

RIDGWAY RAILROAD MUSEUM
LOCATED IN THE RIDGWAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VISITOR CENTER
HWYS 550 & 62
www.ridgwayrailroadmuseum.org

July

2008

WORK SESSION – SATURDAY, JULY 19th, 9:00 A.M. (NOTE DATE CHANGE)
JULY BOARD MEETING - SATURDAY, JULY 19TH, 1:00 P.M.
IN THE MUSEUM

MUSEUM NEWS

BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

Incumbents Jim Pettengill and Karl Schaeffer were elected to the Museum Board along with first time Board member Don Kellogg.

The Board will selected officers and duties for the coming year at the July 19th meeting.

MUSEUM/CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING HAS A NEW LOOK



Jim Pettengill by Chamber front door

With Jim Pettengill's leadership the Museum has a new exterior paint scheme. A depot "wheat" trimmed with an oxford brown gives a more railroad look to the structure. A time consuming task was the scrapping to remove old paint and applying over twenty-five tubes of caulk. Assisting Jim in preparation prior to painting were Jim Lysaght, Don Kellogg, M.E. Spirek, and Kathy Pettengill.

On Saturday May 29th the spray gun manned by Karl Schaeffer quickly blew through 5 gallons of primer requiring a quick paint run from Montrose of an additional 5 gallons of primer. The final coat was sprayed on Monday June 2nd. Jim spent Restoration Week painting the brown trim. The building looks sharp and is much more visible from Highway #62.

MUSEUM RESTORATION WEEK

June 4-6 marked the second annual Restoration Week at the Museum. Several activities focused on Telluride Motor #4. Many items were removed from the freight box including the streetcar seats, the stove, a water tank, two track sanders, and the concession stand. The freight box was discounted front the Wayne bus body, and the pinon gear was removed. The gear was loaned to the Galloping Goose Society of Dolores for use in their Motor #5.

Other projects included building a roof walk for the stockcar, the construction of storage shelving, finishing touches on the newly painted Museum/Chamber of Commerce Building, laying additional track, reorganizing Museum files, preparing a Museum display for the Ridgway State Park Visitor Center, fence repair, weed control, repainting portions of Motor #1, and power washing any thing that moved.



Local members Jon Esty, Stuart Harrah, Tom Hillhouse, Don Kellogg, Keith Koch, Jim Pettengill, Bob, Connie, and Karl Schaeffer joined Grand Junction members Michael O’Connell and Bill Pratt for a productive three days.

The crew was well fed with lunches catered by Connie and Bob Schaeffer. Thursday evening Janet and Karl Schaeffer hosted a barbecue for the workers and their spouses at their home.

Saturday June 7 was a day for reflection on how much we had accomplished earlier in the week, and an opportunity to fire up Motor #1. In the morning one of our passengers was a two-year old boy dressed as an engineer. In the afternoon an Elderhostel bus tour group of MIT graduates stopped and spent an hour touring the Museum. Trains are enjoyable for children of all ages. ☺ The following week we had another bus tour with an additional 35 people.

E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

“I just wanted to take a minute to tell you what a first class job you and the other volunteers have done of the restoration of Caboose 0575! I've worked with museums before and this is one of the best restoration jobs I've ever seen. What great craftsmanship and attention to detail.

Naturally the lanterns look good, but, WOW, look what they are mounted on! Very nice work indeed!”
Jim Kottkamp

“The June issue of *Trains* magazine has an ad for the Ridgway Railroad Museum on page 87. Thanks to Karen Avery, OCRA President, for making ad this possible. The ad will run for six consecutive issues.”
Don Paulson

“The Galloping Goose Historical Society (Dolores) has a new web site - www.gallopinggoose5.com”
Larry Spencer (*I misspelled Larry’s last name in the June issue, sorry.*)



MOTOR #4 STOVE

The photo shows the coal-burning stove that was in the rear corner of the freight box of Motor #4 left side. The M-W casting on the front was for Montgomery-Ward, a one-time competitor of Sears. As the picture shows the stove is missing a door. The Museum is interested in finding a door, or a complete stove to help bring the Motor back to its 1952 condition. Any leads?

RIDGWAY AS A RAILROAD TOWN

By Keith Koch © 2008

When Otto Mear’s and his chief engineer Charles W. Gibbs began planning the Rio Grande Southern Railroad in the late 1880’s there were important decisions to be made. At the southern end of the proposed railroad, Durango was the logical location to meet the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Where the northern

end of RGS would tie into the D&RG might not been as easy to determine. Some historians have suggested that the RGS considered Dallas, a small community in the Uncompahgre River valley where Dallas Creek joins the Uncompahgre. Dallas was a tiny railroad town of 541 people on the Ouray branch of the D&RG Railroad, a few miles north of what is today Ridgway. Dallas had a small wooden depot and a freight house. (See *The RGS Story* VI, page 25, for a map of the Dallas town plat.)

