

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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He Was Workin' On The Railroad

In the halcyon days of yore, the late Carlisle S. Abbott of Salinas, fathered, or promoted, the organization of the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad Co., which built a narrow-gauge railroad from Salinas to Monterey, a distance of 20 miles. This enabled the farmers to ship their grain to tidewater and resulted in a great saving in freight.

Abbott wrote in his "Recollections of a California Pioneer" of two amusing incidents in connection with the Monterey-Salinas Railroad Co. of which he was president. Wishing to avoid the importunities of people who he knew would be clamoring for free transportation, he procured the consent of his board of directors to pass a resolution forbidding the president to issue such transportation.

While this resolution was in effect, the Rev. S. McGowan, the Episcopal clergyman who built St. Paul's Church in Salinas, St. James Church in Monterey and San Ardo, San Miguel and Jolon churches, was residing in Salinas and also had charge of the church in Monterey.

He, supported by a large delegation of women from his two congregations, solicited from Mr. Abbott a pass between the two parishes. While Mr. Abbott declared that he was desirous of advancing religious affairs at least to a small extent that would be accomplished by the issuance of free transportation to the gentleman, he was at a loss for a method of getting around the resolution above referred to.

Then it occurred to Abbott that if the Rev. McGowan could by some means be classed as an employee of the company, the way would be open for his complying with the request. After short reflection it occurred to him that above all things else the little railroad needed a chaplain, whereupon he had the secretary enter upon his books an order appointing the Rev. McGowan as chaplain of the Monterey-Salinas Valley Railroad Company, and he then handed him his pass.

Abbott repeats in his recollections the "dirtiest political trick with which I was ever connected." There was to be a Democratic rally in the old town of Monterey, which was to be addressed by some celebrity from San Francisco. The chairman of the Democratic Central

Committee went to Mr. Abbott and asked him what the lowest rate would be for running an excursion on the night of the meeting. Abbott told him it would not be a question of rates, that he would run a free train that night.

Abbott then telegraphed to the Republican State Central Committee to send the best speaker they had in Salinas for the same night the meeting was to be held in Monterey, and he then set some men to work putting temporary sides on a train of forty flat cars, and placed benches to seat the passengers.

On the day the rally was to take place he had notices posted announcing a free excursion from Monterey to Salinas; and practically the entire population of Monterey went over to the Republican meeting in Salinas, while the Democratic orator and a few of his friends, who refused to desert him, remained at the Old Capital.