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**SPRING 2019**  
139th Edition

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**THE NEVADA STATE  
RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
An Agency of the Nevada  
Department of Tourism  
and Cultural Affairs



# SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

## Eureka & Palisade: Nevada's Bonanza Narrow Gauge

By Gregory J. Maxwell

### Eureka!

Situated at the center of the vast sage covered wilderness that was 19th century Nevada, Eureka was the Silver State's second city. What set this gritty mining camp apart was the nature of the metals mined from the "Base Range" hills west of town. Eureka's ore contained bonanza quantities of gold and silver, but was com-



E&P Number 4, the "Eureka," was the railroad's first passenger engine. Here the "Eureka," resplendent in all its Victorian grandeur, is pictured back in the engine's namesake town in 1992. Number 4 was restored by Daniel Markoff of Las Vegas, Nevada. Author's photo.

bined with large amounts of lead and iron. The only method of separation was through smelting. At its

zenith, Eureka was home to seven smelters, earning it the title,

*(Continued on page 4)*

## NSRM Commemorates Transcontinental 150th

By Adam Michalski

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. On May 10, 1869, the Union Pacific, building west from Omaha, and the Central Pacific, constructing east from Sacramento, met at Promontory, Utah. The historic "Wedding of the Rails" oc-

*(Continued on page 3)*



Kevin Owens re-enacts the driving of the Golden Spike on May 10, 2019, at the Nevada State Railroad Museum.

## VISIT THE MUSEUM

Open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday through Monday  
(closed Tuesday & Wednesday)

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

### Museum Admission:

Adults 18 & Over - \$8.00  
Children (Under 18) - FREE  
Museum Members - FREE

## STEAM TRAIN & MOTORCAR RIDES

Rides run every weekend May through September with select dates in October, November, and December.

The complete 2019 operating schedule is available at:  
[carsonrailroadmuseum.org](http://carsonrailroadmuseum.org)

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**Adam Michalski**, Curator of Education: Editor  
**Lara Brown**, Museum Store Manager: Designer

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2180 South Carson Street  
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## Message from the President of the Friends of the NSRM, Barry Simcoe

These are exciting times at the Museum. As I write this we are in the middle of our Fourth of July Celebration. Locomotives No. 25, the *Inyo*, the *Glenbrook*, and the McKeen Motorcar are operating this weekend. There are a couple of speeders from the West Coast Railroaders Group visiting, too. It is really a spectacular event. The weather has been great, the crowds have been large and excited and we have had a large group of volunteers to make this happen. This is what the Friends do and do well.

By now most of you have received a little yellow card in the mail from Dave Brambley regarding serving on the Friends' Board of Trustees. I encourage you to give this some thought. The Board really does work along with Museum Director, Daniel Thielen, to help set the course for the future of the Museum. Events like the one we are participating in now are a product of Board of Trustees input. Meetings are every other month, and I believe you will really enjoy the experience. We can use your help.

Once again I want to thank all of you for your help during the year. Have a great summer and continue to help the museum.

*Thanks,  
Barry*

**Note: FNSRM Board Meetings are scheduled for August 5 & October 7, 2019. All members of the Friends organization are encouraged to attend.**

## NSRM Commemorates Transcontinental 150th

(continued from page 1)

curred, which connected the East and the West. Freight and passengers could be hauled across the nation in a matter of days, as opposed to a matter of months by wagon or ship. The new railroad revolutionized travel in the United States.

To commemorate this historic occasion the Nevada State Railroad Museum organized a special celebration on May 10, 2019. Activities included: train rides behind Virginia & Truckee locomotive No. 25; hand car rides; a track laying demonstration; re-enactors from the Ne-

vada Civil War Volunteers; Samantha Szesciorka from *Sagebrush Rider Magazine* and her horse, Sage; a display from the Keck Museum; crafts with the Carson City Library; and a reenactment of the driving of the Golden Spike. Also, visitors had an opportunity to view the new exhibit commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. In addition, the museum's two wood-burners the *Inyo* and the *Glenbrook* were fired up for the day.

Students from various Nevada schools were invited to attend the celebration. Over 250 students and their chaperones attended from schools ranging from Silver Springs to Las Vegas. The students not only had an opportunity to view artifacts, but to interact with them. From the sounds of the steam whistles to the smells of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century wood-burners, it was a great way to introduce students to Nevada's history and heritage. 🚂



## NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM NIGHT PHOTO SHOOT

Join us for a Night Photo Shoot, November 16, 2019, led by Steve Barry, editor of *Railfan & Railroad* magazine, a life-long railroad enthusiast and author of *Railroads: The History of American Railroading in 500 Photographs*.

