

THE MANIFEST

January 2016



Happy
New Year!

I hope everyone has had a fantastic new year so far. As some of you may know, I had some minor surgery on my wrist, and was unable to attend the January meeting; however, I will be back in February.

I want to extend a sincere thank you on behalf of the club to Christina Carver for a very informative and interesting presentation. Thank you again Christina. I am very sorry I missed it, everyone I talked to enjoyed it immensely.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC 2562
THE STORY OF A DISPLAY LOCOMOTIVE

by Bob Trennert



A half-century has passed since the Southern Pacific ended its use of steam locomotives. Because a historic era had clearly ended, numerous cities, parks, and museums asked the railroad to donate a steam locomotive in order to display a major element of rail heritage. The SP responded favorably, and generously, to many of these requests, and during the late 1950s approximately fifty engines of various types were given away for static display. At the time, hardly anyone gave much thought to the future or long term preservation of these "iron horses." They were hastily placed in parks or in some other prominent location, sometimes fenced, but generally open to the public and the elements. The past five decades have witnessed many changes for these displays. A lucky few have been rebuilt and restored to operation, a few others are lovingly protected and cosmetically kept up, while still others have become neglected and derelict eyesores. A few have even been scrapped. One of the more typical cases involves Southern Pacific C-9 class 2-8-0 Consolidation #2562, donated to the City of Chandler, Arizona. This brief paper will examine the saga of 2562 from its 1956 donation to its current status, with all the ups and downs in between.

During its working life the 2562 toiled with nothing much to distinguish it from many other similar engines. Constructed by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1906, with 57 inch driving wheels and operating on 210 pounds of steam pressure, the oil-fired locomotive enjoyed a fifty year service career. Entering revenue service on November 27, 1906, the engine appears to have worked all over the S.P. system. Although its movements are difficult to trace, official boiler repair documents suggest it operated mostly in California during the 1910s and '20s. During most of the 1930s it appears to have been stationed at El Paso on the Rio Grande Division, moving to the far-Southwest between Tucson, Phoenix, and Los Angeles during World War II. Following the War it could be found heading local freights or in general switching service on the Southern Pacific's busy San Francisco Bay Area lines between Roseville, West Oakland and Bayshore (San Francisco).

How the 2562 was selected for donation is unclear. However, by early 1956 the engine sat out of service and rusty on a storage track at the West Oakland Roundhouse, where it was vacated on March 23, 1956. Because of the high volume of traffic during the spring and summer of '56, the S.P. relied heavily on steam power in the Bay Area, making use of almost every serviceable engine. With power in short supply as the railroad awaited its new diesel units, the company most likely chose a gift that had scant likelihood of being returned to service. Apparently hauled to the Los Angeles General Shops for cosmetic restoration (including the removal of a curved stack extension smoke deflector and a box under the on the pilot that contained a fire hose), it was towed to Phoenix.

The locomotive came to Chandler through the efforts of Nick Shepherd, a local Southern Pacific station agent. In early 1956 Shepherd was contacted by Lanford Calley, the City of Chandler's superintendent of Water, Streets, and Sewers. Calley agreed that it might be appropriate for the city to acquire and exhibit a steam locomotive. Shepherd consequently wrote the Southern Pacific, making a request on behalf of the city. Nearly six months passed before word arrived from Los Angeles that a locomotive was on the way. Shepherd quickly took some vacation time, helping Chandler officials line up the labor necessary to move the engine from a siding to the display location near the station.

Meanwhile, the city needed to sign a formal agreement with the railroad. On August 2, 1956, in what was a standard contract, the Southern Pacific and the City of Chandler formalized the terms of the donation. Among the most important articles were ones that specified that the locomotive and tender be accepted "exclusively and solely for the purposes of exhibition;" that the city would move the locomotive (at its own expense) to the exhibition site, and that the city "will provide for continued maintenance of the locomotive and tender and their protection from vandalism." Thus the City of Chandler assumed ownership of a steam locomotive.

Everything came together on August 16, 1956, when the engine was hauled from Phoenix to Mesa by a local freight. A group from Chandler met the train at Mesa and rode the engine back to Chandler after paying the price of a ticket—15 cents. As the 2562 arrived at the little mission-revival style station it was greeted with a welcoming ceremony that included a performance by the Williams Air Force Base band and a speech by Mayor Bert Lewis. The mayor formally accepted the donation, saying it would be placed in the park next to the station. To physically move the locomotive to its new home, a group of union members, aided by the fire department, laid temporary sections of rail (sometimes called snap track) in front of the locomotive, moved it forward, then took the section it had just passed over and ran it around to the front. By evening the work had been completed. The 2562 sat on its own rails along Delaware Street near the station.

