



C&TS DISPATCH

VOLUME 36 NO. 1
SPRING 2022



The Annual Bit of History Issue

*“Gramps” and the Oil that Saved the Railroad
Work Session Schedule, Sessions A-D
Volunteer with the Virtual Education Program
New Photos of Cascade Trestle Discovered!*





C&TS DISPATCH

Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec
Scenic Railroad, Inc.

William Lock, Founder-1988

Vol. 36, No. 1 🌸 Spring, 2023

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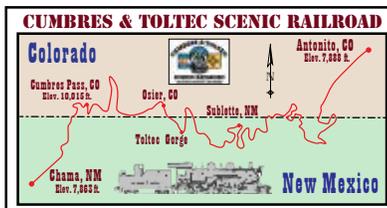
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C&TS DISPATCH

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The C&TS Dispatch is published four times each year by The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Inc., a New Mexico nonprofit corporation. The Friends is the official museum arm for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a sixty-four mile-long Railroad and museum of railroad history and technology, operating between Antonito, Colorado, and Chama, New Mexico. The Railroad is owned jointly by the States of Colorado and New Mexico. As the museum arm, the Friends is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the Railroad. The Friends is an Affiliate Member of the *Heritage Rail Alliance (HRA)*. Family membership in the Friends is \$35.00 per year; outside the USA membership is \$50.00. All contributions are fully tax deductible and will be gratefully accepted. For information, please write us in Albuquerque at the **Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc., 4421 McLeod Rd. NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM, 87109**, or call us at (505) 880-1311.



Denver & Rio Grande Railway: 1880-1886
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad: 1886-1921
Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad: 1921-1970
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad: 1970-today

**The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is both a
National Historic Landmark and a
State Registered Historic Site.**

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President's FORUM



Spring has Sprung and C&TS's Opening Day is Just Around the Corner!

Spring has arrived! At least the calendars say it's here, even if the weather around parts of the country seems more like winter. Major League Baseball is off and running with their new "pitch clock." Flowers are blooming and allergies kicking in. Our days are longer. Easter and tax day have come and gone. So it must be spring! We are now looking ahead to Memorial Day Weekend and the start of another Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad operating season. At the depots, the smell of coal (OK, and maybe a little oil) fills the air. Smiling docents will soon be greeting passengers in Antonito and Chama.

For many Friends members, it means looking at the Railroad's schedule and choosing projects during the sessions. Check pages 6 and 7 of this issue for the latest schedule of Sessions A through D, keeping in mind that the projects and schedules are subject to last-minute changes. Then look for special trains that may be running during your visit, maybe the *Friends Member Train & Dinner at Cumbres* on June 23rd or the *Moonlight & Wine Train* on Saturday July 31st to Osier, and the *pre-National*

Narrow Gauge Convention Charters on the C&TS on August 28th & 29th. The convention charters already sold out (but keep in touch; there may be openings!)

So, what are your plans for the summer? Thanks to Covid, you may not have not ridden the C&TS in a while. If you're a modeler, maybe you are attending the *National Narrow-Gauge Convention* at the end of August and ride one of their two photo charters.

Don't forget to bring relatives or friends who have never experienced what Cumbres & Toltec has to offer. Last year I had visitors from the Midwest who loved the amazing experience of riding through the beautiful San Juan Mountains. We all put off things that we've been intending to do for a long time. Make 2023 the year for you and your family to come ride the C&TS! Regular daily passenger service begins June 3rd and will run six days a week, Tuesday through Sunday. And don't forget there are half-day trips, too.

As the season approaches, we are working to provide more awareness of the Friends and the Railroad. In the last issue of the *Dispatch*, I touched on our presence at model railroad shows and other train-themed events. We have had a great response; we had members sign up to volunteer staffing the shows. This is fantastic! We'll pay for the space and supply our display and materials. We have a good supply of Cumbres & Toltec and Friends brochures, so if you need some for any event or to display, please let me know.

I especially want to thank Kathleen Walser for her efforts in overseeing the Friends social media presence. She has done a marvelous job with FaceBook, YouTube and Instagram postings and the number of online views have been great. This has been an excellent way

On the Cover, Spring, 2023



Photo by Chris James

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is not only scenic, it's historic. The Spring issue of the *C&TS Dispatch* is always presented as "The History Issue," and Spring 2023 is no exception. In 1992, 2008, and 2017, narrow gauge tank cars were returned to the C&TS after many years. They have all needed continuous restoration. After repainting in 2016, volunteers added historically accurate lettering to the cars.

to keep our members engaged and to invite new individuals to join. Kathleen is always looking for members to feature on FaceBook, so don't be shy. She is also looking for interesting material to post. If you have ideas she'd love to hear from you. You can contact her at kswalser@gmail.com.

Another communication tool that's been introduced over the past six months has been the monthly email newsletter, the *Dispatch Extra*. A supplement to the Friends quarterly *C&TS Dispatch* magazine, the *Dispatch Extra* offers up-to-the-minute news and information that needs dissemination before the next *C&TS Dispatch* goes to press. Editor Ian Kelly assembles the *Dispatch Extra* along with Don Atkinson, John Engs, Bill Kepner and Chris James. Chris has also done an excellent job of editing and producing the *C&TS Dispatch* for the last seven years. Between it and the *Dispatch Extra*, I have received great comments about our increased communication efforts. If you are not receiving the *Dispatch Extra* "e-blast," please e-mail me at timtenant@cumbrestoltec.org. If we don't have your email address or it has changed, we will get you signed up.

As the Friends continues to grow and adapt in an ever-changing world, we are sorry to announce that Wayne Huddleston has made the difficult decision to resign from the Friends Board. We recognize the profound impact that dedicated individuals like Wayne have made on our organization; his contributions have been immeasurable and we thank him for his time and energy. Joining the Board is Melissa Sellers who will serve the remainder of Wayne's term. Melissa, along with Kathleen Walser, is part of the team creating educational materials for youngsters to learn about railroading. We welcome Melissa into this role!

In closing, I thank our members for your support and volunteer efforts that you provide the Friends of the C&TS as we begin another season.



 Tim Tennant

Melissa Sellers Joins the Friends' Board of Directors

My first ride on the C&TS was in 2007, a short trip from Chama to Cumbres. Vowing to return, I booked



two sets of one-way tickets for my family, riding from Antonito to Chama, returning the following day. The family was hooked; it was now "our railroad!"

When our kids, Dylan and Kailey, were old enough to volunteer, we went to Chama for our first work session. The family was assigned to the Paint Crew and we had a blast!

Fueled by the desire to share the Railroad with others, I volunteered with the Historic Interpretation Committee and now work helping develop educational programs for kids.

Our New Dynamic QR Code!

Dynamic? Indeed it is! The Friends have started using QR codes more and more for quick access to information links on the Web. Our new code (above and on the cover of this issue) is great because one scan gives you access four of our most important sites;



- The Friends of the C&TS Website
 - Our Facebook Page
 - Our YouTube Channel
 - The Friends Instagram Site
- Other links may be added soon!



Rio Chama RV Park to Open in May!

New owner Dale Homesley says they *will* have the campground open on May 1st! That changes the complexion of work sessions in Chama. This is an update to information posted in the last *Dispatch Extra*.

DON'T WAIT! JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE C&TS!



2023 is going to be a great year for the Railroad and the Friends!

If you love trains, history and volunteer activities, JOIN US as we help preserve the "Living History" of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

For \$35 a year, you and your family can become Friends and receive the quarterly *C&TS Dispatch*, train ride discounts, invitations to special events and the opportunity to participate in restoration projects each summer, along with the satisfaction of supporting and investing in the historic cultural heritage that is the Cumbres & Toltec!

Only \$35 per year for a basic Family Membership! Foreign: \$50

To join, send us this application (or a facsimile):

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed,
or

Charge my Visa / MC / Discover
[circle one] for \$ _____

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Email _____

Mail to:

Friends of the C&TSRR, Inc.
4421 McLeod Road NE, Suite F
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505-880-1311

www.friendsofcumbrestoltec.org

**Already a Member?
Give this to a friend!**

Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. is a non-profit, tax exempt corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. All contributions are deductible to the fullest extent of the law. IRS# 85-036487

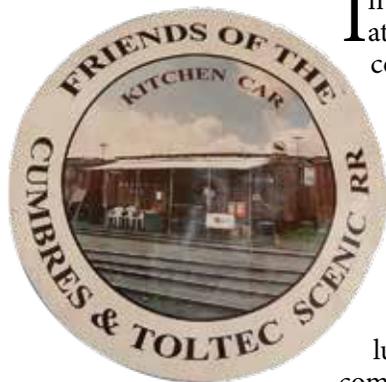


C&TS Friends Telegraph: NEWS

Food and Fun in the Kitchen Car

Attention ladies and gents! Is your significant other a train nut and work session volunteer on the Cumbres & Toltec? Why not join them as a volunteer! You don't have to use a wrench or swing a hammer to join a Friends work session. Come volunteer in the Kitchen Car! You will go home a lot cleaner than your significant other, have fun and meet others who live with the railfan bug. The camaraderie is great and...

We Need Your Help!



In Chama the daily food preparation ritual begins at 7AM when the refreshment table is set up with coffee and tea pots, pastries and snacks. The food prep area is cleaned and lunch bags are counted out and filled with items from the menu of the day. At noon, a bell is run in Chama and a whistle sounds in Antonito, telling the volunteers it's lunchtime. In Chama, lunch items are handed out by the kitchen volunteers. Food service in Antonito is slightly different but the job duties are the same. After lunch, food prep needed for the next day is completed. Throughout the day volunteers continuously

check the refreshment table to replace pastries and snacks, and replenish the variety of liquid refreshment as providing adequate hydration at this altitude is extremely important. At the end of the day, all items are properly stored, coffee and tea pots are cleaned and readied for the next morning, counters are wiped down and garbage is collected. The day is usually done between 4:00 and 4:30 PM and the Team Leader stays to close up. We hope you will consider joining Project 0230 (Chama) or Project 0231 (Antonito).

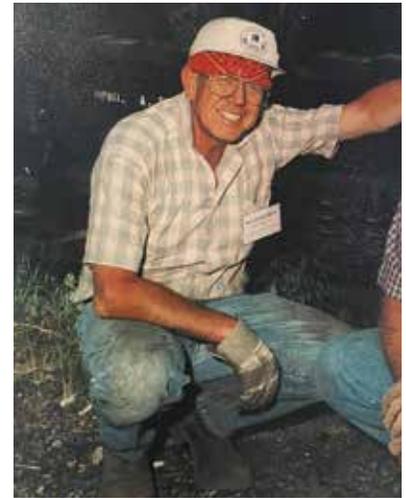
As Caroline Tower, a food service volunteer since 2002, says:

"I love this job. I am not skilled with a wrench or a paint brush so it gives me a way to support the restoration and preservation of the C&TS which I truly believe in. No particular skills are needed other than following the usual food handling instructions.