Participants will be able to photograph the McKeen Motorcar No. 22 built in 1910, Virginia & Truckee No. 25 Baldwin oil burner (pictured), and the wood-burning, 1875-built *Glenbrook*. There will be a mandatory safety briefing at 12:30 p.m. At 1:30 p.m. the photo shoot will start and continue throughout the evening. Sunset is estimated at 4:45 p.m.

Participants **MUST** bring the following:

- Sturdy shoes since you will be walking on uneven ground.
- Camera capable of being adjusted for long shutter speeds. Please have used and know the features of your camera before this event.
- Remote release or cable release for your camera.
- Please keep in mind any participant not adhering to the safety directions of official staff will be asked to leave the property and no refund will be given.



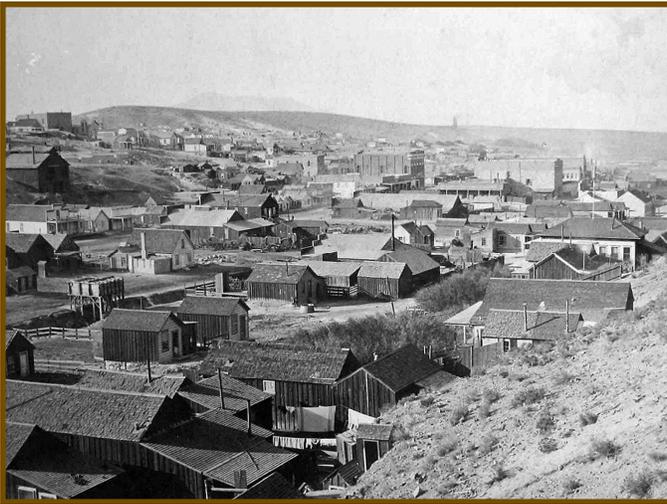
Safety is important at the NSRM.

The regular registration fee is \$150. Friends Members or Active/Retired Military receive a discounted registration fee of \$125. There is a 30 photographer limit, so register soon using the following link:

<https://www.nsrml-friends.org/photoshoot.html>

For more information, contact Adam Michalski, Curator of Education, at 775.687.6953 x.224 or email him at [amichalski@nevadaculture.org](mailto:amichalski@nevadaculture.org). 🚂

## Eureka & Palisade: Nevada's Bonanza Narrow Gauge *(continued from page 1)*



Studio photographer Louis Monaco exposed this image of Eureka sometime around 1880, when the camp was at the height of its wealth and prestige. In this view, looking north, Eureka's business district is clustered along Main Street (now Highway 50) with the Eureka County Courthouse at the center. One of Eureka's seven smelters, the Hoosac Works, is visible at upper left. Courtesy of Louise Sexton.

"Pittsburgh of the West." The product of Eureka's furnaces was a base-bullion that was composed mostly of lead. Recovering the gold and silver from the lead mixture required shipping the bullion, in the form of heavy "pigs," to the Selby refinery in San Francisco.

### The E&P

Transporting the hundreds of tons of base-bullion being produced at Eureka, by ox and mule teams, to railheads on the Central Pacific soon became an issue. A railroad was the only answer. After several false starts the Eureka & Palisade Railroad was organized on November

