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A STATE APART.

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SUMMER 2017
132nd 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

New Motor Car Weekend Popular with Visitors

By Adam Michalski

It was a busy weekend at the museum on August 19 & 20. The museum held its first Motor Car Weekend. Each day from 10:00am to 4:00pm the museum operated both of its motor cars, the Virginia & Truckee No. 22, the McKeen Motor Car, and the Tucson, Cornelia, & Gila Bend No. 401, the Edwards Motor Car. Riders had the choice of riding either motor car during each run. Additionally, wristbands were available for purchase, which offered museum admission and



Visitors board the McKeen Motor Car during the first ever Motor Car Weekend at NSRM.

unlimited train rides throughout the day.

There were other surprises in store for the Motor Car Weekend, too.

Members of the Karson Kruzers held a "show and shine" at the museum on Saturday. This event included several classic cars from various owners on

(Continued on page 3)

NSRM's 40 and 8 Car

By Wendell Huffman

Visitors often come to the Nevada State Railroad Museum asking specifically to see a small wooden French boxcar that is generally hidden away in the recesses of the Annex. This particular car spent its service life on the Paris, Lyons & Mediterranean railroad, which runs between Paris and the south coast of France. While this car has nothing to do with Nevada railroad history, the story of how it got here is



Offloading the 40 and 8 Car.

(Continued on page 4)

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 - \$6.00
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 2017 operating schedule is available at:
carsonrailroadmuseum.org

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Address correspondence for the *Friends* to:
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NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
2180 South Carson Street
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Message from the President of the Friends of the NSRM, Barry Simcoe

It has been a great summer at the Museum so far and it will continue through the end of the year. We have an event in each month from September through December. These events will require help from as many volunteers as possible.

The Friends are a vital part of the museum operations. In addition to volunteer hours we provide financial assistance in several areas of the museum. The funds are primarily derived from dues, but also come from the many events we help with during the year. The disbursement of these funds is approved by the Board of Trustees following specified guidelines.

The Board of Trustees is elected by the membership and serves three-year terms. The Board elects the officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board and officers work closely with the Museum staff. Working with the staff helps determine the future direction of the Museum.

We have elections coming up this fall and do not have enough candidates to fill all the Board positions. Now is your chance to be directly involved in the future of the Friends and your Museum. We really do need new faces and ideas on the Board of Trustees. Please contact Dave Brambley at ytrrloco18@AOL.com or me at barrysimcoe@sbcglobal.net if you are interested. I believe you will gain some personal satisfaction, get a better understanding of the Friends and we sure can use you!

I want to thank all of you for all the effort you put into supporting our museum.

Please call me if you have any issues you would like to discuss.

BECOME A BOARD MEMBER!

Email: barrysimcoe@sbcglobal.net
Phone: (775) 379-1353

Thanks,
Barry

FNSRM Receives Generous Friendship Day Donation

During Labor Day weekend the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum received a generous donation of \$1,000 from the 2017 Friendship Day gathering of five local antique automobile clubs.

Eleven years ago Bill Ramsden and Al Abrahamson hosted a Horseless Carriage event at the ranch of Bill and Dorine Ramsden. To make it a memorable event they invited members of other car clubs. The event was well received by the attendees. The Horseless Carriage event became an annual gathering and the name was changed to "Friendship Day", which is a common name for similar events throughout the country.

The Horseless Carriage, the Antique Automobile Club of America, and the Inliners stepped up as sponsors for the first Friendship Day event at the Ramsden Ranch in May of 2008. Other sponsors appeared from the Sagebrush Studebaker Club and Packards International Nevada Region in following years.

During the heavy rains and flooding that caused damage at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, a few club members asked how they could help.

After discussions between members and officers of

the sponsoring clubs, and a conversation with Museum Director Daniel Thielen, a gift from Friendship Day to the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum became the obvious choice.

The donation honors the memory of Dorine Ramsden. Dorine, the enthusiastic co-host of Friendship Day with Bill Ramsden, passed away in July.



Officers from various Friendship Day sponsors present a check in the amount of \$1,000 to the FNSRM at the museum: (left to right) Dennis Bargman, Bill Ramsden, Al Abrahamson, FNSRM President Barry Simcoe, Museum Director Daniel Thielen, Curator Adam Michalski, and Gary Butrick.

Without their generosity Friendship Day would not occur.

