

WESTERN PACIFIC RR ROUNDHOUSE AT PORTOLA IN 1939, LOOKING NORTHWARD

James E Boynton Photo

SURROUNDED BY STEAM LOCOMOTIVES DURING THE GRAND AGE OF STEAM

In response to our request for articles about people's past activities on the late great WP has brought us this wonderful story of operations in Portola during the Grand Age of Steam.....

by John R Daly

Over the deafening roar of about a half dozen of the fourteen steam engines surrounding my office at the Western Pacific roundhouse came the unmistakable sound of breaking glass. I remember instantly thinking that it could not be an earthquake because that region high up in the Sierra Nevada mountains of Northern California is not prone to quakes. But in a split second I saw loco #57 come charging right through the wall and in doing so it took down the walls and the ceiling of what had been the office containing the Enginemen's Board in the roundhouse at Portola, Calif. A hostler had just brought the engine in on a track which ended about twelve feet from my office but the cylinder cocks were not opened properly and this allowed steam pressure to build up in the massive main cylinders. Under those conditions nothing in the world will contain a loco until it has moved itself far enough to exhaust the built up pressure.

And loco #57 did just that, coming to a stop about half way through my collapsed office as the leading wheels sank into the ground under what had been the office floor. Luckily no one was hurt as I managed a very hasty retreat out a rear door but I still have a mental picture of hostler helper Dan Rascon as he leaped over a five foot high counter in the office with only a standing start.

That was just one of hundreds of experiences I had, some frightening, some sad, and some humorous, during the fifty-one months I was in the service of the WP during WWII. The WP was a major trans-continental carrier running for 928 miles from Salt Lake City to San Francisco and like so many other American railroads it performed with unparalleled effort night and day all through the war in transporting troops and mountains of war supplies in quantities never before heard of. I was in charge of the Enginemen's Board on the swing shift at Portola seven days a week for eight and sometimes sixteen hours a day and as such I dealt directly with all the locomotive crews running between Oroville and Winnemucca, Nevada. Because of its geo-

graphical location, right at the crest of the famous Feather River canyon, almost all locomotives going both east and west were changed and serviced at the Portola roundhouse and because of this I found myself constantly surrounded with steam locomotives including some of the largest and most powerful 2-8-2 mallet engines in the US.

Portola was actually the dividing point between the western and eastern divisions of the railroad so we had locos from both divisions as frequent visitors in the Portola roundhouse. I can recall at least ninety-seven different steam locos which were turned and serviced there including eleven of the 2-8-0 consolidation freight engines built by Baldwin in 1906. Almost twenty-five of the 2-8-0 engines built by Alco in 1909 were frequently in and out of Port. As were at least nine of the remaining 4-6-0 TP-29 passenger engines built by Alco at their Brooks plant in 1908 and 1909. This class of engines powered Western Pacific passenger trains for over 17,000,000 miles between Oakland and Salt Lake from the time the railroad started operations in 1910 until they were displaced by the larger mountain type 4-8-2 locomotives in 1936. These fast stepping 4-8-2

the railroad after seven o'clock!

It was always a thrill for me to call one of the young recently promoted engineers for his first trip on his own, particularly for his very first passenger run. I remember calling young Tom Rutherford for such a trip and can still see him heading east out of Portola on the big 4-8-4 Lima built 486 with train #40 in tow with sixteen heavyweight coaches and pullman sleeping cars. Some of these young engineers had very harrowing experiences too, for example young Orville Dack sent to work on the extra board down in Oakland. He later told me that his first trip was as engineer on a helper engine east to Altamont Pass and when he cut off and turned on the wye a dense fog rolled in and he suddenly found out that his fireman was brand

new and didn't know where he was either. His account of his return trip back to Oakland would give anyone gray hair.

One night in 1946 Engineer Dick Bacon was called west from Portola on engine 484 on a passenger special with an old boomer fireman named Bernie Newport. Dick knew that his fireman already had the reputation of being somewhat slow and appeared to have poor eyesight so before Dick would leave the roundhouse he had me type up a statement that he would not be responsible for anything that happened on the left side of the engine. I was to hold the signed statement until I knew that the train had arrived safely in Oroville and then destroy it which I did the following day. Then there was the case of Engineer Jess Jacobs who for some reason was

terrified of working out on the main line. He worked constantly as engineer on switch engines in the Portola yard and whenever it appeared that because of the shortage of promoted men he might be called for mainline service he would immediately lay off. But one night before he was aware of what was happening I had to call him as engineer on a Gerlach helper. This meant that he had to run a light engine east for 117 miles and then couple onto a big freight engine for the return trip to Portola. Obviously he made it but was a nervous wreck and I learned that he passed away about two years later while still a comparatively young man. I have always wondered if that trip had something to do with his untimely passing.

