

The Celebrating 60+ Years Trainmaster

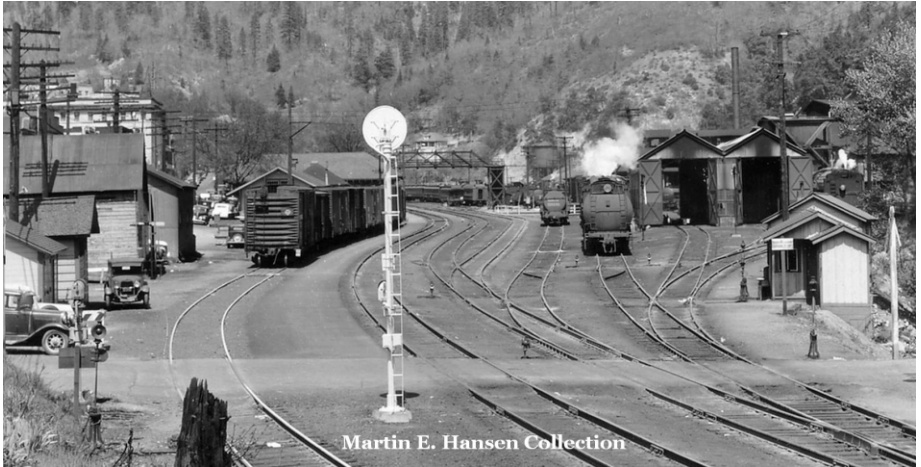
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TOWN OF DUNSMUIR RAILROAD ROOTS



Overview of Dunsmuir Rail Yard during its Steam Locomotive Railroad Era
from the Martin E. Hansen Collection

The Union Pacific rail yard, formerly the Southern Pacific rail yard, runs alongside one of the main streets, Sacramento Avenue in Dunsmuir, California. On the other side of the rail yard is the Sacramento River. The Central Pacific Railroad initially called this settlement "Pusher" because this is where they added extra "pusher" locomotives to trains going north over the Siskiyou range. They built the roundhouse, turntable, depot, machine shops and rail yard here in the late 1880s.

Dunsmuir was designated as the headquarters for the Southern Pacific railroad's Shasta Division back in 1916. The Shasta Division was famous for being the smallest but most rugged of any on the Southern Pacific system.

Dunsmuir was incorporated as a California city in 1909, when the town was already thriving. It's great how the railroad has promoted tourism to the area. It started publicizing railroad excursions to the famous resorts in the area back in the 1880s, and in the 1920s ran special trains to bring visitors from far and wide. They came for the wonderful climate, superb fishing, scenic beauty, and the healing waters at well-known resorts such as Shasta Springs and Shasta Retreat.

The town's fountain was a gift from British Columbia coal baron Robert Dunsmuir and son, Alexander, back in 1888. They donated the fountain on



condition that the town be named for them and their family.

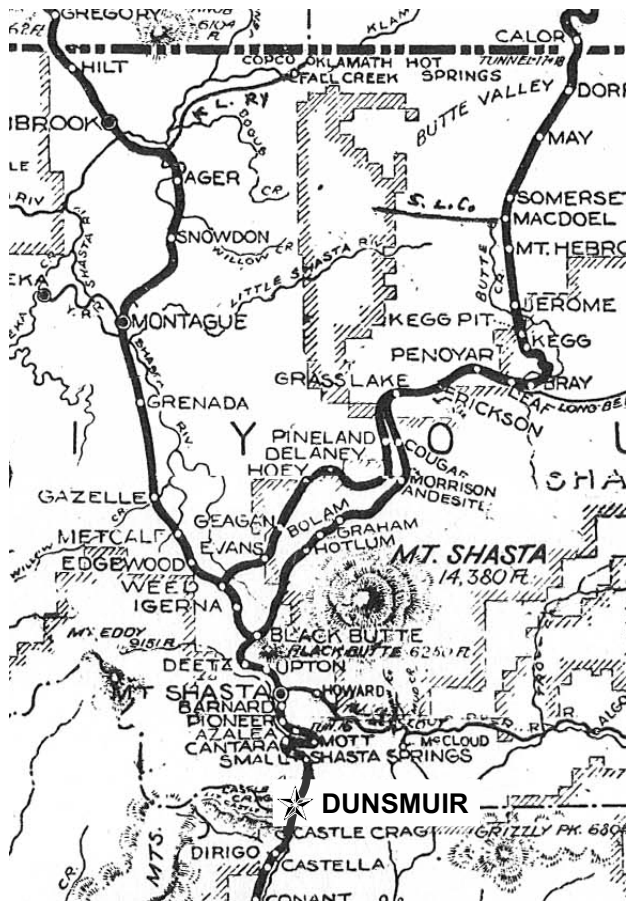
Dunsmuir is a town that looks forward while cherishing its rich history, a town where high-tech startups mingle on the main streets with more traditional shops and restaurants, a town where echoes of the early 20th century mingle with the sounds of the railroad that launched this community over a hundred years ago.

