

 *The Santa Clara*
B L O C K 

Along the Mission Trail - Touring California by Model Railroad



(The Photo Gallery features more San Miguel pictures, starting on Page 6)

The South Bay Historical Railroad Society (SBHRS) was incorporated in 1985 to preserve local area railroad heritage while running a working museum to serve the community. One of the benefits of the Santa Clara Depot museum is having the space available for two operational HO and N scale model railroad layout displays.

We have discovered that the museum layouts provide a unique opportunity to provide our visitors and members with a better understanding of California's history through model railroading.

California and the Railroad

The completion of the Central Pacific Railroad on May 10, 1869 linked California to the rest of the country.

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By 1920, California had over 8,000 miles of tracks. Railroads were the driving force of the the state's social, political and economic development.

Today California is well known for the abundance and varieties of fruit and vegetables cultivated throughout the state. However, the only fruits indigenous to the region are wild berries. Spanish missionaries first introduced Old World fruits such as oranges, grapes, apples, pears and figs to California in the late 1700s. Mission San Gabriel Arc-angel near Los Angeles had a significant orchard and is considered by many to be the origin of California's citrus industry. Small carloads of California fruits and vegetables were shipped eastward over the Central Pacific soon after completion, but it was the iced refrigerator car or "reefer" that led to the dramatic increases in the amount and distances California products could be shipped.

The Santa Fe railroad developed a massive fleet of refrigerator cars and in 1906, the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads created the Pacific Fruit Express. Over half the farm products produced in California were soon exported by rail to the rest of the country. High-demand crops such as wheat, sugar beets, olives and lettuce were also cultivated and shipped. California earned the title of "the nations produce basket."

California's abundant natural resources were other important commodities that were shipped by rail. Lumber quickly became a major industry, although most forest products were shipped and consumed locally to keep up with the growing housing demands. With the development of petroleum fields near Los Angeles, railroads were converted to oil power, and gasoline pushed California and the world into the "Automobile Age".

The SBHRS Museum HO Model Railroad

The train layouts play a major role in attracting visitors to the Museum. This is most apparent during the two annual open house events which are significant fundraisers and an important source of new society memberships.

The HO layout has been a focal point of the museum experience since construction began in 1988. By 2012, the HO layout was approaching 24 years of age and many areas needed serious cleaning and repair. As scenery upgrades

were contemplated, the Layout Committee decided, whenever possible, scenes be created to accent California's railroad heritage.

Alhambra Valley was the first California scenery upgrade project. I approached Charles Cottam and Woody Rider with a proposal to refurbish part of the layout to reflect the distinctive California scenery found along the Santa Fe mainline near Martinez. The Committee approved and under Woody's guidance, the Alhambra Valley transformation began. Planned track upgrades were completed and followed with plaster and cliff work by Keith "Kiwi" White. The scenic highlights here include oak woodlands, rolling hillsides covered in yellow grass, wood and steel trestles and a new Santa Fe depot. In two years, our first California scenery project was completed.

Our attention turned next to an area known as "The Modules", one of the oldest parts of the HO layout.

The Birth of San Miguel

The relationship between railroads and the fruit packing industry is one of the most fascinating aspects of the California economic story. To provide museum visitors with historic insight as to how these two industries worked together, we decided to build a typical railroad town in a fruit growing area along the Southern Pacific Railroad's (SP) Central Coast mainline.

As fruit growing began in the missions, the St. Miguel Arc-angel Mission, located only a few hundred yards from the SP Central Coast mainline, became an inspiration and ultimately the name of our new packing town.

Before any new construction could begin, all the existing structures and scenery needed to be removed. Because everything on the "modules" was securely glued, screwed or nailed down this proved to be a long and arduous task. Just about anybody who could hold a scraper was drafted by Woody, and we went to work. We vowed early on to make all new scenery elements removable for cleaning and maintenance.

The SBHRS library, staffed by Michael Wagner and Bill Burket, proved to be an invaluable resource for accurately researching the history of towns, industries and railroad facilities along the SP Central Coast mainline. After review-

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SBHRS ALL MEMBERS MEETING

January 14, 2017

The Society welcomed 20 new members during 2016. Four have joined since the November Open House. We welcome the newest members! In addition, the Society would like a volunteer to greet our new members, and give them a general orientation, as well as answering any questions they have. If you are interested, please contact Woody Rider, or Jack Morash for more information.

Museum

Joe Hoffmann gave a report on the status of the Museum. Our Museum, which was started in 1991, is the first responsibility of the Society. During the past year, two display cabinets were refurbished. Two mannequins were acquired, and dressed as a UP conductor, and a chef. They are now in the Waiting Room. A surveillance camera was installed and activated in the Waiting Room. In preparation for the November Open House, the display cabinets in the Train Room, and the Main museum room were cleaned, and the display items were arranged in proper order. A UV protective filter was installed in the windows of the Waiting Room, and the Library (see article in this issue by Joe Hoffmann). A display rack for 30 railroad-related travel brochures was cleaned and polished, and was put on display.