Next Part Next issue.....

WESTERN PACIFIC'S SKELETON LOGGING FLATS & HUTCHINSON LUMBER COMPANY

By Kent Stephens

In the mid-1920's Western Pacific rostered a fleet of 200 skeleton logging flats numbered 2601-2800. Their M.C.B. (Master Car Builder) designation was FL, class logging, wood underframe. Outside length of the cars was 43 feet, 2 inches, with a capacity of 80,000 lbs. These cars were part of a fleet of logging cars in service out of Oroville for one customer--the Hutchinson Lumber Company.

The name Hutchinson Lumber Co. is not familiar to many fans today but a railroad owned by the successor company is much better known despite being abandoned now for nearly two decades. The successor lumber company was Feather River Pine Mills, Inc., owner of the well-known Feather River Railway.

Hutchinson Lumber Company was a West Virginia lumber firm that entered the West Coast lumber business in 1920 with the purchase of a timber tract northeast of Oroville.

Hutchinson's 21 mile logging railroad was built during 1921-22 from a connection with the Western Pacific 12 miles east of Oroville at the Bidwell Bar into their timber holdings above the present town of Feather Falls. At the same time the company built a large sawmill south of Oroville near the WP yard.

The logging railroad cost over \$1 million to build. Several miles above Bidwell Bar the line crossed the South Fork of the Feather River on a timber trestle in a beautiful canyon setting. Less than a mile above the trestle was the beginning of a stiff 5 1/2% compensated grade that

continued for six miles to Onyett. Hutchinson bought three new Shays in 1921-23. All were three truck; No. 1 was a 70 ton saturated engine, Nos. 2 and 3 were 90 ton and superheated. One Willamette was also on the roster, 70 ton three-truck No. 5, which arrived in 1923. A secondhand 0-6-0T, No. 4, was the mill switcher at Oroville.

The mill and logging operations started in May 1922. By 1924 Hutchinson was in full production, cutting 90,000,000 board feet of lumber during the year. This production required a supply of 300 log cars to transport the logs to

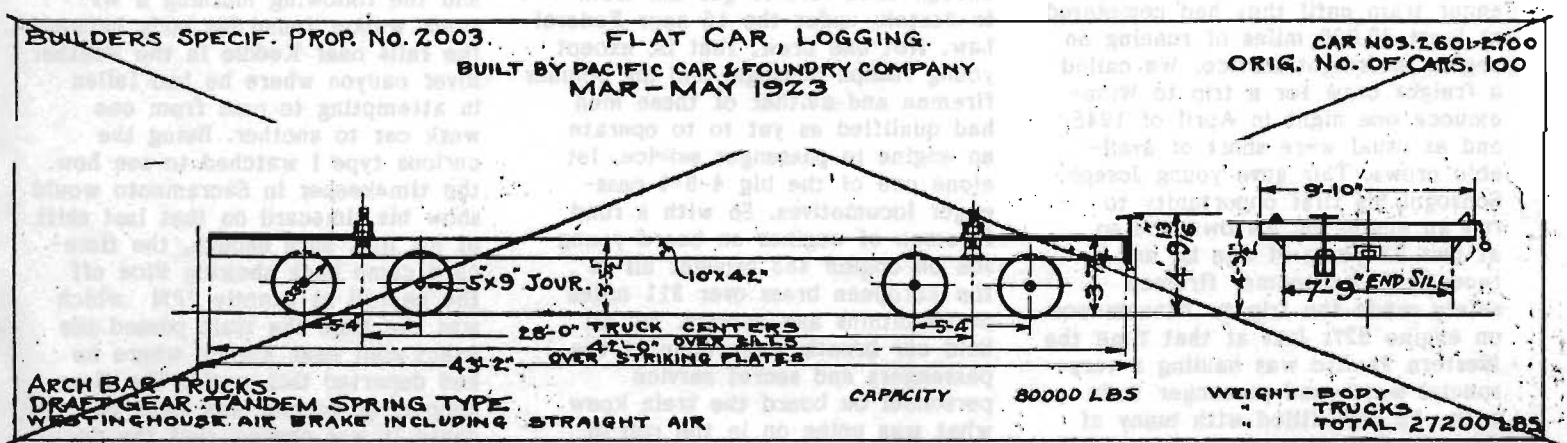
WESTERN PACIFIC LOGGING CARS.....

