

# SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD

Number 72

Cal Poly

May 1999

## On Track

With your director,

Ed Carnegie



In spite of the rain we had over 230 stouthearted visitors showed up for the sixth Al Smith Day. This was the largest attendance we have had for this event. The weather was sunny and nice the day before but rained all night on Saturday. We had real mixed emotions on what the day would be like as it kept drizzling all morning long. We finally decided we would set up for the rains, tables and chairs were set for 55 in the red-house, as well as plans for the using the car-barn as a dry area. We did use some covers down in College Park that the society had just purchased and hoped for the best. As the morning progressed, and the clouds kept coming we decided to go on with our original plans of feeding in College Park. Two of the large tables were covered and the BBQ crew under the leadership of Jim Scott had the fire underway.

I would like to extend a very special thank you to the ranch, Wally Mark, LaDonna Seely, Jerry Kurz and their crew of people that helped cook and serve, as well as to Professor John Beckett of the Animal Science Dept. and his fence crew. Thank you to ranch crew Marius Antanavicius, Louisa Alix, Steve Auten, Tom Midgley; and Cal Poly's fence crew- Ashlee Redmond, Shane Osterhaler, Jennifer Madrigal, Rene Brewer, Kate Jenkins, Brian Wetzal, Jessica Trentecoste, and Christina Hepner.

Marty Campbell and crew had the 1912 and 1914 polished and hot, so all we needed was the weather to cooperate. It did, from 11:00 on we had only very light showers, most of the time it was just cloudy. A little after 3:00 a few drops came and that is when most of the crowd left. I never saw the College Station area cleared so fast.

Everyone must have thought here it comes, but the rain only lasted a short time. It cleared up and we were able to put things away without getting wet. I want to thank all of our members that jumped in to help to make clean up go so quickly. The canopies were taken down, all the tablecloths were picked up, the cars were put away, garbage hauled out, and the car-barn was turned into Swanton's new "drying shed". Tablecloths and awning covers were hung from the rafters to dry.

Preparing for the event on Saturday's workday brought lots of members to help out. Several of our new members were there to help out as well.

Projects accomplished included:

-  dressing of the track from the turntable through College Park
-  weeds were pulled, lawn and area behind the round-house was mowed, even road and parking lots were swept
-  two new RV parking spaces were cleared, leveled, and muddy
-  right-away was cleared and inspected
-  unused material and trash were picked up and taken to the dump
-  the roundhouse crew installed additional lighting, repacked valves, and got the engines ready for the next day's run
-  concrete work was completed on the turntable
-  a great dinner for all Swanton helpers who stayed around

Next on the calendar came Open House at Cal Poly- April 17. For this event the Swanton Ranch and Railroad worked together to set up a combined exhibit featuring both the ranch and railroad. A few of our members lent a hand to set up and man our display. Our display consisted of picture boards depicting "life on the ranch" and handouts of Swanton Pacific history and membership

applications. During the course of the day we had a constant stream of people stop by to inquire about Swanton and the Railroad. Hopefully we will see some new members from this activity. If not, our presence was noted and good PR is always appreciated. I would like to thank each and every one of you who participated. Your help allowed us to get away for a short period of time to attend one of our grandson's birthday party.

Remember to mark your calendar for the next workday - Saturday, May 8. There will be lots of tasks to work on. Car-barn crew will be working on brakes and the building a new ballast car. Electrical lighting needs to be continued in the roundhouse, and preventative maintenance on our engines is always in order. The track crew will be surveying for a possible new run, and of course working on our existing track is always needed. The battle of the weeds will continue!

Since we have an abundance of food left over from our BBQ we will be able to provide all the makings for cold tri-tip sandwich for all in attendance. All you need to bring is your own beverage.

