

The
June 2009



Trainmaster

The Official Publication of the
Pacific Northwest Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
Portland, Oregon



June 20, 1959 - June 20, 2009
50th Birthday Celebration
Steam Locomotive, OREGON



From the Metro Council President

As a railfan and as Council President of the regional agency which operates the zoo, I am doubly proud of the locomotive 'Oregon' and the extraordinary crew that keeps her steaming at the half-century mark. But the locomotive and I share a particularly unusual bond, from our respective and nearly simultaneous births. On June 19, 1959, the 'Oregon' was delivered to the Oregon Centennial Exposition (she came to the Portland Zoo later in the year) to be readied for service, and that very evening my mother went to the hospital with the first pangs of labor. The next day, on June 20, 1959, the 'Oregon' steamed into service, and I screamed into the world. As the locomotive and I celebrate our fiftieth birthday this June 20, we both appreciate the fellowship of railroaders everywhere.

David Bragdon, Metro Council President





A Brief History of the Steam Locomotive

OREGON

W.P. & Z. Railway #1

The Oregon traces her roots back to the Oregon Centennial Exposition held during the summer of 1959. In early 1958, the Portland Zoo was well along in its project to build a railroad at its (then) new site. The 1959 Exposition presented a unique opportunity to raise additional funding for the zoo railroad, and possibly acquire some additional rolling stock and structures as well.

Ed Miller, a Zoo Commissioner, and Jack Jones, Northern Pacific Terminal Railroad, General Manager, were staunch supporters of the zoo railway and were determined to construct a railway for the Exposition that would later be moved to the zoo. After an abortive attempt to design a zoo *Phantasy Train* which carried passengers in stylized cages, it was decided that possibly a steam locomotive (to complement the frontier theme of the Exposition) would be more appropriate. Miller and Jones contacted George Burton, an outspoken advocate of having a steam locomotive, and who was well known as a live steam modeler.

Burton was given the responsibility of constructing the locomotive in less than a year – a daunting task.

Burton drafted three other men to help, Ron Wicke, Chet Wheeler, and John Labbe – together the four-some formed the Oregon Locomotive Works. He also obtained assistance from the H.E. Hirschberger Company which would construct the Centennial coaches and who had already done the body work on the Zooliner.

The steam locomotive was to be generally modeled after the *Reno* (and sisters *Inyo* and *Genoa*) of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad in Nevada. George had already visited the *Genoa* and measured it for an 1 ½” to the foot scale model (1/8 size) that he was building. Some minor modifications to the proportions would be necessary to accommodate the zoo railways 30-inch gauge, but the basic design would be able to be used.

The locomotive was constructed at the Northern Pacific Terminal's Guild's Lake roundhouse. Burton did all of the drawings necessary for the construction of the locomotive. The majority of the pattern and casting work was done at the Oregon Steel Foundry. Much of the ancillary equipment for the locomotive was donated by individuals and companies who were supportive of the project. While much of the work was done by Burton, Wicke, Wheeler, and Labbe, others were shanghaied whenever possible, including George's (then) twelve year old son Brian who laid the original firebrick in the firebox – he was the only one small enough to fit through the firebox door! There are many others who also deserve credit.



Above: The Oregon got plenty of attention during her time at the Exposition, after all, she was brand new and untested. Here her siderod bearings are being checked.



Left: Passing the frontier town at the Exposition, the Oregon pulled its full compliment of five cars.

