson contractors shot down and loaded the rip rap on air dump cars and the Western Pacific train and engine crews were used to haul it and dump it at the two dam sites. We had two 20 car trains with about ten spares. Each train had a Jordan spreader.

We dumped about 6000 carloads of rip rap at each dam site. Between tunnels 17 and 18 alone, we dumped 500 cars of rock. On some days we loaded, hauled and dumped 100 carloads, all with little or no interference with main line trains.

In order to house the personnel who were to work on the project, they were to be housed in cabooses and outfit cars. On the river side, there was a short spur on which was placed the living car for myself containing two bedrooms and a living area in the center for myself and wife. Next to this car was another containing the telegraph office and living quarters for the trainmaster's clerk and for a telegrapher.

On the track next to the main track was a longer spur where were parked cabooses and outfit cars for the two train and engine crews, car repairers, engine watchman and laborers. At the end was a cook car and dining car on the upstream end of this track.

The water department piped in water from Jackass Creek across the Tobin bridge. There was a shower bath installed in our car and some of the other cars.

It was originally intended that our car should have a flush toilet, but it was not done because it was thought that if this happened, flush toilets would have to be installed for everyone else. There was already an outside Chic Sale for general use. However, the decision was made to have one for the exclusive use of the Trainmaster. Consequently, since the telegraph office at Altamont was closed with the installation of CTC, the Bridge and Building Department sent a Burro Crane to Altamont and loaded this two holer onto a flat car and shipped it to Tobin and installed it close to our outfit car. When they had it set up with a lattice screen in front of it, there was a bill sent to the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. for \$450.00. Am quite sure that two such edifices could have been built new for that amount of money.

All vestiges of this operation have now vanished. We rode the last trip of the California Zephyr in March 1970 and in passing through Tobin, this was the only structure left. Even the screen was gone. That is the reason I nominate this Chic Sale to be the highest priced crapper* in all of Northern California. July 17, 1978.

Grant S. Allen.

711 Spring Street, Sausalito, Calif., 94965.

* Crapper was the name of the English plumber who invented the flush toilet.