

WESTERN RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Dedicated to preserving the skills and artifacts of our western railway heritage

The Electronic Newsletter of the WRPS

*E-News Issue - 1
October 2009*



President's Report

Hello everyone and welcome to the very first E-Newsletter produced by the Western Railway Preservation Society. We plan to create and e-mail out these newsletters on a regular bases to keep the members of the WRPS informed as to what is happening in the society and give some insights on where we hope to be going in the future.

First off, I would like to give you all an update on filings and status of the WRPS. Back in July, we completed all the incorporation documentation that shows us as a non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Oregon. Since that time, we have also completed our IRS filings to obtain our tax-free status.

We owe a great deal of thanks to Fred Horn and Cindy Williams who both made generous donation to the WRPS to help cover the rather expensive filing fees.

In other business, the charter members of the WRPS have voted in a Board of Directors to oversee our activities and guide the society towards what we all believe will be a bright future. A complete list of the current directors and officer of the WRPS is listed here in the newsletter. I would encourage everyone to contact any of these people if you have any questions, concerns, thoughts or ideas about the WRPS.

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Preservation Society**
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Once a year, the WRPS will be holding an annual meeting that is open to all that wish to attend. Since we are closely related to the Sumpter Valley Railroad Restoration Inc., our directors have chosen to hold our meeting as close as possible to the SVRR's annual meeting. This would allow our members to attend both annual meetings without making two trips to Baker City.

The WRPS annual meeting will be held at Barley Brown's Brew Pub Restaurant located at 2190 Main St. in the heart of Baker City. We plan on meeting at 7:30 on the evening of October 9th. At this meeting, we will cover Society business and discuss some future ideas in a casual, dinner and drinks environment.

Remember that the SVRR's annual meeting will be held the following night and I would encourage all WRPS members to attend both meetings if able. It should prove to be a great weekend for catching up with old friends and seeing what both organization have planned for the future.

Please e-mail Tim Bain if you would like to attend the WRPS annual meeting so I can let the restaurant know how many people to expect.

As you may know, one of the main projects the WRPS is currently focused on is the preservation of the remaining shop buildings in South Baker once owned by the original Sumpter Valley Railway. We have entered into negotiations with the current owner of the property and we will keep you informed as this project develops.

Jerry Huck has inspected the current status of the South Baker shops. Be

sure to check out Jerry's report a little further down.

Also in this issue, Mike Roberts has begun an article series on this efforts to rebuild the old West Side Lumber Company "coffin" tankcar #5. While this car is owned by the current Sumpter Valley Railroad, it was Mike who raised all the funding and led a team in the restoration of this very unique tankcar from the woods of California. Look for future updates from Mike in up coming E-Newsletters.

The WRPS will soon have a presence on the internet in the form of a new website. Jaimie Roberts is currently working on this project and should have the site up and running soon. Jaimie is the daughter of one of our directors and is also a very talented Graphic Designer and we are very fortunate and grateful to have her assistance.

The address for the website will be; www.westernrailwaypreservation.com so remember to set your bookmarks. We plan to lay out many of our current and future restoration projects on the web page so it should make for some interesting reading.

Lastly, I would like to recruit your help. We need a name for this E-newsletter. If anyone has a suggestion or an idea of what we should be calling this newsletter, please e-mail me at the above address with your ideas.

I wish you all a great fall season and we'll talk again soon.



Tim Bain – President
Western Railway Preservation Society

South Baker Shops Tour, A Trip Back In Time.

By Jerry Huck

On Saturday, September 5th, 2009, Ken Carlson and I had a tour of the old Sumpter Valley Ry. carshop and storehouse located in south Baker. These two buildings represent all that remains of the large shop complex that once maintained the Sumpter Valley Ry.

Upon closure of the SVRy. in 1962, the carshop and store house were purchased by Carlson Construction for use as their office headquarters and heavy equipment shop. However, the shops have been idle for well over 30 years now and have received little in the way of maintenance during that time.

The storehouse is in good condition but is in need of quite a bit of TLC. While the roof and settling problem are major issues to be addressed, the storehouse held a real surprise when our guide reached over and **TURNED ON THE LIGHTS!!!** I would not have believed the power was still on in an unrestored SVRy building!