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum wish to thank the members and sponsors of Friendship Day for their generous donation. The contribution will go a long way in supporting various programs and functions at the Nevada State Railroad Museum. 🚂

Motor Car Weekend (continued from page 1)

display. Also, the annual Jazz & Beyond Carson City Music Festival was in full swing during the weekend. Each day of the Motor Car Weekend featured a jazz concert in the depot. Colin Ross performed in the depot on Saturday afternoon. Colin's show featuring vintage jazz, blues, and Americana music was well received by those

in attendance. Dale Pouné, known for his skills on the guitar and mandolin, played to a large audience in the depot on Sunday afternoon.

The Motor Car Weekend was a new event for the museum. It was a great way for both the 401 and the McKean Motor Car to operate on the same weekend. Com-

bined with the concerts and the "show and shine" it could become a great addition to the Museum's lineup of special events. Also, thank you to the Jazz & Beyond Carson City Music Festival for providing the concerts and the Karson Kruzers for providing the cars for the "show and shine." 🚂

40 and 8 (continued from page 1)



Locomotive 26 delivers Nevada's 40 and 8 car from the Gratitude Train as spectators gather in front of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad Depot on Washington Street in Carson City, February 1949 (Daun Bohall Collection).

part of America's history, and it reminds us of the relationship between railroads and the military, and of the railroad's role in World War I. To make the car more accessible during this, the centennial of World War I, the car has recently been moved into the Jacobson Interpretive Center.

This car, filled with various gifts, was given to the people of Nevada in 1949 as an expression of the gratitude the French people felt for the outpouring of food donated to France the previous year. World War II had left France in

terrible condition, and there was considerable suffering as the country struggled to recover. Inspired by a suggestion made by newspaper columnist Drew Pearson, American citizens responded to this crisis in the winter of 1947-48 by contributing more than 700 boxcar-loads of food. Special "Friendship Trains" were run all across America, collecting these donations. Two boxcars were filled at Reno, when a Friendship Train paused there on November 10, 1947. The trains all gathered at New York, whence ships car-

ried the donations on to France. The French expressed their gratitude by sending a trainload of gifts to America in 1949. This train was called the "Merci" or "Gratitude Train". It consisted of 49 cars, one car for each of the 48 states, with Washington, D.C., and the Territory of Hawaii sharing the 49th car. Of these cars, 43 still exist. The Nevada State Railroad Museum's car is the one given to Nevada.

The ship carrying the French cars arrived at Jersey City on February 7, 1949, and the car destined

for Nevada reached Carson City on February 23rd. Each car of the Merci Train contained a variety of gifts. Though the French had little to give, they collected precious keepsakes to fill the cars. Among the gifts placed in the car destined for Nevada were hand-painted watercolor note cards, cradles, a wedding gown, a miniature Eiffel Tower, and a brass tobacconist scale. Over 200 gifts from Nevada's Merci car are currently cared for by the Nevada State Museum. The cars were all emblazoned with signs



Onlookers inspect the 40 and 8 car as it arrives at the Virginia & Truckee Railroad Depot on Washington Street in Carson City, February 1949 (Daun Bohall Collection).

reading “Gratitude Train” and “Merci Train”, and decorated with shields representing the various French provinces.

Nevada’s car is typical of the small four-wheel boxcars that served on European railroads in the 19th century. It bears a small un-dated builder’s plate from Chantiers de la Buire of Lyons. The car may date from the 1870s or 1880s—we can be sure it was old and of little practical value when it was sent to America. It has no brakes and has the peculiar style of buffers and couplers used in

Europe. Stenciled near the top of the doors is the caption “Homes 40 Chevaux (en long) 8”, which reveals its capacity in terms of men or horses, and it is from this that this particular class of car was called a “40 and 8” (though it was actually meant as 40 men or 8 horses).

The rating of the car in terms of men or horses capacity directs our attention to the fact that the car was very much a part of French military planning. Though railroads were not initially conceived as an adjunct

to military operations, the role played by railroads in the American Civil War soon changed that. Much of Abraham Lincoln’s drive to complete the American transcontinental railroad was to provide the ability to move troops rapidly across the country, and the price the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroad’s paid for their land grants was an agreement to move troops and material at reduced rates. (The first train to cross the country east-to-west carried a company of federal troops.)

European observers of the Civil War quickly incorporated railroad capacity into military planning, and railroads played a key role in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. The “40 and 8” cars came into their own during World War I, moving troops and supplies to the front. Indeed, the fixed nature of railroads, both French and German, did much to shape the character of the war, with well established and heavily defended battlefields.

