



# C&TS DISPATCH

VOLUME 30 NO. 1  
SPRING 2017

**Cumbres Pass: 1879, 1951 and 2016**  
**Definitions in Preservation** *by Keith Hayes*  
**Drop Bottom Gondolas** *by Bill Pratt*  
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***Plus: The 2017 Restoration Work Sessions are coming. Register NOW!***



# C&TS DISPATCH

*Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec  
Scenic Railroad, Inc.*

William Lock, Founder-1988

Vol. 30, No. 1  Spring, 2017

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## C&TS DISPATCH

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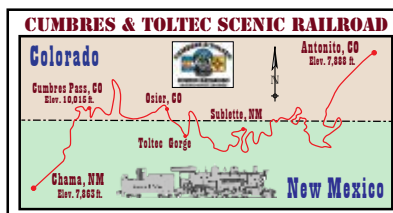
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The *C&TS Dispatch* is published four times each year by *The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Inc.*, a New Mexico nonprofit corporation. The Friends is the official museum arm for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a 64 mile-long operating railroad and museum of railroad history and technology 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 Association of Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums (ATRRM). 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.

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Denver & Rio Grande Railway: 1880-1886  
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad: 1886-1921  
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**The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is both a  
National Historic Landmark and a  
State Registered Historic Site.**

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## President's FORUM



### Making Your Plans for 2017

As I'm sitting here to compose my first column of the year, the calendar indicates that it's Ground Hog Day so the question is, will Punxsutawney Phil see his shadow? Well according to the Associated Press accounts he did, so...six more weeks of winter! Somehow visions of poor Bill Murray reliving February 2<sup>nd</sup> over and over come to mind.

I know as you all actually read this issue of the Dispatch, spring will be upon us or close at hand. When spring has sprung, we know that summer will not be far behind. Time just seems to move that quickly now.

Some of you may have already made your summer and autumn travel plans while others might be contemplating what to do and where to go. As always, you have many opportunities to consider. Maybe a trip to Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico is in the cards.

As has been the case over the past few years, the Friends have seven week-long work sessions available starting mid-May and ending in late September. These provide an excellent opportunity to come to Antonito or Chama and volunteer with a great bunch of Friends members. These are always rewarding and fun events, and provide the ability to

soak up the history that surrounds the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Over the last couple years we have had a number of first-time participants. Maybe this is the year you make that trek and join us!

Now, if you are looking for a great vacation and haven't ridden the Cumbres & Toltec in a while then consider a ride this year. In fact, it's a great suggestion for family or friends as well... bring them along! Whether you are looking for a summer get-away to the cool air of the San Juan Mountains or a fall color journey, make your plans now. You'll be glad you came back and your friends will be in awe of the majestic scenery that surrounds the railroad if it is their first time.

If one of the C&TS regularly scheduled trips is not what you are looking for or you have done it several times, then circle Friday August 4<sup>th</sup> on the calendar as the Friends operate the annual Moonlight and Wine Tasting Train. Enjoy an evening of riding through the San Juans from Chama to Osier and return. Take in some wine tasting, featuring a regional winery, and enjoy a prime rib and cod dinner at Osier. Return under the illumination of a full moon! If you're lucky, you may see a herd of elk or a black bear along the way. This is a relaxing and romantic way to spend a summer evening.

For those who are serious photographers and love the history of the D&RGW narrow gauge system, we have your cup of tea. Two photo freight charters are planned during the course of the year. Please note the information about these charters as you read further through the newsletter. A D&RGW Locomotive charter will operate on June 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> which immediately follows our work session "B." This charter will originate out of Antonito with a special fare for Friends members. Then on September



### On the Cover:

The Cumbres depot is framed by the eastern leg of the Cumbres Snowshed and Wye in this undated photo from the Friends of the C&TS *Dorman Collection* (RD013-044). The wye is still there but both the depot and that portion of the snowshed are gone.



4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Denver, the Friends and railroad will partner on a re-creation of Rio Grande Southern Locomotive 455 using K27 #463!

As you can see there is a multitude of events across the board during the year that hopefully will entice you to journey to Colorado or New Mexico. There's a lot to do and you can't beat the scenery and people.

*Tim Tennant*



## Membership Dues Increase

At the October Board Meeting in Alamosa, the Friends Board of Directors approved a slight increase in our basic membership dues structure. Effective January 1, 2017, the new basic annual membership fee will be \$35-Domestic Membership and \$50-International Membership. This is an increase from the current \$30-Domestic and \$40-International. We have not increased our basic dues in approximately ten years. This increase will help offset rising operating and restoration costs. We appreciate everyone's continued support and understanding for this increase.

*Tim Tennant*

## SANTA & MRS. CLAUS VISIT THE C&TS CHRISTMAS TRAIN!

Santa, Mrs. Claus and a number of Selves took time off from the North Pole to pay a visit to Antonito and Chama over two weekends in mid-December. Brad "Santa" Lounsbury and Becky "Mrs. Claus" Falk made a list, checked it twice (both naughty and nice; it really didn't matter) and entertained many youngsters and collected Toys for Tots and food for the Chama and Antonito Food Banks.

Weather in Antonito was rather un-Christmas-like but the following weekend made up for it with a genuine North Pole storm. But that didn't stop fun—or the train. And who needs a toy train around the Christmas tree when you have a real one to ride through real Christmas snow!

Thanks to all who made it happen!



Photo: Don Atkinson



Photo: Joe Kanocz



Peter and Cal Smith at the Friends' table at the Amherst Railway Society Show

## The Friends on Display in Massachusetts!

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad was well represented at this year's *Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show* in Springfield, Massachusetts on January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

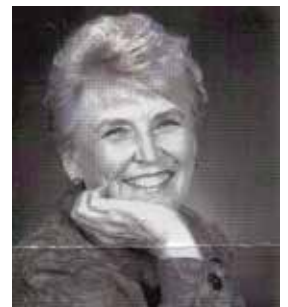
Friends members *Peter* and *Cal Smith*, along with *Ken Brink* and *Chuck Moore*, hosted the display, handing out brochures and membership applications, showing our terrific videos and talking up narrow gauge railroading to the many attendees.

The show is the largest event in the country featuring model trains, but it also highlights historic railroads and railroad museums.

If you would like to host the Friends' display at a show near you, contact Tim at the Friends office at 505-880-1311.

## In Memoriam

*Louise Alice Mattson* passed away on December 5, 2016, in Fountain Hills, Arizona following a more than six-year battle with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF). Along with her husband, George Mattson, she was an active member of the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad for many years and participated in many summer work sessions as well as activities in the Scottsdale Presbyterian Church, where she held positions as both Elder and Deacon. She is survived by her husband George, two sons and two grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Scottsdale Presbyterian Church, [CaringVoiceCoalition.com](http://CaringVoiceCoalition.com), or Hospice of the Valley, Scottsdale.





## **FRIENDS' TEAM LEADER APPRECIATION PROGRAM RETURNS FOR 2017!**



Through cooperative efforts between the C&TS and Friends, an incentive program for Team Leaders is again being offered. This appreciation program is based on the number of work-session weeks a Friends member serves as a Team Leader throughout the 2017 Friends work-session season. The reward will be one or more complimentary coach tickets on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

When a Friends member volunteers to be a Team Leader for a **minimum of two (2) weeks during the season**, that individual will receive one (1) complimentary coach fare ticket.

When a Friends member volunteers to be a Team Leader for a **minimum of four (4) weeks during the season**, that individual will receive two (2) complimentary coach fare tickets.

When a Friends member volunteers to be a Team Leader for a **minimum of six (6) weeks during the season**, that individual will receive a complimentary "season pass."

**Complimentary tickets and season passes must be used during the 2017 season.**

Recognition of the Team Leaders' accomplishments on the many projects that help preserve the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad also supports the Friends mission of "preserving the railroad's historic assets... and interpreting the railroad to the general public." This well-deserved recognition has been a long time coming. Knowing that Team Leaders have limited time to spend on the railroad, those earning a "comp" ticket will have the opportunity to utilize them anytime during the season. There are railroad guidelines that apply to the use of coach tickets. Plan to make your reservation when you arrive or earlier if you wish. With this reward, we hope to encourage more members to step forward and accept the challenges of becoming a Team Leader. It is not too late for you to become a Team Leader during the 2017 work session season.