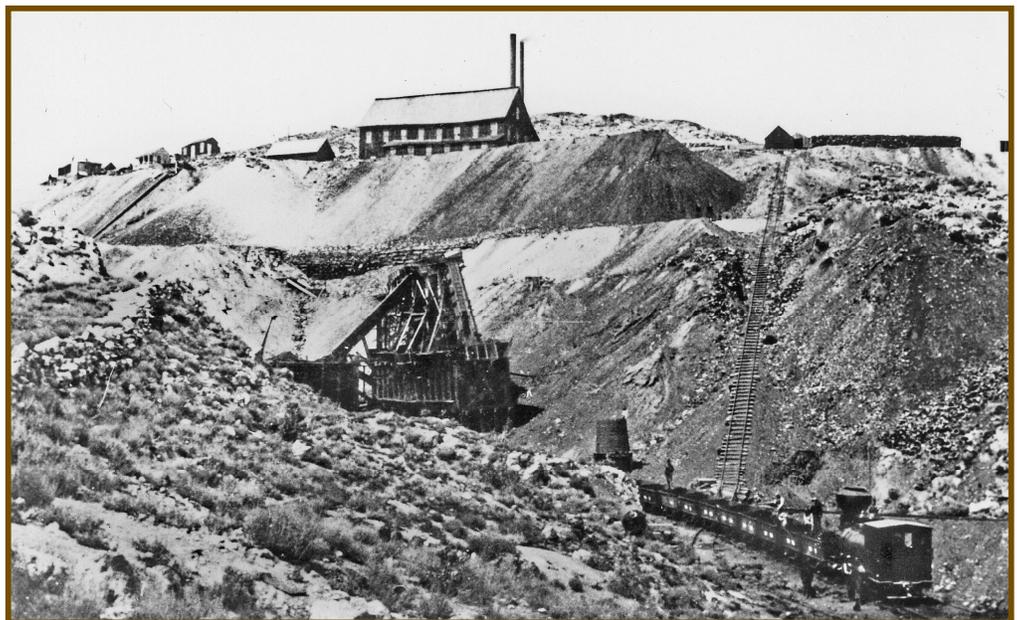
19, 1873. Ground was broken at Palisade Station on the CP two weeks later. Owing to the financial panic of 1873, the original directors of the railroad, all

local businessmen, quickly ran out of money. In April 1874 San Francisco banker Darius Mills took control of the project. By July, the first 20 miles of railroad were in operation. On Christmas Day 1874, construction

crews reached Alpha, 45 miles south of Palisade. Work on the E&P resumed in August 1875 and the tracks reached Eureka on October 22. The E&P enjoyed great financial success in its early years. In its first eight years of operation, the E&P rewarded D.O. Mills and his partners with dividends amounting to \$1,770,000.

### Up on Ruby Hill

While the E&P was



The Eureka Consolidated Mining Company's Lawton mine was situated high on the slope of Ruby Hill. The Ruby Hill Railroad's Number 2 is pushing a cut of ore cars under the ore bins at the base of the hill. Ore was conveyed to the bins from an adit intersecting the Lawton Shaft at its 50-foot level. The track running up the hill was an incline used to deliver car loads of cord wood and mine timbers to the hoisting works. Northeast Nevada Museum Collection.

