



Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum

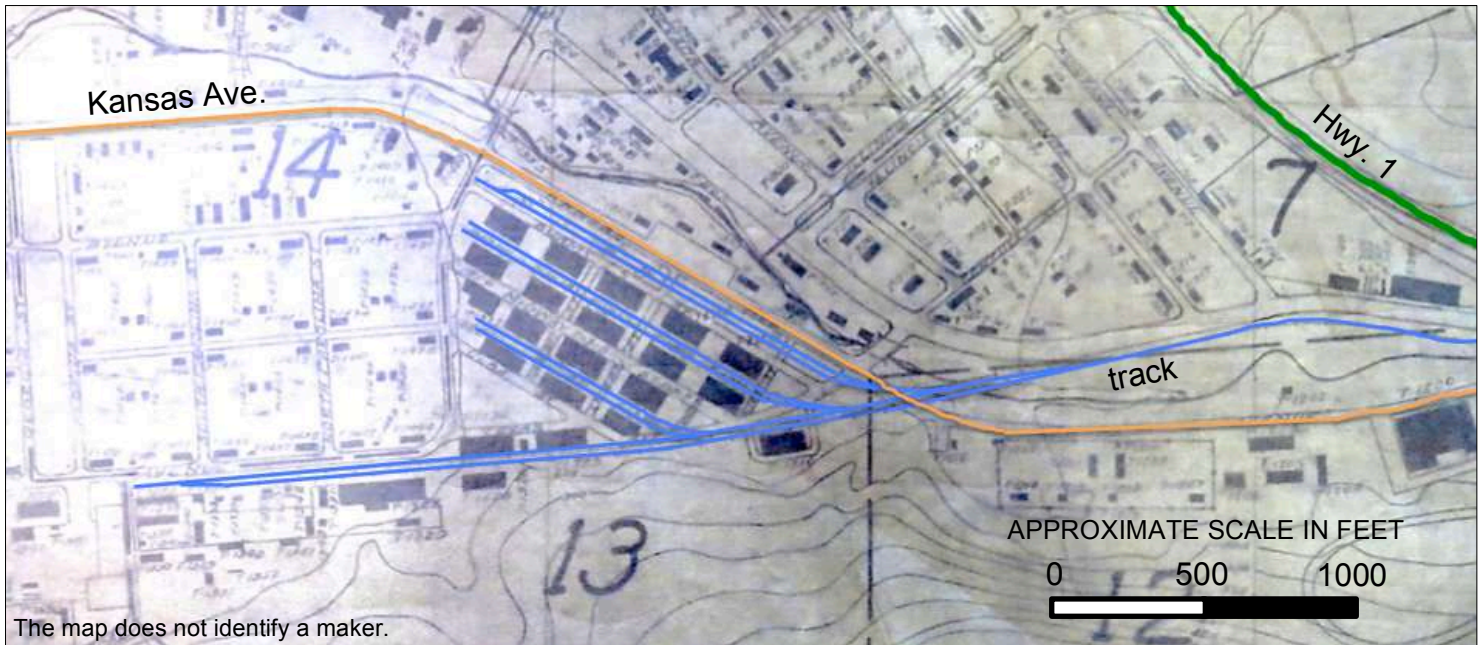
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The Museum is open every Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm. It opens other times for groups by arrangement. Contact media@slorrm.com.

More on Camp San Luis Obispo

The Winter 2017 *Coast Mail* reported on rails to Camp S.L.O., disused by the 1960s. Since that article, the Museum received a 1941 map donated by Paul Deis

that shows the trackage below (highlighted blue) in relation to that era's Kansas Avenue (orange) and Highway 1 (green). The big gray rectangles were storage areas. A 1952 U.S.G.S. topographic map indicates the same track in a general way.



The map does not identify a maker.

Recent History

Extra Cars for Extra Riders

In mid-January one of Amtrak's south-bound Starlights through San Luis Obispo had eight extra cars and three extra locomotives, but not to serve riders on that train. The equipment was being moved to Southern California, so it could supplement the Surfliners that run between L.A., Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. The holiday rush was over. But Highway 101 had been closed by mud and debris flows in the aftermath of the Thomas fire and an intense rainstorm in Montecito.

Surfliners that were longer than usual carried riders around the obstruction, with heavy usage between Carpinteria and Goleta. For a few days, with Union Pacific Railroad co-operation, an extra "Mudliner" ran part of the route.

At right an expanded *Surfliner* waits at S.L.O., with a locomotive and cars normally used on trains between San Jose and Bakersfield or Auburn.



Amtrak to the rescue Cars borrowed from Northern California operations helped carry riders around blocked Highway 101 in January. Previous passenger rail transportation disaster relief efforts include after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake (Metrolink,) and between Phoenix and Tempe when the Salt River flooded roads in 1980 (Amtrak).

