

ROOTS OF MOTIVE POWER, INC.

A Journal of Redwood Logging History

HIGHLINE

VOLUME 29 NO 2 ROOTS NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2011



CALIFORNIA WESTERN RAILROAD AND NAVIGATION COMPANY A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE

The 40-mile Railroad that linked Willits and Fort Bragg with "bands of steel and friendship"

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California Western Railroad and Navigation Company

A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE

The 40 mile railroad that linked Willits and Fort Bragg with “bands of steel and friendship”

By Chris Baldo and Theron Brown

Willits, California truly seemed to be the “City of Destiny” in 1911, when the Northwestern Pacific Railroad made Willits a division point, as they pushed their rails north up Outlet Creek toward Humboldt Bay, and the Union Lumber Company’s California Western Railroad and Navigation Company extended their logging railroad east to make a connection in Willits on December 19, 1911. All of Willits, the new railroad center of the west, greeted the first Fort Bragg train with the giddy exuberance normally reserved for small children. In the year of the centennial celebration, the authors look back at the rich 126 year history of the railroad. We make no attempt to duplicate the two fine California Western Railroad histories of Spencer Crump and Stanley Borden. The story will be told using images from the Roots of Motive Power Library Collection, many unique and unpublished, focusing on the many California Western artifacts in the Roots collection. As the rust deepens each year on the Northwestern Pacific Railroad tracks from disuse, we hope our Centennial Tribute will help to rekindle the spirit of common purpose and imagination that railroads brought to the Willits community a hundred years ago.

Few things in this world bring a universal smile like returning a wave from a passing train passenger, embarked on their unique path to an unknown destination. When Charles Russell Johnson left Michigan for California at age 23 in 1881, he embarked upon a path beyond anyone’s imagination, that would transform Mendocino County forever. The son of a Michigan sawmiller with sawmills at Saugatuck and St. Ignace, and having worked for the Menominee River Lumber Company in Chicago, Charles (or C.R.) possessed a knowledge of the lumber industry that belied his youth. Hearing stories of the huge redwood resource on the Mendocino coast, C.R. made his way to the abandoned army post at Fort Bragg, at the mouth of the Noyo River. The first white settlers which had arrived in the early 1850s had been harassed by the disgruntled Native American population, and the U.S. Army sent a detachment of soldiers to protect the “rights” of the settlers and establish Fort Bragg. The army solved the “problem” by moving the Native American population to the Round Valley Indian Reservation in 1867, and the fort was abandoned. Charles befriended two men, Calvin Stewart and James Hunter, who were operating a sawmill on Mill Creek, a tributary to Ten Mile River north of Fort Bragg. He persuaded his father to finance his purchase of a third interest in the mill, and the firm became Stewart, Hunter and Johnson. Lumber from the sawmill was shipped from a small “doghole” port at Newport, nearly a ten mile wagon haul from the mill. C.R. proved to be an innovator at many levels; he pioneered the idea of operating the sawmill for a nightshift, and purchased one of John Dolbeer’s steam donkeys for the logging woods in 1883.

Business was good for Stewart, Hunter and Johnson, but the Mill Creek mill had several barriers to expansion, the most critical of which was the poor shipping situation at Newport. Needing a new location, C.R. picked the site of the old army post at Fort Bragg. A.W. MacPherson and Henry Weatherly had operated a sawmill on the Noyo river flats since 1858, and by 1881 had built a two-mile railroad, the Noyo and Pudding Creek Railroad, to access more timberland. The Fort Bragg Railroad Company was formed in

1884, which included the assets of Stewart, Hunter and Johnson, and a large tract of land on Pudding Creek and the Noyo River that was purchased from MacPherson and Weatherby. Also included in the sale was the Noyo and Pudding Creek Railroad, which became part of the Fort Bragg Railroad, which C.R. started steadily extending along the banks of Pudding Creek in 1885. A wharf was built at Soldiers Harbor, and after sufficient materials were cut for the new mill, the sawmill equipment from Mill Creek was moved to Fort Bragg. A new band saw was delivered and installed, and the sawmill went into production on November 16, 1885. The Fort Bragg Railroad Company provided logs for the mill, and was soon hauling lumber

Fort Bragg Railroad #2, a 30-ton Baldwin 2-4-2, purchased by the Fort Bragg Railroad, and operated as the #2 for the California Western Railroad. The locomotive was sold to the Irvine & Muir Lumber Company in 1910, which had just completed a sawmill at Irmulco, MP 23.9

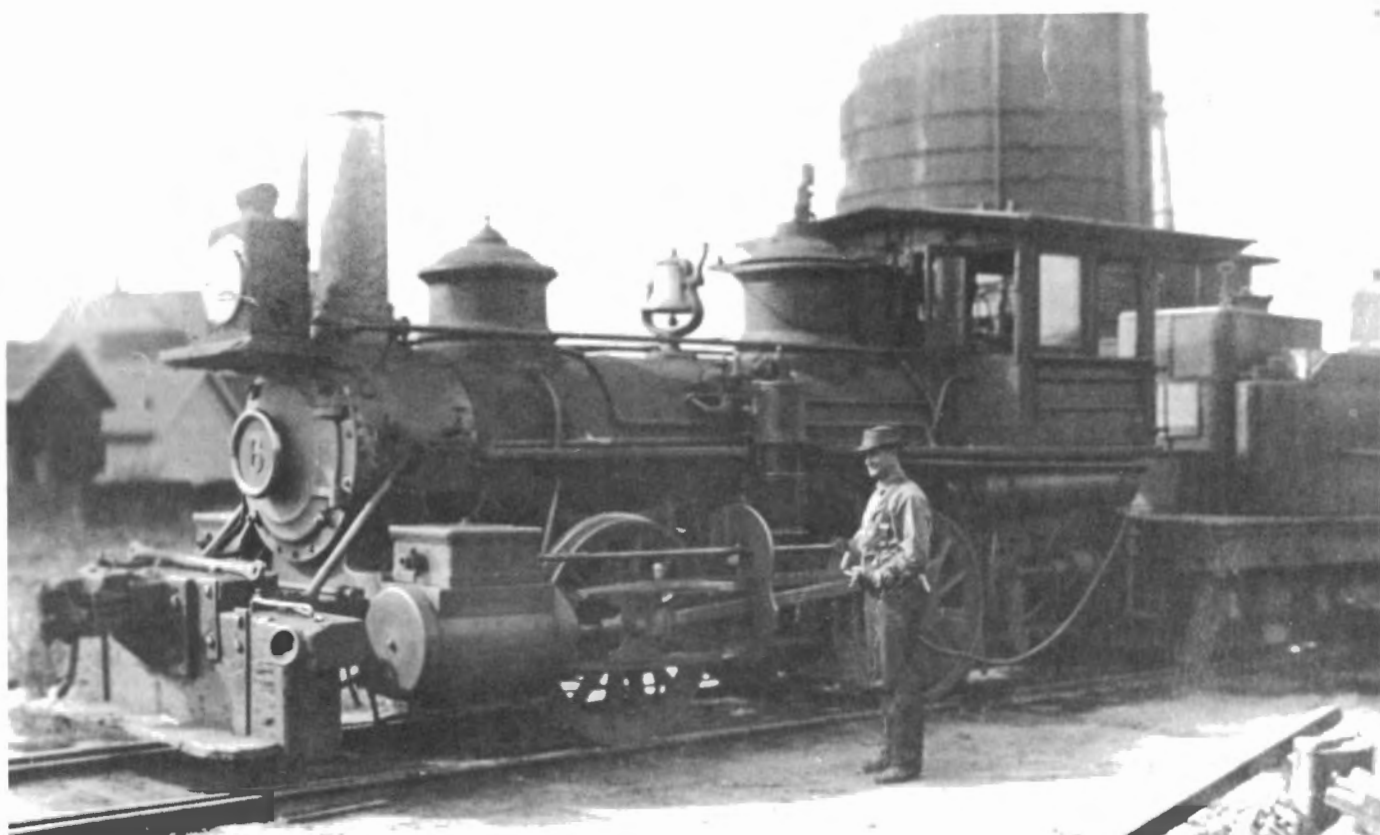
Photo courtesy of Charles Givens collection