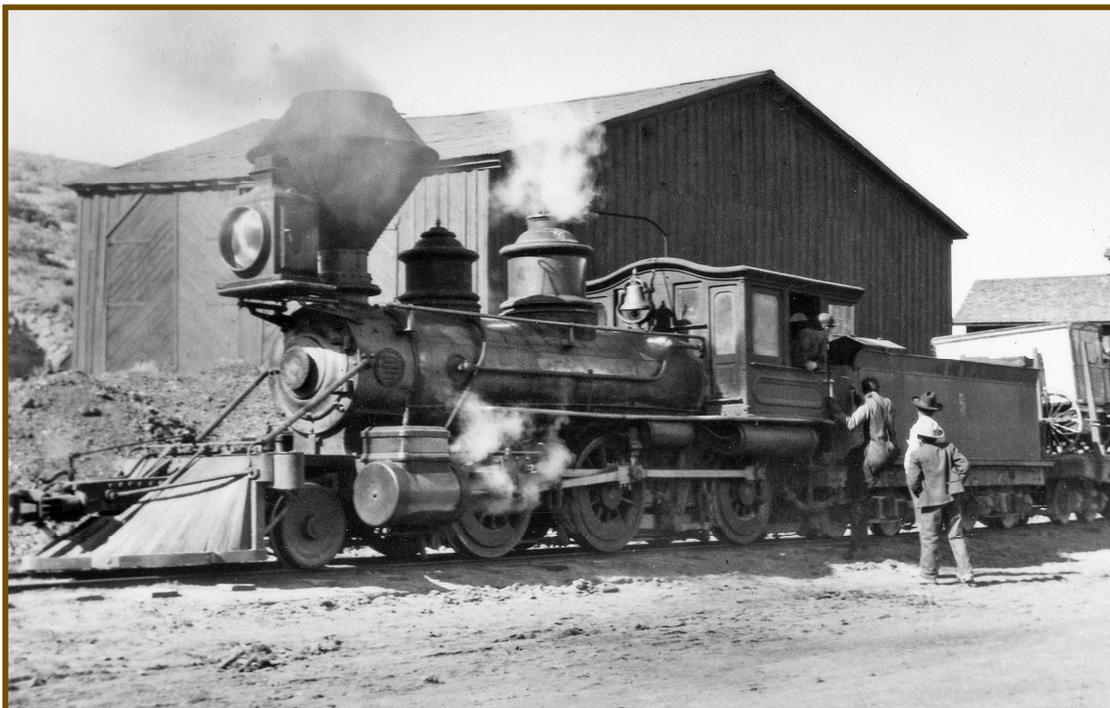
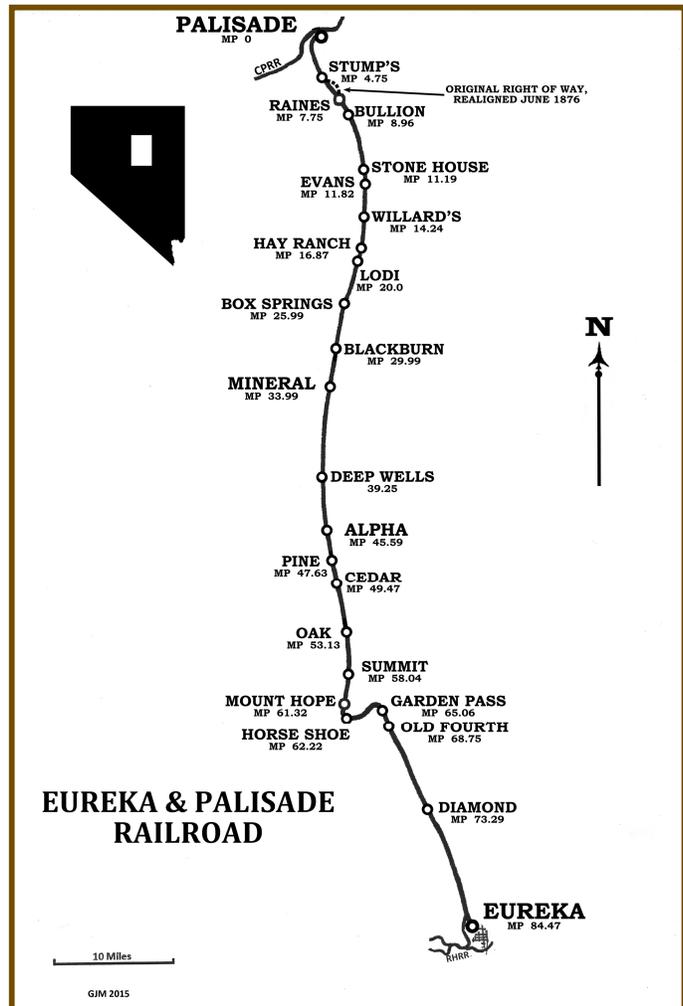
stalled at Alpha, Eureka's largest mining and smelting concern, the Eureka Consolidated Mining Company, was busy building its own narrow gauge railroad. The three-mile long railroad connected the company's mine on Ruby Hill with its furnaces at the north end of Eureka. The E&P purchased the mining company's rail line in 1876 and created a new company, the Ruby Hill Railroad, to carry on its operation. Over time, the RHRR built extensions to its track to serve other mines and smelters in the district. The E&P's Ruby Hill

line was also a huge financial success. Just in the years 1878-9, the RHRR paid out \$225,000 in dividends on an original investment of only \$150,000.

**After the Bonanza**

The Base Range's fortunes crested and began to recede after the mines under Ruby Hill became flooded in 1881. Eureka's smelting era came to an end when its last furnace went cold in 1891. After that, all of Eureka's ore traveled to smelters in the Salt Lake Valley for

*(Continued on page 6)*



*(Above) The route map of the Eureka & Palisade Railroad. (Left) The Eureka & Palisade's Number 3, the "Belmont," has just pulled into Eureka with the daily mixed train in November 1901. Both E&P Numbers 2 and 3, had the distinctive omnibus style cab roof. Louis Sexton Collection.*

## The E & P: Nevada's Bonanza Narrow Gauge *(continued from Page 5)*



The EN's second Number 10 does some switching at Alpha in May 1937. The well-worn Consolidation was purchased second-hand in 1927 from the Uintah Railway in Colorado. Gilbert Kneiss photo, courtesy of Guy Dunscomb.

reduction. The Ruby Hill Railroad was abandoned and its rails were taken up in 1894. Through the 1890s the E&P suffered a steady decline, greatly hastened by the Silver Crash of 1893. The E&P's revenue for 1894 was one tenth of what was earned in 1879. These hard times made it impossible for the E&P to pay the interest on its outstanding bonds. D.O. Mills, whose family held a majority of the railroad's bonds, decided in 1900 to put the E&P through the wringer and reorganize the company. The narrow gauge line emerged from receivership in 1902 as the *Eureka & Palisade Railway*.