Objectives for 2017 include (1) Install a San Jose Depot baggage sign, (2) Prepare a donated SP Team Track sign that had been used in Milpitas, and (3) the possible installation of a spotlight in the Waiting Room.

Library

Michael Wagner provided an update on the Library activities. An audio-visual display will be installed and made available to members. When researching a railroad topic, or looking for a specific publication, the SBHRS Library may be searched online, from home or other location with web access. The web address (URL) is <http://library.sbhhs.org>. Three new sections are in preparation for display and access: Logging, Colorado, and a Children's Section.

eBay

Bill Burket gave an update on eBay activity. Many items that are donated to the Society are offered for sale on eBay, and their proceeds are added to the Society's income. Total



Longtime San Jose Transportation Leader Rod Diridon Inspects HO Diridon Station With Mike Laine on a recent visit.

income from these sales exceeded \$6,000 in 2016. 90% of the items sold on eBay are to individuals in western or eastern parts of the United States, and even to various European countries.

Facilities

Lloyd Darknell reported that two items are on the 2017 agenda, which must be completed by October of this year to be in compliance with our agreement with the Joint Powers Board. They are the painting of the south side of the depot, and deck replacement. If you have any tools which might be valuable in either of these projects, and would be willing to lend them, please see Chris Ewing, or Lloyd Darknell.

Santa Clara Tower

Doug DeLong advised that the November Open House saw a record number of visitors to the Tower. Doug has proposed that some kind of visual display be made available for visitors to browse while waiting to enter the tower for the presentation. Doug recently visited the Monterey ex-SP depot and noted some window hardware, which can serve as examples for the Society's tower windows during repair and maintenance. An SP logbook covering the years of 1935 to 1971 was acquired which gives extensive details on maintenance and repair of the various components of the interlocking switch mechanism. This will be invaluable in restoring switch elements for display and simulated operation.

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ing key books and other suggested resources the concept for a new model San Miguel quickly emerged.

A track plan was drawn up reflecting typical 20th century California railroad practices. The existing double track main-line through town was used but new tracks and spurs were added to accommodate two fruit packing plants, a Pacific Fruit Express icing plant, and a town lumber yard. A gandydancer crew that included Jack Morash, and Guenther Hossner quickly went to work, laying track, turnouts, switch machines and all the wiring necessary to bring the track to operational standards. Kiwi used his skills to blend the rough edges of the scenery. Bob Bartlett bravely took on the responsibility of learning a long list of new skills needed to paint the 33 foot long backdrop. Only when all these individual projects were completed could work begin on the town itself.

The first structure encountered in the new San Miguel area is the iconic Spanish mission. The Mission San Miguel Archangel is based on the existing mission of the same name rebuilt during the California Mission Revival Period of the early 1900s. I scratch-built the mission and surrounding garden grounds in styrene and wood. The mission church is closely based on available plans, although the whole complex is highly compressed. If modeled exactly, the church alone would be almost 48 inches long! Mission courtyard landscaping was planted by Ed Thelan, and Dale Cherne is working with Woody on the vineyards that will eventually cover the hillsides flanking the mission. To complete the scene, Mike Stockwell added the comforting sound of mission bells to the rolling hills above St Miguel.

To the south of the mission is a typical central California citrus orchard. The orchard includes a farm house, storage barn, wind driven water pump and storage tank. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, some of the orchard along the old Mission Road was sold off to create Mission Estates, a residential development featuring trendy California Mission Revival Style houses. I built Mission Estates and the citrus orchard largely by kit-bashing existing structure kits and scenic elements to reflect California practices and appearance.

The construction of the buildings and scenery of the San Mi-

guel project is a substantial undertaking requiring a variety of modeling skills. At least 50 individual buildings will be needed to complete this impressive town scene. While I scratch-built or kit-bashed some of the more unique structures such as the San Miguel Mission and the Libby, McNeill, Libby packing plant, almost all the remaining buildings were built by one or more members who chipped in to help.

Many modelers learned valuable new modeling skills. While assembling the Sunkist Packing Plant, Ed Del Prete was compelled to acquire the Zen-like patience needed to read the instructions and construct the new very complicated laser cut kits. Bob Bartlett may follow in Ed's footsteps as he tackles the roof and shingles on the new Southern Pacific depot. Seth Evertz, Dale Cherne and Alex Matuzek were instrumental in building several of the residential structures while Travis Klein single handedly tackled the Pacific Fruit Express Ice storage building and loading platforms.