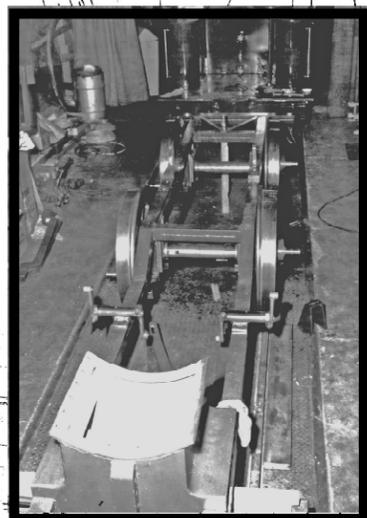
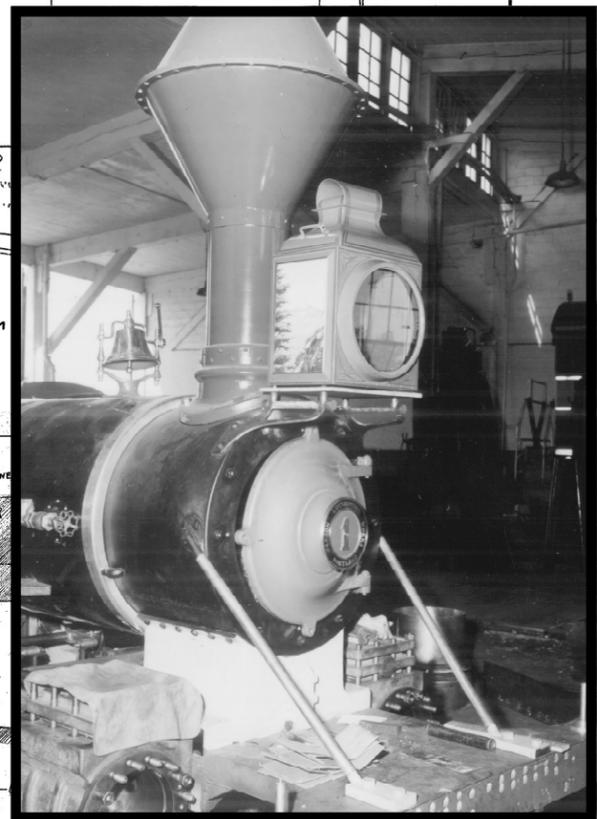
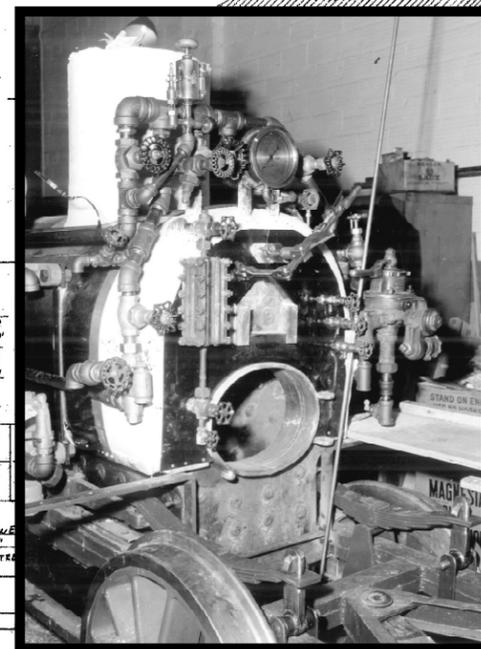
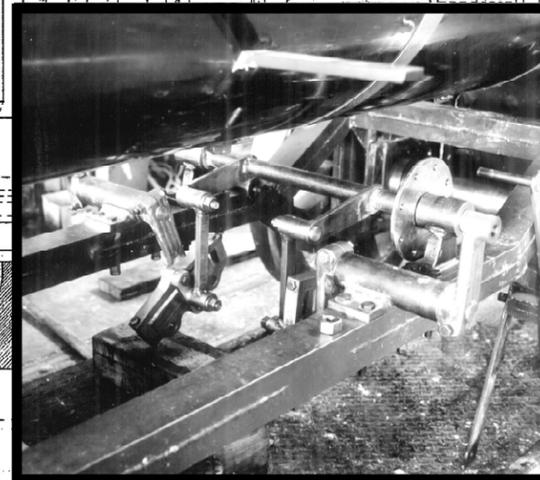
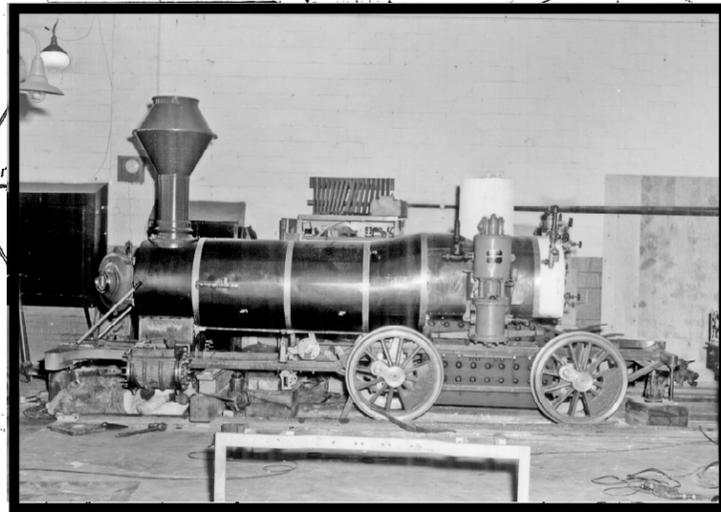
Below: The Oregon was designed to operate on very sharp curves as illustrated by the front wheel being well outside the pilot (cowcatcher).

