

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 29, 1954

The Monterey Railroad

The Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad about which C.C. Flagg wrote in his letter dated July 5, 1979 which we featured in two issues of the Peninsula Diary last week, actually existed although there is little or no evidence of it today, not even a deserted freight car on a siding.

A small "Hand Book of Monterey" published in 1875 had this to say: "Whatever the fate of this road in the future, it will always be memorable in the commercial history of California as the first narrow-gauge railroad built in the state; and also as a road built by the people for the people, to contend with a great and powerful monopoly, and to save the grain-growers of the district no less than \$200,000 a year."

The railroad was begun in April, and finished in October, 1874. All interested in it devoted their time and means without stint, according to the "Hand Book" report, especially C.S. Abbott, the president; David Jacks, treasurer; and John Markley, Secretary. J.F. Kidder, later connected with the Nevada narrow gauge, was the chief engineer and superintendent of construction. The iron came from the Pacific Rolling Mills in San Francisco, and Faulkner, Bell & Co., also of San Francisco.

The locomotives, "C.S. Abbott," and "Monterey" were from the Baldwin Locomotive Co., of Philadelphia. The cars, "which were superior in every respect," were built in Monterey by Thomas Carter. Although the road was a "narrow gauge," only three feet between the rails, the cars were designed so well that the passengers hardly realized any difference from those of the broad gauge, so ample was the room and accommodation, according to reports written in 1875.

The railroad commenced running trains on Oct. 28, 1874, too late to carry much grain from the Salinas Valley; but its early completion had been a fixed fact in August, thereby compelling the S.P.R.R. to make a reduction from \$5.50 per ton to \$4.25 freight on grain to San Francisco.

The Monterey & Salinas Valley Railroad carried about 6,000 ton in 1874; loaded the H.L. Richardson at Monterey (2400 long tons). The freight on merchandise from San Francisco to Salinas City was \$7.20; the S.P.R.R. reduced to \$6. Salinas was supplied with

redwood lumber from Watsonville and pine from San Francisco; now there were two markets wrote the editor of the "Hand Book," and redwood could be brought from Santa Cruz, and pine from Puget Sound, which would come as cheap as to San Francisco, and had only be freighted 10 instead of 120 miles.

The number of stockholder in the new railroad company was 72, principally land owners or farmers; David Jacks, who owned 30,000 acres, and Jessie D. Carr with 45,000 acres; B.V. Sargent and A. & M. Gonzales, each 13,000; Robert McKee and the Munras family, 19,000; P. Zabala, James Bardin, J.B.R. Cooper, Malarin, all 5,000; C. S. Abbott, 10,000; J.M. Soto, 3,500; F.S. Spring and C. Laird, 2,000; and in the 1,000 acre class were Francis Doud, A. Wason, George Pomeroy. Included in stockholders with less land were John Abbott, Charles McFadden, Judson Parson, William Quintal, William Robson, Charles Underwood and William Ford.

The road, warehouses, wharves, cars, engines, etc., everything included, cost \$357,000.

(To Be Continued)