The Dunsmuir Railroad Depot Historical Society (dunsmuirdepot.com) opened a display area in the station adjacent to the Amtrak waiting room and showcases photographs, railroad memorabilia and equipment.



Since 2018, The Southern Pacific (SP) Shasta Division Archives are housed in a building in downtown Dunsmuir. These were previously located at the Depot and other various locations around the city. This archive includes maps, historic photographs, drawings and other memorabilia. In the late 1980s Southern Pacific Transportation Company was absorbed into Rio Grande Industries (Denver And Rio Grande Western Railroad Co.). The Dunsmuir engineering office was closed.

Because of their historic value of the records, appeals were made to the Sacramento division superintendent. This led to the eventual gifting of all the files located in the Dunsmuir vault along with selected files from the Dunsmuir engineering office prior to 1957. These files give the valuable insight of the What, Why and How of Dunsmuir being what it was. Archives open by appointment.



Map of SP Rail Lines Near Dunsmuir

FRESNO MALLETS

Text and Photos provided by Kenneth G. Johnsen



S.P. M-6 No. 1727 was given to Dunsmuir, California by the railroad in 1957. It is looking a bit shabby this day and a grass roots effort has been ongoing by *The Friends of the 1727* to cosmetically restore the engine and tender. Photo by Kenneth G. Johnsen, Aug. 19, 2020.

The August 2020 issue of *The Trainmaster*, with Arlen Sheldrake's note about efforts to cosmetically restore Southern Pacific (SP) 2-6-0 No.1727, landed in my mailbox one day after I had stopped in Dunsmuir, California, to inspect that very engine on my way home from California. The engine is very visible from Interstate 5 and I always make it a point to stop and check out the old gal when I pass through.

The No. 1727, and the rest of the clan collectively known as the Fresno Mallets, have a special place in my heart. In 1954 at the ripe old age of 8, I was given my very first locomotive cab ride in one of the Fresno Mallets. I was visiting my grandmother in Reedley, 20 miles south of Fresno, and I spent hours each day standing at trackside a couple blocks from her home watching as the Southern Pacific crew switched cars around the packing houses with an M-6 class 2-6-0.

In those halcyon days no one worried if an 8-year-old kid wandered a few blocks away to watch trains. And no one would have gotten upset when the friendly crew of the 2-6-0 offered me a ride. I remember they asked me if I wanted to ride in the engine or the caboose. "Engine!" was my instant reply! My excitement overflowed as I climbed up the ladder into the cab and saw up

close the array of controls, and smelled the smells of a working steam engine.

We shuffled around town for a while, during which time the engineer and fireman offered me a sandwich and (jokingly of course) a cigarette. I was in seventh heaven. If there had been any doubt up until that time that I was a devoted railfan, all doubt permanently disappeared. I was hooked!!

