

2014 GNRHS Convention in Helena, Montana

July 12-16, 2014

Welcome to Helena, the capitol of Montana. Our convention hotel is the Great Northern Best Western, with rooms reserved starting on Friday, July 11, 2014, so that those participating in the Saturday tour will be able to check in at convention rates. The format will be changed a bit for this convention. We will have a great Saturday tour (see below), then on Sunday the Board will meet in the morning, with time for others to attend the church of their choice. The Rail Fair will only happen on Sunday this year, from 1 PM to 6 PM. We will only have presenters on Sunday evening, and Monday, and Wednesday until 3 PM. Our Model layout tour will be on Monday evening, with another great day-long tour on Tuesday. Of course, there are also the non-railroad tours on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings (see

below). Of special note for this year is the fact that the men's shirt will have a pocket, as requested by several members of the GNRHS. Finally, on Wednesday evening we will wrap up with our traditional Happy Hour, Banquet, raffle and door prizes.

Because our convention will focus a fair amount on the Montana Central Railway, owned by James J. Hill, we will offer the recently published book by Bill and Jan Taylor, *The Montana Central: Copper, Coal and the Empire Builder* at a special convention price of \$15.00. However this book will only be available, at this price, to those who pay for it on the Registration Form. The book provides the focus for the Saturday and Tuesday tours.

GNRHS Tour: Helena to Great Falls, MT Saturday, July 12, 2014

Guides: Jack Dykstra & Members of the Montana Museum of Railroad History

GNRHS attendees will be treated to one of Montana's most scenic mountain canyons as we explore the route of the historic Montana Central Railway (MC Ry) from Helena to Great Falls. Completed in 1887, this portion of the line has a wide variety of bridge structures and tunnels, as well as former depots to be seen as we travel along the beautiful Prickly Pear Creek and Missouri River.

All aboard! Departure is at 7:45 a.m. We leave Helena on two deluxe motor coaches, with all the amenities, that will provide an enjoyable day encompassing about 230 miles, round trip. Snacks and water will be available throughout the trip.

The tour will proceed north on I-15, with descriptions of how the Montana Central (MC) entered the Helena Valley with notable landmarks pointed out. Then we'll enter the Prickly Pear Canyon to get close-up views of the MC tracks, tunnels and bridges. Quiet today after years of embargo by Great Northern—successor, BNSF Railway, all is still in place for us to see. We'll pull out from time to time, seeing Tunnels No. 5 and No. 4.

At Wolf Creek, we'll stop and stretch our legs while viewing the siding, former depot (privately owned) and surroundings. We'll continue to follow the MC line towards Craig, seeing Tunnel No. 3 across the river. Soon the lengthy bridge over the mouth of the Dearborn River comes into view where it enters the Missouri. Next, we'll pass the very short Tunnel No. 2 and wind our way along the river towards Tunnel No. 1, located by the massive rock named The Mountain Palace. After passing Hardy Creek we'll take I-15 to Cascade, going thru town for a view of the Cascade depot (privately owned). Time allowing, we'll make a swing thru Ulm, see the old depot site, and take I-15 into Great Falls to visit the former GN locomotive facilities, still in use by BNSF, complete with GN-style truss-bridge turntable

and diesel engine house. Next, it's a catered lunch at the Montana Museum of Railroad History. MMRH Members will host you thru historic Montana railroad exhibits and operate the two extensive model railroads. You'll also see a restored BN caboose and 30-inch gauge 1923 Davenport steam loco.

Then its onto the buses for a swing by the two major Great Falls depots (GN and Milwaukee Road), each beautifully preserved; then along the Missouri River with views of the former Great Northern line to Havre on our way to the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center. Here you'll learn about the epic Corps of Discovery passage from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean, including the difficult portage around the Great Falls of the Missouri River in 1805, Leaving the L & C Center, we'll take a side trip to view the large Great Northern bridge spanning the Missouri River at Rainbow Falls.

Having experienced a very full day, we'll depart Great Falls by 3:15 for a scenic trip back to Helena. Along the way on I-15 south you'll be treated to views not seen on the way north. Our target is to return you to the convention hotel at 5:30 p.m., hopefully with both your head and your camera loaded with newfound knowledge of the critical role that the Montana Central Railway played in James J. Hill's quest to build a railroad to the Pacific Ocean.

GNRHS Tour to Butte, MT, on Former MC Ry Tuesday, July 15th, 2014

Guides: Bill & Jan Taylor

The two 56-passenger coaches, with all the amenities, will depart Helena at 8:00 A.M. Participants will first travel to East Helena along the former Montana Central Railway (MC Ry) grade and the current Montana Rail Link (former NP) main line. Then it will follow the MC Ry grade south to Montana City. This is the only operating part of the MC Ry. The current end of track is at Montana City, the remainder having been scrapped in the 1970s and 80s. Much is left to see, however.