### **Redhouse Reservations:**

The Ranch Director has been working with the Railroad to ensure that we have some space available at the Redhouse for our workdays. However, I do need to know at least one week in advance whether room reservations are needed or not. That way I can better coordinate with Wally Mark to make sure that things move smoothly. If you do not call in to

### **New members**

New memberships received over the last month were as follows:

Arthur Andersen	Chicago, IL
Carol Campbell	Sonoma
David Cole	Daly City
Barry Daniels	Redwood City
Kerry Depold	Santa Clara
Richard Finlayson	Saratoga
Ron & Barbara Green	Palo Alto
Ernest Hills	San Mateo
Pete McFall	Redwood City
Al Meyerson	Santa Cruz
Connie Miller	San Leandro
Tony Pratkanis	Santa Cruz
Teryl Pratt	Morgan Hill
Fred & Yvonne Pyle	Hercules
Bob & Margie Semple	San Rafael
Fred Seyferth	San Jose
Walter Whitman	Oakland

On behalf of the entire organization we welcome each of you into our "train family" and we certainly look forward to seeing you at some of our next events. Many of our members may not recognize you right away so please introduce yourselves so that we can get to better know you and vice versa

### **Request for submissions**

Dear Members,

It has been some time since we have had an article for the Observation Car, which is the column for members to express their thoughts regarding the railroad, relate memories of Al Smith or others, complain if you must (or just feeling ornery), tell how wonderful we are, or anything else your little heart desires.

Your task, should you choose to accept it, is to please send submissions to:

R. FitzPatrick

2770 Shannon Dr.

South San Francisco, CA 94080

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

Typed, hand written, notes on the back of an envelope, pictures even. Long or short, we'll make room for it!



**PUBLICITY  
AND  
EVENT COORDINATION**

Mary Ann Carnegie      and      Fred Vertel

Dates to mark on your calendar

Sat	May	08	Workday
Sat.	May	22	Second Workday
Sat.	June	12	Workday
Sat.	June	26	Second Workday
Sat.	July	10	BBQ and Run for BAGRS
Sat.	July	24	Golden Spikes

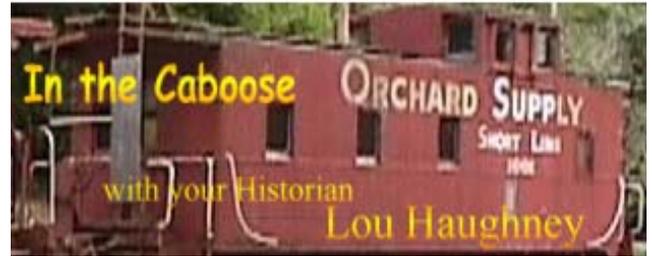
As you notice we are now having our two work weekends a month beginning in May. That means the second and fourth Saturday/Sunday of each month.

However, if any of you want to contribute time other than on the work weekends you are more than welcome to come when it best fits your schedule. Just be sure to let the Director, Ed Carnegie know that you will be on the premises.

Remember too that since we have tri-tip leftovers all you workers for the next workday will have lunch provided. You just need to bring your own beverage. Dinner will also be on the schedule for those of you want to stay. Just be sure to let Fred or myself know that you want to be included. And by the way we always have some railroad videos to show and tales to tell.

Safety Simon says:

**“Don't let a fall  
ruin your Spring!”**



## MORE HISTORY of the MacDERMOT FAMILY

### Louis' Father

Louis M. MacDermot was born of wealthy parents. His father, Charles F. MacDermot, was described in an obituary as "a capitalist" and "a very wealthy man, being rated as a millionaire. ... He was extensively interested in real estate across the bay [i.e., in San Francisco], from which he derived a large income." This obituary in the Oakland Enquirer of Nov. 22, 1898, states that the deceased had lived in Oakland for 20 years or more, since 1879 or earlier. He was born in Ireland. The article mentions "a wife and four children" as survivors without giving their names, not even that of his wife. Rather, the article identifies Charles as the "son-in-law of Charles Main, of the well-known San Francisco firm of Main and Winchester".