From concept to reality took slightly more than nine months. The locomotive was delivered on June 19, 1959, and began service on June 20. Burton made the decision to christen the steamer with the number one, and to name it the *Oregon* in honor of the State Centennial. The cars for the train had already arrived at the Exposition site when the *Oregon* was delivered, so the loco was immediately pressed into revenue service.

When the Exposition closed, all the railroad rolling stock was taken to the zoo. In addition, the water tank and station were also relocated to the zoo where they continue to serve the railway. The *Oregon* originally operated only on the "Zoo Loop" while the Zooliner ran on the Washington Park line. Soon,

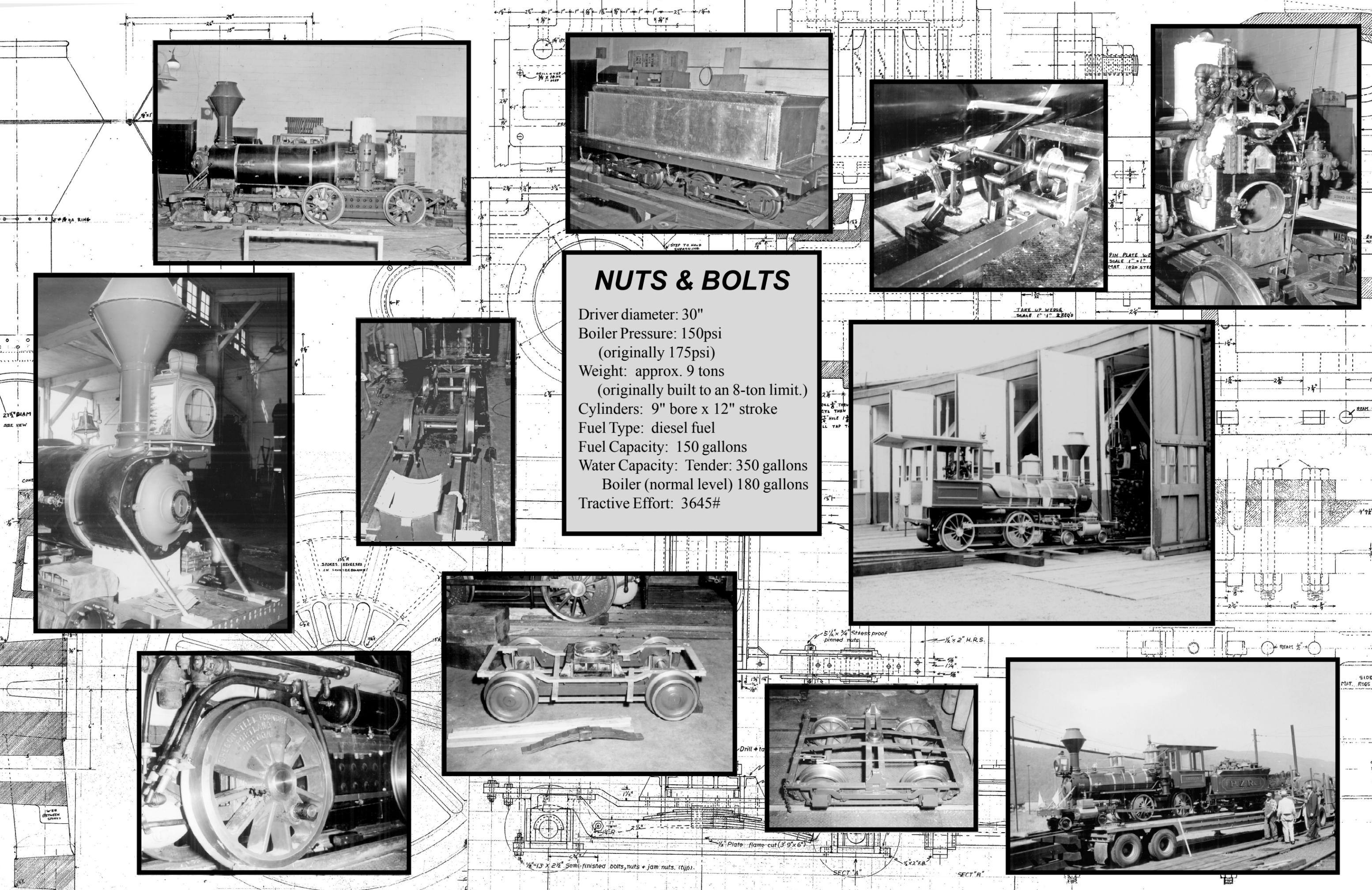
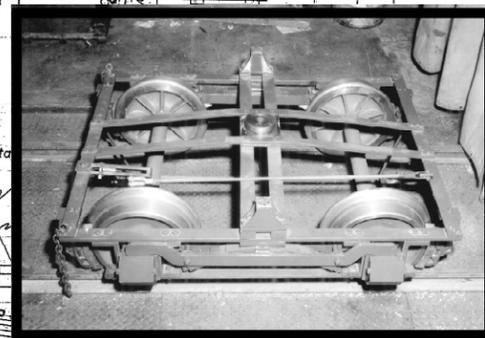
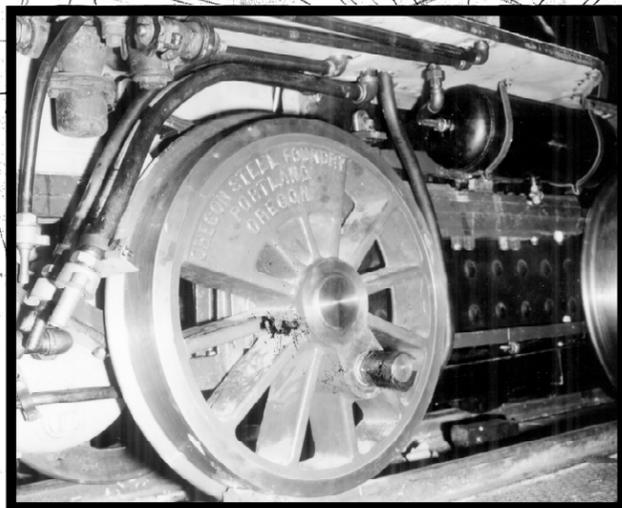
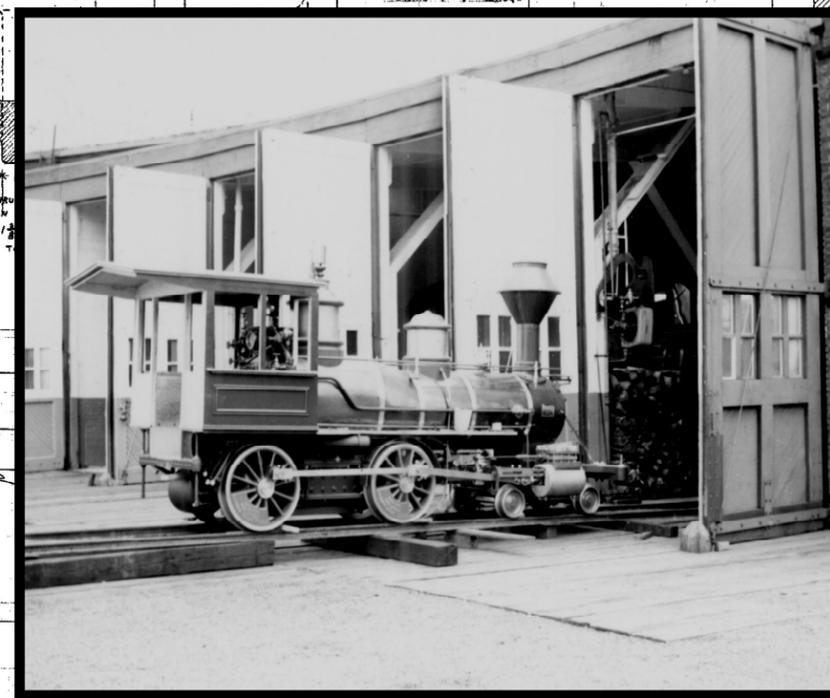


Following pages: There were few drawings made for the locomotive, several are reproduced here for the background. The photos show the locomotive taking shape at the Guild's Lake roundhouse.



