Memories of the

GORRE & DAPHETID

Reminiscences by Rod Smith
Yardmaster, Great Divide 1963-64

Collected from Yahoo Groups G&D list
(now GandD @ Groups.io)
&
Pacific Coast Region NMRA Newsletter Branch Line

Compiled by Anders Eriksson in 2021
Minichemindeferroequinologist

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All text by Rod Smith ("railgeezer"), Yardmaster at Great Divide in 1963-64. Thanks for all your memories Rod and that you took the time to write them down!

Meeting John Allen

#2632, 02/28/2006
Branch Line, Volume 67-4, Oct-Dec 2010

Those who have joined this hobby in recent years may not recognize the name John Allen or the railroad known as the Gorre & Daphetid. The names appear infrequently today though there was a mention in *Model Railroader* as recently as July 2010. Names of other well-known modelers are more recognizable today – I won't try to name them because I will undoubtedly forget one of the better-known ones who is from the PCR and that would be unforgivable.

But allow me to introduce John to you. He was an unmarried man who lived in Monterey. His passion was model railroading and he created one of the first layouts specifically designed for operations. His contemporaries included Frank Ellison, Whit Towers, Cliff Robinson, Bill McClanahan, and several others who espoused the idea a model should emulate the movement of cars loaded and empty as did the prototype railroads.

John was also a master modeler and a prolific writer. He worked on several NMRA committees and was a great supporter of the PCR. He and his friends could be counted on to attend Coast Division meets where he was a frequent clinician. He entered contests with models which often won the competitions. He attended many regional and national NMRA conventions and often could be found espousing his latest ideas on modeling. He welcomed all to participate and could usually convince you he was right in any discussion. John did like to debate.

The HO scale Gorre & Daphetid Railroad (G&D) was John Allen's creation. Although John died in 1973 and the railroad was destroyed by fire shortly after his death, even today it is regarded as a very significant model railroad and not infrequently referenced in the published press. It was the subject of a book, *Model Railroading with John Allen* by former *Model Railroader* editor Linn Westcott which was published in several editions by *Kalmbach Publishing*. There are exciting rumors it will soon be available again under the *Benchmark Publications* brand.

Great Divide engine facilities with the town of Port under construction in the background. Jul-59. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_002_roundhouse_july56]

While some consider the G&D to have been a caricature of a railroad due to its spectacular mountain scenery and numerous bridges, it was one of the best-known layouts from the 1950's until its demise in 1973. People travelled from great distances to see it in person and John published many photo essays in model railroad magazines to keep us informed of progress of the layout. There are several websites dedicated to this railroad. You can view many pictures and scans at http://gdlines.org or http://doug56.net/GD. A group dedicated to John and his railroad is found at https://groups.io/g/GandD. There are other sites as well.

Here are some of my memories of having operated on this line in the 1963-65 period. Some of these reminiscences have been seen before on the G&D group, but I hope another group of readers will enjoy them.

I first learned about John Allen around 1954 when I purchased my first copy of *Model Railroader*. John was explaining his techniques for painting and weathering cars and locomotives and had some early pictures of his third rendition of the G&D in his then new basement in a home he purchased in Monterey's hills. Later, I joined the NMRA and PCR.

The first Coast Division meet I attended was a picnic meet in Monterey at the El Estero Park there. John and some of his friends were hosting the meet, and after the business meeting, they made their layouts available for us to visit. John had arranged for some folks to run his layout so he could drive and carry those of us without our own cars. I hitched a ride with him. He was most gracious, and I think we saw 3, maybe 4, layouts including his own.

One of his operators looked remarkably like a fellow I knew from Oakland High School, but I was too shy to inquire. Besides, he was busy keeping the trains running and I was taking pictures. Only after returning to school did I discover it really was Dave Grandt, now proprietor of Grandt Line.

John took us back to the park where I met my parents for the trip back home. Seeing this famous, even then, layout kept me looking forward to more articles about it, and they did come.

In 1963, my employer sent me to Castroville (only a short distance from Monterey) for 18 months. I called John to see if I could arrange a visit to see the G&D again. John invited me to come and suggested I come on a Wednesday when they had an operating group there. The next Wednesday I was at his home promptly at 7:30. I think there were around 4 or 5 fellows there and I had a chance to run the through freight trains. I also helped with the yarding operations at Great Divide, his main yard. Around 10, we gathered around his kitchen table for a little conversation and refreshments.

I guess I passed muster, as upon leaving John invited me to join their group which met every week. I jumped at the chance and was soon the regular yardmaster in Great Divide as well as the hostler at the engine facility. Both jobs used the same control panel. John, ever the consummate host, varied the weeknight we met to fit the schedules of the operators. It was normally either Tuesday or Wednesday. While John was a bit of a stickler on following the rules, he was an easy man to know and was willing to share his knowledge with any of us who asked. I was there into 1965 and we did several extra sessions for visitors who dropped by on Sundays to see this famous layout. Phone books in Monterey public phone booths usually had his name underlined or worn out from people holding their finger on it while dialing.

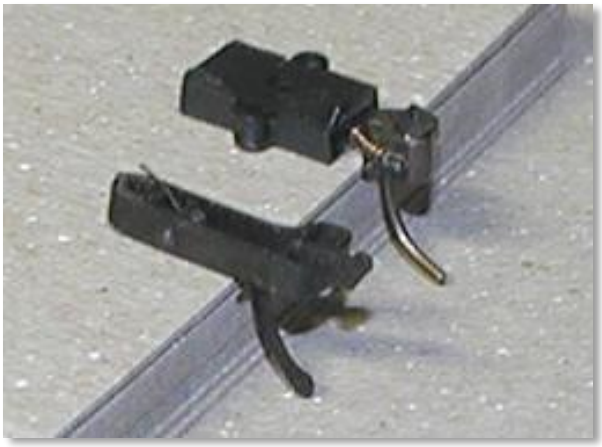
I will detail some of my operating experiences in future articles. Some may be funny, and some will delve into John's operating system which was very different from today's DCC style. I hope you enjoy the ride.

Another Perspective on Baker Couplers

#2776, 03/10/2006

Operation with Baker couplers on the G&D was very smooth. In my opinion, it far exceeded even the current day operation with Kadees. There, I said it! While Bakers didn't look like any prototype coupler, they almost always coupled when they met, they rarely uncoupled accidentally (since two hooks had to be raised at the same time), they were easy to manually uncouple with just a brass strip to lift those simulated air hoses, and the clear plastic ramps John made where frequent uncoupling was needed, or beyond the reach from the aisle, were not very noticeable. John's ramps were easy to make and install. The plastic strip lay flat atop the ties when retracted. When a car, or string of cars, needed

spotting, we just pushed them slightly beyond the ramp, pushed a button on the panel which activated a solenoid, thereby raising a plunger which caused the ramp to arch above railhead level, and pulled the car back over the raised ramp. As the couplers passed over the arch, the air hoses were pushed up, the hooks disengaged the loops and the engine proceeded while the cars stayed in place. There was no need for "slack" as with Kadees. Take a finger off the button and the ramp retracted below railhead height. In the Great Divide yard, each track had a ramp. All the freight yard ramps activated together from one button, and all the passenger tracks did the same. Since you would only be using one track at a time, this made good sense. At the ends of passing tracks, both tracks had ramps which acted together. Some spurs had multiple ramps for different industries, such as the long spur behind Austin Street at Great Divide.



John's Baker coupler compared to Kadee. Photo Unknown, GDRP.
[baker1]

Since we only used the ramps when we wanted to uncouple, there was no danger of false uncoupling while pulling over a ramp. Kadees suffer from this problem when slack occurs over a fixed magnet. One caution we had to be careful of, since the ramps actually extended above the railhead, was not to activate them under one of the track cleaning sliders, or under a pilot or gearbox of a locomotive. Doing so could cause a derailment. If one was careful to only activate the ramp when the air hoses were in immediate proximity, no problems occurred. We operated for weeks without any derailments. Usually it was operator error which caused a derailment, not equipment failure.

In looking at John's pictures, the Baker couplers are, to me, not very noticeable. Sure, I can see them, but that area of a car or locomotive is usually shaded and the coupler just fades into insignificance. They're invisible between coupled cars unless seen looking straight through, and then, seen from the side, they're not that much different from any other coupler, if noticed at all.

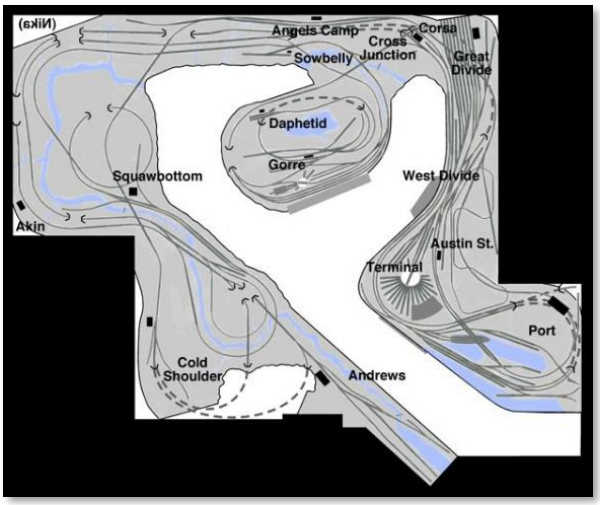
I understand the die for making Baker hooks was worn out by the late 50's. Whit Towers offered to let me have all his Bakers when he passed away. I seriously considered this offer but decided not to take them since no additional ones would ever be available. Besides, the Kadee, with its better looks and magnetic activation has become the de facto standard, and had I used Bakers, my friends would have been unable to operate their equipment on my layout. I still think though, I would have had a better operating railroad! And, a connection with two great model railroaders.

Scaring the Yardmaster

#2936, 03/18/2006
Branch Line, Volume 68-2, Apr-Jun 2011

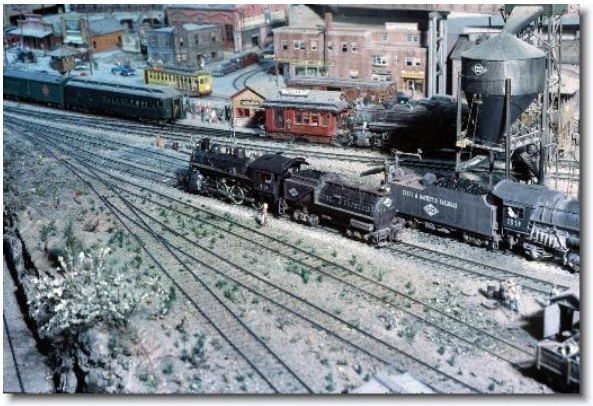
During the time I served as yardmaster in Great Divide, John discouraged us operators from talking while running trains. He told us, in theory; we were miles apart and therefore had no means to talk to each other. Even though the through train engineer was right behind me across the narrow aisle, I wasn't to speak to him. These were days before radio's made it possible. Thus, John once scared the life out of me.

When a through train approached the yard via the cutoff from Gorre, the engineer, using a motor driven whistle (Lionel, I think) under the layout, would signal me he was approaching. My signal was a road crossing whistle, two longs, a short, and a long. The Port signal was a long, and three shorts. Until the engineer got a clearance from me, he had to hold just out of the tunnel mouth behind the yard. I guess the poor passengers and rear end crew just had to put up with the smoke and steam inside the tunnel unless I expedited their run into the station at Austin Street. Truth to tell, the track was usually open and available since all trains ran on a schedule and I knew about when to expect them to arrive. I tried to keep the station siding open unless using it for a run around or when switching the businesses behind Austin Street. When I had a track open for him, I used a three light signal to tell the engineer what to do. The signal was at the throat of the passenger terminal where we could both see it. It is in the picture on page 20 of the book *Model Railroading with John Allen* glowing red. It also shows on page 123. When red, it meant for the engineer to stop. When I wanted him to proceed forward, I gave him a green. If I wanted him to reverse, I gave him a yellow indication. Pretty simple. When not in use, the light was usually kept at red.



The G&D Track Plan.

We had the mainline engineer for a passenger train back the train into the terminal, then uncouple and pull forward through the throat and stop over the ash pit on the turntable lead. For a freight train, the engineer would cut off at the far end of the big truss bridge and use the main line to back alongside his train into the terminal lead. He could then run forward onto the ash pit, where my red signal told him to stop. The hostler (usually me) took the engines from there on to the turntable.



2-6-6-2 #39 has taken on a load of coal. She has just pulled forward off the ashpit which is obscured behind the tender of #49. While #39 will now go to the turntable for servicing, #49 is heading out to take the passenger train in the background on its run to Port. Switcher #5 is adding the combine #5 to the consist. It will be dropped off at Gorre for the short run up to Daphetid. Jul-68. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_027_49etc_jul68]

Well, one night I was happily switching the yard when I heard my call. I cleared the lead and welcomed a train into the yard. Using my signal control, I guided the engineer to his destination. Seconds after the engine stopped over the ash pit, I was horrified to see smoke curling around the firebox and boiler! I thought the motor had somehow shorted and was burning up. I called to John for advice, and he doubled over in laughter! It seems he had installed a smoke generator under the ash pit! To activate the smoke, he had wired the circuit so it only received power when the two

turnouts were aligned for the track containing the ash pit, and the control switch for that infernal signal was on red! That combination only occurred when an engine was coming in from a run. It simulated dropping the ashes.

John prohibited smoking in the layout area, even in my time, but he tolerated this smoke unit. Of course, it only ran for seconds and I soon learned to throw a turnout as soon as I could! But it was fun to use when visitors were watching the action. I don't think it was activated when the track was being controlled by the hostler from the roundhouse end as he used a separate part of the circuitry in the Great Divide control panel...

Engineer on the Through Freight

#3150, 04/05/2006
Branch Line, Volume 68-3, Jul-Sep 2011

On occasion in 1963-64 I had the chance to run the through trains. There were two: the through freight and the passenger. Both made a round trip to Port and back. The freight ran to a scheduled departure time and began its trip in Great Divide at the Austin Street station. The eastbound freight (toward Port), assembled by the Great Divide Yardmaster, had the cars destined for Gorre, Daphetid or the peddler freight at the front of the train. Cars for Port or further east would follow them, then the caboose. I would pick up my locomotive on the departure track from the roundhouse, pull through the yard throat and back down on the waiting cars. Once coupled, I would proceed to the "bypass" and enter the tunnel behind Great Divide yard. I had to whistle for the crossing at Cross Junction (first train to whistle got the right-of-way though the only other train on the line was the local freight) and would run into Gorre. Pulling through the tunnel in Devil's Post Pile I would pull in on the siding and clear the main. If the peddler happened to be in town, we would coordinate to separate his cars. Usually he was not there, and I would set out the cars for both destinations on the third track (closest to the front of the layout) at the east end. Normally there would be cars there headed for Port from Gorre or Daphetid. I added them to my train. These moves involved switching with the engine running down the 4% grade toward Sowbelly. Cutting off and pulling forward was easy, backing a string of cars up the hill could be a challenge. Woe unto the engineer who made the mistake of taking more cars down than he could push back up, as the only thing one could do was proceed to Squawbottom, drop some cars there and back all the way to Gorre to deliver the others. John didn't like this move. I only saw it once, and I was not the engineer that night! Anyway, after picking up the outbounds, adding them to the train and dropping the inbounds on this track, the through freight departed east for Port.

With a string of stock cars, 4-10-0 #34 is about to plunge into a short rock-lined tunnel blasted through Devil's Post Pile. The Ryan Gulch Trestle is the highest wood trestle on the railroad. Its tallest bent is 125 feet tall. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_016_curve_unkdate]

From Gorre, I owned the railroad to Port. The local would be somewhere along the line, but he had to be out of my way. I usually found him tucked away at Squawbottom, but sometimes he would clear me at Port, making for a real busy time there – no real yard and few through tracks. Port was a busy place. It was normal for the hostler to assign sufficient power to the train to pull the hill

from Squawbottom to Cross Junction. It might be a double header, but usually only a single loco. If a double header, I ran both locos, and never had them coupled going down the hill from Gorre to Squawbottom, as they would often buck against each other when the slack between the gears and worms ran in and out of sync. At least one locomotive did this while running alone. These were the days before DCC! After passing CJ (another whistle), I would alert the Port operator with his whistle signal. When he cleared me, I would enter his small yard and uncouple the train. My freight loco proceeded around the balloon loop. The Port operator had been busy and usually had the westbound through freight ready to depart. I could couple to those cars and depart, heading back west to Great Divide. Again, if double headed, I ran them separately down to Squawbottom. At that time, the freight train did not go up the line toward Andrews, as there was no Andrews up there! The track did go to the entrance and over the bridges to Cold Shoulder, but since a freight would have to back down we didn't test the wheels and couplers backing that far. A runaway would have been dangerous when it reached Port. It was downhill all the way!