These engines were nicknamed Fresno Mallets because of their amazing amount of strength for their size. In the flatlands of California's San Joaquin Valley they could pull as many cars as Southern Pacific's much bigger Mallet articulateds could pull over the



Dunsmuir's future Fresno Mallet #1727 is seen in service at Fresno, California on December 7, 1955. The doughty 2-6-0 has already given its owner 54 years of service at the time of this photo, and is still going strong. Photo from the collection of Kenneth G. Johnsen.

mountains. And yet they were nimble and able to negotiate the tight curves and light rail found along the fruit packing branch lines of the valley.

SP crews liked the Fresno Mallets because of their versatility in tight quarters, and their relatively smooth ride. They did not use up as much fuel and water as larger locomotives, and yet they could pull 50 loaded refrigerator cars at 65 miles an hour! Because of these characteristics, they were well suited to the flat San Joaquin valley conditions and spent most of their careers in California. Dunsmuir's 1727 gave the railroad 55 years of faithful service.

SP 1727 and most of its brethren were built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1901. They were built to a design pioneered by Samuel Vauclain known as a 4-cylinder Vauclain Compound. Each side had a high pressure cylinder and a low pressure cylinder, in an attempt to utilize the steam more efficiently by using it twice. However, the resulting pounding of the drive rods gave the engines a rough ride and put more wear on the rails. So Southern Pacific eventually converted them all to simple operation.

Number 1727 was "simplified" in 1908 and if you look at its smokebox you will see a plate affixed by the Sacramento Shops stating that the engine was rebuilt by them in December of 1908. This rebuild certainly contributed to their long service lives. How many diesel locomotives do you know of that gave their railroads 55 years of service?

Several Fresno Mallets were saved by the Southern Pacific and donated to towns in California and elsewhere. My favorite is in nearby Woodburn, Oregon. [Editor's Note: for more info, see: www.woodburn-or.gov/parks/page/historic-1785-locomotive] For many years, Portland



My Dad gave me a camera in 1955 and I began taking train pictures. Unfortunately we had moved away from California and I was unable to photograph my beloved Fresno Mallets in action. We returned to California in 1958 and by then the action was all done. A long row of dead Fresno Mallets lined the yard in Fresno. The engines would soon meet the scrapper's torch. Photo by Kenneth G. Johnsen.

resident Frank Scheer has cared for S.P. 2-6-0 No. 1785 on display in downtown Woodburn. Frank, along with the late Chris McLarney, cosmetically restored the 1785 over 30 years ago and has kept it in immaculate condition ever since.

Frank spared no detail. It is the finest cosmetic restoration of a steam locomotive I

have ever seen. It is right up there with the Southern Railway PS-4 Pacific in the Smithsonian and the Southern Pacific Cab Forward in the California State Railroad Museum. It is definitely worth a visit if you haven't checked it out before.

And, if you want to help another Fresno Mallet regain its rightful appearance, you can donate to the Friends of the 1727, P.O. Box 412, Dunsmuir, CA 96025. Funds are being collected for the project in memory of Bruce Petty.

[Note: Ken, a long time PNWC member, is the President of Yakima Valley Trolleys (www.yakimavalleytrolleys.org) and since 1965 has been a fan of the Milwaukee Road and active in preserving the trolley history of Yakima.]

In closing we would like to thank the people at Parks & Recreation and the City of Dunsmuir, in particular Brian Wilson, for their support in the refurbishment of the engine and surrounding park, as well as the rest of the 1727 Team.

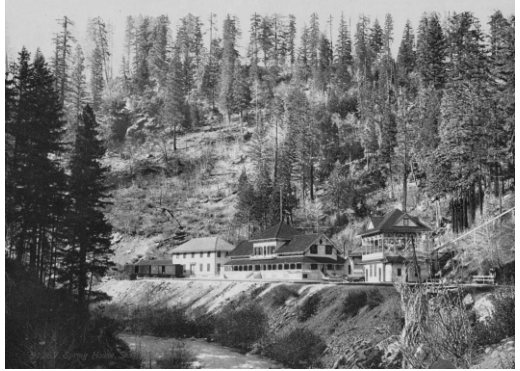


There is still much work to be done but the goal is in sight. THANK YOU!