NUTS & BOLTS

Driver diameter: 30"
 Boiler Pressure: 150psi
 (originally 175psi)
 Weight: approx. 9 tons
 (originally built to an 8-ton limit.)
 Cylinders: 9" bore x 12" stroke
 Fuel Type: diesel fuel
 Fuel Capacity: 150 gallons
 Water Capacity: Tender: 350 gallons
 Boiler (normal level) 180 gallons
 Tractive Effort: 3645#



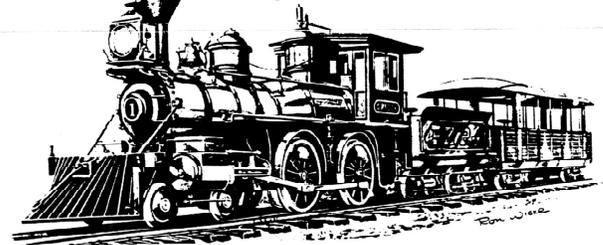


Left and below: Twenty years ago, the Oregon's thirtieth birthday was also celebrated. Despite the fact that the banquet announcement stated that the locomotive was "over the hill," with a little luck, and continued good maintenance, the Washington Park and Zoo Railway will be able to celebrate the locomotive's 75th or even 100th birthday.

The Washington Park & Zoo Railway's steam engine is over the hill!

Come celebrate the steamer's 30th birthday at a banquet honoring the people who got the train on track.

*7 p.m. Saturday June 24
Metro Washington Park Zoo
Elephant Plaza*



**Tickets \$15. Prepaid reservations only.*

Dinner includes choice of barbecued chicken or beef kabobs, zoo admission and a ride on the zoo railway. No host beer and wine.

Reservations required by June 13. Tickets may be picked up at the gate June 24 or mailed in advance.

For information, call Pam Cordray at 226-1561

however, the traffic demand was such that a passing siding was added and the *Oregon* joined the diesel on the full four-mile run. On the four-mile loop, the loco consumes about 10 gallons of fuel and converts 80-100 gallons of water to steam.

By 1982, the years of service had taken their toll on the *Oregon*. The original steel channel (box) frame had broken several times and was no longer repairable. Doyle McCormack (instrumental in the rehabilitation and operation of S.P. #4449) was contracted to construct a new frame of solid steel. While this added significant weight to the locomotive, it cured the frame-cracking problem.

Although the general appearance is very similar to what it was in 1959, there have been many subtle changes over the years. The original maple pilot (cowcatcher) has been replaced with a steel, boiler tube pilot, allowing a front coupler for improved operations. A new six-chime (six-tone) whistle was

added in 1993, giving the *Oregon* a "big locomotive" sound. In 2000, the locomotive received new steel tires (yes, locomotives have tires) and new bearings. By 2002, the boiler was in need of major inspection and general rehabilitation. The boiler was pressure-tested and easily passed. The old insulation (lagging) on the boiler was replaced with new, environmentally-friendly material. Other repairs were also accomplished, including a new cab roof and new electrical wiring. The rebuild was extensive, requiring a total of 550 days to accomplish, but it ensured that the *Oregon* would be operational for many years.

As with all steam locomotives, there are many maintenance tasks to be done, and periodic repairs that must be accomplished, but the *Oregon* has come through her first half century with flying colors and the crews and riders of the Washington Park and Zoo Railway can look forward to many more decades of service from this classic iron horse.

Below: One of the chores that must be done periodically on a steam locomotive is to blow down the boiler. This rids the boiler of some of the sediment that accumulates in the course of normal operation. This is normally done in a remote location for safety reasons.



Above: The Oregon takes water at the water tank.



Left: Relatively early in her career, the Oregon is shown here on the Washington Park loop. The 4% grade on the line limited the train to four cars.

Below, left: Modern meets classic when the Oregon noses up to the Zooliner. Despite appearances, the Oregon is actually the younger of the two locomotives.



Below: The locomotive has the distinction of carrying the first, and only, builder's plate from the Oregon Locomotive Works.





PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAPTER NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Union Station, 800 NW Sixth Avenue Room 1, Portland OR 97209-3794

www.pnwc-nrhs.org ◊ 503.226.NRHS



FROM THE PRESIDENT

*More than half a century ago a group of Oregonians gathered to plan the celebration of our state's hundredth birthday. Their planning resulted in a highly successful fair held in Portland, in the summer of 1959. It was themed, *Frontier of the Future*. The organizers understood the huge impact of the railroads on the development of the state of Oregon and the country as a whole. Transportation, particularly rail transportation, was the key to move Oregon-produced products to markets far and wide. Railroads were considered so important that the Exposition built its very own railroad, complete with a borrowed state-of-the-art diesel train, and a brand-new steam locomotive, christened the 'Oregon,' to carry visitors around the grounds. 1959 was a time of change, the railroads were completing their conversion from steam locomotives to diesel engines. The Exhibition acknowledged the glory of the steam era while looking forward to a modern, efficient rail system. Railroads continue to play a key role in Oregon's transportation system. In her current role as one of the locomotives of the Washington Park and Zoo Railway, the steam locomotive 'Oregon' continues to provide new generations with a up-close, living, kinetic link to a different, early Oregon, while reminding us of the importance of transportation today. Please help those of us of the Pacific Northwest Chapter celebrate this important milestone in state history.*

Keith Fleschner, PNWC President

HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY, OREGON!

Congratulations to the Oregon Zoo and Metro for providing this wonderful, now fifty-year-old, attraction.

In many ways, the Pacific Northwest Chapter, National Railway Historical Society (PNWC-NRHS), grew up with the zoo railway. The Chapter was formed in 1955 and shortly thereafter began work helping to develop the zoo railway and its rolling stock. We are very pleased to be a part of this golden anniversary celebration and fully intend to be a part of the 100th anniversary celebration, as well.

Please join us in thanking the Oregon Zoo management and the Metro Council for their continued support of this important Oregon asset.

For more information about PNWC-NRHS: 503.226.6747 or www.pnwc-nrhs.org.

Keith Fleschner, Pacific Northwest Chapter President
800 NW Sixth Avenue Room 1, Portland OR 97209

This special *Trainmaster* issue was developed with contributions from Jeff Honeyman, Ken Lauderback, Ron McCoy, Glen Comstock and Bill Hyde. Photos are from Bob Harbison, John Labbe, Joe Perelle, the Hyster Corporation and the PNWC archives.

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PNWC-NRHS MISSION

To preserve and interpret Pacific Northwest railroad history and historical artifacts for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.

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The Oregon's Heritage

In 1958, when George Burton was contacted about building a locomotive for the Exposition and Zoo, he was already in the process of constructing a live-steam model of a Virginia and Truckee Railroad 4-4-0. The locomotive that he had chosen for his model was V&T's #11, the Reno.

The *Reno* was the first of three, nearly identical, 4-4-0s to be delivered to the V&T. She rolled out of Baldwin's Philadelphia works on the 11th of January, 1872 as Baldwin shop number 2816. In May, 1872 she was on the V&T to be set up and readied for service as the 'express' locomotive from Reno to Virginia City, a role that she started in September. By 1873, traffic on the V&T had increased to the point where another locomotive was needed to spell the *Reno* when she was in the shop, and #11 was joined by a sister 4-4-0, the #12, *Genoa*. Two years later, in 1875, the third of the trio, the *Inyo*, arrived on the railroad, carrying a Burnham, Parry, Williams and Company (a Baldwin subsidiary) builder's plate. She was, nonetheless, dimensionally identical to her two sisters.

All three of the locomotives were delivered as wood-burners, but by 1876, the *Reno* was converted to coal. 31 years later, the *Reno* was the first locomotive on the V&T to be converted to an oil-burner.

While the locomotives were supposed to be identical, it is interesting to note that various sources indicate that each of the sisters had their own quirks.

The *Reno* was a favorite of the crews, and was the standard locomotive on the passenger run to Virginia City. The *Genoa* was considered by many of the engineers to be the fastest of the early locomotives

and saw quite a bit of duty on special trains and excursions. The *Inyo*, though not generally mentioned, had a fairly long working life, staying in harness many years longer than the *Genoa*, and substituting for the *Reno* until she left the V&T. Almost the opposite of the *Reno*, the *Inyo* was the next-to-the-last V&T locomotive to be converted to burn oil.