The locomotive remained at its original location for some thirteen years. Unfenced, it became something of a plaything for local kids, but it apparently remained in fair condition. In 1969 the display encountered a problem, however-- it was standing in the way of the planned new City Civic Center. Some Chandler officials suggested it be sold for its \$1,500 value as scrap metal. Fortunately, city residents came to the rescue.

Ray Armstrong worked for the School District and taught driver's education at Chandler High School. According to Eddie Basha, Ray "had an extreme interest in locomotives." Determined to save the engine by moving it, Armstrong organized a volunteer group to lobby city government and raise money to help with the expenses. His so-called "Chandler Short-line Railroad " sold enough "shares" to local residents pay for a concrete base for the engine's new resting spot. On March 29, 1969, Joe Gustafson, Director of Chandler's Parks & Recreation Department, reported on a meeting between the Park's Committee and Armstrong's group. Gustafson, with the concurrence of everyone present, recommended that the locomotive be moved about two blocks north to a city owned site between the railroad tracks and North Delaware Street from Detroit to Erie streets. He

suggested that over the next few years the area might be improved to serve as a park area (it became Armstrong Park in Ray's honor). Armstrong also recommended that "the locomotive should be fenced and preserved as a historical attraction." Estimated cost to fence the park and locomotive came to \$2,770, plus \$600 for the concrete slab to support the engine.

The City Parks Planning Commission approved the relocation, which was favorably acted upon by the City Council on March 27, 1969. However, rounding up enough volunteer labor to actually move the engine proved so difficult that City Manager Gale D. Christy finally asked city employees, including fire and police, to help Ray Armstrong move the engine (the work to be done on city time). This appeal apparently generated a sufficient, but inexperienced work force. The Southern Pacific didn't think much of the idea. One S.P. official argued that "moving a weight of this size requires technical skill and equipment which could not be supplied by volunteer labor, and the hazard of personal injury would be extremely high." This statement only motivated Armstrong even more.

The actual move began at 7:00 am, Thursday, May 22, 1969, and was wrapped up by Saturday, May 24th. Much of the town came to watch what resembled, as the newspaper put it, "a group of ants moving an object which obviously is much too big for them to handle." Using a truck, service station wrecker, and brute force, they set down sections of "snap track" behind the locomotive, rolled it backward, then took up the section of rail just passed over and moved it to the rear. The repetitive work of moving some 96 tons of locomotive proved laborious but rewarding. The 2562 was now at home in what became Ray Armstrong Memorial Park, where it would remain for the next thirty-seven years.

Unfortunately, the locomotive received little maintenance during the following years. Armstrong Park remained an undeveloped dirt lot and the locomotive went un-fenced. Because the Park was located in a residential neighborhood it became a plaything for local kids, who did not treat it kindly. Vandals stripped the cab of most of its gauges and

hardware. Glass in the windows and headlight disappeared.. Overall, the locomotive began to deteriorate to the point that it no longer resembled the beautiful gift received by the city in 1956.

By 1971 rumors began to surface that some Chandler officials wanted to sell the locomotive for scrap. Although little more than idle gossip, the story reached the owners of Old Tucson Studios, who made an offer to acquire the engine for their theme park outside the Old Pueblo. This threat prompted the City Council to review the Park issue. They discovered that no money had been spent developing Armstrong Park, nor was the \$10,000 needed to create a park available. Thus while the engine remained essentially on an un-improved lot, at least the City indicated its desire to retain the artifact.

A little over a year later, the Mayor of Chandler expressed an interest in renovating the locomotive. Frank Pezzorello, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, thus met with Ray Blake of Ray Steel Company regarding the cost of restoration Blake subsequently presented the city with a bid of \$8,423.50 for sandblasting, painting, and providing "catwalks." The cost seems to have been excessive. No one else, however, could be found to enter a competing bid. Nevertheless, in a letter to City Manager William O'Dell, January 17, 1973, Pezzorello recommended that at least some steps be taken to restore the engine because Armstrong Park would eventually be developed "and also because it [the engine] is a hazard to the safety of individuals at the present time." Records do not show how much restoration work the city actually did, but it did install pipe and mesh safety railings on the locomotive's running boards, top of the cab and tender, and elsewhere. It may have been painted all black at the same time, with somewhat crude lettering.

The next crisis arose in the spring of 1980, when an outfit known as the Great Western Railroad Museum of Klamath Falls, Oregon, asked Chandler to sell or donate the 2562 to them. The Museum stated that it wanted to restore the locomotive to operation and use it on the dormant Santa Fe

Grand Canyon line between Williams and the South Rim. There was one of several schemes hatched in the 1980s to reopen the Grand Canyon branch as a tourist railroad. Interestingly, several members of the Parks and Recreation Board favored the idea, lamenting that few people visited the locomotive in its present location. As consequence, the Board recommended "that the City Council investigate the possibilities of transferring the steam locomotive," with reservations. Expressing concern over the ultimate disposition of the steamer if or when the Grand Canyon project could no longer use it, the city wanted to have the option of taking the locomotive back.