I would suggest several reasons for rejecting this location for linking up with the D&RG. One was the limited amount of land in the narrow valley at Dallas to build the railroad structures and rail yard needed for the operation of the RGS. To build on the west side of the river at Dallas would have required a tall bridge of about 500' in length. Dallas' water supply quality would have been inadequate to meet the needs of a larger community and the RGS. During Dallas' short existence it burned twice. It was more profitable for Otto Mears and his partner Fred Walsen to purchase land for a new town site and sell lots where Ridgway now exists. The town site consisting of 490 acres was laid out in 1890, and soon lots were being sold as a way to help finance the construction of the RGS.

The new town became Ridgway, in honor of Robert M. Ridgway who had been responsible for the construction of the RGS from the town site to Rico. (See *The RGS Story* V.I, page 60, for a map of Ridgway) An unusual feature is the twelve city blocks bordered Amelia St. on the west, Lena St. on the east, Sherman St. on the south, and Charles St. on the north all have two alleys, one running east-west, the other north-south. This grid was designed to serve as firebreaks in the core of the community in the event of a fire.

Railroad companies and town sites have an interesting history in western Colorado. Most town fathers realized that to be on a railroad line would be good for commerce, creating stability and growth for their community. Without a railroad a community might be doomed to wither away. One of the few exceptions to this view in Southwestern Colorado is Cortez.

Because the D&RG knew that existing communities wanted rail service they were able to play "hardball." In the case of Ouray, the city leaders met the railroad's demands for land for a depot, and other financial considerations. (This newsletter earlier published a detailed account by Jim Pettengill of these "dealings.") The community of Animas City, just north of present day Durango, refused to meet the D&RG's requests. The railroad plotted and developed Durango. Soon buildings were being moved from the rail less community. Dallas suffered the same fate, as Ridgway quickly became a center of commerce and railroad activity for the area.

As the rail was laid for the RGS, the structures to support the railroad were also built. The Ouray branch line of the D&RG was relocated to the west side of the Uncompahgre River (the present day walking trail north of town uses a railroad bridge) and a large wooden depot was built near the Ridgway City Park along what is now Railroad Ave. The depot has been moved to a nearby location is currently a private residence. The depot was a shared arrangement between the RGS and the D&RG. A Ridgway Railroad Museum document shows that in 1924 the expenses for the Ridgway depot were split 50-50 between the RGS and the D&RG. In Durango the RGS entered into an agreement for the shared use of the existing D&RG depot and roundhouse facilities. The RGS as shown in the 1924 document was responsible for 1/3 of these expenses. This Durango agreement proved to be very expensive, and when Victor Miller became the Receiver of the RGS he built a small engine house facility for the Motors west of Durango on RGS property as a cost cutting measure.

There were two other locations on the RGS that needed major engine facilities. Rico, which was the dividing point between the (2nd) Southern Division (Durango to Rico) and the (1st) Northern Division (Rico to Ridgway), received two-stall wooden engine house. By 1909 Rico had a much larger brick engine house. At Ridgway a five-stall roundhouse was constructed. Engines at Rico were turned using a wye, while the Ridgway roundhouse had a 50' turntable for reversing the direction of engines.

Otto Mears purchased ten used C-16's (2-8-0s) from the D&RG for use on the 1st Division in 1890 for an average price of \$4,500. Engine facilities were a critical part of railroad operations, as steam engines are

high maintenance pieces of equipment. Ridgway, during its railroad era, had two different roundhouses at two different locations. The second roundhouse was built to replace the original roundhouse that had burned down February 12, 1906. This second roundhouse was located behind the present day Mountain Market and the Ridgway hardware store. This location was chosen because it provided much better fire protection for the roundhouse. Nothing remains to indicate that this large structure existed into the 1950's. (See *The RGS Story* V.I, pages 72-73+, for a map and photos of the second Ridgway roundhouse.)

While there are lots of information and photos of the second Ridgway roundhouse, that is not the case of the original structure. The site is currently private property, and with the permission of the owner, five members of the Museum in May visited the site. The Museum has an excellent aerial photo of the site taken by Museum member Gary Woods from his hot air balloon. The variations in vegetation clearly show the outlines of some of the features.