HOME OF THE “BEST WATER ON EARTH”

The City of Dunsmuir is known as having “The Best Water on Earth” for good reason. The water delivered to the greater Dunsmuir area is pure spring water. This water comes straight out of a mountain spring and is delivered right to their homes and businesses. That’s right, from the spring straight to the tap. No chemicals added, no filtration, simply pure spring water from mother earth.

Shasta Springs was the name of a popular summer resort on the Upper Sacramento River, during the late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century. It was located just north of the City of Dunsmuir, California and just north of Upper Soda Springs along the Siskiyou Trail in northern California. The resort was on the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and natural springs on the property were the original sources of the water and beverages that became known as the Shasta brand of soft drinks. The resort closed in the early 1950s when it was sold and continues to be owned by the Saint Germain Foundation.



Spring House at Shasta Springs
Library of Congress [locn.loc.gov/2008678119](https://www.loc.gov/2008678119)

The Dunsmuir Fountain was originally located next to the town’s depot. It became a community landmark and a symbol of the town’s water resources and a centerpiece for the active railroad yard. It was also a gathering place for railroad workers, travelers, tourists, and residents. In 1899, the fountain was damaged under a heavy accumulation of frozen snow and ice. It is thought that the lady who graced the center of the fountain disappeared at this time and a round globe/sprinkler was installed in her place. The fountain was dismantled in the 1960s and the fountain was relocated in the early 1970s at the entrance to the



The Restored Fountain from *Mount Shasta Herald*
Photo by Shareen Strauss Jul 8, 2020

Dunsmuir City Park and Botanical Gardens. The fountain began restoration in 2019. A new fountain lady, ‘Rebecca at the Well’ was purchased and reinforced to once again stand on the original fountain base. The restored fountain continues to flow the “Best Water on Earth”. (dunsmuirbotanicalgardens.org)

WILLAMETTE MEDCO No. 7



Photo Courtesy of John Labbe Collection

During the 1920s, the Willamette Iron and Steel Company of Portland, Oregon constructed a total of 33 locomotives for the logging industry. The locomotives were an improved variant of the Shay design with 3-cylinders providing power to the wheels in all three trucks through shafting and gears on the right side of the locomotive. These locomotives had a maximum speed of about 18 mph.

Medco's No. 7, with a fuel tank capacity of 1200 gallons of oil and water tank capacity of 3000 gallons, was initially delivered in 1926 to Anderson & Middleton Lumber Company of Cottage Grove, Oregon as their No. 2. The locomotive was the 21st constructed by Willamette Iron and Steel Co. and was one of only 4 to have been built with an open cab. From 1933 to 1949, the locomotive had a succession of owners at Westfir, Oregon. The 87 ton locomotive was put to work by five different logging operations before needing a boiler rebuild. Consequently, the West Salem Machine Company rebuilt the boiler and the locomotive was sold to the Medford Corporation at Medford, Oregon in May, 1949.

In June, 1965, the No. 7 was retired and sold to the Railroad Park Resort and was moved to Dunsmuir, California. It was placed there on display where it resides today.



(rrpark.com)



Photo Courtesy of John Labbe Collection



SP No. 3295 at Dunsmuir Railyard Turntable in 1946. Martin E, Hansen Collection

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Dunsmuir Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center
(dunsmuir.com/history).

Dunsmuir Depot Musuem (dunsmuirdepot.com).



With the support of *The Trainmaster* reporter, Arlen Sheldrake, and editor, T. Trent Stetz, and the Pacific Northwest Chapter (PNWC) of the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS), this pamphlet was developed to celebrate the newly refurbished SP locomotive No. 1727 for the Gala Ribbon Cutting at Dunsmuir Railroad Days held on June 12, 2021, at the Dunsmuir City Park.



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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