

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

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## October 2017 Newsletter

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*This interesting looking boxcar was spotted in Colfax in 2014. See page 3 for details on its purpose. Photo by Roger Staab*

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### Scheduled Events & Notices



**Oct 26 PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm**  
\*\*\* Note Location Change – Colfax Passenger Depot \*\*\*  
– Program – Railroad Changes in Colfax thru the years + Caboose Tour

**Oct 28 PSRHS Fall Fieldtrip – see page 2 for details**

**Nov 11 Colfax Caboose Planning Meeting + Work Session 9am-12noon**

**Nov 16 (Tentative) PSRHS Potluck Dinner Meeting 6:30pm Dinner & Socializing**  
– Program – Peter Hills – SP Narrow Gauge from Laws to Keeler

**Nov 8-11 SPH&TS 2017 Annual Conference – Santa Rosa** [www.sphts.org/convention/](http://www.sphts.org/convention/)

**Nov 11-12 Roseville Railfair, Placer Co. Fairgrounds** [www.internationalrailfair.com](http://www.internationalrailfair.com)



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## October 2017 Newsletter

**Monthly Meeting 7PM Thursday, Oct. 26th,**  
**\*\*\*Colfax Passenger Depot\*\*\***

### **Note location change for October meeting**

**October Program:** Roger Staab will present a slide show outlining railroad-related changes that have taken place in Colfax through the years. Included will be hints on how to estimate dates of some old photos using clues embedded in the images.

After the presentation the meeting will move across the tracks for a tour of the newly renovated Colfax caboose. Future plans will be discussed for interactive displays that will tell the story of the caboose and its occupants and their role in railroad history.

**September Program recap:** Bill George, historian and film maker, presented his new film, **“Beyond A Miracle, Creating California’s Empire Of Agriculture”**. This was a very interesting program that tied facets of California history including gold mining and railroad construction into California’s emergence as a major agricultural force and supplier of food to the nation and the world.

**NOTE:** Attendance was very poor at this very interesting presentation. If we hope to continue to offer quality presentations at our monthly meetings, we owe it to the presenters to have good turnouts.

### **November Potluck Dinner Meeting**

Mark your calendar for the **November potluck dinner meeting to be held at the Auburn Airport location. Tentative date is Nov. 16th.** More details to follow in the November newsletter.

### **PSRHS Fall Field Trip October 28th**

**Railroad Signaling and Narrow Gauge Locomotive Heritage and BBQ, Saturday, October 28, 2017,**  
9 AM to approximately 4 to 5 PM

Our Fall 2017 fieldtrip is a step back in time to visit railroading hardware from a bygone era.

Our first stop is at the home of Dick Dorn, a kindred railroad aficionado who has a fond memory of SP railroading through the Central Valley and is passionate to preserve SP signaling equipment. In addition, he has recreated a full size replica of the Yuba City SP depot in his backyard! His collection is unique, to say the least!

Our second stop is at the home of Les, Cindy and Casey Wilmunder in Palermo, near Oroville. Les is blessed to retain the locomotive and railroad memorabilia collection of his late father, Hal. There, we’ll see Les’s collection as well as be treated to a pot luck BBQ at their home.

Among the interesting pieces in the collection is one of the first locomotives brought to California, an 1880’s vintage Porter, as well as a narrow gauge Heisler, and other interesting pieces from the Central Pacific RR and the San Francisco Municipal street car system.

The Wilmunders have invited our group to a potluck BBQ lunch during our visit. The Wilmunders will BBQ chicken and Members are asked to bring a side dish of your choice to share. A donation of \$5 is requested to contribute to offset costs for the hosts as well as supply drinks and miscellaneous accoutrements. Ice chests will be brought to stow refrigerated items until we reach Wilmunder’s home.

**At this time, we Can accommodate a limited number of Member’s guests for this trip.**

Let’s try to set up car pools from Auburn and perhaps Roseville to economize on transportation.

Please call or email Jim Wood of your intention to attend the trip, desire for carpooling, and guest attendance. Call Jim at 530 320-1276 or email to [greenstonemaker@gmail.com](mailto:greenstonemaker@gmail.com).

Jim will respond with details of addresses and other pertinent info if you wish to drive separately.

Don’t miss this trip!



### Passing Scene

This interesting-looking boxcar was seen in Colfax in a westbound double-stack consist in 2014. Research revealed that Union Pacific Classroom boxcar MCVX 911119 is used to train first responders.