We were able to take measurements at the site to confirm some information that has been published about the roundhouse area. The turntable pit suggests a 50-foot turntable. We suspect the metal turntable was moved to the second site after the 1906 fire. From the center of the turntable to the doors of the roundhouse was just over 100 feet. The roundhouse had five stalls, and each stall had an inspection pit. The center stall also had a drop pit that allowed the removal of two engine driver wheels and the axle for servicing.

There are enough foundation stones that supported posts to estimate the over all size of the roundhouse. These stones have a one-inch hole in the center of them. I wonder if the posts had a pin in the bottom to secure them in place. From front to back the engine house would have measured 69.' The remains, that a contemporary map labels as the blacksmith shop, measured out at 14' by 30.' This same map doesn't show a track we discovered along what was the south wall of the roundhouse. A quick attempt to determine the location of the water tank and sand house as indicted by this map was unsuccessful. A photo does show the water tank as being on the roundhouse lead track. (A common practice)



This first Ridgway roundhouse has been described as a wooden structure. A close examination of a photo in *The RGS Story* V.1 page 55, suggests that this may be only partially correct. The front of the roundhouse and its doors are clearly wooden. Posts, beams, and the roof would have been wooden also. The shown south wall appears to be brick. We found small amounts of reddish brick near what would have been the south, west (back) and the north walls. The remaining bricks are soft and the weather is taking its toll. The quality of bricks from that era is a major problem as the people involved in the restoration of the Beaumont Hotel in Ouray discovered. The roundhouse bricks have a stamp with the raised letters W R.

Our guess is that the bricks were produced locally, maybe in Ridgway. We know that both Montrose and Ouray had brick works. Early Ridgway had several other brick structures including the Mears Building, the Park and Mentone Hotels, and the public school. If you have any additional information about these bricks or where they were manufactured please contact me.

Roundhouse fires are not uncommon. In contemporary times the Durango roundhouse had a serious fire. The Durango – Silverton Railroad quickly rebuilt the structure and presently it is used for its original purpose as well as serving as a Museum open to the public. RGS engine #40 is housed there.

Why take the trouble to attempt to piece together the history of the first Ridgway roundhouse? First of all, the preservation of railroad history is part of the Museum's mission, and the roundhouse provided employment for many RGS employees who lived in Ridgway. We hope that our field measurements will help use match the first roundhouse to an existing set of either D&RG or RGS roundhouse plans. Ridgway is again growing, and the site may be developed in the future. Lastly, what better way to spend a sunny afternoon in Ridgway than with fellow Museum members?

JUNE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

When one examines the Rio Grande Southern Railroad's records of Carloads of Freight & Revenue – Years 1930 -1938 there are five general categories: Products of Agriculture, (*beans & peas*) Animals and Products, (*sheep, goats, cattle*) Products of Mines, (*ores, concentrates*) Products of Forests, (*lumber, shingles, lath*) Manufactures & Misc, (*petroleum oils, refined & other gasoline, mfg. & misc.*)

Which of these five categories produced the largest amount of revenue for the RGS during this time period?

Answer

Surprisingly, for this nine-year period the sub-category: *Petroleum oils, refined & all other gasoline* was the greatest single source of revenue for the RGS. The smallest year was in 1932 with \$28,783, while the best year was 1937 with \$42,440. These products were transported in tank cars, some of which contained crude oil from New Mexico headed to a Salt Lake City refinery.

An examination of 1937 shows what was a typical pattern for RGS during this time period.

Products of Agriculture: cars used 456, revenue \$18,010
Animals and Products: cars used 1,389, revenue \$26,861
Products of the Mines: cars used 987, revenue \$41,740
Products of Forests: cars used 918, revenue \$19,810
Manufactures & Misc. (*petroleum.*) cars used 810, revenue \$63,790
Less than carload lots: revenue \$20,400

As you can see, the poorest financial return per car was moving stock animals.

During this period the worst financial year was 1932, with \$82,874 in total railroad revenue, the best was 1937 with \$190,611.

Thanks to Karl Schaeffer for pointing out this information in Richard Dorman's [The Rio Grande Southern 11](#). A chart therein was the source for this item. KK

If you would like to submit a RGS trivia question and answer to the editor, we'll publish it as space permits.

