

SAN PEDRO TROLLEY MILESTONE

Second Car Arrives at Carhouse

Thursday, April 24th was another red-letter day for the San Pedro Trolley when car 501 was moved from the Wilmington facility to the San Pedro Trolley line. Car 501 shorn of its trolley poles to clear the door of Berth 155A was readied for its initial contact with sunshine during the early morning.



The interior had been completed since our last visit with the seats all installed. The Port of Los Angeles carpenters had fabricated these seats and they are almost too beautiful to sit on.



Due to almost perfect planning, the truck with lowboy trailer arrived as scheduled at 9:30AM. The

Having the Right People and Tools For The Job

One of the most interesting aspects of the move of car 501 was the equipment used to move the car, especially the rig used by the trucking company. The truck driver who moved the 1058 last June was the same individual tasked to move the 501 so he came prepared with a low boy trailer specifically configured to carry rail equipment.

First of all, the trailer had to be perfectly aligned with the rails extending from this building as shown below.



This was no easy task. After a dozen back-up moves, the trailer was not quite in the correct position. The final alignment was made by unhitching the tractor and moving the trailer at the tongue end with a forklift. A slightly humorous event occurred when the forklift operator (an actual supervisor) lifted the trailer from the wrong side and nearly tipped the forklift over.

Now it was time to attach the rails on the trailer to the rails extending from the side of Berth 155-A. Because of the



different heights of the rails coming from the building and the rails on the trailer, the same

truck driver was the same driver that had moved the 1058 last June. But that trip was only for a few yards. Because of the difficulties with the railroad when moving the 1058, this time the truck would be used to carry the car all the way to San Pedro with police escort.



Right on cue, the truck was backed to the opening in the side of the building where the car was to be rolled out using a winch mounted on the tractor and the track connections were securely made. (See column 2 for more about the move). The car was pulled out of Berth 155A by the winch cable with motorman David Garcia, who is also a member of the Southern California Traction Club, manning the brake wheel.



The car was moved with the hand brakes applied. This was done to eliminate any possibility of a runaway.

Once the car was on the trailer and secured, a group photo of the craftsmen that completed the car was taken and the trip began from Wilmington to San Pedro.



fork lift (not pictured) was used to push each rail down to the trailer level and then both rails were bolted together.

Once the trailer and tracks were aligned, the winch cable was extended from the tractor with the help of Southern California Traction Club member George Jones, clad in his 'official' safety vest



George Jones and the truck driver had formed a close bond during the move of the 1058 last June and could work closely with him.

Once the winch cable was attached to cables hooked to the front truck of the 501; the star of the show began to appear from the darkness of the building.



As you read in column 1, the lowboy trailer was equipped for this job but the real surprise was when we arrived and the car was to be unloaded. The car would actually be unloaded from the front of the trailer. Very carefully the trailer brakes are set and the tractor is detached, with the skill of the truck driver being responsible for gently lowering the trailer to the ground.



The trip started practically on schedule with police escort with a convoy of several vehicles following, including John Smatlak (Railway Preservation Resources), George Jones (SCTC) and George Huckaby (Custom Traxx). Next is a view taken through the windshield of one of the cars.



Once the car arrived at 22nd and Miner, the truck and trailer pulled to the south of the intersection and aligned itself to the track on the paved surface. Then, the car was unloaded (see more data about the unloading in column 2) and the truck was moved out of the way. The tractor was hooked to the other end of the car and pulled north across 22nd Street until under the overhead wire.



The 1058 was ready to uncouple to the north end of the car and tow it back to the barn.



In what we found fascinating, the gooseneck portion of the trailer, shown in the above photo just in front of car 501 would be detached by removing the front two attaching points and backing the tractor back under the gooseneck, removing the rear attachment and pulling away.



What was amazing is that this operation was accomplished with no more trouble than it takes to uncouple a model train. The trailer is equipped with ramps, which were attached to the front of the trailer.



The winch cable was attached to the front of the car; motorman Garcia was positioned behind the brake wheel. Then, on cue, the tractor gave a tug and the car literally rolled off the trailer, relying only on the skill of Dave Garcia to bring the car to a halt before it struck the tractor.





After the truck towed car 501 across 22nd Street, the tractor was moved out of the way, (a story in itself). Car 1058 coupled to the brand new coupler on 501; Motorman Bob Cook (shown below) connected the air hoses and the two-car train went north to the car barn turnout under the control of Dave Garcia. The turnout was opened and by 1:00 PM, car 501 was again under cover.



It should be mentioned that Dave Garcia has been a key contributor to this program behind the scenes in this entire project. You won't see his name in lights or a plaque with his name on it but without Dave, there probably would not be a San Pedro Trolley as it is today. Dave has forgotten more about the mechanical details of trolley cars than most of us will ever know.

An interesting event presented itself after car 501 had been towed across 22nd Street. The tractor was now sandwiched between cars 1058 and 501, straddling the rails which were between a fenced area and a berm. Ties were placed on the rails but since tractors with all those wheels are NOT equipped with Positraction. (See the movie My Cousin Vinny for a complete definition of positraction....), there was plenty spinning of tires. This took longer than expected but the knowledgeable craftsmen took charge and the tractor was extricated with a gentle tug from an SUV. Guess that SUVs are good for something after all!



Finally the train of 1058 and 501 could be coupled and moved to the temporary barn



So the operation was completed and two of the three cars are now on site and will soon be operational. Generations will soon be able to see "the one that got away", the Pacific Electric. The cars represent this fine Railroad in both of its liveries, the dark red (501) that the cars wore until about 1942 and the brighter red (1058) that adorned the cars from 1942 on. Very soon Huell Howser will be on site talking about these cars and marveling about these as some as California's Gold. Sadly, few persons will even know that the unique managerial talent of Project Manager Bob Henry, the vision of Port Director, Larry Keller, the knowledge of



!!!!Mission Completed!!!!

Dave Garcia, the savvy of John Smatlak, the dedication and professionalism of many unnamed fine craftsmen and other fine people made this project a reality. These fine people have contended with some of the most perplexing, complex and sometimes pure idiotic problems and governmental and regulatory nonsense but they always remained positive and creative. Our hats should be always off to them. Because of them, a lot of history will be taught and maybe some lessons will be learned!

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