

Modern
&
Efficient
Transportation



Modesto
&
Empire
Traction
Co.



45
YEARS
OF
SERVICE

A brief history of the

MODESTO & EMPIRE TRACTION CO.

..... by Al Rose

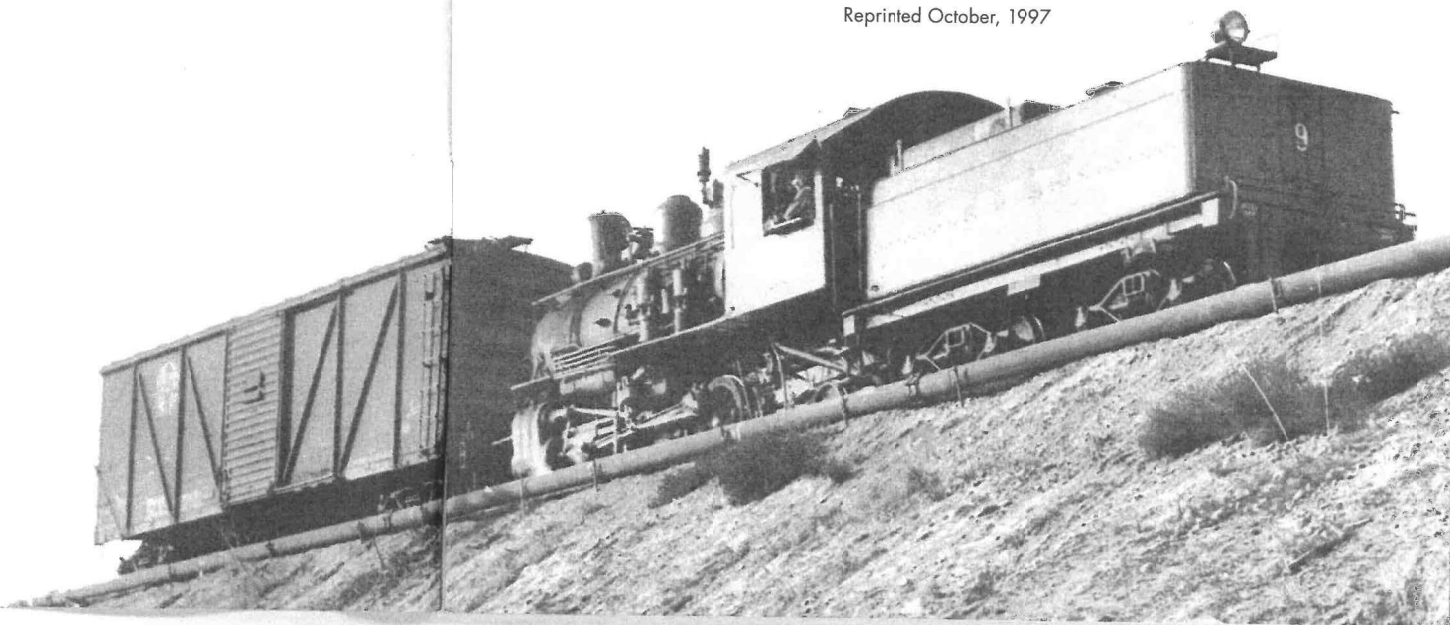
..... issued by

The Western Railroader

..... upon occasion of the
"Valley Express" Excursion
to Modesto, California
honoring
The Modesto & Empire Traction Co.
and forty-five years of service.

..... sponsored by the
Pacific Coast Chapter of the
Railway & Locomotive Historical Society
October 14, 1956

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From the "Official Guide"

..... 1915

MODESTO & EMPIRE TRACTION COMPANY.
 T. K. BEARD, President and General Manager.
 R. J. LE CLENT, Superintendent and Traffic Manager.
 L. L. DENNETT, Secretary and Treasurer.
 J. F. RUSSELL, Auditor.
 General Offices - Modesto, Cal.

March 25, 1914.

18	14	10	8	2	Ms	1	5	9	13
P.M.	P.M.	NOON	A.M.	A.M.	...	LEAVE	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
45 55	43 40	12 45	10 00	7 00	0	LEAVE	7 45	10 50	1 31
5 58	5 43	12 48	10 03	7 03	1.8	ARRIVE	7 42	10 47	1 28
6 00	5 46	12 50	10 05	7 05	1.8	Modesto	7 40	10 45	1 26
6 02	5 47	12 52	10 07	7 07	2.8	Colony	7 39	10 43	1 24
6 04	5 49	12 54	10 09	7 09	3.7	Palo Verde	7 36	10 41	1 22
6 07	5 52	12 57	10 12	7 12	4.7	Riverside Park	7 33	10 38	1 18
6 09	5 54	12 59	10 14	7 14	5.6	Hunsuckers	7 31	10 36	1 17
6 12	5 57	1 00	10 17	7 17	6.7	Laurel Lodge	7 28	10 33	1 14
6 15	4 00	1 05	10 20	7 20	7.8	Empire	7 25	10 30	1 11
P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	A.M.	...	ARRIVE	7 25	10 30	1 11

Additional Trains - Leave Modesto 7 50, *10 53 a.m., *1 40, 14 50 p.m., arrive Empire 8 10, 11 12 a.m., 2 00, 4 50 p.m. Returning, leave Empire 7 15, *11 20 a.m., *2 10, *4 05, *6 22 p.m.

* Daily; † daily, except Sunday.

Connection - At Empire - With Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe P. STANDARD - Pacific time.

1956

MODESTO AND EMPIRE TRACTION COMPANY
 Freight Service Only

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 General Offices - Modesto, Cal. - P. O. Box 500 - Phone (Area) 10701

330 Eleventh Street, Modesto, Cal.

Modesto Terminal
 Modesto Colony
 East Modesto
 Empire
 Prins Valley

M & E T means Modern and Efficient Transportation.
 Modern switch engines are radio directed.
 Efficient service is prompt and courteous.

Through rates applicable via AT & SF or SP.
 Stop-off and/or storage in transit privileges available. Cold or dry storage available.

Choice industrial sites with abundant water, natural gas, electricity and waste disposal.
 Good labor and living conditions.
 Write for brochure or specific information.

CONNECTIONS: At Emporia, Cal., with AT & SF.
 At Modesto, Cal., with SP.
 At Modesto, Cal., with TE.

MILEAGE: Between Modesto and Empire, Cal. 9.5 miles.

See the above map for complete geographical list of stations. Billing and accounts for all stations handled at Modesto, California, February, 1956.



...ucked away in the middle of California's great Central Valley is a little railroad the Golden State may well be proud to claim. A line short in miles but as modern and up-to-date as many large systems, The Modesto & Empire Traction Co. is a railroad that reflects the farsightedness of one man, T. K. Beard.

In the beginning the Modesto & Empire Traction Co. had many of the difficulties experienced by other new railroads in developing traffic, and lean years were no easier on this short line than on others. A big difference existed on the M. & E. T., however; the majority of the control has always remained in the Beard family, and it being a "family affair," it was possible to understand the little line's whims and problems with a comprehension impossible to an outsider. Indeed, the prosperous M. & E. T. of today is a monument to family cooperation.

It was the early 70's that saw the Central Pacific push their first line down the San Joaquin Valley to Modesto and on to Fresno and Bakersfield. With river transportation on the San Joaquin River and its tributaries dependable only in spring and summer, the C. P. enjoyed a monopoly. Relief came to Valley residents in 1895 when Claus Spreckels built the "People's Road," The San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley, which roughly paralleled the C. P. at distances of one to fifteen miles all the way down the San Joaquin Valley. In 1900 this property came into the Santa Fe fold. Stockton, Fresno and other towns the Santa Fe touched benefited from the competitive service; the by-passed towns did not profit.

Any 1908 resident of Modesto would vouch for the practicability of a rail connection to the Santa Fe a few miles away, so it is not surprising to find a proposed railroad, to be called the Modesto Interurban, in the thought stage. Original intentions were to run this road from the southeasterly side of Modesto up one of the main streets, then out McHenry Avenue for a distance, then head in the most direct line to Riverbank, this making a line 9.50 miles in length. Promoters of the line figured the total cost to Riverbank at \$157,800, with an extension to Oakdale, costing \$88,080, and another line from Modesto to Turlock for approximately \$240,840; the total system to consist of 28.25 miles. Right-of-way acquisition looked formidable for such an extensive layout. After all, Empire, only five miles away, was also on the Santa Fe, and Mr. Beard who was interested in the project already owned most of the land a line to this point would traverse, so what more practical solution could there be?

On the 23rd of March in 1909 the Modesto Interurban Railroad was organized and incorporated to construct the line between Modesto and Empire. Construction started immediately on the 5.226 miles of main line and 1.262 miles of industrial and yard tracks. However, fate in some unknown form stepped in, and more than two years were to pass before service commenced. and then not under the M. I. herald!

In March of 1911 the Modesto Morning Herald made mention that no service was yet available to Empire, but trackage rights had been obtained over the Santa Fe to Riverbank and when passenger service commenced it would be by the newest type of gasoline motor cars.

About this time "interurban fever" began to be felt; after all, the Tidewater and Southern was wrangling for a franchise in Modesto to connect with track they had under construction from Stockton; and the San Joaquin Valley Electric had done some grading south of French Camp and already had obtained a franchise for use of Modesto's Eighth Street. Apparently the T. & S. was anxious to get some equipment running in a hurry, perhaps to satisfy their bondholders. Proclaimed in a full page ad in the Morning Herald on April 18th, T. & S. management stated: "We have just completed arrangements to lease, take over and operate the roadbed of the Modesto Interurban R. R. Co. now built from Modesto to Empire, and we propose to put same in operation in conjunction with a portion of our main line through Modesto and north seven miles to the picnic yards on the Stanislaus River." On April 22nd local citizens were informed T. & S. would be operating cars on the M. I. "by next week." Further reported: "As a nucleus of a temporary system until its own cars can be delivered, the Tidewater Co. has leased from the Stockton Terminal & Eastern Railroad a motor car to be delivered to Empire next Tuesday."

Apparently the editor of the local paper was astonished by the appearance of the T. & S. car: A few days later he wrote a tongue-in-cheek description of the "Comedycar", as he called the conveyance. The scene takes place at the Empire depot where the writer and his pal, Percy, have alighted from a Santa Fe train to await arrival of their transportation to Modesto. "- - - About that time there will be a subdued rumble and a 'honk! honk!' and Percy will yell, 'In the name of Abe Ruef, what in the world is that thing?' With the utmost calmness you will follow his startled gaze and see an overgrown automobile, with seats for twelve, rolling along on a railroad track and carrying a man and a dog.

"With the same calmness you will turn to Percy and exclaim, 'That, my dear friend, is it. That is the COMEDYCAR, alas the

D. S. Richter



Out of the past! This bit of relay rail on an M. & E. T. siding is from the original San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley Railroad, predecessor of Santa Fe's line through the San Joaquin Valley. Note the steelmakers incorrect abbreviation!