Union Lumber Company's Fort Bragg sawmill grew from its humble beginnings in 1885 to this sprawling complex by 1953, with the dry yard for lumber extending to the north and the log deck on the bluffs above the Pacific Ocean to the south.

Photo courtesy of the Union Lumber Company

to the port from the Pudding Creek Lumber Company at Glen Blair. The Pudding Creek mill, later the Glen Blair Redwood Company, was built by Samuel Blair and Alex McCullum in 1886, 6 1/2 miles up Pudding Creek from Fort Bragg. The Glen Blair Lumber Company's own railroad would extend north another six miles, eventually reaching Smith Creek on the South Fork of Ten Mile River. C.R. Johnson would later purchase the assets of the Glen Blair Lumber Company.

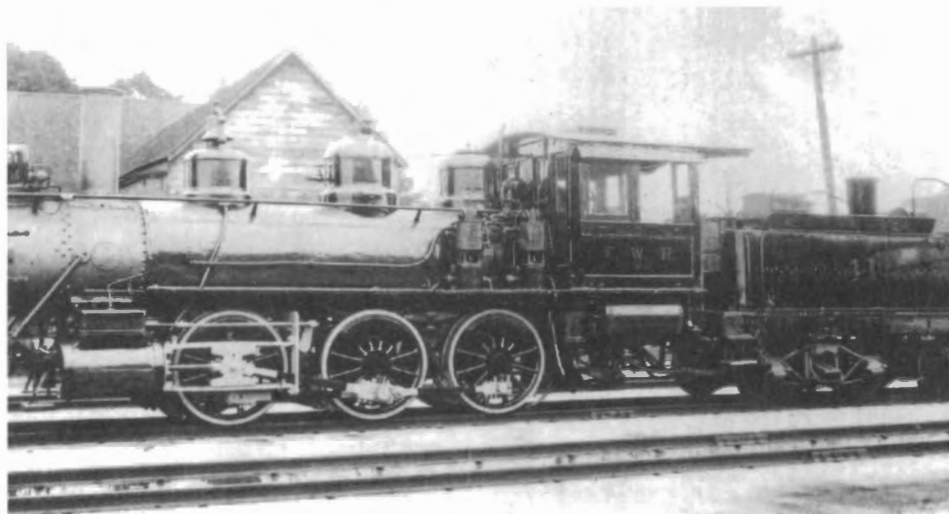


CWR Locomotive #6 was built for the California Pacific Rail Road in 1868, and transferred to the Southern Pacific along with the railroad. It was purchased by the California Western RR in 1906, and scrapped in 1915. It was built by the Mason Machine Works of Taunton, Massachusetts, and weighed 24 tons.

Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection

The first CWR Engine #41, 1901 0-6-0 Baldwin, purchased by the CWR from the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad in 1922, scrapped in 1937. Later, a 1920 Baldwin 2-8-0 carried the same number.

Photo courtesy of the Charles Given collection.



By 1891, the Fort Bragg Redwood Company's timber supply in Pudding Creek was nearly exhausted, and they needed to access the Company's holdings in the Noyo River. Needing investors to help fund the cost of extending the railroad, C.R. formed the Union Lumber Company, adding W.P. Plummer and C.L. White as partners. The first obstacle for the railroad was to build a 1,129 foot hard-rock tunnel from Pudding Creek to the Noyo River. Chinese tunnelmen were brought into Fort Bragg to accomplish the task, which caused all sorts of angst among the "established" Fort Bragg residents. Once into the Noyo drainage, the rails of the Fort Bragg Railroad stretched steadily eastward as the lumber company's needs for raw materials demanded. In 1904, the railroad reached Alpine, MP 18.1. The railroad provided



CWR Engine #7 moving a string of side dumps as a shovel makes grade. Engine #7 was a 1909 2-6-2 T, which was re-numbered to CWR #17 in 1924. She was scrapped in 1938.

Monsen photo, courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection



A shovel works the gravel pit at MP 5.7.

Monson photo, courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection

lumber shipping for the Alpine Lumber Company mill, and a sizeable town developed at the site. Regular daily passenger, freight and mail service was established in 1904, which connected with the stage from Alpine to Sherwood. Sherwood was the connection point with the California Northwestern Railway, a predecessor line to the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. The "end of the line" for the California Northwestern, Sherwood was also the stage connection point for Eureka bound passengers for many years before the Eel River route was built.

