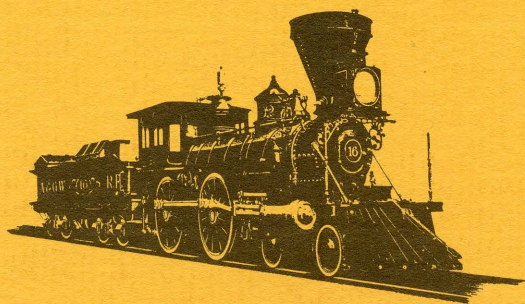


# A GOLDEN SPIKE

BY

MARIE HARRINGTON









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*The Story of the Completion of the  
Southern Pacific — San Joaquin Valley Line  
Between Los Angeles and San Francisco  
Septembr 5, 1876*

*Marie Harrington*

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Los Angeles Cable Railway near Old River Station  
of the Southern Pacific

Charles Crocker

Leland Stanford

50th Anniversary Celebration

From the Historical Photos Collection of the  
San Fernando Valley Historical Society:

Train #801 at Lang Station, Valley Times Photo

Southern Pacific Railroad Station at  
San Fernando, Valley Times Photo

San Fernando Tunnel

Train at San Fernando Tunnel

Lang Station, 1968





Charles Crocker, President of the Southern Pacific Railroad



## THE BEGINNING

Lang lies in a hollow of the once-desolate Soledad Canyon in a spot Don Benito Wilson described as "fit only for the production of horned toads and scorpions." It was here that a momentous incident occurred on September 5, 1876 which would echo around the world and forever end the land isolation of Los Angeles. It would be the first big step in making this "Queen of the Cow Counties" the metropolis she was to become. For it was here on this windswept dusty spot at the south end of the Mojave Desert that Charles Crocker, president of the Southern Pacific Railroad of California, with a silver hammer, drove the gold spike that finally joined the rails linking Los Angeles and San Francisco. This would end years of stagecoach travel either along the coast when tides permitted or across the rot dusty desert with the ever-present threat of banditos, heat and thirst.

As far back as 1853 Lt. R. S. Williamson, of the United States Geological Survey had come down San Francisquito Canyon and over the steep, brush-covered mountain leading into the San Fernando Valley. His orders from Washington were "to command an expedition and surveying party to ascertain the most practical and economical route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean."

That more than twenty years would elapse before a railroad linking the north and south became a reality may be due to such factors as the Civil War, bank failure both in the east and here and the end of a boom era. Hope was reborn when the Southern Pacific finally began laying its rails south. They eventually reached Lathrop and then Bakersfield (or Baker's field to give it an early name) which became the terminus from the north.

From time beyond time the only means of egress to the north or south inland was by the way of treacherous Cuesta Vieja, or Old Grade, the forerunner of the later Fremont's Pass; later still the Pass would be known as Beale's Cut, the Santa Clara Divide and the Big Cut.



The original old Pass was no doubt used by the Indians from prehistoric times right down to the mission period. The padres of San Fernando Mission tried, without much success, to improve the trail so that carretas could get over it as well as making it easier for the stock and lessening the chances of their falling off the trail to their death. Even Fremont and his men had difficulty in getting over the Pass with their equipment. Memories of the San Marcos Pass must have passed through his mind.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors finally decided that something had to be done about the bottleneck hindering traffic into the pueblo and in 1854 awarded a contract to construct a new road across the San Fernando mountains a little southwest of the old Cuesta. The new road with its long narrow cut was opened the next year but still proved to be very steep. It was over this road that Edward Fitzgerald Beale brought his camel corps on their way to Fort Tejon in 1857. It was also on this road that the famous story of Phineas Banning driving his stagecoach down the steep grade while his passengers walked it, had the misfortune of the stage turning over and over until it reached the bottom and Banning got out unhurt. The Butterfield stages came this way until they ended service in 1861.

After the 1862 floods a toll service was put into effect and a franchise was granted by the Legislature to Andres Pico, C. H. Brinley and a man named Vineyard, to make the Pass usable for increased traffic. But the trio did not exercise their franchise and it was given to Beale who was no longer Surveyor General of California and Nevada. His franchise was finally approved in 1864. Banning's stage wagons continued over the route accompanied by a contingent of soldiers each trip. A small adobe house was located at the foot of the grade in which the tollkeeper lived.

By the time Remi Nadeau and his Cerro Gordo wagons were bringing wealth into Los Angeles in the 1870s the Cuesta was much traveled. Gold, silver, lead and copper mines were scattered around the Soledad country and one of them, the "Escondido," was owned in part by Andres and Romulo Pico. Mines along the Kern River county as well as other parts of the Mojave made for extra travel.



With the coming of the railroad the beginning of the end had come for Beale's Cut. Previous to September 1876 stagecoaches from both Los Angeles and the coast had left off passengers at the summit of the San Fernando mountains near Lang's Station. They were picked up on the other side of the mountain to continue the train trip north or south. The poor old fifteen-foot wide Beale's Cut proved too narrow for "horseless carriages" by 1910 and since the freeways have come into our lives, the old cut remains almost forgotten.