89 Cars, Whew!

On October 13, 1945, little No. 6, weighing scarcely over fifty tons proved victor over 89 cars between Empire and Modesto. Considering the main line from Prima Vista (Western edge of Empire) to the outskirts of Modesto at East Modesto is only 2.4 miles, this train took up almost one-third of the railroad's main line!

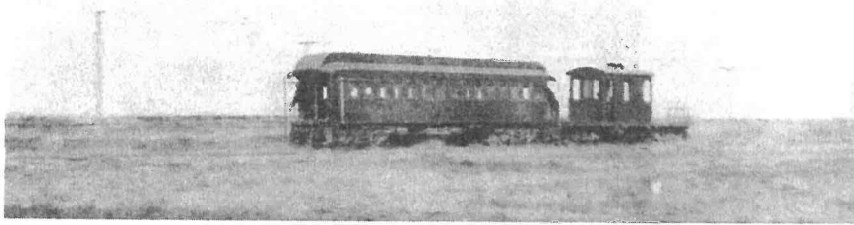
During the summer of '51 it is said a diesel pulled in from Empire 102 cars, about 33 of them loaded.



complete and entire rolling stock of the recent merger. This merger which put a horrible crimp in Wall Street was recently affected with great acclaim by capitalists at Modesto, and united the extensive interests of the Modesto Interurban (that never did) and the Tidewater & Southern (that's yet to be)! Behold our chariot!

"By this time the Comedycar will have come to a stand by the depot, and the tall man who formerly stood by the depot, and who is really the postmaster, express agent, representative of the Santa Fe transcontinental, the T. & S. - M. I. merger, mayor, bill poster and grocer will come forward. The sole occupant of the Comedycar will hand the tall man a can of milk, a bale of hay, a porous plaster and a bottle of Heinz's best pickles. He will then kick the dog, lift off the Comedycar, and turning it around, will replace it on the track pointing in the opposite direction. He will load on a sack of alfalfa and a keg of nails and announce in stentorian tones, much to the disturbance of a nearby poultry yard, 'all aboard for Beardville, Hunsucker's Corners, Modesto, Wisecarver's Cross Roads, Sylvan Club, Langdon's Corals and all points west and north! - - - Well, you and Percy and Bill (the chauffeur or engineer or whatever Bill's official dignity is) get in the Comedycar. Bill yells, 'all ashore that's going ashore', takes a reef in the carburetor, kicks the dog, pulls a lever and you're off at a rate that would leave a funeral procession (going in the opposite direction) behind in short order."

No doubt the editor wrote the story as a trip might have been, for it was not until April 30, 1911 he wrote: "The Comedycar has come. It made several trips over the Modesto Interurban yesterday, although the weeds along the right of way obstructed its progress several times. The car is about as big as a minute, and in case of a blockade on the road it could easily be carried around the obstruction by passengers and crew. The news that the car had arrived drew large crowds to the Tuolumne yards yesterday, although it was difficult to locate owing to its size. It is expected the car will run on a regular schedule to Empire beginning next week and although we made fun of it, we are glad to see that at least some kind of communication has been



Before introduction of canal irrigation in the Modesto region, fruit orchards and vineyards were non-existent. A trip to Empire was one across barren plains.

established over this road and hope that it is the forerunner of a real service.

In May of 1911, Byron Bearce of the T. & S. again promised service would soon start to Empire and that his company had ordered a "big regulation motor car capable of hauling freight and many passengers". Despite the elaborate talk, it seems obvious the intended service under the T. & S. banner did not materialize.

Mr. T. K. Beard announced in mid-July of 1911 that if the stockholders of the Modesto Interurban would take care of the outstanding indebtedness against the company, either by sale of stock or long term loans at small interest, he would take enough stock to equip the road and put it in operation. He stated that if this were done the company could operate the road or he would be willing to form a subsidiary company to operate the railroad. The directors of the M. I. must have found it advantageous to lease the right-of-way and railroad property to a new corporation formed for operation of the line, for we now have the beginning of the present Modesto & Empire Traction Co., incorporated on October 7, 1911. Action became swift: A new depot was constructed at 11th and F Streets, a gasoline locomotive was ordered and the first trip to Empire was announced for Wednesday afternoon November 1, 1911.

At last liberation! Modesto papers proclaimed "Railroad Competition in Modesto a Reality". Actually the competition became a reality a few days earlier, for already the Hall-Scott gasoline locomotive had brought in three or four loaded freight cars. Considering the locomotive arrived in Empire on Sunday and the passenger coach on Monday, the little railroad wasted no time in having the first official run on Wednesday with regular schedules starting immediately afterwards!

A description of this first trip, as reported in the local press, is worth repeating: "The train, consisting of the gasoline locomotive and a passenger car, left Modesto at 3:22 P.M. and arrived at Empire at 3:45, exactly thirteen minutes having ensued from the time it left this city until its arrival at Empire. The return trip was made in about the same time. No attempt at speeding was tried and the trip was typical of about the average time that will be made between the two terminals.

"The engine pulled the passenger coach with the greatest ease. In fact the run was no indication of the power of the engine, as

previous to the trip, it had handled several freight cars without trouble. The guests were loud in their praises of the rolling stock and the roadbed, which, for a new roadbed is remarkably smooth.

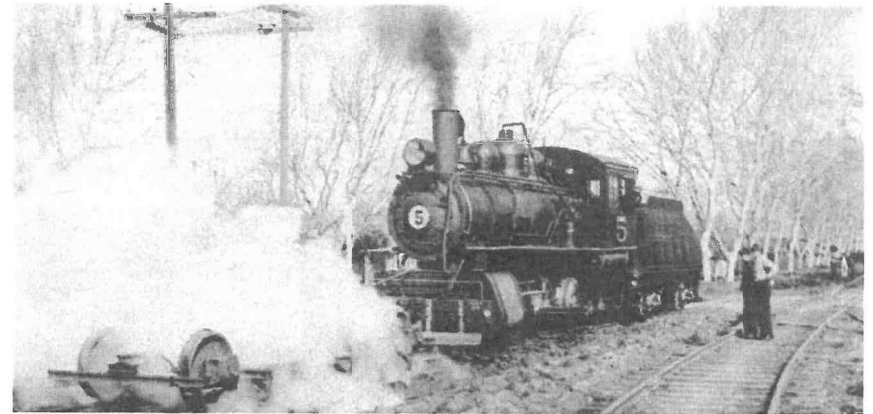
"All along the route those in the coach and on the engine platform greeted the ranchers along the route with cheers, which were enthusiastically returned. About half way to Empire the passengers noticed a gentleman waving an American flag. The only accident of the entire trip was the killing of a chicken which had usurped the right of way for its own use and had to pay the penalty".

Early operations on the M. & E. T. were uneventful; the gasoline locomotive provided good and satisfactory service, hauling and switching freight between the nine or so round trips a day with the passenger coach.

In 1913 came the "latest" in passenger comfort, a battery-powered "street car" constructed by Edison using Beach trucks. This car eventually proved unsatisfactory. With permission, another quotation from the Modesto Morning Herald describing a trip on the electric car, decidedly good reading for the enthusiasm it presents for this new mode of travel. "Think of an automobile trip in an electric car running at twenty-five miles an hour just as smoothly and quietly as though it were racing across your parlor floor: Think of an electric car line without poles or wires or other paraphernalia except the track and a car with no trolley pole and you have an idea of the new style of electric road that Modesto is going to have!

"Yesterday without any elaborate ceremony the first historical trip was made from this city to Empire in eighteen minutes in a storage battery car which seats twenty-six persons and could carry a much larger crowd if necessary and even a trailer if there was a baseball match or circus that demanded it.

"The car comes from the East and when the batteries are stored there is enough power to run the car seventy-eight miles. At the end



Versatility of a small railroad! Steam master mechanic George Logan (standing, far right) and his son watch No. 5 "burn" weeds with his homemade car, constructed of rails and old boiler pipe, perforated to force live steam on to weeds along the track. March 8, 1938.

of each trip the car will be reloaded so that it will take only a few minutes. While to load the batteries from the beginning takes several hours!

"The cost of the power is about a cent a mile, so that no doubt the Modesto & Empire Traction Company will be able to reduce the fare to Empire to half what it is today.

"The car cost \$7500 laid down in Modesto, and that is not much in excess of the ordinary electric car now in use. There is no trolley system to build so that saves at least \$2800 a mile and there is no trolley system to maintain which means less cost again. Then there is only about one-third the expense of running the storage battery cars that there is in running the electric cars one sees in San Francisco and Sacramento.

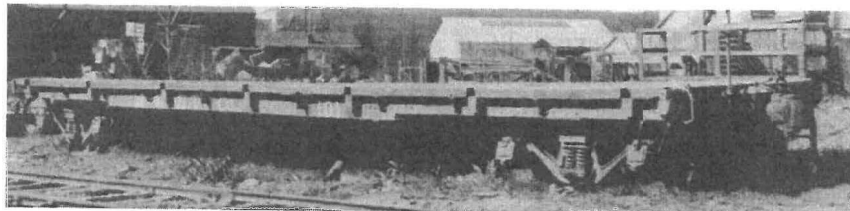
"The introduction of these storage battery cars means a big thing for this valley. This system is so much cheaper than the old fashion trolley lines that with a given amount of money, the company can cover so much more territory. That means more lines can be and will be built, that means they will be able to carry passengers and freight so much cheaper than the trolley lines and that means the cheapening of the cost of living, and consequently the increasing in the value of land.

"As the initial car sped along its five mile journey to Empire and on its way back the residents along the line rushed out to see the new home builder as it passed them by, and the travelers on the road were so intent on watching the new car that they forgot to watch their teams. At Empire a number of future legislators in bare feet and overalls greeted the new arrival with the greatest enthusiasm.

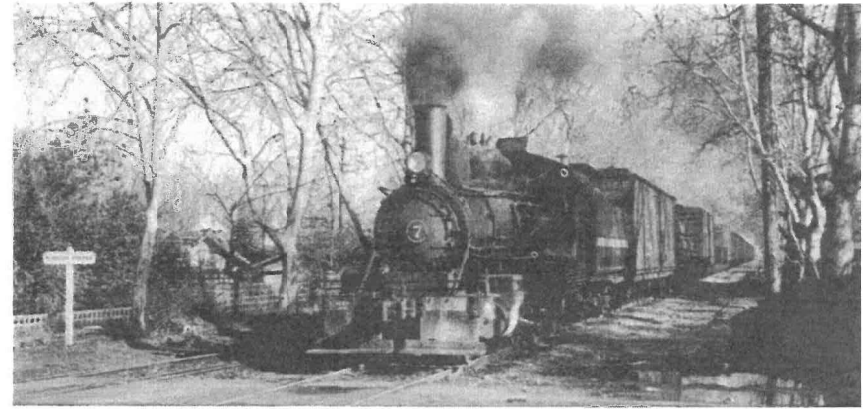
"The trip was an unqualified success. The car was under the personal management of Mr. Curtiss of Howard & Curtiss who have the sole agency for the Edison Storage Battery System on this coast. Mr. Cutting representing the great inventor was along to see that everything worked smoothly.

"There are electric cars of the new type in this State only in San Diego and Burlingame, near San Francisco, so Modesto is among the most up-to-date cities on this coast."