Prior to opening day, the Projects Committee will post an eligibility list with the railroad. If you have committed to be a Team Leader for the required number of weeks, your name will be on that list. The railroad coordinator is Roberta Martinez.

To discuss the opportunities of becoming a Team Leader, contact John Engs (e-mail: [jengs@cumbrestoltec.org](mailto:jengs@cumbrestoltec.org) or phone: 719-499-1228) or Don Atkinson (e-mail: [atk3985@comcast.net](mailto:atk3985@comcast.net) or phone: 757-846-8241).



**Join or renew your membership to the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. online!**

<https://www.cumbrestoltec.org/online-store/donations-all/membership-join-or-renew.html>





## Friends of the C&TS *TIMETABLE*

The *Timetable* showcases upcoming events for  
*Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.*

(Note: For events sponsored by the railroad along with C&TS schedules and fares, visit:  
<http://cumbrestoltec.com> or call the railroad at 1.888.286.2737)



### **FRIENDS' C&TS RESTORATION WORK SESSIONS, 2017**

**Five-day restoration sessions:** Friends members work in Chama, New Mexico, and Antonito, Colorado, along the C&TS's right-of-way, and in Colorado Springs with the restoration, preservation and interpretation of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, an official *National Historic Landmark* and a *Registered State Historic Site* for Colorado and New Mexico.

**Session A—May 22-26; Session B—May 29-June 2; Session C—June 19-23**  
**Session D—June 26-30; Session E—July 24-28; Session F—July 31-August 4**  
**Session G—Sept. 25-29**

Visit the Friends' website at <https://www.cumbrestoltec.org/volunteer.html> for more information.

**Coach Restoration (Colorado Springs shop)—Monthly on 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Saturdays**

Visit the Friends' Colorado Springs website at <http://friendsofthechrsrrcos.blogspot.com> for more information.

### **OVER 100 PROJECTS TO CHOOSE FROM (WE NEED TEAM LEADERS, TOO!)**

**Support services of all description:**

Food Preparation  
Chronicling Photos and Notes  
Tool, Bolt and Paint Car Operation  
Carpentry Shop...and more!

**Antonito, New Mexico:**

Landscaping  
Maintenance of Antonito Entrance Sign  
Car Painting  
Car Lettering  
Restore Long Stock Car 5995  
Restore UTLX Tank Cars 11036, 11037  
Restore UTLX Tank Car 11050  
Construct Period Trucks for Pass. Cars  
Cosmetic Restoration of Box Car 3159  
Cosmetic Restoration of Stock Car 5774  
Rebuild Drop Bottom Gondola 878  
Maintenance/Repair Flat Car 6601  
Remove and Install Freight Car Trucks  
Backing Plates, 3 Drop Bottom Gons  
Complete Concession Car 3244  
Major Repairs, Caboose 0306  
Replace Train Line Air Brakes  
Build Storage "Lean-To" at CRF  
Repair and Maint. of RGS Caboose 0400  
Install 40-foot Wood Container at CRF

**Lava, New Mexico:**

Restore Lava Pump House Masonry

**Osier, Colorado:**

Replace Old Flag Poles  
Install Historic Signage

**Cumbres, Colorado:**

Restoration of Car Inspector's House  
Repair of Cumbres Section House

**Chama, New Mexico:**

Landscaping  
Car Painting  
Car Lettering  
Caboose Roof Maintenance  
Rider Mower at Stock Pens  
Stock Pen Repairs  
Coal Tipple Operational Equipment  
Restore Locomotive 484 for Display  
Rebuild Idler Flat Car 1515  
Survey Shop Trailer for Repairs  
Restore GRAMPS Oil Rack  
Restoration of Wheel & Tie Car 60692  
Restoration of Water Service Car 04904  
Restore Jordan Spreader  
Repair Roof Leaks, Kitchen Car 3591  
Repaint RPO 54 to Correct Color  
Repair Box Car 3073

Repair Stairs Between Hiway 17 & Depot

Restore Chama Sand House

Repair Sheep Car 5674

Rebuild Box Car Coach back to 3537

Rebuild MOW Bunk Car 04258

Repair/Maint. Rider Gondola 6205

**Along the C&TS Right-of-Way**

Trimming Wild Growth along track

Wood Preservative Treatment

Maint./Upkeep of Railroad Signage

Future Project Survey and Discovery

**Special Session, Chama and Antonito CRF,**

**May 17-19:**

Food Preparation

Restore Stock Car 5995

Chama Stock Pen Repairs

Extend Concrete Pads at CRF

Repair Stairs Between Hiway 17 & Depot

Install 40-foot Wood Container at CRF

**Colorado Springs, Colorado Site (all year)**

Restoration of MOW 0252 to Tourist

Sleeper Car 470.

...and more!

See the full list and schedule at [http://fctsfido.org/FIDO/proj\\_sched.php?public](http://fctsfido.org/FIDO/proj_sched.php?public)

Friends with any skill are encouraged to attend and all skill levels are welcome! There's something for everyone!

Registration opened on February 1, 2017! Register now!

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH MORE 2017 EVENTS!**

**Locomotive 315 Photo Charter—June 3 & 4, 2017**

**Moonlight and Wine Tasting Train—Friday, August 4, 2017**

**Fall Photo Charter—September 4, 5 & 6, 2017**



# DEFINITIONS IN PRESERVATION

Keith E. Hayes, AIA

*This article was originally published in the Fall, 1995 issue of the C&TS Dispatch. It is presented here as a refresher course in the vocabulary of historic preservation and restoration for the upcoming 2017 restoration season.*

If you attended any work sessions, you received a list of preservation principles with your registration materials in the form of a condensed version of the Secretary of the Interior's *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. The guidelines mention steps in the preservation process including protection, maintenance, repair, replication, alterations, and additions. Also used and implied are some specific terms: preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation. I often see these words used interchangeably when, in fact, each refers to a *specific aspect* of preservation. Even in preservation circles, these words may be confused as an author becomes careless or presumes to write for an audience well-schooled in the field.

For my definitions, I turned to a standard text on architectural preservation, *Historic Preservation* by James Marston Fitch, (McGraw Hill, 1982). Check your local library for this book if you would like more information. While the definitions are slanted towards buildings, I think they apply to boxcars as well, as boxcars are just little buildings that move! Also, keep a dictionary handy for some of the lingo-istic words that follow.



Photo: Ed Lowrance, 2016

**Rehabilitation**, broadly defined, means to restore to an operable or sound condition. Locomotive 463 was rehabilitated.

**Preservation** implies the maintenance of an object in the same physical condition as when it was received by the curatorial agency. Nothing is neither added to nor subtracted from the aesthetic corpus of the artifact. Any intervention necessary to preserve its physical integrity (protection against fire, theft or intrusion, heating, cooling, lighting) are to be cosmetically unobtrusive. Several years ago, the Friends performed minor maintenance on Derrick OP to preserve its physical condition.

**Restoration** describes the process of returning the artifact to the physical condition in which it would have been at some previous stage of its morphological development. The buildings at Sublette, New Mexico have been repainted in a color scheme representative of the D&RGW paint scheme used during the period of abandonment.


**Conservation** and **consolidation** involve physical intervention in the actual fabric of the object to ensure its continued structural integrity. For several years now, a crew has been hard at work on 30-foot refrigerator car 55. Each summer the group carefully disassembles part of the car, investigates the extent of damage and meticulously crafts new wood replacement parts in a 'railroad-like' manner. [Conservation of Refrigerator Car 55 has now been completed. -Ed.]

While a **prototype** is an original form that serves as a basis on which later stages are based or judged. A **replica** is a copy or reproduction. A **facsimile** is an exact copy or reproduction. No two objects on the Cumbres and Toltec are quite the same and D&RGW cabooses are typical. Caboose 0503 can be considered a prototype on which caboose replica 0306 is based. Caboose 0306 is not a facsimile of 0503. However, 0306 is much more comfortable!