2601-2700...Blt 1923

2701-2800...Blt 1924

3101-3200...Conv. 1941 from Org 1-700 Flats Blt 1906

In July 1947 35 in series 2701 in service and 70 in series 3101.....gone by the Fifties.....



ROSTER of EQUIPMENT at the PORTOLA RAILROAD MUSEUM, PORTOLA, CALIFORNIA as of February, 1987

LOCOMOTIVES

FR&W	1	PLY ML-8
KCC	2	Alco RS-3
KCC	3	Alco RS-3
FRSL	8	BLW 2-6-2
USS	12	GE 80 Ton
KCC	104	Alco RS-2
WP	608	EMC NW-2
WP	707	EMD GP-7
WP	708	EMD GP-7
KMC	778	GE Elec
UP	849	EMD GP-30
WP	921D	EMD F7-A
ARR	1506	EMD F7-A
ARR	1507	EMD F7-B
ARR	1508	EMD F7-A
ARR	1510	EMD FP7-A
ARR	1512	EMD FP7-A
ARR	1517	EMD F7-B
WP	2001	EMD GP-20
WP	3051	GE U30-B
UP	6946	EMD DDA-40X

TENDER & POWER CAR

ARR	P-4	Power car
WP	481	GS-6 tender

CABOOSSES

WP	428	Steel bay window
WP	645	Wood bay window
WP	779	Wood cupola (FRSL)
SP	1345	Steel bay window
SN	1632	Wood cupola
UP	25049	Steel cupola
UP	25283	Steel cupola

REFRIGERATOR

PFE	11454	Steel icer
PFE	52138	Wood icer (WP/PFE)
FGEX	55932	Steel icer

HOPPER

SN	5005	Covered (WP 11530)
WP	10649	Ballast
WP	11509	Covered

GONDOLA

WP	6116	Wood side 40'
WP	6550	Steel drop end 52'
WP	11012	Air dump

FLAT

WPMW	0318	40'
WPMW	0319	40'
WP	2328	50' (79-4)
WP	2350	50' (37-2)
WPMW	8514	40'
WPMW	8522	40'
WPMW	8545	40' Comb Gon

TANK

WP	1072	10,000 gal (1577)
WP	1074	10,000 gal (1583)
WP	1132	10,000 gal

BOX

TS	520	50' SD Steel
WP	3032	50' SD Steel
WP	3417	40' SD Steel (0209)
WP	3472	40' SD Steel (21513)
WP	3796	50' DD Steel
WP	18503	40' DD Steel (0813)
WP	19507	40' SD Steel (0246)
WP	19801	50' SD Steel (0258)
WP	19901	50' DD Steel Transco
WP	20094	40' SD Steel (0207)
WP	20599	40' SD Steel (0212)
WP	20772	40' SD Steel (0218)
WP	20806	40' SD Steel (0220)
WP	20868	40' SD Steel (0247)
WP	21255	40' SD Steel (0239)
WP	22009	40' SD Steel
WP	22023	40' SD Steel (0242)
WP	27198	40' SD Wood
WP	34005	50' DD Steel
WP	36011	50' SD Steel
WP	37007	50' SPD Steel
WP	64004	50' DPD Steel

OUTFIT

ODKX	2	USAR kitchen (FRSL)
WPMW	0912	Kitchen-diner
UP	905884	Bunk-car
UP	907344	Bunk-car

PASSENGER

UP	105	Business
ATSF	601	Diner

MISC. EQUIPMENT

WPMW	E-14	Burro crane
WPMW	90	Brownhoist crane

SURROUNDED BY STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

reached the head office down in Sacramento.

