

The **WESTERN RAILROADER**

For the Western Railfan



Deep Creek No. 2 at Wendover Utah. W. C. Whittaker

THE DEEP CREEK RAILROAD

From Tom Aldridge, of Wendover, Utah, comes this story of the Deep Creek R.R. Tom in turn, extends credit to Mr. Mason Moore, former General Manager of the Deep Creek, who is, Tom says, "one of the finest men I have ever known, and a real railroad man."



Deep Creek No. 2, and combination coach No. 1, at Wendover Utah.

STORY OF THE DEEP CREEK RAILROAD

"WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD EMBARGO NO. 17: Account abandonment of the Deep Creek Railroad, authority of I. C. C. Finance Docket No. 1207, the Western Pacific RR Embargo goes all traffic billed or intended for delivery to the Deep Creek Railroad which cannot reach Wendover, Utah on or before July 27, as last scheduled train leaves Wendover July 28, 1939."

Thus stated is the death notice of the once proud and profitable Deep Creek line, one of the last surviving short lines of the Rockies.

The road had been built back in 1916 to haul ore from mines in the Gold Hill and Clifton districts of western Utah that had been partially developed and on which geologists had reported there were deposits of almost every known kind of ore in large amounts. Formost among the mines was the Western Utah

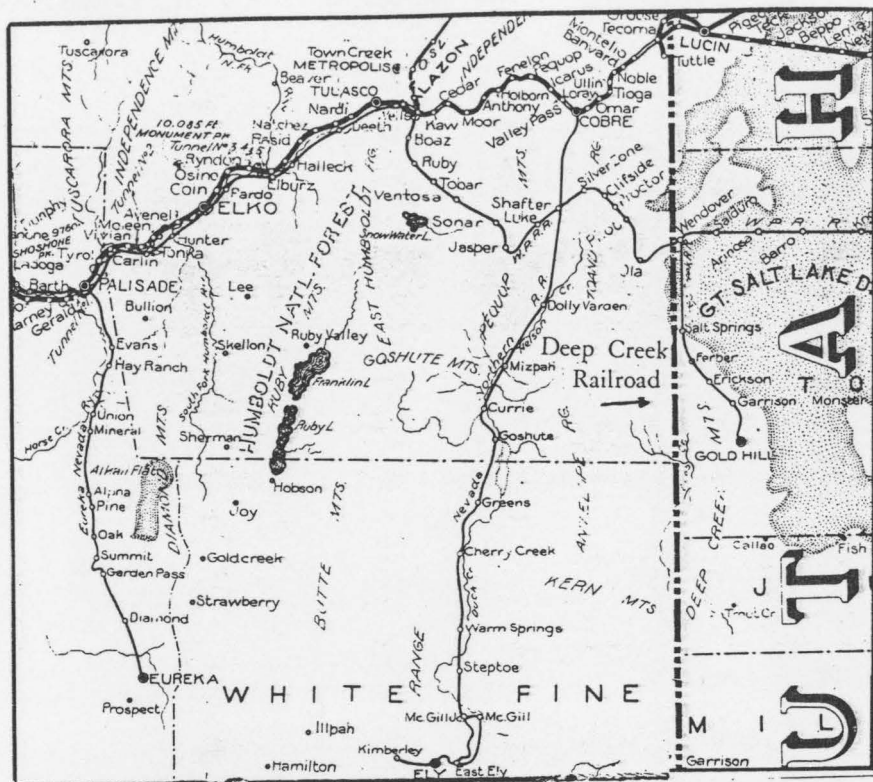
Copper Company toward which the line headed. This mine was expected to rival both Ely, Nevada, and Bingham, Utah, as a copper producer.

The magic word "Gold" entered into the consideration, too, as some years before there were several small stakes made in gold by a Woodman family. One of the Woodman heirs is said to have taken out over \$200,000 in gold in about 18 months.

The construction of the Deep Creek Railroad was financed by Captain Duncan MacVichi and associates, chief among them being the late C. M. Levey, then President of the Western Pacific Railroad Company, and United States Senator Reed Smoot of Utah.