Inside the storehouse there is a wood stove that is a larger version of the former stove in the SVRR carshop up at McEwen. There are several calendars and other paperwork still in place and the building already has a

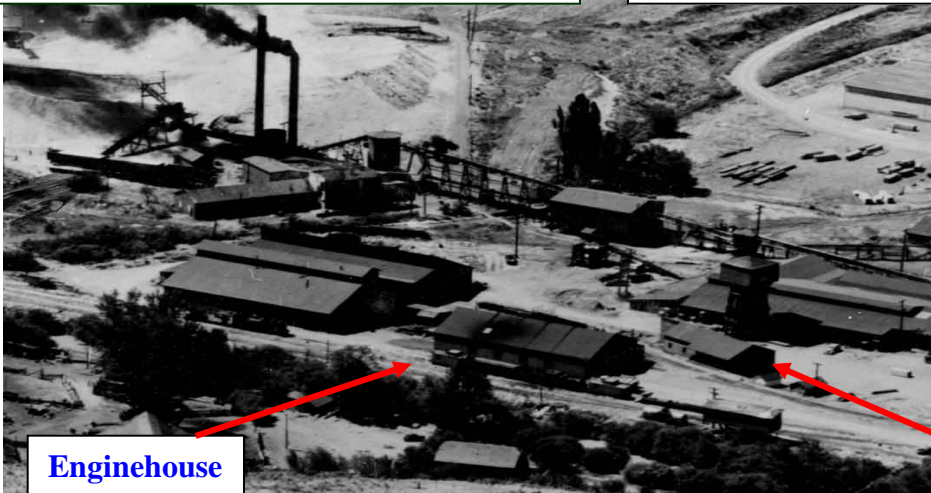
South end of the SVRy carshop/enginehouse located in South Baker. Part of the red storehouse can also be seen on the left in this late 1980's photo.



"museum like" feel to it! There is considerable clutter from the construction company, however there are still artifacts from SVRy mixed among the debris.

The office area of the storehouse is in surprisingly good condition mostly needing a good cleaning and new windows. Even the map boards and picture rail are still in place. There is a bathroom located adjacent to the office area as well. Many of the original light fixtures remain as well as a surprising amount of details, such as door locks, hinges and other hardware.

The Carshop is a little more of a "project". As seen from the road, the building will require significant repair to the roof structure but the main support beams are surprisingly sound. [Continued on page 4](#)



Enginehouse

Here is an aerial view of the South Baker sawmill and railway shop area taken in 1948. It clearly shows the SVRy Carshop, which later became the enginehouse and the storehouse; all that is left of this once huge complex.

Storehouse

The main bay measures 40 feet by 130 feet with track and a pit still in place running through the east side of the building. There are four rooms located to the west side of the large main bay. From the north end there is a work bay with a pit once used to store and maintain the SVRy locomotives #100 and later #101. The pit still has steam heat lines and is dual gauge! However we are not sure what, if any standard gauge equipment the old SVRy would have kept in this part of the shop. The bay measures 15 feet by 35 feet and is big enough to accommodate a caboose or other freight equipment projects. Aside from glass replacement and repairing the timbers in the pit, this bay is in great shape.

Next to that is the former tool and parts room which still bears cabinets and shelving from SVRy. There is also another larger tool room adjacent to this room.

All in all, these two original SVRy buildings are in fairly good condition considering the lack of maintenance over the last three decades. There is little doubt that once we secure the rights to these structures, they will serve us well as a restoration shop and future museum of the Western Railway Preservation Society. [Stay tuned as this conservation project develops!](#)



Here is the old Sumpter Valley Railway storehouse in South Baker City as of June 2009. On the right is the west wall of the enginehouse.



These two photos are separated by 62 years. Both show the south side of the Enginehouse that was the home to the SVRy's two mallets; the largest narrow gauge locomotives in America.



West Side Lumber Company Tank Car #5

A Short History and the Resurrection

By Mike Roberts



Late 1960's of Tank #5 at the Roaring Camp & Big Trees railway in California. The car was still complete at this time, but starting to deteriorate.

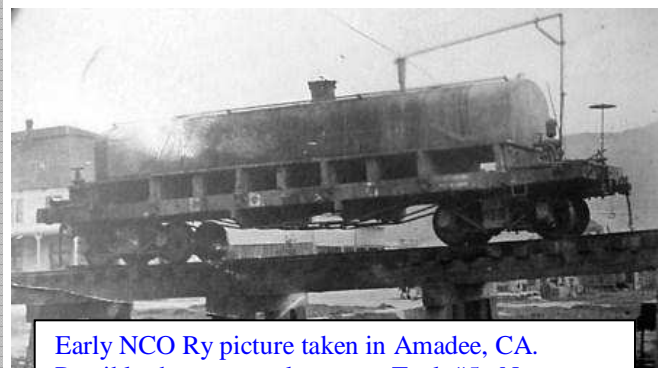
Dr. Nick Muff photo, Dave Squire collection.

Dr. Nick Muff

In October of 2000, Sumpter Valley Railroad Restoration, Inc. made a trade with the Roaring Camp and Big Trees Railroad in Felton, CA. A narrow gauge Climax boiler went south, and a pair of Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge flat cars and a one-of-a-kind West Side Lumber railway tank car came back to McEwen, OR. The cars from California were badly rotted from the decades in the damp South Bay area, and the tank car collapsed onto the ground while being unloading from the trailer. There it sat for five years.

