

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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First Narrow-Gauge

The history of the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad has been an interesting topic to pursue. The little handbook of Monterey, which has (been the source of so much material and the inspiration for further investigation, has much to say about this little railroad which "commenced running October 28, 1874, too late to carry much of the grain from the valley."

In "Bonanza Railroads," by Gilbert H. Kneiss, published by Stanford Press, there is a world of information for those who would be interested in this topic, but most of all it tells what happened to some of the old engines.

The railroad will always be memorable in the commercial history of California as the first narrow-gauge road 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, especially C. S. Abbott, the president; David Jacks, the treasurer; and John Markley, the secretary. J. E. Kidder was the chief engineer and superintendent of construction. The iron came from the Pacific Rolling Mills in San Francisco, and Falkner, Bell and Company. The locomotives, "C. S. Abbott" and "Monterey," from the Baldwin Locomotive Company in Pennsylvania. The cars, "which were superior in every respect," were built in Monterey by Thomas Carter.

Although the road was only three feet between the rails, "the cars were so designed that the passengers hardly realize any difference from those of broad gauge and have ample room and accommodation."

For the reason that the railroad was late in starting, the officials were forced to make a reduction from \$5.50 per ton of grain to \$4.25, freight to San Francisco. The Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad carried about 6,000 tons in 1874, loaded on the "H. L. Richardson" at Monterey (2400 long tons).