The line was projected and built from Wendover, Utah, (a division point on the Western Pacific main line 124 miles west of Salt Lake City), for 45 miles,

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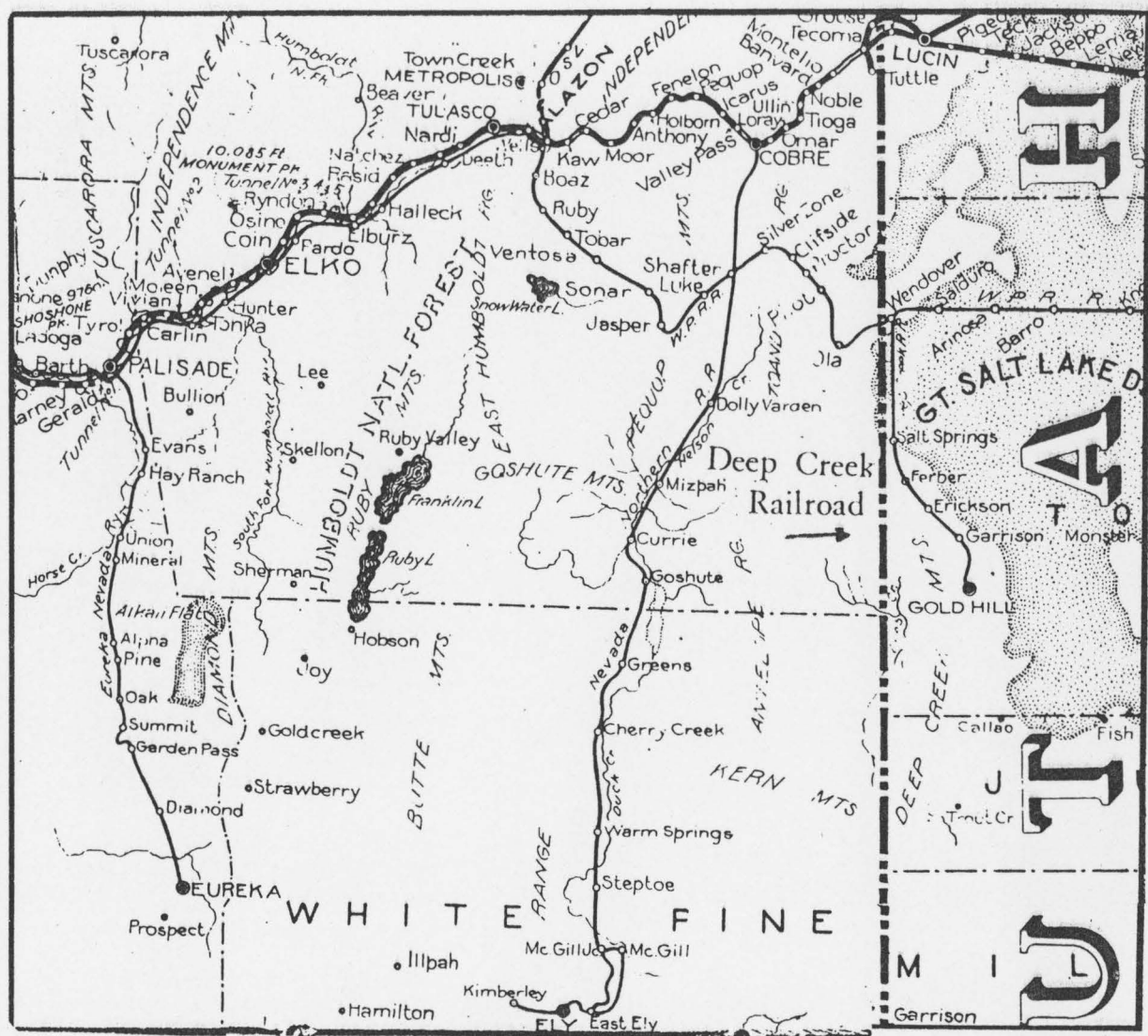
practically straight south through Tooele County, Utah, and Elco County, Nevada, almost straddling the Utah-Nevada state line to Garrison Monster and Gold Hill, Utah.

Construction of the road was started on November 1, 1916, by the Utah Construction Company who did the work under contract. The line was completed by March, 1917, after a total of \$450,000 had been appropriated for its construction.

The line was equipped with two engines, numbers 1 and 2. Both originally saw service on the Denver and Rio Grande Western before being used on the Deep Creek. Number 1 was a 4-6-0, built by Rome in 1891,

and had 18" by 24" cylinders, 55" drivers, 160 lbs. boiler pressure, 19,228 lbs. tractive force, and 198,400 lbs. weight for engine and tender in working order. Number 2 was a 2-8-0 built by Baldwin in 1890, and had 20" by 24" cylinders, 51" drivers, 151 lbs. boiler pressure, and 187,000 lbs. weight for engine and tender loaded.

Other equipment included a box car, number 100, and coach, number 1. The coach had been built by the Pullman Company in October, 1895 for the Southern Pacific, number 1336, and had been purchased by the Western Pacific in February, 1917. After remodeling the Western Pacific



turned it over to the Deep Creek. It was a 60 foot, wood sheathed, open platform (2), combination car equipped with four wheel trucks (34" wheels), 4 oil lamps, and a Baker heater. It had three compartments finished in mahogany, a twenty foot baggage, eleven foot smoker, and twenty foot first class compartment.