MORE COLORADO RAILROAD MUSEUM DOCUMENTS

Among the many treasures I uncovered in one of the boxes of RGS records were a stack of Telegrams and memos from the year 1924. They were from points all along the RGS system and most were addressed to RRB (Roy R. Boucher), Storekeeper, Ridgway. Typically the sender was requesting track maintenance parts or tools, oil or gasoline, basic supplies, or emergency repair items. Mrs. E. McDonald, who seemed to move around quite a bit, sent frequent grocery lists. But sometimes the notes offered a more interesting window

into railroad life in the 1920's. Following is a selection from them. They are reproduced as written. I hope you enjoy these as much as I did. Don Kellogg

Kings, 6/5/24

R. R. Boucher

Roy. I am sending in my oil can to be filled.

The goods sent out yesterday came today and the syrup was all spilled not a drop left you can imagine the mess everything was in better not send bucket syrup as it is apt to spill I am out now of any kind tell them to send another bill could not make this one out.

Mrs McDonald

May 6th, 1924

Mr RR Boucher

Ridgway, Colo.

Dear Sir

Please send a Gunny sack full of waste out here to me for the work Eng. as I have no waste & the Engr gives me H ___ every morning so send a sack of waste out here at once – Send at Once.

Geo F Milly, Watchman

Kings, Colo.

Delors Colo June 7th 1924.

Mr.G.M.Darby.

Division Engineer. Gunnison Colorado

Dear Sir:-

The last Motor Car Frafes we receive from Ridgway Sheops dit not have any Amergiance Brakes on or hol in the Flor to use a clube for the brake or any cleds on the Ends of the flor to keep tools from foling of we hat it up last fall and diside to Putting 2X2 on the Ends as this been Discontiud 2.

I took Joe.Nickons Engine and Munded on Stoner Greek Frame account of his Engine Send to Ridgway for Repairs. Please have his Engine Mounted on the Frame you Building for Nickons And Return to Stoner Greek.

Yours Truly.

AD Kane

Ridgway, Colorado

June 2nd., 1924

Mark Deti,

Section Foreman,

Ophir, Colo

Your requisition No 514 for two felt gaskets for type RNF engine. We have none of these in stock at present but if you have an old felt hat, you can cut these gaskets out and will answer the purpose until I receive shipment, and will forward promptly.

R R Boucher, SK

Date 7/8 '24

The meat Carmichael sent last was so old could not use some of it tell them I want fresh meat or none at all.

Mrs Mac

Rico Novr 2 1924

RRB

The attached refers to Eng QHB22648 shipped you by 382 Oct 29th to fix up for 4 man Coke Ovens. please make the repairs while Eng is there & it will be in good shape after fit up on new frame.

TM Gill

(Attached note:) "here is the parts that are needed for the Motor engine of Chas Mickeys - Sliding Base link the Curburetor is broken in one place on the top and few other parts needs replacing. the tank licks Where the

pipe is walted on also needs new Gas Tank Stud Nud one sliding base lever dog Spring – one Gas Tank filler cap, and not much Compration.”



Bonus Photo: *The interior of Goose #4 after it has been stripped of seats, some of the interior siding and the snack bar. The 2X4 in the center is helping to support the roof.*

MUSEUM HOURS

It is planned that the Museum will be open seven days a week during the summer. To confirm this you can call 626-5181, the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce, as when the Chamber is open so is the Museum. If you have a special need, feel free to contact me, or one of our Board members.

MUSEUM WISH LIST

Clear detailed photos of Galloping Goose 4 from 1950 or 51

\$500 for acquisition of more sophisticated software for documenting Museum artifacts

Marker light bracket D&RG pattern #M2088 (We have 2825 to trade.)

\$2,500 for operating insurance for Motor #1

RGS books by Grandt (Except Vols 1 & 9), Ehernberger, Dorman, John Norwood

400 feet of 30# rail

An Otto Mears silver filigree pass

Brake shoes

ELECTRONIC MAIL

If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail or have a question or comment, contact Keith Koch, 469 Cobble Dr., Montrose, CO 81401 or 970-252-1110 or touray@aol.com. Please use “Museum” in the subject box.

Using electronic mail helps the museum defray costs and use funds for additional education and restoration projects. You will also receive additional photos that are not included in the print copy of the newsletter because of space limitations.

2008 ANNUAL DUES SCHEDULE

INDIVIDUAL \$20 FAMILY \$40 SILVER \$100 GOLD \$200 PLATINUM \$300
LIFE MEMBER \$1,000 (one-time donation) BUSINESS \$100

You may now pay your dues or make a cash donation to the Museum using PayPal. See the Museum website at RidgwayRailroadMuseum.org for details. Information is found on the membership page of the website.

While several renewing members have used PayPal, we now have had our first new member use the system.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

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