Perhaps it was the early success of the battery car that in 1914 brought about a proposal for the Modesto Interurban to construct a line southwesterly across the San Joaquin River to the "West Side" district. The planning of this extension went so far that bonds of the road were placed, sufficient to purchase the rails. Upon completion,



M. & E. T.'s one-and-only piece of rolling stock, flat car No. 101, was acquired accidentally. About ten years ago a large Modesto lumber yard was destroyed by fire; in the ruins was a badly damaged box car. Donated to the M. & E. T. it was rebuilt into this flat. It is not used in interchange.



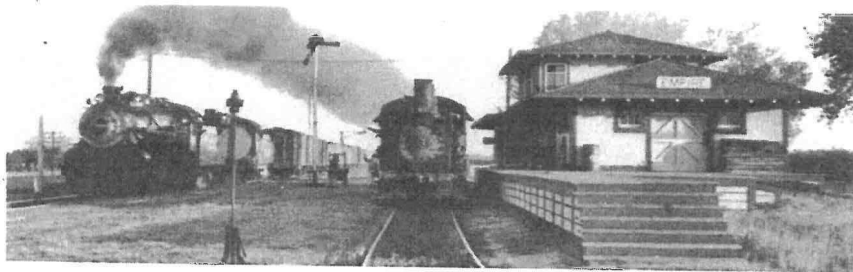
During diesel-days occasionally a steamer did service. Here No. 7 is rolling down Sonora Ave. with a long string of cars on January 11, 1951.

the idea was to lease the road to the Modesto & Empire Traction and let it operate the line. However, the extension plan was withheld for various unknown reasons. Request to abandon all passenger service was made in 1917.

After the construction by the Modesto Interurban of the main track from Modesto to Empire and the leasing of the road to the Modesto & Empire Traction to operate, the idea occurred to develop the property owned by Mr. Beard as an industrial zone to be used as general terminal properties. The Tidewater Southern (reorganization of the earlier Tidewater & Southern) had built to Modesto but had no adequate terminal facilities. An agreement, in 1917, was worked out for the use of certain joint terminal facilities whereby the T. S. would construct the spurs and tracks for the terminal grounds. The M. & E. T. paid a cash rental to the M. I.; the T. S., in lieu of cash, built and maintained the tracks and paid taxes and assessments. In 1920, another company, under Beard management, was formed: The Modesto Terminal Company which was to greatly facilitate the leasing to various industries and warehouses, property that may be required by them either improved or unimproved. This company took over the terminal facilities of the Modesto Interurban.

In January of 1922 connection was made with Modesto's other railroad, the Southern Pacific, when an interchange track was constructed between the two roads.

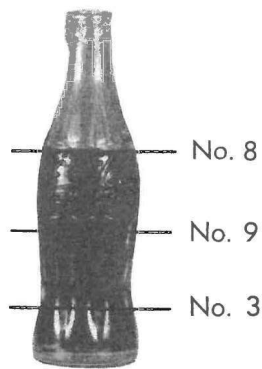
It is interesting to note the change in the character of Modesto & Empire Traction traffic. At first, the passenger was the important commodity. With the development of ditch irrigation in central Stanislaus County and the subsequent planting of thousands of acres to fruit and grapes, outgoing traffic reflected the change with carloads of peaches, grapes, canned goods and dried fruit starting their trip to eastern markets over the local rails. Not to be overlooked were animal products; cattle, hogs and hides, shipped in some quantity in the early twenties. As Modesto's economy turned even more to fruit, livestock business dwindled to nothing and the extensive cattle pens on lower Twelfth Street were torn down.



Friendly waves are exchanged between Santa Fe and M. & E. T. enginemen in this April, 1944 view at the Santa Fe's Empire station. How this scene has changed! Gone are the semaphore, the order board AND the steamers.

A story of the Modesto & Empire Traction could well be divided into three chapters: The Early Days, with passenger service and experiments with various forms of motive power; The Average Days, when the railroad was much like any small freight-only switching road, rough track, handsome old steam engines and a few dependable shippers; The Modern Days, as represented by the railroad since World War II. Truly a boomer switchman who had not seen the railroad in the past ten years would be lost! Gone are the aromatic steamers, replaced by three shiny diesel-electrics. Light 60 lb. rail has been relaid with heavier steel on the main line. And industries! There are three large canning plants, frozen food plants, a carton printing plant, a winery and many many more. Probably the most difficult bit of modernization for our boomer is the two-way radio that eliminates those sometimes delightful "dead miles". Efficiency first! There is no double hauling, and shippers' orders may be processed almost as quickly as they can be telephoned to the company's traffic headquarters. It takes but a moment for the yardmaster to pick up his radio phone, call Engine 600, 601 or 602 as the case may be and tell the crew what to do.

The tone that refreshes!



With "home" recorders practically non-existent during steam days on the M. & E. T. it is doubtful that any whistle sounds have been captured for posterity. However, during winter months, with their clear atmosphere, the M. & E. T.'s evening train could easily be heard over most of Modesto as it beautifully whistled its way to Empire. Not un-noticed, these sounds - - - a railroad fan "tuned" a "Coke" bottle to the engine in service (having previously determined which engine was being used that evening). Herewith, instructions to reproduce, with reasonable accuracy, the sounds of three M. & E. T. locomotives. (Drink Coke to level indicated and blow in top.)

Yes, how the little Modesto & Empire Traction Co. has grown! This distance of 5.226 main line miles from Modesto to Empire remains the same - - but the siding, spurs and joint-trackage of today add up to an impressive 22.5 miles.

The Editor of the Modesto Morning Herald in the edition for November 2, 1911, the day after the first run, wrote these words: "Mr. Beard deserves a great deal of credit for the building of this our first interurban railway, and had it not been for his efforts the road would not even now be operating". The forty five intervening years have in no way lessened Modesto's appreciation to Mr. Beard and his family; his foresight and the ability of George Beard, W. F. Beard, John Beard, Herbert Beard, and Tom Beard to carry on with "Modern & Efficient Transportation" is a credit to them and a gain to the community.

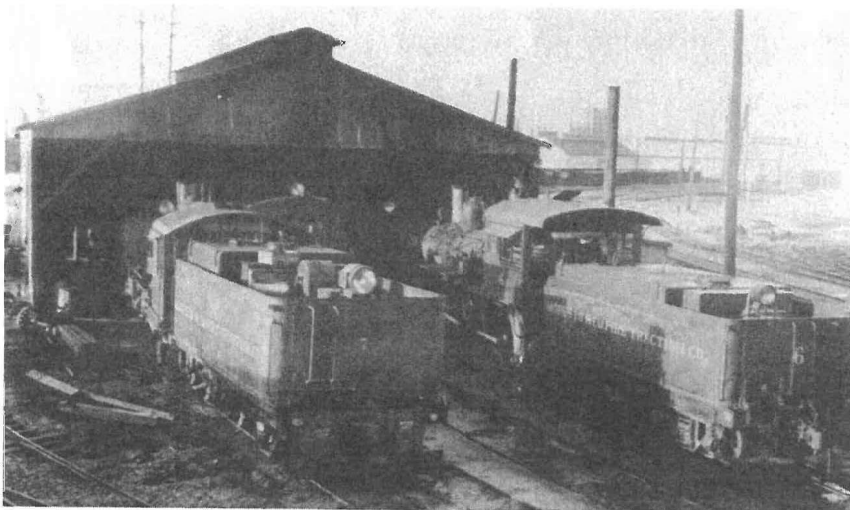


Locomotives of the M. & E. T.

Until the coming of the diesels, motive power of the Modesto & Empire Traction Co. was as varied as that found on any short line. Steam, of course, was the principle source of power, although the road started with a gasoline locomotive both to handle the one and only passenger car, and to do what hauling of freight equipment was repaired. Later came the battery-powered "street car." Despite the "Traction" in the company title, the M. & E. T. never did own or operate electric locomotives or cars. A considerable portion of M. & E. T. rails in Modesto was covered by the overhead wire of the Tidewater Southern, where joint switching arrangements existed: They may have led some to believe the M. & E. T. operated electric locomotives.

Only new steam engine to appear on the roster was No. 3, yet it was not built new for the M. & E. T.! Constructed on order of Central Sofia with a group of similar locomotives in 1921, these 2-6-0s were not delivered to the intended purchaser, but held in storage by the builder. When obtained in 1926, a builder's plate for that year was applied. At one time No. 3 had the unusual distinction of two whistles!

In 1945 the No. 7 had a rather unusual contrivance applied: The "Evans Adhesion Device," consisting of electromagnets located near the drivers and just above rail-head. An extra dynamo-generator was added to supply current to the magnets, used when starting or braking heavy trains. Enginemen reported the device helpful, altho



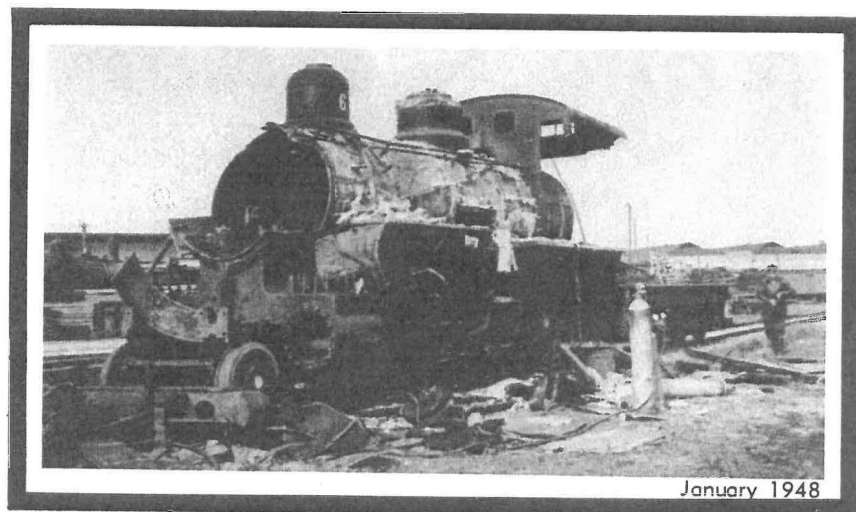
Full house! This December 23, 1945 view in pre-diesel days pictures the complete roster of M. & E. T. locomotives. Inside, left to right, No. 3, No. 8 and No. 9; outside, the No. 7 and No. 6. With advent of diesels this old engine house was remodeled into a modern diesel shop.



the magnets had the annoying habit of picking up a great amount of "junk"! Photo of No. 7 on page 20 shows this device.

Several occasions have seen foreign power used. Santa Fe No. 2440 was leased in September of 1935 for the fruit rush. Red River Lumber Co. No. 25, which was to become M. & E. T. No. 7, arrived in Modesto in June, 1938 under its own power and was used the day of arrival in switching service, lettered R. R. L. Co. Similarly, Santa Fe No. 2447, purchased in October, 1944, arrived during the fruit rush and was pressed into service for a few days, still lettered A. T. & S. F. In August of 1947, Yosemite Valley 23 saw several weeks of switching service.