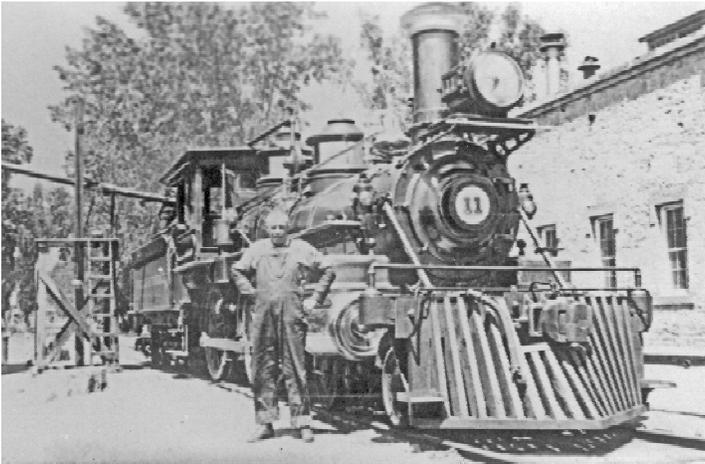
Another curiosity of this threesome of mid-1870s relics, is that they have all survived to the 21st Century. The *Reno* is now owned by Old Tucson Studio, where she occasionally is used in motion pictures and television. The *Genoa* sits in pristine, restored condition in the California State Railroad Museum. The

Inyo resides close to its V&T home at the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City, restored to running condition.

The *Oregon's* heritage is that of very sturdy stock. While we celebrate the *Oregon's* 50th birthday this year, in comparison, she's still a youngster.

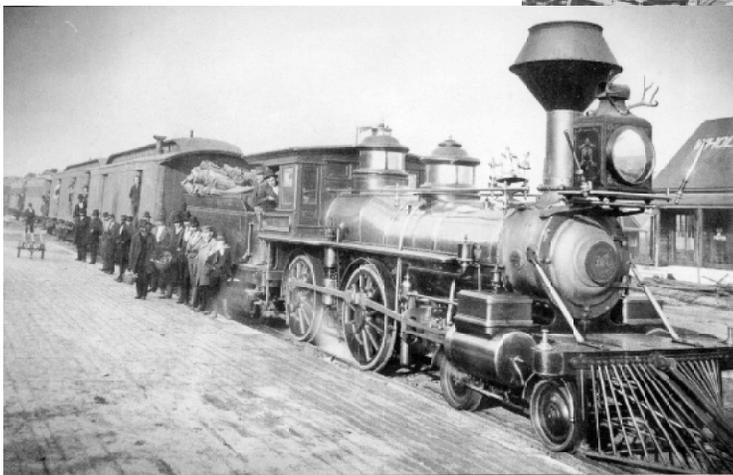
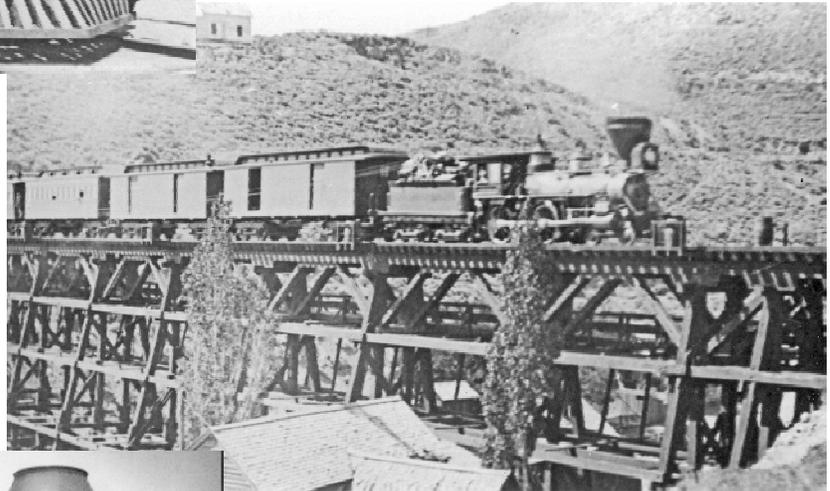


#11 Reno



Left: In later years, there were still a few pieces of brass to polish on the *Reno*, but her paint and trim were a far cry from the Victorian gleaming metal and paint that adorned the locomotive when she arrived on the railroad. The photographer caught #11 taking water beside the V&T's beautiful, stone Carson City enginehouse.

Right: The *Reno* was the locomotive of choice for the Reno/Carson City to Virginia 'express'. Here she is shown on the Crown Point trestle near Virginia City with the morning passenger train, consisting of two head-end cars and several coaches.