If you or your significant other are debating about whether to attend a work session because you don't think you have the technical skills needed, this is the job for you. We really need people in this role as the food service is central to our mission of Friends and fellowship and provides a place to bring all of the volunteers together."



Geoffrey (Geof) Gordon



Geoffrey (Geof) Gordon passed away on February 13th at his home in Albuquerque. A long-time supporter of the Friends' organization and the Railroad, Geof filled several roles. He served as a member on the Friends' board and also served on the Rio Grande Railway Preservation Corp. Board. He participated in many volunteer sessions for 25 years as a site leader, team leader, docent, and wherever help was needed. He loved spending his summers in Chama either riding the train or chasing. His photo albums are full of pictures of the C&TS (more than his family). Geof's enthusiasm for the Railroad and the work of the Friends will be missed. A celebration of his life will be held on May 17th at French Funeral in Albuquerque at 1 PM. You can go to the French Funeral and Cremation website to find Geof's obituary and to leave a comment for his remembrance book at www.frenchfunerals.com. Contributions in Geof's memory can be made to the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

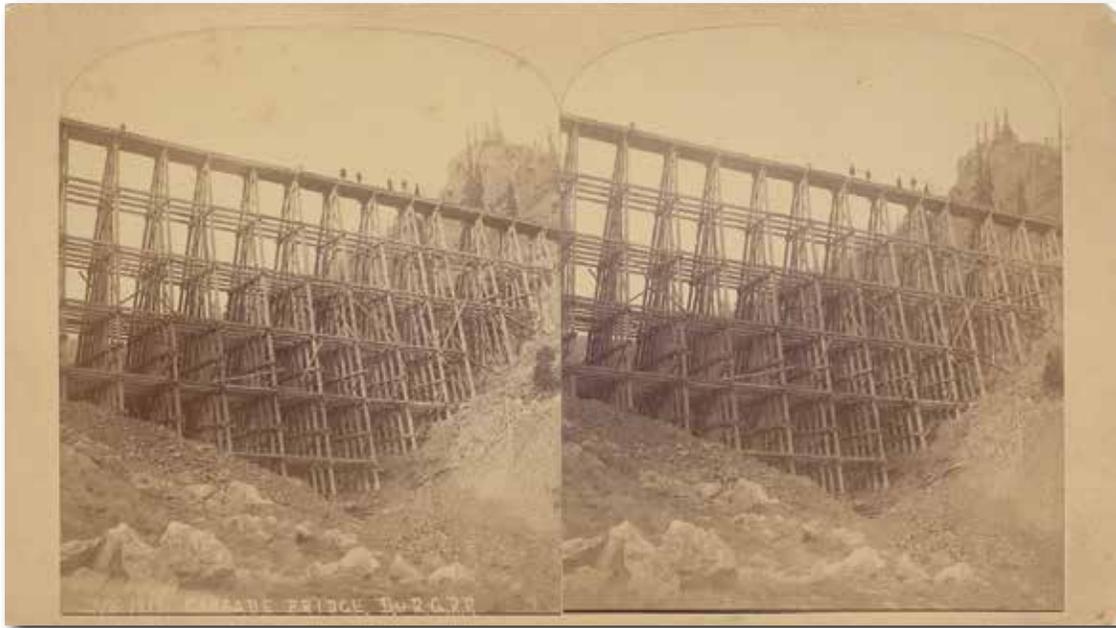
~ Nancy Gordon

We need volunteers in both locations.

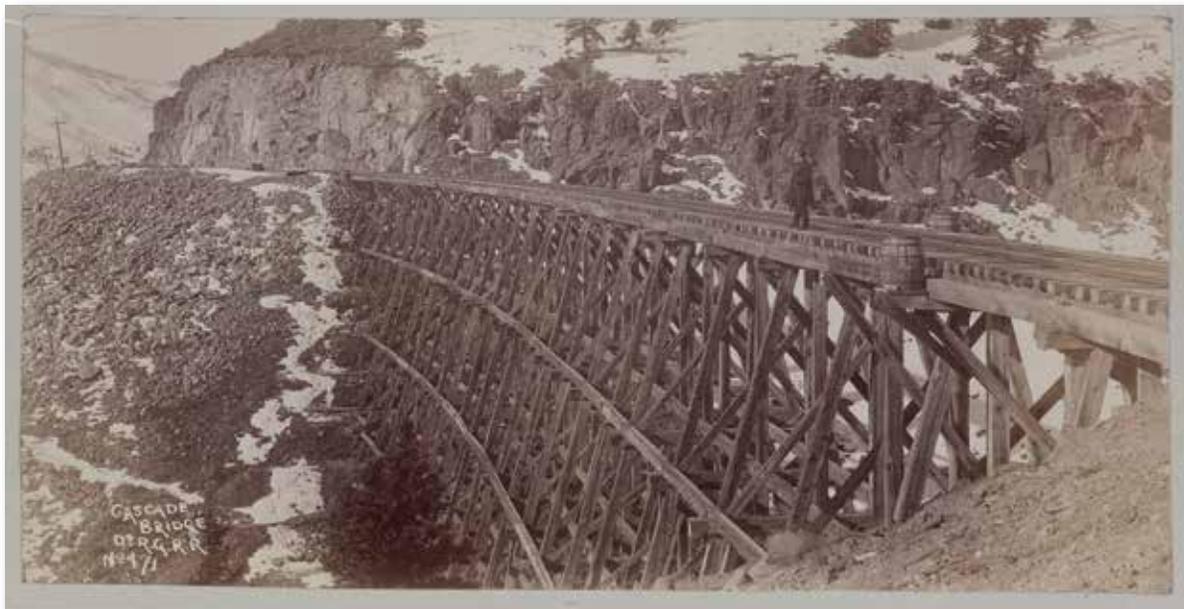
A Bit of History: Cascade Trestle, 1882

When the San Juan Extension was built, General William Jackson Palmer was in a hurry to get to Silverton. Time was of the essence, so a temporary timber trestle was built for the San Juan Extension. It was later replaced by the steel truss bridge we see today, designed by S. Shaler Smith (who also designed the *Wolf Creek-Lobato Trestle* as well as the famous *Hanging Trestle* in the Royal Gorge.) The two photos presented below are from the Amon Carter Museum of American Art collection in Fort Worth, Texas, and are reproduced here with their kind permission.

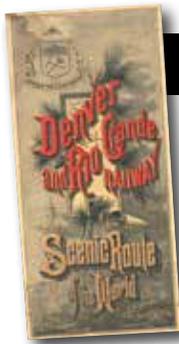
Stereoscope cards were popular 19th century parlor entertainment. The top stereoscopic photo was probably taken by George Mellon (1854-1915) who photographed around Colorado in the 1880s and 1890s. The photographer of the lower photo is not known.



George E. Mellon, (1854–1915), "No. 1912 Cascade Bridge, D&R.G.R.R. ca. 1882," Albumen silver print, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas P1978.147.4.2



Unknown, "Cascade Bridge, D. & R.G.R.R., ca. 1890" Albumen silver print, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas P1978.147.4.2



Friends of the C&T's: *T*IMETABLE

The 2023 Work Session schedule is slightly different from previous years in that there will be concurrent Sessions in Chama and Antonito *only* during Sessions C and D. Sessions A, B, E, F and G will be in Antonito *only*. The reason for this change is the lack of support personnel when sessions are scheduled all along the line. There will still be two Special Sessions in Chama in May and June and one in Antonito in August. Only Sessions A through D are shown below. Future 2023 sessions we be posted in the Summer issue.

See the enclosed flier for a listing of important Work Session Projects in Sessions C and D.

In addition, **volunteers** are needed for most of the season's projects at both Antonito and Chama. **Docents** (Project 0400) are needed not only throughout the scheduled Work Sessions but throughout the summer season, on board the trains and in the Antonito and Chama yards. There are also volunteer opportunities at the Colorado Springs CRF.

Listed below is the abbreviated schedule for Sessions A-D, although remember that the project schedule is often quite fluid and may change throughout the season without notice. Always check the FIDO schedule for any changes or updates in the current schedule at: <https://friendsofcumbrestoltec.org/work-session-volunteer-registration/> or scan the QR code to the right. The complete FIDO schedule, plus Special Sessions can be found at <https://friendsofcumbrestoltec.org/work-session-volunteer-registration/>



TL = Team Leader “+ none” or “+ X” = indicates the number of volunteers needed.)

Support Services Projects					
Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/22 - 5/26	Session B 5/29 - 6/2	Session C 6/19 - 6/23	Session D 6/26 - 6/30
	Registration Deadline	5/15	5/22	6/12	6/19
0200	Chama restoration session Site Leader.			C. McMullen + none	C. McMullen + none
0201	Antonito CRF restoration session Site Leader.	J. Hickman + none	J. Hickman + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none
0206	Dispatch Editorial Photographer - Provides photography and editorial comment to the Editor of the Dispatch	C.James + 1	C.James + 1	C.James + 1	C.James + 1
0210	Work Session Check-in for Chama			TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none
0211	Work Session Check-in Antonito CRF	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none		
0222	Friends merchandise sales - registration location.	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none
0230	Food Preparation - Chama lunches and snacks.			TL NEEDED + 3	TL NEEDED + 3
0231	Food Preparation - Antonito CRF Lunches.	M. J. Smith + 2	M. J. Smith + 2	TL NEEDED + 1	TL NEEDED + 1
0240	Tool Car Operation - Chama			C. McMullen + 1	C. McMullen + 1
0241	Bolt Car Operation - Chama			R. Brigham + none	R. Brigham + none
0245	Tool & Bolt Operation - Antonito CRF.	M. Smith (Asst: G. Davies) + none	M. Smith + none	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none
0246	Paint Car Operation - Chama			F. Higgins + none	F. Higgins + none
0248	Lettering Coordinator - Stencil Car			P. Lounsbury + none	P. Lounsbury + none
0250	Carpentry Shop Operation - Chama			J. Hickman + 2	J. Hickman + 2
0262	Project Chronicing - Chama			S. McGee + 2	S. McGee + 2
0263	Project Chronicing - Antonito CRF	S. McGee + 1	S. McGee + 1	S. McGee + 1	S. McGee + 1
0280	Work Session Preparation at Chama		B. Reib + 2		
0282	Work Session Close at Chama				B. Reib + 2
0294	Hauling & Vehicle Operation	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1