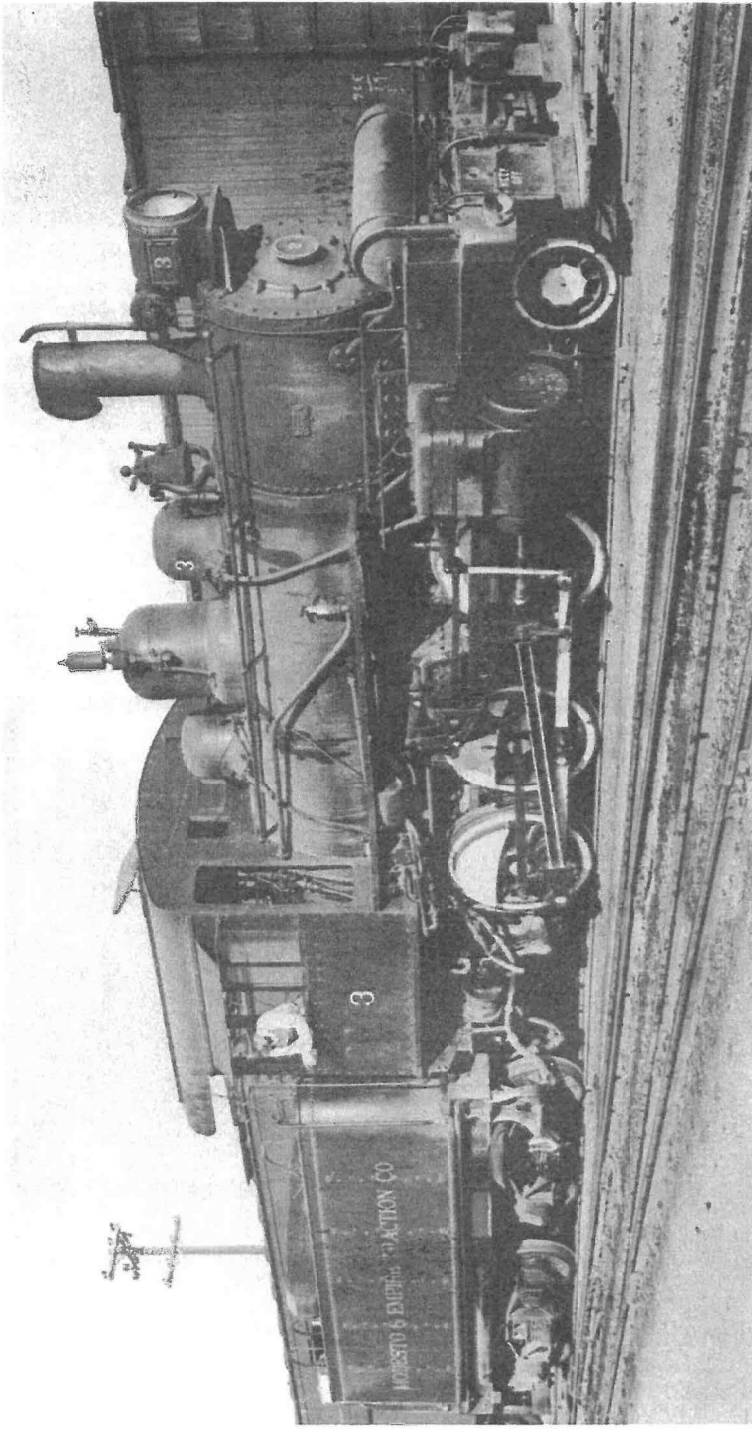
Five years have passed since a steamer has done motive power honors, - - - Now, three as-alike-as-peas-in-a-pod diesels; competent, colorful (paint-wise) and practical, provide an efficient switching service.



Specifications for locomotives are shown with the picture captions and in the following order: Type, Builder, Construction number, Diameter of Drivers, Cylinder Dimensions, Weight, Boiler Pressure and Tractive Force.

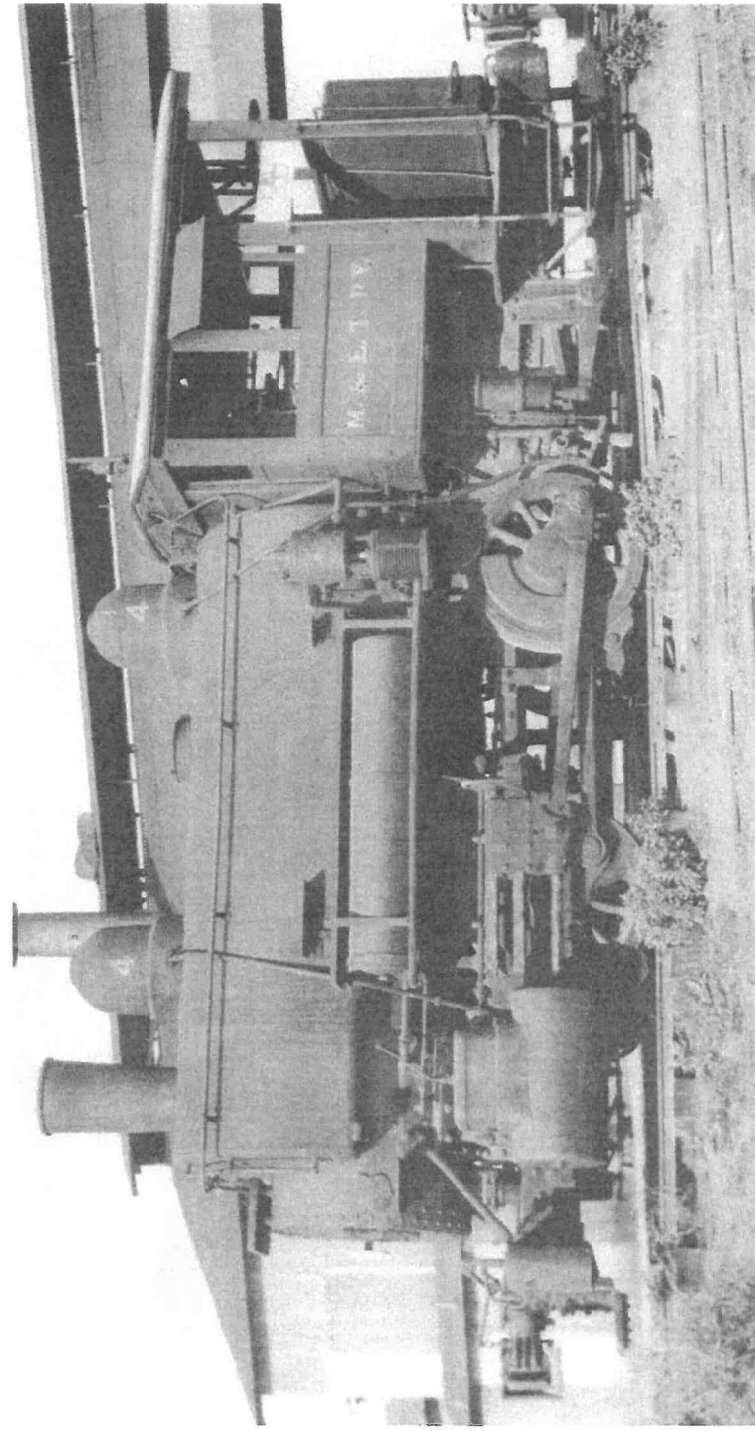
1 0-6-0

2 4-4-0



3 2-6-0 Cooke No. 62717 1921
46—16x24—86000—160—18200

Built new in 1921, stored by builder. Purchased as new locomotive by M. & E. T. Last used in November 1947, No. 3 was officially retired from service on August 31, 1948, and scrapped at Modesto in February, 1949.

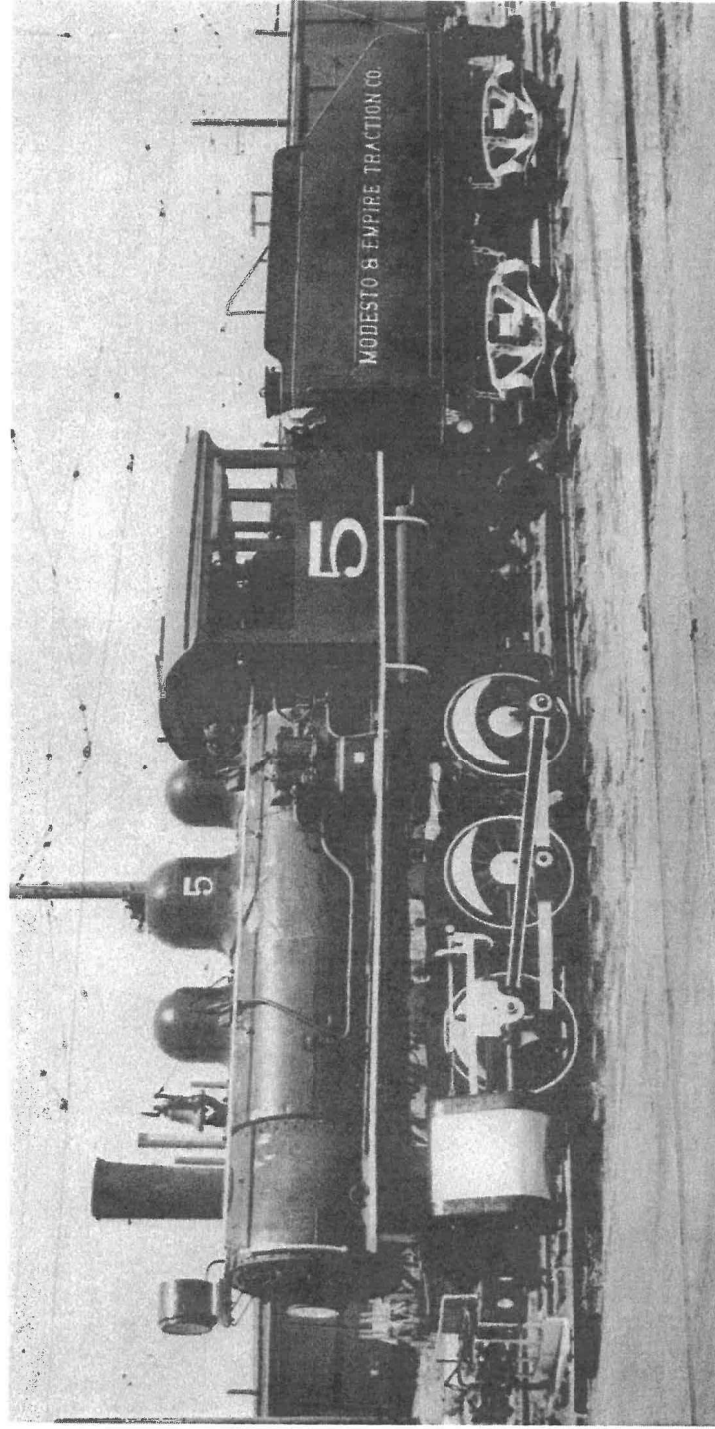


4 0-4-0T Porter No. 3654 1907
46—15x24—84000—170—16960

Built for Mammouth Copper Mining Co., Hutchinson Lumber Co., Feather River Pine Mills. Purchased by M. & E. T. Sold to Atlas-Olympia Gravel Co., then to H. J. Kaiser Co. No. 104. Scrapped