Because business on the railroad had increased so rapidly due to the effects of World War II we had many very young fireman who were promoted to engineer after passing the required examinations. Obviously these young engineers continued as assigned firemen or went on the extra board but they never could be called for engineer on a passenger train until they had completed at least 30,000 miles of running an engine in freight service. We called a freight crew for a trip to Winnemucca one night in April of 1945 and as usual were short of available crews. This gave young Joseph Sonzogni his first opportunity to run an engine on his own and so at just 22 years of age he and a recently hired boomer fireman safely made the trip to Winnemucca on engine 327. Just at that time the Western Pacific was hauling a very special westbound passenger train with 18 cars filled with many of the crowned heads of Europe on

their way to San Francisco for the founding meeting of the United Nations. The WP left no stone unturned to make sure that everything was letter perfect and even had section men standing at the main switch points along the 928 mile route to eliminate any possibility of sabotage. But when the train approached Winnemucca the dispatcher suddenly realized with horror that there was not one engine crew in Winnemucca with enough time left to get the train to Portola under the 16 hour Federal Law. Not one crew, that is, except young Joseph Sonzogni and his boomer fireman and neither of these men had qualified as yet to operate an engine in passenger service, let alone one of the big 4-8-4 passenger locomotives. So with a road foreman of engines on board young Joe on engine 483 brought all of the European brass over 211 miles of mountains and deserts. We all held our breath while none of the passengers and secret service personnel on board the train knew what was going on in the cab of the 483.

And then there was the classic case of railroad efficiency. On Dec. 19, 1946, there was a bad derailment in Oroville involving engine 172 and the Portola wrecking crew of 40 men was called for a special wrecking train. I was there when the train pulled out westbound down the canyon late on a wintry afternoon. Although 40 men left Portola there were only 39 men in the crew when the train arrived in Oroville. They soon discovered that a Portola carman named Rice was missing and and the following morning a WP track walker found his body between the rails near Keddie in the Feather River canyon where he had fallen in attempting to pass from one work car to another. Being the curious type I watched to see how the timekeeper in Sacramento would show his timecard on that last shift of his life. Sure enough, the timecard came back showing Rice off the payroll at exactly 7PM which was the time the train passed the exact spot near Keddie where he had departed this world. The timekeeper, of course, was right because it was obvious that the deceased did not do any work for

of air about the wrist pin. The inlet and exhaust valves are disposed on either side of the cylinder in the familiar "T" head arrangement; the exhaust valves are water cooled. It will be seen from the profile of the engine room arrangement that the cylinders are grouped in four pairs to correspond to the four sections of the crank shaft.

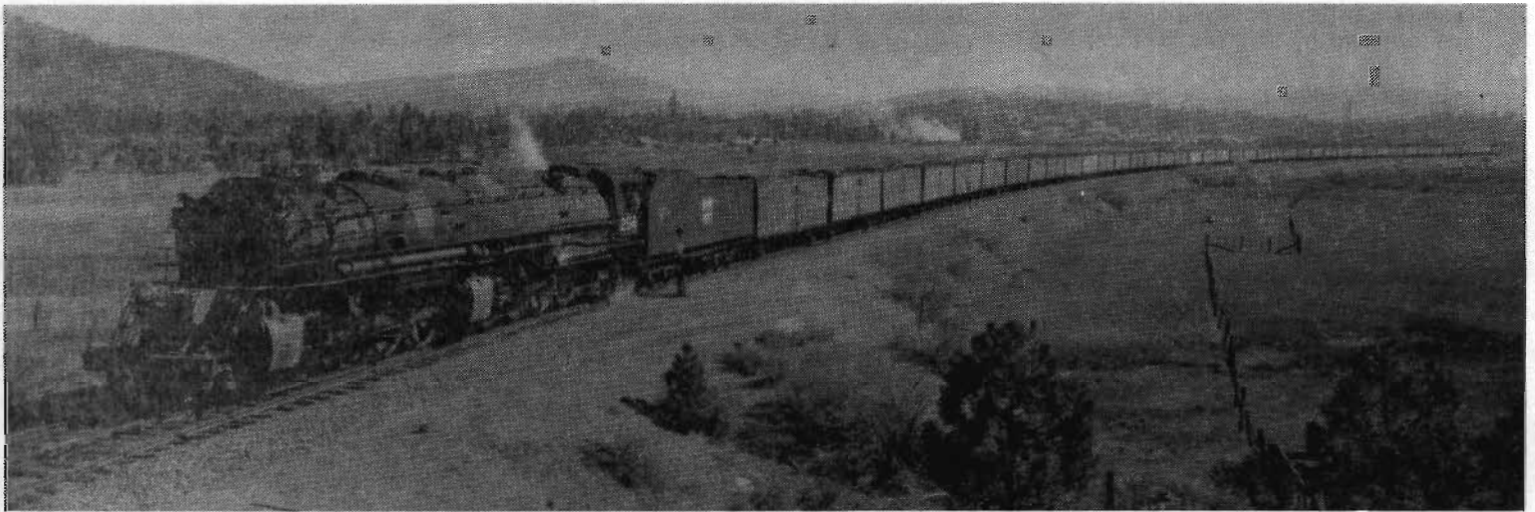
The fuel that is to be used is known on the Pacific Coast as "engine distillate" and corresponds closely to British "paraffin". The vaporizing device consists of two carburetors used in connection with two jacketed inlet manifolds of special construction, heated by the exhaust gases in order to prevent condensation of the heavy fuel.