Projects in Antonito, CO					
0701	Landscaping Antonito Yard and Friends Ed Lowrance CRF / CSF complex	TL NEEDED + 2	TL NEEDED + 1		
0722	Car Painting Antonito CRF and AN based painting			D. Stewart + none	D. Stewart + none
0732	Car Lettering Antonito CRF		F. Pittroff + 1		
0741	Caboose Annual Maintenance and Roof Repair	D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + none		

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/22 - 5/26	Session B 5/29 - 6/2	Session C 6/19 - 6/23	Session D 6/26 - 6/30
0779	Mechanical Maintenance - Antonito CRF	B. Kepner +4	B. Kepner +4		
1115	Restoration of MOW 0252 (1889 Tourist Sleeper Car 470)		S. Jorgensen + none		
1197	Construct Period Trucks for Passenger Coaches	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +3	I. Kelly +3
1246	Restore UTLX Tank Car 11050 original GRAMPS car		C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none		
1304	Restore Converted Stock Car 5774	D. Pyzel (Asst: B. Horky) + none	D. Pyzel (Asst: B. Horky) + none		
1332	Restore GRAMPS Tank Car 11056 to operational condition		C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) +1		
1354	Maintain and Repair MW02 to operational condition	J. McGee +1	J. McGee +1		
1382	Maintain, Repair, Upgrade, Paint & Letter Concession Box Car 3244.	D. Atkinson +2	D. Atkinson +2	D. Atkinson +3	D. Atkinson +3
1389	Rebuild Box Car 3263 for use as Friends Stencil Car.				
1390	Railway Post Office Car 54 - Repair windows and windowsills then strip old paint and prime, repaint and re-letter	D. Atkinson +1	D. Atkinson +1	D. Atkinson +2	D. Atkinson +2
1391	Rebuild Flat Car 6649 to roadable condition for MOW service	B. Oltmanns (Asst: B. James) +2	B. Oltmanns (Asst: B. James) +1		

Projects in Cumbres, CO

1005	SHPO - Reconstruction of Car Inspector's House			V. Behr (Asst: J. Pierce) +4	V. Behr (Asst: J. Pierce) +4
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Projects in Chama, NM

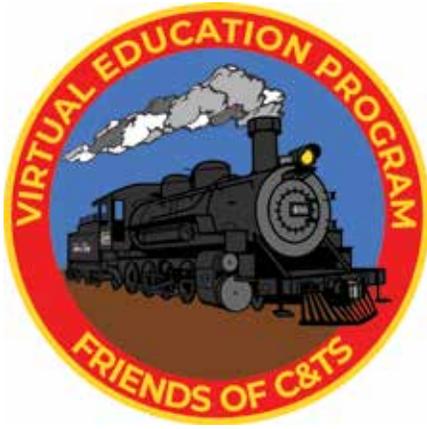
0700	Landscaping Chama - Yard and Gardens			E. Dyer +2	TL NEEDED +2
0720	Car Painting - Chama Based			D. Stewart +12	D. Stewart +12
0730	Car Lettering - Chama Based				S. Jorgensen +5
0780	Mechanical Maintenance - Chama Based			R. Lorentz +5	R. Lorentz +5
1017	SHPO - Stabilization and Repair of Coal Tipple			J. Sulkus +2	J. Sulkus +2
1186	Cosmetic Restoration Engine 483 and Tender for Static Display			R. Schoen (Asst: B. Sargent) +5	
1286	Construction of Friends Storage Building.			B. Conry +2	B. Conry +2
1300	Repair Office Car 04982: (i) deteriorated buffer blocks and associated hardware A & B ends, (ii) deficient safety appliances, and (iii) other minor defects found in a general inspection of the car. 04982 is a contributing asset.			T. Rider +5	
1307	Install Sign Garden in lower garden area below the stairs on the west embankment in the Chama Yard.			J. Ferrell +3	
1312	Reconstruct High Side Gondola 1000			M. Hagemann +5	M. Hagemann +5
1351	Reconvert P-Box 207 to Rider Box Car 3414			B. Stamm +1	
1372	Joint Project RR / Friends Excavate Material, Install Retaining Wall, Swell, Sump Drain and Stabilize Track Bed			TL NEEDED +3	TL NEEDED +3
1375	Eagle Scout Project - Installation of Historic type double sided signage behind to the s/e side of the large fir tree behind the flag pole.			J. Engs +2	
1376	Rebuild boxcar 3566 as a Hollywood Movie Boxcar (HMB) for public display			R. Young (Asst: D. Sowell) +5	R. Young (Asst: D. Sowell) +5
1399	Museum Car Relocation and Maintenance			R. Lively +2	

FIDO schedule is accurate as of Friday, April 28, 2023. Always check FIDO website for changes and updates!

Proj Num	Project Description	Session 5B3 6/4 - 6/10
	Registration Deadline	6/2
1373	Rebuild double deck Stock Car 9660 to road-able condition.	B. Lock (Asst: D. Jenkins) +8
1388	Upgrade Chama WebCam Project to enhance available WiFi	J. Ross +3

Projects Along the Right-of-Way

0710	Removal of plant material along the Right of Way (ROW) that may impair SAFE and efficient Railroad operations. The ROW extends from the Yard Limit in Chama to the Yard Limit in Antonito. This is a high (1) priority Project				P. Davenport (Asst: R. Hassell) +6
0740	Wood Preservative Treatment - Along the Line and Rail Yards				F. Higgins +1
0750	Maintain All Railroad Signage Along the 64-Mile Long Track			J. Gross (Asst: M. Mahoney) +4	
0770	Project Discovery - Identification of New Projects Along the Line	J. Hickman + none	J. Hickman + none	C. McMullen + none	C. McMullen + none
1381	Update "Structural Condition Survey" Originally Completed in 2010			J. Herron +1	



Climb Aboard with the Friends' Virtual Education Program Team!

Members of the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad have a new volunteer opportunity, one largely aimed at encouraging coming generations to appreciate the Railroad and supporting its continued existence.

The Historical Interpretation Committee of the Friends recently launched a Virtual Education Program that will develop curriculum focusing on the C&T&S and railroading in general, with volunteers participating in a variety of roles from wherever they may live.

Here is more about the program and how Friends members can participate:

What's the purpose of the Virtual Education Program and who are the Friends trying to serve by providing the curriculum?

The Virtual Education Program is an online program designed to educate kids ages 5-18 about the history of railroading, and specifically about the history of the Cumbres and Toltec and its economic impact on Colorado and New Mexico.

We are designing the program to be used by teachers and homeschoolers, but we do not want to limit its use to these groups. We encourage extracurricular clubs, adult hobbyists, and more to use our Virtual Education Program.

This is a new type of interpretive project for the Friends. How will the Friends benefit?

This project will augment educational outreach, which is one of the Friends' missions. It allows us to connect with people across the United States and around the world to share the historic importance of the Railroad in the development of the West. It will also encourage the younger generation to enjoy and appreciate the C&T&S and promote the desire to help preserve our favorite living history museum for years to come.

What type of content do you want to include in the Virtual Education Program?

We want to have educational text, videos, and photos that teach about each topic being presented. We plan to include activity sheets that reinforce the material being taught. Activity sheets may include fill-in-the-blank sentences, short-answer questions, map activities, or word scrambles. In addition, our goal is to bring the topic to life by having learners participate in hands-on activities such as painting, clay sculpture, creating a comic strip, or a story-telling activity.

What roles can volunteers have in developing the program?

Volunteers can help us by researching and writing text, developing activity sheets, preparing hands-on projects, creating educational drawings, taking photographs or videos, or proofreading and fact-checking material.

What does a volunteer need to have or know to do the work? Do volunteers have to be a current or former educator to participate?

Volunteers could include anyone interested in railroading, history, the Cumbres & Toltec, or the surrounding community. Volunteers do not need to be an educator; they just need a desire to help and the ability to make sure their submissions are factual and accurate.

How many topic units will the curriculum include and can you provide examples either already being researched or awaiting assignment?

We have a ten-page document with topics that volunteers can choose from. Some examples are the history of the Railroad, jobs on the Railroad, historic preservation, geology along the tracks, historic settlements including the people, places, and daily life, science and technology that will include how the Railroad was built and what challenges they faced, the Railroad's economic impact and the growth of America, rail cars and their uses, communication along the rails, and railroad disasters.

Each major unit has several sub-topics, so you can choose a topic that is exciting to you. For instance, one member of the Friends has a family history of railroad telegraphers, so he is researching that topic for his own personal family history, but also to help our program.

Do volunteers select the topics they'll research and write about?

Volunteers can choose the topic they will research and can choose to do as many or as few topics as they would like. Researching and converting that knowledge into an engaging style will be one of the most important parts of this program. Our goal is for text to be written to a ten-year-old's level of comprehension. This will allow younger children to understand the material with guidance from a teacher or parent, and older children to learn from our program to encourage them to dig deeper for more information.

Can you explain how volunteers might research topics? Is there somebody for consultation on how to do the research? Also, many volunteers may have books and other material on their topics, but others may not. Are there suggestions or resources on finding research material?

When a volunteer begins researching, our first suggestion is to Google your topic if it is unfamiliar. This will give you a broad overview and ideas of where to start. The Friend Forum on the Friends website (<https://friendsofcumbrestoltec.org>) has past issues of the *C&TS Dispatch* available for researchers to reference. There are many websites that can be used as sources as well. If you are local to Colorado, several libraries, including the Colorado Railroad Museum and the Denver Public Library, have a multitude of railroad resources. If volunteers have any questions, please reach out to our team via email: education@fctsr.org and ask for guidance. New volunteers will also receive a PDF guideline to help with the process.

How does the program intend to get photos, video, audio recordings and drawings to visually illustrate the text material? What can volunteers do to help in providing or arranging acquisition of that material?

This question has several parts. Our goal is to use original art or photos and videos as often as possible. This will include volunteers providing photos and videos and even volunteers drawing or creating images.

The Friends also own an expansive gallery of historic photos that we plan to use in our virtual education units. If a volunteer finds a photo from this gallery that they would like to include, it is as simple as providing the program organizers with the photo ID number for us to access that image.

When creators provide their own photos, videos, or artworks, they will submit a form to the program organizers that will ensure the Friends have rights to use that work.

We also understand that sometimes the perfect image or video may be found in outside sources. In this case, we will need permission to use these works. This will include contacting the owner of the work and asking for written permission to ensure that we have proper rights and do not run into any copyright issues. Our Virtual Education Volunteer Guide includes information on how to cite these sources. The guide can be found on our Google Form for volunteers.