**Adaptive use** involves saving a structure by adapting it to the needs of the new tenants. Many boxcars were adapted into passenger cars in the early history of the Cumbres and Toltec.

**Reconstruction** describes the re-creation of vanished buildings on their original site. Rebuilding the snow shed at Cumbres is one example.

I hope this helps to clarify some often-confusing terms. You can see from the examples that the Friends have embarked on a wide range of preservation and rehabilitation projects, and often the projects encompass several definitions. Inherent in every project is a series of decisions about the condition of the existing materials and how best to maintain and preserve them.

 **Keith Hayes** is an architect practicing in Colorado and about ten other states (mostly those starting with 'N' and 'O'). He has been a Friends member since 1993 or thereabouts. He coauthored the National Historic Landmark nomination and is currently hard at work at a recreation of 1930s Leadville in Sn3.



Editor's Note: *Cumbres Pass has always been a focal point on both the San Juan Extension of the D&RG and the Cumbres & Toltec. Thus, it seemed fitting to offer three Cumbres articles from three different eras, 1879, 1951 and 2016 in one issue of The Dispatch. As I was assembling this issue, I found the photo of the Cumbres depot, as framed by the snowshed, in the Friends of the C&TS Dorman Collection. I felt it would make a perfect cover photo. Thus the central topic for the Spring 2017 of The Dispatch was sealed.*

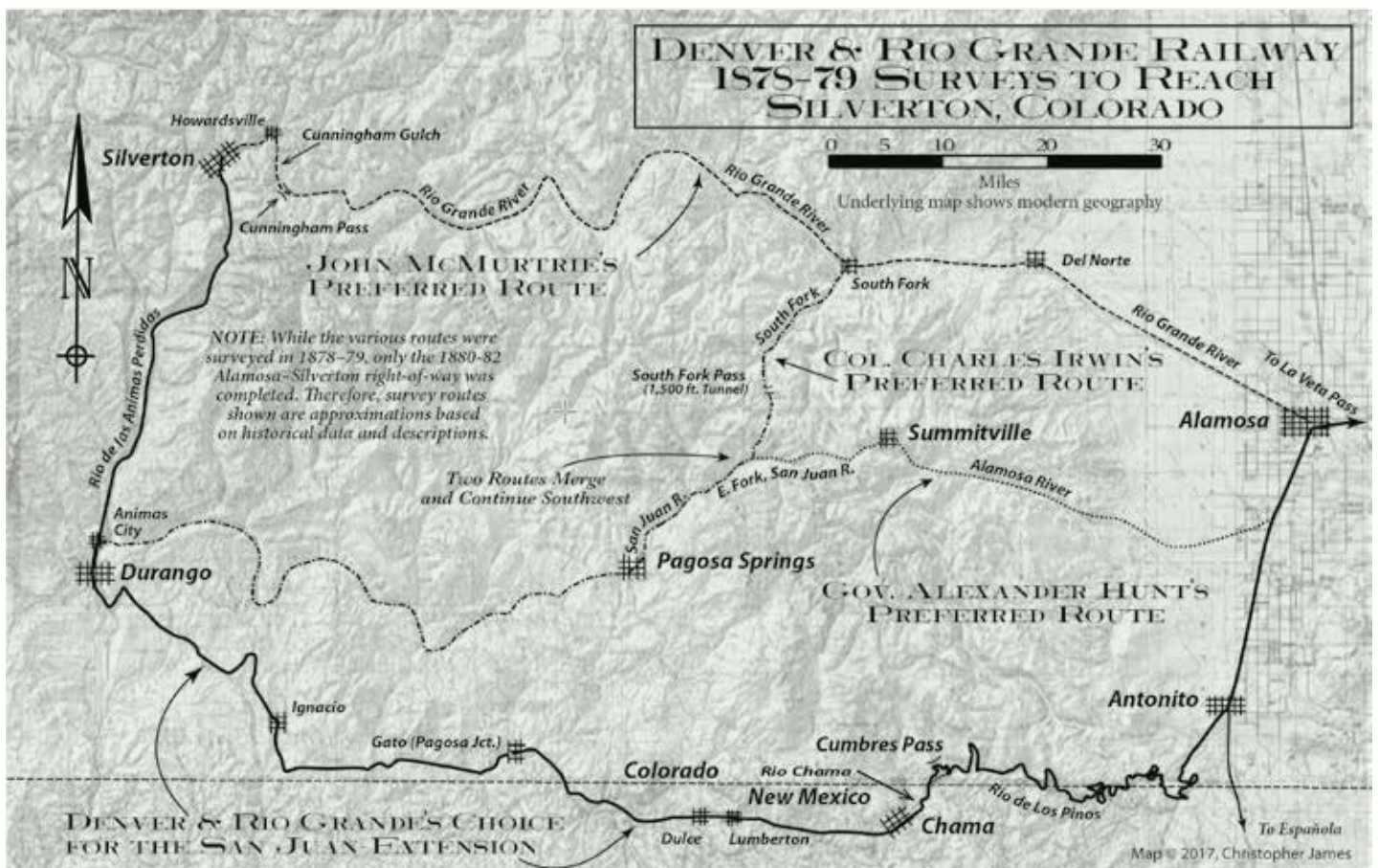
# Cumbres Pass: The “Impracticable” Route

## The 1879 Denver & Rio Grande Railway Surveys to Reach Silverton

By Christopher James

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad—and by logical extension The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad—owes its 21<sup>st</sup> century existence to a time in the late 1870s when the Denver & Rio Grande Railway and its chief engineer, John McMurtrie, were trying to find a suitable route into the mining districts above Silverton, Colorado. McMurtrie and his engineering corps surveyed a number of possible ways to cross the Continental Divide west of Alamosa. His survey recommendations, however, were bypassed and the railroad chose Cumbres Pass as their final selection, a totally unexpected route through difficult terrain that lacked even a preliminary survey. If the survey actively promoted by John McMurtrie, or one of the several other routes considered by the D&RG’s engineering corps and some of the railroad’s senior management been chosen for final construction, it’s unlikely that any portion of the D&RG’s San Juan Extension, including the C&TS and the Durango & Silverton, would exist today.

In 1875, General William Jackson Palmer was pushing deeper into southern Colorado, pursuing his dream of reaching El Paso and Mexico City. His initial goal was Santa Fe, entering the town from the east through northern New Mexico via Raton Pass. The following year, he opened a second front by letting contracts to build into the San Luis Valley by way of 9,423-foot La Veta Pass. This second route would allow the railroad to build into Santa Fe from the north via the Rio Grande River valley. It would also allow the D&RG to build toward the San Juan Mountains and the rich silver mines near Silverton, adding much-needed wealth to the Rio Grande’s coffers, which had been drained by Palmer’s expansionist ways. Building 90 miles south out of Alamosa toward Santa Fe was not a difficult passage. But to get to Silverton from Alamosa was not going to be easy, as some of Colorado’s most formidable terrain lay between the dusty San Luis Valley railhead and the mines surrounding Silverton.



A number of surveys were made in the attempt to get to Silverton but the unsurveyed “Pinos-Chama Summit” route was the final choice. Map by the Author

In 1878, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe stifled the D&RG's construction to Santa Fe via Raton Pass and was challenging the railroad's claim to the right-of-way through the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas River, the water-level route toward the new silver mines of Leadville. This challenge became known as the "Royal Gorge War," though most of the "war" was fought in the courts, not in the Gorge itself.

Palmer had completed the La Veta pass line as far as Alamosa. But a forced lease of the D&RG to the Santa Fe during the Royal Gorge court battles had stalled further expansion to the west and south. Palmer's court case had advanced all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court. He was convinced he would emerge victorious in the Royal Gorge conflict and, while he couldn't continue construction under the Santa Fe lease, he could still push the D&RG locating engineers to find a route to Silverton that would be ready when a favorable ruling was made.

Throughout 1878 and 1879, Rio Grande surveyors clamored all over southwestern Colorado, lining surveys that resulted in three or more possible pathways between Alamosa and Silverton. The final route, however, was a matter of debate among the engineers and the management.