2-6-0 #25 with a local freight rounds the high bridge on Sims Loop which passes over spectacular Grandt Cliff. Apr-58. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_008_curve_april58]

On the return trip, I often met the local again along the line, and would run all the way to Gorre. Switching the westbound in Gorre was very similar to the eastbound except there were no cars to drop for the peddler. He picked his up in Port himself. The Gorre and Daphetid destination cars were once again at the front of the train. Arriving in Gorre, I again entered the siding. (center track) Now at least I am heading uphill! On that front track at the west end I would find cars left by the Gorre switcher and the peddler destined for Great Divide or beyond, to pick up. I cut off the drops for Gorre and Daphetid, pulled forward into the tunnel, and then backed down on the pickups. I pulled them into the tunnel and backed them down on my train. I then dropped the inbound cars on that now empty front track. I could then couple to my train and proceed up the line to Great Divide. Another whistle signal for Cross Junction and one for the Great Divide Yardmaster to let him know I was approaching. Upon arrival in Great Divide, I left the cars on the passing siding and ran the loco to the inbound track of the roundhouse where I stopped over the ash pit as related previously.

Origins of the TimeSaver and Other Games

#3175, 04/07/2006

The Book states it was first built by John in 1966. I was there in 1963-64 and we did NOT play with it. On occasional visits later in the 60's it existed, so 1966 looks like a likely date.

John loved games of his making and we did have one I remember in 1964. He found a children's top at a toy store. You remember, those plastic and metal things you pumped with a handle in the center on top, causing a disk inside the plastic cover to spin. Anyway, this one sat on a stand, had a plastic cover, then another plastic cover inside the first one and finally, a horizontal disk containing a TRAIN! The train would rotate in one direction and the interior plastic cover in the opposite. That cover was attached to a

horizontal plate around the train disk which had scenery on it, including a tunnel. I hope this description gives you an idea of the toy.

By pumping the handle several times, one could build up some inertia with the counter-rotating disks. When you took your hand off the handle, friction took over and the disks slowed and finally halted.

The game was, you had to give the handle sufficient pumping to make the train pass through the tunnel three times. The starting point varied due to the last operators ending point. This thing didn't have the best bearings, so there was quite a bit of friction to overcome. If your train, all of it, didn't clear the tunnel on the third loop, you lost. If it cleared, we counted how many car lengths beyond the tunnel you went. Least number of car lengths wins. BUT, since the outside cover also spun, John had added a small bird shaped cutout which we called the Vulture. If the top stopped with "the vulture" over any part of the train, YOU LOST!

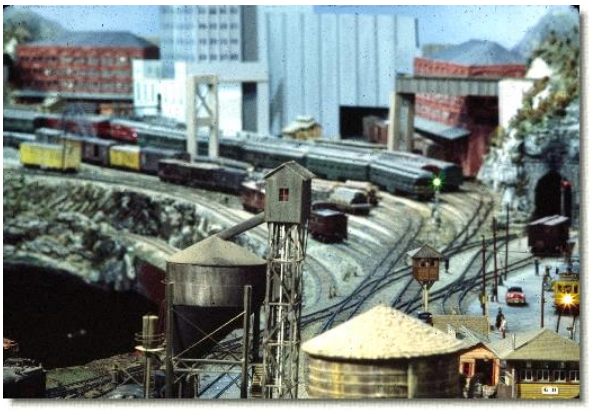
It sounds hokey, but we had a lot of fun exchanging nickels with this top. John was pretty good at judging how fast he had to spin the thing to get a winner. But, he didn't always win. That vulture hit about every 6th or 8th spin. What grown men won't do to have fun when their wives or girlfriends aren't around!!

Running the Passenger Train

#3404, 04/21/2006
Branch Line, Volume 68-1, Jan-Mar 2011

As far as I remember, the passenger run was the only train which had a schedule for departures and arrivals at the stations along the Gorre & Daphetid (G&D). The through freight run departed at a set time from Great Divide but ran as an extra. The passenger train, on the other hand, had to follow a schedule of departures from each station. Of course, it could be running late, but it was not allowed to depart early.

It departed Great Divide at 7:00 AM. We normally ran a consist of green heavyweights composed of four cars; a baggage, an express reefer, a combine and a coach. The G&D also had a red streamliner, but John discouraged its use, preferring the heavyweights or the gas electric car. Number 49, a 4-6-0 was the normal power; sometimes we ran #50, a Pacific which was painted green.



Great Divide yard throat with "The Cutoff" tunnel portal on the right. Apr-65.
Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_038_tower_apr65]

The G&D trackage was never completed. Only one bridge remained to be built when John died. The high bridge between Angel's Camp and Cold Shoulder was missing. There was however a track called "the cutoff," a connection between Great Divide and Gorre, which was planned as a connection to allow continuous running. This track entered a tunnel behind the Great Divide throat and emerged at Cross Junction. Because all trains left via the "cutoff," the train would be pulled from the Great Divide passenger terminal by the yard switcher and delivered to the suburban station named Austin Street for loading. The road engine would proceed from the turntable, run through the throat of the yard, and back down on the cars. Since this was an "out and back" operation and a local, the lead car could be either the baggage or the coach. The engines were turned; the cars were not rearranged between runs. I think that may

have had some bearing on John's hesitancy to use the streamliner which would require shuffling and turning of the observation on the turntable. In my role as yardmaster I can appreciate that since there was precious little time to do all the freight shuffling and car delivery between through trains!

The passenger run would proceed to Gorre, Squawbottom, Cross Junction, and Port. Scheduled stops were made at each station. If the gas electric car was used, an additional stop would be made at Sowbelly, and the car would run beyond Port to Corsa and up to Akin and Eagles Nest. We didn't run the four-car train to Akin because it would have needed to back downgrade returning to Port, and any derailment would have been catastrophic. Rails hadn't reached Andrews in 1965.

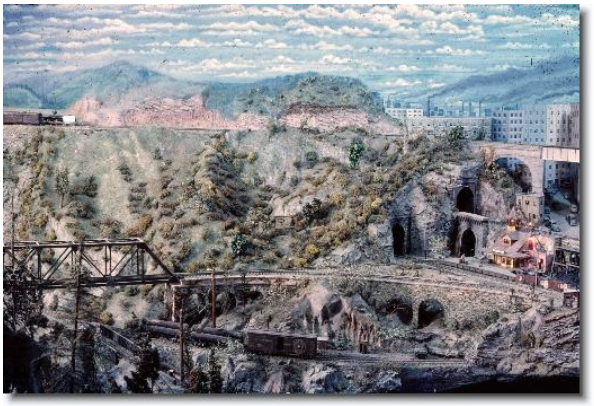
In accordance with the schedule, the train left Port station, running westbound through Cross Junction, Squawbottom, Gorre and back to Great Divide. A stop was made at Austin Street, and the road power would back the train into the Great Divide Passenger Terminal. There the road power was uncoupled and pulled forward to the engine terminal where the hostler took control. The yard switcher had to clear the road power and not block its path to the engine terminal. This sometimes resulted in holding a string of cars out on the passing siding, since the switching lead passed through the throat.

What about passengers for Daphetid, you ask? To serve them, the G&D possessed a shorty combine which would occasionally be attached to the through freight. This train would run as a mixed train from Great Divide to Gorre. There the combine, which was coupled behind the caboose, would be left at the station. The branch train would take the combine up to Daphetid and back to Gorre in time for the returning freight to pick it up for delivery back to Great Divide. The shorty combine never ran to Port.

Running with Cab #2

Branch Line, Volume 68-4, Oct-Dec 2011

The cab #2 on John Allen's main panel was a motor-generator combination with a large flywheel, and quite a challenge to run trains with. I've seen it, and don't understand how it worked. Basically, the controls on the panel allowed the engineer to control the motor which in turn rotated the generator. The current out of the generator was directed to the track to run the locomotive. Now, the panel controls were similar to those on transistor throttles, but no transistors were used as I recall. There was a lever throttle (Marn-O-Stat), but, there was also a rotary switch which acted as the brake handle. It had positions for "release", "lap", "service brake", and "emergency brake". I think these were all connected to resistors of varying values. There may have been another position or two; I don't recall after all these years. Of course, there was also a forward/reverse toggle as well as an East/West one. John also had a counter connected to a damaged watt-hour meter which was used to simulate water usage. More on that later.



Cross Junction station is at the lower right of this picture. The Through Freight passed here on both tracks through the crossing. Leaving Gorre, it also passed the log loading area at the bottom on the track through the girder bridge under the truss bridge. Aug-68. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_003_cross_aug68]

To start a train with this cab, you had to release the brakes, and then open the throttle. Pretty obvious, isn't it? Well, if the train was a heavy one, it was quite possible to absorb all the wattage the generator was producing without moving the train. Of course, the more power you applied by widening on the throttle, the more watts ran through that infernal meter and the counter really began to click as the "water" was used in the boiler. If you got the train underway, it was a constant battle to keep it from stopping or running away – which it was fully able to do if the brakes weren't carefully applied on downgrades. The profile of the G&D was almost all either upgrade or downgrade – there was very little level track.

The through freight enters Squawbottom and clears the passenger train at the station. High above, the gas electric car is crossing the high bridge over Squawbottom Creek, and the peddler freight is clearing both trains on the spur to the Cinnabar mine which runs under the steel trestle of Sim's Loop. Aug-65. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_022_60engine_aug65]

Once moving, the flywheel kept the generator turning, so the throttle could be closed a bit to conserve "steam". If it started to gain too much speed, the brake could be used in "service", or even "emergency" if it was really traveling, such as downgrade from Gorre. This was my main nemesis. Just try stopping at Squawbottom with a runaway train! And don't forget the speed limit on Sim's Loop. The brake handle inserted some resistance into the circuit which slowed the motor and took energy away from the flywheel causing the generator to slow down. It took a deft hand to run trains with this cab, and John usually used it with a great deal of skill.

Now, as the watt-hour meter turned, a cam hit a contact which triggered the counter to register the next number. The faster it turned, the faster those numbers ran up. John had calculated the capacity of his tenders using the counter, so we could assume the tender was full at a water column, and by adding its capacity to the current reading, know when the tender was theoretically empty. Better be at the next water tank before then! I don't recall the counter being resettable to zero – we just added numbers. John was the master at using the least amount of "water" when running a train over the line. A gentle hand on the throttle caused the counter to move slowly, while really pulling the throttle open would get it clicking like a castanet. Deft use of the brake and throttle allowed you to occasionally pass a tank and proceed to the next one without running the tender dry. On the other hand, you could also use most of your water just getting the train moving. Then you might need to uncouple the engine and "run for water". Of course, you then had to come back and collect the cars, still having to reach a tank before running dry again.

John had discovered it was possible to get the watt-hour meter "stuck" on that contact to the counter. If that happened, you could run for a spell using no water at all! He told us about it, but it wasn't easy to do. Only worked on downhill runs, and usually at pretty slow speeds. With more power being drawn from the generator, the contact let go and water was used again. We sometimes would have contests to see who could run the entire railroad using the least amount of water. I can't recall anyone beating John at that game.

The through freight is approaching Cross Junction on its way to Great Divide. It is crossing above Sowbelly Creek. The roadbed without rails below is for the narrow-gauge Devils Gulch and Helengon RR. High on the hill in the left background is the town of Akin. The curved track on the trestle leads to Daphetid. There are surveyors working on the stub of the high bridge under construction over Devil's Gulch. Good eyes might discern G&D #13, Emma, in this scene. Jul-59. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_015_bridge_july59]

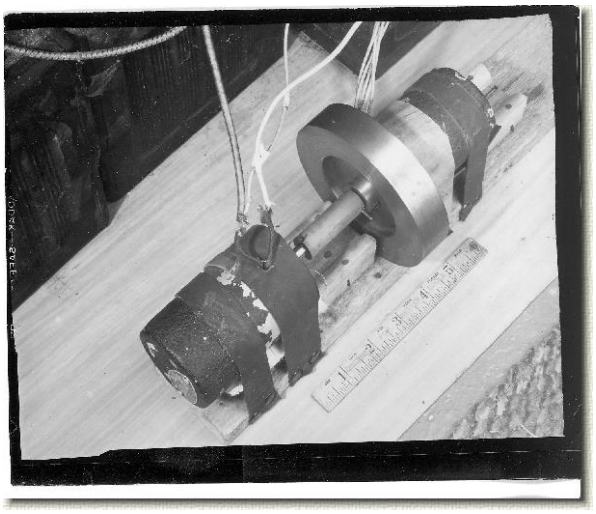
John's Block Control System

#4036, 06/30/2006
Branch Line, Volume 69-2, Apr-Jun 2012

John Allen used an interesting wiring system on the Gorre & Daphetid which I have never seen anywhere else. I'll try to describe it even knowing today's DCC systems make a lot of it unnecessary. It sure did operate smoothly and we experienced very few shorts during a session. I've described the local cab operation at Great Divide previously, (see Scaring the Yardmaster, Branch Line, April-June 2011, #2936) so here goes on the mainline cabs.

The G&D wasn't a large railroad, but with the loops of track encircling the space, it did allow nice long runs between towns. In each case, as I recall, there were two blocks between each passing track. This was long before DCC, and each train needed a separate block for control as with today's DC operations. Two blocks allowed switching activity to be simultaneous at each town.

John's main panel had three cabs. Cabs 1 and 2 shared a 4P3T lever switch which was a three-position switch not a center off one. Throw it left and cab 1 controlled the block. Throw right and cab 2 had it. In the center position, it was available to cab 3, the pushbutton cab, but unless cab 3 pushed the appropriate button, the block was unpowered. We always were supposed to clear these lever switches to the center position when we vacated the block so another engineer could use it. Linn Westcott, in *Model Railroading with John Allen*, attributes the flywheel throttle to cab 3, but it was actually cab 2. Cab 3 was a motor controlled Variac. The engineer here had a DPDT momentary toggle controlling the motor which rotated the Variac. Thus, we could increase the speed or decrease it, but only at the rate the motor turned the Variac. It simulated momentum and John could vary the rate of that motor. If you ran too fast for his liking he slowed your acceleration waaaay down.



Cab 2, the momentum throttle. Photo John Allen, GDRP.
[momentum]

Anyway, back to those mainline blocks. Each block on the single track could be chosen by any of the main panel throttles. Some could

also be chosen by a local panel, such as at Port, or Great Divide. The interesting thing was, at passing sidings, there were absolutely NO electrical switches to direct power to either track! Those two parallel tracks were automatically assigned depending on how your train was routed. John saved quite a number of electrical switches by using this method and we operators had fewer switch handles to remember to throw as we ran across the division.

Down in the lower elevations of Giant Canyon, 2-8-0 #29 drifts into Squawbottom Station. Jun-70. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection. [s1_032_ssuaw29_jun70]

This is going to be hard to explain, but here goes. Each passing location had a "master" turnout at one end and a "slave" turnout at the other. Turnouts were operated by old surplus rotary relays. The master would select either the main or passing siding through contacts on the relay. Once the master had chosen a route, the slave could choose the other track if that turnout was aligned properly. Sort of a simple logic system. If both turnouts were aligned for the same track, the nonaligned track was unpowered, and the block at the master end powered the track all the way to the slave turnout. By having one turnout set each way, running meets were possible. Likewise, if you arrived at a passing location before the opposing train, you could throw both turnouts against your train and thereby protect it from any collision or inadvertent movement since the track you were on was electrically disconnected. That would be unpopular today as it would turn off the sound systems.

There were enough contacts on those old rotary relays to allow John to also wire a "holding section" behind the frog of each turnout. The holding section on the aligned track was powered, the non-aligned one was not. This gave us a dead section which would stop the engine before it could short on the misaligned frog, plus it stopped the engine before it reached beyond the fouling point thus preventing side swipe collisions. We would proceed in a passing track slowly until our locomotive reach this dead section and stopped. I've visited a number of layouts which could use this protection. If you power your frogs, it takes only a 2P2T contact set, as on a Tortoise. In John's era, most locomotives picked up power from the track with the right-hand side of one truck and the left-hand side of the other. With steam, it was the right side of the locomotive and the left side of the tender. Therefore, the dead sections needed to be different lengths on each track since one had the locomotive pickup and the other tender pickups.

One other feature John used was the hierarchy of train throttles. One would think the first-class trains would have the highest priority throttle and the lowly local have the lowest, but on the G&D it was just the opposite. The highest priority, that is, the one who could pre-empt any others, was the local panel at Great Divide and at Port. There was a small panel at Sowbelly which also had this priority. The next priority, if none of those was using a block, were cabs 1 and 2 which shared those lever switches. The lowest priority was cab 3. Now, cab 3 usually ran the passenger trains. Class 1, eh? Well, John's philosophy was, since the other cabs must clear the higher-class train, they should be the ones to give up control of a block, and of course get their trains out of it! It wouldn't do to have the passenger engineer suddenly take a block with

another train in it, now would it? Cab 3 also ran the through freights. Cab 1 was usually running the local (there was only one during my tenure, between Gorre and Port) and John liked to run the branch to Daphetid and switch Gorre with cab 2, the motor-generator cab.