Each manifold supplies four cylinders. Lubrication of the cylinders and bearings will be accomplished by means of force feed lubricators mounted on the back of the engine and driven from the cam shaft. The crank-pin bearings are lubricated by a centrifugal ring oiling device mounted on each crank web and connecting with oil holes leading out to the center of the crank-pin.

The engine is placed in the center of the hull and is connected to a four-bladed propeller, 72 inches in diameter, on either end. The Ramon as stated above, is double-ended, and in order to eliminate the necessity of a reverse gear the two propellers are made of opposite pitch and are thrown in and out of action by a clutch mounted on each end

of the engine. At one end of the engine room a 20 horsepower, two-cylinder, distillate engine is belted to a generator for supplying current for lighting purposes about the ship and also to the coaches in transit.

This installation of 600 odd horsepower will require only one engineer in the engine room, which will be a considerable reduction in the number required for a steam plant of equal capacity. The greatest saving, however, will be shown in the elimination of all fuel expense while the vessel is tied up at the wharf, and it is this consideration that will undoubtedly lead to the further development of the internal combustion engine for ferryboat service, especially about San Francisco Bay, where this type of vessel is used to a large extent.



SURROUNDED BY STEAM LOCOMOTIVES DURING THE GRAND AGE OF STEAM

Unfortunately those days during World War II were so hectic that I had no time to take photographs which today would be priceless. But I do have a whole host of memories and anecdotes of what it was like to be surrounded by steam locomotives and to be at the very center of activity where nearly one hundred engineers and firemen reported before they began their assigned runs and where they reported back after long hours working steam locomotives out on the main line. At one time there were thirty-two tunnels in the Feather River canyon, one as long as 7,343 feet, and engine crews arriving from the west in freight service were often black from smoke and cinders. One joke making the rounds was that a dog belonging to one of our engineers actually growled and attempted to bite him when he arrived home. I personally walked through that 7,343 foot Spring Garden tunnel twice using a long broomstick to scrape along the blackened walls until I found one of the empty spaces which were about one fourth mile

The second part of John R. Daly's article of steam in Portola

apart and were just large enough to hold a hand car. Each time through the tunnel a long eastbound freight with a massive 2-8-8-2 engine caught me in one of those spaces and the roar and the smoke as it went by is something I will never forget. The freight crews arriving from the east almost had put in at least fourteen or more hours in pulling long trains across the Nevada desert. I wish now that I could have had a tape recorder to make a record of what went on in the room in my office where the engine crews filled out their reports and officially signed in after each assigned run. Some of their conversations were actually serious, some were hilarious, and some were downright unprintable, but always with the appearance of a job well done.

For example, as Engineer Bill Tout and Fireman John Moore came roaring across the Sierra Valley one afternoon on Engine 316 a low flying airplane hit the sand dome on top of the engine and put a large hole in it. The pilot knew who was

on the engine that day and decided to give the crew a thrill, but in doing so he misjudged his altitude and nearly lost his life as well. When the crew tied up in my office they confessed to me what had taken place and asked my advice on how to word their federal report. As I remember it I suggested that they just state that the engine had been hit by an unidentified flying object but they finally talked the roundhouse foreman into covering up the whole affair for them until the needed repairs were made. F.L. Crissey was the night foreman at that time and he was really a great mechanic and easy to work for. But like everyone else he was working long hours under trying conditions and one night was the recipient of some roundhouse humor when he signed a request for some materials from the store department without looking at it. The request asked for "one hundred feet of rope to hang the roundhouse foreman" but obviously it was stopped before it