February 18, 1934

Harold Harding

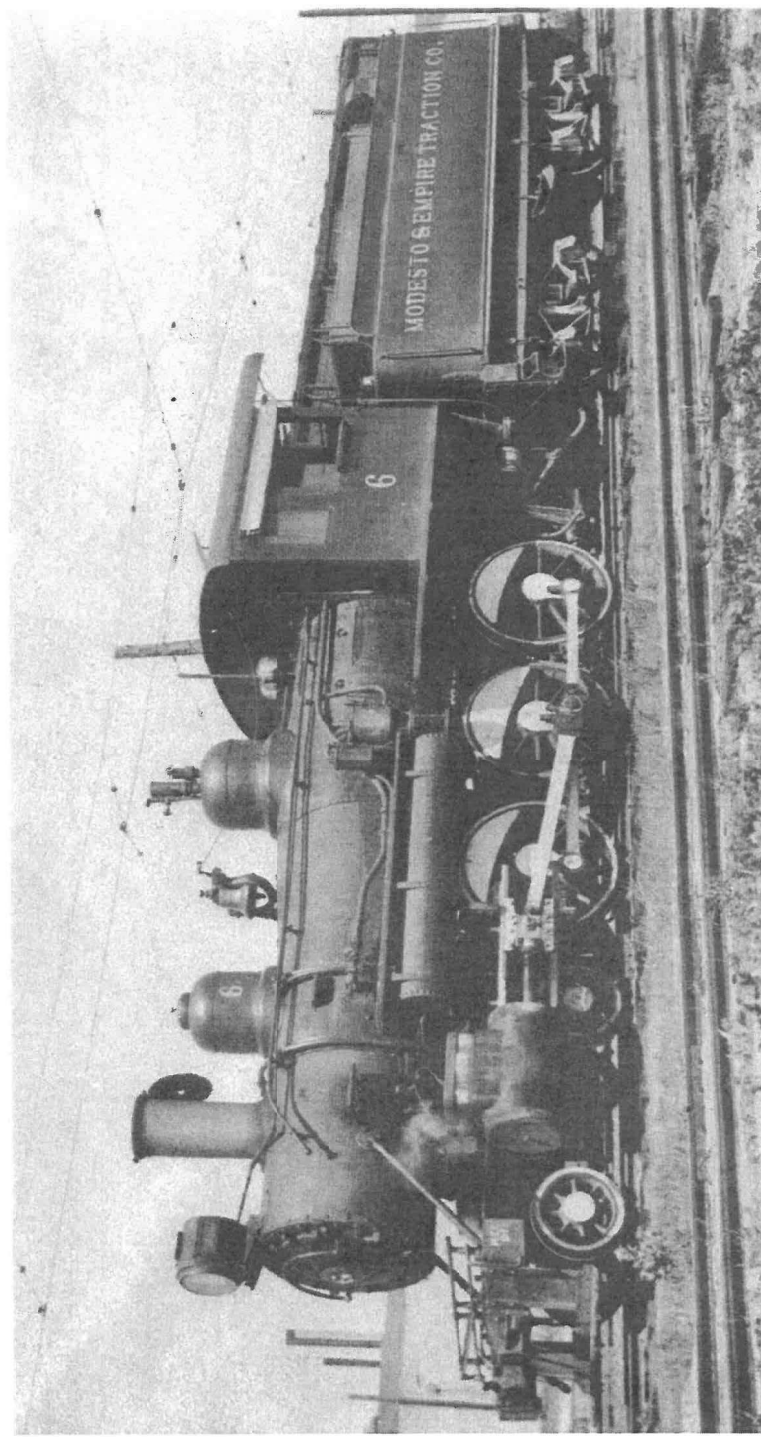


August 13, 1937

5 0-6-0 Vulcan No. 1759 1911

51-19x24-198000-175-25270

Built as State Belt Railroad of California No. 4, sold to the M. & E. T. in 1932. Sold to A. D. Shader in 1938 and used on Treasure Island. Used by Permanente Cement in 1940 as the No. 400. Became U. S. A. No. 6956, used near Tracy during the war. Now in a Stockton junk yard.

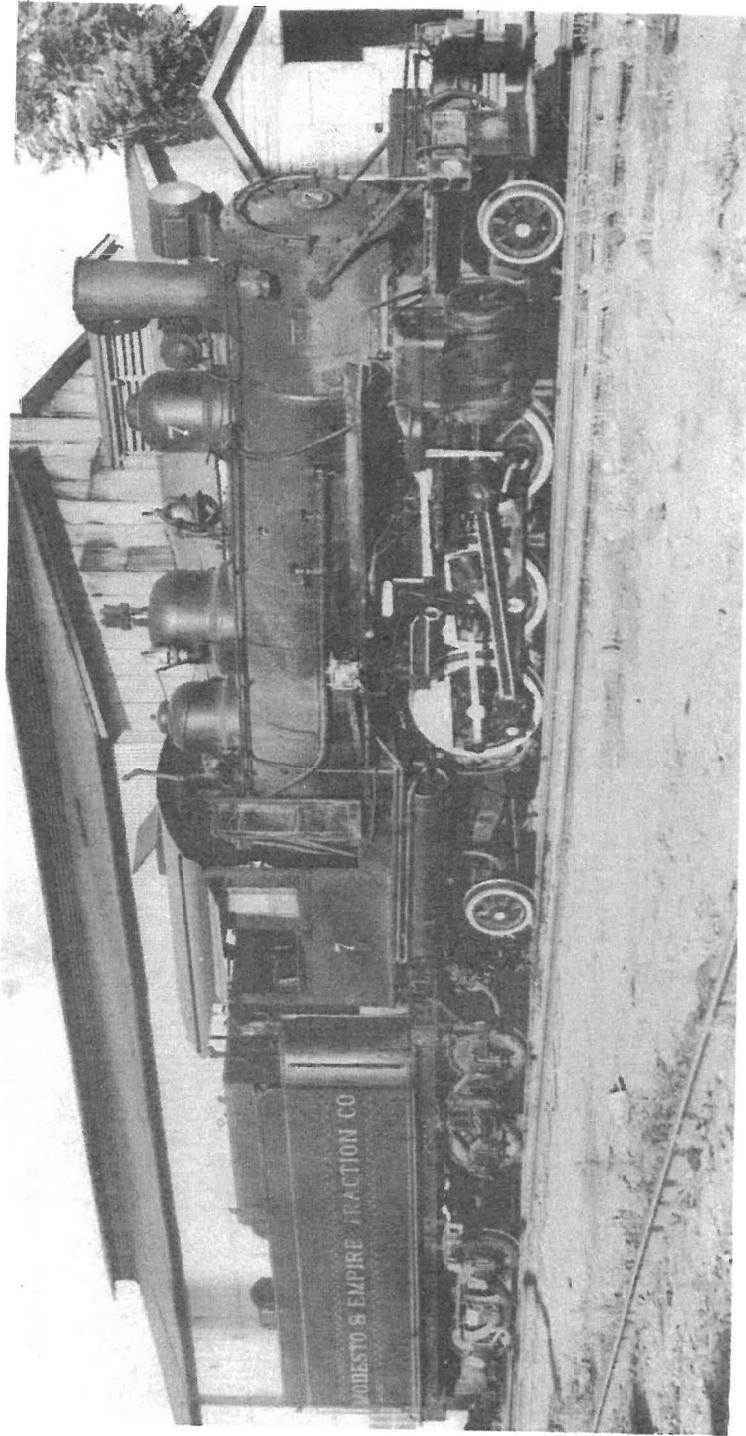


April 1, 1940

6 4-6-0 Baldwin No. 41472 1914

56-18x24-110950-180-21240

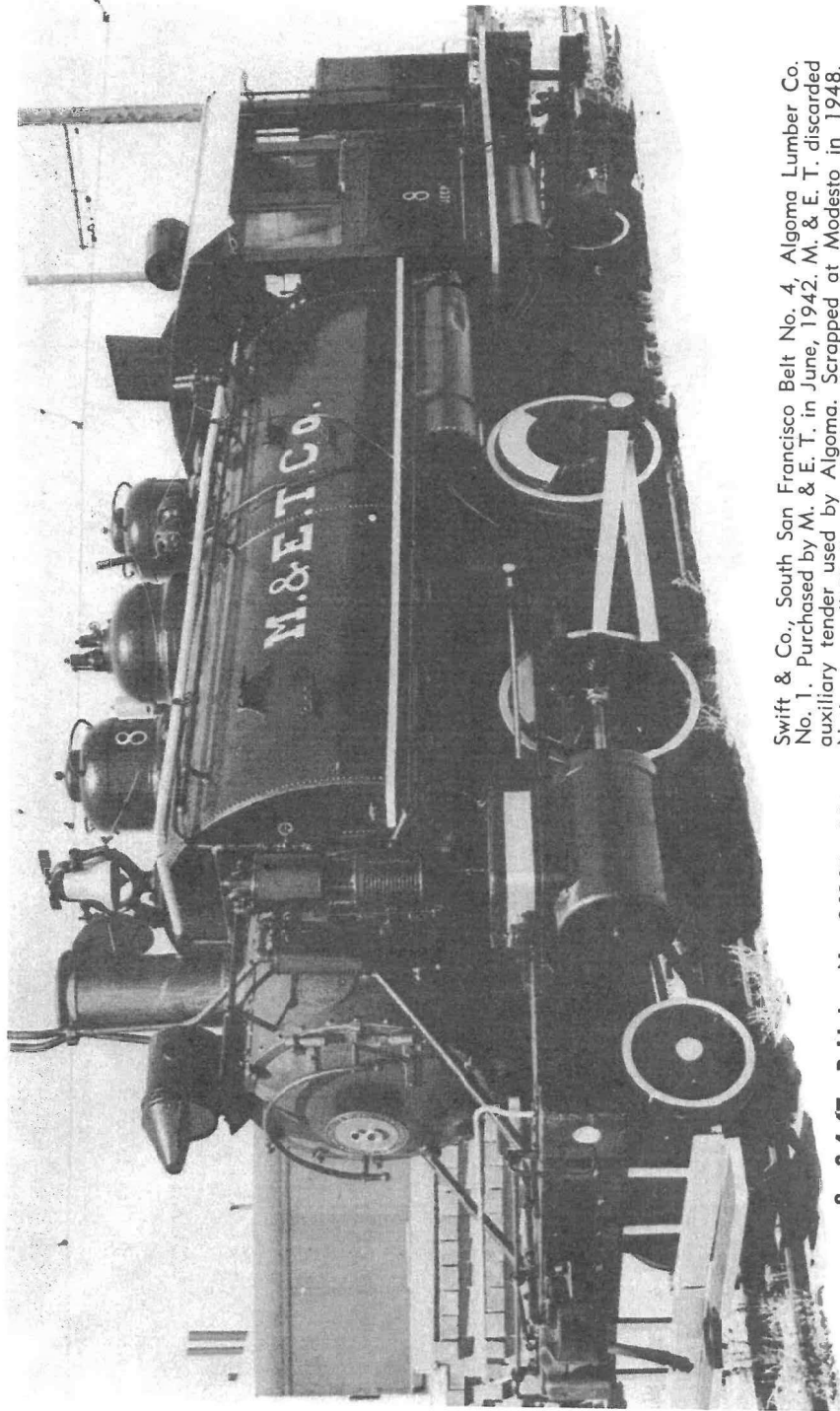
Built as San Joaquin & Eastern No. 201 Purchased by M. & E. T. in 1936. Scrapped at Modesto in January 1948.