Now, of course, DCC negates the need for control blocks, but anyone using straight DC and wanting to run three or four cabs, might want to consider John's wiring system. Four cabs would have two sets of those lever switches or DP3T toggles.

Incidentally, John did not use common rail. In fact, he detested it and gleefully would show any practitioner how he could easily short out a common rail layout while his G&D would be impervious to such shenanigans. I must admit I never really understood his discourse on this subject, as I have seen a number of common rail layouts which seem to run just fine.

The Car Pairs

#4250, 08/11/2006

Looking through some of the slides, I noticed s2_039_metalbridge_sep64 contains a picture of the two Schwarzchild & Sulzberger reefers. These two cars were a permanently coupled pair for operating purposes. They had John's Baker couplers on their outside ends, but there were other coupler types connecting them together. My recall is they had X2f couplers there, but it may have been Kadees. John had several paired cars like this to allow visiting equipment to run on a railroad which used Bakers. There were some ore cars like this which had the old Mantua couplers!

Obviously, the visiting equipment could only run over the line, not be used in an operating session since the uncoupling ramps only worked with the Bakers; or perhaps the Mantua's, MDC's or Devore's, which also required a lifting ramp. Once, when I took a Kadee equipped locomotive over for a test run, we used a transition car to connect a train. Sure wish I could remember which car was used! It didn't get far, as it was too big an engine and hit some scenery running down to Squawbottom.

The Port Plastic Complex is just in the beginning stages of construction. Sep-64. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_039_metalbridge_sep64]

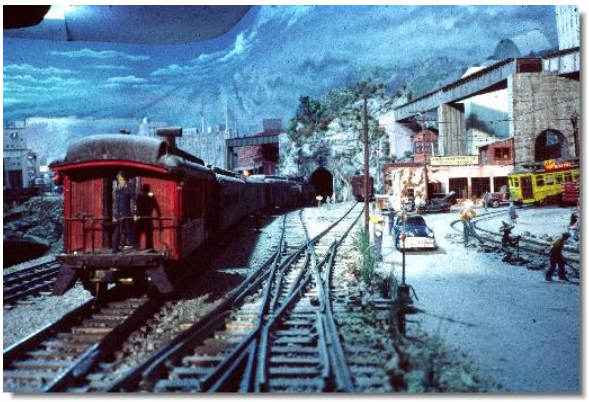
Assigning Locomotives

#4296, 08/13/2006

When I was Yardmaster, we had a small group of operators, probably no more than 5 or 6 of us including John. That meant I also got to be the roundhouse foreman and hostler! Lucky me, eh? Yes, I enjoyed that!

John provided a 3X5 card which listed the number of cars each loco was able to pull up the 4% grade. On the run to Port, the main only faced a 3.5% grade, but coming back, the full 4% had to be overcome. And that INCLUDED the Sims Loop. There's a table in "The Book" on page 124 listing the ratings which I think is accurate. When assigning a loco to the train, I had to consider how many cars the Port operator would be sending back to Great Divide. Since he was just around the layout corner from me, and in clear sight, I would ask for his estimate. Then I would determine which loco would be appropriate for the train. I could overload the outbound if there were cars for the peddler (there always were) since

they got pulled downhill to Gorre and dropped. Also, the cars for the Daphetid Branch and Gorre proper, which the branch operator (usually John) would deliver. The peddler normally took any Port destination cars he picked up to Port himself, and he interchanged there as well. The only cars the through freight picked up on returning were any peddler cars destined for Great Divide, since the peddler never ran beyond Gorre. The train rarely exceeded 12 or 13 cars, but I had to take into account the track cleaner cars, which counted as two cars, since they had the added drag of the Masonite sliders. Once in a great while there were too many which either meant doubling the hill or a DOUBLE HEADER! What fun those were! The same 3X5 card noted which class a locomotive belonged to, #1, #2, or #3. Locos of each class would run together reasonably well, but it was not permitted to mix classes, since they ran at different speeds due to wheel diameter or gearing or motor revolutions. Best not to tempt the derailment gods! And doubling the hill destroyed the schedule! Always hated to send the passenger out late, but there was only one mainline engineer.



The passenger train departing Great Divide. John's only slip switch is beside the shorty combine number 5. Jul-68. Photo John Allen. Paul Beard collection. [s2_016_cvmw_jul68]

That also meant the only train the through freight was likely to meet was the peddler. And sometimes he would be at Port. That's of course in 1963. Perhaps later when Andrews became a destination, there were more.

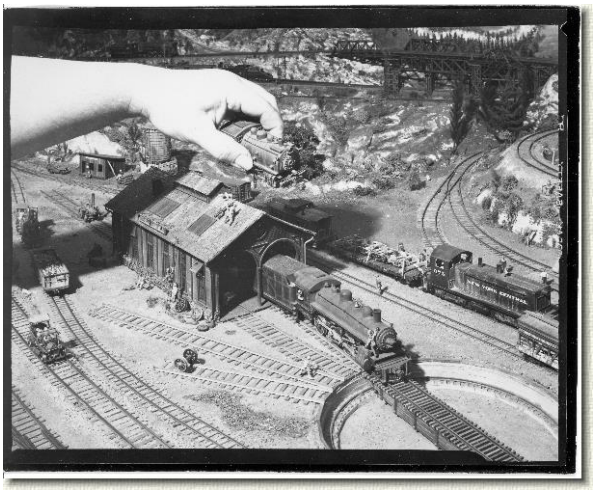
Incidentally, the trains got longer after John instituted the tabs on cars. I think that was because we could switch faster since we no longer had to read car numbers or look for cars. All we had to do was match the color of the tabs for destinations, and they were easier to see. I'll have to write about the system we used when I first arrived, but not tonight.

Call the Big Hook

#4311, 08/13/2006

I never heard about John leaving the screws out of his loco superstructures. As I recall, the reason he gave for not touching a derailed locomotive was to protect those sliders from being bent or otherwise damaged. They weren't in the same place on all the engines, but John knew where they were. And, they were very delicate, much more so than the ones made by Taurus. Almost invisible between the drivers or under the tender trucks. They sure improved pickup of power by the locomotives; we rarely had an engine stall while running.

In my era, John did allow us to rerail cars, even the track cleaners if they derailed. Usually the derailment was due to "operator error", such as pushing cars through a closed switch or off the end of a spur. Or trying to put 6 cars on a 5-car spur! Sometimes enthusiastic manual uncoupling would lift the flanges over a rail, too! Derailments while operating were rare. Of course, there was the need to reset the steel balls inside those "hotbox" cars out on the line. I don't recall setting them out on the nearest siding, though that's probably what we should have done.



The Big Hook in action at Gorre Engine terminal on the 2nd G&D. Photo John Allen, GDRP.
[handover2]

John and Locomotive Controls

#4322, 08/14/2006

The main panel had three throttles or cabs. Cabs 1 and 2 had Marn-O-Stats (remember those?) They were a lever handle which was up for off and down for full throttle. I think the cab 1 may have been a direct drive. It was mostly used for the peddler freight. Cab 2 was the momentum throttle, and the Marn-O-Stat worked much like a steam throttle to increase the motor speed in the momentum device. It had no effect on slowing though, just went into "coast" when it was returned to the top of the panel. Cab 3 was a motor driven Powerstat variable transformer, controlled by a toggle switch. Variable transformers (Variacs) vary the voltage, not the resistance like rheostats and give much better control and smoother power to the layout.

The yard panel also had a Variac, controlled with a rotary handle right on the Variac. I can't speak to the Port control, but I believe it also used Variacs with rotary handles. There was also a small panel at Sowbelly which is now in the collection at Salinas and pictured on the gdlines website. Andrews wasn't in existence at the time of my tenure but there may well have been a control panel there also.

Sowbelly panel in Salinas collection. Photo MSVRR, GDRP.
[GD_panel_front]

The Travails of the Hostler at Great Divide

#4394, 08/17/2006-08

There were two turntables on the G&D. One at Gorre which I think was manually operated, and the big one at Great Divide engine terminal. As yardmaster at Great Divide, it usually was my responsibility to also run the engine terminal. We rarely had a separate hostler to handle the engines, though I often wished there was one. John's turntable at Great Divide had an indexing system that was pretty advanced for the period. It was all mechanical, no fancy photocells or anything. Just a contact riding on a circular piece of brass mounted on a rotating disc with cams to make and break contacts. They probably were contacts from old pinball machines; those were popular back in the 50's. The tracks radiating from the table were only energized when the table was aligned for them. I NEVER put a loco in the pit!! (Today, DCC allows us to do that). I could choose which direction I wanted the table to turn and which end I wanted the table track to be connected to, either the leads, or the whisker tracks. The table itself was always energized except

when it was in motion. Unless I chose the whisker tracks, they were dead, and the locomotives wouldn't move. And I had a lever switch to choose either the leads or the whisker tracks in order to run an engine onto or off the table. There were short shared blocks on both leads where either the hostler or the yardmaster could exchange locomotives. The whisker tracks were only energized when the table was aligned for them. So, if I wanted a particular locomotive, I would choose CW (clockwise) or CCW (counterclockwise) for the table and it would begin to rotate. After it passed the track before the one I wanted, I would flip the control to off. The table continued rotating and slowed just before making alignment. At alignment, it stopped. I then flipped the lever switch to the whisker tracks and backed the loco onto the table. Because all trains departed via the cutoff to Gorre, I had to turn the locos to face the correct direction, but I could choose the shortest distance with the rotation switch. As I neared the outbound lead I again used the switch to gain alignment. When the table stopped I could throw the switch to "Lead" and roll the loco off the table to where the yardmaster with his yard panel could pick it up and move it to its' train.

While John did not like anyone touching his locomotives, we did have one exception. While no fingers were involved, sometimes a loco wouldn't respond when we applied power to back it onto the turntable. In this instance, we did have a short stick which we were allowed to use to give the recalcitrant loco a light nudge. This always would dislodge the bit of dust or whatever causing it to be unresponsive and it would then run under its own power. Nudges were applied near the coupler or pilot, never near the top of the tender, which was more likely to cause a derailment.

There were also several destinations for freight traffic off the turntable. This was a steam era railroad after all. Though rarely modelled these days, the roundhouse required supplies which were delivered in box cars on the track just to the right of the building. The track just to the left was reserved for a tank car (or two) of oil or lubricants, or perhaps some Methyl Ethyl - Badstuff.

An overhead view of the very active engine facilities at Great Divide. Sep-63. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard Collection. [s1_019_great_sep63]

In addition, the coaling tower received coal by way of the turntable. Probably rare in the prototype, it did give me another car to take across the table. More work to be done! And once in a while, the gondola at the ash pit had to be switched out as it had become loaded. As you see, it wasn't just receiving and dispatching locomotives. Those cars could arrive at the most inopportune times too. I'd have an outbound loco, one to receive from an arriving train, and then a car would foul up my plans. Remember, there were only two lead tracks into the engine facilities, and arriving engines had to visit the ash pit and coaling tower on the one lead. I always figured the locomotives took precedence, but sometimes there was so much traffic it was hard to find a place to temporarily stash the cars. At least I didn't have to run around them, just swing the table until they were on the right end! John also had several cars with yellow doors on one side. These were designated to be unloaded from the yellow door. It might need a trip to the turntable to make the proper door align with the loading dock. Those lucky

folks running Port had it easy. Just a trip around the loop for them!

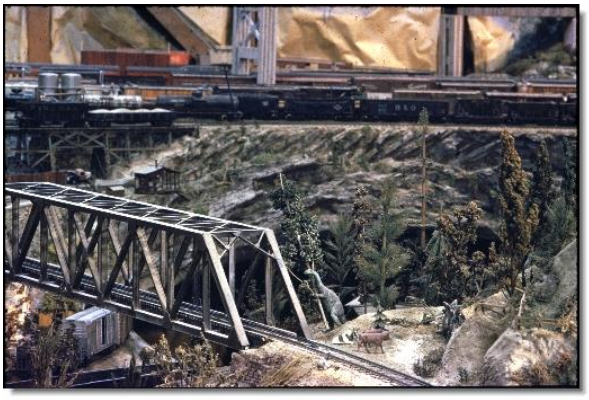
John Allen's Humor

#4399, 08/18/2006
Branch Line, Volume 69-4, Oct-Dec 2012

A narrow-gauge modeler in the San Francisco Bay Area, Charlie Trombley, held an open house get together every year in October. He had a nice layout in his basement – yes, they do exist in the Bay Area! Basements that is, we have lots of nice layouts. John was a regular attendee. Sometime in the late 60's, probably 67 or 68, John asked a group of Charlie's friends to come down to Monterey for a weekend. The group included Dave Grandt, Cliff Grandt, Charlie of course, and I think there may have been Bill Reynolds, John Arata and myself. May have been others, I can't remember. Anyway, we all met and carpooled to John's. We arrived in the early afternoon, and since we planned to stay overnight, we had our camping gear along – sleeping bags, toothbrush, etc. You know, the bare essentials men carry when sleeping over. We operated the railroad most of the afternoon, and all went down to Cannery Row for dinner. John dearly loved a place called Neil DeVaughn's where they served turtle soup. We then returned to Johns for more trains and talk. Went well into the evening until we finally decided to call it a day.

Now, you remember, John was single. He didn't use the living room much, though there were a couple of couches; maybe even a chair. John really lived in the kitchen, the basement and his bedroom. The bedroom contained his adjustable bed, his TV (mostly for football games) and his stereo setup. He did have speakers in the living room, but the controls were all in the bedroom.

Well, we all rolled out our sleeping bags and settled down, prepared to get some shuteye. John had other ideas! In that era, Mobile Fidelity produced some fine vinyl records of train sounds and John obviously had some. One in particular was a long recording of a train approaching up a valley, starting a good way off so the chuffing was almost imperceptible. John put that record on his stereo and applied the needle to the disk. Even in the quiet room, we could hear nothing. Some of us were asleep by then. As the train climbed the valley, of course it got closer to the microphone and louder. Pretty soon, we were all awake listening to the rhythmic chuffing as the engine approached. Louder and louder it became.



Strange things are happening at the bridge over Sowbelly Creek near Cross Jct. At the lower right is Emma (#13) the ever-present work Stegosaurus. Her friend to the left is doing a little re-forestation. Oct-60. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_015_dino_october60]

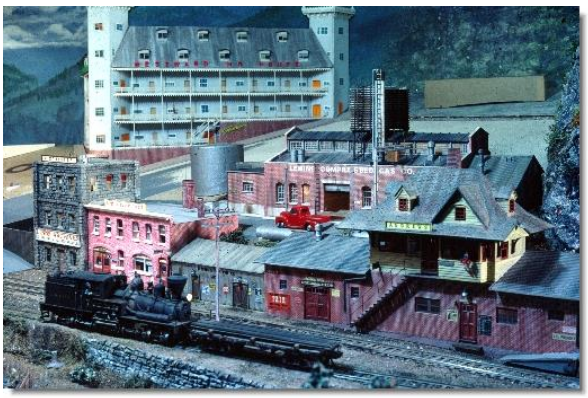
When it was getting to its' loudest and we were all waiting for it to pass. Well, the recording must have been made from the only grade crossing for miles around because there was this almighty whistling, and high decibels, which startled everyone as the engine passed through the room. Stereo, you know and good fidelity. It then faded away (much faster than it had come) and all was quiet again. There was no appearance, or guffaws by John until the next morning. He probably denied any knowledge of the train on Carmel Hill, but I heard it and know it was there.

Never heard it again though. Wonder where it went?

Trains to Andrews?

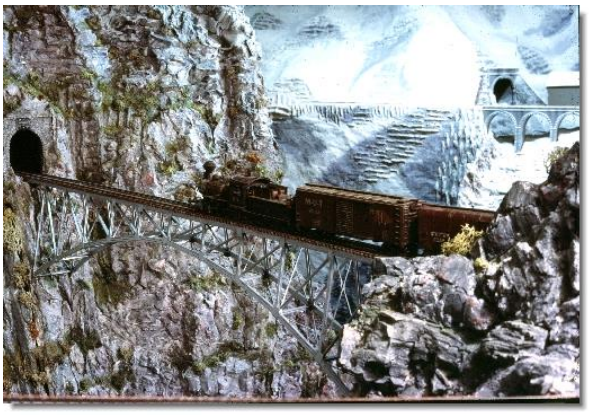
#4553, 09/13/2006

In the era I was an operator, Andrews was roughed in, but no track actually went there. I cannot recall any freight trains running up the hill from Port, although the passenger train did run to Akin for a stop. It then backed down to Port from which it proceeded back to Gorre and Great Divide.