One survey, 140 miles in length, went from Alamosa to the headwaters of the Upper Rio Grande, over Cunningham Pass and down Cunningham Gulch to Howardsville on the Animas River. From there it went an easy five miles south, down-river into Silverton. It was already the main wagon road for Silverton's goods and mail and was, in McMurtrie's view, an excellent route for a railroad.

A second survey, promoted by Col. Charles Irwin, McMurtrie's colleague in the D&RG engineering corps, was also under serious consideration by McMurtrie. It too went up the Rio Grande but diverted to the southwest, up the river's South Fork. A 1,500-foot hardrock tunnel could punch under the Continental Divide at South Fork Pass and proceed down the East Fork of the San Juan River to Pagosa Springs and then west to Animas City—more of a small village than a city—on the banks of the Animas River. From there, the railroad would build 43 miles up-river and enter Silverton from the south, 220 miles from Alamosa. Col. Irwin promoted this route because he felt "it could operate throughout the winter."

A third survey was preferred by ex-Colorado Governor Alexander Hunt, president of the Rio Grande Extension Co., the building and development arm of the railroad. It "colonized" towns created by and for the railroad (often at the expense of existing towns nearby) and sold land to create a business infrastructure that helped finance the construction and provide future freight and passenger traffic. This survey climbed Alamosa Creek to the mining district at Summitville, southwest of Alamosa, and crossed the Divide to join the South Fork survey and continue on to Pagosa Springs. From there the line would trend northwest, foregoing Animas City, to the railroad's newly colonized



*Railroad survey crews are the unsung heroes of Western railroad construction.*

Lake County Public Library: Colorado Mountain History Collection

town of Durango, platted and sold to the citizenry by the railroad (and, as usual, putting Animas City, not owned by the railroad, out of business).

McMurtrie did not support a route that served Summitville, stating that the grades were too steep and it would not be profitable enough for the D&RG. Annoyed, Hunt sent a wire to McMurtrie stating, "I'd rather have the trade of Summit than the whole Rio Grande Valley..." More likely than not, Hunt was in fact counting on the trade, not of Summitville but Durango. He and several other D&RG board members had purchased large tracts of land around Durango that they hoped to sell for substantial profits.

In late summer 1879, as McMurtrie was preparing to take an on-the-ground look at another survey that would climb Weminuche Creek, south of Cunningham Pass, and build toward Animas City, he received a communiqué from Denver:

CONCENTRATE ALL YOUR ENGINEER CORPS ON THE  
ROUTE ACROSS PINOS-CHAMA SUMMIT TO DURANGO.

The 245 miles between Alamosa and Silverton by way of the Pinos-Chama summit—Cumbres Pass—made this new survey longer than any of the original surveys and, as far as McMurtrie knew, was never under any serious consideration as a final right of way.

What was Palmer thinking? Silverton historian Allen Nosselman notes in his book *Many More Mountains: Volume 3, Rails Into Silverton*, "...[S]ome theories on its choice included the reasoning that the Park View and Ft. Garland Toll Road offered easy access to men and supplies to at least the first leg of the operation; that coal deposits existed along this line which were not present on the northern options; and that such southerly construction might serve to forestall construction of any tracks into the San Juan Basin by the [Santa Fe]." Moreover, a route through the Chama River valley had already been proposed in the D&RG's original charter in 1870, a time when the new railroad was trying to claim to every acre of economic opportunity in Colorado. The overall terrain may have also influenced the decision as well; while it would be difficult to build over



Cumbres Pass, the longer right-of-way may have been seen as easier, faster and less expensive than a shorter line directly through the most rugged corner of Colorado. Time was of the essence to get to Silverton.

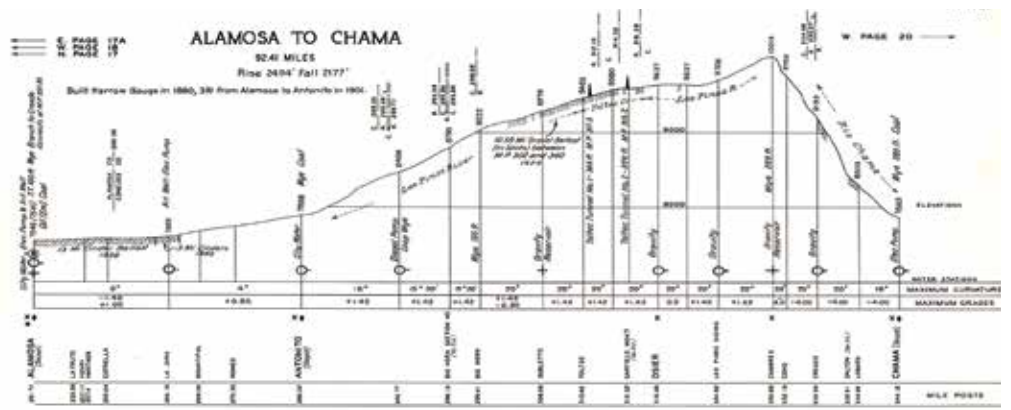
In January 1880, as Palmer predicted, the Supreme Court ruled in his favor and the Royal Gorge right-of-way to Leadville was awarded to the Rio Grande. Freed as well from the Santa Fe's lease by the "Treaty of Boston," the Tripartite Agreement between the D&RG, the Santa Fe and the Union Pacific, the railroad could now begin an aggressive building spree throughout southern and central Colorado and northern New Mexico, including a route to Silverton by way of Cumbres Pass.

While McMurtrie had spent virtually no time considering this southern route, he nonetheless moved his engineering corps to begin locating this new pathway into the San Juans. Alexander Hunt, more a politician than an engineer, insisted to the D&RG Board that the line could be built with a maximum grade of 75 feet to the mile, about a 1.4% grade. This was an accurate assessment for the right-of-way between Alamosa and Cumbres. But Hunt either neglected to study or had ignored the descent from Cumbres to Chama, forcing McMurtrie to build on a 221 foot (4%) grade that remains to this day. The railroad's insistence on the Cumbres route also meant that McMurtrie had to survey for 64 miles of track to cover the 35 miles between Antonito and Chama.

McMurtrie was also annoyed that the Board let construction contracts on the route on November 21, 1879 when nothing more than preliminary location surveys had been made. He found the route "impracticable" in a number of locations, particularly in Toltec Gorge and down the west side of Cumbres Pass, claiming it would be "the most costly piece of railroad construction in the country."

Still, the surveyors, graders and track crews pushed on, with rails reaching Cumbres summit (at the time named Alta) in December 1880 and Chama in early 1881. Construction continued on to the newly-colonized town of Durango and reached Silverton via the Animas River Canyon in July 1882, two years after the date the citizens had hoped for and four years after the first Silverton survey stakes were driven in the Rocky Mountain soil by John McMurtrie's engineers

And the other routes to Silverton? Nothing came of Alexander Hunt's plan for a railroad through Summitville, though his Durango dreams came to fruition by way of the Cumbres Pass trackage. The D&RG built west up the Rio Grande from Alamosa to South Fork in 1881, Wagon Wheel Gap in 1883 and as far as the new mining district at Creede in 1891. Some boosters still hoped for a line from there to Silverton via Cunningham Pass but that was not to be. Rails were also laid north out of Gato, along the final San Juan Extension construction, to Pagosa Springs, but went no farther.



Author's Collection (with thanks to the late Jackson C. Thode)

But suppose the D&RG Board had accepted John McMurtrie's 140-mile survey in 1880 and built directly from Alamosa to Silverton via Cunningham Pass. There certainly wouldn't be a Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad today as there would be neither a "Cumbres" nor a "Toltec." Given the difficult terrain in Animas Canyon, it's unlikely that a railroad between Durango and Silverton would have been built to Silverton if access to the mining district already existed by way of the Rio Grande River drainage. Even the existence of the town of Durango would be in question.

As time passed into the 20th century, a decline in mining activity around Silverton including Animas Forks, Red Mountain and Gladstone began to take down, one by one, Silverton's other railroads; the Silverton Northern, the Silverton Gladstone & Northerly and the Silverton Railroad all fed dwindling shipments to the D&RG in Silverton. Unlike Durango, Silverton had few other sources of revenue and, like many other D&RG branch lines, it is unlikely that a route directly to Alamosa would have survived until or past World War II.

