The Steam Locomotive—A Giant That Is Passing

HUMBOLDT RAILROADS, PAST AND PRESENT, HAVE VARIED ENGINES

By FEYTHE W. HOWDEN

Steam locomotives are, perhaps, one of the most proudly cherished memories ever invested by man ... and one of the most magnificent, despite the fact they are referred to as "old."

Today, the internal combustion engine is king on the highways, shoreways—indeed, everywhere. The only real exception is the farm. Here, in many places, and in large power plants, has steam remained supreme. But even in this age, it takes a small boy who will just be interested in a big steam locomotive ... while a legion of railroad fans follow the gong with keen interest. Witness the visit of the Railroad and Locomotive Historical Society in Humboldt this week.

For 135 years steam was supreme on the rail. Locomotives have changed, developed from the toy buggies in the beginning of the 19th century, to the colossal units that still run—seem so vital to an era over time.

But they are not making many steam locomotives in these days. The record of steam on the rails has come to a standing still, and the friends of the locomotive are trying to keep it alive.

The story of the North Valley and Eureka Railroad, that runs as far as Alton, and the Humboldt and Mad River, that runs as far as Redwood City, is a story of steam. It is a story of how the golden spike on the Valley of the Pacific Coast highway is pointed with a power plant, still another story of how the Humboldt and Eureka Railroad was once run by steam. It is a story of how the Humboldt and Eureka Railroad's present-day service is provided by the mighty unit.

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