Glen Matteson photo

Preserving California's Central Coast Railroad History

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is a non-profit educational institution. Founded to preserve and present California Central Coast railroad history by collecting, restoring, displaying, and operating relevant railroad artifacts, photo-graphs, models, and documents, its goal is to facilitate a better understanding of railroads' impact on our area's social, cultural, and economic history.

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Contact

Telephone (message) 805 548-1894
 e-mail: info@slorrm.com
 Website: www.slorrm.com
 Mail: 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Anyone may access the Museum's *Bylaws, Collections Policy, Development & Operations Plan, Code of Conduct*, and other documents at slorrm.com. Or request a paper copy via info@slorrm.com.

Museum Store

To raise funds, the Museum offers several items for sale. T-shirts, baseball caps, belt buckles, mugs, enameled pins, embroidered patches, engineer hats, and videos are available through the Museum website www.slorrm.com. Click on **Company Store**.

Wine-rail excursions continue

June through August are sold out, but there are waiting lists. September 21 and October 19 are available: afternoon departures from S.L.O. on Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* to Paso Robles; to Pomar Junction Winery and evening return to S.L.O. by charter bus; live music. See **slorrm.com**.

Fundraising Dinner at the Bitter Creek Western Railroad

June 9, 5:00 p.m. Train rides, surf-and-turf dinner, wine pairings, silent auction –a rare opportunity to experience this extensive 7.5-inch gauge line on the Nipomo Mesa. Tickets are \$75/person. Details at slorrm.com.

Proceeds benefit the Museum.



Become a member

Like today's railroads, railroad history, train travel, or model railroading? Membership includes free Museum admission and access to Members Only website pages such as full current issues of *Coast Mail*.

Individual members pay \$36 per year, a family \$60, and a sustaining member \$100. Application forms can be downloaded from the Museum's website and mailed with payment, or you can join online by clicking Membership and using PayPal. (Mailing and web addresses are at left.)

Utilities Progress

Members Ted Van Klaveren and Howard Amborn have extended water pipes and electrical lines to make services available to the walkway area and in the narrow gauge boxcar that's used for storage. This kind of behind-the-scenes effort truly improves Museum operations.

Tank Car Restoration



Gary See photo

On a hot day in February (!) Howard Amborn (on the ground) and Brad LaRose position the dome cap for our 1904 tank car. A few weeks before, Brad had an adventure in far northern California tracking down the cap and a valve that extends from the side of the dome. Authentic restoration demands persistence, ingenuity, and good balance.

TIMETABLE

Scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m., at 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue, San Luis Obispo: June 12; July 10; Aug. 14.

For committee meetings, use the number or email in left-hand column.

Special Museum Presentation: The Streamliner Era

September 8 at the City-County Library, downtown S.L.O. Check our website or the Library's for details.



No online extras this time

Your editor's been busy with a Cal Poly class for engineering majors specializing in transportation. Online extras will return this Fall.

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The beets may be gone, but the beet gon is here!

“Gon” is short for gondola, the open-top type of car that from the 1920s through the 1980s carried thousands of tons of sugar beets from the Salinas and Imperial valleys to processing plants at Betteravia and Spreckles. Only a few cars of this kind exist, and the Museum recently received this one, in good condition, as a donation from the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista. Curator Brad LaRose has put much effort into arranging the acquisition and move, with help at this end from members Howard Amborn, Ted VanKlaveren, and Bob Wilson. Some cosmetic work remains. And backfilling our budget for the crane and truck expenses is a high priority.



On May 3 a crane lifted the former Southern Pacific beet gondola onto the display track. The bay window caboose and La Cuesta café-lounge car were moved to make way. Then all were repositioned. *Glen Matteson photos*



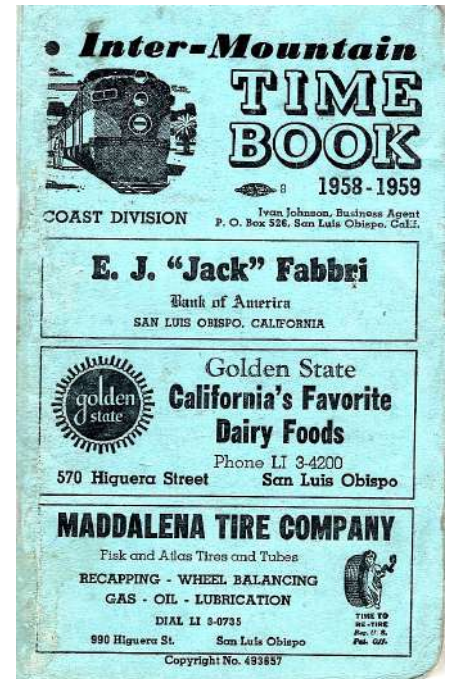
In April and May Cal Poly students from the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the architectural fraternity Alpha Rho Chi helped clear a survey path through the proposed site. Still to do: additional fund-raising and preparing plans for city approval.

This is the cover of a booklet produced by a private business for Southern Pacific employees to record their hours worked. It and others like it provide names and certain service dates.