Durango, however, became a center point for railroad transportation with trains rolling north to Silverton, south to Farmington and east to Alamosa via the D&RG, and west and north to Ouray and Telluride via the Rio Grande Southern. Durango and the D&RG's San Juan Extension flourished, first on mining, then lumber, then agriculture, then oil, then tourism. It was a railroad built at the right time in the right place.

And while the rails between Durango and Chama have now been gone for nearly 50 years, the Antonito-to-Chama right-of-way remains. That it was built at all owes to decisions made, not by John McMurtrie and the D&RG engineering corps who felt the best route to Silverton's mines lay many miles to the north, but by boardroom decisions in far-away Denver by General Palmer, Alexander Hunt and others. The D&RG management had a very different view of what could be gained by building to a new town of their own design, Durango, by way of the "impracticable" Pinos-Chama summit, Cumbres Pass.

*Note:* Data on the surveys and construction of the San Juan Extension comes from *Many More Mountains, Vol. 3: Rails into Silverton* by Allen Nossaman (Denver, Colorado: Sundance Books, 1998) and *Ticket to Toltec* by Doris Osterwald (Lakewood, Colorado: Western Guideways, 2007).

For two other views of the difficulties of operation over Cumbres Pass, see "A Cumbres Tunnel?" by Roger and Noreen Breeding in the Spring, 2001 issue of *The Dispatch*, pp. 10-13 and "1927—Bypass Chama for Willow Creek?" by Kevin Corwin in the Fall, 2004 issue of *The Dispatch*, pp. 1, 4-6.

**Chris James** is the author of *Silver Rails: The Railroads of Leadville, Colorado* and is the Editor of the *C&TS Dispatch*.



# Over Cumbres Pass in 1951 with the Railway Club of Southern California

Photographs by Ed Von Nordeck

Last July, Evan Werkama posted a collection of photographs on the *Narrow Gauge Discussion Forum* taken by his friend Ed Von Nordeck. The photos are from the *Rio Grande Holiday*, a June 1951 railfan trip sponsored by the Railway Club of Southern California. The adventure included travel over Cumbres Pass on the *San Juan* from Alamosa to Durango, up to Silverton and back, then on to Lizard Head Pass via the Rio Grande Southern's "Tin Feathers" Galloping Geese and back to Durango, Cumbres and Alamosa. The total cost for this week of railroading? \$30! (In case you're wondering, that would be about \$280 in today's market; still a bargain!)

When I saw the photos, I knew that some of them belonged in *The Dispatch*. I wrote Evan Werkama, who in turn contacted Ed Von Nordeck, who gave his kind permission to reproduce them here. The entire collection of photos includes the journeys to Silverton, Lizard Head and back. Those presented here are only the Alamosa-to-Chama images (plus the three Geese on the RGS, as they too show up on the C&TS now and then) and some of the background about the trip. You can review the entire series of photos by registering at the *Narrow Gauge Discussion Forum* at <http://www.ngdiscussion.net> and then visiting <http://ngdiscussion.net/forum/read.php?1,313955> to start your own 1951 "Rio Grande Holiday"

Chris James

**World's Most Congested Camera-Travel Club**

**RIO GRANDE HOLIDAY**  
THE MAJESTIC ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO  
SICKEN THE CAMERA-TRAVEL ENTHUSIAST!

One full week and 284 miles of thrilling adventure in broad special trains of the Denver & Rio Grande Western and Rio Grande Southern NARROW GAUGE EMES! Yes, we will explore the remaining segments of what was once the WORLD'S NARROW GAUGE EMPIRE!

Route of the "San Juan," "Shavano" and "Dangling Geese." Scale of glacial trains never more to stain their paths way along the rugged hills.

See's comprising 16,000-foot mountain passes and crossing over spindly trestles. Back clinging to narrow ledges cut in solid rock. Back built by the sheer guts and determination of men who never knew the meaning of the word "back."

We'll live for a few fleeting hours where man fought, and loved, and died to bring the riches out of the mountains.

We'll live again where little towns "whiskered off" one evening to disappear forever down some awesome precipice. And others? With heavy timber stores and towering fanges were brought to a halt by strong and long lightning bolts of the wild!

Via the little yellow coaches of the D&RGW and the "Dangling Geese" of the RGS we'll "SEE AMERICA FIRST!" This is a rare opportunity to visit the country which is America! And to meet the hearty mountaineers whose smiling faces bring the produce and minerals out of the Great Rockies to smother our slightly famished.

One should have seen that our train will join the "great parade," as the slim gauge railway is fast becoming history. Even today there is no longer scheduled service along the route which we will traverse.

Take Gorge, Cumbres Pass, Rio de los Animas, Cofre Uto, Lizard Head here we coast!

The narrow gauge portion of the trip leaves Alamosa, Colorado at 8:00 a.m., Monday, June 25, 1951.

Special chartered air-conditioned Santa Fe motor coaches leave 9:40 and Main Depot in Los Angeles at 7:30 a.m., Saturday, June 23, 1951. Arrangements will be made to return Sunday, July 1st for those who wish. It is important that you advise accordingly.

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTICED, the Club will place hotel reservations for the entire group at Alamosa, June 24th, Durango the 25th and 26th, Alamosa the 27th, Montrose the 28th and 29th and overnight stops (3) enroute for those who travel by bus. Please advise us to your requirements.

For those who may drive their own cars, rail fare is: \$30.00  
Five and under travel: 25.00

Full fare from Los Angeles (2000 miles) via motor coach is: \$63.00  
Five and under travel: \$3.00

Meals and lodging are not included.

Due to limited facilities kindly remit as soon as possible and include full names of your party.

RAILWAY CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
Post Office Box 116  
Los Angeles 42, California  
Cleveland 7-2644

**WILL YOUR CAMERA RECORD THIS EVENT OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE?**

**Rio Grande HOLIDAY**  
LEAVES ALAMOSA, COLORADO, JUNE 23, 1951

EXCURSION No. 11

via  
The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company  
and  
The Rio Grande Southern Railroad Company

|                            |         |                          |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| ADULT - Standard 2nd Class | \$22.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ADULT - Standard 1st Class | \$28.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ADULT - Standard 3rd Class | \$12.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CHILD                      | \$6.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

RESPONSIBILITY: The Railway Club of Southern California does not take the responsibility for the passenger to report to travel, standard for rail and motor coach, but we shall be glad to assist in the making of arrangements for motor coach, but we shall be glad to assist in the making of arrangements for motor coach, but we shall be glad to assist in the making of arrangements for motor coach.

Value \$ 22.00

"Will your camera record this event of historical importance?" 65 years later, we can begin to understand just how historically important some of these photos are.



D&RGW Caboose 0503 in Alamosa, 1951. Rebuilt by the Friends, it was painted inside and out during the 2016 restoration work sessions.



The narrow gauge excursion steams out of Alamosa over dual-gauge track on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1951.





Looking back as the train pulls out of Osier.



The complete Cumbres Pass snowshed was still standing in 1951.



The station at Cumbres Pass stood until 1954, three years after this photo. Only some remnants of the foundation remain today.



Photo run-by at Lobato Trestle. Back then, photographers were allowed in places that we can only dream about today!



Then as now, Tanglefoot Curve was an outstanding place for a high-quality photo run-by.



D&RGW 497 pauses on Cascade Trestle for a well-deserved portrait. No. 497 still operates over the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.



Flying white "Extra" flags, Geese 3, 5 and 7 cross Bridge 44A on the Rio Grande Southern near Ophir.

Many thanks to Evan Werkama for posting these images to the *Narrow Gauge Discussion Forum* and to Ed Von Nordeck for giving *The Dispatch* permission to reproduce them here!







# A Harrington Semaphore Returns to Cumbres

by John Cole

When working on restoration projects for the railroad, the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec take great pains to insure the work accurately reflects the historic time period that our “living history museum” represents. Rolling stock is lettered with the correct data, buildings are restored to their mid-century appearance, even small details like mile-posts and whistle boards are recreated to exacting historical standards.