From an engineering standpoint the biggest difficulty with the San Fernando tunnel project was the boring and financial problems. Upon completion the cost exceeded two and one half million dollars and took a year and a half to bore through the mighty mountain. If Chinese help had not been available the tunnel might never have been completed. Located some 27 miles from Los Angeles between Weldon Canyon and the Santa Clarita watershed, the cut, when completed, was nearly 7000 feet long (6940 feet exactly.) Candles to light the excavation as it continued were supplied from Newmark and Co. in Los Angeles. Fifteen hundred men labored at the bore with frequent caveins, sweat, blood and the loss of life. Digging commenced on March 22, 1875.

The sandstone composition of the mountain was saturated with water and oil and the muck was like working with very soft mud pies. The challenge of this almost impossible task was met by the young superintendent, Frank Frates, native to the Azores, who had started his railroad career with the Central Pacific. Hard work was no stranger to this earnest young man. His Chinese crew had had previous experience with the Tehachapi tunnels, most of them having been at Caliente when it was railhead for the Southern Pacific.

According to figures given by Remi Nadeau, Frates' excavation was 22 feet high, 16½ feet wide at the bottom and over 18 feet at the shoulders, an angular arch being formed overhead. The Chinese worked as teams of two, one man holding the wedge in place against the rock while his partner swung the heavy sledge. The upper half of the tunnel was dug in advance of the bottom half



for a distance of about 20 feet. Temporary timbers were placed as soon as the excavations were made; permanent timbers of Oregon cedar would be placed later. The lower half of the tunnel was dug by another crew of workers, the dirt being carried away by two-horse cars running on laid track. Day and night the work went on in 8-hour shifts, the Chinese being paid \$1.00 per day and the white carpenters and mechanics receiving \$2.60 a day for a 12-hour shift. A city of tents was located near the south end of the tunnel mouth for the workers.

The site of the northern end of the tunnel just south of the present town of Newhall, had to be abandoned due to the oil-soaked rock causing caveins. Frates chose higher ground.

After the northern mouth of the tunnel was opened in June 1875, steam pumps helped to keep the tunnel from flooding with water.

Frates previous experience with the Central Pacific stood him well with his many problems including incline shafts, sand in the water holding up the pumps' work and delaying further tunneling until the pumps could be overhauled. All this rather belied the remark made by Leland Stanford that it was "too damned dry in southern California for any such catastrophe." Caveins still occurred.

For a time the southern terminus of the railroad was at the new little town of San Fernando. The first train from Los Angeles reached San Fernando on April 20, 1874, shortly after the town had been founded by Charles Maclay, a former state senator from Santa Clara County and an ex-Methodist missionary. Excursion trains ran daily from the city, the passengers being given lunch at the Mission before going on to bid for lots.

Eulogio F. de Celis and his brothers, Jose Manuel and Pastor, had deeded a parcel of land to the railroad on August 9, 1873 (in consideration of \$1.00), on the express condition that the site "be used only for a depot and other railroad purposes, construction of a building for proper operation of the railroad." At a later period, Maclay and his partners, George and Benjamin Porter,



also deeded three blocks of land to the railroad lying between the railroad and Porter Ave. (now San Fernando Road). It was hoped that this plot would be used for a park adjoining the depot but the horses hitched to the new trees there made such luscious meals of the bark that the idea was abandoned.

Charles Maclay filed a map in September 1874 showing the proposed site of the railroad depot, the Cerro Gordo Freighting Company headquarters to the north of the depot and a hotel to be constructed by a Captain Kittridge. The railroad property then as now, lay between Maclay and Kalisher streets.

Persons who became identified with San Fernando included Ross Ames, the first station master who married a sister-in-law of Captain Kittridge. There was also A. B. Moffitt, co-partner with Maclay in a store. At that period the post office was located at the railroad station, Kittridge bringing the mail down from the northern terminus of the railroad and Moffitt distributing it in the "event of the day," as history tells us. Persons from the valley patiently waited to have their names called out and receive their letters. Moffitt was also the coroner and the story goes that only he knew for certainty how many Chinese workers were killed in tunnel mishaps during construction.

Captain Kittridge moved the post office to The Tunnel as it was now officially known, in 1875 when a veritable city of tents and portable houses arose at the south mouth of the tunnel. Many railroad wives came up to make homes for their husbands in makeshift houses and even planted flower gardens while they lived there.

Remi Nadeau was also a familiar figure around San Fernando where his huge freighting wagons were now headquartered after removal from Los Angeles. When the north part of the railroad construction reached Mojave, he moved his headquarters to that high desert spot.

As to the final opening of the tunnel, history has left us two dates. The first version is that Chinese diggers came face to face on July 14, 1876 when the opening to



the north and south was only a half inch out of line. Another version is that Frates finished boring the tunnel in August 1876 when he personally removed the final cart of earth. Water is said to have gushed from the tunnel from one end to the other and after a year and a half, the San Fernando Mountain was drained. Timbering was completed the same month and not long after that, the tracklayers finally laid the rails from the mountain's summit to the northern entrance. From nearby Lyon's Station, the news was flashed to Los Angeles that the rails were in the tunnel. The first train passed through the San Fernando Tunnel on August 12, 1876.