Shay #7 shoves a flat full of rail past Andrews Depot. Linn's Archives at the left is named after the late Model Railroader Editor Linn H Westcott. Sep-69. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_030_linnsarchives_sep69]

In later years, when Andrews had become a town with track and industries to serve, how were they switched? I suspect a second local was called at Port (in addition to the local between Port and Gorre) to take cars to Andrews, do the switching, and return outbounds to Port for further forwarding as directed by the tabs. I'm wondering if any through freight action was active on this line. In 1964, we handled any eastbound cars destined beyond Port by holding them for one cycle and turning the tabs at Port. Later, were they actually taken beyond Port? Without turning facilities, it seems unlikely to me trains of 15 or so cars were taken up the hill, but I could be mistaken. After all, there was a run around available near Cold Shoulder, and I've seen pictures of freights up there. Also, the local to Gorre never turned its locomotive, so tender first operations were done regularly.



2-6-0 #25 and a short freight heading up to Cold Shoulder on a spidery steel arch bridge below Eagle's Nest. Feb-72. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_039_25bridge_feb72]

Operating Before the Tabs on the Cars

#4599, 09/26/2006

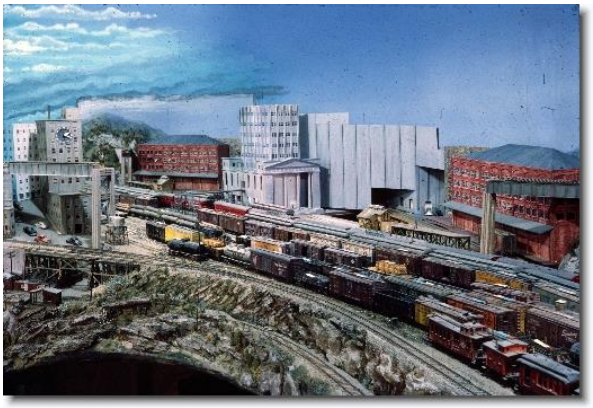
Many may think John used tabs on cars for operation from the beginning. Such is not the case, though. When I joined the operators during 1963, the car top tabs were still in the future. At that time, we had another system. John had cut some cards, probably from 3X5 file cards, which were about 1X3. On these cards he had hand lettered the cars road name, number, type of car (box, flat, reefer, etc.) and color. There may have been more, but I don't recall. Then, he had made a bunch of tabs about 1" square with three layers of paper. These could be clipped over the car cards, since the middle layer was smaller than the outside ones. Unfortunately, they didn't clip securely, so we had a lot of difficulty keeping them in place. Woe unto any operator who dropped his cards! Tabs went flying, and it was hard to remember which tab went with

each car card. I'm sure we shuffled some around.

The tabs had destinations written on them and were color coded just as the later ones were. All were at least double sided; some had two destinations on each side for a four-stop trip. For those, John had made the middle layer smaller on two sides so it could be rotated 90 degrees on the top of the car card. These tabs also had identification as to which type of car they were appropriate for. Wouldn't want to send a tank car to the corral, now would we.

The poster on the wall of the Bulline Packers slaughterhouse proclaims livestock competition. The live beef in the pens will probably end up in Chet's Meat Pies, which are advertised on the CERR trolley that's passing by. May-63.
Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_020_bulline_may63]

In the Great Divide yard, I had a box with several dividers in which I could place the car cards. The tabs went in a box like a kit box when they were not on a car card. To make up a train, I would choose some tabs, place them on appropriate cards, and switch out the train. Now, as you know, John believed in weathering. He also believed in having more than one car of the same road name but with a different number. Many of these were G&D cars too. Imagine having a yard full of cars, including say 6 tankers. Of those 6, 4 are G&D cars and they are numbered 22, 23, 25, and 28. With heavy weathering, it wasn't easy to pick out any one number, but that's what I had to do. Sending the wrong car would put me on the receiving end of good-natured ridicule from the other operators and I wanted more than most anything to avoid that happening. Didn't always succeed, but I tried.



The Great Divide yard and passenger station. Note the clever use of a mirror to enlarge the yard. Jun-65.
Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_037_greatdivide_jun65]

Soon after my arrival, we came in one evening to find John had replaced all the car cards with similar sized envelopes and the tabs had become slips which fit inside the envelopes. Very similar to the systems in use to this day, though a different shape. Now we could drop the things without major problems. Still had to be able to pick out those numbers, though. We used these for about 6 months, until John converted to the tab system, similar to the one published in *Model Railroader* in 1965 by Ed Ravenscroft. Ed used tacks, but John made each tab from paper with tiny bits of wood or card on each side to keep them on over the roof walk. For tankers, he made round ones with a hole in them to fit over the vents in the domes. All tabs, as I recall, were four destination tabs. It was amazing how many cars we could process in a session with the tabs. Probably 25% more than before. That's because we didn't have to look for car numbers anymore. Weathering didn't matter. Just follow the tab instructions and make up the train. I suspect John was unhappy we

didn't notice his equipment as much as we had before, but hey, we had a railroad to run! And, the reefer ice was melting.

Taking Slack

#4618, 10/04/2006

I can't recall John "Requiring" us to take slack in order to start a heavy train, but you can be sure we did it! That's really the only way to get a heavy train started sometimes. Of course, on a pike as mountainous as the G&D, you had to be sure you could pull the train up any grades you would encounter on your run. Certainly did not want to stall on the grade. That would mean doubling the hill, which could blow the schedule all to pieces. Now, if the run is downhill, such as from Great Divide to Gorre and you are dropping some cars there to lighten the load, then we would proceed with a heavier train than we could drag from Squawbottom up to Cross Junction. I often used slack to let me start a string of cars from the yard tracks, since the lead sloped up from the yard. If I could just get those cars clear of the throat switch, I could classify them in a string, rather than having to take a portion in two batches. It was handy to start with one clear yard track!

Dave Grandt mentioned the "unload this side only" cars. I had forgotten them, but yes, there were several cars with, as I recall, yellow doors on one side. These had to be positioned with the yellow door facing the door or ramp. Sometimes they had to be turned. Port could run them around the balloon loop, but in Gorre and Great Divide we had to spin them on the turntable. In my experience, that's about all the Gorre table was used for. The local's engineer usually did the honors, but the branch engineer might also need to spin them. I remember spinning them sometimes at the engine terminal to get the door on the proper side. And we always knew, John was watching!

Pass Numbering Dates etc.

#4647, 10/17/2006

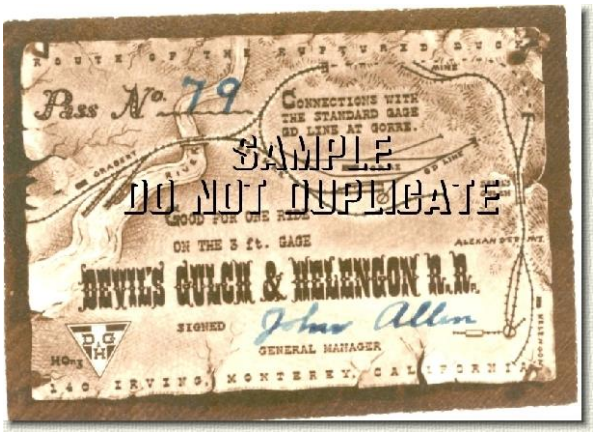
I have G&D pass #692, which is the one pictured in the GD Galleries. It was issued to me in 1958 after I sent John one of mine. So, it looks like John issued almost 700 passes before then and 200+ after that date. Good thing postage was only 3 cents for a letter!

G&D Pass, Rod Smith collection.
[GD_Pass]

I became aware of modelers exchanging passes from a magazine named *Model Trains*. That was back in about 1955. *Railroad Model Craftsman* also had a pass interchange listing in their Swappers Column. After those magazines stopped listing pass exchangers, the *NMRA Bulletin* took on the project for many years, though I don't think it is an active column there today. The list of registered model railroads (last issue was a CD) does show who exchanges passes, if you participate in this program.

When I visited the G&D in 1956, I noticed a bulletin board on the wall at the layout entrance which John used to display his pass collection. In 1958, I had some passes printed for my Sierra Valley Railroad, and, in hope of getting a pass from John, I sent him one with a letter describing my plans and noting I planned a narrow-gauge line as well. To my joy, I received a nice letter and a pass for each of his railroads. Later, in 1963, when I was transferred to Moss Landing by my employer,

the pass gave me a reason to call John and arrange a visit. That led to my becoming a regular operator during my tenure in the area. I also saw the pass I had sent John displayed on his bulletin board. It was still there on my last visit three weeks before his death.



DG&H Pass, Rod Smith collection.
[DGH_Pass]

Games Guys Play – 1

#4740, 10/31/2006
Branch Line, Volume 70-4, Oct-Dec 2013

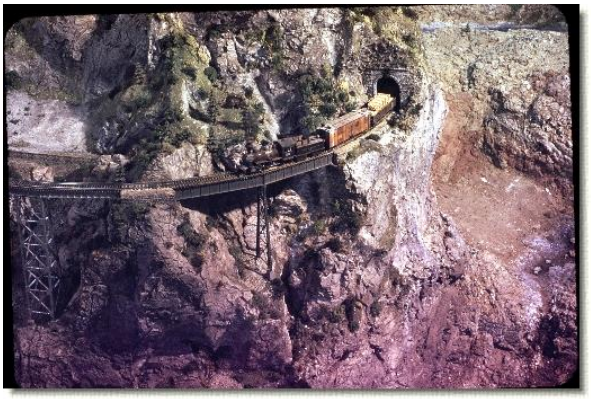
Once in a while during my tenure on the Gorre & Daphetid, there weren't enough operators to run a full schedule. It required a yardmaster/engine foreman, a mainline engineer, a local engineer, and a Port engineer at a minimum. That's only four, but, believe it or not, there were nights only three of us showed up. Of course, I wasn't always one of the three, either. With four, we could neglect the branch to Daphetid, but none of the other positions could be dispensed with. If there were three, we didn't just go home. Instead John had a couple of games we would play. The usual one was to see who could run a heavy train over the line using the least amount of "water".

Cab #2 was a special throttle known as the motor-generator cab. Linn Westcott calls it cab #3 in his book *Model Railroading with John Allen*, but 3 was the pushbutton cab. I've never really understood how Cab 2 worked – and I've seen it with the cover off! The cab is pictured on page 108 of Linn's book (which was recently reprinted by *Benchmark Publications*, a PCR firm) and the motor generator on page 110. Basically, it was a controllable motor (from the cab) which rotated a generator that powered the rails. There was a pretty hefty flywheel which provided inertia to the whole shebang. On the face of the panel we had a lever throttle (Marn-O-Stat) to control the motor. It was very similar to a real locomotive throttle. Pull it out and the motor revved up the generator. Push it back in and the momentum in the flywheel just kept the generator humming along, though it did slow down gradually. We also had a position switch which acted as a brake stand. It was similar to the later ones on transistor throttles. My recall is it had positions for "release", "lap", "service", and "emergency". There may have been others too. I think the brake worked on the generator side of the affair.

Now, to measure the "water usage", John had rigged up a defective watt hour house meter to the generator output. PG&E is probably still looking for it. It in turn was connected to a counter on the panel. With each revolution of the meter, a cam hit a contact and the counter and added one to the count. By calculating the tender capacity in terms of the counter, John had a measure of water usage across the line. Since it was measuring watts, it was measuring power used. It was a simple matter to add the tender capacity of any engine to the reading on the counter to know at what point we had to be at a waterspout to refill the tender. Not there? The boiler would explode! In theory anyway – we didn't destroy any engines.

John would make a train up in Great Divide and each of us would make a run to Port and back, stopping as necessary for water. This cab let us know how much power we used, and it was amazing to see the difference running downgrade and upgrade. That counter

could be almost silent or clicking like a castanet. Sometimes we had to leave the train and run to the next water plug, fill the tender, and return to get the train. A deft hand was required to get the most work out of those watts. We really got the benefit of making a run for the hill and using the momentum as we entered the grade. Sometimes it was hard to get a train moving from a standing stop as the wattage could be used up in the stalled motor. Then the counter really went mad.



Sim's Loop tunnel and the small bridge. 4-58. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_018_25_April58]

As you may have guessed, John usually won these contests. He had a secret, but we all knew about it. There was a point at which the watt hour meter, running very slowly, would catch on the counter detent and actually stick until the wattage got high enough to overcome the glitch. John knew just where he could use this to his advantage running downgrade, and he rarely used any water on descending slopes. Most of us couldn't get it stuck, so we used a bit of water downgrade. John also knew which brake position to use all the time while we others kind of guessed where we should brake, often needing to use the emergency position because we hadn't begun braking in time to stop at the station. It was, after all, a momentum throttle. Yes, we had to make all station stops, as well as at the waterspouts as needed.

I've never seen another throttle like it and no transistor throttle I know of counts watts to simulate water use. It's too bad John never wrote a how to build it article, though I doubt many would want to go to embarrass their operators with one!

Games Guys Play – 2

#5195, 12/15/2006

There was another game John sometimes had us play when we didn't have a full crew. He had drawn up some timetables for the G&D as though it was a portion of a larger railroad with scheduled trains running through the district in his basement. I think, years ago, there was an article in one of the magazines about these schedules. Since most of us don't have all those back issues, I'll describe my experience with the timetables.

These timetables were very similar to actual railroad ones with first, second, and third-class trains across the railroad. They were on 3X5 file cards. First, of course, were the express passenger runs. Second were the local passengers (mail train or gas electric) and third were the freights. John had made sure all trains passed or met each other at places such passing was possible, i.e. at passing sidings. The timetables depended on the clock in the building at Great Divide, which was visible from all operating positions. To run these timetables, we used the main panel which had three throttles. We also needed to use the Great Divide panel, since we had to turn locomotives and rearrange cabeese there, but the panel at Port wasn't used. Usually we ran these when there were only three of us. With four, we could do a regular operating session.

John's timetables required us to stage trains along the line, such as at Gorre or Squawbottom. John's unique wiring system had each passing track powered from the adjacent main line through the switch machine contacts at either end. Thus, if the turnout

wasn't aligned for a track, that track was dead, since it got no power. A train couldn't move accidentally. A wonderful feature then, but today it would silence any sound equipped engines. Once the staging was done, the clock would be started. John was usually the dispatcher as well as one of the engineers. It was a no-no to stop the clock when things got behind.

Squawbottom Station as it looked in May-63. High above to the right is the town of Akin. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_036_b4squaw_may63]

Each engineer was assigned a set of trains to run. We didn't run them across the entire railroad at one time though. For instance, I might have run a freight east from Great Divide to Gorre. I would park it on the passing siding at Gorre and I would pick up a westbound train at Port and run it to Squawbottom. When we left a train on a siding we had to "protect" it. That meant we would throw the turnouts to the other track, thus killing any power to the track our train was on. We also had to put out a "flagman" so following engineers would know the siding was blocked by a train. These flagmen were small washers which hung on a small brad in the control panel at the appropriate siding. I haven't found any pictures showing these washers or brads. They were pretty small. Woe to anyone who failed to throw those turnouts though. If another train approached running the opposite direction, as soon as that engineer energized the block in front of your train, it would suddenly become operational and back its cars over the switch at the other end of the siding, derailing every car in the process. (Don't ask how I know this!). If that block wasn't energized, there wasn't even a short circuit to indicate what was happening. The locomotive, fortunately, would stop just before the turnout due to the dead section behind every turnout. I didn't roll any cars down the mountain, but I sure made a mess behind the harbor at Port! John was NOT thrilled.

Meanwhile, another engineer would take a passenger train from Great Divide, pass that train at Gorre, meet me at Squawbottom, and proceed to Port. I would go back to the Gorre train and run it to Squawbottom, where I would change to the other train there and take it to Gorre, or maybe into Great Divide. Another engineer might pick up the train I left at Squawbottom and take it to Port. And so on.

4-6-2 #50 with a local passenger train in tow crossing the concrete viaduct over Squawbottom Creek. The middle track is a stiff 3 1/2% grade while the top track leads to the town of Akin. Sep-64. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_036_sqwbtmcrk_sep64]

These timetables became a challenge when something didn't go quite as planned. Perhaps a train wasn't turned and ready to go on time at Great Divide. Or, a mistake might happen on the line where a train was supposed to take the siding but actually ran into the main

and had to be moved. We respected the superiority of trains by class and direction, and the passenger runs had to have access to the station platforms. When we made a mistake, John, as dispatcher, would issue orders to facilitate runs and attempt to regain the schedule. Sometimes we would get hours behind (scale time) and he had to keep in mind where everyone was. The passenger runs were topmost in priority, unlike the Amtrak situation today.

2-6-0 #25 waits for a passenger train to pass Squawbottom so it may enter the main line. Jun-70.
Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_008_squaw27_jun70]

After a session of this fun, we would go upstairs to the kitchen, have a cup of coffee, and review our performance. Maybe play a few turns of his game with the top and hope next week we had a bigger crew so we could run an operating session with the car cards, or later the tabs on cars. Both systems were fun, but switching was more fun for me.

