

RIVERSIDE INDEPENDENT ENTERPRISE

NEWSPAPER FOR RIVERSIDE COUNTY

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The End of an Era

The steam locomotive may be almost as outdated as the horse-drawn fire engine, but one can't read of its passing from the Riverside scene without a few pangs of regret.

And passing it is. It's been some time since the Santa Fe sent its last steam on this division today. The Union Pacific will make its last use of steam on this division tomorrow. The Southern Pacific is still sending little steam switch engines over from Colton, but their days—or their years at least—are numbered.

The last steam run on the Union Pacific will be a railroad excursion on which some 500 railroad enthusiasts will ride out from Los Angeles to have lunch in Fairmount Park. The trip has been organized by the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society. The locomotive selected for the trip is of the once-popular Mikado type.

We doubt that many children will gather to see this old "Mike" pull the last steam load into Riverside, but we're sure that the generations of children to come will be the poorer for the passing of the steam locomotive.

The shiny diesels are an attraction, of course. But they offer nothing to compare with the pounding drive wheels, the roaring steam and the long, moaning whistle of the steam engine.

The Iron Horse, conqueror of the prairies, builder of the West, is departing the scene. It's retiring to the limbo of the horse-drawn carriage and the hand-cranked automobile. It's being replaced by something far more efficient but far less appealing.

The demands of progress will in a few years eliminate the last of the steam locomotives. But we wonder if one of the last of the great clan couldn't be preserved for the children of Riverside.

A few months ago the Great Northern Railroad gave the last steam locomotive on its western division to the City of Seattle. It's been painted and polished as brightly as the day it made its first run, and it now stands proudly in Seattle's Woodland Park.

Asking for a gift may be in bad taste, but we've gone too far with this to back away. We'd like to see a steam locomotive in Fairmount Park. We'd like the children of the decades ahead to be able to see, even if they can't hear, a grand old locomotive.

We'd like to see the bright symbol of the Santa Fe, the UP or the SP emblazoned on the side of a retired locomotive, standing through the years as a symbol of a romantic era in transportation. We hope the officials of at least one of these railroads feel as we do.

Third, Fourth, So V

Ever since the latest U figures showed Philadelphia populous than Los Angeles, calling the City of Angels and more earthy people the duking of being the nation's third city, there has been an effort that figures once again are lying.

Certain L.A. newspapers in every conceivable way to Los Angeles (figures be damned) larger of the two. This has strained the City of Brotherly love for Los Angeles.

Now at last Philadelphia has that the simplest way to ending is to stop responding to claim by Los Angeles that it is the larger. Bigger in area, yes, Philadelphians; but we have more and that is where we intend to matter, at least until the next.

With luck that is where Los Angeles will leave the matter, too. But we don't quite understand the stance of being big. Why do so much to be third, largest or of fourth?

Los Angeles would do well worrying about smog and Philadelphia free to worry about its place in the League.

The Right Thing to

To the credit of the congress didn't let last week's shooting House squelch their sense of long. Rep. Carl Vinson (D-Ga.) stance, (perhaps because he was for the fireworks) was one of the first to recover his wit. He considered submitting a bill three new classifications of representatives.

One would be combat pay for those who stood up under fire and would be flight pay, for those who flew out of the House chamber the third would be, of all things, marine pay, this for those men were wise enough to dive under desks.

Doubtless the congressmen their colleague's proposal the motion it deserves. We hope having paid their respects to the memory of that startling Monday, the representatives will honor in some way Rep. Ben Jensen, of Iowa, the one of the five who were shot in the presence of mind to say what was required of him: "They got me."

Senator Souper

"The Revolt of the Middle-Aged" the title of a new book, and appropriate to that time of life when there is a man's hair but the girls are attracted by the green in his pocket.

SIDE SHOW

GEORGE RIX

"Alas! how swift the moments fly!

How flash the years along!
Scarcely here, yet gone already by,
The burden of a song.
See childhood, youth, and man-
hood pass,
And age with furrowed brow;
Time was — Time shall be —
drain the glass —
But where in Time is now?"
—John Quincy Adams

Railroad Lines: From time to time, in this space, I've mentioned the whistle of the steam locomotive: spoken of it mournfully as something regrettably missing from the modern American scene, something impossible to replace with the bellow of a Diesel horn.

My laments have extended over a period of the last several years, during which I've noted similar regrets expressed in verse, prose and in mere statistics, in magazines, newspapers and over the air. A lot of people, it's evident, regret the passing of the steam whistle.

In an effort to preserve for future generations something of the appeal of the steam locomotive, American railroads have presented typical engines to cities and towns willing to give them places of honor. Riverside is fortunate now in having a steam engine, a half-century-old sample of yesterday's railroadng, gift of the Union Pacific. It's fitting that old No. 6051 should end its service as a memorial in the golden days of the rails here in Riverside, because it must have thundered through Ourlown hundreds — possibly thousands — of times, hauling the world's merchandise east and west and north and south.

We can preserve the hard metal, the iron and steel and copper that went into the making of this steam locomotive. It's too bad we can't also keep the musical wail of its whistle. A lonesome voice, a sound with heart-break in it, it's called by Minnie Hite Moody in the lines she wrote for the August Ladies Home Journal, in which she bids her grandson listen to a locomotive whistle in the night and remember always, if he can. Says she, "It will be gone forever, when you're a man."

If you've a spark of sentiment, you'll enjoy reading all of Mrs. Moody's railroad lines. You'll find them on Page 122 of the Journal.

Old 6051's Last Run

Word that the Union Pacific Railroad will donate a steam locomotive for permanent display in Fairmount Park is good news indeed. For the steam locomotives are rapidly passing from the American scene; and the Union Pacific, by its generous gesture, is giving the city a chance to preserve a fine specimen.

Not so many decades ago the steam locomotive was an indispensable tool in the building of a nation 3000 miles across. Now it's being pushed into the scrap yard by the more efficient diesel. It will soon be entirely replaced. And America will be stronger in foot-pounds of transportation energy, but poorer in spirit.

One doesn't have to share a small boy's fascination with locomotives to realize that the pounding drive wheels, the churning drive shafts, the hissing steam, the flashing sparks, the rolling smoke, and the moaning whistle of a steam engine can never be replaced by anything the streamlined diesel has to offer. And one doesn't have to be an authority on American culture to realize that as the iron horse chugs its way over the hill to the land of clipper ships and Concord coaches, American folklore is the poorer.

The steam locomotive, like the horse-drawn fire engine and the Mississippi steamboat is worth remembering; and the best possible way to remember is by suitable preservation and display.

There could hardly be a better place for this than in Fairmount Park. Union Pacific No. 6051 will be a significant addition to the Park. It will, over the years, be of increasing interest to young and old alike.