After the turn of the century, C.R. Johnson's perspective seemed to change from a focus on the immediate needs of his sawmill operation to a broader view. In 1901, he incorporated the National Steamship Company, which not only provided reliably scheduled shipping of lumber from the Union Lumber Company mill, but would provide regular passenger service between Fort Bragg and San Francisco, prompt merchandise deliveries, and deliver lumber to market from many other coastal sawmills. In 1905, the California Western Railroad and Navigation Company was incorporated, which took over the operation of the Fort Bragg Railroad. Among the purposes of the new Corporation listed in the Articles of Incorporation was to construct a new railroad "from the eastern terminus of Alpine, up the Noyo River along the most practicable route to a point in or near the City of Willits." Enduring the effects of the 1906 earthquake and the record floods of the winter of 1906-1907, the rails continued to push eastward. The railroad reached Irmulco, MP 23.9, in 1908, the site of the Irvine and Muir Lumber Company sawmill and town, and the terminus of their railroad which ran up Olds Creek to the south. The

tracks reached Burbeck, MP 27.7, in 1910, and the real assault on the grade between the Noyo River and the Eel River began. To maintain a prevailing grade of 3%, it was necessary for the rails to stretch more than eight miles to cover a 1 1/2 mile distance. Construction of the grade was also started from the Willits end. At the top of the grade, MP35.5, the route required the construction of Tunnel #2, 790 feet long.

The railroad let the contract for construction of the tunnel to P. Nelson & Company of San Francisco in April, 1911. In addition to the tunnel, the contract also called for the excavation of 10,000 yards of earth for the approaches.



A locomotive with a single car traverses the famous S Curve trestle, just above Clare Mill at MP 31.3. The S curve trestle was later changed to an earth fill, called High Fill. When the railroad was built, it contained 115 bridges and trestles. This number was reduced over time to 35 bridges and trestles through fills, realignment and relocation.

Photo courtesy of the CWR collection



Engine 21 moves a work train of side dump cars into position as the S Curve trestle is transformed into High Fill, MP 31.3 *Monsen photo, courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection*

"The contractors are experienced men, and they intend to employ only white men on the work. They expect to have a force of 80 men, and will work both ends of the tunnel. Their force will be divided into four crews and they will work two shifts at both ends." Willits News 4/22/1911.

"Last Sunday, the two crews which have been boring the 899 foot tunnel for the Fort Bragg railroad met in the center. The centers were only one-eighth of an inch apart when the two crews met, which is a most remarkable showing for the engineers." Willits News 11/4/1911.

The first through passenger from Fort Bragg arrived in Willits just before noon on December 19th to a huge celebration and lunch at the Hotel Willits. Engine #5, a Schenectady Locomotive Company product, had the honors pulling the train, with CWR Superintendent J.C. French at the throttle for the lightly ballasted new construction. The Fort Bragg Advocate headlined "A Great Day for Rejoicing" and continued:



With redwood timbers plentiful on Union Lumber Company's California Western Railroad, these A-frame bridges were common for many years. The design allowed flood water and debris to freely pass under the structure. Here, CWR Skunk M-80 passes in the grandeur of the Noyo River.

"It was a day looked forward to for years by the old residents of Fort Bragg with eager anticipation, and when it finally did come, it brought with it all the pleasure and happiness stored up in realization of such an important event. It was a great day in the broadest sense of the word, and those in that party, we venture, will always refer to it as one of the most happy moments of their lives, when the coast of Mendocino was bound with steel rails on one of the grandest and most scenic routes in the State of California, with the interior, giving direct communications with the outside world."

It was not until the summer of 1912 that the line was opened to regular traffic, the main delay being an arson fire that closed Tunnel #2 and caused considerable damage, and a wet winter that delayed maintenance of the new road bed. The town folk of Willits had to wait until July 21, 1912 for their special excursion to Fort Bragg, when they filled four passenger cars with over 300 people. The Fort Bragg residents tried to match the hospitality shown by the Willits residents during their earlier visit.

"Willits money was no good in Fort Bragg last Sunday, and every coaster was trying to outdo the others on open hearted hospitality." Willits News 2/27/12



Above Left: The CWR Bridge & Tunnel Crew at Fort Bragg. L/R John Kokko, Joe Jembroski, Pete Crosti, Walter Koski, Ralph Burr, Clarence Tarver, Roy Rexrode, Bernard Mottaline. With 115 bridges and trestles when built, this crew was busy with constant maintenance.

Above: Many years after Tunnel #2 was completed, both portals were lined with concrete.

Photos courtesy of the CWR collection.



Engine #21 moves a long string of log cars across the Pudding Creek trestle into the Union Lumber Company mill at Fort Bragg.

Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection



Crews working on the east portal of Tunnel #2 at Summit.

Photo courtesy of the CWR collection

Union Lumber Company's logging operations were moving steadily eastward in the Noyo River drainage. To secure a future timber supply, Union Lumber Company began construction of its Ten Mile Branch in 1916. The line followed the coast up to the mouth of Ten Mile River, MP 8.0, and then entered the vast Ten Mile River drainage. The South Fork, Clark Fork (Middle Fork) and the North Fork of Ten Mile all had miles of track serving logging camps, with countless additional miles of logging spurs that were laid temporarily to harvest timber and were pulled up for re-use elsewhere. The South Fork branch extended past Camp One in the confluence of Churchman Creek, at MP 15.0. The North Fork branch extended through Camp 2, MP 12.8, to Camp 6, at MP 17.6. The more rugged Clark Fork branch began at MP 13.8, and extended to MP 16.5. As the timber in the more favorable ground was exhausted, Union Lumber Company relied more and more on log trucks to move logs from the steeper terrain to railroad reloads. In 1949, the Ten Mile logging line was pulled up and replaced with an off-highway truck road direct to the sawmill in Fort Bragg. This off-highway truck road would serve the entire Union Lumber Company ownership north of the Ten Mile drainage to Hales Creek, Usal and eventually Kinney.

Passenger service continued to build on the California Western. Pride in the unique redwood railroad was more of a motivator for Union Lumber Company than the profitability of passenger service for the railroad. With the completion of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad to Eureka and the emergence of Willits as a railroad hub, Union Lumber Company built its famous Willits Depot in 1916, a redwood masterpiece and one of America's most beautiful railway stations.

(continued page 12)



CWR engine #21 crosses the Ten Mile River with a string of log cars headed for Fort Bragg.

Photo courtesy of the Charles Givens collection



CWR engine #21 working on some light rail. CWR Engines #21, #22, and #23, all 2-6-2s, were built by Baldwin Locomotive Works specifically for the demanding grades and curvature of the California Western RR. Engine #21 still survives in Mexico.

Photo courtesy of the Charles Givens collection



CWR Engine #23, one of the three 2-6-2 sister engines built by Baldwin. She was purchased in 1923 and scrapped in 1950.

Photo courtesy of the Bruce Evans collection



CWR Engines #44 and #23 pulling a passenger train on the grade.