Such was the case with the construction and installation of a replica Harrington semaphore for the Cumbres Section House. The original semaphore stood adjacent to the Cumbres depot. In the early 1950s, the depot was torn down and the semaphore was moved to the Section House where it remains today.

In the spring of 2015, there was a thread on the online Narrow Gauge Discussion Forum (NGDF) about a photo of the Cumbres Section House and the work being done by Bob Conry and his team. Ed Trump, an NGDF contributor and the last maintainer of the signals, telegraph, and telephones on the narrow gauge until the D&RGW sold the line to Colorado and New Mexico, made a comment that the semaphore on the section house was the wrong one.

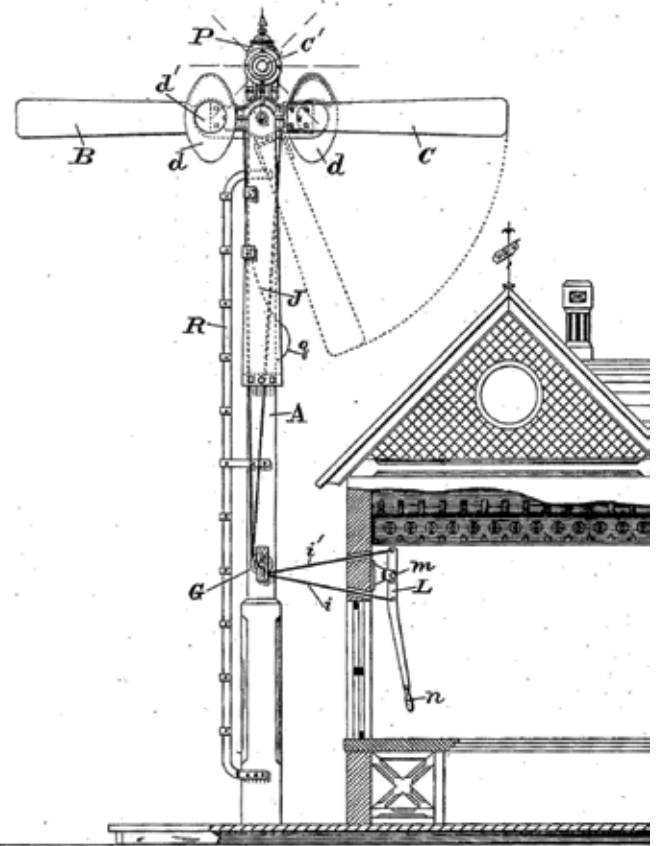


Harrington Semaphore at Cumbres Station, February 20, 1953  
Richard L. Dorman Collection RDS042-005

It would appear that between the 1970 sale to sometime in the 1990s, the two-color semaphore had been replaced with a three-color semaphore. Furthermore, the flags were tilted up (upper quadrant), rather than tilted down (lower quadrant), as would have been the case at D&RGW at station stops. The upper-lower quadrant issue was resolved, (See the story, **Details Matter** by Ian Kelly, in the Summer, 2016 *Dispatch*) but the semaphore itself was still incorrect. For historical accuracy, the Section House needed a two-color Harrington semaphore.

In the Fall of 2015, I started a thread on the NGDF asking for help in locating an original Harrington semaphore for the Section House, without success. I then contacted Roy Lloyd, a team member who did a great job fabricating historically-accurate swivels for the Gramps oil loading

S. H. HARRINGTON.  
SEMAPHORE.  
No. 317,347. Patented May 5, 1885.



A portion of the original patent application and approval for the Harrington semaphore, 1885.

racks in Chama, to see if he could build us a replacement semaphore. We sent Roy all the information we could find on the Harrington units—even a Grandt Line Models’ HO scale replica of the device provided by owner Dave Grandt—along with the drawings and measurements used when making the models. Roy took all of this information, made a small mock-up and sent photos of it to Friends Project Leader John Eng and the rest of us for review and ideas.

After several revisions and discussions, it was decided to not only build a replica semaphore, but also a replica lantern light box that was used to light the



Water-jet-cut parts form a prototype for one of the semaphore arm supports. Photo by Roy Lloyd





*During Session E in 2016, Wayne Klatt and Roy Lloyd placed the completed Harrington semaphore atop the Section House Mast.  
Photo by John Cole*

lens spectacles at night. Because we wanted to be able to see the light at night and wanted to avoid having to climb a six-inch wide ladder (maybe a little dangerous and hard on us old guys), we wisely decided to not use a kerosene lantern, but use a LED bulb with a small reflector in place of the lamp.

Roy kept us updated on his progress last spring. He sent the metal to the local trade tech near him so they could cut out the parts on a water-jet cutter. It was exciting when the photos started arriving showing the cut pieces welded together, and seeing Roy's progress making and painting the signal flags that would be attached.

Since Bob Conry and his team were working on the exterior of the Section House last summer, one of their projects was to replace the mast that held the semaphore. We were able to coordinate our work with theirs so that everything would fit when we arrived at Session E in late July. Bob had the mast up and with Wayne Klatt and Roy Lloyd up on the roof, we started hanging and hooking up the "new" semaphore. I kept busy installing a 200-watt solar panel, inverter, battery, and charging system to run the lights as well as running a wire to power the semaphore lamp. Adding this system had an extra benefit of providing power to the section house so work can be done without the need for a generator. With the installation of LED light bulbs in the fixtures, we can run all of the lights using less power than one of the old light bulbs.

Another team member, Chris Jensen, mounted and wired the electrical equipment for the solar system. We now have 110 volts AC, as well as the 12-volt DC system for recharging the battery and running the lights on the semaphore. Chris programmed the timer so between 4:30 and 11:00 each

night you will see the light on the semaphore.

With the semaphore installed, Roy and Wayne hooked up the control cables so the flags and light colors could be changed from inside the building. At the end of one day the entire system was finished and operational with the Harrington semaphore's flags tilted down, just as it was at D&RGW station stops.

I think that one of the most gratifying parts of being a Friends member is that when you see your work show up in other people's photographs, you are reminded that you and your team had a hand in building, rebuilding or repairing another piece of the history of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.



*A solar panel and inverter provides power to the Section House and the LED semaphore lights.*

*Photo by John Cole*



*The Friends-built Harrington semaphore waits for the next train atop Cumbres Pass.  
Photo by John Cole*

**John Cole** has been a Friends member since 1999 and generally works during multiple Restoration Sessions each year. He also volunteers at the Orange Empire Railroad Museum in Perris, California.

# Drop Bottom Gondolas on the D&RGW and the Cumbres & Toltec: Their History and Restoration

Story and photos  
by Bill Pratt

**D**rop bottom gondolas (DBGs) are a most unique piece of narrow gauge rolling stock. They are unique by their evolution to what we see today, by their unique construction, and by the fact that the D&RGW didn't scrap many unless damaged beyond economical repair.

Before we get into the details of their history, I want to point out that there are two series of DBGs; there is the 700 series and the 800 series. There are not many structural differences between the series today, but when built they were "vastly different animals" than what we now see.

The 700 series cars were ordered by the D&RG as Class 17 drop bottom cars from the National Car Company (later part of American Car and Foundry) in March 1904. This class consisted of 100 cars numbered from 700 to 799, and their original cost was \$849.56 per car.

Although these cars were DBGs, they were much different from what we see today. Their door-operating mechanism was a very complicated system consisting of link levers, two 2" square shafts running down the center of the car, and cams that raised the doors. Pins were pulled to disconnect the linkage to let the doors fall open. The doors were controlled by operating levers that were only on one end of the car, each lever controlling the operation of all six doors on one side of the car. These levers were so long that they projected well above the car ends, and these cars were usually called "longhorns" because the protruding operating levers resembled Texas longhorn cattle.

Other than the operating levers, the door-operating mechanism ran through the center of the car and was enclosed by an A-frame. The A-frame tapered up from the inner edges of the doors, making a triangular-shaped center structure running the length of the car.

After being rebuilt in 1918, these cars have a much simpler operating system consisting of two roller bars on each side. These roller bars have short chains connected to the door edges and are rotated by much shorter operating levers that are located on each corner of the car. Each lever now controls the operation of three doors, whereas each of the original levers operated all six doors on one side.