7 2-6-2 Baldwin No. 56403 1923
46—16x24—106060—180—20430

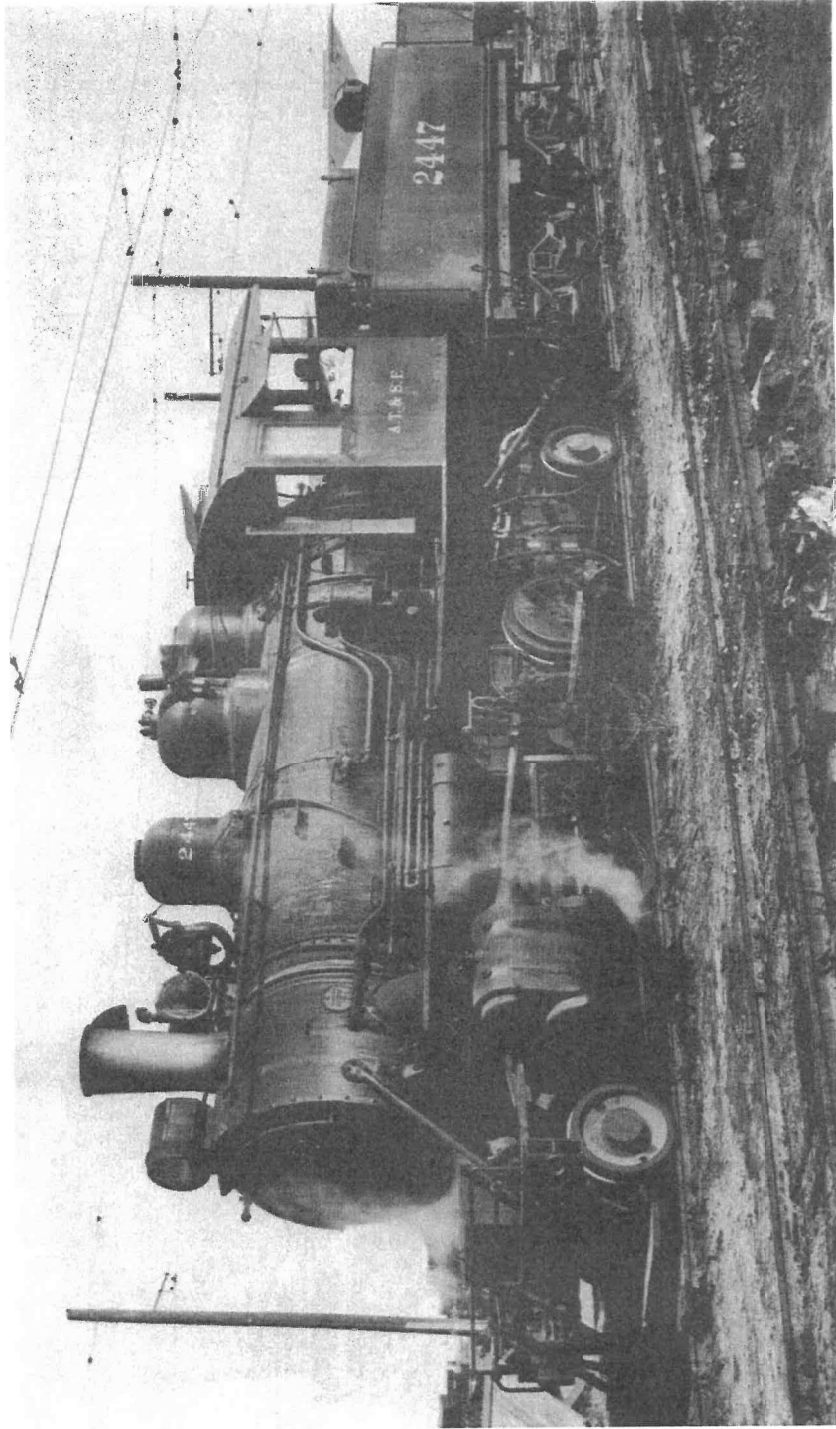
June 16, 1945

Lassen Lumber & Box, purchased in 1929 by the Red River Lumber Co. to become their No. 25. Obtained by the M. & E. T. in June, 1938. Sold for scrap, left Modesto on April 24, 1952.

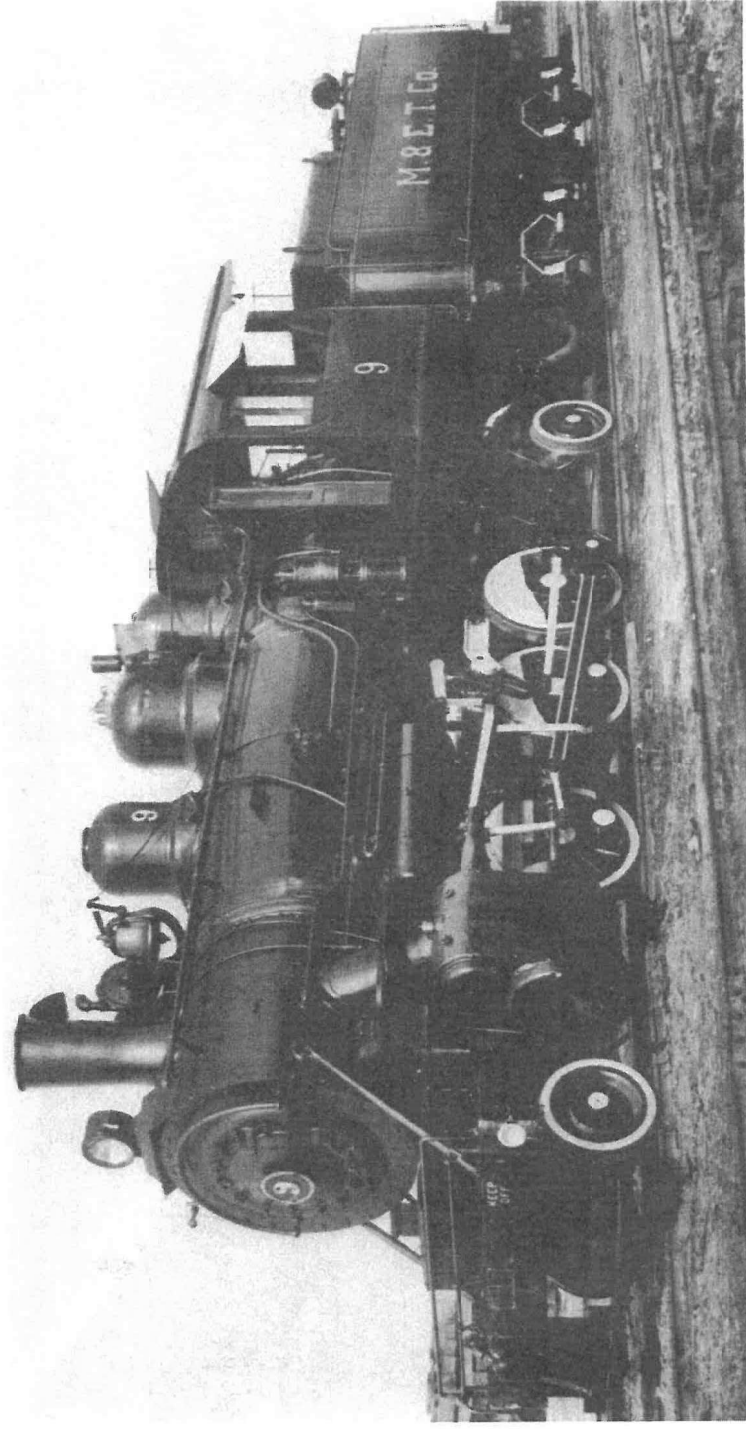


8 2-4-4T Baldwin No. 34845 1910
46—16x24—110000—160—18200

Swift & Co., South San Francisco Belt No. 4, Algoma Lumber Co. No. 1. Purchased by M. & E. T. in June, 1942. M. & E. T. discarded auxiliary tender used by Algoma. Scrapped at Modesto in 1948. Notice name "JEEP" on cab!

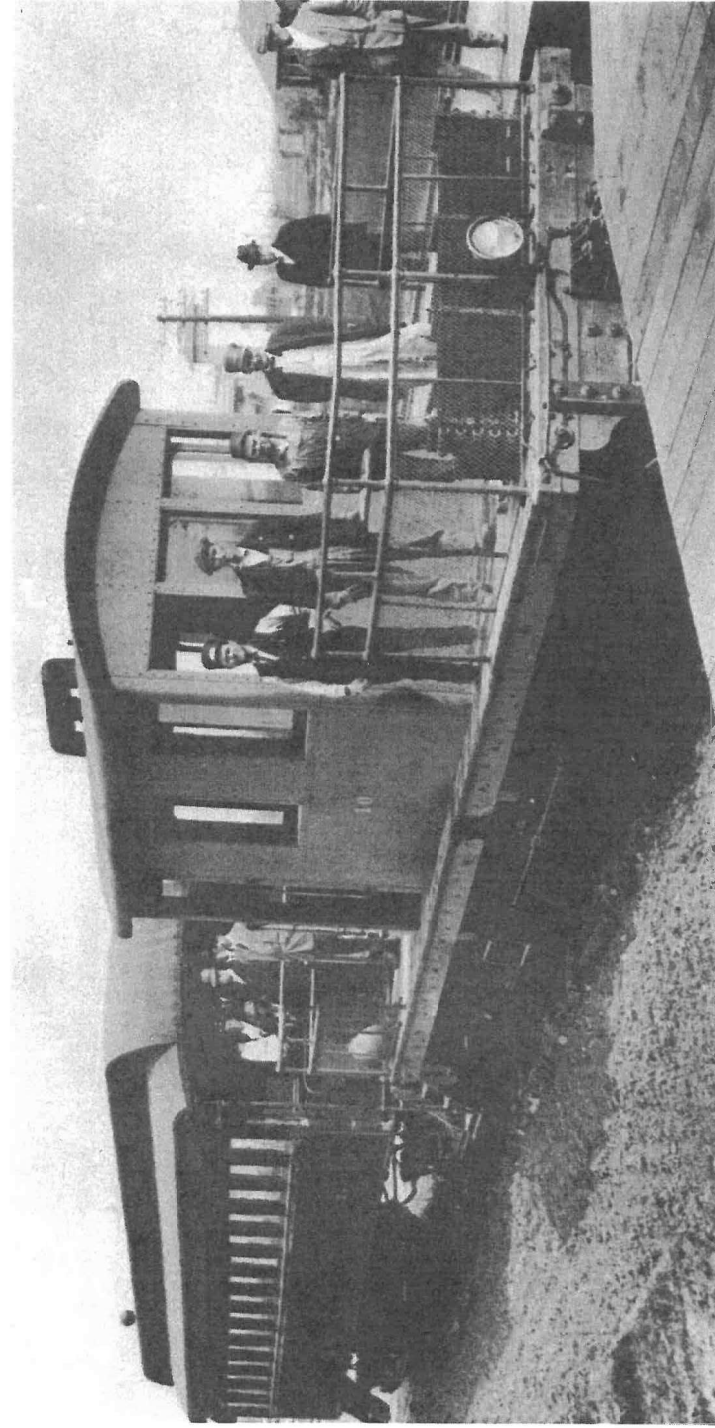


October 14, 1944



9 2-6-2 Baldwin No. 56728 1923
44-17x24-125720-175-23400

Built as Mt. Shasta Power Corp. No. 4, Key System No. 4, Oakland Terminal No. 4, became Santa Fe No. 2447. Purchased by the M. & E. T. in October, 1944. Sold for scrap, left Modesto on April 24, 1952.