passenger engines with 73" driving wheels were constructed for the Florida east Coast in 1924 by Alco at Schenectady and were bought and reconditioned by the WP at Sacramento in 1936. All ten of these fine engines were frequently serviced in the Portola roundhouse. Then the ten huge 2-8-8-2 freight locomotives built by Baldwin in 1931 and 1938 were constantly seen at Portola as they handled almost all of the heavy freight tonnage up the ruling 1% grade in the Feather River canyon over the 116 miles between Oroville and Portola. These big engines weighed over one million pounds and were capable of moving trains of more than 3000 tons up the canyon with ease. All ten of these mallet engines were constantly in and out of Portola and two or more of them could always be seen on tracks adjoining my office. Likewise, Portola saw at least 23 of the 36 big 2-8-2 MK-60 engines built by Alco at both Dunkirk and Schenectady between 1918 and 1929. These engines were the mainstay of the heavy freight haulage across the many miles of the Nevada desert as well as in the Sacramento valley. Some of this class of engine also handled most of the passenger trains in the Feather River canyon between Oroville and Portola, and all 23 of them which I remember seeing at one time or another were frequent surroundings of my Portola office. And then beginning in early 1943 the Western Pacific purchased six new 4-8-4

passenger engines built by the Lima Locomotive Works and these big machines with 73 1/2" driving wheels weighed almost four hundred and thirty tons. After their arrival they took over most of the passenger service and all six engines were constantly seen in Portola. To this big array of motive power was added an assortment of steam switch engines which worked around the clock in the Portola yards, plus a number of the eastern division locomotives which never were in service as far west as Portola but came through on their way to and from the overhaul shops in Sacramento, California.

So here I was in a position which modern day steam locomotive enthusiasts would surely envy. I had daily personal contacts with nearly one hundred engineers and fireman and hostlers, as well as about eighty machinists, boilermakers, pipefitters, electricians, and their helpers, all of whom were men except for two women hired as engine wipers during the labor shortage of WWII. All of them, both man and woman, were truly a dedicated lot and worked long hours often under trying conditions. There were so many trains moving that every piece of available equipment was pressed into service and every passing track from Oakland to Salt Lake appeared to have a train passing another train either eastbound or westbound. Hundreds of times I watched Locomotive crews tie up and fill out their reports after nearly sixteen

continuous hours on the road, only to be called to go out again eight hours later. At one time the Portola Enginemen's Board had eighteen crews (36men) working between Winnemucca and Portola, plus another twelve crews (24 men) working in the canyon from Portola to Oroville. In addition to these the passenger trains were taken over by eastern division crews, and the passenger crews working the Feather River canyon. We likewise had a helper engine pool of five crews (10men) which regularly were dispatched east to Gerlach where they were turned and helped westbound freights over Sand Pass in Nevada and then up the Long Valley grade in California and through the Chilcoot tunnel in which the WP crosses the crest of the Sierras. From there it was just another 18 miles across the flat Sierra Valley to Portola. There also were crews for a variety of local runs including those to Reno, Loyalton, and Keddie and added to all of this was a large pool of extra board men who filled in for any vacancies. To keep an adequate supply of men on the extra board the WP had to bring in a number of what were called "boomer" firemen who had some firing experience elsewhere and for one reason or another were currently available. And finally, Portola at one time during the war had as many as six crews working switch engines around the clock in the local yards.

continued next issue....



that run. I remember also watching engine 77 being brought into the roundhouse from train #12 after it had struck and killed six teenagers in a pickup truck at a grade crossing near Tracy. The engineer on engine 77 was so overcome by grief that the train had to be taken on into Oroville by Engineer Bill Cope who happened to be riding in one of the coaches at the time of the accident.

But I also remember many enjoyable things involving the railroad and these included the fact that when our youngest daughter was born at the Western Pacific hospital on the stormy night of December 8, 1943, it was with the help of engine 33 that she arrived in this world. The schools had been closed because of a flu epidemic and late that afternoon the fierce winds blew down the electric power lines between Truckee and Portola. This left the entire community, including the roundhouse and the hospital, without electricity and so it was with the help of engine 33 which was providing steam to an emergency generator that our daughter arrived in this world. The generator made it possible to light both the hospital and the roundhouse until the big storm was over. The WP hospital was located on the hill directly above the roundhouse and although it was small it was well staffed and served Portola well for nearly fifty years until replaced by a larger non-railroad facility. In conclusion I feel very fortunate to have been in a situation where I was actually surrounded by those wonderful steam locomotives during the grand age of steam and I am forever thankful to have had the opportunity to play a part in the war effort of the Western Pacific working with such a great group of railroaders.

