



THE MANIFEST JANUARY-March 2021



Greetings!

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. We have all been through a year like no other in recent memory, at least for me. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and I don't think it is an oncoming train wreck!

There is no date yet for reopening the park this year. I am sure we are all hoping to see that at some point. In the meantime, various members from the clubs have been working at the park and informing of any damage that they may have noticed. So far, there is nothing too drastic, and even some of the stolen items have been returned.

It is another year, and membership dues are due. If you have **not paid your** dues as of yet, please do so **as soon as possible**. Thank you all for your continued support, including those you donated through Go Fund Me.

In my last newsletter, I neglected to add Allen's updates on Butte Falls. Allen may have emailed them out, but I am also including the last ones I have in this newsletter.

eBay Fundraising
By: Allen Dobney

I am continuing to sell railroad slides and glass insulators on eBay with 75% of the proceeds going to our society. To date since August 2020 I have raised over \$6,300.00. I still have about another 4,000 slides to sell. Butte Falls Scenic Railway Status by: Allen Dobney

The town of Butte Falls is still working on getting the second grant for the property purchase. The acquisition of this grant has been seriously delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. I am still working closely with the other project teams in the town to stay coordinated with the other teams. Our project is slowly coming along. The project website, <http://soc-nrhs.org/BFSRyhome.html>, has been updated in the history area, the plot plans and the Ticket Office / Gift Shop design. We are also working with one of the forest landowners to develop an easement agreement. In the near term we will start working with the second forest landowner for an easement agreement. Also we will be working with ODF to develop a fire safety agreement. You can also check on how the Butte Falls project is coming, as well as other news for the SoRail at the website <https://www.soc-nrhs.org/> For Butte Falls, click on the Butte Falls Logo.

Our story this month comes from our very own Allen Dobney.

Enjoy, and hope to see many of you all soon.

The Butte Falls Railroad: From Logging to Tourism By Allen Dobney

From a vision in 1889 to abandonment in 1962 the Butte Falls line was managed by 8 different organizations.

As early as 1889 planning and surveying was being performed to build a narrow gauge railroad from Central Point through Eagle Point to Butte Falls. This project never got past the planning and surveying stage.

In 1891 the Rogue River Valley Railroad developed a plan to extend their railroad through Medford and on to Eagle Point. Surveying was performed by J. S. Howard under the direction of general superintendent Graham. By 1893 Mr. C. H. Leadbetter, president of the Rogue River Valley Railroad was developing grand plans to build the railroad past Butte Falls over the Cascades and on into Klamath Falls but work on the railroad never started.

The Medford & Crater Lake Railroad Company

On January 14, 1905 the Medford & Crater Lake Railroad Company was organized with the objective to build the line from Medford to Crater Lake by Medford banker A.A. Davis. By March 9, 1905 the railroad had secured \$75,000. for the purpose of constructing the railroad from Medford to Eagle Point & on to Butte Falls.

With great fanfare on April 4, 1905 the Town of Medford celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for the start of construction of the railroad. Mrs. Davis, wife of banker A.A. Davis, lifts the first shovel of earth in the groundbreaking ceremony. The Medford school band was also on hand. Mule teams were on hand to start grading

immediately at the conclusion of the ceremony.



With contract crews from India track Construction was completed to Eagle Point (11.7 miles) by December 1, 1905. By 1906 the line was in financial difficulty and construction was halted. On February 2, 1906 the Medford and Crater Lake Railroad went into receivership.

The Pacific & Eastern Railroad

The Pacific & Eastern Railroad was incorporated in May of 1907 financed by W. Stryker & Alexander Sweek both of Portland. The road was to be managed by George Estes. Because of continuing financial difficulties the railroad changed ownership four times between 1907 and 1910. During this period construction continued toward Butte Falls. In June of 1910 James Hill, President of the Great Northern Railway took over the P&E. John F. Stevens was elected president of the P&E and is now head of all Hill roads that are strictly Oregon properties.

With the financial support of the Hill roads the Pacific and Eastern was able to continue construction to the town of Butte Falls. Construction of the rail line into

Butte Falls was completed on November 15, 1910.



The original plan was to extend the line across the Cascades to connect to James J. Hills Great Northern RR at Klamath Falls. Although the route was surveyed beyond Butte Falls, construction was never continued. For most of its existence the P&E operated at a deficit. In 1918 the line was allowed to go into receivership and was ordered shut down and be sold at auction by the Courts on January 15, 1919.

The Brownlee-Olds Lumber Company

In 1920 Mississippi lumberman James Brownlee purchased timber land north of Butte Falls. He also purchased 33 acres near the junction of the P&E and Southern Pacific railroads and began building a mill in Medford.

