

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey's Street Cars

Electric cars once connected Del Monte, Monterey, and Pacific Grove. There may be some old timers who will remember when the first cars ran over the tracks on Thursday afternoon, June 10, 1903, sixty-three years ago.

The Monterey New Era published on June 17 the headlines of that day, announcing the important event in large black -face type. At top of the first page the paper is addressed to one A. Logan, a carpenter.

The story of the first-round trip of the first electric car follows: "After numerous vexations, the Monterey and Pacific Grove electric railroad is at last in operation, and already the company is doing big business. The first car made a trip over the road last Thursday afternoon with Chief Engineer Ira B. Funk, who supervised the installing of the big plant from its inception, as motorman.

"On the car when it made its trial trip were Secretary M. V. V. McQuigg and Manager George E. Somarindyck, of Monterey, J. M. Gardner of Santa Cruz and Treasurer R. C. P. Smith of Los Angeles. The trip was made without mishap and the following day the road was opened for travel.

"Only one car had been running, but by the next Sunday, and possibly as early as Friday, the two cars will be put on a regular schedule. By this schedule, the first car will leave Del Monte at 6:30 .a.m., and cars will leave every hour thereafter until 10 p.m., the last car leaving Pacific Grove at 10:30 p.m. More cars are expected shortly and when they arrive a ten-minute schedule will be given."

The article is illustrated with a photograph of the car literally filled with male residents of the community. The picture had been taken by the Custom House Studio.

An old timer, who remembers the railroad and many of the citizens who are in the picture, identified: Harry Greene, Robert Miller, Tom Field, Manuel Perry, Manuel Wolter, Juan Malarin, Les Whitcomb, William Bergschicker, Eddie Smith, Grant Towle, Joe Wolter, and William Haynes. On weekdays there was only one man on the cars and fares were collected at the switches, but on Sunday, so large was the crowd, two men were

in charge—one a brakeman and the other the conductor.

Before the road was electrified the cars were drawn by horses. In Pacific Grove the track ran along Central Avenue and ended at the depot, but, except on Sundays, the cars stopped at the Methodist church.

In Monterey, the track was laid along Alvarado to Pearl, down Pearl to Washington and down Washington to the depot, then out Del Monte avenue to Ocean and up Ocean to Eighth, stopping at the car barns on Sloat. Part of the old buildings, where the cars stopped, was still standing until recently. It was all, single track with switches at various points.

On the day of publication of the New Era, the editors announced that: "On Sunday next the last car No. 16 of the Monterey- Pacific Grove railroad, with about 75 passengers on board, was derailed opposite the Serra cross about 9:30 p.m. Had it not been for the fact that the power was shut off and the car was traveling very slowly, it would probably have gone over the embankment, which is about two feet high at this point, and the road being very narrow, have crashed down into the gulch below, overturning, and perhaps killing and maiming many.

"The derailment was caused by the placing on the tracks of several spikes and small rocks and is supposed to have been the work of small boys."