This program sounds interesting and rewarding and I'm thinking about participating. What kind of time commitment might be involved and would there a deadline to prepare and submit the material for a unit?

One of the best things about this volunteer experience is that you can commit as much time or as little as you want! You may want to research and write about many topics, or you might want to create just one hands-on project instruction sheet or take a few pictures. That's okay! We welcome any and all help. We do ask that once you volunteer for a topic you keep in touch with our program organizers with regular updates. We want to ensure progress is being made so that we can launch the program in a timely manner with a variety of units!

How do I get in touch with the program's leadership if I'm interested in participating and want to find out what topics are up for grabs?

Our topics and subtopics are listed in our Google Form. If you have a topic in mind that is not on our list, we are always open to new ideas. There are a couple of ways to get in touch with the Education Program Leaders, Melissa Sellers and Kathleen Walser:

1. Fill out the online form found at: <https://tinyurl.com/fctseducationprogram>.
2. You can email us at: education@fctsr.org
3. Contact us via the QR code (right.)

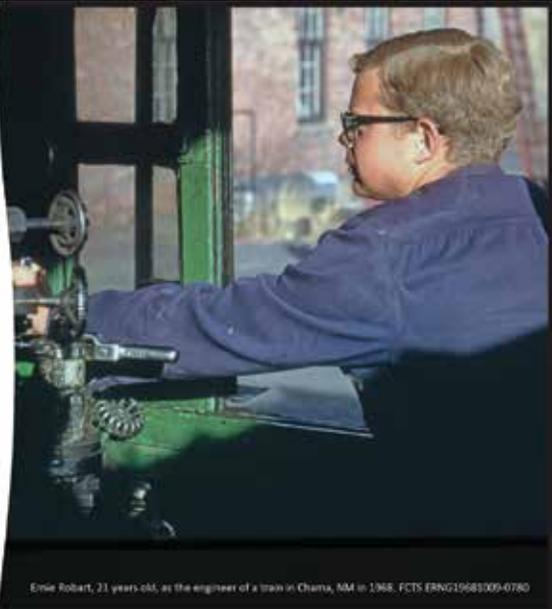


Melissa Sellers, Kathleen Walser and Paul Davenport contributed to this article.

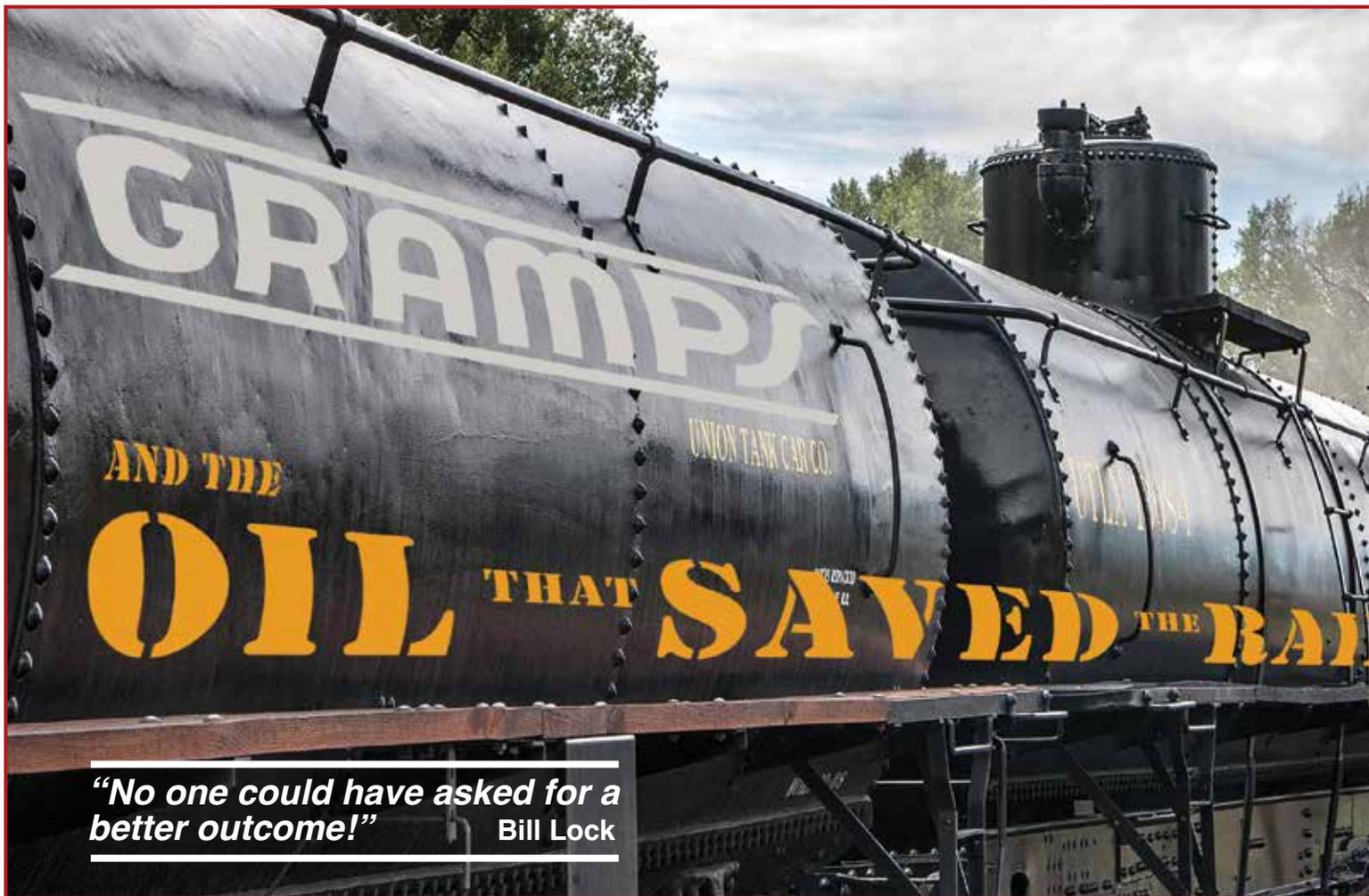


Whistle Signals to Provide Instructions or Information

- When a train is about to depart a station
- When a train in a railyard is going to move forward or in reverse
- When more than one locomotive is pulling the same train and the engineers need to know when to have their locomotives move and stop, all at the same time



Ernie Robert, 21 years old, as the engineer of a train in Charma, NM in 1948. FCTS ERNG19681009-0780



"No one could have asked for a better outcome!" Bill Lock

A row of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad's tanks cars in Chama, 2016, part of the continual upkeep of the Railroad's narrow gauge road.

A Bit of History

I

Passengers on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad are intrigued not only by the "scenic" part of the journey but by its history. Riders often ask the docents, "Why was this built? What sort of goods, besides passengers like us, did this Railroad carry?" Some of those goods are probably obvious: ore, coal and bullion from the mines and smelters in Colorado, lumber from New Mexico's forests, and cattle and sheep from the region's rich pasturelands. What they may not consider is yet another commodity: oil.

Oil may not be the first thing that comes to mind when crossing Cumbres Pass. But from the major oil and gas fields around Farmington, New Mexico, to the more remote "oil patch" sites scattered around the southwest, oil and gas has been a major player in the economy of the Four Corners region throughout most of the 20th century, one that continues well into the current era.

Looking back about eighty million years, the area now known as the San Juan Basin was a tropical jungle covered by thick, organic matter that fell, layer-upon-layer, over the shores and swamplands of an inland waterway that covered much of

what is now the West. The sea level's rise and fall, combined with the immense pressure of overlying deposits of sand, mud and more organic matter, created a variety of geologic strata of sandstone, shale and limestone. Over millions of years, this layered mixture of non-organic and tropical plant matter was compressed to what is now known as the San Juan Basin Formation. Depending upon the amount of pressure exerted on these varied layers by the rise of the nearby San Juan Mountains, along with the heat generated by the decomposition of the organic material, this organic goo turned into gas, oil or coal, trapped in the layers of strata, awaiting discovery. In the late 19th century, oil was the new gold rush; early geologists suggested that there just might be black gold in "them thar hills" and strata.

Most of the exploration was focused around what later became Farmington, New Mexico. But there were also outliers throughout the Basin. Oil seeps were first noted along the Navajo River between 1885 and 1901 and



It has new lettering applied by volunteers after further restoration in the yard.
Photo by Chris James

investors from around the state formed at least seven new companies to attempt oil extraction. Most discoveries were too small or too difficult to access profitably and the Farmington area remained focused on agricultural production.

In 1905, the D&RG built a standard gauge line from Durango in the middle of its narrow gauge territory to serve Farmington and to stave off a threat from the standard gauge Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe Railroad companies who were considering building into the region. The intent was also to prepare for the eventual conversion of the narrow gauge San Juan Extension from Alamosa into a standard gauge line. Once it became clear that the SP/AT&SF threat was over, the upgrade was moot. In 1923 the newly-reorganized D&RGW decided that rather than rebuild one hundred and seventy miles of narrow gauge right-of-way into standard gauge, it made more sense to convert the forty-seven miles of the Farmington Branch to narrow gauge instead. This upgrade—or as the Railroad may have viewed it the time, a downgrade—was contrary to the D&RGW's ongoing conversion of many of their other routes to either three-rail or standard gauge.

Following the 1929 Stock Market Crash, the D&RGW was struggling. While the Railroad had finally come out

of receivership a few years earlier, deferred maintenance and the overall decline of mining activity and the resulting reduction in Depression-era traffic pushed the Railroad's fixed charges up and their revenue down. During the 1930s, the D&RGW began cutting its losses by scrapping or selling off nearly twenty-five branch lines and continued converting of the more profitable routes to standard gauge. With its reduced iron footprint as well by the possibility of a war looming in Europe, the D&RG began to regain some of its power, if not profits.

The rest of the country was also slowly improving with an upturn of manufacturing, including more and more automobiles that needed lubricants and fuel. The result was the need for a commodity that, while always a player, was now becoming a big player: oil.

II

Oil was first discovered in large quantities in the United States in Pennsylvania in 1859. Getting it from the well to the consumer was done first with barrels and then large banded tubs on flat cars for rail transport. The horizontal "boiler-type" tank car debuted in 1870 and it was found that the new design, grandparent of today's cars, could carry more and was more stable and safer than the giant tubs, especially when carrying volatile cargo like gasoline. The first tank cars were about twenty-four feet in length and five-feet, six inches in diameter. In the 1880s and 1890s the tanks were lengthened to thirty-two feet long and six feet wide. The cars' capacity was between 80 and 100 barrels at 42 gallons to a barrel. As demand for oil grew, so did both the size of the cars and the size of the tank car fleet. By 1900 there were over ten thousand tank cars carrying oil and other petroleum products on US railroads.

