

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 137

Cal Poly

Dec. 2004

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

Here we are again drawing close to the end of another year. With that said, it is now time to think about your contributions to the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society for the next year. We must all be having so much fun for the year to pass so quickly—or is it true that the older we get the faster time flies? Again, as we reflect on the past year much was accomplished, & my thanks goes to all of you who help make Swanton such a special place, not only for us volunteers, but also for all who come to visit. I think Al would be very pleased with what all is being done on the railroad & its grounds.

This past work weekend saw many of our volunteers arrive early since many had it as a four-day holiday with Veteran's Day on Thursday. We rolled mid-day on Thursday and found that Clinton, Mark Cooper, & Randy had been busily working on the 1500. We thought that Bob Wilkinson was also present, but soon discovered that it was Martie Way and sons, Aaron & Logan. They have now become the new owners of Bob's former blue van. The next day saw Pete & Bob join the volunteer forces. While Bob showed everyone his new van, in between working on the overhaul of the diesel engine, & recouping from recent eye surgery, Randy and Cooper continued to work on the 1500, Aaron, Logan & Clinton did some maintenance on the crane, & I worked on the new station, to be located at the south end of the McNab Grove. Andy arrived later to help get things ready for the workday on Saturday.

The work weekend had a full crew turn out. Frank Smith came in to work on qualifications,

Marty & Randy worked on the 1912; pulled the cylinder, along with one of our new volunteers, Vincent. Edski installed hose reels in the roundhouse. Dick Toulson cleaned up around the grounds & later showed guests around. Mac Gaddis assisted me with the new station, & Lou worked on the roses before going down to the caboose to work on archiving.

Pete drove Martha, Martie, Jen with children "Lissa" & Josh, & Mary Ann down to Folger Field. There every-one searched & eventually found the rows & rows of daffodil bulbs. Approx. four five-gallon buckets of bulbs were dug up & brought up to be planted in the meadow area. Come spring we will maybe see daffodils everywhere! Marty brought in the new signs to call attention to our very own radio station for a short overview of SPRR—turn your FM dial to 104.7 to listen to a great recording, by Pete, about Swanton. Bill & Fitz made basic forms for the upcoming wreath-making workday. Bill also transplanted the growing redwoods from 1 gallon- tubs to five-gallon containers. Then he went to check on his new fern garden project. If you haven't seen this project yet, you should, as it is really coming along & will be very nice. Later that afternoon, Arlene & Matt came down to visit after their recent move to Washington. It was great to visiting with them & to hear that all is going well.

Gloria McNab came over Sat. afternoon to feed all of us a very delicious homemade lasagna dinner. Aaron commented on how she got the turkey to taste so good! Along with the great dinner, others contributed other dishes &/or grand finales for various desserts. One has never gone away from a

Swanton dinner table starving, & this was true to form again. Our thanks go to Gloria & Bill for providing everyone with this very special meal.



A fine meal was had by all



After every meal the work begins

A General Meeting followed Saturday's lunch. A unanimous ballot was passed for the new slate of officers.

Though the volunteers had thinned out pretty much, on Sunday, Geoff & I did finish assembling the new station. Martha & Mary Ann finished cleaning up around College Station, & planted more daffodil bulbs—all 503[?] of 'em. Several irises were also transplanted. All in all it was a most successful work weekend & much fun was had by all. We look forward to seeing many of you in Dec. either for the scheduled work weekend &/or for the New Year's Eve run. That event is always a great family



Ed and Geoff working on new station

outing & one that several of us look forward to every year. Just be sure to dress warm & come well rested so you can stay up late. Until Dec., then, we wish all of you & your families a very safe, enjoyable, & thankful Thanksgiving. If you eat too much Turkey, come on out to Swanton in Dec. to help work it off. We have the best outdoor gym around!



1914 and 1912 on the Folger Y

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

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| Dec. 11/12 | work weekend- WREATH MAKING CLASS |
| Dec. 31 | New Year's Eve Run |
| Jan. 8/9 | work weekend |

Turkey day came & went & we certainly hope that all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving spent with family &/or friends. Though we did not serve a

Swanton turkey dinner this past month, we want to give our very special thanks to Bill & Gloria McNab for providing a delicious homemade lasagna dinner. Approximately twenty of you stayed for the dinner & an evening of just good visiting & getting to know one another even more. We are always thankful for the bonds of friendship developed here at Swanton.

As the end of the year is fast approaching, plans for the annual New Year's Eve festivities are in the making. The theme for this year's barn was provided by Pete & will be the based on "The Polar Express". During the Dec. work weekend we will be starting to gather decorations & ideas to get everything organized. So if any of you have extra strings of white lights, bells, white sheets bring 'em on down. Remember, too, that for the New Year's Eve run SPRR hosts a potluck prior to the train rides. For those of you coming down, the day before New Year's Eve, we will be serving dinner—but would like to have a head count to make sure we plan on enough for all. Having a head count always helps in better planning.

Reservations for wanting to stay overnight during the work weekend & for New Year's should be called or emailed in ASAP. Facilities are limited & we want to make sure we can accommodate everyone. Call (805) 995-3659 or email ecarnegi@calpoly.edu. Thank you.



