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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Oceano Depot Tour and Lunch
Feb 29, 2020 at 11 am

- Friends Presentation "Heart of the Valley Talks" in Shepard Hall at the Santa Maria Public Library
March 21, 2020 at 10:15 am

The History of Stock Yard and Stock Pass Sidings

Santa Maria Valley Railroad's main line between Ray and Sinton Road has two sidings, one located on each side of the main line. Stock Yard Siding lies on the south side of the main line and Stock Pass Siding is located on the north side of the main line.

The question often arises as to why they are called Stock Yard and Stock Pass? There was a feedlot that was served by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad located there. The 280 acre Sinton and Brown Feedlot was bordered by Ray Road to the west, SMVRR line to the north, Sinton Road to the east, and Betteravia Road and the Union Sugar Refinery to the south. Beet pulp from the Union Sugar Refinery provided feed to the cattle.

Originally the Betteravia Feedlot was established by Union Sugar Company and Southern Pacific Railroad as a pig feedlot around 1899. By 1915 brothers Ernest, Charles, and O.B. Fuller moved cattle to the Betteravia Feedlot. The Union Sugar Refinery closed, and consequently also the feedlot, in 1927 and when reopened 7 years later, the feedlot was taken over by Sinton and Brown.

A 42 inch narrow gauge railroad was installed within the feedlot, and is a story in itself that we'll cover at a later date. Feeder cattle were brought in by rail and finished steers were shipped out by rail. Two sidings were constructed as live cattle was a very time sensitive freight. Loading pens were built along Stock Yard siding. Today all of the structures and footings are gone. Stock Pass was built for either empty cars ready to load, or cars that were just unloaded. Time was of the essence to either load or unload the cattle.

Over the years the annual amount of cattle finished went from 3,000 head of cattle to 60,000 head of cattle. By the late 1960's transport of cattle by rail was shifting over to trucks. Shipping livestock by rail was labor intensive, livestock has to be watered and fed at regular intervals during transit. The national railroad system was in bad shape and service and transit times worsened. Time sensitive freight such as live cattle left the rails.

The Douglass Oil Refinery located at Sinton Road increased transportation of asphalt by tank cars in the 1970's. The 7 car Douglass Refinery siding was switched out two or three times per day at the height of asphalt production.

(continued on page 4)



October 25 - 28
2019

Amtrak
State Railroad Museum
State Capitol
Stanford Mansion
Crocker Art Museum
Old Sacramento
Delta King Hotel

Sacramento Excursion

“Pleasantly worn out” might be an apt description of our group as we departed Sacramento for our return trip home. We certainly packed a lot into our weekend adventure in Sacramento! We visited the State Railroad Museum, the Capitol, and the Crocker Art Museum. Not on our itinerary but a definite bonus was our tour of the Stanford Mansion and its opulent interior and furnishings as it appeared in 1870. An advantage we enjoyed having prearranged our group tour at the Crocker was our docent was able to tailor our tour more toward our rail interests. He offered interesting incite to the men that were the “Big Four” as we viewed their portraits and learned about their role in California history. There was also time to explore on your own at each venue. Our accommodations on the Delta King were a real treat and added to our overall experience in Old Sacramento. We didn't conduct an official poll of the group but it seemed the overall consensus was “let’s do it again”.



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Where Are They Now?

SMV RAIL Bus #9

The rail bus was acquired by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad to provide mail and express service on the line, although it apparently never officially carried passengers. Built in 1932 by Fairmont, it was powered by a Ford Model A engine and delivered to the SMVRR on May 23, 1932 at a cost of \$1685. During its time in service it saw use as an inspection car, auxiliary maintenance of way car, and eventually had its body removed and was used as a MOW motor car. It was retired from service in 1962 and sold to a local scrap dealer in 1965. It was rescued by the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum where it eventually underwent a complete restoration. During a Motor Car Operators West speeder event in April of 2008, SMV No.9 returned to Santa Maria to run on its home rails after 46 years. Today the No. 9 resides at the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum in Campo California and operates occasionally for special events. More information about Rail Bus #9 is available on the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum website at www.psrn.org/trains/passenger/smv-9/.



