



THE MANIFEST May 2022



Greetings!

Our Mother's Day run was rather cold and wet, but the upcoming run day promises to be much nicer. We still need volunteers to help on run days. Please email, call or shoot me a text or one of the other officers if you can help.

You will note that there is now a fence around the parking lot. The main gate on the fence will be open for run days or other events involving the public.

There is a second gate, which members coming in to work will use, as well as the inside gate. For now the combination remains the same, and the inner gate is still to be shut the same way if it is not a run day.

In addition, we need new, so I once again encourage you to let your friends and family who are not part of our organization to come and check us out, bring their special areas of expertise, or just plain enthusiasm.

Membership is only \$20 per year. There are student, youth, and family options available. The application can be picked up at the park at the burger shack, ask one of us for one, or downloaded online at <https://www.soc-nhrs.org>.

For the story for this month, I am repeating one I did a few years back. I was reminded of this story this week when my grandchildren wanted to know if there had ever been a train robbery like you see on TV. So, I told them this story.

OREGON'S GREATEST TRAIN ROBBERY THAT WASN'T

On Oct. 11, 1923, on a mountainside south of Ashland, 23-year-old twins, Ray and Roy DeAutremont, and their little brother, Hugh (none of which were the brightest crayons in the box) put their plan into the works to rob a train.

Long story short, the DeAutremont brothers came from a large family and had lived in several western states. However, in the summer of 1922 ended up in Oregon (lucky us). They were penniless and not too thrilled, apparently, with the prospect of actually going out and getting a job and earning an honest living. Therefore, what's left, oh yes we will become criminals. Now robbing trains did not occur to them at first, banks, that was the ticket. The twins decided to rob a bank in Yacolt, WA. As the story goes, they were across the street from the bank getting ready to make their move, when a large car pulled up in front of the bank and blocked their view of the bank. Oh, but things were about to get worse, as they watched several men exit the vehicle, enter the bank, rob the bank, and speed off down the road, leaving the brothers in shock and still broke.

In Cannon Beach, they cased a candy store, perhaps they decided to start small and work their way up. Alas, our two hapless crooks fell asleep in a ditch nearby, leaving the elderly owner to lock up as usual and go about his way.

At some point after this, the twins were joined by little brother Hugh. The three of them decided that robbing a train would be much more lucrative than either banks or candy stores (now remember I said I did not believe they were the brightest crayons in the box). They went to work in the woods, (working for a living!) saved their money ready themselves for their greatest robbery yet, which would not have been hard

considering their track record. By the end of summer 1923, they were ready.

The set their sights on the Southern Pacific Train No. 13 from Seattle to San Francisco, known as the "Gold Special" because it often carried gold bullion and large sums of cash. They chose the SP Tunnel 13 high in the Siskiyou Mountains to make their move.

Now, much to their delight, I'm sure, the first part of their scheme came off as planned. The twins, Ray and Roy jumped aboard the train as it went up the hill to the north end of the tunnel. After reading up on these guys, I find it amazing that they figured out the train might be going slower uphill!, but I digress. Once aboard, confronted the engineer and fireman with pistols in hand, ordering them to halt the train, just as the locomotive was exiting the south end of the tunnel, where little brother, Hugh, stood waiting armed with his shotgun.

The twins fastened a suitcase full of dynamite to the mail car door, which was directly behind the engine tender, and just inside the tunnel. With great anticipation, I'm sure, they retreated to their preset detonator spot, and Roy hit the plunger.

Now like I said, not the brightest crayons in the box. They apparently had no idea how much dynamite they would need, or considered the fact that it was directly behind the tender and still inside the tunnel. Well, it blew the car into bits, set the contents on fire and ripped the poor mail clerk to shreds.

Clark Williams, a reporter for The Oregonian, later observed that the mail car "had been reduced to kindling." The blast blew out the windows of the passenger cars in the half-mile-long tunnel, filling them with acrid smoke.

Apparently, our three bumbling crooks did not do their research into what the train was actually carrying that day. They were under the impression there was at least \$40,000.00 aboard the train, a lot of money in 1923. They was not, and even if there had been, it would have most likely been destroyed.

Now, up until now these three were simply three idiots trying to make a quick buck. However, in their panic, they shoot and kill the engineer, fireman and brakeman before fleeing into the woods. Remember, the blast has already killed the clerk. Now they are still three bumbling fools, but they have added murder to their repertoire.

Some nearby rail construction crews heard the blast and rushed to help. They found the four dead men and quickly summoned for help. Soon lawmen and vigilantes of every shape, color and size were on the hunt for the brothers. They did manage to become famous, as they appeared in the headlines in papers across the nation.

Somehow, I'm still amazed how, because up until now they had not shown a lot of intelligence, they managed to hide out in the forest and eventually make their way to California, where they went their separate ways. The hunt for these three became known as the most massive manhunt in U.S. History.

It was said that some 9 million wanted posters appeared all over the world, yet they managed to avoid capture for nearly 4 years! Goes to show you that even bumbling idiots can get lucky once in a while.

Hugh had joined the Army under an alias and was apprehended in the Philippines. Ray and Roy were arrested in Steubenville, Ohio, where they were of all things, working for a living.

They were all three returned to Jackson County tried and sentenced to life in the Oregon State Penitentiary. Hugh was paroled in 1958, moved to San Francisco and died of stomach cancer less than a year later.

Roy suffered from schizophrenia and was transferred to the Oregon State Hospital. He was released in 1983 and died in 1984.

Ray was paroled in 1961, lived in Eugene and died in 1984. There you have it folks,

Our next meeting is **June 14, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.** in the model railroad building at south end of parking lot at the Railroad Park.

Our volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are **PRICELESS**

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