John R Daly
Hayward, California

We would like to thank Mr Daly for sending in this super article. He also sent this correction for the first part of this three part article. an omission.....

"In addition to these we had the

passenger crews which worked from Portola east to Gerlach, Nevada, where the passenger trains were taken over by eastern division crews, and the passenger crews working the Feather River canyon."

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM 1987 SEASON SCHEDULE

Open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
May 22 through November 1.

STEAM OPERATING SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24—V&T Engines No. 22 and No. 25.
Friday, July 3; Saturday, July 4 and Sunday, July 5—Engine No. 25.
Saturday, August 1 and Sunday, August 2—Engine No. 25.
Saturday, August 15 and Sunday, August 16—Engine No. 25.
Saturday, September 5 and Sunday, September 6—Engine No. 25.
Saturday, October 3 and Sunday, October 4—Engine No. 25.
Friday, October 30; Saturday, October 31 and Sunday, November 1 (Nevada Day Weekend)—Engines No. 22 and No. 25.

Feather River Rail Society
P.O. Box 1104, Portola, CA 96122
916-832-4737

MAINLINE MODELER Magazine
5115 Monticello Drive
Edmonds, Washington 98020

April 6th 87

An open letter to MAINLINE MODELER Magazine from the FRRS Membership

Dear Sir,

We have read your past editorial commentary with interest, for some time now we have requested you to include our society in your society listing. As each issue comes out the society page is checked and each time we have been omitted. And each time the magazine is returned to the rack unpurchased. We have only 600+ members of which about one half are modelers, FRRS members not buying your magazine are small in numbers but part of the whole picture. It's a disservice to your readers that may be interested in the Western Pacific not to include us. As the FRRS is filling the role of a historical society multi-dimensionally by preserving data, photos, negs, records, drawings and historical info plus preserving and restoring actual WP railroad equipment to operation and display.

We respectfully again request to be included on your society page.....
Thank you in advance for joining the other publications that support our society.

The membership of the Feather River Rail Society

New Marine Equipment

During the past five years Western Pacific has conducted studies looking toward the replacement of its present two steam-powered tugs, the *Hinnacanna* and the *Hercules*, and the two wooden barges now operating on San Francisco Bay. This equipment, used in barging freight cars between Oakland and San Francisco, is near the end of its physical life and extensive and costly repairs would be necessary to maintain the equipment in operation. The research project, which was completed last December, indicated that a single diesel-powered train ferry would be the most satisfactory solution. Approval has now been given by the Board of Directors to proceed with the construction of this vessel, pictured in the architect's drawing above.

The new vessel, to be called the *Feather River*, will by itself provide improved service, because of greater capacity; faster point-to-point speed;

and all-weather dependability, resulting from greater maneuverability and stability.

Although minor changes may still be made, tentative specifications for the new self-propelled car ferry are: overall length, 375 feet; overall breadth, 55 feet; depth, keel to deck, 16 feet; operating draft, nine feet; loaded displacement, 3,500 tons; capacity, 26 to 28 cars on four tracks, the exact number of cars depending on final on-deck truck arrangements. Direct diesel propulsion will be by three main screws at stern, each engine to deliver 700-horsepower maximum; providing a speed of approximately 10 knots when loaded.

The hull, in barge form with tapered ends fore and aft, will be of all-welded

steel construction, framed longitudinally, as a tanker is constructed. The bow will have a 200-horsepower diesel engine, driving through right-angle gears a bow propeller housed within the hull, and positioned to give thrust at right angles to the vessel for quick maneuverability. Contour of the bow portion of the vessel's deck has been designed to fit existing slips in the Bay area.

The control bridge and crew's quarters are located in a single-span bridge located amidship and over the freight cars. This superstructure will rise about 23 feet above the deck to the underside of the span, and about 15 feet from that point to the top of bridge. The engineer will be stationed approximately in the center of the engine

room, within a control room, whence he may view the rest of the engine room through large glass windows. Steering will be hydraulic, with three main rudders at the stern. Engines will be controlled from two locations, the bridge and the engine room.

The exact number of the crew is yet to be determined, depending on Coast Guard regulations and practical operating requirements.

Loading of the fuel tanks with diesel fuel will be accomplished by rolling tank cars aboard the vessel and filling by gravity flow from the cars.