Tender Connections

#5238, 12/22/2006

John liked to switch tenders around on his locomotives from those the manufacturers chose to include in a kit. John normally didn't put a number on any tenders, just the road name. Numbers were located on the sides of the cabs, domes, and/or number boards. That way, there were no conflicts if he changed tenders.

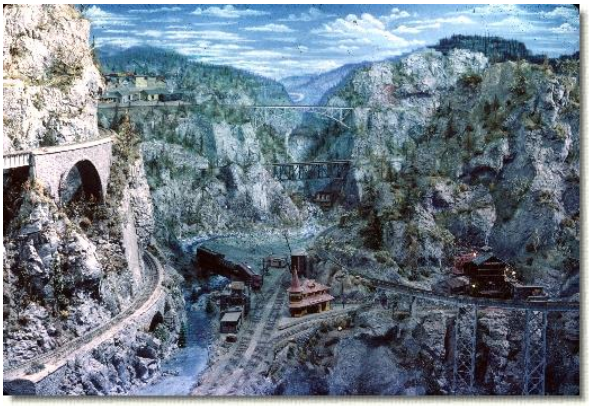
Coming up the 4 percent from Sims Loop and about to cross Rjeldgaard Falls bridge en route to Gorre. Jun-65.
Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_046_atengine_jun65]

As you probably know, John had low voltage lighting in his locomotives and some tenders. As I recall, the backup light was out when the locomotive ran forward, but the headlight went to dim when in reverse. He used a fairly unique triangular diode system to control these lights and the motors which required only the drawbar connection between the loco and the tender. The system was described by Kermit Paul in an article titled "John Allen's Diode Triangles" published in the October 1997 issue of *Model Railroader*. I found it through the magazine index on the *Model Railroader* web site. Since John threatened us with bodily injury if we touched a locomotive, I don't know if he ran any wire between the tender and locomotive. Kermit's article implies the drawbar connection was sufficient. Ah, those days before DCC! But, on the other hand, I don't want to go back.

Animation at the Squawbottom Mine

#5300, 01/12/2007

This mine, which was frequently photographed and published, sat within the Sim's Loop and was served by a spur off the main at Squawbottom. As most of John's buildings were, it had fine detailing and was illuminated with interior lighting. One special feature was the ore car. This car ran on tracks which disappeared down into the shaft. You could look down the shaft and see the tracks disappearing into the depths of the mine. John used some mirror trickery in that the shaft curved just inside the portal and mirrors gave the impression it extended far down into the bowels of Scalp Mountain. The ore car was pulled by a cable up into the head house where the ore was unloaded. It then returned into the mine for another load.



Squawbottom after the new station was built with the Cinnabar Mine inside Sims Loop. Dual gauge track ends at lower left. Jul-68. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_071_squaw_jul68]

This car was unique in that it would come up out of the shaft piled high with ore, but after running through the head house, it was lowered empty! I can't remember whether John had sound effects of the ore being dumped into the bunker inside, but it wouldn't surprise me to learn he did. The effect was accomplished quite easily by having the body of the ore car rotate inside the frame. The bottom of the body was modeled as the pile of ore, while the other side was the empty car. Sort of like an empty box. John used a magnet inside the head house and one down in the shaft to rotate the car body and expose the correct side as the car depending whether it was ascending or descending. Simple, yet an interesting effect to watch. Many wondered how the ore was loaded down in the mine!

Another feature was; the empty car lowered into the shaft moving visibly faster than the heavy, loaded car emerged uphill. John reasoned a car loaded with heavy ore coming uphill would move slower than an empty car moving downhill. He showed me the mechanism to do this. The cable from the car into the head house ran over some pulleys and emerged behind Scalp Mountain (which had no back side), where it was attached to one end of a simple stick. This stick, about 18 inches long, was pivoted at the far end on either a nail or a screw. Between the pivot and the cable, John mounted a rotating motor with a cam containing another nail. The stick had a light spring pulling it toward Scalp Mt. and keeping it tight against the nail. As the motor turned, the nail pushed the stick away from the mine, which raised the ore car. At the furthest distance, the car was inside the head house. Further rotation allowed the stick to retract toward the mine, and the car returned into the shaft. Because the nail was closer to the pivot on the returning trip, the motion was faster in lowering the car. Ingenious, no?

That little ore car ran up and down for years and I don't recall it ever failing to show the proper side of the body going up or down.

Coal vs. Oil-fired Locomotives

#5347, 01/31/2007

Let's not forget, Great Divide was a division point. One direction or the other must have been a coal burning division while the other was an oil fired one. Facilities for both fuels were available at the engine terminal. And, you know, I think I may have stopped oil

fired locomotives over the ash pit! My bad!! Come to think of it, I do believe it was an oil burner when John scared me half to death with his smoke unit. See message #2936. But then, that's where we handed the locos over to the roundhouse hostler. Maybe not my bad after all?

An Amazing Find (Perhaps)

#5486, 02/28/2007

I was visiting a modeling friend several days ago. We were discussing the recent subject of portions of the Gorre & Daphetid which might have been salvaged. He was an officer of the NMRA at the time and told me he and Linn Westcott were asked by Andrew Allen to check and see if any of the fire damaged layout could be salvaged. They went to Monterey and struggled through the debris. He doesn't recall any portions saved, but I still think I saw two pieces on display in a hobby shop.

But then, he hit me with a surprise. He said he and Linn saved as many of John's locomotives as they were able to identify. The locos were placed carefully in a satchel for transport. Apparently, Linn asked him to keep this satchel, which he did. Linn never asked about the satchel before he passed away and it was apparently forgotten. Now, he did say most of the locomotives are severely damaged and some unrecognizable as engines. Most of the plastic was melted and solder flowed. After all, the floor above fell onto the area of the engine terminal and Port. He has occasionally tripped over the satchel and thought several times over the intervening years of disposing of it, but could not bring himself to throw them out since they were John Allen's engines. So, the satchel has resided all these years in his storage area. Probably good he hasn't had to move!

We have a mutual friend who is involved with the Howell Day Model Railroad Museum and I think I talked him into making the contact and donating the satchel to that museum. Even with the damage he describes I thought it would be nice to get those remains into a museum environment where we could someday see what still exists. Some on this list would be able to visualize the engine in its' pristine condition, even if heavily damaged. So, keep your fingers crossed that one day we can "give it a go". I'm looking forward to it.

Bridge over Port

#5538, 03/12/2007

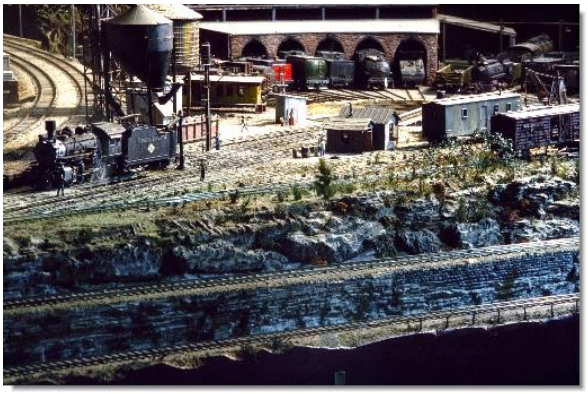
While I was the Great Divide yardmaster, we never serviced the Transfer Building and only ran across the big truss bridge above Port to use the run-around and for a yard lead switching the Great Divide yard. We did simulate through trains by shoving a string of cars, perhaps 10 or 12, up the line for a cycle, but retrieved them to turn the black tabs and send them to another destination. I don't know how far this track was operable at the time. I'm sure it was wired but I doubt John cleaned this track (It was pretty inaccessible) and a locomotive never ventured onto it, only cars. Come to think of it, I never suffered a Hot Box up there! A stalled loco would have been difficult to retrieve without lifting the hatch at Port, or some skinny fellow popping up behind Great Divide in the minimal opening there. I never took the chance.

The Truss Bridge over Port harbor west of Great Divide. May-61. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection. [s0_028_silverbrigde_may61]

Yard Switchers

#6212, 09/26/2007

As the yardmaster at Great Divide I can assure you we all liked those consolidations as switchers. They had enough power and traction to pull, or push, a long string of cars. While Port may have been pretty level, the lead was an uphill grade heading for Cross Junction. Strings of cars had to be pulled up it to start classifying them. Likewise, the yard at Great Divide's lead was an uphill pull over the truss bridge, and the yard itself tilted uphill the other way to clear the "cut-off" in the tunnel. I had to push entire strings of cars from the main into the yard and pull strings out to send on their way. That little 0-6-0 that John wanted me to use just didn't cut it. Of course, now I look at it as part of the game to be worked around, but then I was concerned with getting the trains broken down and made up so they could depart on time. As soon as John wasn't looking, I would park the 0-6-0 and bring the 2-8-0 out to use. John never made me change back but I'll bet he was disappointed I deviated from his plans. He usually ran the Daphetid branch and used the Little Joe 0-4-0. But, he didn't have trains of up to 15 cars to worry about either.



At the Great Divide engine terminal, all five stalls of the roundhouse are filled as 2-8-0 #27 steams out of the yard. Jul-65. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_023_27engine_jul65]

John was sort of famous for changing tenders around on his locos. He even had a circuit for headlights and backup lights which only used a single connection (the drawbar) between the loco and tender and gave directional lighting. The circuit was described by Kermit Paul in *Model Railroader*, October 1997 page 93. That allowed him to exchange tenders at any time and still have the lights work.

Where was the ALLIGATOR??

#6230, 10/02/2007

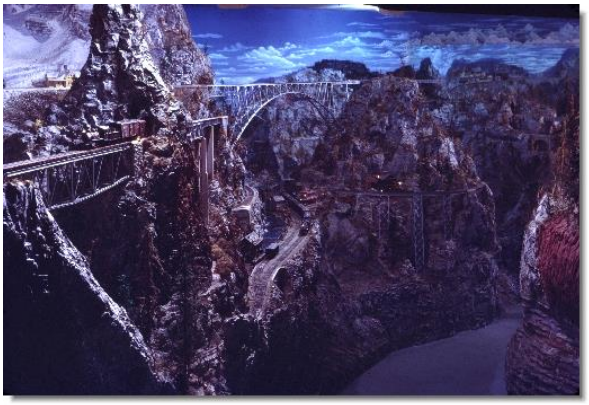
During the 18 months I was an operator, that alligator migrated several times. It could be found in Port harbor, under the bridge near Cross Junction, in the lake at Gorre, and even down at Squawbottom Creek. I think John helped it migrate just to flummox us each week. Now, Emma seemed to stay close to Gorre all the time. Funny, they're both cold blooded critters...

Long days, bright nights

#6306, 10/29/2007

When I was there in 1963-64, we never operated with the Sun down. Dang thing stayed up for the entire three hours or so, through 24 hours of scale time. John did have the blue night lights working, but sunset and sunrise were instantaneous with a throw of the toggle switch! Perhaps Glenn, who was there later can weigh in? And even then, operators didn't need to see which way the turnouts were thrown because all John's turnouts were powered and the handle of the toggle switch told us the alignment. The Great Divide yard had some pushbuttons as well. The button for the selected track stayed depressed, all others were up. The Anabel car ferry lead had the only hand operated turnout on the G&D as I recall. It was what we now call a "finger flicker"; simply push the points over with your finger. Same as on the Timesaver.

Perhaps the light was handy for uncoupling at points without electromagnetic ramps, such as at Sowbelly or Port. Come to think of it, I sometimes used an uncoupling "spoon" at Great Divide for run-arounds of several cars when I didn't want to run all the way over the bridge to get on the other side of two or three cars. More than that, I had to go the long way and used the ramps. Four cars didn't fit on the run-around. There was no Andrews when I was there. Perhaps it had hand throws?



Dusk looking up Giant Canyon. Large arch bridge is between Cold Shoulder and Scalp Mt. Bridges at left lead to Andrews, behind the camera. Feb-72. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection. [s0_101_scalpnight_feb72]

Sound

#6757, 01/19/2008

While I was an operator, John did have at least one locomotive with a rudimentary sound system in it. It "chuffed" as it ran along the track. Wasn't very loud, so it was only heard when it was near you. As I remember, it was one of the road engines, but I cannot recall which one. Not an articulated though. And, there was no whistle.

How was it done you ask? Well, John had fabricated a small plastic box, put some really tiny metal shot in the box, mounted the box atop the frame, and a cam on an axle caused the box to lift and drop as the cam bumped it. Probably had four bumps per revolution, though I cannot state that as a fact. It was surprisingly effective, though archaic by today's standards. I wonder if there were ever more than one engine so equipped?

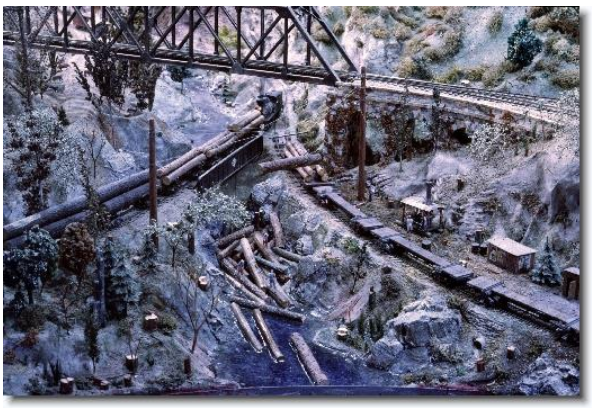
Squawbottom Siding

#6953, 03/04/2008

This siding was not on the route of the Andrews peddler, but the Gorre peddler, as properly noted in the caption under the drawing. In my era, there was no Andrews, only some roadbed for future use, but the siding in question existed. I would guess the cartographer just missed highlighting the Cinnabar spur as it surely was a major spot on the Gorre peddler's run. I never ran the peddler - that was the domain of Bill Corsa - but did note him using this spur to sort his train when he needed to without blocking the main. In 1963-64, we didn't run the passenger train at the same time as the freight (the same engineer ran both) so there wasn't a conflict of two trains plus the peddler having to meet anywhere. I don't recall the peddler ever being a very long train. As you will note from the track plan, the sidings at Sowbelly and the logging area near Cross Jct. (picture on page 25 in "The Book") had no runaround track. Bill had to get his cars on the correct end of the locomotive before heading up the grade. He used the spur to help with this. He had a little local panel for train control at Sowbelly. I don't know how far this panel controlled the railroad. Bill normally used Cab 1 on the main panel for the peddler.

The picture on page 140 would lead one to believe this spur was a logging operation since it is filled with loaded log cars. I cannot explain that picture, unless in later years a new logging camp has been opened. perhaps the cars are just there being switched to ahead of the locomotive for the push up to Cross Jct. as there is also a reefer on the Cinnabar mine track. The peddler was probably clearing the passenger train at the station. Oh, and John had

very nimble cattle which had no problems negotiating the steep hillside to the cattle pen! I never saw one fall into the creek.



Logs that were floated downstream and formed a jam are being unloaded by steam donkey out of Sowbelly Creek. Oct-67. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection. [s1_029_logs_oct67]

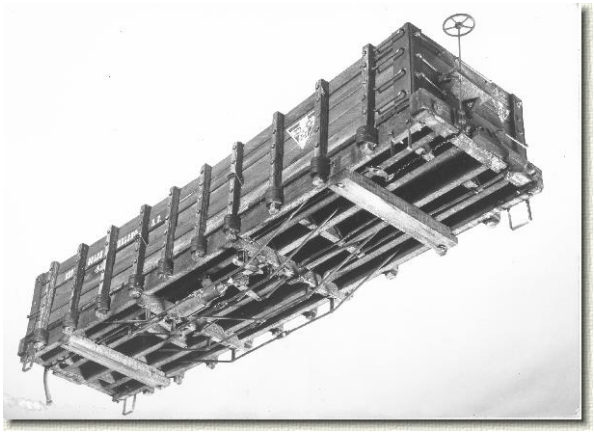
Locomotive Performance

#6958, 03/06/2008

"John's locos ran so smoothly because he had slider shoes on all of them for better pickup. Because of these, we were to have John handle any re-railing needed. - Glenn Joesten"

Glenn has noted the wipers John installed on his locos. And he is absolutely right about NEVER trying to rerail one of them yourself. John really jumped on anyone he caught doing it. And, you only tried it once after that tongue lashing. The sliders were very sensitive and easily bent if they caught on the rail during handling. John was always available to rerail the locos. We were allowed to rerail cars if necessary, but it was hardly ever necessary. John's railroad ran almost flawlessly, and his turnout wiring prohibited running through a misaligned turnout, at least with the locomotive leading. There was a short dead block behind each turnout to prevent shorting. It was possible to back a train through a closed turnout, but I don't recall seeing this happen very often. We all wanted to be good engineers! Derailments were rare and usually caused by "operator error". Don't ask me about the train I failed to protect on the Port loop and it somehow got power and backed all the way around the loop until the engine reached the turnout set against it! Thanks heaven it was only a rerailing job, not a floor sweeping one!