Despite this brief enthusiasm, the idea fell apart for two basic reasons. First, the 1956 agreement with the Southern Pacific specifically stated that the locomotive could be used "exclusively and solely for the purpose of exhibition." Thus any relocation or return to service seemed to violate the agreement and present potential legal problems. More significant, however, was the grass roots opposition by Chandler residents. The April 30, 1980, issue of *The Chandler Arizonan* raised an alarm in a scathing article titled "Should (or Can) Chandler Give it Away." After reviewing the heroic efforts of city fathers to secure and then save the engine from the scrap heap, the newspaper remarked that:

Since the old locomotive and its tender are the property of the citizens of Chandler, it might be wise for our city officials not to be stampeded by a commercial operation and outsiders who may be inclined to be over-generous with Chandler historical items.

Considerable opposition also came from local residents. Old Timers contacted by the *Arizonan* recalled their efforts to save the engine and expressed dismay at the current proposal. With sentiment to "keep it where it is," responses "ranged from the emphatic almost to the furious." Nick Shepherd, who did so much to secure the locomotive in 1956, vocally opposed the plan. Old 2562, he said, was given to Chandler in good faith. They (the S.P.) "gave it to the children. . . . So the kids of the city [would] be able to see the old locomotive and know what the old steam trains were

like.” Public opposition worked. At the May 9, 1980 City Council meeting the Great Western Railroad Museum’s request failed to garner a vote. Mayor Jim Patterson, remarking that he had played on the locomotive as a child, said he wanted “future Chandler children to be able to do the same.” Once more the old steam engine had been saved.

Although safe, the locomotive continued to deteriorate. Fortunately, during the early 1980s a group of local “railfans” saw the need to preserve the fast disappearing artifacts of Arizona’s railroad history. In 1983 they incorporated the Arizona Railway Museum (ARM), non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, and displaying railroad memorabilia. About a year later the City of Chandler (undoubtedly with much relief) signed a contract with the Museum in which the Museum would be responsible for the upkeep of the locomotive while the city retained ownership. ARM was also granted use of Armstrong Park for it’s displays, which at first centered around the 2562. Almost immediately improvements were made to the display. Most notably, the iron railings (catwalks) were removed. The first priority involved moving the locomotive to safe track. The installation of some grass and a sprinkler system by the city had caused the display to begin sinking and listing toward the engineer’s side. The rails it sat on were also close to failing because no ballast or subgrade had been utilized when the engine was placed there. Thus in 1986, the railings were removed, the concrete pad was broken up, and the engine located on solid rails. More equipment was added to the Museum over the years and additional rails were installed. Meanwhile, the museum secured the old Boys & Girls Club building at the north end of the park and in 1987 volunteers remodeled the building to resemble the demolished Chandler depot. Finally, a protective fence was placed around the historic equipment. With these improvement, the steam engine occupied at a featured spot, the corner of Chandler Blvd. and Delaware Street. In the early 2000s the need to recondition the locomotive was obvious. Fortunately, the City of Chandler agreed to pay for the paint if ARM volunteers would give it a new paint job. Consequently, the engine was power washed and hand scrubbed, the cab floor on the fireman’s side was replaced,

and the remainder of the catwalk welds were removed. After a good coat of paint, the proper lettering stencils were applied. The 2562 emerged looking much as it had the day in 1956 it was donated to Chandler.

The story doesn't end there. Restoration work is continuing as funds and parts become available. More important, Armstrong Park was never a good location for the growing museum. By the year 2000 it was overcrowded with historic rail equipment. Fortunately, the city again came to the rescue, agreeing to give the museum about six acres of land in Tumbleweed Park, about three miles to the south. Planning for a permanent museum home began in 1995, and serious work started in 2001. Major grants provided funds for a half dozen display tracks, fencing, lighting, and other accessories. Museum trackage was also connected directly to the Union Pacific's Chandler branch, providing access to the outside world. In July 2006 the 2562 and other pieces of equipment were moved to the new site at Tumbleweed Park. For the first time in years the steam engine rolled along a stretch of real trackage as it was relocated to a site where it could be protected, viewed and appreciated (and restored). After a half-century Chandler's steam engine has finally come full-circle.

On Display at Arizona Railroad Museum



MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

I was unable to attend the January meeting, and do not have a copy of the minutes. However, I will try to obtain a copy for the February meeting.

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UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

As of the date of this mailing, there has not been any entertainment scheduled for the meeting. However, please let me or Jerry or Bruce know if you wish to present something.

If you know of any other events that should be added to our newsletter, please email, (chrismanleysteam@gmail.com), or call, (541-291-1705), with the details.

OFFICIAL Publication of the Southern Oregon Railway Historical Society

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