10 100HP Hall Scott 1911

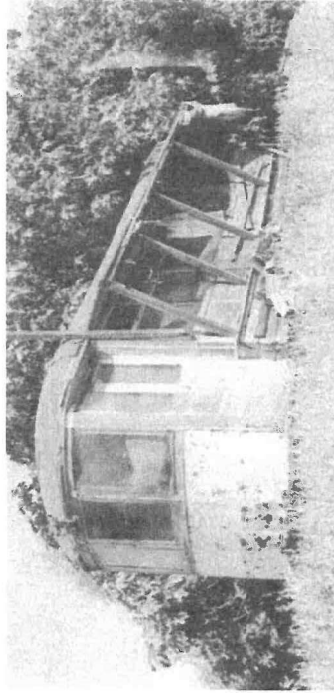
This direct-drive Hall-Scott gasoline locomotive was first M. & E. T. motive power. Scrapped by M. & E. T.

No. 10, coach No. 1642, crew and passengers pose for their photos at the Empire station, sometime prior to 1916. On balmy days, it was said passengers were allowed to ride on the generous-sized locomotive platforms. The one and only coach on the M. & E. T. came from S. P.'s Seventh Street line in Oakland. Parts for the platform gate may be seen.

R. J. LeClerc



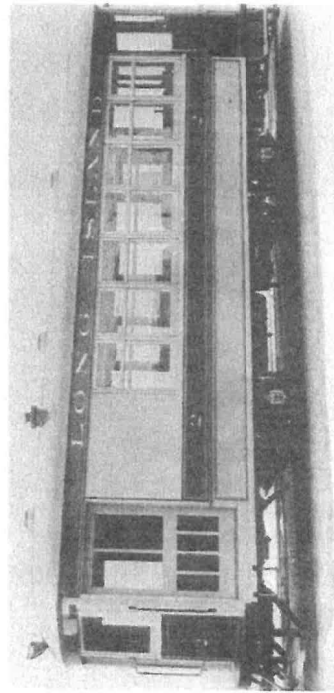
Forty-five years later remnants of M. & E. T.'s first equipment is yet in evidence! Old coach No. 1642 is office for a junk yard on



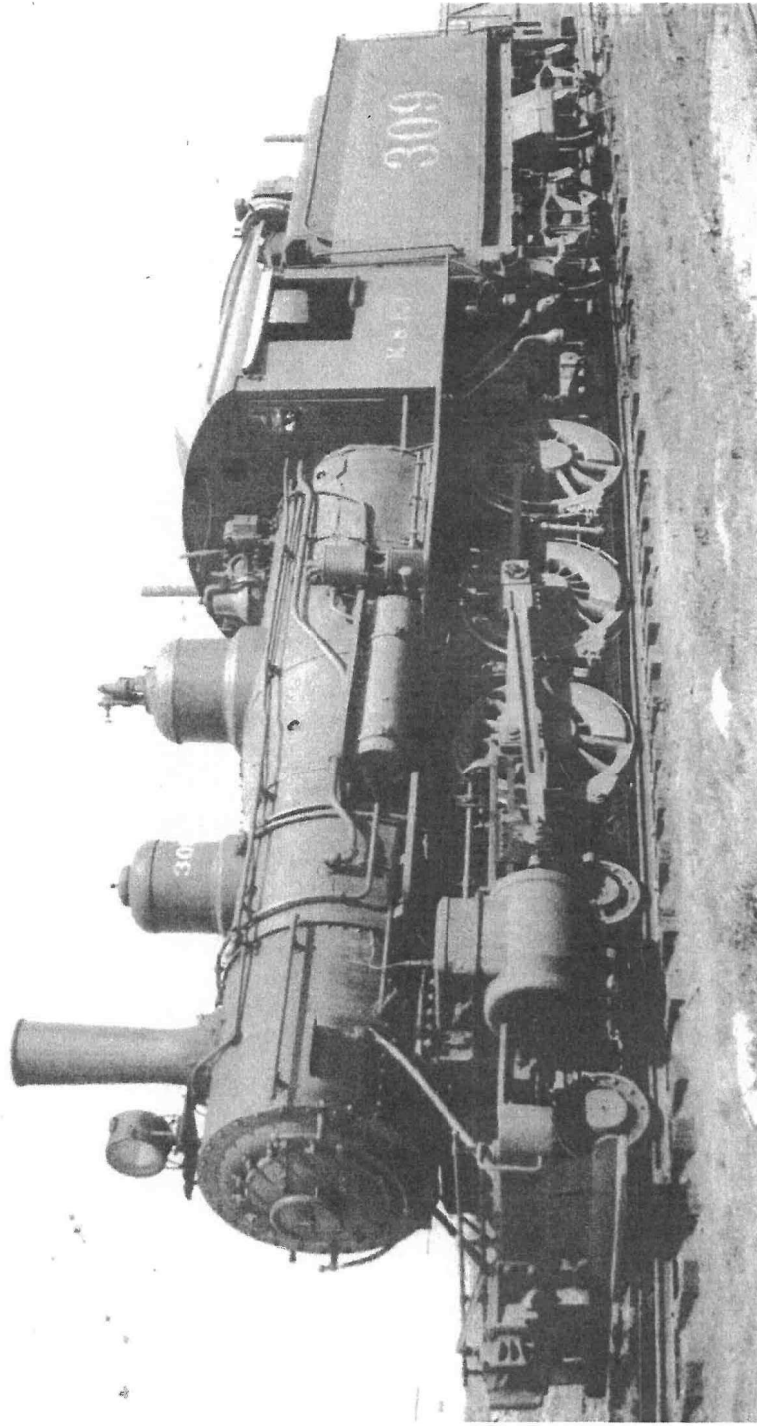
No photograph of battery-powered "street car" No. 11, in service, is known to exist. Photograph on left shows remains of this Edison-Beech car as it looked in Modesto on June 4, 1940. There is some



River Road; cab of No. 10 is being used as a storage shed behind a residence on Beard Ave. Both photographed in September, 1956.



likelihood this car appeared much like Long Island No. 2, shown on the right.

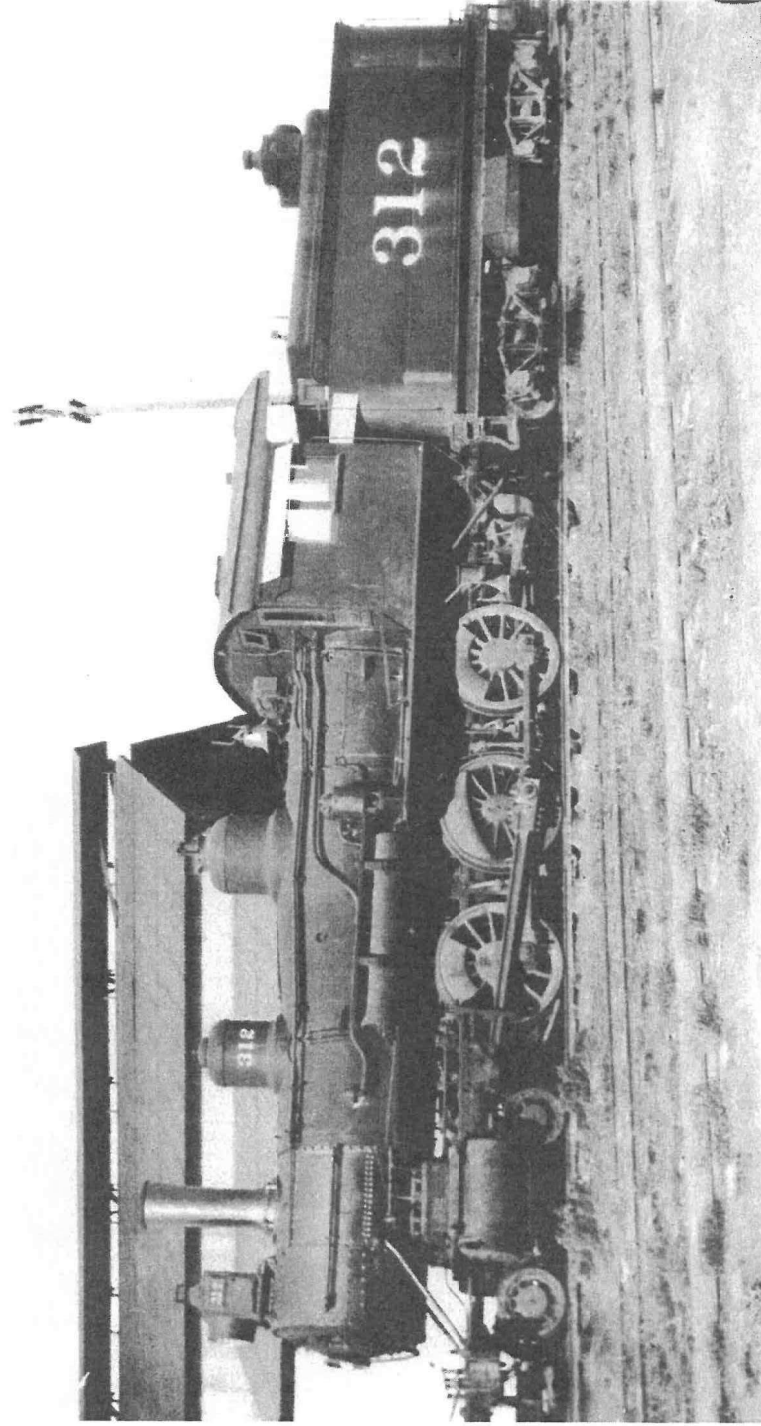


March 31, 1934

309 4-6-0 Baldwin No. 14332 1896
57-19x24-100000-165-21350

Harold Harding

Built as San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley No. 1, later became A. T. & S. F. No. 309 in 1901. Purchased by the M. & E. T. in July, 1929. Scrapped at Modesto in 1935.

