

Southern Pacific Bulletin

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STEAMER DIVISION NUMBER

The Picturesque "Netherlands Route"

California's "Valley of the Nile" served by one Branch of this Company's Steamer Division.

By F. A. FISH, Assistant Superintendent of Steamers

On the ragged slopes of Mt. Shasta, far up in the northern part of the State, Big Spring Creek and Gold Creek unite and their off-spring is the Sacramento River, which gathering strength as it goes along, finally empties into Suisun Bay at Collinsville, 375 miles from its source.

The Sacramento flows into a valley of 12 million acres and is as potentially rich and productive as the far-famed Valley of the Nile. If the acreage tributary to the Sacramento River were brought under full cultivation it would sustain a population of five million people.

Sacramento Valley itself follows the birth of the first railroad and today it is gridiron by the rails of the Southern Pacific Company, but long before the railroad came the Sacramento River was the "roadway" along which commerce first traveled. The river steamers which the Southern Pacific Company today operate between San Francisco and Sacramento, the capital of the State and which transport the traveler during the night time through a region which bears a close resemblance to The Netherlands, were antedated over half a century by boats which to this day hold the record of being the speediest, largest and most elaborately furnished that the Sacramento River ever afforded.

While today the automobile and the railroad have cut in heavily to the Sacramento River traffic, both passenger and freight, the water route is still important, picturesque and has a fascinating history.

For example, there is the story of the first Sacramento River steamboat called the "Little Sitka" brought from Sitka Island to San Francisco on a Russian bark and assembled at Terba Buena Island in 1847. She was a side-wheeler, very cranky, and the records state that the weight of a single person on her guard would put one wheel out of commission. She made one trip to Santa Clara, with indifferent success, and one trip to Sacramento in November, 1847. On the following February she was swamped while lying at anchor in San Francisco Bay.

Among the principal steamers engaged in passenger and freight traffic between San Francisco, Sacramento and way points in 1849, 1850 and 1851, were the "New World," "Senator" and "Chrysopolis." The latter was launched in 1850, was a marvel of speed, size and luxury. Her gross tonnage was 1,625 tons, and she negotiated the run from Sacramento to San Francisco in five hours and ten

minutes. Passenger fares were \$30 from San Francisco to Sacramento, berths \$5 and meals \$1.50.

In 1849 sea-going sailing vessels were placed on a run from Atlantic seaboard to San Francisco and Sacramento, and the first one to arrive at Sacramento was the Bark *Whiton*, fully loaded with general merchandise for R. Gleason & Co. She made the trip, New York to San Francisco, in 140 days and from San Francisco to Sacramento in three days, arriving there on May 4, 1849.

Early Development

The early operation of steamers carrying passenger and freight between San Francisco, Sacramento and way points was handled by a number of independent lines until February 28, 1854, when a combination of the strongest independent lines was formed; the California Steam Navigation Company incorporated with a capital of \$2,500,000, and R. P. Cheney chosen as president. He was followed by S. J. Hensley, James Whitney, Jr., and B. M. Hartshorn. The Navigation Company operated and owned during its life 40 steamers, which were engaged in handling traffic between Sacramento, Marysville, Stockton and San Francisco. All of the holdings of the California Steam Navigation Company finally came into possession of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869.

In 1850 the fleet of vessels engaged in traffic on the Sacramento and Feather rivers consisted of 18 steamers, 19 brigs and 21 brigantines.

Traffic on the Sacramento River at the present time is handled by 217 vessels, of which 118 are registered and comprise 32 steamers, 71 gasoline boats and 15 sailing vessels. The remaining 99 craft are unregistered, and consist of gasoline boats, sailing vessels and barges.

The Southern is one of three lines operating river steamers on the Sacramento. Of the three, all of which carry freight, the Southern Pacific and one other transports passengers also. It is a decidedly pleasant and interesting journey to leave either Sacramento or San Francisco in the afternoon and make the night trip along the river, arriving at destination early the following morning. The Southern Pacific's two commodious steamers, the "Navajo" and the "Modoc," are well designed for the service in which they operate.