Photo courtesy of the Bruce Evans collection



CWR Engine #44 was the last steam engine purchased by the California Western in 1944, before the return to steam in 1965. She was a sturdy 2-6-2 Mikado, that no doubt influenced CWR's decision when they acquired Engine #45, another Mikado. Engine 44 was built in 1930 for the Lamm Lumber Company in Modoc Point, Oregon; acquired by the CWR in 1944, and scrapped in 1952.

Photo courtesy of the Bruce Evans collection



CWR Engine #12 edges up to the water tank at Northspur, MP 21.3, with a passenger train in tow. Engine #12 was one of the more popular CWR engines, purchased in 1915 from Baldwin, and continuing in service until scrapped in 1950.

W.C. Whittaker photo, Roots of Motive Power collection.



CWR Engine #41 pulls a work train into Fort Bragg. She was built in 1920 as the Sierra Railroad #22, sold to the CWR in 1940, and scrapped in 1950.

Photo courtesy of the Charles Givens collection.

The height of passenger service on the California Western was in May, 1921, with the inauguration of through Pullman sleeping car service between Fort Bragg and Sausalito. The train left Fort Bragg at 9:00 PM, the car switched to the Northwestern Pacific night train, with the refreshed passengers arriving in San Francisco at 9:05 AM. But even with the Pullman service, Americans habits were changing, and so were passengers on the California Western. Passenger service on the CWR peaked in 1923, and then began a steady decline. The last regularly scheduled steam passenger service ended in May, 1930. The California Western searched for alternatives to pulling sparsely seated passenger coaches with steam locomotives. One such product was a gasoline powered "rail motor car" produced by Mack Trucks Inc., called the Model ACX. CWR tried the Model ACX on their line in 1925 and purchased their new M-80 Mack rail bus in December of that year. This became the first of four "Skunk" cars, presumably earning the name because of the lingering gasoline fumes after the M-80 had passed. The M-80 was followed in 1934 by the M-100, a 1825 Edwards Railway Motor Car Company product, originally built for the Morehead and North Fork Railroad of Kentucky. Then came the M-200 in 1941, a Skagit Steel and Ironworks Model 6-46 built for the Longview, Portland and Northern Railway before operating on the Troma Railway in the Mojave Desert.



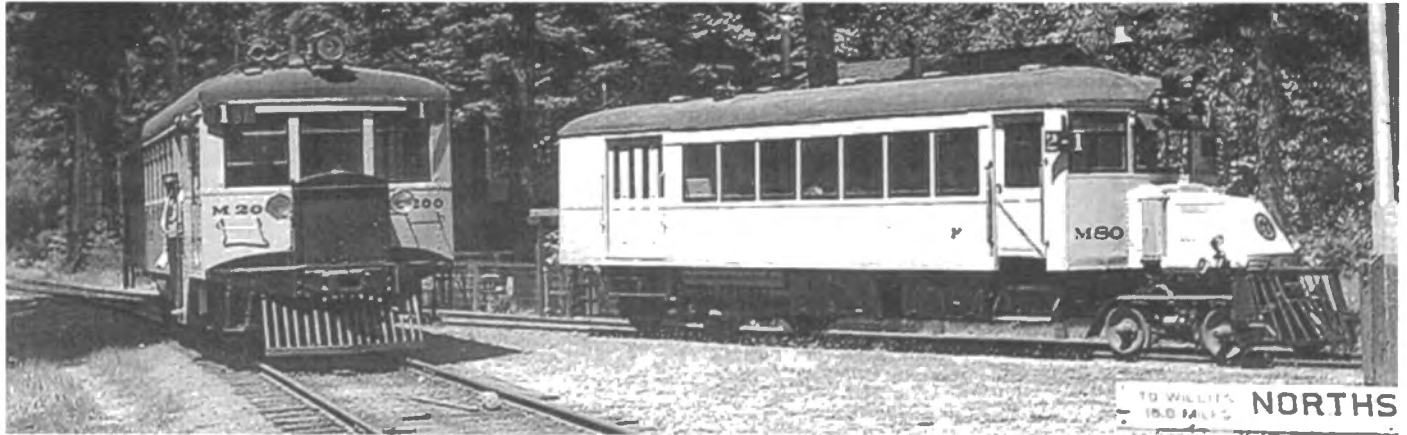
CWR engine #12 pulls the two logger coaches along Ten Mile River. *Charles Givens photo, Roots collection*

Right: The M-80, CWR's first "Skunk", arrives at Northspur, MP 21.3. The railcar was built by Mack and was termed a Model ACX with classic Mack hood and engine.

Photo courtesy of the Charles Givens collection.



The last Skunk car was the M-300 acquired in 1963, a 1935 American Car and Foundry product built for the Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad in North Carolina. Before moving to the Salt Lake, Garfield and Western Railroad, "The Saltair Route." While all four Skunk cars were originally gasoline powered, the M-100, the M-200 and the M-300 were eventually converted to Cummins diesel power. The M-100 and the M-300 remain in service on the California Western. The M-80 was involved in a head-on collision with the M-100 in 1964 and was scrapped. The M-200 is owned by the Pacific Locomotive Association and resides at the Niles Canyon Railway.



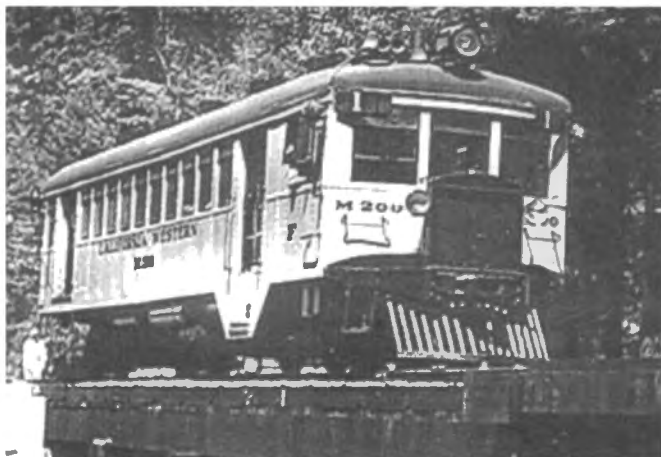
Two Skunks at Northspur, the M-80 and the M-200. *Charles Givens photo, Roots of Motive Power collection*



CWR M-200 at the Willits Depot. *Charles Givens photo, Roots of Motive Power collection*



The CWR M-100 leaves Willits and begins to ascend the grade to Summit. *Bert Rudolph, photo Roots of Motive Power collection*



CWR M-200 departs Northspur eastbound, crossing over the North Fork of the Noyo River. *Charles Givens photo, Roots of Motive Power collection*