(Continued on Next Page)

40 and 8 (continued from Page 5)

While railroads continued to play a significant role in World War II, airplanes and road transport resulted in more fluid lines of combat during that conflict.

While the Merci Train does not relate directly to either World War, American soldiers who served in Europe in both wars adopted the 40 and 8 box cars as a symbol of their service in the European theaters. La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux is a American veterans organization dating back to 1920, but World War II veterans are also closely associated with the cars. Nevada's car was restored by the Nevada State Railroad Museum in the fall of 2002 to honor Nevada's veterans of foreign wars.

Nevada's 40 and 8 car from the Merci Train has been in Carson City now for nearly seventy years, located either at the Nevada State Museum up town, or the Railroad Museum. Presently, plans are being developed to temporarily relocate the car to the Nevada State Railroad Museum, Boulder City, where it will be placed close



By 1998, when this photo was taken, the 40 and 8 car fell into a state of disrepair after being left outside in the elements for years (above). NSRM's shop restored the 40 and 8 car to honor Nevada veterans of foreign wars thanks to a generous donation in 2002 (below).



to the Nevada Veterans' Home and shared with southern Nevada residents and visitors. It is expected that the car will remain in

the Jacobsen Interpretive Center until it is moved south, giving visitors the opportunity to examine the car closely before its move. 🚂

Harvest Train Arrives Again at NSRM



Autumn is just around the corner and that means the Nevada State Railroad Museum's third annual Harvest Train celebration is approaching fast. Harvest Train occurs during the weekends of October 14-15 and 21-22. The

event will feature craft vendors in the depot, a pumpkin patch, steam train rides, food trucks and other surprises. Special event wristbands featuring unlimited steam train rides and museum admission will be avail-

able for purchase. Wristbands are \$15 for adults; \$10 for FNSRM members; \$5 for children ages 4 to 17; and FREE for children ages 3 and under. Regular admission and train ride pricing will be available for purchase, as well.

Not only is Harvest Train a fun event for the entire community, but it is also an opportunity for FNSRM members to contribute to an exciting museum program. The museum is seeking vendors and food trucks, as well as donations of pumpkins or decorations for Harvest Train. If you are interested in becoming a vendor or making a donation for Harvest Train please contact Adam at amichalski@nevadaculture.org or (775) 687-6953 x224. 🚂



A Message from the Museum Director

By *Daniel Thielen*

This has been a fantastic summer. The museum is fully operational and exciting things are taking place. The Museum Store is having a terrific year and our store manager, Lara Brown, keeps bringing in the most wonderful items. Please stop by and have a look the next time you visit the Museum. Christmas is right around the corner and the Museum is a great place to shop.

The Museum partnered with Make-a-Wish and granted a wish to a young man. My heartfelt gratitude is given to the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Mu-

seum and especially Bill Kohler for providing this important service to the community.

The 40:8 Car, part of the *Merci Train*, is currently on display in the Jacobsen Interpretive Center. Sometime in October, the car will be transferred to the Boulder City facility for display. It will remain in Southern Nevada for two years. If you want to have a look at this amazing car, please stop by and visit.

Harvest Train and Santa Train will round-out the end of this operating season. The lighting is perfect and the air is crisp so the



Dan Thielen, Museum Director

time is right for photographing historic equipment. Autumn is a great time at the Museum! 🚂

MUSEUM STORE HIGHLIGHTS

Own a Piece of History...

ORIGINAL RIVET FROM THE
LOCOMOTIVE GLENBROOK
\$25.00 EACH

Certified original rivets from the locomotive Glenbrook, built in 1875 by Baldwin Locomotive Works.

Following a thirty-two year restoration effort by the Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, Glenbrook was unveiled to the public on May 23rd, 2015.

38 rivets were saved during the restoration project.

Call to get yours today!
775/687-6953

Friends of the NSRM Members receive 15% off of every purchase!
(Excludes clearance and used items)



Come find your hidden treasure today!
GREAT DEALS! \$5 - \$15

The museum is very grateful for all of the donations we receive. Many of these donations are books from railroad fans' collections. After due process, we are able to offer these books for sale in the museum store.

*Used Railroad Book
Blowout!*



Proceeds from Donations and Museum Store sales are used to fund museum projects and programs.
Thank you for supporting the Nevada State Railroad Museum!

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