Variety of Crops

The principal tonnage of upper Sacramento, north of that city, is grain and rice, statistics showing that at one time Colusa County produced

two per cent of the total wheat crop of the United States, while the rice crop of 1920 approximated 3,500,000 sacks. Government statistics of 1919 show 443,047 tons of freight were carried on upper Sacramento, valued at \$49,229,615, and on lower Sacramento, south of that city, 866,927 tons, valued at \$93,424,822.00.

Cultivation of delta lands south of Sacramento is intense and the crops produced enormous, consisting of barley, beans, green vegetables, fruit, potatoes, onions, etc.

Of the above production asparagus is particularly noticeable, as 12,638 acres are planted in this vegetable, which produces a crop of approximately 1,200,000 boxes. A considerable portion of this crop is shipped to San Francisco and Oakland locally; quite a tonnage is also shipped green, by rail, to eastern market, while over 700,000 cases are packed annually by the eight canneries located in this district.

The first carload of deciduous fruit from this district was assembled at Courtland in July, 1869, and forwarded by steamer to Sacramento for movement by rail to Chicago and was consigned to Porter Bros.

Records of the fruit season of 1920 show that 2,193 carloads of deciduous fruit, principally pears and plums, were moved out of this territory to transcontinental points, and approximately 250,000 boxes moved locally to Sacramento, San Francisco and Oakland for local consumption and canneries. There are in this district 1,318,130 fruit trees, and this number is being increased annually.

Shipments of celery from fields located in Sacramento delta lands during the past season approximated 850 carloads. Shipments from sugar beet acreage in this territory in 1920, practically all of which moved over Sacramento-Southern rails out of Walnut Grove, totaled 14,000 tons.

The above figures indicate that the Sacramento River delta lands may truly be termed the "garden of the world."

The delta territory south of Sacramento was fittingly termed the "Netherlands of America" by Assistant Passenger Traffic Manager F. E. Batturs, on account of the resemblance of the levee, and the fertile lands lying behind them, to Holland with its dikes protecting that country from the inroads of the sea.

As an example of excellent performance the fact is worthy of mention that the steamer "Navajo," placed in service on a daily round

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Familiar Scenes on S. P. "Netherlands Route"



1—Asparagus cannery; 2—Steamer Navajo; 3—Hurricane deck, Steamer Navajo; 4—Asparagus field; 5—Typical scene of river and levees; 6—Steamer Navajo with excursionists; 7—Typical alfalfa field.

Having read your Bulletin—Pass it along.

Loss and Damage Claims

Railway Age Analysis Shows that this Expense is Alarming Large.

"Few items of railway operating expenses have increased so much in proportion within recent years as payments for loss and damage of freight," says the Railway Age in a recent issue. "It is, therefore, both timely and gratifying that the railways should have begun a concerted movement with the American Railway Association to reduce this item of expense.

"Some statistics regarding developments within the last six years will indicate why railway managers are becoming greatly disturbed upon this subject. In the year 1914 the railways transported the equivalent of 288,000,000,000 tons of freight one mile, and had freight earnings of \$2,115,000,000. The loss and damage payments in that year were \$32,376,000. Three years later, in 1917, their ton mileage was 394,500,000,000; their freight earnings \$2,820,000,000 and their payments for loss and damage of freight \$35,080,000. The increase in freight movement was 37 per cent, the increase in freight earnings 33 per cent, and the increase in payments for loss and damage only 8.35 per cent.

"In 1918 the total freight moved by the railways under government control was only 1.8 per cent greater than the amount handled by the same railways in 1917. The freight earnings of Class 1 railways, chiefly because of advances in rates, showed a large increase, being \$3,458,000,000, and the payments for loss of and damage to freight jumped up to \$55,634,150, an increase over 1917 of 58 per cent, and over 1914 of 71 per cent. But this was nothing compared with what occurred in 1919. In that year the freight movement was almost 10 per cent less than in 1918 and substantially less than in 1917, although, because the advanced rates were in effect throughout the year, the freight earnings increased to but \$3,557,000,000. Meantime, loss and damage payments increased to \$104,244,000. With less freight handled than in 1917 the increase in loss and damage payments over that year was approximately \$70,000,000, or 197 per cent. With an increase in freight business handled over 1914 or about 40 per cent., there was an increase in loss and damage payments of 222 per cent.