The tracklayers from Tehachapi were steadily laying around 2½ miles of rail per day. As they reached Mojave, they laid track east of Willow Springs and past Lancaster Station. By this time it is estimated that 4000 workers were furiously pushing ahead from desolate Soledad Canyon south and the San Fernando Tunnel north, trying desperately to meet and close the remaining gap between them.

Charles Crocker, president of the Southern Pacific watched progress from Lang's Hotel and on the morning of September 4, he was able to send a message to the Southern Pacific in San Francisco and to ex-Governor John G. Downey in Los Angeles, that all was ready to lay the golden spike on the following day.

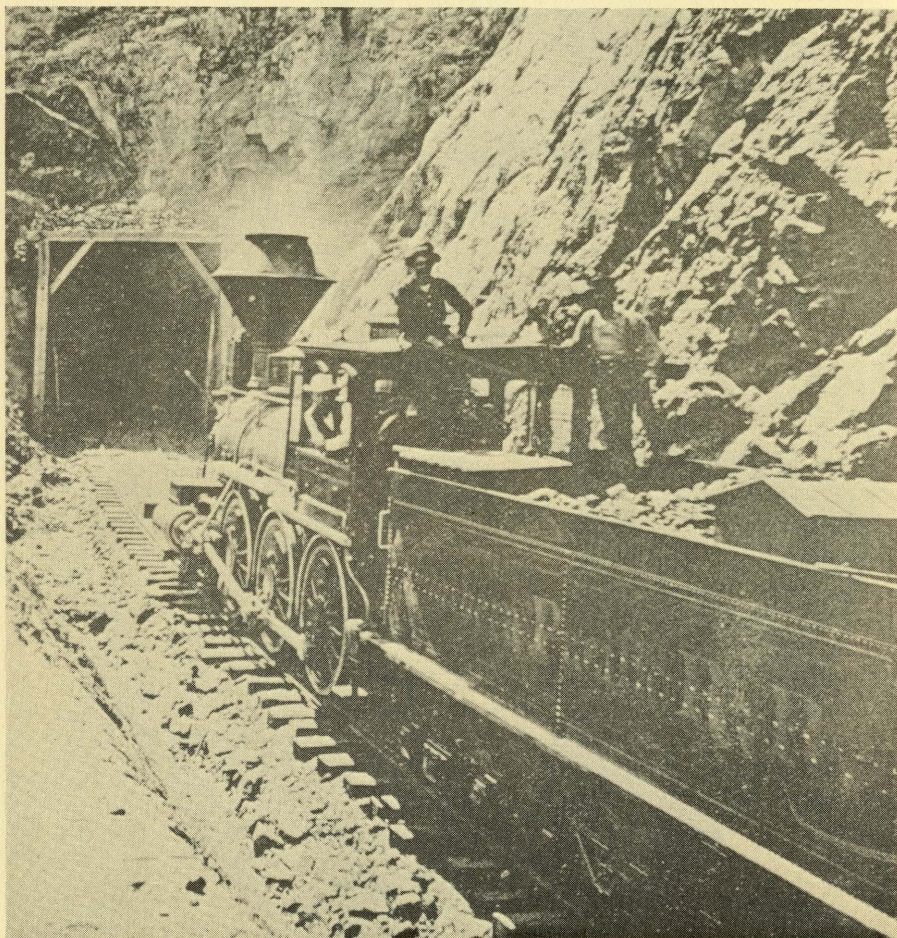
Completion of the tunnel made it one of the longest railroad tunnels then in the United States, exceeded only by tunnels in Virginia and Massachusetts and one in Switzerland. Sutro's famous tunnel into the Comstock Lode was not a railroad tunnel such as the others mentioned.





Leland Stanford, first president of the Central Pacific Company  
and director of the Southern Pacific Railroad