From Montana City the buses will stop at Clancy, site of the MC Ry's terminal facilities from 1895 to 1924. From Clancy the tour will continue south along the MC Ry grade to Jefferson City. There it will turn west and travel to Corbin where participants will visit the spectacular 700-foot long 100-foot tall steel Corbin trestle (Br 236.2) which continues to dominate this former mining community. A group photo will be taken at the trestle.

From Corbin we travel south over the 5,600-foot Boulder Divide to Boulder, MT. From there the tour will return along the frontage road to the south portal of the 6,145-foot long Boulder Tunnel at Amazon. This tunnel was the longest constructed by the MC Ry (GN Ry) until the new Cascade Tunnel in 1929. Its locally-quarried granite portals still bear its 1893 completion date, name and length.

From Amazon the tour continues south to Butte. From the buses participants will be able to see the 1900 Boulder relocation, the pre-1900 double grades of the MC Ry and NP, Tunnel 7, Basin, the Bison Creek grade and Tunnel 9, Elk Park, Woodinville and the original GN Ry continental divide sign which still marks the summit of Elk Park Pass. The route is highlighted by spectacular mountain views, former NP and MC Ry grades, beautiful rivers, historic mining structures and tons of Montana history.

In Butte the group will lunch at the brick 1913 GN Ry passenger station which now serves as a privately-owned concert venue and pub. Much of the former GN Ry yard trackage remains in place and is used by the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Ry and BNSF to access the modern Montana Resources (MR) mining operation at the Continental Pit and Weed Concentrator. MR remains one of the largest copper producers in the United States.

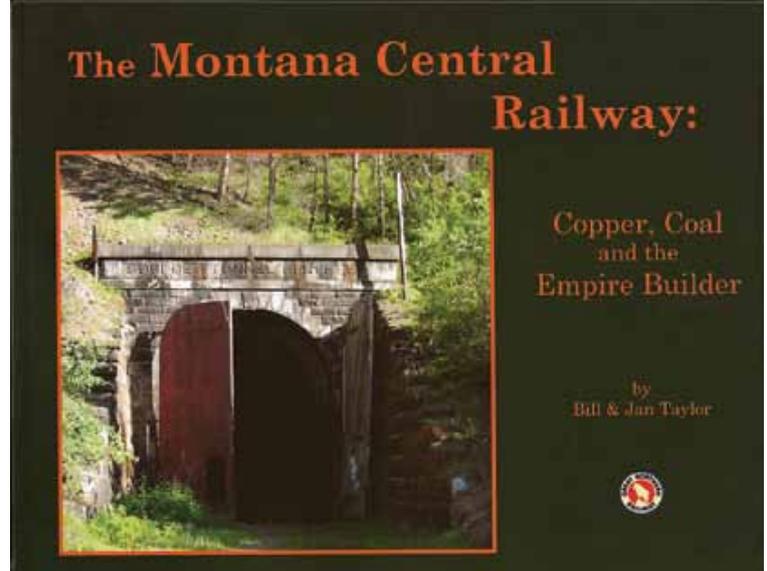
MR has graciously agreed to provide a guided tour of its Butte operations for our group. School buses (coaches are not allowed) will pick us up at the Butte depot for the two-hour tour. Participants will see the Continental Pit, massive dump trucks, gigantic excavators, the flooded Berkley Pit and some original cut-off GN Ry. Participants will also be allowed to tour the Weed Concentrator (Note: Some walking is required to see everything. Those not wishing to walk may remain in the buses. Butte's elevation is 5,280 feet above sea level.)

After touring the MR facilities, the group will return to the Butte depot and the return to Helena. Buses should be back in Helena between 5:00 and 5:30 P.M. after traveling approximately 120 highway miles.

**Weekday Morning Tours
Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday**

Of course, the tours on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings have not been forgotten. The first tour covers the Montana State Capitol which includes Paxson, De Camp, and Russell art and the architecture of the state house, restored to its original interior in 2002, and the Montana Historical Society's various galleries: Montana at the time of Lewis and Clark, Homeland, and Mackay Gallery of Russell Art. The second tour will visit the Original

Governor's Mansion with its fully restored former executive residence, and the Last Chance Tour Train. Finally, the third tour will cover a variety of locations including the Pioneer Cabin and Reeder's Alley along with other special Helena places.



- 176 pages in 8 1/2 x11" format
- Soft cover
- 245 Photographs
- 15 Maps
- 15 Profiles
- Timetables and corporate documents

The Montana Central Railway Copper, Coal and the Empire Builder

By: Bill and Jan Taylor

By 1883 Canadian born James Jerome Hill had become successful shipping coal and developing railroads in and around St. Paul, MN. In 1884, his friend, Paris Gibson, founding father of Great Falls, invited him to visit Montana Territory. While there, he toured the Rocky Mountain Front between Great Falls and Butte looking for investment opportunities and future traffic for his St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway which was in the process of building west in Minnesota. Hill bought mining property, silver options near Rimini and invested in Gibson's Great Falls Townsite Company. Hill's visit was to have far reaching consequences for him and the territory's development. This is the story of the construction and the early operations of Hill's Montana Central Railway built in 1887-88 between Great Falls and Butte.