"The statistics show that whatever the other effects of government operation may have been, it certainly did not have the effect of reducing loss and damage to freight. The average

increase in the prices of commodities between 1914 and 1919 was approximately 100 per cent. This doubtless accounts for almost one half of the increase in the total amount of the claims paid. Another large part of it was due to the fact that the amount of freight handled in 1919 was about 40 per cent more than in 1914. There remains a large balance of about one-third of the total increase of loss and damage payments which must have been due to absolute increase in the amount of freight lost and destroyed.

"The total increase in railway expenses since 1914, and especially since 1917, has been very large and the increase in loss and damage payments has been by no means a small part of it. It is conservative to estimate that by securing more efficient operation and the co-operation of shippers in the way of better packing, marking and routing of freight, the managements should be able speedily to reduce loss and damage payments by at least \$50,000,000 a year. If this large saving were to be added to net return, it would pay interest, even at the high rate of 7 per cent, on over \$700,000,000 a year of new capital invested in the property.

"The Freight Claim Prevention Congress which has been called should be attended by representatives of all the railways in the country in order that the work of the new committee on the Cause and Prevention of Claims may be started with the needed enthusiasm and backing. Recent developments have shown that it is not only necessary that the railways should handle all the traffic they can with the existing facilities, but also that if they are to earn adequate returns on existing rates they must be operated with the utmost practicable economy. No part of the present operating expenses need vigorous attack more than the item of loss and damage of freight."

LINCOLN said "Property is the fruit of labor." That's true, and it is also true that without energetic efforts and conscientious service, we need not hope to succeed. Success depends, not only on our efforts to give full value for the compensation we receive, but upon our efforts to render a higher degree of service than that for which we are being paid. During the past three years, due no doubt to conditions created by the war, a feeling of indifference has crept into the ranks of working people, and has exercised a strange and damaging influence.

The war and its mysterious influences are rapidly becoming a thing of the past; the march of progress is again in motion, and those of us who fail to keep in line will be forced to drop out of the procession. The day has returned for efficient service—a full day's work must be done, and the man or woman who produces such service has an excellent opportunity to succeed. Those who are still believing that success should come their way without working for it, are going to find the future roads exceedingly rough to travel.—The Right Way Magazine.

THE PICTURESQUE "NETHERLANDS ROUTE"

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trip schedule between San Francisco and Sacramento, from September 1909 to October, 1917, was in continuous service for eight years and traveled in that time 586,658 miles, or a distance equivalent to 23 times around the world. The Navajo is today on a regular tri-weekly run between San Francisco and Sacramento.

The fact that excellent facilities exist at San Francisco for furnishing direct rail service connecting with Southern Pacific lines, makes the Netherlands Route of great value to the hundreds of prosperous farmers located along the river banks. The delta region is fast coming into its own, due to the growing recognition of the richness of its soil admirably adapted to deciduous fruits, berries, asparagus, celery, etc.

The broad surface of the Sacramento will in the future bear an increasing tonnage, while for the passenger in search of a pleasant, restful and picturesque journey the Netherlands Route will never lose its charm.

HANFORD'S ANCESTRY

Hanford, the thriving little city of the San Joaquin Valley, recently had its ancestry traced back to 1630 and its citizens are elated. It is common knowledge that the town was named after James M. Hanford, for many years head paymaster for the Southern Pacific Company, now deceased. While many residents knew Mr. Hanford personally, none knew whence he came.

Reading a press dispatch from Hanford recently, S. C. Bassett of Bibbon, Nebraska, a nephew of James M. Hanford, addressed a letter to the Mayor outlining the history of the Hanford family, which established that this venerable old gentleman was a direct descendant of pioneers to this continent in 1630.

The court was looking into the sanity of a deckhand and the following question was put to the witness:

"Does this deckhand speak to himself when alone?"

"Couldn't say, sir, I never was with him when he was alone."