His locomotives also ran exceptionally well. I remember once he asked me to tell him whether a particular locomotive (I don't remember which one) was moving or not. I watched it for a few seconds and determined it was not. John then gleefully directed my nose down close to the track. His locos had open frame motors - the standard in those days - and by looking at the armature I could see it was actually turning, though extremely slowly. As I recall, we timed the engine at 1/2 scale mph. I have never seen such performance since, even with can motors and DCC pulses.



On3 Gondola built by John for Cliff Grandt. Photo John Allen, GDRP. [42dgh]

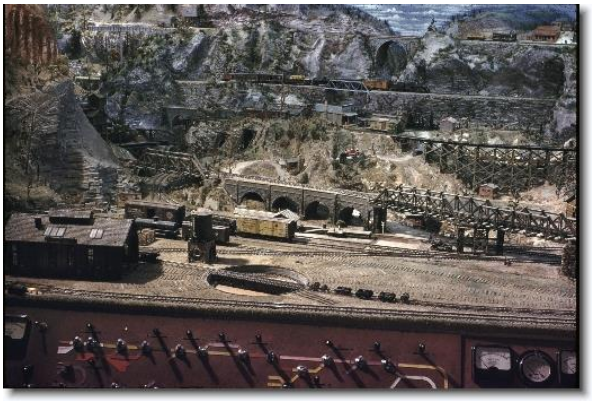
John was a real craftsman and may have worked on his mechanisms to get such performance. He also had a friend, Cliff Grandt, who was an excellent machinist and may have had Cliff work on some of them. I remember Cliff built an O scale two-man handcar with a homebuilt motor which was under the deck. And the men on the car bent at

the waist as they pumped that car along the track. He too was a wizard.

Turning the Gorre Peddler

#7238, 04/02/2008

There was no way to turn the engine at Gorre. It did turn around at Port as I recall, in that it would pull into town, drop its cars and run around the loop so as to back down on the cars awaiting its' departure. It would also pick up the caboose, which, of course, was immediately available being on the rear of the train it has just dropped. It left Port and proceeded to Gorre regardless if the tender was leading or the pilot. Spent half its life running tender first! In my era, this was a Bill Corsa run and I can't recall if he ran slower with the tender leading or not. Nothing ran very fast, not even the passenger runs.



The yard and control panel at Gorre. Apr-57. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_003_const_april57]

The Gorre peddler did get some use out of the turntable at Gorre. John had several box cars which had a yellow painted door on one side only. This yellow door signified the car was to be loaded, or unloaded, from the yellow door only. The through freight from Great Divide to Port would drop cars for the peddler in Gorre, and one of those box cars might be in the consist. If the yellow door was on the wrong side, the peddler engineer would turn the car around on the turntable. It was dangerous to set the car out with the yellow door away from the loading platform, as John would invariably point it out, and the transgressor was subjected to John's caustic wit for the rest of the evening. I know, he got me on a set out for Purina Mills in Great Divide one time. And I had a turntable available! You bet I learned my lesson!

TimeSaver – Uncoupling

#7333, 04/11/2008

The Timesaver had manual uncouplers built in. I don't think John permitted the use of the spoons, as it would permit a slight "push" by the operator to clear a car on the adjacent track. Plus, you would be able to uncouple in locations where John did not intend you to do so. All operations were "hands free" as I remember. The uncouplers were not electric, but a small piece of brass, mounted between the rails and soldered to a wire shaft which was in turn mounted to extend beyond the rail and terminated in a bent lever parallel to the rail. The brass was heavy enough to keep itself down on the ties. The lever was slightly elevated then. When we wanted to uncouple, we had only to place a finger on the end of the lever, depress it downward, and it would cause the brass piece to raise and activate the Baker couplers. These ramps worked only in one direction as a trailing move, but then, that's the only movement you would want to uncouple anyway. When your finger was removed, the brass piece sank back onto the ties and the lever was elevated, ready for the next time you wanted to use it. You could couple to the car in exactly the same location you dropped it, should you want or need to do so.

One really nice thing about the Baker couplers, when you wanted to drop a car, you had only to wait until the couplers ahead of your car passed and you could raise the ramp and hold it until the couplers met it and uncoupled. Spotting was automatic! Had to be a bit careful uncoupling the track cleaning cars though, as well as the car next to a locomotive.

The electric ramps could lift the Masonite sliders and even some footboards or gear boxes and cause derailments. John did not approve of derailing equipment and would admonish us if we did so. "No need to raise the uncoupler until the couplers arrive there" he would say.

John's 110V Electric Switches

#7675, 10/01/2008

The "master power" switch on the control panel in the center of the layout killed all the power to the layout. At the end of an operating session, John would turn it off, and woe unto the guilty party if there was the "click" of a turnout relay going to the off position. John's turnouts were controlled by surplus aircraft relays which had an on and an off position. I think they were 28-volt relays. Off was the "normal" route, and on was for the "reverse" position.

The toggle handles on the control panels were marked with red paint which showed the reverse position of the switch. In order to reduce the power demand upon starting on the 28-volt transformer, John required us to set all turnouts to the "normal" position when not in actual use, and especially when leaving the railroad. Those relays drew several amps to throw but held with very little current draw. He often asked us to check our toggles, but sometimes one, or more, would be overlooked, the relay would still be on, and when he cut the power the relay would go off, creating that click as the spring pulled the relay off. Since the lights were still on, it was pretty easy for him to find the panel with the offending toggle and thus the last operator there.

I have to admit, as yardmaster, with one of the largest selections of toggles on my panel, I was the offender on more than one occasion. But, in truth, we did pretty well, especially the weeks after causing the "click".

My Treasure Hunt on Jan. 31

#8196, 02/03/2009

It dawned a bright sunny Saturday here in the San Francisco Bay Area. We need some rain, but it won't fall this day. There was a model train meet in Santa Clara, so I decided to attend. I'd heard rumors for years about a cache of treasure somewhere on the San Francisco Peninsula, and I planned to try locating it today after the meet. Putting my best Indiana Jones fedora upon my head, I jumped into my trusty Buick and headed out.

The Santa Clara meet was interesting, with layouts, vendors and clinics available. A map to the treasure was available, though it was labeled as a layout tour map for those not in the know. I was unsure if others might have the special knowledge I had, so I studied the other folks attending for signs of competitors hoping to find the treasure. I saw no one who looked suspicious or a likely competitor in my quest.

After enjoying the meet for a while, I fired up the Buick and started out on the Highway 101 freeway. There were no huge rolling boulders to dodge, just errant motorists weaving in and out of traffic. Heading north along this route, I kept an eye pealed for caravans of Nazis or Russian agents who might want to interrupt my endeavor. Either there were none, or they were well disguised. Just to throw them off, I exited early, into Redwood City, as a diversion. Also a chance to find a place to satisfy my need for nourishment before tracking the treasure, which I felt was nearby.

I then drove up the El Camino Real (The King's Highway) into the burg of San Mateo. The sun was bright in the western sky, making it hard to read the street signs as I followed the map. No one was following. I approached the location indicated on the map. The garage door was open, and I could see a layout there. I parked the Buick and

walked up to the open door. It was dark inside and the sun was in my eyes. No one else appeared to be there. But, when I arrived I heard a voice from behind the layout greeting me and telling me to advance into the inner sanctum, near the washer/dryer. I went through the side gate and found a large German shepherd dog guarding the entrance to the treasure cave. Uh-oh, I thought, but he looked old and pretty friendly, so I continued my quest. Once past the dog I entered the cave. An older man in an overstuffed chair sat inside, running the trains. He offered me a cookie, which I gratefully accepted. We chatted. I admired his trains and we discussed some history and mutual friends from the past. Finally, I told him I had come seeking the treasure I had been told he possessed. Ah, he said, you want the locomotives!

He asked a blond woman standing nearby to "fetch the valise". She brought it out and set it on the floor. "Here", he said, "take it with my blessing. I've been tripping over it in the attic for years".

I hefted the valise. It was heavy, weighing 19 lbs. or so. Taking a quick look around and seeing no challengers, I picked it up, said my goodbye, carefully went past the dog and carried the valise to the trusty Buick. No one interfered. I drove back to the freeway and headed for home, not knowing what was contained in the valise, except that it was something long sought.

Upon arriving at my home, I dusted off the accumulation of dust and spider webs. The blonde had gotten some of it off, but I needed to ensure no contaminants fell upon the contents of that valise. Once clean, I opened the zipper on the top and pulled the sides apart to view the contents. They appeared to be some form of plastic bags with contents obscured by the plastic. The smell of smoke drifted into my nostrils. I gently lifted the top bag out of the valise and set it on a table. By the weight, I thought it to be a HO locomotive. I carefully removed the contents to discover it indeed was a fire scorched engine and tender. The fire damage is extensive, and most of the lettering is gone, but the front number boards are still readable. IT IS JOHN ALLEN'S ORIGINAL G&D #27!! And there are many more locomotives inside that valise! 19 lbs. worth to be exact.

G&D 2-8-0 #27 Fireman's Side.
Photo Rod Smith, GDRP.
[No. 27 001 Fireman's side]

Watch for another post on how this valise happens to exist to this day and is now in the hands of the G&D Reminiscence Project team http://gdlines.org/GDLines/The_Satchel.html

Control of Turnouts and Uncoupling

#8895, 12/08/2009

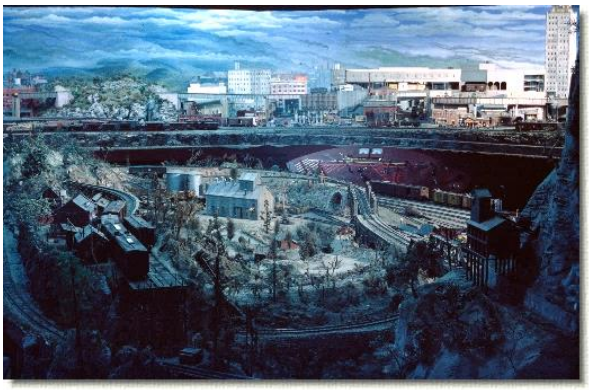
"Someone correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe John ran two-man crews. The engineer stayed at the control panel and threw the turnouts and the brakeman/conductor uncoupled the cars. - Bill DeFoe"

Not during the time I was an operator. We had maybe 7 operators at the maximum, often less. Train engineers did their own running, throwing of turnouts and uncoupling (or coupling) as needed. I cannot recall ever having a two-man crew, except when a new operator was being trained and might work along with another experienced operator. The new person usually acted as engineer and ran the train as directed by the conductor/brakeman.

Turnouts were thrown by old aircraft relays which were either "on" or "off". Off was the normal route through the turnout, usually the mainline, while on was the diverging route, usually the passing track or a spur. The relays were controlled by a toggle switch on one of the panels. In the yard I had two 5 button bank assemblies which could activate one relay at a time and clear the last button. As I recall, the main panel in front of Gorre (see page 108 of "The Book") could control the main route through Great Divide yard and also Port. It couldn't control spurs or yard tracks. It also had toggle switches which controlled most of the online turnouts. There was an auxiliary panel at Sowbelly since that location wasn't visible from the main panel. Squawbottom had no panel of its own. Both Great Divide yard and Port had their own panels and controlled the spurs as well as the main turnouts. The peddler engineer was almost always within reach of this panel to throw needed turnouts. I was there before Andrews, but suspect a separate panel was provided there.

Gorre and main panel.
Devil's Post Pile hides a support post.
Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_005_const_unkdate]

At Great Divide yard, I had a lever switch which when thrown allowed the main panel to throw those main switches. It was rarely used and I as Yardmaster directed the mainline engineer to enter and depart over the route I set up. I think Port did the same. (Check message #2936 for a perspective)



Seldom seen back side of Gorre from behind Daphetid. Butler Mine at the right foreground. John left tabs on cars for this picture and a tool on the track. Great Divide and Austin St. are in the background. Jul-68. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_070_westdividepanel_jul68]

Now, those uncouplers. Many sites were within reach and John provided a piece of brass stock, we called it a "Spoon", with which we could lift the "hoses" on the Baker couplers. At more remote sites, there were solenoids which lifted a strip of clear plastic in a sort of hump. When down, the coupler hoses rode right over them. When energized with a pushbutton on the panel (you can see the tiny buttons in the picture of Great Divide panel in "The Book" on page 16, one button raised multiple ramps) lifted the plastic strip and the hoses were thus also lifted and the couplers parted. One great feature of the Baker coupler was you didn't have to spot the couplers right over the ramp. I could push a string of cars past the lowered ramp, energize the ramp, and just pull forward until the couplers parted. On some spurs, John had multiple ramps in front of different industries, so cars could be spotted properly. A caution though, the ramps could derail locomotives by lifting the gearbox or step, so care was required when to actuate the solenoid - after the loco passed, but before the car did. They were safe under tenders. Hardest was uncoupling from a geared loco,

such as a Shay or Heisler where the gearbox, step and coupler hose were in close proximity.

Turnouts

Branch Line, Volume 71-3, Jul-Sep 2014

This time let's take a look at some of John's wiring innovations. In particular, his turnouts, which almost never caused a short.

Most of the turnouts were controlled with toggle switches mounted on the control panels, some of which controlled more than one turnout. For instance, the toggle controlling entrance to Gorre from Great Divide would direct a train onto the passing siding in one position, the mainline in another position, and onto the interchange track in a third position. One toggle, three possible routes. It was pretty simple to keep track of where your train was headed. The toggle switch handle pointed toward the proper track line on the diagram.

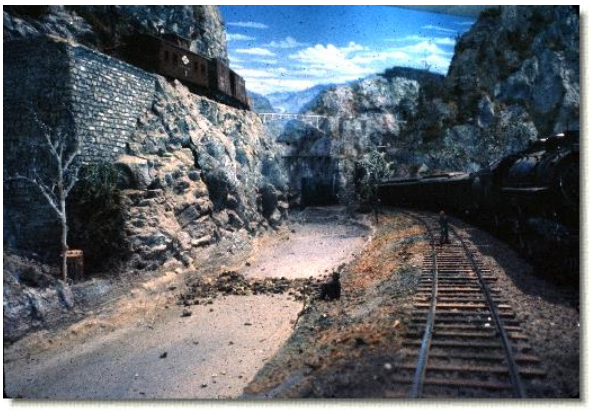
Freight train entering Gorre, eastbound around Devils Post Pile. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_009_enginehouse_unkdate]

For switch machines, John used surplus single coil rotary relays from WWII, which were widely available in the period he was building. Very powerful, almost foolproof, quite noisy, and had a lot of contacts for power routing. When you threw a toggle, you knew if the machine had thrown by the thunk! These babies were either on or off, and power was in the coil whenever they were thrown on, sort of like today's Tortoise. So, with a multiple throw switch, say a single pole double throw center off, you could operate two relays separately, but not together. If the main is the center track, off means the turnout is lined for the main. Throw the toggle up and you get the passing siding, down and you get the interchange track. We always had to clear the turnouts after we used them so the machines would be off. Not because they might burn up, they wouldn't, but to relieve the system of any unnecessary power drain and allow full wattage for the other fellow to throw turnouts. There were a lot of them on the G&D.

John's turnouts had live frogs, and the closure rails were electrically connected to their adjacent stock rail. He went one step further though; he provided a short section on each track behind the frog which was dead unless the turnout was aligned for that route. An engine approaching a turnout from the frog side where the turnout was not aligned for it to proceed would encounter this dead section and simply stop. And, this point was before the fouling point, so we didn't have sideswipe problems either. Since John ran steam, and in that era engines picked up power from one rail and tenders from the other, the sections had to be of different lengths on each route to stop engines at the fouling point. The relays had plenty of contacts to provide for this, but then so does a Tortoise. Meets were easy; you would run into the passing track until you were clear or the engine stalled and wait for the opposing train to arrive. When it had passed, you could align the turnout for your train, the engine had power again, and proceed on your way. Almost foolproof.

The yard at Great Divide used two pushbutton banks for turnouts in the freight and passenger sections. These had simple ladders, and when all the relays were de-energized the turnouts were aligned for the back track. Therefore, only one turnout had to be thrown to access any track in that portion

of the yard. The pushbutton banks had 5 buttons interconnected so when one button was pushed it would clear whichever button had last been activated. As I recall, the entire yard track would be de-energized if its turnout was not aligned, so it was possible to store the switcher, or any other locomotive, anywhere in the yard if another engine had to use the ladder to move in or out of the terminal.