Future CWR M-300 arrives in Willits in 1963, en route to CWR's Fort Bragg shop for a complete rebuild. She returned to service as the M-300 in 1965.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

In 1949, Union Lumber Company was clearly in a mood for change. The post-war Redwood Strike was over, the California building boom was underway, and the war had produced new technology that not only influenced the productivity of industrial America, but profoundly changed attitudes in American homes. Union Lumber Company decided to pull up its Ten Mile Branch railroad and replace the railroad operation with an off-highway truck system. In a lesser known move Union Lumber Company purchased its first two diesel electric locomotives in 1949. Having operated Baldwin Locomotive Works steam locomotives since 1886, it was not a great surprise that the first Union Lumber Company diesel locomotives were Baldwin products also. The new locomotives, Engines # 51 and #52, were



The M-100 and M-300 doing double duty waiting for passengers at the Willits Depot.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



Above: The redwood timber in Ten Mile River was unrivaled in quality, and spurred the construction of CWR's Ten Mile Branch in 1916.

Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection

Right: CWR M-100 awaits departure for Fort Bragg from the Willits Depot, while the Northwestern Pacific SP-10 Budd RDC car awaits departure for Eureka.

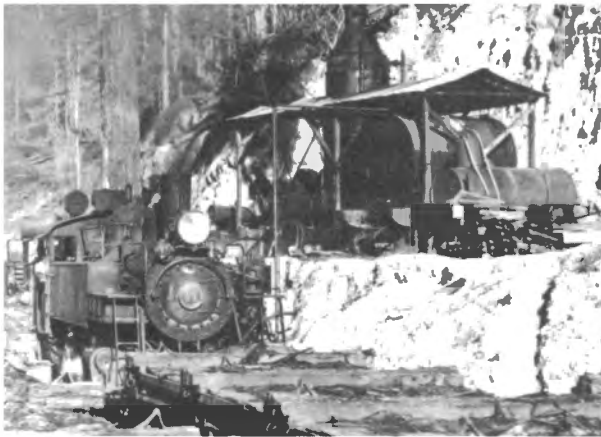
Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection





Camp 2 on the CWR's Ten Mile Branch.

Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection.



Above: CWR Engine #14 moves a string of empty log cars at the landing on CWR's Ten Mile Branch.

Photo courtesy of Kevin Bunker collection.



Above Right: CWR Engine #14 pulls a supply train through Camp 2 on the Ten Mile Branch, delivering fuel oil and other materials for the camp and woods.

Roots of Motive Power collection.

Right: Planking a trestle at Camp 32 on the Ten Mile Branch.

Dave Devon Gibson Hoover, photo Roots of Motive Power collection.



CWR Camp 28 in Ten Mile River. Housing was separated into family housing and bachelor's quarters.

Dale Devon Gibson Hoover photo, Roots of Motive Power collection.

Model DS-4-4-750, 750 HP units C/Ns 74408 and 74409. With the combination of less demand for motive power with the removal of the Ten Mile Branch, and the addition of the two Baldwin diesel electrics in the motive power roster, Union Lumber Company decided to sell or scrap a significant portion of their steam locomotive roster. In 1950, Union scrapped Engines #12, #22, #23, and #41. Engine #21 was sold to Pan American Engineering, and reportedly exists on the motive power roster of a sugar cane factory in Mexico. Engines #21, #22, and #23 were all heavy 2-6-2 Baldwins, built specifically to negotiate the extreme



California Western Railroad's first diesel electric locomotive, Engine #51, Baldwin Locomotive Works C/N 74408, a 750 HP unit built in 1949, sits in the Willits yard with a passenger consist.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection.



When Caterpillar introduced the Sixty Cat, they became a popular alternative to the steam donkey. At Camp 28 in the Ten Mile woods, Jesse Gibson, cat skinner, takes a break from work with L/R Beverlee Gibson, Dale Gibson, Mrs. Lydic, Shirley Lydic. *Dale Devon Gibson Hoover photo, Roots of Motive Power collection.*



In the headwaters of Ten Mile River which were difficult to access by railroad, Union Lumber Company began using truck reloads in the 1940s. Moving logs by truck proved so successful after the war that the rails were pulled up and the rail bed converted to a truck road. *Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection*

curvature of the CWR line. Engine #44, a Baldwin 2-8-2, was scrapped by Union Lumber Company in 1952. This left a diminutive 54-ton Baldwin 2-6-2 tank engine, California Western #14, as the only steam engine on the motive power roster. The diesel locomotives were proving to be reliable workhorses for the



Top Photo: In 1949, the last load of logs on the Ten Mile Branch rounds the curve at Ten Mile River and heads south along the Pacific Ocean beach to Fort Bragg. *Roots of Motive Power collection*

Above: CWR Engines #51 and #52 begin climbing the grade west of Willits with a passenger train.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

A tough looking diesel locomotive crew from the CWR, L/R Fred White, John Hurley, Charles Monsen, James Dempsey, Tom Golden, John Galliani, Louis Hanson.

Photo courtesy of the CWR collection

railroad, and in 1956, the railroad purchased a third Baldwin diesel electric locomotive, another model DS-4-4 but a 1,000 HP version, which became California Western Railroad #53. With the arrival of Engine #53, Engine #14 became surplus, and it was sold to a railfan in Willits, Bert Rudolph. This ended the steam locomotive era for the California Western Railroad, at least temporarily. For those familiar with the Roots of Motive Power collection, there is some irony here, as both California Western Engine #14 and California Western Engine #53 reside in the Roots collection. The California Western acquired a fourth Baldwin diesel locomotive in 1968, a Model S-12, which became Engine #54.



Engine #53, in new paint, proudly joins Engines #51 and #52 in the CWR Fort Bragg yard. *Photo courtesy of the CWR collection*

CWR Engines #51 & #52 with a passenger train along the Noyo River, waiting to clear a track crew. *Charles Givens photo, Roots of Motive Power collection*



The shop crew, with newly rebuilt CWR Engine #75, a Baldwin Model S-12, purchased from the Southern Pacific in 1970. The shell of Engine #76 was acquired by Roots of Motive Power for parts for Engine #53 and later scrapped. *Photo courtesy of the CWR collection*

Engine #53 had some minor mechanical issues on a fateful day in 1970 and was in the Fort Bragg Roundhouse for attention, when Engines #51, #52 and #54 headed to Willits with a heavy lumber train. After moving half the cars to Summit, the locomotives paused before returning for the second half of the train. Somehow, the locomotives lost their brake air, and they careened downhill to the east, ending up in a tangled mess in the canyon below. All three locomotives were damaged beyond repair and scrapped. Needing a rapid infusion of motive power, the California Western acquired three more Baldwin diesels: #55 and #56 were Model RS-12s from the McCloud Railroad, and Engine #57 was a Model S-12 from the Southern Pacific. The Baldwins operated another ten years on the line before they were replaced in 1979 by three ex-Southern Pacific ALCO diesel electrics, Model RS-11s Engines #61, #62, and #63. The ALCOs were eventually replaced by the current diesel locomotive fleet, GP-9s from the Electromotive division of General Motors, Engines # 64, #65, and #66.