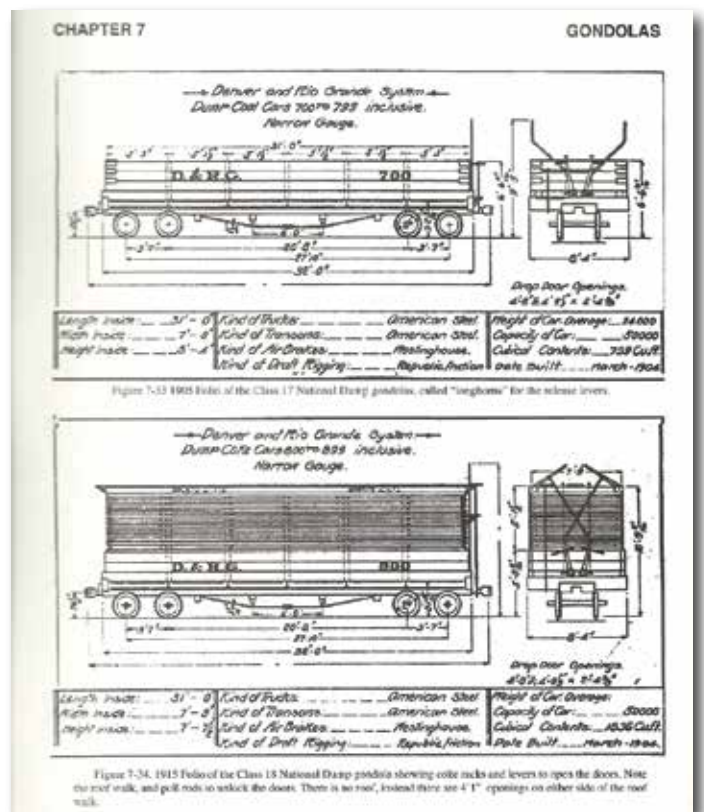
Today there is a serious potential problem in that if all six doors on one side are opened at the same time when there is a heavy load, the reduction of load on that side with a heavy load remaining on the other side will cause the car to roll over. One must wonder how often this happened with the older design when all six doors on one side were always opened at once.

It is ironic that these cars had an A-frame structure down the center of the car that was done away with during the early rebuilds, but when we rebuild a DBG today for use by the railroad for track maintenance, we usually add an A-frame to aid in unloading the car. Without an A-frame, there is a 3 foot flat "deck" down the center between the doors, and the material being hauled piles up on this deck and must be moved to the open doors by



D&RG Coke Car 800-series No. 859, photographed in Alamosa, date unknown.

Photo by O. T. Davis, Dorman Collection RD019-130



Folio sheets showing the 700 series cars with the "longhorn" operating levers, and the 800 series cars with the high coke racks

hand. With an A-frame this material slides out and the car empties completely.

Although the 700 series cars were originally DBGs with a different door-operating mechanism, the 800 series cars were a vastly different car—they were built as coke cars. They had one less board on the sides than the 700 series, but had slats extending from the boards up to boxcar



height. They didn't have a roof, but the sides were so high that they did have roof walks. They were classified as Class 18 cars, and the original cost was \$918.60 per car. In 1918, the coke racks were removed, an additional side board was added, and the door-operating mechanism was reworked, making the cars basically as we see them today.



*Interior view of a 800 series DBG, showing the side board extension "cripples," the corner posts used in only the 800 series cars, the drop doors on both sides and the center deck that causes a problem when unloading these cars.*

Although these two classes of cars started life looking completely different from each other, today there are very few visible differences. About the only difference that is readably noticeable is that the 700 series have the sides and ends joined by large steel angle plates, and the 800 series have a wood post in the corner, instead of the plates.

Both series had three side and end boards after being rebuilt, but through the years many have had a "half width" board added to increase the carrying capacity of the car. These added side boards were supported by short posts attached to the regular side posts, and we call these added posts "cripples." Usually when a car is being rebuilt for railroad track maintenance use, a single longer post is installed instead of the short side post and cripple combination.

The construction of these cars is very interesting. The top portion, including the sides, ends, and drop doors, is typical NG car construction, and mainly consists of boards bolted together, but the lower portion is vastly different. The main frame consists of two steel end sills connected by two large steel channels. Five steel cross frames that support the top portion are attached to these channels. Two wood beams run along the outside of each channel and support items like the drop door hinges and much of the brake rigging. Many people wrongfully think that the cars only have a wood frame, because only the outer wood beam can be seen from a casual look. I have won several beers through the years by proving that they do have steel frames.

The rebuilding of these cars can also be very interesting. The top portion is like rebuilding most any other NG car, and consists of replacing old wood with new. But the frame portion is a very different situation. I don't want to get too

detailed, but want to briefly describe two areas that make frame repair more complicated.

Most frame damage is due to wood rot in the wood beams that run along the outside of the steel channels. The theoretical repair of this wood rot is "to replace the wood beams," but that is not nearly as easy as it may sound, as the beams can not just be slipped out and new ones slipped back in. To replace them, all five steel cross frames and the steel bolsters must be removed. The three center cross frames are secured by eight large steel rivets and seven



*This photo shows the steel end sill and the steel frame channels with the wood beams removed. Ron Senek is preparing to remove the truck bolster so that new wood frame beams can be installed.*

large bolts. They are secured so tight that we have to use hydraulic jacks to separate them from the steel channels after the rivets and bolts are removed. Removing the bolsters is nearly as difficult, as they also have both rivets and bolts, and must also be pressed apart with jacks.

As it is not easy to replace the wood beams, we usually cut out the worst rot that is affecting the structure, and glue in new wood inserts. This rot is usually under oak blocks that the door hinges are bolted to, and is most critical in the area where the brake cylinder is bolted to the frame. When we do an insert repair, we make a cutout with angles on each end trying not to exceed one third of the beam height so as to not weaken the beam any more than necessary. We then glue a new piece of wood in place.

The worst problem from this rot is that the brake cylinder is suspended by six bolts, and all six go through the wood beam, and not through the steel channel. Needless to say, as heavy as the brake cylinder is, and with the loads imposed on it, it doesn't take a lot of rot before the cylinder starts sagging. We take care of this by replacing the rotted wood with inserts in this area, and then installing a steel plate across the top of the frame assembly. This steel plate transfers the heavy loads from the cylinder to the two steel channels.

Although they usually don't have to be removed, removing the truss rods is also much more difficult than on other cars. The end sill end of the rod goes through a steel casting,

instead of wood like most other cars, and usually the rod is severely rusted to this casting because of crud that accumulates in this area through the years. Additionally, the rod goes through holes in a wood beam preventing it from being swung around to different angles to aid in removal, No other cars that I know of have this other beam.

In spite of these difficulties, my crew prefers to work on



Two wood inserts have been glued into the outer frame beam. Expanding glue is used to preclude having gaps where water can collect and cause more rot.

DBGs. They are more challenging than most cars, and we like the fact that most of the DBGs we work on go back to actual railroad service, being used for track maintenance work on the railroad.



Two wood beams have been cut away from the steel channel on BOTH sides because of wood rot, and one new piece has already been inserted. To gain access, the last cross frame had to be removed, the truck had to be rolled away and the truck bolster had to be removed. The bolster is the large casting in the lower left corner of the photo.



The bolster and cross frame have been reinstalled and the truck has been rolled back in place. The drop door hinges are now being reinstalled with new wood hinge blocks.



D&RGW Drop Bottom Gondola No. 727, rebuilt by the Friends in 2002, awaits work in the Chama yard.

Photo: Bill Pratt



A happy crew during the rebuild of DBG 859, same car featured in the opening photograph on page 14. L to R—Daniel Parks, Bill McCall, Randy Parks, Lee Parks, Bob Osborn, Bill Pratt, and Warren Ringer. Team leader Bill Pratt has stuck his hand in the wrong place, and is wearing a few stitches on some fingers. DBG 859 was the first car to be completed in the new Antonito Car Repair Facility after the CRF opened in 2006.

