

Northern Pacific Charter Centennial Side-Lights

As part of the observance of the 100th anniversary of the signing of its charter by President Abraham Lincoln, the Northern Pacific has produced an LP record album to present highlights in the history of the railroad in story and song.

Narrated by Raymond Massey, the recording is entitled "A Thousand Miles of Mountains," from the theme song, which is one of four selections specially written for this occasion. A combination of dramatic and musical episodes, along with Mr. Massey's narration, relates the story of the opening of the American Northwest, from the days of Thomas Jefferson to the present.

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Just as countless cities, villages and hamlets along the way took part in the grand opening of the first of the northern transcontinentals in Henry Villard's day, so communities on the "Main Street of the Northwest" are participating in the Northern Pacific Charter Centennial today.

More than 100 invitations to address civic, social and business groups have been received by NP officials. Led by President Robert S. Macfarlane, who will travel the length of the railroad for several appearances, all will tell the Northern Pacific story in a speech entitled "Dreamers Who Dared."

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For many months following passage of the bills which led to the creation of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the nation continued to be divided by the Civil War, which raged on for more than nine months after Lincoln had signed the charter act.

Partisans of both sides were later found working together in building the Northern Pacific. Such, for example, were Col. J.B. Culver, a Confederate veteran of Chickamauga, and Col. Hiram Hayes, a former Union quartermaster, who joined in shoveling and wheeling the first earth in NP groundbreaking ceremonies in 1870.

Perhaps the most prominent among these former "enemies," however, were Generals George A. Custer and Thomas L. Rosser. Inseparable friends at West Point Military Academy, where the two were graduated in the same class, they nevertheless went their separate ways in battle. Custer, of course, gained fame in the Union cavalry, while Rosser became a general in the Confederate horse brigades.

Despite having led forces against each other in several engagements, the two maintained their friendship and, following the war, were reunited in Dakota Territory just prior to the Custer disaster at the Little Bighorn. Rosser served more than a decade as the leading field engineer of construction on the railroad; Custer and his troopers were assigned to protect NP survey and construction crews against the attacks of marauding Indians.

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In its centennial year, the Northern Pacific has purchased 15 diesel locomotives of the most advanced design. Each of these units has six traction motors and is capable of developing 2500 hp.

By contrast, the railway's first locomotive, the MINNETONKA, purchased in 1870, developed a maximum of 115 hp. It was used in construction on both ends of the transcontinental line, was sold to a logging company, and was later reacquired by the NP for exhibit purposes.

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When construction of the Northern Pacific was begun in 1870, the total population of the territories of Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington, combined with that of the states of Minnesota and Oregon was 613,477. In 1890, by which time all of these territories had achieved statehood, this same area had a population of 2,798,829.

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The Northern Pacific, which began train operations in 1871, had gross revenues of \$7,855,459 in 1883, the year its transcontinental line was completed. In 1963, the railway recorded gross revenues of \$204,472,212, third highest total in its history.

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