The UP fact sheet on this car states: "Union Pacific, in collaboration with the Firefighters Education and Training Foundation, converted an insulated boxcar into a mobile classroom, expanding its fleet of training equipment used to educate emergency responders. Using the climate-controlled boxcar, Union Pacific pairs classroom education with first-hand rail operations observations to provide emergency responders an enhanced learning experience. Training covers a variety of topics including how hazardous materials are shipped, tank car types and construction, and the railroad's protocol in the event of a derailment. ... Painted in Union Pacific's armour yellow, the classroom entrance was designed to resemble a Victorian depot and the interior was inspired by a passenger train coach car." (See inset image)

Features of the converted insulated boxcar include seating with work space for 40 students; an advanced "plug and play" audio/visual system; an electrical generator; and a redundant climate-control heating and cooling system.

*Photo by Roger Staab. Inset image from UP fact sheet*



### **Amazon Smile Fund Raising**

We are now part of the Amazon Smile fund raising campaign. We receive a donation to the society based on your purchases. Please feel free to copy and paste the link below and include it in all your emails.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0488569>

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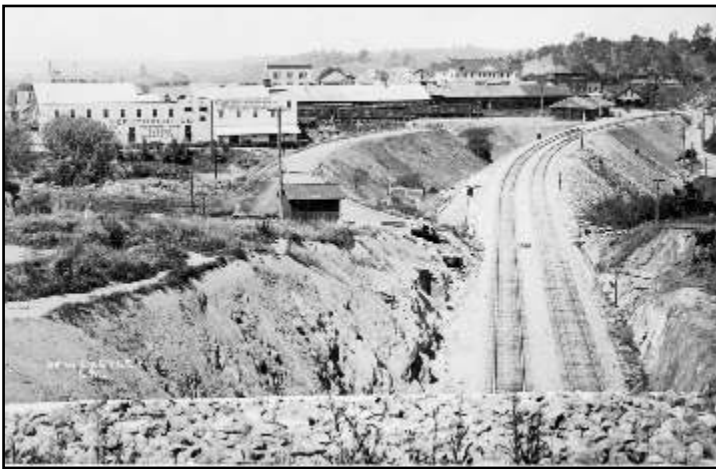
## From the Archives

**September Mystery Photo (right):** NCNG's standard gauge Heisler geared locomotive pulled carloads of gravel from the Bear River gravel pit to Colfax and transfer to SP trains from 1913-14. The NCNG tracks were converted to 3-rail from Colfax to the viaduct at Long Ravine. Standard gauge tracks then followed the old NCNG right of way to the river. By 1924 the third rail and gravel spur had vanished into history. *Ken Yeo collection*



**October Mystery Photo (left):** Where was this photo taken, what was the approximate time frame, and what major details can be identified in the image? *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers.*

This is one of the 200 photos featured in the new Arcadia book, *Railroads of Placer County*, by Art Sommers and Roger Staab, to be published Jan. 15, 2018. The book provides a short history of 14 railroads that operated in Placer County through the years, some for only a short time or distance, others for many years, with a major one still operating today.



**Accidents/Other Incidents. Snowshed Fires – Colfax Sentinel, Oct. 11, 1901.** “A fire at Emigrant Gap, October 9th, destroyed thousands of dollars worth of snowsheds of the Southern Pacific Company. The fire started at the station during the afternoon and before 6pm the telegraph office, freight building, section house, new roundhouse turntable, company tool houses and 2,500 feet of sheds were a total loss. The snowsheds were destroyed from a point 300 feet west of the depot on east toward Tunnel No. 2. The fire trains at Summit and Blue Canyon were rushed to the fire, and while timbers were still blazing, trains loaded with ties, steel rails and structural materials were speeding to the scene...by 8am yesterday morning trains were moving... The last fire before the one of this week occurred at Lake View on August 21st, when 3,500 feet of sheds were burned. The work of renewing these sheds has not been completed.”

### Membership Information

Individual Members = \$25.00/yr  
Each Additional Family Member = \$5.00/yr

- Monthly Meetings (4th Thursday) and Newsletter
- Member Activities, History Pubs and Field Trips
- Display and Restoration Projects

PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713  
or join/renew online at [www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)

Reader comments, additional details, etc., are invited on any newsletter items or photos. Please forward comments, suggestions or information for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter to:

Roger Staab (530) 346-6722 [roger.staab@psrhs.org](mailto:roger.staab@psrhs.org)