Over time, the Pennsylvania, Texas, and California oil fields became well known but exploration was increasing in the less well-known fields as well, including the San Juan Basin. Drilling for oil and gas deposits began in the area as early as 1911. As the geology of oil-bearing strata became better understood, the region became a focus of the expanding oil industry, including deposits on what were existing ranch and agricultural holdings. Many of the original wells came up dry but the search continued. Interest in exploration grew during World War I and into the 1920s and 1930s, as still more automobiles began hitting the road.

One of the first successful drilling sites in the San Juan Basin outside of the Farmington oil fields began in 1935 along the Navajo River north of Chama, New Mexico, and north-east of Chromo, Colorado. The location had a most peculiar name: the Gramps Oil Field.

III

"Gramps" was Col. William E. Hughes, attorney, banker, and founder of the Continental Land and Cattle Company that had become one of the largest ranching conglomerates in the west. Ann Clifton Springer was Col. Hughes' granddaughter. In 1907, at age fourteen, her parents transferred legal guardianship to Col. Hughes. Ann dropped the

“Springer” surname and now calling herself “Ann Clifton,” moved in full time with “Gramps” and her grandmother, “Bammy.”

In 1912, Annie Clifton married Lafayette M. Hughes, the son of Colorado Democratic Senator Charles Hughes, (no relation to Colonel Hughes.) When Col. Hughes died in 1918, Annie Clifton Hughes inherited both her grandfather’s 57,000 acre Banded Peak Ranch in southwest Colorado and the Cross Country Horse and Cattle Ranch south of Denver, part of today’s Highlands Ranch holdings. Two years later, she sold the Denver property to Waite Phillips, founder of Phillips Petroleum.

By July 1935, Lafayette M. Hughes (perhaps with the help of Waite Phillips?) was aware of the possibility of oil on the family-owned ranch. Like many other drill sites, the first attempt was a dry hole. The second attempt however, completed December 3, 1935, was the “discovery well” that established the Gramps Oil Field. It was Annie Clifton Hughes who coined the company name, in honor of her late grandfather, the good Colonel.

Because the Lafayette Hughes family was the landholder as well as the drillers, they were free to develop as they saw fit and over the years sank twenty-six wells, 1,000 to 1,400 feet deep, over 127 acres of their ranch. Unlike the vivid images of oil gushers spouting crude oil into the sky, the Gramps oil did not burst, or even flow, from the wells; it was a thick, viscous fluid that required pumping for retrieval and storage. To realize any profit, Hughes had to ship this thick crude to a refinery for processing into usable oil products.

There were some small refineries in the Farmington area, but roads were primitive and tanker trucks were small. It would take a major fleet of tankers making many round trips through rough terrain to handle the output of the Gramps Field. The obvious answer was to ship by rail; the D&RGW narrow gauge was south and east of the Gramps Oil Field, between Chama and Durango, where the right-of-way turned south toward Lumberton and down the Navajo River. That route, however, would require the oil to make a twelve-mile journey from the oil field, down river to Chromo, then east eleven miles to reach the railhead. It could have been shipped by line but Gramps crude was too heavy and thick to flow without pumping. Pushing oil through twenty-two miles of line for an operation the size and output of the Gramps fields would be an expensive proposition.

There was, however, an alternative route to reach the D&RGW: Chama and the Railroad were about twelve air-miles south-southeast of the Gramps field. The only problem was that there was a mountain range in the way. But that mountain range would be advantageous to getting the Gramps oil to market: it only needed to be pumped uphill to the crest of the range. From there the oil would act as its own syphon and flow down to Chama. Chama historian Margaret Palmer picks up the story in the piece she wrote for the long-gone *Chama Valley Tattler* in the summer of 1989 and reprinted in the February 1992 *C&TS Dispatch*:

Very soon after striking oil, (Hughes) began work on fifteen-miles of pipeline...(It) began at the

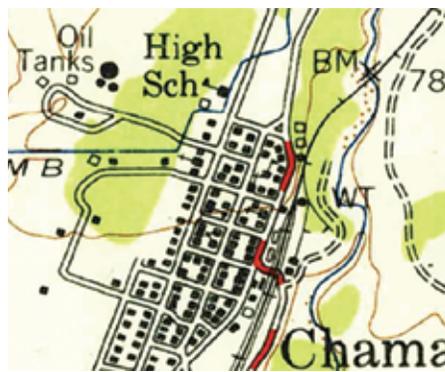


A small segment of the Gramps Oil pipeline remains near the original drilling sites. *Photo by Rich Muth*

operational plant on the Hughes ranch and came across the Continental Divide through the Sargent property where Hughes had leased a twenty-five-foot easement from Ed Sargent.

The pipeline consisted of four-inch pipe encased in a box filled with sawdust for insulation. The pipe was mostly buried, but was carried above ground on trestles over the canyons and arroyos...It took one summer to complete.

While the line was shut down during February and March—even the sawdust insulation wasn’t enough to keep the thick crude flowing—oil was generally sent through the pipeline twenty-four hours a day. At Chama, a 55,000 gallon storage tank, four additional 20,000 gallon tanks and a loading dock were constructed to store and rack the oil into waiting narrow gauge tank cars, ready for shipment.*



USGS Chama Quadrangle, 1955

IV

Then, as now, most railroads didn’t own their own tank car fleet. Instead, they were leased from a number of companies including Union Tank Car Company, today known as UTLX, and the General American Transportation Corporation, today’s GATX. (The “X” in their names indicates that they are not a common carrier like the D&RGW. These companies lease the cars to the companies in need of bulk liquid transport of anything from crude oil to corn syrup and everything in between. Originally associated with John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Co., Union Tank Car Company became a publicly owned corporation when the government broke up Standard Oil in

*For a more detailed account of the Gramps Oil Field, see Doris B. Osterwald’s book, *Ticket to Toltec* (3rd Edition, ©2013), pp. 100-101 and *The Gramps Oil Field* by Margaret Palmer in the February 1992 issue of the *C&TS Dispatch*, downloadable in the Friends Forum.



End-to-end, a Narrow Frame UTLX tank car (L) and a Frameless Gramps tank car in Alamosa, December 20, 1952. In 1956 these two cars were renumbered as Narrow Frame 11007 and Frameless 11043. Photo by Robert Richardson. FC&TS Collection, AMP06-118

1909. Union Tank Car Company became a major player on the D&RGW during the oil production years. There were other tank cars seen on the D&RGW, notably cars for Conoco and Texaco, but the majority on the narrow gauge carried the UTLX reporting marks.

There were two types of UTLX oil tank cars on the D&RGW narrow gauge, “Narrow Frame” and “Frameless,” the two having distinctive differences. The oldest Union Tank Cars were originally built in 1907-08 as standard gauge cars with a capacity of around 6,000 gallons, about 143 barrels, increased in a later design to 6,500 gallons. Designed by Union Tank Car engineer John Van Dyke and called the “V-Car,” they were designated “Frameless” as their cast iron saddles were riveted directly to the underside of the tank. The railroads, however, didn’t trust the structural integrity of the Frameless tank cars and only about 100 such cars were built. In response, Van Dyke designed a revised model that included an end-to-end center sill that supported the tank and provided points of attachment for the trucks and strength for long, heavy trains and powerful locomotives on the major railroads. Called the “X-Car,” or “Narrow Frame,” it became the standard design and many were built as standard gauge by UTLX. The majority of the cars on the D&RG were converted to narrow gauge in Alamosa in the 1920s as oil exploration began picking up in the San Juan Basin.

In 1937, twenty-five of the V-Frame “Frameless” cars were leased by the Gilmore Oil Company to carry road oil for paving in southwest Colorado. Structural integrity was not a major concern; the V-Frame cars would be used for short, slow and relatively local shipment. With the oil output increasing, eighteen of the Frameless cars were leased directly to Gramps Oil, with the bold silver “GRAMPS” logo applied to most of them. In 1945, another ten cars were leased for road oil.

V

By 1937, Hughes had built its own refinery in Alamosa, exclusively for Gramps crude. On April 27, 1937 the first eleven-car train left Chama for Alamosa. Like the Frameless cars, the

Narrow Frame cars carried 6,500 gallons of oil—155 barrels. Trains were generally eight to twelve tank cars long, often double-headed, though some photographs show much longer, double-headed trains with tank and freight cars in the consist, most likely strings of empties returning to Chama.

According to Margaret Palmer, again writing in the *Chama Valley Tattler*, when the Gramps Field was at peak production in 1942, 1,100-1,300 barrels per day were pumped to Chama. This amounted to the daily equivalent of a nine-to-eleven-car train. Oil that wasn’t sent directly to the Gramps refineries was transferred by gravity to standard gauge cars in Alamosa for shipment to Denver and elsewhere. Heaters inside the cars, supplied by steam at the refinery, warmed the thick oil allowing the oil to flow into standard gauge cars. The narrow gauge cars would then return empty to Chama for another load. Around 1950, the Gramps refinery was purchased by the Oriental Oil Company, though everyone still called it “Gramps.”

Regardless of the refinery owner, the line over Cumbres Pass was Main Street for oil from the Gramps Oil Field. By 1960 there were around fifty-six of the Narrow Frame and Frameless cars on the narrow gauge line. Overall, it is estimated that during oil’s heyday about 38,000 carloads of Gramps oil were shuttled over the Pass. At an average of



Famed railroad photographer Jim Shaughnessy visited the D&RGW in August, 1963 with his 4x5 Speed Graphic camera and captured No. 488 eastbound, just past Tanglefoot Curve. Center for Railroad Photography & Art Collection Used with permission.

150 barrels each, more than 5.7 million barrels—240 million gallons—of oil rode the narrow gauge to Alamosa and beyond.

Oil was not the only petroleum-industry freight carried on the D&RGW. The Railroad was also the most economical means of delivering westbound oil field equipment, pipe and drilling “mud,” a viscous fluid pumped into the drill holes to both lubricate the pipe and to carry rock cuttings to the surface. Mud was generally bagged and shipped dry in boxcars and mixed at the drilling site. That, and general Farmington freight, kept the San Juan Extension alive in a time of change when sixty- to seventy-year-old railroad technology was disappearing.