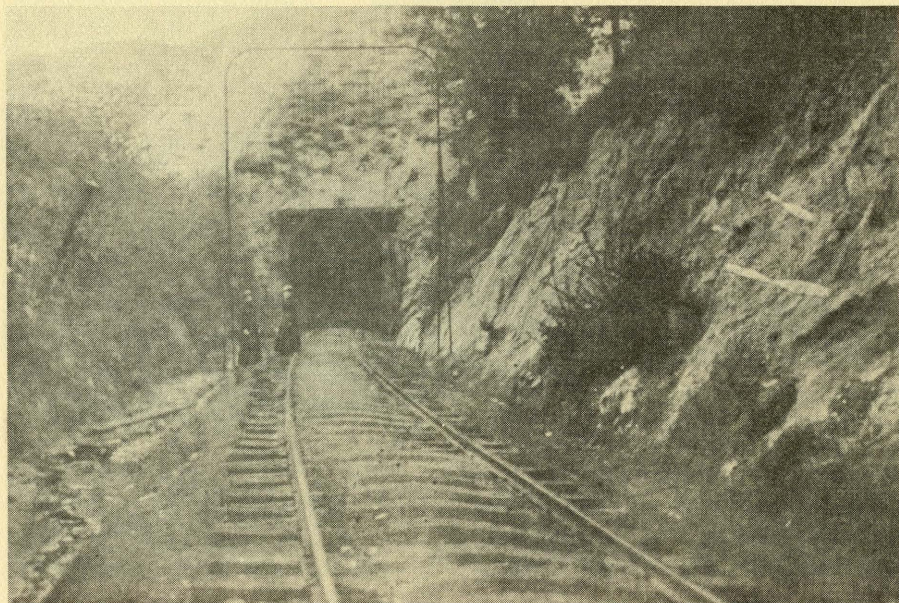


Early train at San Fernando Tunnel





Lang Station, 1968



San Fernando Tunnel



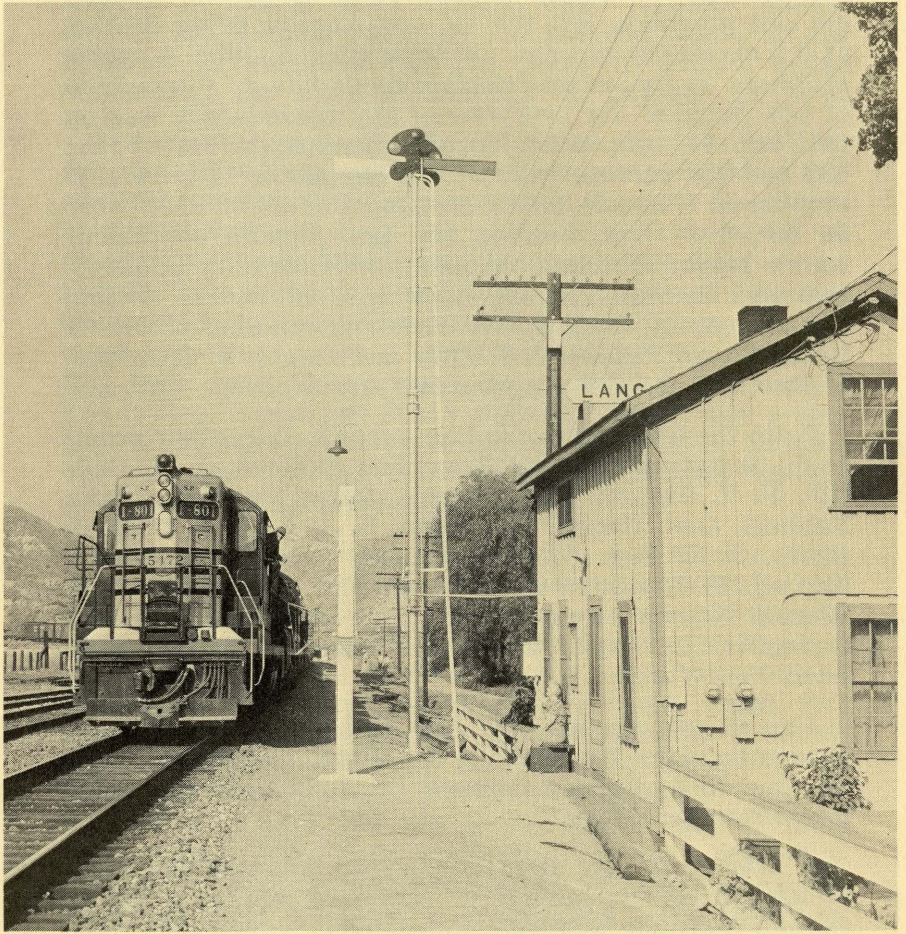


Los Angeles Cable Railway near old River Station of Southern Pacific



The old San Fernando Railroad station, badly damaged by fire in 1956, abandoned in 1957





SP 5472, an Electro Motive Division SD-9, powers the first section of train No. 801 past Lang Station with a load of high priority freight, August 1958.



## THE GOLDEN SPIKE

Engine 25, decorated with national flags, fruits, flowers and greenery, left the old Los Angeles River Station at 9 a.m. on the morning of September 5, 1876. A roster of guests on the excursion train reads like a "Who's Who of Los Angeles" for everyone of any consequence was on that trip. Reports in Los Angeles newspapers stated that 190 and 250 persons were at the banquet held later that evening so it is safe to say that most or all of them were on the train trip. Leading the Los Angeles contingent were: Mayor Prudent Beaudry, ex-Governor John G. Downey, General Phineas Banning, Don Benito Wilson, Col. Benjamin Peel, I. W. Hellman, ex-Sheriff James Burns, Judge Robert W. Widney and Joseph U. Crawford, engineer of the Los Angeles and Independence Railroad.