It is difficult to talk about the railroad collection of Roots of Motive Power without talking about Willits railfan Bert Rudolph. Bert's purchase of CWR Engine #14 in 1956 was just one element of his amazing collection of California Western artifacts and other important railroadiana. California Western Railroad equipment in the Roots collection that was originally acquired by Bert Rudolph includes California Western Engine #14, a 1924 2-6-2 T Baldwin, California Western Flatcar #370, last used for excursion service, California Western Boxcar #462, and California Western Caboose #4.

Engine #14, the little 2-6-2 side tanker, deserves a special mention. The California Fruit Exchange was a collective whose lumber division focused primarily on producing a reliable supply of box shooks for its member growers. The mill was located in the Mohawk Valley area of California at Graeagle. The Fruit Exchange purchased the engine, their Engine #1, in 1924, and built nearly twenty miles of track southeast from Graeagle to access their timber holdings, crossing the Feather River twice. Railroad operations were discontinued in 1938 in favor of log trucks, and the locomotive was sold to the California Western Railroad in Fort Bragg to become Engine #14. Engine #14 was too small a locomotive to see regular service on the Fort Bragg-Willits mainline, but it proved invaluable on the Ten Mile Branch to return empty cars to the landings, deliver materials and supplies to the logging camps, and gather loaded log cars from the disparate log landings in the Ten Mile and assemble trains for the larger engines for the trip into Fort Bragg. The locomotive was also a favorite engine for many of the railfan trips that took place over the years. After the locomotive was sold to Bert Rudolph, it was moved to the Rudolph Ranch, east of Willits, for storage. The Rudolph family donated the locomotive to Roots of Motive Power in 1991, where it currently awaits restoration.

California Fruit Exchange Engine #1, with the famous anchor logo emblazoned on its sidetanks, rests at Graeagle, California.

Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection

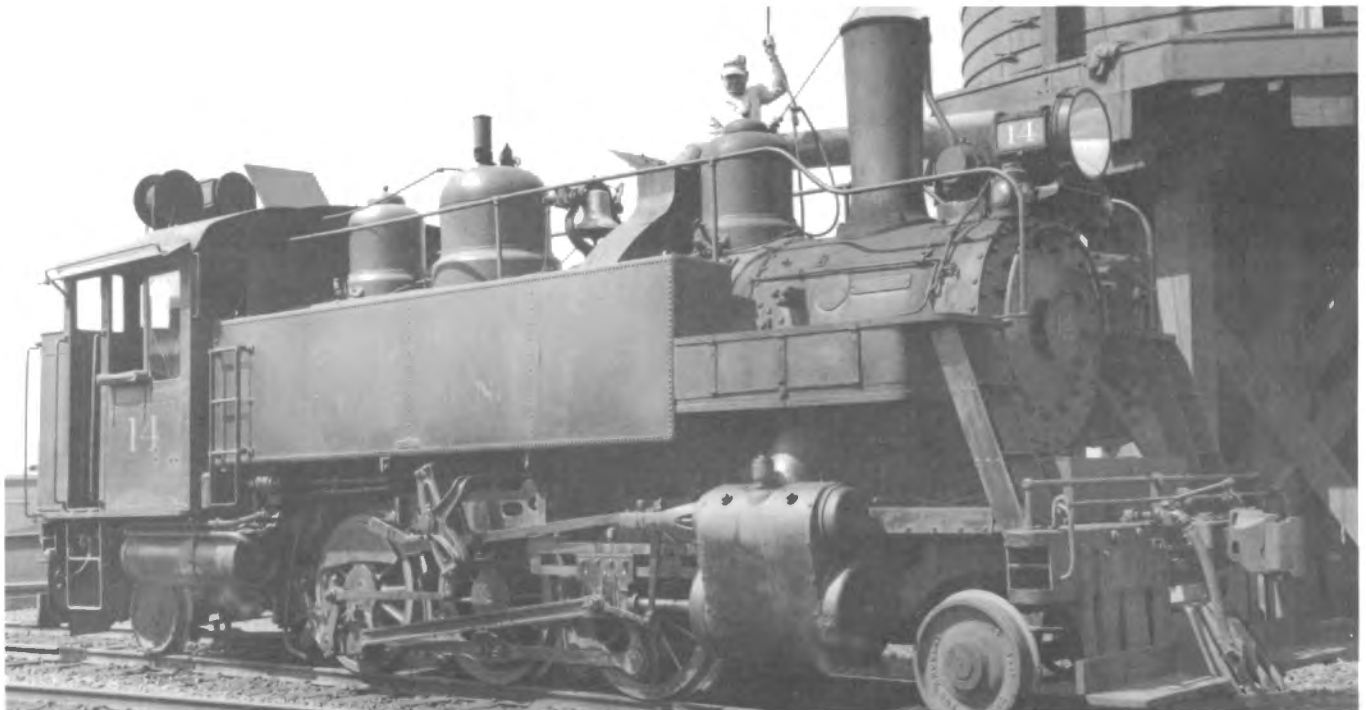


Thirty-five years after the end of steam passenger service in 1930, the California Western Railroad re-entered the steam passenger business in 1965 with the introduction of the Super Skunk. The railroad purchased a 1926 2-8-2 Mikado type locomotive from the Medford Corporation, (continued page 23)



Undoubtedly the most recognizable photograph of Engine #14 was in its earlier life at the California Fruit Exchange in Graeagle when it fell through a Howe Truss Bridge over the Feather River in July, 1931. The locomotive suffered only minor damage, and was soon back in service.

Photo courtesy of the California State Railroad Museum collection



California Western Railroad Engine #14 at the water tank at the Fort Bragg Depot in 1948. The #14 still sports her original riveted water tanks.

Richter photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



The fireman's side of Engine #14 at Fort Bragg. The locomotive was built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1934 for The California Fruit Exchange in Graeagle. The locomotive was sold to the California Western Railroad in 1938. It was sold to Bert Rudolph in 1956, and donated by the Rudolph family to Roots of Motive Power.