Large scale mining returned to the Eureka early in the new century. In 1905 the United States Smelting and Refining Company acquired the mines on Ruby Hill to extract low-grade lead-iron ore for use as flux at its Midvale, Utah smelter. To accommodate this new traffic, the narrow gauge again went into debt to rebuild the track to Ruby Hill and to purchase heavy freight engines and self-clearing ore cars. For five years, heavily loaded ore trains departed Eureka daily. Unfortunately, the flux ore business was never profitable.

The E&P had discounted its freight rates on low-grade ore too deeply to earn any return on its considerable investment.

Catastrophe struck the narrow gauge in March 1910. A 100-year flood hit central Nevada, washing out miles of the E&P's track. This disaster overlapped with the death of the E&P's principal benefactor, D.O. Mills. Without Mills' personal support, money could not be raised to rebuild the railroad. In November 1910, the E&P again went into receivership. Minority stockholder, George Whittell Sr., joined with D.O. Mills' son and daughter in re-



*Eureka Nevada Railway Number 7 was one of several new Porter locomotives purchased while John Sexton ran the railroad. The trim little 2-6-2 had nice lines, but was said to be "slippery," and was not well-liked by crew or management. Fred Jukes photo, author's collection.*

deeming and rebuilding the narrow gauge. In May 1912 the railroad reopened as the *Eureka Nevada Railway*. For the next ten years, the EN was operated under lease by the Nevada Transportation Company and managed by the colorful John E. Sexton. Mining

in the Eureka District saw a major revival during, and immediately after, the First World War. This allowed the railroad to return to profitability. In the end, the Great Depression slowly strangled the life from the EN. Eureka's narrow gauge succumbed to abandonment on September 21, 1938.

*Gregory J. Maxwell will give a presentation at the museum on Monday, September 9, at 6:00pm regarding his new book, The Eureka & Palisade: The Biggest Little Railroad in the World. The presentation is free for Friends of NSRM members. The presentation is \$8 for non-members.* 🚂

## 2019 FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM CALL FOR CANDIDATES

One of the main goals of our organization is to provide financial assistance for various museum projects. Our Board of Directors has the task of determining which projects are funded and how our membership fees and donations are to be spent. It is essential for us to continue to support the museum in order to continue the activities the museum provides (i.e. steam train operation, motor car operations, visitations to various schools with our handcar, tour groups, etc.).

Besides project funding, we need volunteers to serve in many positions, including serving on the Board of Directors. Our 2019 election of officers is upcoming. No railroad experience is necessary. Meetings are held bi-monthly commencing in December. It can be a rewarding experience.

To apply, send a concise biography including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, occupation history, hobbies, and anything else you may deem useful to the railroad museum to:

David Brambley, Registrar, FNSRM  
2016 State Ln. , Big Bear City, CA 92314

or e-mail to: [VTRRLoco18@aol.com](mailto:VTRRLoco18@aol.com).

**Biographies must be received no later than August 10, 2019.**

Volunteering is fun. Tell your friends and neighbors. We hope you will consider running for a position on the board.

Thank you for supporting the Nevada State Railroad Museum!

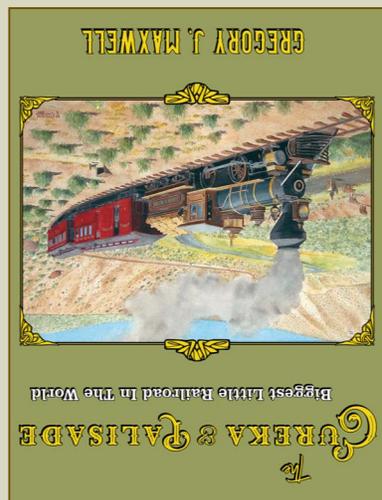
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