From the long list in the Los Angeles Star, other prominent Angelenos included Brig. Gen. Sanford, J. M. Griffith, H. T. Hazard, J. S. Slauson, Louis Wolfskill, Frank Sabitchi, Gen. George Stoneman, L. J. Rose, J. DeBarth Shorb, S. L. Foy, Solomon Lazard, Stephen M. White, Hon. U. Wells, the French Consul, M. Moteuhant, J. J. Warner, Harris Newmark, the Rev. Fathers Duran and Gallegher, the latter from San Francisco and Mooney from New York.

Also on this historic list: J. P. Carrillo, ex-Mayor J. H. Toberman, City Marshal A. W. Hyam, County Assessor Dr. Crawford, Antonio Coronel, Dr. J. J. Widney, the Rt. Rev. Francisco Mora.

A trio from the Central Pacific Railroad Benjamin Welch, master car builder; W. H. Potter, auditor and E. P. Gerald, traveling auditor.

Other parties came from San Diego to San Luis Obispo. Among the towns surrounding the Los Angeles area, representatives came from Downey, El Monte, Wilmington, San Joaquin, Soledad, Anaheim, Tustin and San Bernardino. Reporters from both Los Angeles and San Francisco papers were on hand as well as the Associated Press.



A stop was made by the train at San Fernando to take on Sen. Maclay, T. J. Caystile, Dr. Ellis and others not named in the accounts. Other stops were made at the Tunnel and Newhall. The town of Newhall would be founded a month later, Henry Mayo Newhall having deeded 426.76 acres adjoining the railroad tracks to the Western Development Co. The Southern Pacific began subdividing the town of Newhall on October 18, 1876.

The weather, according to old accounts, "was delightful, the sky vacant, and the temperature refreshing and grateful." It took the train one hour to reach the mouth of the tunnel and here the party entered a region of Stygian darkness. Water trickled down the sides of the tunnel "and every now and then a glimpse of pale and unearthly light caught from flickering candles of a tunnel fiend crowding up to a niche formed by the timbers." The train took 10½ minutes to go through the tunnel and it finally emerged into a region of white sage giving way to the same grass which covers the plains of Nevada. The train had left well-timbered land behind and "emerged into the forbidden regions beyond."

Lyons Station, where the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph huts were located where telegraphers waited to rush the great news over the wires, was reached shortly after leaving the tunnel. Then past the site of Newhall and finally into the Soledad region which was indeed well-named for it was described as a "wild, wierd, and inhospitable region especially in that part of it which has been subjected to the railroad. The indications of sidetracks, material, cars and gangs of workmen advised that we were near the end of the track." Still another account says: "The spot where track layers occurred is a valley of sand in an amphitheatre of bare mountains. Here and there is a bush of greasewood and a collection of pancake-shaped cactus plants."

Upon arrival at Lang's Station, the train party was met by the entire working force of 5000 persons, drawn up in battle array. There were 3000 Chinese at rest paraded with their long-handled shovels. Everyone was covered by a large basket hat. One description states that "Swarms of Chinamen in denim pants, jackets and



basket hats and scores of teams and drivers formed a working display such as is seldom seen. The secret of rapid railroad building was apparent at a glance. The spot selected for the ceremony was on a broad and beautiful plain surrounded by undulating hills on one side and the rugged peaks and deep gorges of the San Fernando Mountains on the other . . . By some strange oversight, no photographer was present and the pictures presented will live only in the memories of those whose good fortune it was to be present."

A young San Fernando man, John T. Wilson, was on the scene at Lang with a team of eight white horses. It was this team which pulled the final rails which were to unite the tracks. Wilson later married into the Lopez family and became one of San Fernando's best-known and loved pioneers.

The Los Angeles contingent arrived at Lang somewhat ahead of the San Francisco party and it was not until 1:00 o'clock that the latter put in an appearance. Their approach was the signal for a general and hearty cheering from the thousands of throats and handshaking and congratulations were indulged in as old acquaintances were recognized.

In the 50-person San Francisco contingent, notables, Southern Pacific officials and members of its board of supervisors were present. Leading the party were Charles Crocker, president of the Southern Pacific (already at Lang as before told), Leland Stanford, president of the Central Pacific, David D. Colton, Southern Pacific; Mayor A. J. Bryant; Darius O. Mills, financier. Others were: Supervisors F. F. Strother and C. B. Edwards; Col. Cunningham, pay director, U.S.A.; A. N. Towne, general superintendent, Southern Pacific; W. T. Coleman, M. H. DeYoung, J. P. Newmark, J. P. Vandenburg, superintendent, Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph; Rev. W. H. Platt, Gen. McDowell, Commander, Department of the Pacific.

The Los Angeles Star gave a graphic description of the ceremonies saying in part: "A space of 1000 feet had been left on which the rails were to be laid and each party of workmen were stationed by their respective cars and



there was a keen rivalry as to which side should lay the last rail. Col. Crocker made a sign, the locomotive whistled and the two groups set to work with a will. While it lasted, it was certainly the busiest sight we ever saw in the course of our life.

In just 5½ minutes from the start as timed by Vice President Colton, the last rail lay on the ties, the party working northward from the Tunnel being victors by a few seconds."