The *Feather River* was designed by L. C. Norgaard, San Francisco naval architect. Cost is estimated at \$1,060,000, and it is contemplated that the contract for her construction will be signed in early May, with delivery tentatively scheduled for the second quarter of 1987.

SURROUNDED by STEAM LOCOMOTIVES DURING the GRAND AGE of STEAM

Part three of the series
by John R Daly

During my service with the Western Pacific I also had the opportunity to ride with some of my engineer friends. One of the highlights was riding one night with Engineer Joe Guffra in the cab of engine 482 as the big 4-8-4 roared across western Nevada and into California with train #39. Another time I rode with Engineer Bob Cronin in the cab of engine 78 on the Oroville to Portola Feather River Express. Engineer Cronin came to the WP soon after the railroad started operating and spent almost all of his 35 or more years with the WP on trains in the Feather River canyon. He made many thousands of trips on trains #3 & 4, #11 & 12, and #1 & 2, and I was there to greet him at the roundhouse as he brought train #2 into Portola for the last time. But I was the only one there to wish him well as he filled out his reports for the last time and I felt sad as I watched him slowly walk away from the only life he had ever known.

During the war years there were a number of father and son engineers working on the Portola board. On more than one occasion both father and son went out on the same engine. Among these were Bob and Emmett "Buzz" Cronin, F.T. Wood and T.C. Wood, "Old Pon" Poindexter and Bert Poindexter, and Noble and Bob Wakefield. There were many odd nicknames among the engineers too, such as "Wheezy Wood, High Miles Nelson, Burr-Head Fuller, Shorty Groom and Burr Outlaw". I remember odd combinations of names too as one night I called Engineer Earl Fightmaster and had to team him with a new boomer fireman with the last name of

Peacemaker. And I also remember calling an eastern division crew in which the engineer was Pete Mennicucci and the fireman was named Jacobucci. Other names stand out in my memory for special praise too such as Engineer L.T. Davis who was the representative of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and later was a California State Assemblyman. Les Davis was most helpful to me in settling the inevitable disputes involving complicated union rules in regard to the handling of the men on the Portola board. Many a time I had to get him out of a sound sleep to solve a serious problem and this he always did without a word of complaint. Tom Hunter, the Road Foreman of Engines, was another real help and was highly respected by all who worked with him. Both of these men are now gone but they are high on my list of great railroad men.

Before the new Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) became operative all Western Pacific trains were run strictly on train orders issued by the dispatcher. I had access to thousands of these train orders which engineers left in my office at the conclusion of their runs and if I had only realized it I could now have a complete file of orders covering every possible condition on the railroad from Oroville to Winnemucca. Among the most interesting orders which I remember were those requesting the engine crews to be on the lookout for Japanese incendiary balloons which were then being released in Japan with the hope they would reach American shores and set our forests ablaze.

All kinds of food was hard to come by during the war years but some of the engine crews working in the canyon soon found a novel way to overcome this. The WP was carrying

many hundred of troop trains west and apparently their kitchen cars were supplied before leaving the east coast but with instructions to arrive in Oakland with nothing left over. The canyon engineers soon noticed that at a location just east of Oroville food was being dumped from the kitchen cars onto a high bank which sloped steeply into the river. The engine crews retrieved a lot of these unopened supplies by conveniently stopping at just the right spot to check on a "suspected hot box" or some other mechanical problem. I have seen crews arriving in Portola with such items as canned hams, canned peaches, canned coffee, and sacks of sugar and potatoes. We also had crews arriving at the roundhouse with deer on top of the tender behind the engine as many deer were killed by trains especially in the winter months. The engineers always expressed sorrow after killing animals as such accidents were entirely unavoidable. One night Fireman John Moore could hardly describe how his locomotive had struck and killed five big white horses which had wandered onto the main line just west of Doyle, California.

Yes, those were exciting days and I look back on them now with both joy and sadness but at the same time I am thankful that I had a part in the tremendous war effort of the Western Pacific. All of those with whom I worked were good friends and now almost every one of them are gone. Some of my sad memories come from times such as when Engineer Jack Hardy arrived at the roundhouse with engine 3 on the Reno local. His locomotive had just hit and killed three WP track workers on a hand car on the branch when they overlooked the fact that Hardy's train had not yet passed that area. Jack Hardy was truly shaken by the experience and had difficulty filling out his reports at the end of