Photo: Friends of the C&TS

All early car historical data and the coke car folio is from *A Century + Ten of D&RGW Narrow Gauge Freight Cars, 1871 to 1981*, 2nd edition, by Robert E Sloan. The author also wishes to thank Dave Grandt for locating the early Coke Car 859 photo.



# D & R G W MORE THAN THE FINISHING TOUCH

## 3016

### What is the Point of a Blank, Unlettered Boxcar?

by Barry Morris

CAPACITY | 1567 CU FT  
50000 LBS.

LENGTH INSIDE 29 FT 5 IN  
WIDTH INSIDE 7 FT 6 IN

**D**id you ever try to carry on a conversation with somebody who sits there with a blank face, not showing anything while you try to find out about him or her? You know there's a story there, but try as you might you can't get to the interesting info.

Looking at a blank, unlettered railroad car is the same experience. Even the most experienced rivet-counter needs the information that the car lettering teams carefully and accurately stencil on the restored rolling stock of the C&TS. Without that info you can only know a small and very generalized part of the car's story. The Rio Grande pretty much stuck to black, gray, yellow and oxide red for its cars, but the most historically important color is the lettering.



The lettering crews do more than add a finishing touch. They provide the detailed info that historians, researchers and modelers need to insure accuracy. It's obviously impossible to get specific information about a car in the Dorman photo library without the car's number. You just don't know what you're looking at, in the yard or in the library.

Car lettering volunteers are perennially tough to come by. It's admittedly not the most glamorous job. Many would say that it doesn't give the same sense of satisfaction of ripping a 125 year old car down to its frame and restoring it to operating condition. Many volunteers want the physical challenge of hoisting beams and turning nuts.

But not everyone is into hard labor. Some volunteers like going through historic photos, blueprints and diagrams to be sure of presenting an accurate snapshot of a car at a particular time. Consider the variety of lettering schemes on just

the box cars. It identifies the car's place in time and on the railroad.

Look at Box Car 3016, which crews rebuilt during 2015-16. It is the almost fully restored car, looking pretty with a new coat of paint. But all you really know is it's a wooden box car about 34 feet long.

Then there is the finished car, numbered and with complete data. The effort of the lettering volunteers tells most of the story of 3016. All that's missing is the herald, which is probably the first thing you noticed when you looked at the photo.



So try to imagine Leonardo DaVinci's Mona Lisa without her smile. Is that smile just a finishing touch, or is it the critical detail that makes the painting a world famous icon? Car lettering is the same. Keep that in mind as you think of what projects to sign up for in 2017. The Friends need you for one of the most important historical jobs on the railroad.

**🦋 Barry Morris** was lettering team leader in Session F, 2016. He and a team of six dedicated workers lettered 3016 on the very last afternoon of session F, four hours of work accelerated by impending rain.





# A Letter *From* the Editor

In Brazil, the largest country in South America, there is an active, country-wide historic railroad preservation group not unlike the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. The *Associação Brasileira de Preservação Ferroviária* (ABPF), the Brazilian Association of Railway Preservation, is a non-profit organization founded in 1977 by a French-Brazilian, Henri Ferdinand Dollinger, who was concerned about the ongoing abandonment of Brazil's railroads, their locomotives and rolling stock, structures and history.

This summer I began an e-mail conversation (thank you, *Google Translate: English to Portuguese* and back!) with one of the ABPF volunteers, Alberto Henrique del Bianco. He shared a number of photos with me of the work the volunteers are doing, projects that look very similar to ours. I've returned the favor with a number of my photos of the Friends' work on both sides of the pass along with shots of operation of the C&TS. Alberto has visited the States and ridden the Durango & Silverton and promises to come ride the C&TS in the next year or two. I hope to meet him.

In comparing our shared photos, along with the descriptions of the two organizations, I was struck by some uncanny parallels between the C&TS, the Friends, and the ABPF.

Both are recognized by our respective governments, the C&TS by the States of New Mexico and Colorado and the ABPF, a "Social Organization of Public Interest," by the Brazilian Government. The Friends and the ABPF are both (their description) "non-profit civil organization(s) of cultural and educative purposes," with missions to "promote the rescue, restoration and conservation of railroad heritage." While we call the C&TS "living history," the various rail lines, locomotives and rolling stock restored and operated by the ABPF are referred to as "dynamic museums."

The goals, projects and volunteer work are similar to the C&TS and the Friends' as well. Continuing from the English translation of their Web site,

*"All the activities developed for the ABPF, amongst them the operation of the railroad (and) composition of the Dynamic Museums are carried through by the associates of ABPF in the form of voluntary work. Our volunteers have diverse education and occupations, and some of them are active or retired railroad workers..."*

*"The passenger trains of ABPF use its historical steam locomotives and passenger cars that were restored by our (volunteers). During the trip, visitors have the chance to live deeply in the past by enjoying the way of transportation used by their ancestors, receiving explanations on how a steam engine works and about the historical context of the railroad they are traveling by."*

Let's face it. Aren't we all just *Friends*?

You can learn more about the *Associação Brasileira de Preservação Ferroviária* at [http://www.abpf.com.br/inicio\\_en/](http://www.abpf.com.br/inicio_en/)

 Chris James



Photos courtesy Associação Brasileira de Preservação Ferroviária



# 2017 FRIENDS PHOTO CHARTERS



## D&RGW No. 315 PHOTO FREIGHT CHARTER, JUNE 3 & 4

Mark these dates! On Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup>, the Friends of the C&TS will be sponsoring a photo freight charter pulled by D&RGW Locomotive 315. This charter follows the Friends Restoration Work session "B."

On Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the charter will originate in Antonito and operate to Cumbres with numerous photo runbys and a lunch stop in Osier. A motorcoach will transport passengers back to Antonito that evening.

On Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup>, a motorcoach will take passengers from the C&TS Depot in Antonito to Cumbres. The charter will then work its way back east to Antonito again with numerous photo runbys along the way and a lunch stop in Osier.

To make this event affordable to more people, we will be offering a daily fare so participants may purchase just one day or both if so desired. Friends members will receive a discounted fare under what the general public will pay.

**Fares: Friends Member: \$225 per person per day. General Public: \$275 per person per day.**

Seats will be limited to 45 passengers per day. Reservations can be made by calling the Friends Office at 505-880-1311 or online at [www.cumbrestoltec.org](http://www.cumbrestoltec.org) and click on Store/Charters. Lunch, snacks, doughnuts, soft drinks and water are included in the price of the ticket.



Photo: Jerry Day

## RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN No. 455 RE-CREATION CHARTER SEPTEMBER 4, 5 & 6



Photo: Richard L. Dorman Collection, RD164-067

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Denver, the Friends will be partnering with the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad on re-lettering C&TS Locomotive 463 into RGS 455 with the Rio Grande Southern "sunrise herald" to represent how she looked between 1941 and 1943, prior to her November 1943 wreck near Dallas Divide. RGS Caboose 400 will also be part of these three days of freight charters.

The event is a fund raiser for the restoration of D&RGW T-12 No. 168 as well as the Friends' various restoration projects. No. 168 will be on display in Antonito during this event. All trips will originate in Antonito. Coffee, pastries, soft drinks, bottled water and lunches are included in the ticket prices.

**September 4<sup>th</sup> Fare (1 Day Package) \$269.00/person**  
**September 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> (2 Day Package) \$899.00/person**  
*Limited to 45 passengers*



Photo: Dorman Collection, RD151-020

Deposits are \$100 per package to hold space. Balance of fare amount will come due in early June. More information will be available soon.

E-mail Tim Tennant at [timtennant@cumbrestoltec.org](mailto:timtennant@cumbrestoltec.org) if you have an interest in riding this special photo freight charter.



Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.  
4421 McLeod Rd. NE, Suite F  
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**Paid**  
Albuquerque, NM  
Permit No. 1710



*A flanger train leaves Antonito in February 1956, photographed by Robert W. Richardson (Richard L. Dorman Collection, File No. RD049-034) and photographed again sixty years later by Don Atkinson in March, 2016. The two images appeared separately in the Spring 2016 issue of The Dispatch, but with Don's photo perfectly matching Robert Richardson's original, the two images simply HAD to be made into one image that spanned sixty years of history.*

*Composite image by Chris James*