While heavy drilling equipment was shipped on flat cars, delivery of the pipe was a bit more of a challenge. When you have a railroad with a rolling stock roster mostly made up of 30-foot cars, the shipment of 40-foot pipe was a logistical problem; imagine putting a foot-long hot dog in an eight-inch bun: there will be substantial overhang. Regardless, the pipe still needed to get to Farmington. The solution was to remove the ends of gondola cars, load them with the 40-foot pipe and place an “Idler Flat Car” between each pipe gondola. Idler flats were created out of unneeded boxcars and stock cars, their sides and ends stripped down to the floor. The pipe would stick out past the end of the gondola car, over the couplers and partially into the idler flat behind. Another pipe-filled gondola could be coupled on the other end of the flat, also extending into space. The 40-foot pipes would swing out beyond the edge of the idler flats but it still allowed the train to make the sharp curves of Cumbres Pass: gondola-idler-gondola-idler. Later on, the D&RGW figured out that they could use fewer idler flats by letting the pipe overhang only one end of the gondola. That way the train consist became idler-gondola-gondola-idler-gondola-gondola-idler, etc. This cut down on the number of idler flats needed.

All told, miles of pipe traveled over the D&RGW. Occasionally used or rejected pipe would be hauled eastbound as well, along with other eastbound freight in its aging rolling stock. Unlike the past, the narrow gauge was carrying little in the way of San Juan mineral out-



Tank cars waiting to be filled at the Chama Oil Dock in 1938, not long after the Oil Dock was constructed and Gramps Oil Field began shipping over the Railroad.

Photo by John Barrenger. FCTS Collection, RD010-070



Jim Shaughnessy caught K-36 488 pulling—and K-36 484 pushing—the usual eight-car train of Frameless Tank Cars, five of them sporting the silver GRAMPS logo, up the 4% grade toward Cumbres, headed for Alamosa in August 1963.

Center for Railroad Photography & Art Collection. Used with permission.

put anymore; instead it was efficiently, if slowly, carrying a lot of San Juan oil, machinery, pipe and lumber. But by now the mid-20th century and the future was catching up with the narrow gauge line.

VI

1964 was a pivotal year for both the Gramps Field and the Railroad. Like the dwindling mining activity in Silverton, the oil drilling and production in the San Juan Basin



Ninety miles north from Chama, Gramps cars transfer their contents to the Oriental Refinery in Alamosa in July 1963, about a year before the fire that closed the plant.
Photo by John West. FCTS Collection, RD010-070



Two modified gondola cars carrying fifty-foot lengths of drill pipe are coupled astride D&RGW Idler Flat 6714 in Alamosa, July, 1956.
Photo by John Maxwell. FCTS Collection, RD059-017

had been declining throughout the early 1960s. Eastbound oil shipments from existing wells continued but the wells were pumping more brackish water than oil, typical for older wells. With the drilling activity waning, the freight shipments were waning as well.

With the decline of oil shipments, most of the Narrow Frame cars were decommissioned in February of 1963. Two Narrow Frame cars had already been sold to the D&RGW to become Water Tank Cars for Rotary Plows OM and OY in 1958. The



Tank Car 11008, along with others, awaits its fate at the Floyd W. Reed Co. in Estrella.
Photo by Stan Rhein. FCTS SR33-001

Frameless cars, however, remained in service: there was still oil to ship and the loaded cars weighed less than the Narrow Frame cars and were easier to haul up the 4% grade. Due to their design, they were also easier to unload at the refinery.

That all came to an end in September 1964 with a fire at the Oriental Refinery. It wasn't a major fire but with production down it was decided that the repair and reopening of the plant was not an economical option; many of the small refineries around the country like Oriental were closing as larger refineries produced more and varied oil products per barrel. In Alamosa, the refinery was permanently closed and dismantled. With roads much improved over the early days of the Gramps Field, oil could now be easily transported over paved highways to and from Farmington and beyond. It could be said that by hauling Gramps oil, the Railroad was in fact digging its own grave: much of the Gramps oil had a high asphalt content that was used to pave the highways throughout the region for motor carriers hauling non-railroad freight, livestock and lumber.

With no refinery in Alamosa and limited westbound freight the die was cast. In December 1964, for the first time since 1881, the D&RGW allowed the Cumbres Pass right-of-way to remain closed during the winter months. That and the refinery fire spelled the end for the Gramps tank car fleet. The Gramps Oil Field kept producing well into the 1990s but the Railroad was no longer shipping Gramps oil.

The remaining D&RGW freight traffic was hanging on, but barely. With the winter closure, if there was any freight it would just have to wait for spring. Longtime C&TS engineer Earl Knoob noted that, "The Chama engine logs for 1964 show a brisk business of two or three trains a week, keeping the rail shiny." But that would only have been when the line wasn't blocked with snow, and that wasn't enough to appease the bean-counters in Denver.

The Railroad also began retiring and scrapping rolling stock: aging box cars and stock cars were cut up in Alamosa and burned, leaving only

the metal parts to salvage. The remaining Frameless tank cars couldn't be burned so they were sold for resale, either whole or as scrap, to the Floyd W. Reed Co., a scrap yard and broker in Estrella, New Mexico, south of Alamosa, in May 1965. Several were sold to local San Luis Valley residents for fuel storage. Several others, with their ends and domes cut off, became culverts for county roads. The rest met the torch.

However, in Alaska, the need for the transport of refined gasoline had been booming. Sixteen of the decommissioned D&RGW Narrow Frame cars had been purchased by the White Pass & Yukon Railroad in October 1962 for use along their 110-mile line north out of Skagway.

By August 1967, the D&RGW was petitioning the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the entire line from Antonito to Durango; the Rio Grande wanted out of the narrow gauge business. There the Colorado-New Mexico story may have stopped but the tank car story did not.

In 1982, world metal prices plummeted, and after many Alaskan mines and oil operations closed, the White Pass & Yukon Railroad suspended freight operations. No longer in need of oil tank cars, several of the WP&Y Narrow Frame cars were scrapped: one was cut in half—lengthwise—for use as a trash incinerator. Eight of the cars, however, were still in serviceable condition along with a ninth car that had been damaged in an avalanche. All were in storage at Log Cabin Siding, near the White Pass Summit.

In 1988, seeing profits in the burgeoning tourist industry, the WP&Y reopened as a historic tourist passenger adventure between Skagway and White Pass Summit, a forty-mile roundtrip through the rugged Alaskan mountains, serving Alaskan visitors and the growing cruise ship industry with period passenger cars pulled by both steam and diesel locomotives. The nine tank cars, however, remained unused.

VII

Eighteen years earlier, a similar historic awakening had happened in the southwest and the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad was created between Antonito and Chama. Since its inception in 1970, and with an eye on its past, the Cumbres & Toltec has tried to maintain a fleet of rolling stock that represented the variety of cars that traveled over Cumbres Pass in the mid-20th century. Stock cars, boxcars, gondolas and a variety of MOW equipment and locomotives were sold to the C&TS by the Denver & Rio Grande Western when the States of Colorado and New Mexico purchased the 64-mile Railroad. But the D&RGW didn't own any tank cars; the Gramps cars and others were all leased from UTLX. With no tank cars on the Railroad, there was a "hole" in the C&TS historic roster.

Spencer Wilson and Vern Glover's 1980 publication, *The C&TS Historic Preservation Study*, noted that while a few Idler Flat Cars left over from the oil boom were still around, the oil tank cars were not. In the study, they referred to the tank cars as "missing" from the C&TS, though it was well known they were on the White Pass & Yukon line in Alaska.

In 1980, Dr. Wilson made inquiries to the White Pass & Yukon about the cars and, after the Railroad had

ceased freight operation, proposed selling the cars to the C&TS. The request went nowhere. Bill Lock, President of the Friends at the time, picked up the crusade in 1984. According to Lock, "Our hopes were dashed when the purchase price for the cars turned out to be unacceptably high." Lock opened negotiations a second time in 1987, this time through a railroad equipment broker, the consignee of all of the White Pass equipment. Once again the price was out of reach.



Damaged Narrow Frame Tank Car, WP&Y No. 51, languishes at Log Cabin Siding. It wasn't one of the cars Bill Lock contracted for the C&TS, but it shipped anyway. *Photo by Bill Lock*

Success finally came in November 1989 after then-Friends Director Dan Ranger introduced Bill Lock to Steve Hites, at the Tourist Railroad Association, Inc. Convention in Denver. At the time Hites was the Manager of Passenger Operations on the newly reopened WP&Y. Having grown up in southwest Colorado, he had seen these cars on the D&RGW. Hites was very motivated to help and was able to obtain a lower price for the tank cars: \$7,500 per car including the \$5,000 delivery cost to Vancouver, British Columbia, a 1,000 mile steamship journey down the coast of Alaska. From there to Chama, another 1,000 miles, the travel would need to be negotiated with three different railroads and several trucking companies.

In 1990, a grant request was made to the Union Tank Car Company. The grant gained no traction until Lock traveled to Chicago in June 1991 where he met personally with the UTLX officials. That visit resulted in a donation of \$22,500 for the purchase of three former UTLX cars from the WP&Y. Part of the agreement stipulated that the Friends would restore the cars to their original Union Tank Car lettering and display them in Chama and Antonito.

The Friends Board of Directors approved another \$7,500 for the purchase of a fourth car and arranged for its shipment. Charles Brown, a Friends member in Camden, Maine, donated an additional \$7,500 for the purchase of a fifth car. The fleet was growing! Friends volunteer Randy Worwag who also volunteered with the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, Colorado, worked with the Museum to purchase two additional cars for the Museum's collection at the Friends' "sticker price." In a final negotiation, Lock signed

a contract for the purchase of eight cars, the original seven plus an eighth car at a reduced price as part of a “package deal.” Now, all that remained was the not-so-simple task of getting eight Narrow Frame UTLX tank cars 2,000 miles from Alaska to Colorado.

VIII

The White Pass & Yukon was more than a railroad company. Throughout much of the 20th century, the White Pass Company provided transportation services throughout British Columbia and southern Alaska. Along with the Railroad, the White Pass Transportation Group included a steamship, motor freight and more. To get the tank cars from Skagway to North Vancouver, the MV Frank H. Brown, the White Pass Marine container ship that made bi-weekly trips from Skagway to North Vancouver, was assigned to the task.

