

Submitted by Scott Lawson, Plumas County Museum:

The Spanish Peak Lumber Company commenced operations at Spanish Ranch (6 miles west of Quincy) in the fall of 1916. Within a few years they had constructed an aerial tramway to ship rough-cut lumber from the sawmill to their planing mill at Gray's Flat on the North Fork Feather River.

Initially their logging operations consisted of steam-powered donkey engines that dragged or "yarded" the logs cut from the huge trees into the sawmill. Soon, the close-in timber had all been cut so they began hauling the logs on gasoline-powered, chain-driven, solid tire Fageol trucks and trailers. This continued until 1925, when they made what could be termed a "technological reversal." Parking the trucks and trailers, they began hauling logs on a narrow gauge logging railroad recently built.



The first locomotive was a gasoline-electric Whitcomb named "No.1," which operated a year or so before it got into a major wreck. It was salvaged and rebuilt, but in the meantime, a second locomotive was commissioned with the imaginative name of "No.2." This 25-ton engine was built to their specifications and delivered to the mill in June of 1926.

The railroad logging operations continued until 1933, when the Spanish Peak Lumber Company went into receivership due to the Great Depression. The two engines were disposed of to other entities. No.1 went to Swayne Lumber Company in Oroville, while No.2 was sent out to Nevada and Utah to scrap out other railroads. It was in Utah that it was changed from its three-foot narrow gauge to standard gauge. From there, the diminutive engine ended up in the Bay Area under ownership of the U.S. Navy where it went to Camp Parks, in Alameda County. After many years it was transferred to the Bay Area Electric Railway Museum, at Rio Vista Junction where it languished on a spur track.

In early 2001, the late Kent Stephens of California State University, Chico, arranged for the Plumas County Museum to acquire the Spanish Peak Lumber Co. No.2 locomotive from the museum in Rio Vista. Todd Anderson of Harco Trucking hauled it from that facility to Wilburn Construction on Lee Road in Quincy where preliminary restoration work was conducted for about a year.

The following year the Plumas County Fair requested it be brought to the fairgrounds where it was planned to display or possibly operate it. Wilburn Construction, Plumas County Public Works, and CALTRANS all helped to move it into the Art Barn, where volunteers worked diligently on it **for over 15 years**.

By 2006, the 25-ton engine was able to move on its own. It was reconfigured to its narrow gauge status, the cab was rebuilt, a new engine installed, windows replaced, plumbing, electrics, and other components were reconstructed, and the whole thing was painted - as close to original in color as possible.

As of this year, and over **14,639 volunteer hours**, it was decided that it was far enough along to move it from the Art Barn to its new home behind the grandstands. On Friday, April 23rd a volunteer crew gathered to begin the almost day-long task of moving the engine to its new home.

Tim Mannies and Bob Meeks of Wilburn Construction provided a large loader and mechanical expertise, Mike Curran of Mike Curran Trucking brought his low-bed trailer and truck to haul the engine, and Kathy & Leland Cotter, Ken Myers, and Larry Trotter all showed up to lend helping hands. (Continued on the next page.)



Leland Cotter had prepped for the project by welding two railroad track panels to use to “leapfrog” the engine to the east entrance to the Art Barn from its home at the west end. Once the engine was out the door, it was able to be rolled up a rail ramp onto Curran’s lowbed trailer. From there it was trucked through the fairgrounds to the new shed behind the grandstands. The unloading process was basically a reversal of the loading process with the addition of angst over whether it would stop when it reached the end of the track. It did.

Although we are happy to finally have it moved, there is still much work to be done to make the whole system operational. We still have ties and track to lay, storage and work sheds to construct, and various other related items.

The Plumas County Museum is proud of all the work volunteers have done for this effort over the years. Unfortunately, Al “Jay” Ricks, Dave Ricks and Leonard Mosley are no longer alive to help us enjoy this part of the project. Jay was instrumental in the welding, fabrication and understanding of locomotives and their parts; his son Dave helped out with tools, equipment and expertise, and Len Mosely put in more than his fair share of scraping his knuckles, and almost single-handedly rebuilt the wood cab for the engine. We owe them a special debt of gratitude.

Ken Myers, who helped with the move, is one of the original restoration crew, having been on it since 2003. Sandy Coats, now in the state of Washington, was the ringleader in getting the whole thing started. Jim Boyer of Lake Almanor spent hours milling axles and wheels (trucks), hunting up parts and materials and helping shape things up. Dave Amos, Dan Chapman, Chris Coen, the late Ray Evans, Jason Girourd, Bill Henwood, Greg Jewers, Clay Johnson, Randy Kelsch and the Quincy High Auto Shop Class of 2005, Bob Lowrey, Aaron Myers, Ray Nichol, Carol Paoli, Ken Roller of Portola, Sam Self, Steve Habeck and Eli of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum were also instrumental in putting the locomotive back together. Newer volunteers include Kathy & Leland Cotter, Carl Peterson, and Larry Trotter who volunteer under the auspices of Community Connections.

John Kolb, Jim Webster, Ralph Koehne, John Schmidt, and Rich Knoettgen surveyed a proposed five-eighths mile long loop track on the south side of the fairgrounds to run the locomotive on. At this point we plan to utilize about a third of that loop. It is hoped that sometime in the near future we can implement the entire project.

The project envisions a depot/museum where visitors can board a log “passenger” car and ride this unique Plumas County attraction. For more information or to volunteer on this endeavor, please call the Plumas County Museum at 530-283-6320.

We would also like to extend a thank you to the numerous organizations, businesses, and individuals who generously made donations which greatly contributed to the progress of this endeavor!