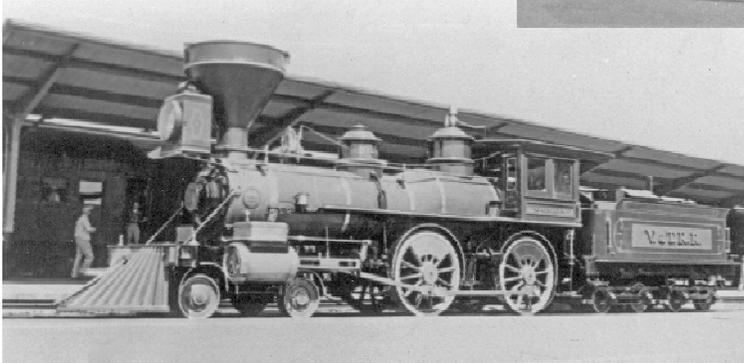
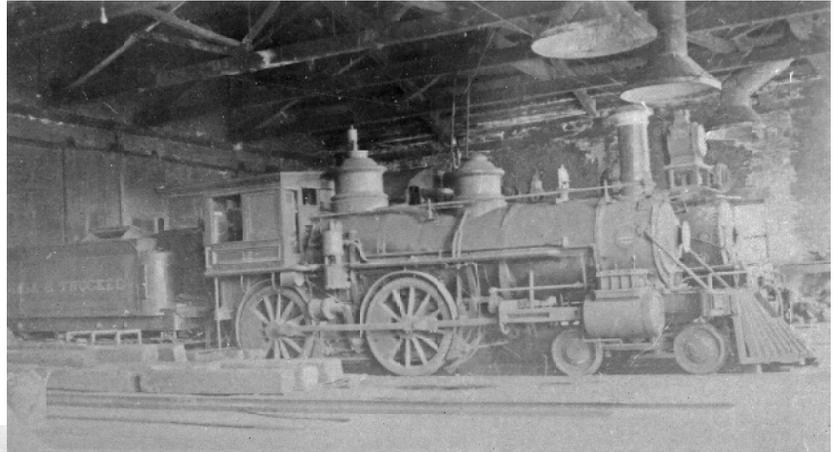
Left: Passenger traffic to Virginia City was significant during the Comstock Rush. Passengers of all persuasions flocked to the Virginia City area to strike it rich. Few did. The V&T, however, carried the lucky and the unlucky, the rich and the poor, the famous and the unheard of - all for the price of a ticket.

Right: Painted as Union Pacific #66 for one of her many movie roles, the *Reno* was certainly dolled-up for Hollywood. The fake wood pile covered her tender oil tank and a metal shroud attempted to hide her single-phase air pump.



#12 *Genoa*

Right: The *Genoa* spent 31 years sitting in the Carson City enginehouse. Shortly after an overhaul in 1908, it was determined that the locomotive was no longer necessary for operations and she was stored until her sale to Eastern Railroads Presidents' Conference in 1939.



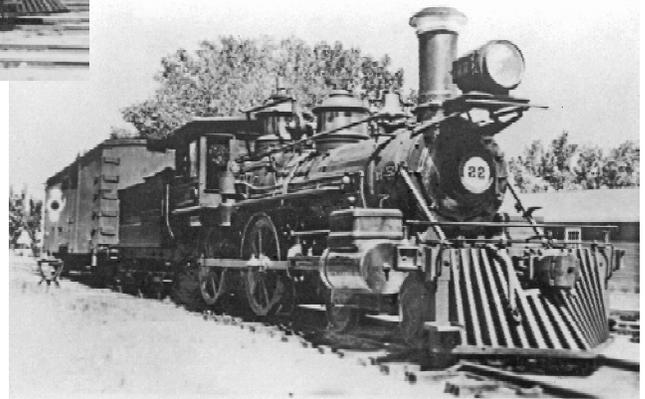
Left: The *Genoa* was donated to the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society in 1948. They retained ownership of the locomotive until 1969 when she was donated to the State of California. Here, she is shown in Sacramento in partially restored condition.

#22 *Inyo*



Left: Shown in this photo outside the Carson City enginehouse, the *Inyo* remained on the active roster until 1926, and was even used occasionally after that.

Right: After her V&T days were over, the *Inyo* was sold to Paramount Pictures and transferred to a backlot near Los Angeles. Like her sister *Reno*, she became a star, and was featured in film and television roles for almost two decades, starting at 62 years of age. Try that, Angelina!



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Virginia and Truckee Railroad #11, *Reno*, was the inspiration for the *Oregon*.

Photos for this article are from the collections of Jeff Honeyman,
Ken Lauderback, Steve Hauff, and the late Lloyd Graham.

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