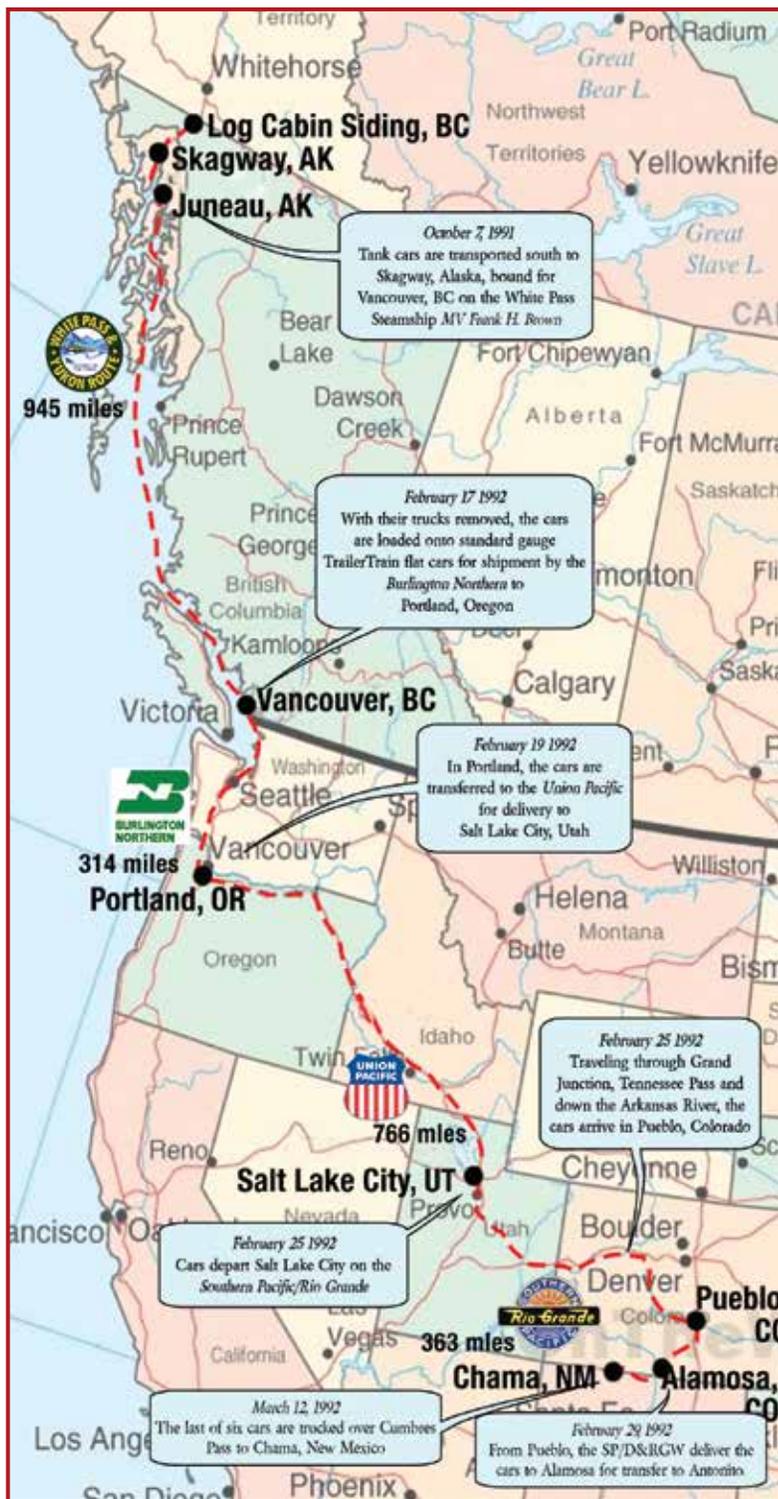


MV Frank H. Brown

Photo courtesy WP&Y

The eight cars were moved from storage at the Log Cabin Siding down to Skagway to be loaded on the *Frank H. Brown*, destination North Vancouver, a 1,000 mile journey south. From there, the tank cars were trucked six miles to South Vancouver and a pre-arranged connection with the Burlington Northern. The trucks were removed from each car and their trucks were strapped to TrailerTrain flat cars.

“Pre-arranged” makes it sound easy, but it took months of negotiations by Dr. Fred Knight, a Los Angeles dentist, a Friends Director and Chair of the Tank Car Committee, to coordinate the shipment. Dr. Knight spent countless hours with officials from the Burlington Northern, Union Pacific and the newly merged Southern Pacific-Denver & Rio Grande. The Burlington Northern would transport the eight tank cars three hundred miles south from Vancouver to Portland, Oregon, where they would be handed off to the Union Pacific. The UP carried the cars across nearly 800 miles of eastern Oregon, central Idaho and northern Utah to Salt Lake City, where they were coupled to a Southern Pacific-Rio Grande freight for shipment to Pueblo via Grand Junction and Tennessee Pass. At Pueblo, two cars were dropped off for delivery north to the Colorado Railroad Museum. The remaining six cars headed for Alamosa, arriving on the morning of February 27, 1992, more than two months since their farewell to southeast Alaska. On February 29th the cars were formally accepted by the C&TS and dedicated by Friends, Railroad officials and local dignitaries. The trucks were reunited with



It was a 2,000 mile journey with one steamship, three railroads and a number of highway trucks to bring the eight White Pass & Yukon tank cars back to the C&TS. *Map data by Janet Rupley, 1992.*

the cars and over the next four days, including a brief pause for a spring snowstorm, the six cars crossed Cumbres Pass to Chama. It didn't matter that they made the trip by flatbed truck, they were home at last! In the summer of 1992, work began on restoring the Chama Oil Dock.

In the years since, the six former White Pass cars have been stripped and painted, missing and modified parts found or recreated, and returned to their historic appearance with UTLX markings. Today, the cars are often spotted at the Oil Dock or in

Tank Car Numbering

The Narrow Frame tank cars were renumbered several times before they left the D&RGW. They were renumbered again by the WP&Y. Their historic UTLX-assigned numbering from prior to 1947 have been restored to the cars. These tank cars are currently at the C&TS and the CRRM.

Narrow Frame		Frameless	
WP&Y	UTLX pre-1947	C&TS	FROM
	Now on C&TS	11036 UTLX	Gibson
50	13084	11037 Gramps	Gibson
51	12739	11050 Gramps	Ashby
62	12962	11056 Gramps	Crowther
63	13168	Under restoration at CRRM	
64	12918	11045 Gramps	11058 UTLX
65	12757		
58	12770 sent to CRRM		
59	12976 sent to Georgetown Loop RR via CRRM		

Half cars: 11010 (Narrow Frame), 11054 (Frameless) are in Antonito, awaiting assembly into a single Frameless car

oil each. As oil output dwindled, eight of the Narrow Frame cars were sold to the WP&Y in 1962; another eight were purchased in 1963. The remaining Narrow Frame cars were scrapped in February 1963. The Frameless cars continued shipping to the refinery until the refinery fire and closure in 1964. In May 1965 the D&RGW's remaining twenty-three Frameless were sent to the scrap yard in Estrella.

Well, not quite: while no longer rolling stock, at least four of the Frameless cars dodged the scrapper's torch and remained in the San Luis Valley area. Two cars had been purchased by San Luis Valley resident Fred Gibson to store fuel for his trucking company. Gibson donated the cars to the Friends of the C&TS in October 2004. Numbered 11036 and 11037, they arrived in Antonito by flatbed truck, lacking trucks, brake rigging and other mechanical equipment. Over time, they have been sanded, painted and lettered, with period-accurate trucks and fittings installed, much of the work being done by the Friends' resident tank car wizards, Chris Trunk and Randy Worwag, along with a host of other Friends volunteers.

A third car, 11050, was purchased several years ago by the Friends from Lindsey Ashby, the former operator of the Georgetown Loop Railroad, as a cash sale. This car now sits in Antonito with restoration in progress.

A fourth car, Number 11056, was located on the Crowther property northeast of La Jara. Evan and Wilma Crowther bought the car around 1968 from the Estrella scrap yard to store diesel fuel for his trucking business in La Jara. According to their son, Blake Crowther, the family stopped using the tank around 1979, as they found it was too large for the quantity of diesel fuel they used. Friends member Dan Pyzel began negotiating with the Crowther family in 1996 with limited results.

Dan Pyzel learned of the tanker from Grant Houston who, with his father, would drive around the San Luis



Cars destined for Chama arrive in Alamosa, by way of the BN, UP, and the SP-D&RG. Photo by Bill Lock

period-specific freight charters on the Railroad.

IX

But there is still more to the story. The White Pass & Yukon cars were all of the "Narrow Frame" variety. What about the "Frameless" cars, many of which carried the GRAMPS logo?

The Frameless cars, deemed too fragile and unsafe by the mainline railroads, were largely forgotten until the Gramps oil began to flow. To ease the crunch, the D&RGW converted twenty-five of the cars to narrow gauge and put them into use. Gramps Oil added their bold, silver GRAMPS lettering on a number of them. The other Frameless cars remained simply "UTLX," though no less important. The fleet of tank cars crossed and recrossed the Cumbres Pass carrying about 6,500 gallons of Gramps



Dignitaries at the February 29 dedication included Joe Vigil, C&TS; Carl Turner, C&TS Commission; Lewis Entz, C&TS Commission; Bill Lock, President, Friends of the C&TS; Ron Phillips, D&RG Trainmaster; Steve Ketcham, Trainmaster and Dave Hopkins, both of the Burlington Northern; Charles Albi, Executive Director, Colorado Railroad Museum; and Randy Worwag, a volunteer at both the FC&TS and the CRRM. Not all the dignitaries mentioned are included in the photo. Photo by John Rupley

Frameless Cars return from San Luis Valley farms and ranches



On May 25, 2017, GRAMPS Car 11056 was retrieved from its thirty-year retirement at the Crowther farm. It arrived at the Ed Lawrence Car Restoration Facility in Antonito after a fifteen-mile trip from La Jara.



What a difference a few volunteers can make! Frameless Cars UTLX 11036 and GRAMPS 11037 were donated to the Friends by Fred Gibson in 2004. Chris Trunk says, “The tanks had been sitting in the weeds and restoring them seemed like a lost cause.” After he wrote an article about the Frameless cars for the Fall 2007 *Dispatch*, it was decided that the cars were worthy of restoration. Chris was asked to lead a team to restore the two cars. *Photos by Chris Trunk*

Valley searching for narrow gauge equipment after the abandonment of the Railroad. Chris Trunk had driven out to the Crowther property on many occasions to take photos and measurements of their tank as it is the most complete of all the GRAMPS cars, both in original equipment and lettering. Dan had been working on getting the car for over a dozen years or so, but had not been able to come to an agreement with the Crowther family. Friends member John Cole took over the negotiation:

About two years later, Dan passed the contact information on to me and over the course of another

two years, I was able to work out an agreement with the Crowthers. This, along with a generous donation of a Friends member, covered not only acquiring the car but also the transportation costs between the Crowther’s property and Antonito.... On May 25, 2017 the trucking company arrived at the Crowther’s and picked up the GRAMPS tank from its resting place of almost a half century. By 9:30 that morning, the GRAMPS car was not only at the Friends CRF building in Antonito, but sitting on trucks on home rails for the first time since the 1960s.