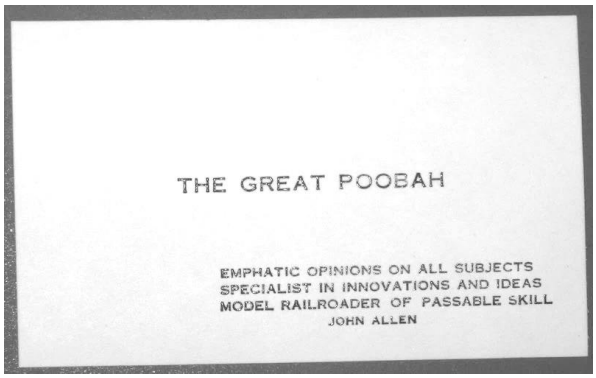
Passenger train at Squawbottom. Creek is dry but the small rockslide was to retain water when flowing. DG&H abutment (never used) at top left. Jun-65.
Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_039_ontrack_jun65]

Many of the layouts I've seen since could benefit from John's wiring system, though I wonder how one could handle the dead sections with multiple diesel locos since power is picked up by each loco individually, and stopping the first one doesn't stop the others from pushing. We experienced a similar problem when running a train with a double header, but those were always being carefully watched, and I cannot recall any disasters happening while I operated there on the G&D.

John Allen Memorabilia

#8984, 01/18/2010

I have just tried my first effort of uploading a file to the files section of this site. It contains some memorabilia of John's which I have.



John Allen's business card.
Rod Smith collection.

These cards were used by John Allen and Jim Findley at gatherings of fellow modelers. I think they were printed in the far East by Jim on one of his sojourns in Korea. I remember seeing them, at least John's, while I was active with the G&D operators, but never had one until recently coming across them in an old valise.

Jim Findley's business card.
Rod Smith collection.

The Satchel Contents Revealed

#9138, 04/18/2010

A little over a year ago I announced I had discovered the remains of John Allen's locomotives which had been salvaged after the disastrous fire. See message #8196 for more information. Well, one thing led to another and I failed to follow through on providing photographs of them in a timely manner. Now, things have changed! The pictures have been taken (about 75) and placed on a CD. I even bought a new camera with more pixels

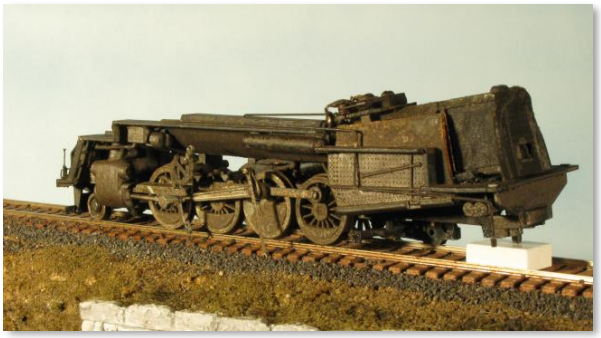
to get better pictures. A number of the pictures had to be redone due to my inexperience as a photographer and also after identifications were made so I could place the appropriate tender with its locomotive. We had some discussions about the appropriate place to open the satchel and it finally was done in South Lake Tahoe, Calif. After identification, I reshot some in my studio, aka the wife's garage.

The CD has been mailed to Peter Prunka for posting at http://www.gdlines.org. Peter assures me there is an album just waiting for them and they will appear shortly. Please don't grumble at him about any delay; it is entirely my fault (The Satchel Gallery: http://gdlines.org/GDLines/Satchel/album). I'll have another post about the history of how these engines happen to be in existence today.

Here is a bit about what I found in the satchel of locomotives: There were 12 engines plus a tender with no engine in the satchel. All had to be identified since only one had a number readable on it. That was #27 where the number board still showed its number. The list is:

# 8 4-4-0	the Sergeant Ennis with tender
# 9 0-4-0T	the Varney dockside
#10 0-4-0T	the Sakura dockside
#26 2-8-0	no tender
#27 2-8-0	no tender
#28 2-8-0	no tender
#35 0-6-6-0	with tender
#40 2-8-2	with tender
#42 2-8-2	with tender
#45 2-8-4	chassis only
#48 4-6-0	with tender
#49 4-6-0	with tender
#50 ------	tender only

The #45 was a plastic H0bbyline body on a Sim's metal drive. The entire superstructure is missing, and the chassis is pretty clean, but I can't tell if it burned, melted, or just wasn't salvaged. From the damage, I suspect no plastic survived the heat of the fire. #50 was the green Pacific and the tender is readily recognizable. In my experience, #50 was usually kept in the roundhouse when not in use. And, we rarely used her since #56 was so much prettier.



G&D 2-8-4 #45 Sim's Engineering Drive. Photo Rod Smith, GDRP.
[No. 45 001 Sims Drive on 2-8-4]

It is pretty obvious these locomotives are never to run again due to all the damage. While they are recognizable, the solder joints have come loose, the insulation in the drivers has burned away leaving some tires loose and held only by the valve gear, many wheels have melted or are missing, some parts have melted into just shapes, etc. Interestingly, on those which still have their Baker couplers attached I found the couplers still work as they did years ago.

I think I have the makings for a diorama of a roundhouse scene where the roundhouse burned a few days earlier!

The Story of the Satchel

#9164, 04/20/2010

Just how did all those locomotives happen to be in that satchel? Why were they lost for so long? How did they come to light after all these years? Inquiring minds want to know! Here's the story as best I can reconstruct it.

In 1974, John's brother Andrew contacted *Model Railroader* magazine (a Kalmbach publication) editor Linn Westcott and asked if he would come to Monterey and see if any of the Gorre & Daphetid, which had burned with

the house in January of the previous year, could be salvaged for use or display. Andrew was in the process of clearing John's estate and preparing the house for sale. Andrew knew Linn was an honest and trusted friend of John's as well as an authority on model railroads. Many of John's articles had appeared in the *Model Railroader* magazine and there was a lot of correspondence between John and Linn.

Linn agreed to come to California and assess the possibilities. By this time, the house had sat vacant and open in its damaged condition and had no doubt been visited by curious folk. Linn contacted my friend, let's call him Bob, who was a well-known modeler and active in the Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA. They, along with another fellow, went to Monterey and, as Linn relates in his epilogue printed in *Model Railroading with John Allen*, tried to salvage some of the remains, to no avail. Bob mentioned after the disastrous collapse of French Gulch, they noticed some of John's locomotives were still there, though badly damaged. Bob says Linn thought they could be salvaged so they carefully extracted them from the surrounding debris and placed them in "the Satchel".

The Satchel.
Photo Rod Smith, GDRP.
[satchel]

There was a prominent model photographer in the Bay Area, Paul Janssen. Paul was noted for his very realistic pictures of locomotives, especially Southern Pacific scenes. Linn asked Bob to take the satchel to Paul and have the remains photographed for posterity. Linn then flew back to Milwaukee and Bob took the satchel to Paul. As far as Bob knows, Paul did take the pictures and sent them to Linn at Kalmbach. The satchel was returned to Bob. Bob contacted Linn about sending the satchel, which weighed about 19 lbs. and Linn told him to hang onto it for the time being. Linn never asked him about the engines again.

It appears the importance of the satchel and its contents drifted away. Linn retired from Kalmbach and wrote "The Book". The pictures Paul took never were published, nor did the remains, or mention thereof, appear in Linn's book. Bob had nowhere to send the satchel but was disinclined to throw it out. So, he put it under his layout and after moving it many times finally relegated it to the attic. There he tripped over it a number of times and contemplated disposal several times but knowing they were John Allen's engines, he couldn't bring himself to do so.

I happened to be on a layout tour in 2007 and in conversation the subject of the G&D came up. He surprised me with the tale of this tripping hazard satchel in his attic. I encouraged him to contact a mutual friend who is involved with the NMRA's Howell Day Museum. I didn't hear anything further, so in 2009 I contacted Bob about it again and he floored me with the statement "if you want it, you can have it; it's just in my way". Did I want it? You bet I did. So, I visited as I described somewhat tongue in cheek in message #8196 on this list and was given the satchel. It has disgorged an amazing 13 locomotives, or parts thereof. I know one added locomotive, #34, exists and is on display in the lobby of Kalmbach Publishing Co. in Wisconsin. Perhaps others may be on

display in Salinas California. They have some cars and layout parts. Anyone know for sure?

Tracks at Port Station

#9333, 08/05/2010

"A few days ago I was looking through the photos on the second DVD G&D set and found a photo of Port in the "SWARNER" folder. I remember that we had this discussion awhile back but couldn't find the message threads. I had mentioned that I saw in photo what looked like a turnout sitting to the left of the mainline near the station that looked like it was going to be installed. Warner, when were your photos taken? – Tom Hokel"

It clearly shows double-tracks leading into the Port station with a curved cross-over through the double-tracked mainline!!! All of the later layout plans that I have ever seen just show a single spur on the left side off the mainline. Some earlier plans don't even show a spur. I am curious too, and I was one of the operators!

Port in 1971
Warner Swarner collection.
[DS060901161216.jpg]

It's interesting to me that, as noted, the spurs were not there in 1968. Not even any sign of their imminent construction. As John was hard at work completing the main line between Angel's Camp and Cold Shoulder, with those two big bridges in this same time frame he must really have wanted those spurs. Could they have been just scenery to make the Port station look like it served more than the loop tracks? Or, perhaps John was anticipating needing helpers on the main trains heading east toward Cold Shoulder after the bridges were completed? After all, that's a pretty heavy train shown on page 24 in "The Book" crossing the Scalp Mountain arch bridge behind a 2-6-0.

High above Squawbottom Depot,
2-6-0 #25 eases across Scalp Mountain Arch.
Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s1_021_bridgesquaw_unk]

We never needed helpers on the Andrews local during my tenure, and if the westbound main line through freight needed a helper, it came from Great Divide with the eastbound freight, or, sometimes it met the freight at Squawbottom. That was rare because it would have had to run in reverse all the way from Great Divide. And, we never had a separate engineer available, so the freights engineer also ran the helper.

I once saw the Port switcher help the train out of Port, but the climb from Port to Cross Jct. wasn't terribly steep and the through freight engine could usually handle it, needing help only on the climb from Squawbottom to Gorre. Because we had only certain block limits to operate separate engines, as I recall, the main train pulled most of the consist up to Cross Jct. and waited in the next block for the Port engine, a Shay, to push the rest of the train up for a coupling. Wonder if it fouled the crossing? DCC would have been so nice.....

Baker Uncouplers

#9390, 09/13/2010

In my recall, most of the uncouplers on the G&D proper were strips of plastic between the rails a couple of inches long which had a pin, raised by a solenoid, in the center. The pin raising caused a lump in the center of the plastic which allowed automatic uncoupling from either end. I recall we had to be careful uncoupling from engines for fear of derailing them by lifting footboards, pilots, and sometimes gear boxes. I think John did use a couple of the hand operated brass ones on the car ferry approach in Port. Perhaps elsewhere in later years?

An end view of "Anabel" with 4-8-0 #68 zipping by with a local freight. Jul-71. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_031_anabel68_jul71]

Baker Couplers

#9398, 09/14/2010

The Baker couplers were manufactured by the Baker Mfg. Co. of Dayton Ohio (I don't remember this, I have a bunch of old magazines! Found an ad in a 1948 issue). I recall hearing from Whit Towers that, when Mr. Baker passed away, he and John attempted to purchase the dies for making Bakers from Mrs. Baker. She asked such an exorbitant price they decided not to pursue the idea. Both had good supplies of couplers at that time and the dies were well worn by then. I wonder if she realized any money from those dies at all? I never saw the Baker couplers for sale after the mid 1950's. After operating on the G&D, I considered making them myself. Even got a pair from Whit to use as a pattern. Then Kadee brought out their magnetic ones and I never pursued making my own. Still have that pattern though.

Close-up view of John's Baker coupler. Photo Unknown, GDRP.
[baker2]

Track Cleaning

#9802, 12/30/2010

I was an operator on the G&D for about 2 years during 1963-65. Never in all that time did I see John clean any track on the G&D itself. I kinda remember seeing a bright boy used on the trolley track in the Great Divide area, which is where I worked. If he cleaned any track he must have done it between operating sessions. I do know we almost never had a stall on the main, or in the yards. Did occasionally have to poke a locomotive in the roundhouse to get it to move. There was a conveniently located stick for that. Never saw the roundhouse tracks cleaned either. Most had a locomotive on them except when that particular engine was running.

Switching at Gorre for local industry and Daphetid

#9897, 02/22/2011

The East bound freight would leave Great Divide with the cars destined for Gorre, Daphetid or the peddler freight at the front of

the train. Cars for Port or further east would follow them, then the caboose. Pulling through the tunnel in Devil's Post Pile I would pull in on the siding and clear the main. If the peddler happened to be in town, we would coordinate to separate his cars. Usually he was not there, and I would set out the cars for both destinations on the third track (closest to the front of the layout) at the east end. Normally there would be cars there headed for Port from Gorre or Daphetid. I added them to my train. These moves involved switching with the engine running down the 4% grade toward Sowbelly. Cutting off and pulling forward was easy, backing back up the hill could be a challenge. Woe unto the engineer who made the mistake of taking too many cars down, as the only thing one could do was proceed to Squawbottom, drop some cars there and back all the way to Gorre to deliver the others. John didn't like this move. I only saw it once, and I was not the engineer that night! Anyway, after picking up the outbounds, adding them to the train and dropping the inbounds on this track, the through freight departed east for Port.

Westbound from Port was very similar except there were no cars for the peddler. He picked his up in Port himself. The Gorre destination cars were once again at the front of the train. Arriving in Gorre, I again entered the siding. Now at least I am heading uphill! On that front track at the west end I would find cars left by the Gorre switcher and the peddler destined for Great Divide or beyond, to pick up. I cut off the drops for Gorre and Daphetid, pulled forward into the tunnel, then backed down on the pickups. I pulled them into the tunnel and backed them down on my train. I then dropped the inbound cars on that front track. I could then couple to my train and proceed up the line to Great Divide.

Now, both the Gorre switcher and the peddler had work to do when they sorted out those cars the through freight had dropped. At the west end the Gorre Switcher did most of the work. He would come out through that curved switch and fetch any Gorre or Daphetid bound cars left there. The switch was not an afterthought as far as I know. It shows on the earliest plans I've seen. (The third through track above the panel was added however). He would deliver westbound cars and take his cars back into Gorre through the same switch and sort them in Gorre.

John's award-winning engine house at Gorre with adjacent ash pit. Helengon Gap high bridge on left. Jun-65. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection.
[s0_043_enghouse_jun65]

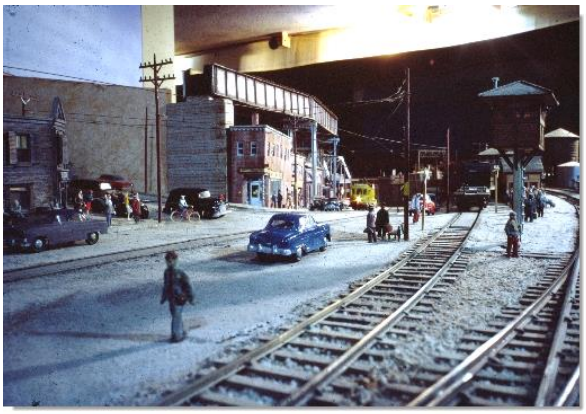
His locomotive was too small to switch on the 4% grade east of town, so the peddler would deliver cars on the east end by pushing them through the crossover at the east end to flat ground in Gorre. I'm pretty sure he was also responsible to take any eastbound cars from the Gorre switcher and put them out for through freight pickup. Note that cars FOR the peddler were always on the east end and FROM the peddler always on the west end. That made a trailing move for both trains - no run arounds.

Animation

#10245, 07/26/2011

The trolley car on the Cooper Electric line between Great Divide and Port ran without supervision and had several places where it might stop for passengers to alight or board. These were set stops along the line, but the

trolley didn't always stop. It was controlled by a set voltage on the track to run at a slow speed. Just before each stopping point there was a short section with a resistor to slow the trolley. At the stop, was a section as long as the trolley which was connected to a contact on a slowly revolving motor. The motor had a cam which would intermittently break the contact for a short period. If the trolley happened to arrive at that moment, it would stop. If the contact wasn't broken when the trolley arrived, it would slow briefly and then continue on its way. My recall is it stopped about half the time. I can't recall if one motor controlled all the stops, but I suspect it did. There was plenty of running distance between the stops.



Downtown Great Divide near the Austin Street Station. The lone trolley of the Cooper Electric Railway makes its way up the street in the distance. Jun-65. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection. [s2_009_andysdrug_jun65]

Funny thing is though, even though the trolley stopped at a group of people, no one ever got aboard while I was watching.

Another One Surfaces

#10397, 10/31/2011

I got a call from a friend the other day. He said a mutual friend, who once ran a hobby shop in San Jose, had just given him the remains of an old John Allen locomotive. This fellow ran the hobby shop with a small model museum in the rear of the shop. It's been gone for a long time now. When he closed the shop and moved, he packed the locomotive away and has only recently found it again after another move. Anyway, I was asked if I would be interested in having the locomotive. Guess what my answer to that was!