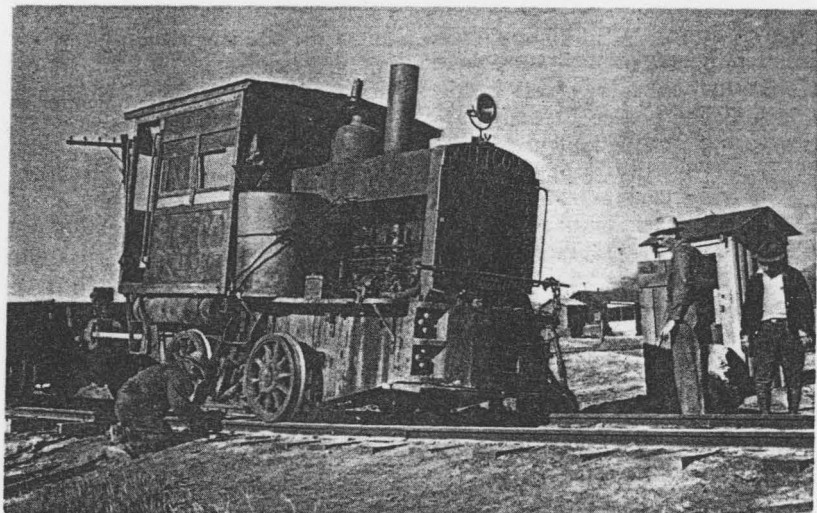
Soon after the line had been put in operation the Western Pacific purchased the entire capital stock of the line from the original builders. The line continued however as an independent road under Mr. Mason Moore, general manager. It was through the efforts of Mr. Moore that the line lasted as long as it did, for he had a way of running a railroad that would have done credit to any transcontinental line.

The mines along the line produced much revenue for the still young railroad, but as they went deeper to get copper ore, the deposit turned into arsenic. Instead of a hinderance, the arsenic, temporarily at least proved a "God Sent", for when the arsenic was removed from the arsenic bearing ore, it was used as a boll-weevil poison in the cotton-producing states. An arsenic solution spray, perfected at that time, was the only remedy and had it not been for the arsenic supply from the Deep Creek the cotton industry in the United States would have gone out of existence. As it was the Deep Creek gained a good amount of business during 1923, 1924, and 1925, hauling the arsenic bearing ore to the refineries.

Because of the need for additions, improvements and dividends on the investment. During the arsenic boom, in the years mentioned, there were two mixed trains each way, each day over the line with all the tonnage the engines could possibly handle. Though it might seem strange, almost anyone could get a job on the Deep Creek in those days. The unusual sight was seen of brakemen and conductors working the trains in high-heel boots and spurs, fresh off the ranges.

Late in 1925, however, it was found that certain foreign countries could produce and deliver arsenic in the Southern states cheaper than the ore could be produced in Utah. Consequently the Deep Creek started down hill from that time on. First to one train per day, and later to one train each way each Friday.

In the early thirties the line disposed of it number 1 via the scrap method, the job being done by the Western Pacific in Sacramento, California. Number 2 continued to handle the weekly runs, but soon she too felt her age and was retired. Western Pacific number 122 was brought to Utah to use on the line, but when the Tidewater Southern wanted 122, number 77 replaced it. Trouble followed this move however, for 77 weighed some 126,000 pounds more than 122 and it broke so many rails on the Deep Creek that the 122 was recalled in December of 1938. The box car was put out of service also when one end, in-



Tom Aldridge

United Commercial Company crews scrapping the Deep Creek in October, 1939, using ex-Spanish Creek Lumber motor #2.

cluding the coupler and draft gear was pulled out near Gold Hill. The combination met a happier fate however, for though it continued to the end as a part of the Deep Creek, it was sold in the early part of 1939 to the Golden State Transportation Historical Society of Oakland, California, to be used as a meeting place.

Bad times turned to worse, and soon the parent company went into receivership. Since the Deep Creek had been operating at a loss for some time, Judge St. Sure of the Federal District Court, receiver for the Western Pacific recommended in the latter part of 1938 that its operation be discontinued. Legal notices to

anyone who might desire to protest abandonment were posted at Wendover, Utah, in the later part of January, 1939; and the protest meeting, presided over by an examiner for the Interstate Commerce Commission, was held February 9, 1939, in the Tooele County Court House at Tooele, Utah.

On July 1, 1939 the die was cast when the Interstate Commerce Commission announced in Washington, D.C., that they had authorized the abandonment of the Deep Creek Railroad.

—As told to the Western Railroader by Mr. Mason Moore, former General Manager of the Deep Creek Railroad.