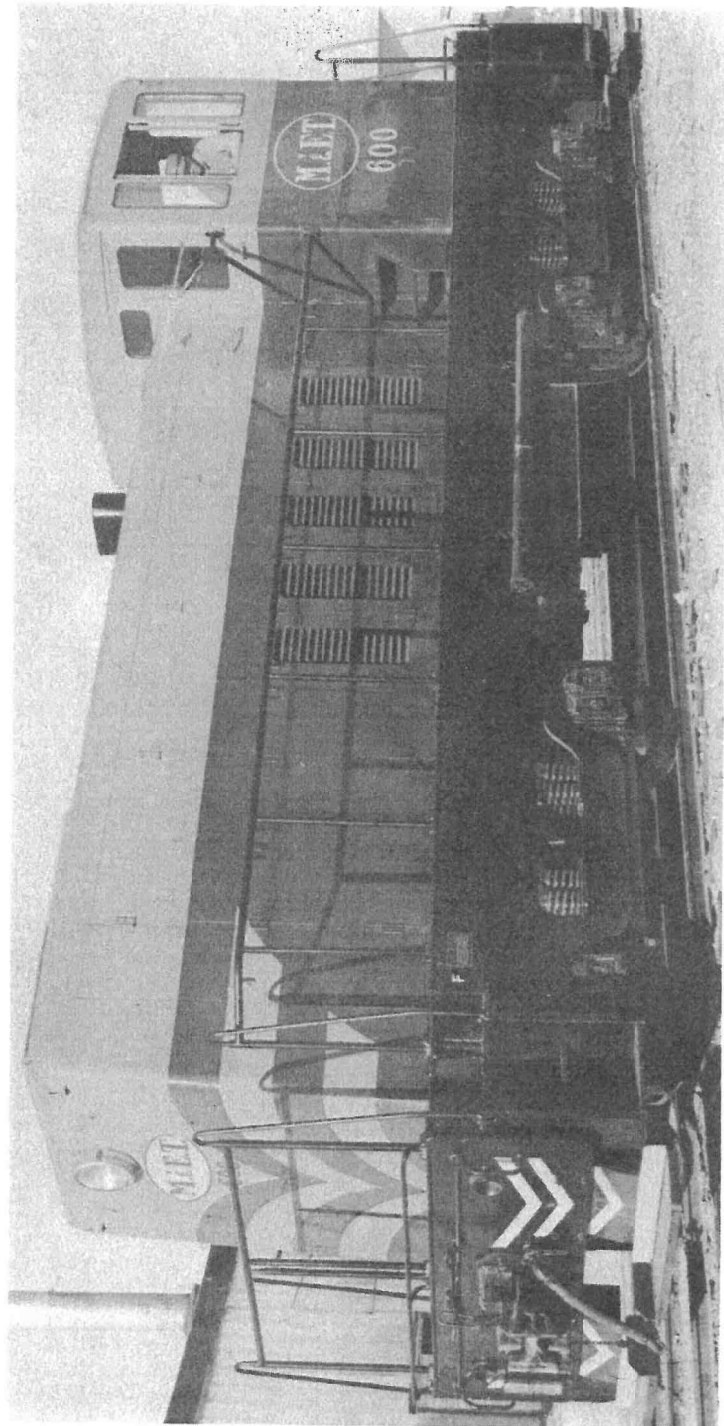


February 18, 1934

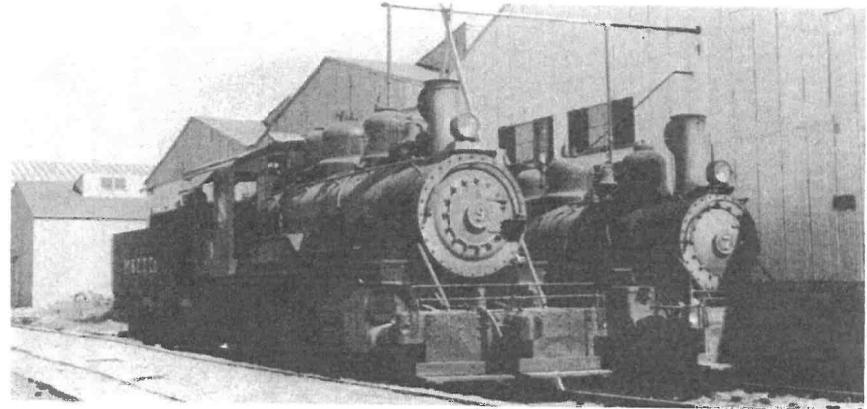
312 4-6-0 Baldwin No. 14898 1896
57-19x24-100000-165-21350

Harold Harding

Built as San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley No. 4, later became A. T. & S. F. No. 312 in 1901. Purchased by the M. & E. T. in June, 1928. Scrapped at Modesto in 1935.



600 600HP G. E. Cooper-Bessemer Oct., 1947 70 tons The number "600" was derived from horsepower of the locomotive.
 601 600HP G. E. Cooper-Bessemer Feb., 1948 70 tons
 602 600HP G. E. Cooper-Bessemer Feb., 1952 70 tons

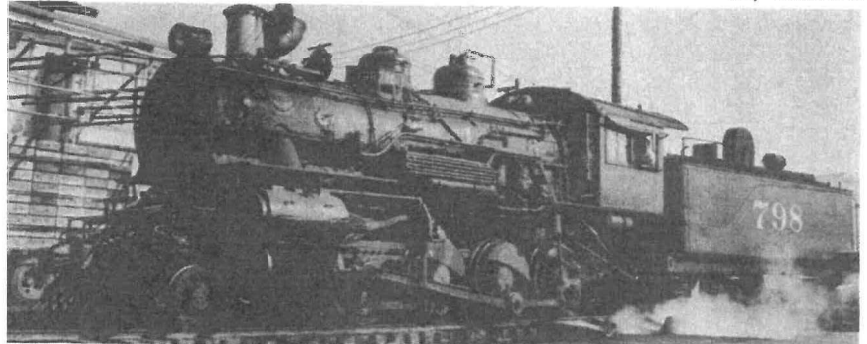


Grahame Hardy

Steam Cookers

Steam engines are handy! - - They pull trains - - they can fruit! When added steam capacity was desired at Modesto canning plants, it was a simple matter to slip a steam engine into a nearby siding to provide that extra steam. Almost all M. & E. T. engines have been used in this service. No. 7 and No. 9 spent their last days under steam in this employ. Largest locomotive on M. & E. T., Santa Fe No. 798 was not for motive power, but was used at the Stanislaus Food Products canning plant in the fall of 1951.

Guy Dunscomb



Ever see a 4-5-0?

... the M. & E. T. had one!

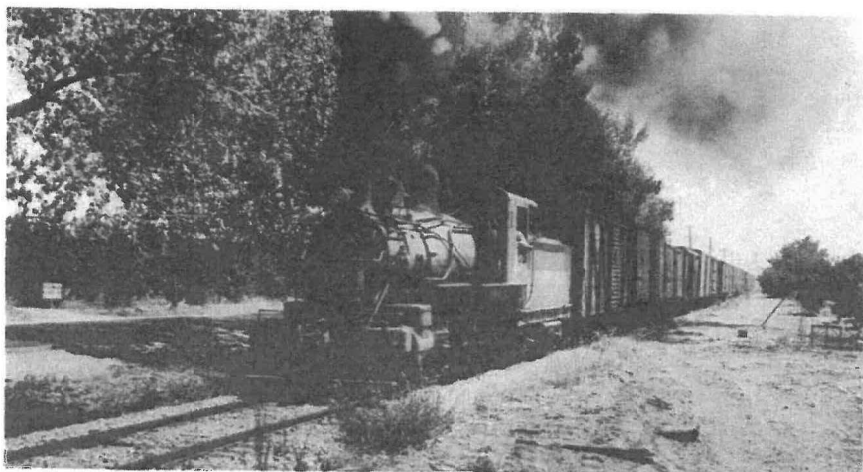
... at least for a few days. One evening in September, 1948, while switching the can plant the engine men felt a "bump". Bringing the No. 6 to a quick stop they found one of the drivers broken off as neatly as could be! So, there you have it - - a 4-5-0!



With the exception of No. 21 (scrapped by this time) and No. 28, here is the complete roster of Yosemite Valley locomotives in storage near the M. & E. T. engine house on April 27, 1947. Right to left are: a portion of M. & E. T. No. 9, Y. V., 27, 23, 22, 25, 29 and 26.

Then there was the Y.V. . . .

With the yards of the abandoned Yosemite Valley Railway being cleared in Merced for homes and stores in early 1947, Y. V. engines 22, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 29 were brought to Modesto in February, 1947 and held in storage on a special track constructed for this purpose. It was the hope of the Y. V.'s scrappers that all these engines could be re-sold; this did happen to No. 29, which headed for Mexico. During the fruit rush of 1947 Y. V. No. 23, 4-4-0, had her pilot exchanged for footboards and saw several weeks switching service on the M. & E. T., before being returned to storage. These Y. V. locomotives were sent to Port Chicago for scrapping in 1948.



Footboard-fitted Yosemite Valley No. 23, 4-4-0, rolls twenty-one cars out of Prima Vista, headed for Modesto on a bright day in August of 1947.

Over the Editor's Train Sheet . . .

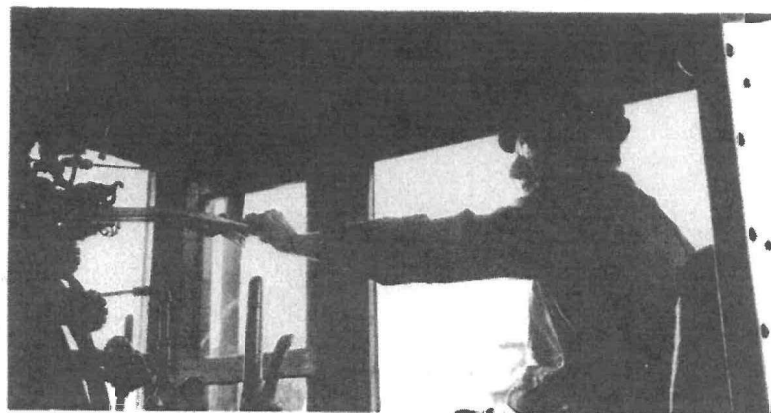
The foregoing pages, have, as the title indicated, presented a brief look at the prosperous Modesto & Empire Traction Co. railroad. From a simple short line, the M. & E. T. has grown into a complex terminal-industrial operation, much too involved to be covered in a publication of this size, and probably of but passing interest to the railroad fan, more interested in motive power and physical appearance than in rate structures, tariffs, switching agreements, etc. To this extent we hope these pages have been of interest.

Particular thanks are due to George Beard for checking this written history, and to Tom Beard, who has helped to see this publication into print. Gratitude is also extended to the following for their assistance: Harold Harding for the photos of No. 4, No. 309 and No. 312; Doug Richter and M. & E. T. master mechanic H. E. Kemmis for roster information; and printers Harley Cooney and Walt Crozier.

Al Rose

Modesto, California, October 8, 1956

Photos are from the collection of the author unless otherwise indicated.



Hand on throttle, the late Walter Albert prepares for another session of switching with No. 7.

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Rod Daley photo (Back cover)