I'm Mike Roberts, the project manager for the current Tank #5 restoration effort. I've been a West Side Lumber Company fan for a long time, discovered the Sumpter Valley Railway in 2001, and became a SVRR member a short time later. It took me a while to realize that the wreck of a tank car sitting in the parking area near the SVRR backshop was from the West Side. After helping get SVRY caboose #3 back into service, I realized I really enjoyed the restoration end of the volunteer spectrum at McEwen.

In September of 2005, I approached SVRR Restoration Manager Tim Bain about getting Tank #5 back into shape. The go-ahead was given, and the project was started. Two of the reasons I was willing to try rebuilding Tank #5 was fact that it was still some 90% complete, and also the large amount of data and pictures that has been collected by West Side fans and historians. Without this information, Tank #5 would probably still be slowly sinking into the parking lot gravel. What also intrigued me was the history of this odd-looking tank car. [Continued on page 6](#)



Early NCO Ry picture taken in Amadee, CA. Possibly the same tank now on Tank #5. Note unusual pump and pipe arrangement for transferring fuel oil to NCO engines. Taylor Rush collection.

To help understand the unusual nature of this tank car, a short history lesson is in order. With the help of Tom Armstrong, a Nevada-California-Oregon Railway (NCO) historian and from pictures and information provided by West side buffs, a better understanding of the origins of the tank car are now known.

The tank car was originally built for the Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad which ran from Reno, NV to Lakeview OR., some 290 miles. Evidence points to the unusual coffin-shaped tank being built in or around Reno in the 1890's, possibly being 1 of 13 similar tanks. Mounted on a flat car, it was used for providing fuel oil to the NCO engines along the line.

The West Side Lumber Company came into the picture in the 1920's when the tank car was purchased from the NCO as it was being standard-gauged by the Southern Pacific. It's been believed that only the tank was bought from the NCO, but a recently found picture shows that the original NCO flat car survived with the tank into the 1940's. Used for hauling oil for the West Side motive power, the tank car was replaced by larger tank cars. Used in the late 1930's

and early 40's in snow plow service, it provided the Shays and Heislors with water while plowing the line in the Spring. Evidence shows that the steam-powered water pump was added at this time as well.

In the early 1950's, the tank car was completely rebuilt, losing it's NCO flatcar to a 28' 6" long flat car built by the West Side car shop from new long main beams and leftover 24' flat car parts. The unusual tool/hose box and platform that perched on the end of the tank were also added at this time. Tank car #5 was placed into fire car service for the rest of its stay with the West Side. After the closure of the West Side railroad in the early 1960's, all of the motive power and cars awaited an unknown fate.

In the 1960's the Roaring Camp and Big Trees tourist railroad was being built in Felton, CA. Some West Side equipment was purchased, including a small diesel switcher, the 2 SPNG flat cars, and Tank #5. For many decades, Tank #5 was occasionally used in photo trains, and put on display near the depot.

[Next Issue – The start of the Tank #5 restoration effort.](#)

In October 2000, Tank #5 and the remains of two SPNG flat cars have been loaded on a trailer for the trip to their new home at the SVRR shops in McEwen, OR. Matt Mattioda photo.



Membership Information

The Western Railway Preservation Society is *dedicated to preserving the skills and artifacts of our western railway heritage*, with particular attention given to the narrow gauge railways such as the Sumpter Valley Railway in northeastern Oregon.

If you have not done so already, please consider joining the Western Railway Preservation Society. For the rest of this year, it's free to join. All you need to do is send your e-mail address to; svwiper@hotmail.com and we will place you on the e-mail list. Then, we will be sending you our e-mail newsletter, where you can stay informed on the progress of the Western Railway Preservation Society's restoration projects including the efforts to save and preserve the Sumpter Valley Railway's South Baker shop buildings as seen in this issue.

Of course, if you would like to go that extra step and purchase a membership, you will not be asked to renew your membership until the spring of 2011. Membership levels are;

General \$20
Sustaining \$35
Life Membership \$250

Membership fees and donations for the Western Railway Preservation Society can be mailed to;

Western Railway Preservation Society
PO 1644
Plaza Way #209
Walla Walla, WA 99362

If you have any questions or comments about the WRPS or any of our projects, please feel free to contact Tim Bain at svwiper@hotmail.com or Jerry Huck at lmcx@eoni.com. We would be happy to share more details of this new venture with you and hope you will consider being a member of the new Western Railway Preservation Society.

Just one of the things to watch for in our next issue, is part 2 of Mike Robert's article on the History and the Resurrection of West Side tank car #5.



West Side tank car #5 at Roaring Camp in 1990. Photo by Douglas van veelen