### Louis' Mother and Maternal Grandfather

Louis' mother, Mrs. Flora Main MacDermot, died in October 1914, sixteen years after her husband's death. By then, newspaper articles were giving more credit to the ladies in the MacDermot family, and presumably to all ladies, by using their full names. A clipping from a December 1914 Oakland newspaper tells more of the MacDermot family.

"The late Mrs. MacDermot was a Miss Main prior to her marriage, daughter of a wealthy dealer in harness and saddles. She inherited property which to-day is valuable, and when she died last October she left an estate estimated at \$2,000,000."

So Miss Flora Main was already a potentially rich heiress when she married Charles MacDermot.

Her father, Charles Main, born in New Hampshire, came to San Francisco in 1854 after a five months sailing voyage around Cape Horn. After a short period in mining, he started into leather goods trade, particularly the manufacture and sale, both retail and wholesale, of leather harness and saddle wear. He became an entrepreneur in other businesses and institutions in the rapidly growing financial center of the West. With other partners, he started the California Insurance Company; and, he served as director of several banks. He was president and director of two San Francisco trolley lines. One line was the Central Railroad of San Francisco, a 6.0 mile horsecar line of 5 foot gauge along Turk Street. The other was the Geary Street, Park & Ocean Railroad Company, a cable car line on Geary Street, that had double tracks of five foot gauge from Kearney Street in downtown out to Central Avenue. From that latter point, a "steam dummy extension" went out to Golden Gate Park.

In most towns and cities, "Main Street" signifies the principal street through the primary business, commercial, and civic center. In San Francisco, however, Main Street honors the name of its wealthy and influential pioneer, Charles Main, the maternal grandfather of Louis M. MacDermot. Main Street is about six blocks long in the "South-of-Market Street" district, between Market Street and the Embarcadero waterfront.

### Louis' Wife

Very little information about Louis' wife has been discovered, other than a listing in the 1920 U. S. Census, which gives her name as Hortense, born in Massachusetts. A recently found directory indicates that they were already married by 1909. The San Francisco Blue Book...Season 1908-1909 has the following entry for the "Oakland List":

MacDermot, Mrs. C. F.; (Mr. and Mrs. Louis M. MacDermot); Mr. Alfred J.; 1407 8th St. [Oakland]; (Oakland 298); Rancho Los Huecos, Madrone, Santa

Clara Co. Cal. and Oak Grove, Portsmouth, N.H.

The significance of enclosing their names within parentheses is not explained. Alfred is the youngest of the four children. The last two items probably indicate additional family residences. The Portsmouth, N.H., residence may derive from Mrs. Flora MacDermot's parents, who were born in New Hampshire. Has anyone heard of Madrone in Santa Clara County?

The two daughters apparently were not living at the family residence at that time. They were: Mrs. Mary W. MacDermot Crawford, the oldest, and Mrs. Flora B. MacDermot Proctor, the third born.

Another interesting section in that Blue Book is the list of all the "Registered Automobile Owners of Cal.". Owning an automobile in 1908-1909 was a qualification for being included in a "fashionable private address directory". L. M. MacDermot, 1407 Eighth Street, Oakland, is listed as no. 1121 of 18,328 registrations. (I did not go through all the entries, which are in fine print over 30+ pages.) The make and model of the automobile are not given.

### Sources:

- 1 Clipping from a newspaper article, without date or newspaper name, presumably a December ??, 1914 issue of an Oakland paper because of its content.
- 2 Obituary is from the Oakland Enquirer, November 22, 1898, page 7, column 2.
- 3 Streets of San Francisco, the Origins of Street and Place Names, by Louis K. Loewenstein, 1984. Lexikos, San Francisco.
- 4 United States Census Records of 1880 and 1920.
- 5 Information about the two trolley lines is found in California Railroads, An Encyclopedia of Cable Car, Common Carrier, Horsecar Railroads in California (1851-1992). by Alvin A. Fickewirth, Golden West Books, San Marino, 1992.
- 6 San Francisco Blue Book: the fashionable private address directory/San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley-Alameda/Season 1908-1909. Charles C. Hoag, Publisher, San Francisco, 1909.