Other modelers have undertaken whole new scenic elements. Bob Bartlett designed, constructed, and painted the wonderfully detailed migrant farm camp on the south end of town. And it came as no surprise when Rick James volunteered to design and build a proper fire station for the residents of San Miguel. The look of the San Miguel town scene is greatly enhanced by the work of Hubert Jansen. He designed and printed almost all the signs on the downtown commercial buildings as well as the illuminated signs for the Pacific Fruit Express Ice Plant and the Libby, Mc Neil, Libby packing plant. All tasks well done.

Finally, we discovered that no scene is complete until the lights go on. After lighting the colorful Sunkist Packing plant sign, we decided that "more is more" when it comes to lighting. Mike Stockwell, Guenther, and Woody are planning to light up all the streets and industrial buildings. Even the loading docks of the Libby and PFE plants have the necessary lights to get loading done, day or night.

There are still many tasks left to complete the San Miguel town project. But when you get a chance, take the time to appreciate the research, work and effort needed to produce a historic scene worthy of the South Bay Historical Railroad Museum.

By Michael Laine

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Railcar

Robin Gilstrom reported that more progress on the restoration of the railcar was made in 2016, than in the preceding six years. A contract for roof repair will be submitted to Caltrain for approval. This work will likely be done in the early spring. The contract is expected to come with a 15 year warranty.

Museum Events and Rental

Woody Rider reported that several upcoming events are scheduled that will rent Museum facilities. These include the National Railway Historical Society meetings which occur twice monthly and their Annual Banquet on Saturday, February 18th, a Rails and Trails program on February 11th. The Society will operate both the N and HO scale layouts during most of these events.

South Bay Historical Society Covenant

Robert Marshall reported on several SBHRS activities that are handled in the background, and not immediately apparent to many members. One of the most important responsibilities our Society has, actually occurs behind the scenes. The SBHRS entered into an Historic Preservation Covenant agreement with the Joint Powers Board. This is a completely separate function from our building residency. Lorie Garcia has served for over 20 years as a Historian, and our Covenant Representative. Lori did post graduate work at San Francisco State, and is an advisor to other agencies as well. Robert Marshall, who is the Assistant Covenant Representative, will be taking over some of the duties that Lori has handled in the past. This function means that some railroad museum societies along the Caltrain Peninsula must obtain permission from the SBHRS representative before making any repairs or modifications to their occupied structures, in order to preserve the historic elements of those structures. For example, this includes the properties at San Carlos, and San Jose Diridon, among others. The SBHRS has maintained a good working relationship with the Joint Powers Board in this area, and it is important that the society continue to do so. An example of modifications that might alter the historic context of a structure would be the installation of a railing on our Loading Dock. Such a railing would constitute an inappropriate modification, as no railing was in place when the depot was active.

Window Film Protects Artifacts, Books



A worker from Window Solutions in Foster City applies protective film to windows in the Passenger Waiting Room

Protective window film produced by Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M) has been installed on the upper tier of windows in the Passenger Waiting Room and over the windows in the Library of the Santa Clara Depot.

The film stops the penetration of ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun, which over a long time period are harmful to paper and ceramic artifacts housed in the Edward PETERMAN Museum of Railroad History. The film is 99 percent effective against UV rays.

The film was applied by two workers from Window Solutions of Foster City. It was determined by SBHRS volunteers that protection from harmful light was needed after watching sunlight patterns within the Waiting Room. Plans had long been in process to apply protective film in the library to protect books and photographs that are housed therein.

The film is applied to the interior of the windows and can be cleaned using standard commercial window cleaners (e.g., Windex) and a squeegee or paper towels.

By Joe Hoffmann

MISSION SAN MIGUEL

(See the article beginning on page one)

Here are just a few photos of some of San Miguel's new modules.

While under construction at the time of this publication, a full panorama of the San Miguel community may be seen at

<http://www.sbhrs.org/panorama>

when it is completed. Please check back!



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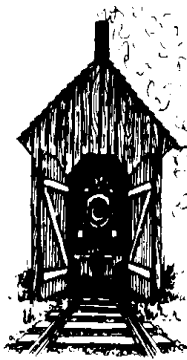
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The South Bay Historical Railroad Society is located at the Santa Clara Caltrain Depot, in the Museum building adjacent to Caltrain, at 1005 Railroad Avenue. Effective June 7th, the Museum is open to the public Tuesdays from 5 PM to 8 PM, and Saturdays from 10 AM to 3 PM. Museum exhibits, the Library, and Train Room all provide many items of interest to a wide variety of age groups. The Train Room features both an HO and N gauge operating model railroad, and members can operate their equipment during those times.



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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Leave a recorded message at the phone number listed below if you have any suggestions, or if you have inputs, comments, or ideas for this newsletter.

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