On Saturday, we both attended a meeting of the Pacific Coast Region, NMRA Board. He handed me an old Varney box. When I opened it, I found another "charred" locomotive and tender. This one is a 2-6-0, though the wheel sets for the lead truck are missing. The axle still exists. According to the roster in "The Book", John had only one 2-6-0, #25. It isn't in too bad shape, though the sideboards of the tender have come loose and there is the usual damage from the fire. I can't find any lettering left, and the crew has disembarked from the cab. The headlight is gone, but the bulb is there. Should have been in a Roundhouse box though; Varney was a competitor.

I'll add it to the other engines I currently have. And, yes Keith and Peter, I will get you pictures in a week or so for posting. It's interesting how these locomotives are reappearing after all this time. I understand there may be another one still undiscovered among all the packing boxes. Should it appear, I'll get pictures of that one as well. I also have a lead on some correspondence between John and another old friend. Copies may be available…

Son of Satchel

#10837, 09/17/2012

After finding and photographing "The Satchel" I was fairly convinced the surviving Gorre & Daphetid locomotives which had made it through the fire had been found at last. But, as time has gone by though, there were some rumors floating around of another cache somewhere in Northern

California. Some pointed to the San Jose area while others indicated a more northerly location. A couple of friends told me they had seen some burned engines in a hobby shop many years ago which they thought might have belonged to John Allen, or might have been others. Information was vague at best.

A conversation a year or so ago indicated a retired dealer might have some artifacts in his storage locker in the vicinity of Healdsburg. While I have never had a conversation directly with him, my friend mentioned to him the interest in the G&D Reminisce Project and he agreed to see if he could locate the engines he remembered having at one time. Since he had recently moved and placed a lot of possessions in boxes it was a big job to find such an eclectic item after so many years and multiple relocations.

Time passed but recently I had a call that some engines had been located. I was thrilled to hear it and a transfer of three pieces of G&D history has been made. I have taken pictures of each item and these will appear on the G&D website soon. See http://www.gdlines.org.

The first locomotive out of the box is G&D #12, a 0-6-0 switcher with a tender. You can review the pictures of her from all angles and see the damage the fire caused. Curiously, the bell still swings and it has a working clapper in it! You will note the tender appears to be in pretty good shape. It is the cast metal Roundhouse slope back tender that came in the kit with the engine. Its cleanliness stems from an attempt to salvage it some time ago when all the soot was removed. The coal boards were in disarray and I braced them as best I could for the photos. This appears to have been an oil tender originally as were most of the Roundhouse kits. The trucks are intact and have the signature John Allen rail sliders on both. The engine also has a pair of sliders. And, of course, there are the Baker Couplers.

An interesting thing about this tender. It was extremely heavy when I lifted it from the box. It weighs 9.7 ounces! The locomotive to which it was attached weighs 13.3 ounces, so the tender is almost as heavy as the engine. Being a curious sort, and since the tender was clean and the screws accessible, I opened it up. It is filled to capacity with lead or Cerrobend metal. I cannot figure why John would do this unless he wanted to limit the pulling power of the switcher. When I was the yardmaster at Great Divide, I never used this switcher in the freight yard. I preferred a 2-8-0 to pull cuts of cars out of the yard. The switching lead was on a grade and I could pull a pretty good string of cars while shuffling cars around for the next outbound freight. I can't recall #12 being used in the engine terminal either. We used a 0-4-0T to move cars in and out of both the roundhouse service tracks. I guess it is a mystery unless someone has a definitive answer to the purpose of the lead.

G&D 0-6-0 #12. Jun-54.
Photo John Allen, GDRP.
[12]

The next prize out of the box was G&D #25, a 2-6-0. Appearance wise, it is very similar to #12 as they both began as Roundhouse switchers. John did some major work on #25 to turn her into a mogul and she shows his efforts. Unfortunately, the extended pilot frame didn't survive, though the pilot itself did. And, once again, the coal boards on the tender, a coal tender this time, were detached and beyond salvage. The bits of the wood boards were glued to a very thin sheet of foil, some of which had melted. This tender is

much lighter also. John had changed a number of things on the engine such as the stack and added a window in the fireman's side of the cab.

Then, there is poor old #60, the well known and loved gas electric car. She suffered immensely in the fire, losing her entire superstructure save the roof. The roof shows where the vents once were, but they have melted into just blobs. One half of her headlight remains and there is a curious strip of vertical corrugated metal in front where the radiator shutters once were. I have no idea what it was for. Backing material perhaps? In the rear of the passenger compartment is one humongous light bulb. It's mounted in a screw socket and supports the rear of the roof. It may have been a ballast bulb for the interior lighting. There are several GOW bulbs among the wires, probably for interior lighting. It's hard to understand the big bulb in the rear. She also has her bell mounted on the roof as well as some of the engine fittings. The drive unit is intact but will never run again. It has a large flywheel on it.

And now you know the continuing saga of fire damaged locomotives. There are still some unaccounted for. Wonder where they are?

Turntables

#11888, 08/23/2013

I can't remember if the turntable at Gorre was motorized or not, but the one at Great Divide certainly was. While I was the Yardmaster at Great Divide I had numerous engines I turned or moved into and out of the roundhouse area. The panel controls allowed me to select the direction of rotation (CW or CCW). I could then activate a lever switch which started the motor and the turntable began to swing. It would rotate until I returned the lever switch to its center off position. That action would happen after I had passed the track BEFORE the one I wanted. The turntable continued to rotate until it approached the chosen track. Then it slowed down. It would stop when the rails were aligned and I could run the locomotive off the turntable. I can't recall it ever being misaligned. I could also select which direction I wanted the locomotive to move. Need this because there were three "industries" served using the turntable; The oil track, the roundhouse supplies track and the coaling tower. The ash pit track also ran off the turntable, but I never moved that car. Don't think anyone did.

John had a mechanical indexing system. I don't know all the particulars, but it was a set of contacts for each track off the turntable with a circular disk turning under the pit with the turntable. A cam on this disk, one at either end, would open each contact it passed and somehow it knew when I had asked it to stop at the next track. Worked in both directions of rotation.

Great Divide engine terminal with the outdoor work pit between the rails on the open track. Jul-68. Photo John Allen, Keith Trinity collection. [s0_063_no49_jul68]

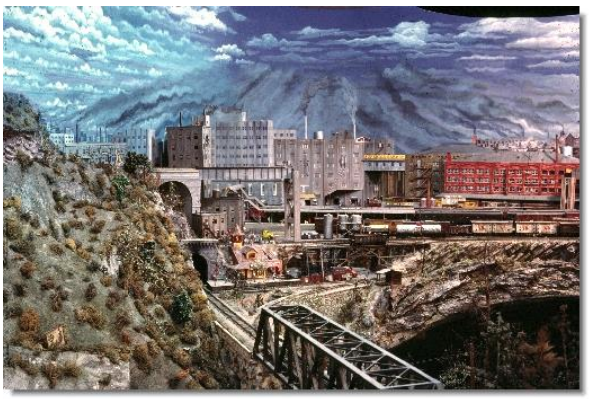
Model Railroader had an article back in the 1950's about a similar system on a project railroad, but John already had his running by then. I don't think he ever wrote an article about it.

Operations

#12023, 10/27/2013

"According to a fellow named Rod Smith, they used to use a "whistle" signal to indicate train approach to Cross Junction and the first train to "whistle" had the right of way. This sounds really cool, but I have never heard this before and wonder what kind of whistle they used? Considering that generally model train sound was not available in the 1963/1964 time period discussed. At least I did not think the PFM sound was available. Would John have used that or just the regular Boy Scout type whistles? Just curious in case anyone know. - Victor Bitleris"

The whistle referred to didn't apply to Cross Junction passage. It was used to alert the yardmasters at Great Divide and at Port a train was approaching their jurisdiction. But, the whistling did occur in the vicinity of Cross Junction (and at Corsa) since that was the approach to both sites. We blew a standard road crossing whistle (short-short-long-short) for entrance to Great Divide, and three shorts for Port. The yardmasters at either yard gave us verbal authority to enter the yard. Since this was a block-controlled railroad, they had to align the yard track to be used to the main panel.



The Bi-level depot at Cross Junction and the yards at Great Divide. Feb-72. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection. [s1_040_herald_feb72]

Now, as for the whistle. It was an American Flyer or Lionel electrical whistle (don't know which) mounted somewhere under the layout under Great Divide. It was activated with push buttons on the main panel. I was the Great Divide yardmaster most of the time, and I didn't have any button to blow the whistle on the Great Divide panel. I don't think the Port panel had one either. Only the main panel with cabs 1, 2, and 3. In Great Divide I did have a three light signal head to direct the main line operators to stop, move forward, or move backward though. Used mostly to get the train put away in the yard and the locomotive sent to the roundhouse lead track. Red = stop, Green = move forward, Amber = move in reverse.

The John Allen Memorial (JAM)

#12200, 07/04/2014

"To celebrate Johns birthday we ran George Hook's 8 cars on the CVMW Northern Pacific layout built by Jeff's father Jack Parker. Jeff was told that this train was George Hook's traveling train, so we'd like to know if any of the folks that actually operated the G&D can verify that either the Loco or the whole set ever ran on the G&D? The set is all brass, and is lettered for the "ROCKANDE MOUNTAIN LINES" – Chad Stalsworth"

I was an operator during 1964-65. I have no recall of ever seeing such a train on the G&D during my time there. I also have no recollection of meeting George Hook there, though John often entertained some of the well-known names in the hobby. I knew George from some PCR conventions though. Really nice guy.

John was very strict about letting folks run their own equipment while I was there. Only his own stuff, which he knew would perform was used during operating sessions. He did occasionally allow us to run an engine or cars after the session, and that's how I discovered my GN 4-8-4 wouldn't clear the

scenery on Sims Loop! John had purposely created scenery to discourage himself from buying large engines, though later he had some pretty big ones. Probably had to send the section crew out there with some explosives to eliminate pesky rock outcroppings. He did allow me to run my scratch built private varnish car, with Central Valley trucks, once. Even installed a Baker coupler on it for me. I think John mellowed in his last years, even allowing one operator to use a diesel switcher. Heresy in my day.

2nd G&D Central Valley Model Works, with owner of CVMW George Hook's diesel, appeared Feb. 1950 HO Monthly Photo John Allen, GDRP.
[cvmw]

John's Cooper Electric Trolleys

#12795, 10/21/2015

Cooper Electric made a loop through Great Divide, down to another loop at Port and returned to the origin point. The trolleys ran counterclockwise around this loop. The trolley was automated and didn't require a motorman. But, there is an interesting twist. There were several "stops" along the trolley line. Willing passengers congregated at these stops awaiting the next trolley. John had the track wired with a short section ahead of each stop having a resistor to slow the trolley, but not stop it. Another short section beyond this one was connected to a motor driven rotating disk under the layout which had a partial copper strip and a feeler completing the circuit at times and breaking the circuit at other times. If the feeler was on the strip, power passed to the trolley. If not, the section was dead. This caused the short section after the slowing section to be energized at times and dead at other times. It was hit or miss if the trolley would stop. Sometimes it did, and sometimes it slowed but skated right on past those patient would-be riders. I'd guess it stopped about half the time. Can't recall if anyone got on or off the car though. It was a clever use of automated animation.

The CERR Trolley heads down Railroad Avenue towards the Port station. Jun-65. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_028_CERR_jun65]

John & Narrow Gauge

#12860, 12/10/2015

As I recall, the DG&H narrow-gauge track began at the abutment in Helengon Gap and immediately joined the G&D line uphill toward French Gulch. The three-rail was continuous all the way, over the wood truss bridge and it diverged from the G&D trackage onto a two-span wooden through truss above Sowbelly. I think the narrow-gauge rails were in place over this bridge, but did not extend much, if any, beyond the bridge. The roadbed, without ties, continued all the way up the slope to Gorre, where some narrow-gauge track was in place into the yard at Gorre. There's a

picture in an issue of *Model Railroader* showing the roadbed with cattle grazing on it downhill from Gorre.

Sowbelly and the DG&H bridge over Sowbelly Creek leading to Gorre. Narrow gauge was never completed. Jun-65. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_021_angelscamp_jun65]

My memories mostly date from the 1964-65 era when I was an operator on the G&D. I did visit several times after, up until several weeks before John's death, but I think I would have noticed if John had completed the narrow-gauge track into Gorre. I'm sure the track never extended into the Helengon Gap area. I do not recall ever seeing a narrow-gauge train run. There would have been no place for it to clear a G&D train.

2-4-0T #3 of the Devil's Gulch & Helengon drifts towards Helengon with 6 cars. Apr-58. Photo John Allen, Paul Beard collection.
[s2_002_number3_april58]

Placement of Uncoupling ramps and such

#13357, 02/26/2017

While I was an operator on the G&D, mostly as the Great Divide Yardmaster, for 1.5 years, I found the Baker couplers very easy to use. John's uncoupling ramps were a length of clear plastic between the rails. These were fixed on one end and allowed to move on the other. A plunger under the middle could be raised by a pushbutton on the panel, and it raised the plastic ramp high enough to cause the Baker air hoses to disengage from each other. They didn't rise high enough to touch the wheel axles. Just barely activated the couplers. The ramps worked from either side. The only problems I remember were they could lift the pilots on the locomotives thus derailing the engine. That was a No-No! When switching the yard with the front of the loco I always tried to have a car behind the loco pilot and the cars being sorted. This only happened with the small switchers. The larger road engines were heavy enough they didn't lift; still uncoupling from the pilot was a bit of a job. One big advantage when classifying cars was I could push the cars a short distance beyond the ramp, activate the ramp, and the cars would uncouple at the proper place. I think the ramps were at the fouling point behind a turnout so as to maintain clearance from adjacent tracks.

We also had hand uncouplers, we called them spoons, with which you could place it under the air hoses and gently lift the hoses to uncouple the cars. These were all we used on the Timesaver layouts, and often on tracks we could reach from the aisles. They were much easier to use than the picks we struggle with on Kadee couplers. Rarely derailed a car.

Epilogue

The satchel contents has been entrusted by Rod Smith to the NMRA. In 2020 three of the engines were selected for a cosmetic restoration to be included in the exhibit *The Magic of Scale Model Railroading* to be held at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Kenichi Matsumoto, former editor of *Train* (Japan's largest model railroad magazine) and a brass locomotive expert, was entrusted with the restoration. The selected locomotives were 4-4-0 #8 Sgt Ennis, 0-4-0T #9 Varney Dockside and 0-4-0T #10 Sakura Dockside. Kenichi excided the expectations not only restoring them cosmetically but also mechanically, making them operational! #8 Sgt Ennis and #10 Sakura Dockside were then exhibited at CSRM in Sacramento, #9 Varney Dockside stayed in the care of Kenichi in Japan.

2-8-0 #27 was auctioned in October 2020 together with some other artifacts in order to raise funds for the NMRA Howell Day Museum. The rest of the satchel contents stays in the possession of NMRA for the time being.

Apart from the satchel engines there are two known survivors. 4-10-0 #34 was taken care of by former G&D operator and *Model Railroader* editor Andy Sperandeo. It is now in the care of *Kalmbach Publishing*. The other known survivor surfaced on eBay much later, 2-8-4 #43 that is now in private hands.

There is also Tioga Pass RR 2-10-0 #31, Jim Findley's Russian Decapod. This engine was too large for Jim's own railroad. Instead it was used on the G&D in the Andrews peddler and Tioga Pass exchange traffic (pages 113 & 115 of "The Book"), as evident by the Baker couplers that came with it. Like #43, it also surfaced on eBay after a long while and is now in the same hands as Berkshire 2-8-4 #43.

Pictures of the above locomotives and much else can be found on the GDRP website, see http://www.gdlines.org.

Resources

"Model Railroading with John Allen"
by Linn H Westcott. (The Book)
Kalmbach Publishing 1981, 1982 & 1996.
Extended Hardcover by
Benchmark Publications 2011.

"John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid"
DVD, Sunday River Productions. (The Film)
http://www.sundayriverproductions.com
/model/gorre-and-daphetid

G&D Reminiscence Project (GDRP):
http://gdlines.org

Jeff Witt's G&D Tribute Site:
http://gdlines.info

GandD @ Groups IO:
https://groups.io/g/GandD

Gorre & Daphetid @ Facebook:
https://fb.com/groups/GandD

Ian McGregor's site:
http://doug56.net/GD

Central Valley Model Works (CVMV):
http://cvmw.com/imagecvmw/john_allen

California State Railroad Museum (CSRM):
https://www.californiarailroad.museum

Monterey & Salinas Valley
Railroad Museum (MSVRR):
https://www.msvrr.org

Pacific Coast Region NMRA (PCR):
http://pcrnmra.org