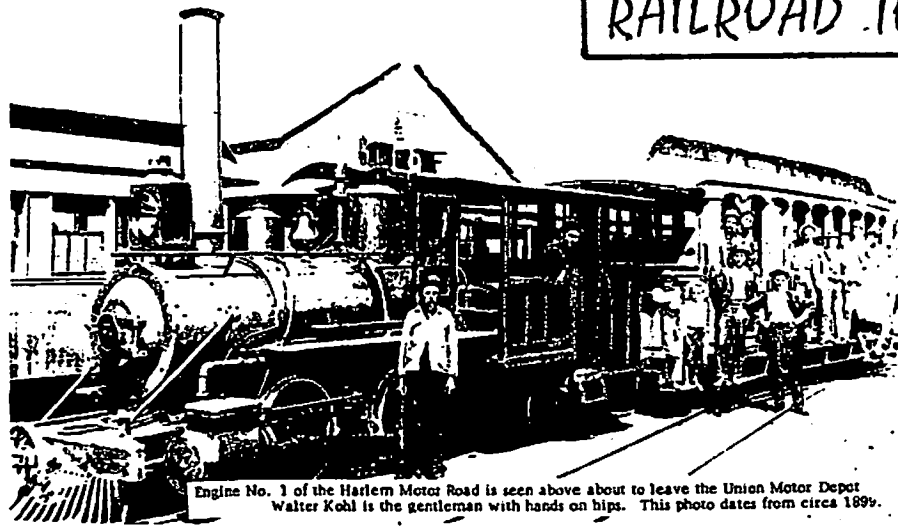


RAILROAD TO HARLEM SPRINGS

By ARDA M. HAENSZEL

UP UNTIL a very few years ago, railroad tracks on Sierra Way constituted a nuisance to motorists whose tires sometimes temporarily stuck in the ruts. They outlasted even the tracks of the controversial Pacific Electric "Water Train" on D Street. Even now one can see the patched paving in the middle of Sierra Way where they formerly ran.



Engine No. 1 of the Harlem Motor Road is seen above about to leave the Union Motor Depot. Walter Kohl is the gentleman with hands on hips. This photo dates from circa 1899.

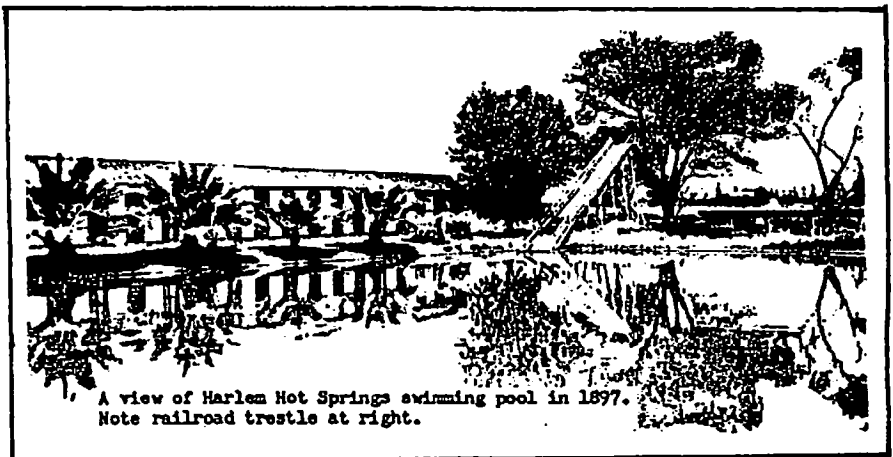
As late as the 1950's this writer remembers lumber and other freight being unloaded from railroad cars to trucks at the end of the line in the lot at the southeast corner of 7th and Sierra Way. The average San Bernardino resident does not realize that this was a historic spot.

The boom of the 80's brought a tremendous development of railroads, not only the transcontinental giants, but local lines serving interurban and intraurban traffic. Horse cars came first, to be followed by steam dummy lines burning coal or oil.

Short lines, many of them narrow gauge, radiated through and out from San Bernardino. One of these, a narrow-gauge steam line from San Bernardino to Harlem Springs, was completed in June 1888 by the San Bernardino, Arrowhead, and Waterman Railroad Co. The engine house, machine shop, stables, and passenger station were all located on the land at the southeast corner of A Street (now Sierra Way) and 7th Street. The steam line curved southeast from the station to 6th Street, ran out east 6th to Pepper, then turned north to Rabel and Harlem Hot Springs on Base Line. A horse car line also ran from the station west on 7th, south on C Street (Arrowhead Ave.), then west on 3rd to the "new" Santa Fe Station. In January 1891 an additional steam line was inaugurated which ran from the station south on A Street to 4th, and then curved along a private right of way to 1st Street (Rialto Ave.), where it utilized the tracks of the San Bernardino and Redlands Railroad Co., west and north into the "Union Motor Depot" on 3rd between E and F Streets. This was later to become the Pacific Electric depot. The company had financial difficulties, and in January 1894, the horse car section was abandoned.

The Kohl Brothers, Oscar and Walter, and their brother-in-law, John Andreson, bought the ailing company in November 1895. Two solutions were found to the problems of the high price of coal and the scarcity of passengers. The locomotive was converted to oil. Then the Kohls and Andreson bought the struggling resort at Harlem and developed it into a popular recreation spot with special events every Sunday. Improvements were also made in the

(Continued on Page 57)



A view of Harlem Hot Springs swimming pool in 1897. Note railroad trestle at right.