Richter photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



Bert Rudolph loads California Western Engine #14 onto a lowbed for the short trip to the Rudolph Ranch on the east side of the Willits Valley.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



California Western #14 leads an impressive consist at the Rudolph Ranch, which includes Pacific Lumber Company Climax #38, CWR Boxcar #462, CWR Flatcar #370, and CWR Caboose #04.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

Newly painted caboose #04 at the California Western shop in Fort Bragg.

Hart Corbett photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



The California Western Railroad owned three wooden boxcars, including #462, which is now part of the Roots collection.

Photo courtesy of the CWR collection

which had been built for its predecessor company, the Owen-Oregon Lumber Company. The CWR also purchased four 70 foot Erie-Lackawanna Railroad passenger coaches, built in 1926. The Super Skunk service was inaugurated on July 10, 1965, and the new CWR Engine #45 proved an ideal match for the steep mountain grades and sharp curves that characterized the line. The Super Skunk service was well received, and the California Western decided to purchase a second steam locomotive. They selected a 2-6-6-2 T logging Mallet, ex-Rayonier, Inc. Engine #111, built for the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company in 1937 by Baldwin, which would become CWR Engine #46. The locomotive was originally equipped with split saddle tanks straddling the boiler and an oil bunker in the rear of the cab. Rayonier added a slope-back tender



On a rainy afternoon, California Western #14 arrives at the Roots of Motive Power facility.

Photo courtesy of the Roots of Motive Power collection



The Medford Corporation Engine #3 arrives in Willits on May 3, 1965, before being transported over the hill to Fort Bragg. The #3 would become CWR Engine #45.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

behind the locomotive from one of its old Polson Locomotives. Rayonier's steam railroad operations on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington ended in 1967 and the locomotive was deemed surplus. The locomotive was rebuilt in the California Western shops from 1968 to 1970. (Continued page 26)



CWR Engine #45 drifts south of Willits before it begins the climb out of the Eel River drainage into the Noyo River drainage.



A crowd gathers in Willits for the California Western's "Return to Steam" and the arrival of the "Super Skunk", engine #45.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

The Super Skunk, Engine #53, thunders across State Highway 20 with a passenger excursion as the climb to Summit begins.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



The California Western shop crew stands on the tender behind Engine #46, after the restoration in 1970. The Mallet was built by Baldwin as a saddle tank engine without a tender.

Photo courtesy of the CWR collection



When Engine #46 was completed in 1970, the California Western RR operated several double-header steam excursions with Engines #45 and #46. Here the two engines make the photographers happy with lots of smoke, pulling a grade with a mixed train.

Photos courtesy of the CWR collection



Engines #45 and #46 double-heading with a mixed train in 1970. .



The new track at High Fill, MP 31.3, is nearly complete, but the double-header takes the old trestle as the train moves up the grade toward Crowley. The trestle would soon be abandoned.

Wanting the locomotive and tender appearance, rather than the logging tank appearance, the railroad removed the side tanks from the boiler and the fuel tank from the cab. They also converted the slope-back tender to a more conventional rectangular appearance. Despite adding ballast under the running boards to replace the weight of the water and the old saddle tanks, the locomotive never seemed to have the proper adhesion and Tractive effort after the alterations were made. California Western stopped their steam program again in 1980 due to the high cost of operation and maintenance. With the financial inducements offered in making the film "Racing With The Moon" in Fort Bragg, Engine #45 was returned to service in 1983. Needing considerable work, the railroad decided to donate Engine #46 to the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association in San Diego in 1984. Engine #45 continues in service today on the California Western.

To most of the public, the face of the California Western Railroad has remained almost unchanged for nearly 125 years. Indeed, until the end of 1968, the railroad continued to serve as Union Lumber Company's railroad, delivering logs to the sawmill in Fort Bragg, delivering lumber to distant markets, and as a common carrier for passengers, freight and mail for the remote residents in the Noyo River canyon.

(continued page 28)



Excursions on the California Western Railroad have been popular almost since the first track was laid. Here, Engine #12 pulls a passenger train along the Noyo River.

A.C. Whittaker photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



CWR Engine #14 pulls a special excursion for rail fans up the Ten Mile Branch in 1947.

Ted Wurm photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

CALIFORNIA WESTERN RAILROAD AND NAVIGATION COMPANY

WESTWARD Toward San Francisco					TIME TABLE NO. 36 AUG. 22, 1938	From San Francisco EASTWARD				
Capacity of Sidings in car lengths, and location of Fuel, Water and Turn- ing Stations.		SECOND CLASS	FIRST CLASS MOTOR PASSENGER				FIRST CLASS MOTOR PASSENGER	SECOND CLASS		
		81	1				2	82		
		Daily	Daily	Dist. from Pt. Bragg & Stat No.		Stations	Dist. from Willits	Daily	Daily	Phone Office Hours
Term. Yd.	KPFWYB	8:30 PM	10:00 AM	0.0	DNR FORT BRAGG	40.0	4:00 PM	6:00 AM	7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P. M.	
35	P	8:35	10:05	2.0	2.0 Pudding Creek	38.0	1:54	5:50		
	P	8:40	10:09	3.4	1.4 Glen Blair Jet.	36.6	1:51	5:45		
8	P	8:50	10:17	6.7	3.3 South Fork	33.3	1:41	5:35		
30	P	9:00	10:24	9.0	2.3 Ranch	31.0	1:35	5:25		
	P	9:05	10:28	10.0	1.0 Redwood Lodge	30.0	1:30	5:18		
14	P	9:15	10:33	12.6	2.6 Grove	27.4	1:24	5:08		
		9:27	10:43	16.0	3.4 Camp Silverado	24.0	1:14	4:55		
15	P	9:35	10:47	18.0	2.0 Alpine	22.0	1:09	4:48		
4		9:39	10:51	19.8	1.8 Camp Marwedel	20.2	1:05	4:43		
	PW	9:40	10:52	20.0	0.2 Olde Camp Seven	20.0	1:04	4:40		
20	PW	9:45	10:55	21.2	1.2 R NORTHSPUR	18.8	1:00	4:35		
16	PY	10:00	11:05	23.9	2.7 Irmulco	16.1	12:50	4:20		
10	P	10:10	11:11	26.7	2.8 Shake City	13.3	12:48	4:10		
12	P	10:14	11:15	27.7	1.0 Burbeck	12.3	12:40	4:04		
6	PW	10:25	11:27	30.2	2.5 Clare Mill	9.8	12:32	3:55		
6	P	10:35	11:38	32.6	2.4 Crowley	7.4	12:24	3:40		
22	P	10:50	11:50	35.2	2.6 Summit	4.8	12:15	3:20		
Term. Yd.	KPFWYO	11:00 PM	12:01 PM	40.0	DNR WILLITS	0.0	2:00 PM	3:00 AM	24 Hours	

ADDITIONAL WATER STATIONS AT MILE POSTS 10.5 AND 34.0.