Swanton photo takers

WREATH-MAKING CLASS

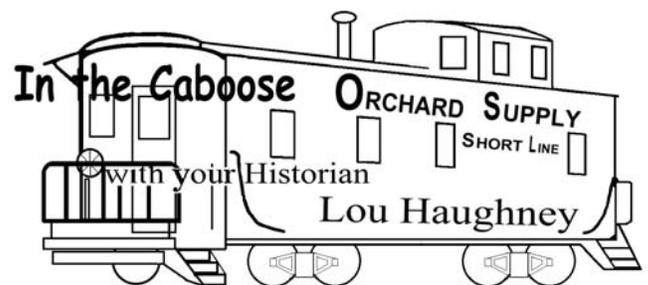
For the Sat., Dec. 11 workday, Swanton will be offering a wreath making class to all who are interested. Fresh wreaths will be made from Swanton redwoods &/or bay wood trees. So if you are interested **PLEASE. PLEASE** let us know so that we can make arrangements to have adequate supplies on hand. There will be a minimal cost of \$5.00/@ to cover costs for supplies. If you have extra metal clippers, wire coat hangers, bring them with you, this would really help. Join in the fun of making fresh wreaths for your self or as a gift!

NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS received over the last month were as follows:

Tom Baker
Patricia Elward

Mountain View,
Santa Cruz

On behalf of the entire organization, we welcome each of you into our "train family" & we certainly look forward to seeing you at some of our next events. Many of our supporters may not recognize you right away so please introduce yourselves so that we can get to better know you & vice versa. Also be sure to introduce yourself to both Pete McFall, Secretary to obtain your membership book with bylaws, etc. & then to Bob Wilkinson so that he can make up your very own "gold", laminated nametag with all pertinent information.



MORE HISTORY OF THE MACDERMOT FAMILY

Bob Parkinson, who researched cemetery records & newspaper files in Oakland, has uncovered more information about the MacDermot Family. Much of what he found pertains to "vital statistics" of the MacDermot Family.

As told before, Louis Main MacDermot was the second of four children born to Charles Francis MacDermot & Flora Main MacDermot. As befitted their status in the social & business circles of San Francisco & Oakland, the Main/MacDermot Families possessed an imposing vault in the Mt. View Cemetery of Oakland. The cemetery's records suggest that the vault was purchased or built by Mrs. MacDermot's father, Charles Francis Main, an original '49er from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. After only a few months in the gold fields, Charles F. Main, with fellow New Englander, Ezra Winchester, founded in 1850 the leather goods factory & wholesale house of Main & Winchester. This firm quickly became a leading manufacturer & distributor of harnesses, saddlery, & related leather products. Main's daughter, Flora, became the wife of Charles F. MacDermot, "a prominent citizen of San Francisco".

The records of the Mt. View Cemetery contain the dates not only of the deaths or interments, but also, in many cases, the birth dates of members of the Main & the MacDermot families. Most important for the history of the Overfair Railway, & the Swanton Pacific Railroad, is the birthday of Louis M. MacDermot, a "vital statistic" previously unknown because of confusing census records.

Louis M. MacDermot's birthday is given as May 2, 1877. This date agrees with the listing in the 1880 U. S. Census roster, which states that Louis was 3 years old as of June 1880. The 1900 Census gives ages of all the MacDermot's that are significantly less than what would be calculated from the 1880 Census. So, the agreements of the cemetery's record with the data of the 1880 Census confirm that Louis was born in 1877. The cemetery's notation for Louis' wife, Hortense, is sparse, like most of the information about her; the listing states only that she died in 1946. Louis died about two years later on Feb. 22, 1948. Both are interred in the Main/MacDermot vault in the Mt. View Cemetery, Oakland.

Additional brief items about Louis & Hortense are found in San Francisco & Oakland directories of the 1920's. The 1924 Roster of the San Francisco Golf & Country Club lists among its female members, "MacDermot, Mrs. Louis M." Louis, however, is

not included in the separate listing of male members. Maybe he was not a golfer, or perhaps he was not concerned about maintaining an elite social standing.

Yet, the 1927 San Francisco Social Register lists both as follows:

NAME: MacDermot, Mr. & Mrs. Louis M.
 MAIDEN NAME:
 CLUBS: SFG (San Francisco Golf Club?)
 PHONE:
 ADDRESS: 1055 California
 CITY:
 REMARKS:

The incompleteness of this entry contrasts sharply with the detailed & complete entry for Louis' sister & brother-in-law, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Hunt Proctor of Piedmont (Flora Belle MacDermot). These listings suggest that Louis & Hortense did maintain some high society affiliations & activities in the 1920's.

The listing of their address as 1055 California, without the name of the city, is strange. If that address was in San Francisco, then they were living on the top of Nob Hill, maybe in an apartment or in one of the hotels there. To confound the question of their residence during that period is the 1920 U. S. Census record, which says their residence was a "river boat in San Francisco". Yet some other evidence suggests that they may have been living somewhere temporarily, or part-time, in San Francisco. According to an article by Micheletti of the Golden Gate Railroad Museum, Louis was involved during the 1920's for several months in the rebuilding of the miniature steam locomotive & railroad at the Fleischauer Zoo at the far western end of the City. Commuting daily from his Oakland mansion to that Zoo would have been a time-consuming daily trip.

Thus, little by little, we find more facts about Louis & Hortense MacDermot. However, significant & relevant questions still remain. Where & how did Louis obtain his mechanical engineering skills? What schools did he attend? Or, were his mechanical aptitudes natural without formal education in that field?