(Another newspaper account says it took 8½ minutes.)

"After the cheering had subsided and the crowd induced to stand back a short distance, ex-Gov. Downey introduced Mr. L. W. Thatcher to Col. Crocker as the public-spirited jeweler who had manufactured the gold spike and silver hammer to be used in the ceremonies. Col. Crocker thanked him for his appropriate gift and said the company would treasure them in its archives as a souvenir of the great event. The spike is of solid San Gabriel gold the same size as ordinary railroad spikes and was inscribed:

#### LAST SPIKE CONNECTING

#### LOS ANGELES AND SAN FRANCISCO BY RAIL

SEPTEMBER 5, 1876

The hammer is of solid silver with a handle of orange wood.

"Fall to" Crocker yelled as he grasped the hammer in one hand and the spike in the other. Placing the spike in the prepared hole, with six raps, he drove it in."

A word here about the spike and hammer donor is not amiss. L. W. Thatcher, according to his display ads in the newspapers of that period, was the keeper of the City and Railroad time, having his shop at 67 Main St., Los Angeles. He was both an importer and dealer in diamonds and jewelry as well as a watch man. In the center of his ads is a picture of a train with "Elgin" prominently displayed.



Both the gold spike and a silver one are now at the California Historical Society's San Francisco headquarters. The whereabouts of the hammer, at this writing, is unknown.

Col. Crocker gave the first short speech of the day saying in part that the "wedding of Los Angeles and San Francisco is not a ceremony contracted by the bands of wedlock but by bands of steel." He prophesied that someday the area in which they stood would be filled with happy and prosperous people enjoying every facility for comfort, happiness and education. "Gentlemen, I am no public speaker but I can drive a spike!" he continued.

His words were followed by Rev. Platt of San Francisco who invoked a prayer.

Gen. D. D. Colton, vice president of the Southern Pacific, was the next speaker and gave the longest talk of any despite the fact that the wind had started up and black dust was blowing into faces and eyes and penetrating throats and lungs. He briefly sketched the career of Charles Crocker, of the work done on the Central Pacific and said that the rails were now within 100 miles of Fort Yuma and the Colorado River.

Both the mayors of Los Angeles and San Francisco gave brief words as did Leland Stanford. The closing words were given by Gen. Phineas Banning who said in part: "The completion of this line of road today gives Los Angeles a market for surplus production such as she never before possessed." He prophesied a great future for the Company thanks to the perseverance of the gentlemen connected with the Southern Pacific Railroad.

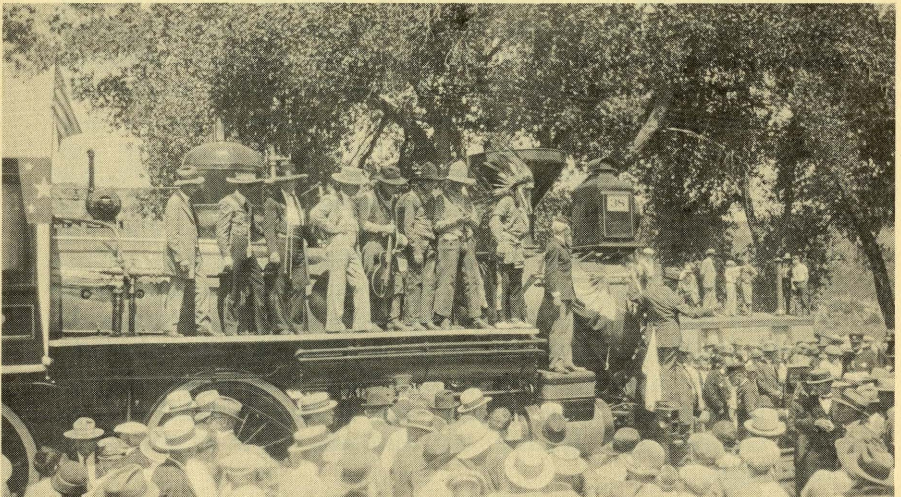
Banning's far-seeing thoughts were reiterated in articles appearing in the Los Angeles Daily Evening Express the next day which said the railroad had brought Southern California out of her railroad isolation and united her commercial capital, Los Angeles, with the greatest system of highways in the United States.



Another prophecy had been made by this paper on September 5 when speaking of the grapes and vineyards in the county, it stated: "it would develop possibilities of a county which is destined to rival some of the most famous nations of Europe in extent of her vine interests."

After Gen. Banning's speech everyone embarked on the trains for the trip to Los Angeles and the banquet to follow at Union Hall on Main St. Union Hall being the once-time headquarters of the now-defunct Union Club. The Club had been founded in Los Angeles during the Civil War, no doubt to combat the secessionist leanings in the pueblo and throughout the southern part of this State.

The great news had already been relayed over the wires to San Francisco, Los Angeles and the East that the rails were now united and cheers of the thousands on the sandy plain of Soledad Canyon added to the great noise of the brass band playing. Pandemonium broke loose. No doubt the wild denizens of the Soledad retreated to their burrows, holes and caves until quiet again settled over their land.



Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration at Lang



## THE BANQUET

As the trains with their "palace cars" pulled into the River Station crowds of Angelenos greeted the cortege with shouts, waving flags, bands playing and all the display of a welcome to conquering heroes. Reports say the streets were lined with cheering crowds all the way to Union Hall.

The interior of Union Hall must have resembled the main exhibit hall of a large county fair according to the descriptions which have come down to us from the Los Angeles Daily Star and the Los Angeles Daily Evening Express. The entry was lined with evergreens, native to Los Angeles or imports now growing in the area. Over the doorway leading from the stairway to the vestibule was an American eagle, captured in the San Fernando mountains. The outer hall was also decorated with a variety of evergreens and over the doorway leading to the inner hall was a Maltese Cross designed also of evergreens with the initials "L.A." and "S.F." outlined.

In the banqueting hall, evergreens and flowers hung from the ceiling in decorative patterns while over 100 varieties of wine and table grapes on the vine were entwined around the evergreens. A huge bouquet was suspended from the ceiling in the center of the hall, made up of 400 varieties of flowers. Suspended cages throughout the room contained such singing birds as linnets, mocking birds and canaries.

On the right side as one entered the hall, there was an arch, also made of evergreens and flowers with the words "Corn, Wine and Oil" displayed across the top. Under the arch were shelves on which local wines from the vineyards of L. J. Rose, Don Benito Wilson and other growers were exhibited. From table to sweet wines, in bottle, case and demijohn, there was an immense variety. There were also exhibits of San Fernando Valley wheat, rye, barley and corn. There was a honey exhibit from San Gabriel and behind the shelves, corn stalks 14-19 feet high.



From Dunsmoor and Coles hop yards at El Monte, came an exhibit of their prize product. There were also hops exhibits as well as lager beer from Anaheim.

Festoons of flowers, agricultural products and evergreens lined the remaining walls of the hall. Everything from clusters of beans to English walnuts were used in the display. In another corner of the hall, another archway had the initials "S.P. R.R." — The Tie Between Sister Cities — S.P. R.R." Shelved under this archway were more wines from Matthew Keller's vineyard. Next to his exhibit was another wine display from the vineyard of Don Jose Rubio; it was Rubio's grapes that had been used in the ceiling decorations.

A platform was raised at the east end of the hall, surrounded by flowers in pots, beds or hanging baskets. Fruits, nuts and broom corn were exhibited on the platform showing the variety of agricultural products raised in the southern part of this State. Another part of the platform was dedicated to the sub-tropical fruits which were growing here including all varieties of citrus, olives, figs and pomegranates. Even the prickly pear known to the natives as the "tuna" were shown.

In other spots of the hall, more citrus, wines, cordials and brandies all had their hour of glory. The vegetable kingdom was also present with beets weighing nearly 80 pounds and watermelons, 45 pounds. Specimens of manzanita wood, worked into canes, olive oil from Sen. Maclay's San Fernando ranch and paintings from J. M. Griffith's private collection as well as monster bouquets all added to the amazing kaleidoscope of color, scent and visual wonder. A fountain, located in the center of the hall, was decorated with flowers and shrubs with a large glass globe suspended over it "which, when lighted up looked like a scene in fairyland."

The banquet, a gourmet's delight, was prepared by Monsieur C. A. Cuyas, chef of the Pico House. Besides this repast prepared for 250 persons, M. Cuyas also had an extra 100 persons to prepare for that night at the Pico House.



The bill of fare at Union Hall that memorable night was as follows:

#### SOUP

Consomme Royale

#### FISH

Filet de Salmon au Beurre de Montpellier

#### HORS d'OEUVRES d'OFFICE

Olives      Shrimps      Anchovies

Relishes      Butter

Apple Sauce      Pickles      Cranberry Sauce

#### SALADS

Mayonnaise de Homards Monteis

Mayonnaise de Chicken a l'Italienne

German Salad

Russian Salad

#### ORNAMENTAL DISHES

Noix de Veal a la Montmorency a la Jelly

Turkey Galiantine en Belle Vue

Pates de Foies au Attele Belle Vue

Pates de Quails a la Jelly

#### ROASTS

Ham de Mayence roast a la Jelly

Smoked Tongue en Arcade au Attele

Turkey Truffe aux Papillote

Chicken Barde a la Glace

Quails Piques decore

Filet de Boef a la Regence

Chaud et Froid de Chicken Decore

Quartier de Venaisoin Marinee

Quartier de Veal a la Creme

Aspic Financiere Belle Vue

Pieces de Flan



## PASTRY

English Plum Pudding, Maraschino Sauce

Fruit Cake, Glace Blanc

Mushroom Meringues

Almond Dessert de Sauce a la Plume

Cakes a la Genoise, Glace Divirsee

Vanilla Souffle

Macaroons

Ladies Kisses

Lemon Cream Pie

Apple Pie

Peach Pie

## PIECES MONTIES

Nougat Baked, garnie au Fruit Caramel

Croquant de Macaroons, a la Royale

## DESSERT

Champagne Jelly, a la Rose

Blanc Manger Punsche

Vanilla Ice Cream

Coffee (cold and warm)      Tea

All kinds of Fruit



Appropriate wines, many of them imported, were served throughout the meal which finally came to an end at eight o'clock. After a half hour's intermission the company sat back to listen to toasts and speeches. Mayor Prudent Beaudry presided and called first on Charles Crocker. He was followed by Col. Grey, engineer of the Southern Pacific, Mayor A. J. Bryant of San Francisco, S. M. Wilson, Capt. C. E. Thom, Judge Ygnacio Sepulveda, Col. J. F. Godfrey and Loring Pickering of San Francisco. Several short speeches were then given by Gen. McDowell, Phineas Banning, ex-Gov. Downey and others.

The time now was 11:30 p.m. The ladies had arrived, the floor was cleared for dancing and the "hop" lasted until 1:00 a.m. At the close of the dance the San Francisco guests made their way back to River Station and boarded their train for the journey home.

The curtain had rung down on Los Angeles' most momentous public ceremony to date.



## LANG

Lang has an interesting history. Its location was one of the original stations on the Cerro Gordo Freighting Line which Remi Nadeau operated in the early 1870s. It was in 1873 that he received his hauling contract from Judson and Belshaw for their famous Owens Valley operation. Other stations on the route north from Lang were located at Mojave, Red Rock, Panamint, Indian Wells, Little Lake, Haiwee Meadows and Cartago. Here, at the southern end of Owens Lake, the little steamer, Bessie Brady, waited for the trip up the lake where she would be unloaded some 18 miles further on for the last leg up to the Cerro Gordo Mine.

It has been written that Nadeau had 100 men and 80 teams on the road over Soledad Canyon going up into Owens Valley. Only washouts, a seasonal hazard, delayed his teams. After the way stations were built, the teamsters no longer had to camp out and do their own cooking on the trail, they could look forward to a hot meal and overnight accommodations. Those great days of freighting did not last a decade. The coming of the Iron Horse would end gradually not only the freighting but also Phineas Banning's stagecoach business.

Lang, or Lang's Station as it was known in the 1870s, was named for a John Lang, a dairyman who had arrived in Los Angeles in 1872. He was known as "Lang No. 2" for according to Harris Newmark, there were four John Langs in Los Angeles which must have made for great confusion.

In 1873, Lang established a hotel at this Soledad Canyon spot and commenced developing several sulphur pools nearby hoping to start a health spa. An article in the Traveler's Notebook for 1904 says that "not far from the station is a group of 10 white sulphur springs of great virtue." It was at this period that the railroad station and its locale was known around the countryside as "Slayton's Ranch" due to the station master being named Slayton.



In the nearby rolling hills of the Soledad country besides the gold, silver and copper mining operations, there was also borax. One such mine, the Sterling Mining Company operated until 1923 and during World War I shipped its borax from Lang to Bordeaux.

For a period in 1875, Lang's was the railhead as work progressed on the San Fernando Tunnel. Passengers for Los Angeles or San Francisco took stages to Lang where the southbound ones would embark on the far side of the mountain or "over the hill" as they jokingly said, and the northbound passengers would go "on the other side" to catch their train.

While the railroad was being constructed, four different grades were washed out in the stream bed. Flooding was not unusual and has continued on to this day. The Southern Pacific finally laid its rails above the stream bed, making use of small tunnels which had been bored through the protesting hills.

One of the stories that makes the name of John Lang No. 2 remembered is that he shot a grizzly bear weighing 2350 pounds in the San Fernando mountains. The pelt sold for a premium price in Liverpool.

John Lang was the first station master and the depot which bore his name was typical Southern Pacific railroad product. Fairly large, it was raised 3-feet off the ground. It was constructed of board and batten with commodious living quarters for the station master and his family. There was a living room and kitchen downstairs and bedrooms upstairs. The rear end of the building was screened in which made for pleasant living in the hot desert summers. Telegraphic quarters were located at the left front of the building.

After 1876, one passenger and one freight train per day passed through Soledad Canyon on the way north or south. The stages had stopped operating over the Soledad but the Ventura-Santa Barbara stages operated until 1886.

It is remembered by some persons that during the last years of Lang Station, the lady telegrapher sold pies and cakes as a sideline.



The station was closed by the Southern Pacific in the late 1960s and the building finally torn down by the railroad. All that remains of Lang, besides memories, is a large plaque by the side of the road which reads:

#### LANG SOUTHERN PACIFIC STATION

On September 5, 1876, Charles Crocker, President of the Southern Pacific Railroad drove a gold spike to complete his company's San Joaquin Valley line. First rail connection of Los Angeles with San Francisco and transcontinental lines.

#### REGISTERED HISTORICAL LANDMARK No. 590

Plaque placed by California Park Commission in cooperation with Historical Society of Southern California, June 15, 1957.



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