TIME INSPECTORS

		NAME	LOCATION
C. A. King, Dispatcher,	Fort Bragg, Calif.	S. A. Pope Mgr. Time Service	65 Market St. San Francisco
Dr. P. J. BOWMAN, Railroad Surgeon,	Fort Bragg, Calif.	B. P. Stuart, -----	Fort Bragg
		A. B. Guslander, -----	Willits

Timetable #36, published in August, 1938, includes the Ten Mile Branch and the Glen Blair Branch. Another schedule, involving San Francisco, appears on the following page.

Photo courtesy of the Bruce Evans collection.

CALIFORNIA WESTERN RAILROAD AND NAVIGATION COMPANY

WESTWARD Toward San Francisco			TIME TABLE NO. 36 AUG. 22, 1938		From San Francisco EASTWARD	
Capacity of sidings in car lengths and location of Fuel, Water and Turning Stations		Dist. from Pt. Dragg & Stat No.	Stations	Dist. from Willits	Phone Office Hours	
P		3.4	Glen Blair Branch			
P		6.5	Glen Blair Jct. 3.1 Glen Blair	36.6		
			Ten Mile Branch			
Term. Yd. KPFWYB		0.0	DNR FORT BRAGG		7:00 A M to 4:00 P M	
		3.0	Cleone			
P		8.9	R North Fork Jct.			
35 PFWY		12.6	R Camp 2			
PW		15.1	Camp 4			
P		16.3	Camp 5			
			South Fork Branch			
P		3.9	R North Fork Jct.			
40 PWY		10.3	Aulla			
67 PWY		15.0	CHURCHMAN			

Steam trains will come to full stop at Redwood Highway crossing, Willits, and station a flagman each side of train on highway before crossing over.

Motor passenger trains will not exceed 5 miles per hour over Redwood Highway crossing, Willits.

Main Street crossing Willits is flag stop for train No. 2.

Westward Trains are superior to trains of the same class in the opposite direction (see Rule 72.)

Conductors on trains on Glen Blair Branch report to Dispatcher's office from Glen Blair Junction before entering main line.

(Otherwise movements must be made under protection of flagman.)

Yard Engines have right over East-bound Extra trains between Fort Bragg and Pudding Creek from 8:00 A. M. until 6:00 P. M.

Yard Engines protect against East-bound trains between Fort Bragg and Pudding Creek, from 6:00 P. M. until 8:00 A. M.

Service on Ten Mile Branch will be handled by extras.

Service on Glen Blair Branch will be handled by extras.

Steam Trains must not exceed 12 miles per hour around curves between mile 23.50 and 34.50.

Steam Trains must not exceed 12 miles per hour descending grade West of Summit.

Employees using siding must look out for derails and know that they are in proper position before and after using.

Two Engines must not be coupled together between Fort Bragg and Summit. Helper engine must be cut back in trains between these points.

For government and information of employees only, and not intended for use of the public.

The Company reserves the right to vary from this time table when necessary.

In January 1969, Boise Cascade Corporation purchased the assets of Union Lumber Company, which included the timberland resource, the sawmill complex, and the railroad. This lasted four years until Boise Cascade sold the assets to Georgia Pacific Corporation. Most of the assets stayed intact at Georgia Pacific, including the railroad, but some parts of the manufacturing facility and some of the timberland was affected by the Securities and Exchange Commission ruling which created Louisiana Pacific Corporation. In 1977, Georgia Pacific arranged with Kyle Railways to operate the California Western. In 1987, Kyle Railways exercised an option in the contract which allowed them to purchase the railroad (without actual ownership of the right-of-way) from Georgia Pacific. A group of twelve local investors later purchased the California Western Railroad from Kyle Railways in August, 1996.

Georgia Pacific Corporation, the descendent of the Union Lumber Company, and the builder of the California Western Railroad and its sole freight customer, announced the permanent closure of its sawmill in Fort Bragg in November, 2002. The popular tourist route was crippled and its future in doubt without freight to defray part of the tremendous operating cost of the 40-mile mountainous railroad. On December 4th, 2002, the California Western Railroad announced it was filing for protection from its creditors under a Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization. With the future of the railroad in the hands of the bankruptcy court

trustee, the railroad was sold to the Sierra Railroad of Oakdale, California, operators of several shortline railroads in northern California. As part of the purchase agreement, Hawthorne Timber Company, who had purchased the 194,000 acres of timberland from Georgia Pacific in 1999, sold the physical right-of-way to the Sierra Railroad. In 2009, ownership of the California Western was transferred from the Sierra Railroad to Mendocino Railway, Inc., which operates the railroad today.

Almost from the day construction began on the California Western, excursions have been part of the program. At the start, it was loggers and sawmillers and their families, in all their Sunday finery, clamoring aboard splintery open flat cars for a trip to the woods for a picnic. The excursions became more sophisticated over time, with railfans chartering special Northwestern Pacific trains to bring them to Willits, for the transfer to a waiting California Western train. No matter the age or interest, the railroad somehow managed to speak to everyone and exceed their fondest expectations. As Stanley Borden wrote:

“it was a trip of scenic grandeur through a seemingly endless panorama of towering mountains, rolling hills, deep canyons, gentle valleys, huge redwoods, carpets of fern, and in season, rhododendrons, azaleas, and California Tiger lilies, with the tracks crossing and re-crossing the Noyo River.”



CWR Engine #51, stops at Clare Mill, MP 30.4, with an excursion train in 1950.

James Maddock photo, Roots of Motive Power collection

The California Western was not the only railroad to enjoy excursions. Here a Northwestern Pacific Railroad excursion passes the MP 200 at the Willits Depot.

Bert Rudolph photo, Roots of Motive Power collection



We all have witnessed former railroad towns, where the local railroad depot now sells ice cream or real estate, where nightly coupling of cars or a train whistle's moan at a grade crossing violates an ordinance, where even though the tracks were paved over for a parking lot, you still can't find a parking space. Fort Bragg and Willits both will celebrate the Centennial of the completion of the railroad, not because the railroad was completed in 1911, but because every day for a hundred years we have had the pleasure of hearing a whistle blow and jumping on board "surely the grandest and most scenic railroad in all of California."