(SLORRM archives Item #2420.3)

“What’s in a Name?”

- W. Shakespeare



The Museum now has about 2,100 names in its People Tracker database, which covers railroad employees along the former Southern Pacific Coast Route, mainly the segment from San Francisco to Santa Barbara, among other railroads on the Central Coast. It’s often been observed that railroading was a family affair, and that railroaders liked to make up nicknames for each other.

W. J. Zipper (actual name) was SP yardmaster at San Luis Obispo, with a seniority date of August 7, 1952. He was probably known for getting trains in and out, and cars sorted, with dispatch. Mr. Bussle (engineer, 1902) had possibilities for speed or ladies’ fashion. T. H. Skillicorn was yardman at Watsonville Junction, seniority date October 20, 1920 –any suggestions?

One hopes R. M. Bongiorno (engineer, 1961) at least had some good mornings.

C. R. Slick was a conductor promoted March 21, 1950.

K. Jung (engineer, 1982) should have had insight into his (by then, possibly her) co-workers.

What about J. C. Coldiron, fireman for the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (seniority four out of seven in 1957)?

Some names make you look twice under a bright light to be sure you read correctly. What are the chances that T. J. Kadlubowski and C. C. Kadluboski were both promoted to conductor on May 10, 1954? That’s not likely a typographical error, because the names appear next to each other, only a few dates away from J. A. Kadluboski, who was hired on June 29, 1946, and made conductor on June 26, 1953 (*Inter-Mountain Time Book 1958 – 1959, Coast Division*, page 30).

Some names have a definite railroad sound. A. A. Gandy became conductor in 1936, while L. C. Gandy became yardmaster at San Luis Obispo in 1940. G. Karman was an engineer (1925), not a car man (mechanical department).

Names like Craig, Todd, and Sheridan imply a family pattern, but with many examples like Jones and Smith we can only guess at relationships until someone gives us more information. Will that be you? *-G. A. Matteson*

From the Archives by Glen Matteson

A weekly sack of coke

It took many parts and supplies to keep a railroad running. (It still does.) And they couldn't be handed out willy-nilly, especially when money was scarce. Requisitions needed to be made and approved.

At right we see parts of three forms from the Pacific Coast Railway in 1923, requesting at weekly intervals one sack of coke. S. Hampton's spelling is creative, and his proposed use is vague.

Coke in this context is a high-carbon, low-impurity fuel derived from coal. It usually looks gray and comes in porous lumps. It's used in blast furnaces to reduce iron ore. But the local use would have been more along the lines of blacksmithing, treating steel parts to make them more durable, in this case the springs on locomotives or cars that help cushion shifting weight as the vehicle moves along the tracks.

"Eng. Extra" looks more like a term that would appear on train orders, authorizing movement of a locomotive (engine) not listed in the timetable. More likely, the engineering department wanted to use coke for blacksmithing away from the shop, possibly in connection with a work train.

The bottom form asks for more recognizable items: spike maul (here misspelled "mall") handles, 10-penny nails for fencing, and 40-penny nails for securing planks where roads cross the tracks. A spike maul is a narrow-headed, long-handled sledgehammer. And "penny" is a term from the dawn of modern carpentry, referring to the size of a nail, not the cost: 10-penny is about three inches long, while 40-penny is about five inches long.

These items, and several records of which engineers, conductors, and brakemen worked certain Pacific Coast Railway trains in the early 1920s, were donated in November 2017 by member Kenneth Chaffee.

Today's Coke

Coke can be made from crude oil. The refinery near Nipomo produces carloads of "petcoke," which move south on Union Pacific trains. This type material is used to make steel, aluminum, and cement. The image below, from a photo by Joe Johnston of the S.L.O. Tribune, shows a spur track for loading at the refinery.



Form 101
 PACIFIC COAST RAILWAY CO. No. _____
REQUISITION
 San Luis Obispo, Cal., 6/14, 1923
STOREKEEPER:
 Please furnish the following for use at or on Spring
 tempering.
 1 sack coke.
 E. J. Edmonds.

Form 101
 PACIFIC COAST RAILWAY CO. No. _____
REQUISITION
 San Luis Obispo, Cal., 6/20, 1923
STOREKEEPER:
 Please furnish the following for use at or on Spring tempering.
 1 sack coke

Form 101
 PACIFIC COAST RAILWAY CO. No. _____
REQUISITION
 San Luis Obispo, Cal., 6/27, 1923
STOREKEEPER:
 Please furnish the following for use at or on Eng. Extra
 1 sack coke
 S. Hampton

Form 101
 PACIFIC COAST RAILWAY CO. No. 134
REQUISITION
 San Luis Obispo, Cal., 6/4, 1923
STOREKEEPER:
 Please furnish the following for use at or on see 11. Signal
 (2) spike maul handles 271
 5 lbs 10 penny nails for fencing (22)
 15 lbs 40 " " " crossings (21)
 H. Buncle