Additionally, there are two” half cars” in Antonito, the top half of Narrow Frame 11010, and the bottom half—including the undercarriage—of Frameless car 11054. A future restoration project will combine these components to recreate one additional Frameless car.

The days of shipping oil over Cumbres Pass have receded into history. Today, many of the tank cars that made that journey can often be found beside the Chama Oil Dock or as part of an historic consist crossing the pass. It has taken over thirty years to locate, acquire, ship and restore the eleven cars that now make up the C&TS’s no-longer “missing” tank car fleet. Those thirty years also include the foresight, perseverance, monetary support and volunteer time to bring the cars back to round out an accurate roster of rolling stock that was the D&RGW in the mid-20th century.

Epilogue

It can be easily be argued that without the Farmington oil boom, the Gramps oil, and the narrow gauge tank cars, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad would not exist today. When the Gramps Oil Field began in the late 1930s, the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression and the mining activity around the Silverton Mining District and the San Juan Mountains was almost grinding to a halt. Mining-related shipments over the San Juan Extension, the original reason for the rails over Cumbres Pass, were negligible. The D&RGW, focusing on profitable mainline service, was already tearing out money-losing standard and narrow gauge branches. Narrow gauge and “three-rail” were things from the past; standard gauge was the future. The “live-stock rush” trains that carried thousands of cattle and sheep from field to market were strictly seasonal. By the 1950s even much of that shipping had been converted to more convenient motor freight. Passenger service between Alamosa and Durango had ended in 1951. Tourists were discovering the Silverton branch, though it was something the D&RGW would have been just as happy to discontinue, despite its growing popularity. Beyond that, it looked as if the era of narrow gauge railroading in the San Juans was coming to a close.

For the Railroad, it was fortunate that the early 1950s corresponded with the return of oil and gas exploration in the San Juan Basin. After nearly twenty years, oil was still flowing from the Gramps Oil Field, shipped to the Alamosa refinery over the D&RGW. Shipping the crude



While it's not likely that the C&TS fleet of tank cars spotted near the Chama Oil Dock in 2016 will receive any Gramps oil any time soon, they are ready and waiting, nonetheless.

Photo by Chris James

oil and the associated freight and equipment supplies for the oil fields kept the narrow gauge line as busy as it had been in 1937. Machinery, drilling equipment, drilling mud and pipe, lumber and construction equipment took up the slack and kept the otherwise antique transportation system alive.

Still, by the early 1960s, like the mines in Silverton, the oil business was fading. Even if the Oriental refinery had not suffered a fire and shut down in 1964, the days of the narrow gauge probably were numbered. With better highways in place, the D&RGW probably would have probably looked at their bottom line and petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the San Juan Extension a decade or more earlier than September 1967.

If oil didn't continue crossing Cumbres Pass after 1964, some oil-related freight and a few surviving businesses and ranches that relied on the D&RGW kept the tracks in place and the trains running, albeit infrequently. But even this meager traffic kept the Railroad operating through the lean years of the late 1960s and the trains kept rolling.

By then, folks like Carl Turner, Governors David Cargo and John Love, Ernie Robart, Eddie Vigil, Terry Ross, and so many others had begun to recognize the future tourist and economic potential of the Railroad. Together, they pushed, pulled and cajoled two states' governments into saving the narrow gauge, the same 64 miles that the narrow gauge tank cars had traversed for nearly thirty years.

Without Gramps Oil, the drilling industry and the limited freight shipments to and from Farmington supporting the Railroad during its final years of Denver & Rio Grande Western ownership, the line from Chama to Antonito would almost certainly have gone the way of so many other D&RGW branches around Colorado and New Mexico. For that we can thank the small fleet of narrow gauge tank cars that helped keep the oil flowing and, as Earl Knoob said, "Kept the rails shiny."

We can also thank a host of individuals and organizations, past and present who make the delivery and restoration of the "missing" tank cars possible:

Thank you!

Dr. Spencer Wilson
Vernon J. Glover
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Carl Turner of the C&TS Commission
Montana Heritage Commission
Tim Tennant
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With apologies to anyone we have left out of the list!



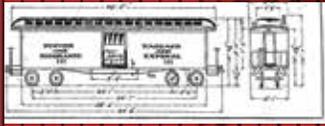
The following people and sources provided information, guidance and photographs for this article:

Bill Lock
Ticket to Toltec by Doris Osterwald, Third Edition, ©2013, Western Guideway, Ltd.
The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad: The Historic Preservation Study by Spencer Wilson and Vernon J. Glover, ©1980, University of New Mexico Press
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..and an extra special Thank You to **Randy Worwag** and **Chris Trunk** for their guidance, suggestions and (many) corrections. They know a heck of a lot more about narrow gauge tank cars than I ever will.

Thanks, guys, for keeping me honest. ~ *Chris James*





D&RG EXPRESS CAR 163 RESTORATION AT THE COLORADO SPRINGS WORK SITE, JANUARY-APRIL, 2013

A Bit of History: Express Car 163

by John Engs



Photo John Maxwell, July 1944. FCTS SR22-015

D&RGW Car 163 is a narrow gauge railroad express car, known as type “BE”—baggage express—car. This type of car came into use in the late 19th century to provide transfer of baggage for passengers and later express service. Constructed in 1883 by the D&RG, it was originally numbered 15. In December 1885, it was renumbered 163. Having gone through a number of modifications it continued to remain in regular passenger service. During the later years it ran as a part of the San Juan train consist between Alamosa and Durango, Colorado until San Juan service ended January 31, 1951.

The period of significance for the restoration of Baggage Express Car 163 is 1916. This coincides with other restored historic cars on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad and 1883 Locomotive 168.

After construction, this car underwent three major modifications and several interior changes. Originally the car had two coal oil lamps for

lighting and a coal stove for heat. In the early 1900s, passage doors were added to each end of the car to provide direct access to freight. In February of 1922, the D&RGW Salida shops lowered the car body, reinforced the underframe and added extension side bearings using the flying bolster concept. In November of 1936, the car went through a major upgrade with modifications including the addition of a DELCO electric light plant for train lighting. An air signaling system for the train was installed along with a steam heating which allowed removal of the coal oil lamps and coal heater.

Historical Significance

Denver & Rio Grande Western Express Baggage Car No. 163 was one of nineteen such cars of that series in service in 1886. It was also among the newest cars constructed in 1883. By 1942 most of the older baggage cars had been sold to National Railways of Mexico.

The car no longer had its original narrow gauge trucks or undercar mechanical equipment, as it was sold by the D&RGW in November of 1951 to Commercial Metals for salvage. During salvage, all steel under the car was cut off, leaving only a wooden car shell which was sold.

This wooden car body is currently at the Friends Colorado Springs Work Site undergoing historic restoration, an estimated five-to-seven year project.

During restoration, some interior and all exterior sheathing will be removed to permit work on the structural elements of the car.

When the restoration is complete, it will be returned to the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad and become part of the historic train set that includes D&RG Pullman Sleeper 470, built in 1889 and fully restored by the Friends volunteers at the Colorado Springs Work Site between 2009 and 2021.

Restoration of Express Car 163 Colorado Springs, January-April, 2023

Restoration began last year when the car shell was moved by truck to the Colorado Springs Work Site, located at the Pikes Peak Trolley Museum. During the fall of 2022, a structural vinyl shelter was erected over a metal frame to protect the car from the elements.

Active restoration began during the winter months, meeting every two weeks, and has continued through the spring of 2023.

By January and February, most of the rotten interior of the car had been ripped out and the floor removed to reveal the car sills and frame.

Photos and documentation by:

Don Atkinson
Glenn Butcher



The express car door was in bad shape and was removed, followed by the door hardware.



To begin repairs on the underside, the car needed to be leveled.



The rotted structural members were cut out for replacement.



The two end platforms were far beyond saving and were scrapped to prepare for leveling the car.



Damage wasn't limited to the side sills and interior. The underside along the intermediate sill showed considerable rot and damage.



As time went on, work moved to the exterior of the car. Here, time and the elements had done substantial damage that had to be removed.



Wood was ordered and delivered for the new side sills, including two lap joints to make up the 37+ foot sill lengths.



Connecting the structural members to the side sill requires many mortise and tenon joints. Craig McMullen is a master of that craft.



Participants in the January-April Colorado Springs Work Sessions included:

- Don Atkinson
- Mike Brabec
- Duncan Burdick
- Glenn Butcher
- John Caufield
- John Engs
- Robert Gee
- Steve Jorgensen
- John Kenney
- William Lowes
- Larry Marquess
- Craig McMullen
- Dean Myers
- Ronald Schaefer
- Christopher Thistlethwaite
- John Weed



ATTENTION PHOTOGRAPHERS!

Submissions Wanted for the 2025 Friends of the C&TS Calendar! Submission deadline is Nov. 30, 2023! Contact the Friends office for submission guidelines, available soon!



A Bit of Personal History: 1966

In as much as this is the “history” issue, your Editor thought he’d take up a couple of column-inches of the *C&TS Dispatch* for a brief history story of his own.

Back in 1966, I was a punk seventeen-year-old kid who was already crazy about trains, railroad history, Colorado narrow gauge, model railroads, well... *anything* railroad.

At the time I was regularly corresponding with Jackson (Jack) Thode, Mike Thode’s uncle, about the history of a tiny narrow gauge line that ran up Little Cottonwood Canyon to the mining camp of Alta, southeast of Salt Lake City. He invited me to attend the annual “Journey to Yesterday” sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, which ran annually from Alamosa to Silverton and back. I’d ridden the *Silverton* with my family six years earlier and was hooked on narrow gauge railroads, and I *really* wanted to go on that trip. But I was seventeen, I didn’t own a car, had very little money and, after much gnashing of teeth, decided I simply couldn’t do it. I thanked Jack for



the invitation, but no, it wasn’t going to happen this year.

The only thing I could do was to send a SASE letter that would travel with the train, get postmarked in Silverton and mailed back to me. If nothing else, maybe I could smell the coal smoke! “OK,” I said. “I’ll just go next year.”

But there wasn’t a “next year.” 1966 was the last year the D&RGW allowed excursions over the San Juan Extension.

Moral: Do it. Don’t wait. As time passes, there is no guarantee of a “next year.” ~ Chris James, *Editor*



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A Bit of Recent History: Restoration



Many hands make light work! Restoration of D&RGW Stock Car 5691 continued in 2020. The car is now complete and the stock car crew has moved on and begun restoration of car 5600. Photo by Dave Jenkins

"And the difference between preservation and restoration? Preservation is the care and maintenance of historic artifacts to stop them from falling apart. Restoration is what happens when they inevitably do." Ian Kelly