On August 20th of the same year Millard D. Olds, a Michigan lumberman who had timber holdings east of Butte Falls, purchased the defunct P&E Railroad for around \$200,000. He then began the extension of the railroad east from Butte Falls and began limited logging on his holdings in 1921. Also in 1921 Olds purchased the Four Bit Creek Timber Sale from what was then the Crater National Forest. This was a tract of about 6,000

acres east of his holdings with an estimated 87.5 million board feet of timber.

Brownlee owned the mill, Olds owned the railroad, and both men had access to timber in the Butte Falls area served by the railroad. A partnership seemed to be to the advantage of both men. The partnership was formalized on April 1, 1922. The Brownlee-Olds Lumber Company operated the railroad and the mill until May 1924 when the entire operation was sold to the John S. Owen Lumber Company of Wisconsin. The Owen family also owned timberland in the Butte Falls Area.

The Owen-Oregon Lumber Company / Medford

Logging Company

The Owen-Oregon Lumber Company was incorporated to operate the Mill and manage the timberland. A separate company (wholly owned by Owen-Oregon) known as the Medford Logging Company was created to operate the Railroad. Along with the timberland, mill, and railroad, came right to log the Four Bit Creek Timber sale. The railroad was extended into the timber sale area in 1924 and full scale logging was started in 1925.

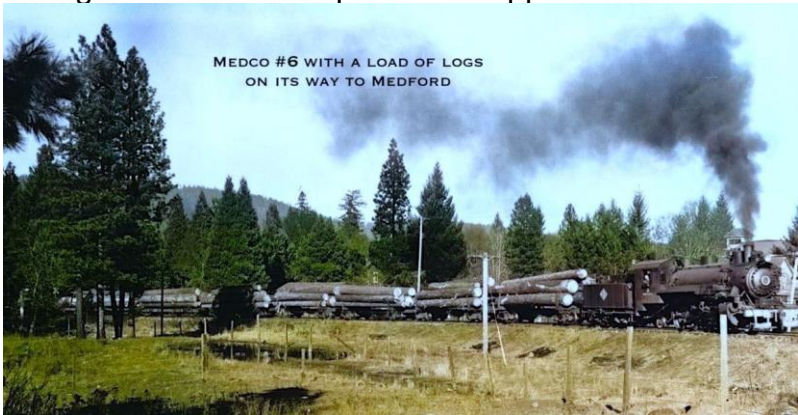
Owen-Oregon started operations with a 2-6-2 Porter locomotive and 40 log cars. The roster was soon expanded with the addition 40 more log cars and the purchase of a used 70 ton Willamette geared locomotive and a new Baldwin 75 ton 2-8-2 locomotive in 1924 and a new 70 ton Willamette geared locomotive in 1925. The geared locomotives would collect the loaded log cars from the landings and deliver them to a transfer point. The Porter locomotive would haul the loads from the transfer point to Derby (west of Butte Falls). The larger Baldwin locomotives would then take the loads from Derby to the mill in Medford.

Even though Owen-Oregon had an ample supply of available timber it never made money. The depression accelerated the decline. In 1932 the company went into receivership and the property was sold at public auction & purchased by the creditors & organized as the Medford Corporation.

The Medford Corporation (MEDCO)

During the late 1930's the Medford Corporation (MEDCO) was beginning to show a profit. The railroad was slowly expanded to the north accessing new tracts of private and Forest Service timber.

World War II was a boom time for MEDCO, the mill needed to run two full shifts every day to meet the demand. In 1945, the 60 acre Daly Pond (aka: Medco Pond) was built 15 miles north of Butte Falls. This provided for longer term storage. Logs were often stock-piled here during the summer and shipped out during the winter to keep the mill supplied



In 1952 MEDCO purchased its only diesel locomotive, a 100 ton, 800 horse power Baldwin. During the 1950's as trucking became more efficient, MEDCO realized that the era of railroad logging was coming to an end.

In 1962 the railroad ceased operations. 4 locomotives survived the scrappers, 2 of which are owned by the Southern Oregon Railway Historical Society, #4 & #8.

The Butte Falls Scenic Railway

Today the SORHS & the town of Butte Falls are working on a project to create a tourist railway on 3 miles of the original Medco line. This project is in the planning and design phase. Medco #4 & #8 will eventually operate on this railway. To learn more about this project, donate, or volunteer go to soc-nrhs.org/BFSRyhome.html



Sources cited:

The Pacific & Eastern RR, Ben Truwe,
truwe.sohs.org

The History of the Medford Logging Railroad, Jerry Hellinga, SORHS

Historic Photos, Collection of Tony Johnson

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