Photo Ken Westcott

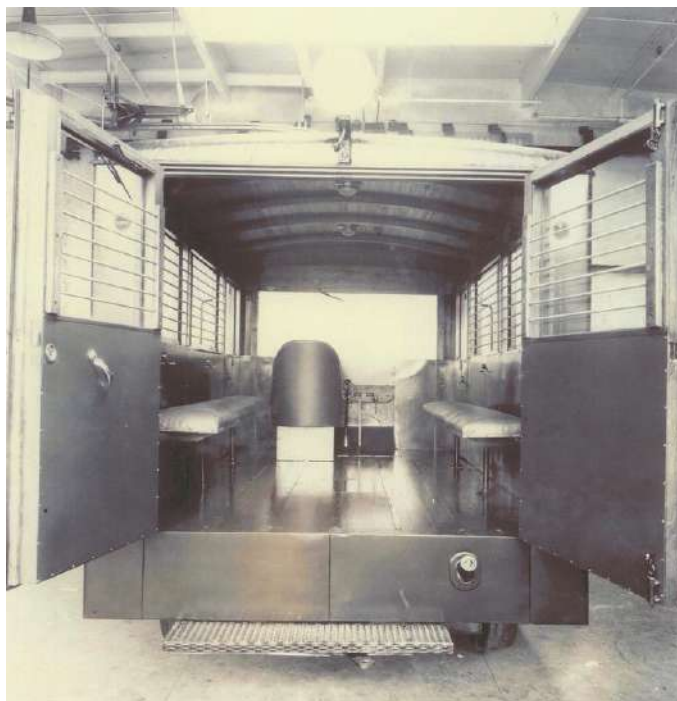


Photo PSRM



Tour the Historic Oceano Depot - February 29, 2020

Join Friends for a tour of the Historic Oceano Depot on Saturday, February 29, 2020. We'll meet at the Depot in Oceano at 11:00 am for a guided tour, including the ex Santa Maria Valley Railroad caboose No. 170, Boxcar, and Dunite cabin of Gavin Arthur. Bring lunch money and following our tour, we'll go to the Station Grill restaurant in Grover Beach next to the Amtrak Station. We'll have lunch and hopefully watch the afternoon Amtrak Surfliner make its stop in Grover Beach. To reserve a spot on the tour, please RSVP by calling (805) 922-7941.



Photo Oceano Depot



Photo Oceano Depot

SMVRR Presentation at Heart of the Valley Talks

Join us in Shepard Hall at the Santa Maria Public Library on March 21

On Saturday, March 21, 2020, Rob Himoto, President and Nathan Paul, Director of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad will be giving a presentation on the history of excursions on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad for the "Heart of the Valley Talks" at the Santa Maria Public Library's Shepard Hall. Although the Santa Maria Valley Railroad is a freight railroad, there have been various passenger excursions in the past. Future excursions on the SMVRR will also be discussed. The presentation starts at 10:15 am. It is suggested to arrive early as seating is limited.



History of Stock Yard and Stock Pass Sidings (continued from page 1)

Both Stock Yard and Stock Pass sidings were used for tank cars for Douglass Oil Refinery as well as storing sugar beet cars for the Union Sugar Plant.

Union Sugar, now Holly Sugar, closed the Betteravia Plant in 1993 while the oil refinery reduced its production of asphalt. By the late 1990's the sidings were often empty. Today both sidings are used for storing various customers cars and are often full. In 2013 Stock Yard was rebuilt with heavier rail and new ties. This year many ties were replaced on Stock Pass. There is a possibility to extend one or both sidings in the future as traffic is projected to continue to grow on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad.

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All photos are from the archives of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad unless otherwise noted.