



Carson City Planning Division

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MEMORANDUM

To: Historic Resources Commission

F-6

From: Jennifer Pruitt, Principal Planner

Date: May 13, 2010

Subject: HRC-10-005
McKeen Motor Car

DISCUSSION:

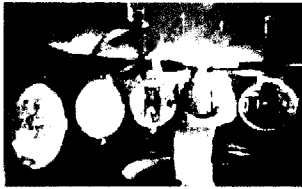
As a result of the reduction in training funds for Carson City, the Planning Division, with the assistance of the Historic Resources Commission will embark on a HRC self training program. The self training program will provide various training opportunities for the HRC and the general public at no costs to Carson City.

The program will consist of Planning Division provided articles related to Historic Preservation on a monthly basis, posted on the HRC website and HRC training session(s) provided by commission members and or City personnel.

This month's topic is "McKeen Motor Car Restoration Complete, May 09, 2010 to mark 100 years since its arrival to Carson City, is the third in the HRC informational training series.

The McKeen Motor Car is an appropriate topic as it relates to this month being Historic Preservation Month. In May of 2007, the McKeen Motor Car was the recipient of the Carson City Preservation Award.

All HRC members are all encouraged to provide information to the Planning Division for distribution or prepare a presentation for the HRC this year, to participate in the HRC self training program.



- Cathleen Allison/Nevada Appeal



- Courtesy Nevada State Railroad Museum

If You Go

WHAT: McKean Motor Car celebration

WHEN: Noon Sunday, May 9. Rides every half hour from 1:30-4 p.m.

WHERE: Wabuska Depot, Nevada State Railroad Museum, South Carson Street at Fairview Drive

TICKETS: \$10 adults, \$5 children

PHONE: 687-8323

The ceremony will begin at noon May 9, Mother's Day, at the Wabuska Depot in front of the railroad museum, 2180 S. Carson St.

"We found some people who rode the McKean in its last day of service, and they'll be there, too," Moiola said.

The depot will be transformed into what it looked like 100 years ago, with old cars and period re-enactors, she said.

Rides will be offered every half hour during the afternoon from 1:30-4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

"The McKean is considered a valuable asset in the national records of our railroad history throughout the world," Barton said.

According to the Department of Cultural Affairs, William Riley McKean Jr. began producing motorcars in 1904. McKean's cars represent the first use of the internal combustion engine in rail service.

"McKean was a pioneer in the development of self-propelled railroad cars," Barton said. "Prior to that, trains were based on steam locomotion."

He said McKean built about 160 of the cars between 1904 and 1920. The Virginia & Truckee paid \$22,000 for the 70-foot motorcar, which arrived under its own power in Carson City from Omaha, Neb., on May 9, 1910.

The restoration started in 1998 and cost just under \$1 million, Barton said.

"In the field of railway restoration, this was a major milestone," he said.

"It was restored from the ground up, and many of the materials had to be fabricated," he said. "You can't just go to Home Depot and buy a window for a McKean Car."

When the McKean Car was donated to the museum, the restoration team discovered that the car body had been

McKean Motor Car restoration complete

Celebration on May 9 to mark 100 years since its arrival to Carson City

BY

SHOOVER@NEVADAAPPEAL.COM.

After 12 years of restoration, the McKean Motor Car, V&T No. 22, is about to make its debut once again, and the celebration coincides with the arrival of the car in Carson City exactly 100 years ago to the day.

"It's great to be able to unveil this 100 years to the day," said Peter Barton, acting administrator of the state's Division of Museums and History. "The stars just lined up for us."

When the McKean runs again on May 9, it will be the first time the car has been in passenger service since it was decommissioned from the Virginia & Truckee Railway in 1945, said Teresa Moiola, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Cultural Affairs.

"The Nevada State Railroad Museum has the only surviving, restored and operational McKean Motor Car in the world," Moiola said.

The ceremony will begin at noon May 9, Mother's Day, at the Wabuska Depot in front of the railroad museum, 2180 S. Carson St.

modified for use as a diner, lounge, pottery shop and plumbing supply store.

“Enough of the body remained to justify a thorough rehabilitation,” said Chris DeWitt, restoration supervisor.

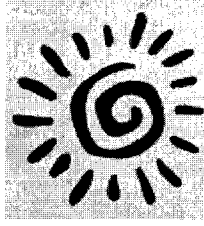
The project has had the support of the community, Barton said, including the Nevada Legislature, which provided funding, and with the help of about 100 donors, mostly from Northern Nevada, who provided time and artifacts.

Barton praised the restoration team, saying DeWitt has “an incredible engineering mind.” DeWitt was assisted by Rick Stiver, a railroad restoration specialist who did the heavy steel work, and Lee Hobold, who took on much of the fine carpentry and interior work.

Jeremy Harding put in a number of years in a variety of roles, and Robert Tatum has only worked on the car a couple of years, but “masterfully painted the exterior,” Barton said.

There were also a number of volunteers, but one man, Bev Smith, who is in his eighties, worked full-time 40 hours a week, Barton said.

<http://www.nevadaappeal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100421/NEWS/100429963&template=printart>



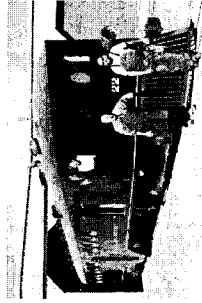
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

NevadaCulture.org

A RAILROAD RENAISSANCE REVEALED

Decade-Long McKeen Motor Car Restoration Complete

For a gallery of McKeen images visit the Department of Cultural Affairs website [Press Room Image Gallery](#)



Carson City, Nevada. The dedicated team at the Nevada State Railroad Museum completed a decade-long labor of love and study in railroad history with the restoration of the McKeen Motor Car, V&T No. 22. A celebration of the momentous occasion will be held May 9, 2010, coinciding with the arrival of the car in Carson City exactly 100-years-ago to the date.

When the McKeen runs again on May 9, 2010 it will be the first time the car has been in passenger service since it was decommissioned from the Virginia & Truckee Railway in 1945. The Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City has the only surviving, restored and operational McKeen Motor Car in the world.

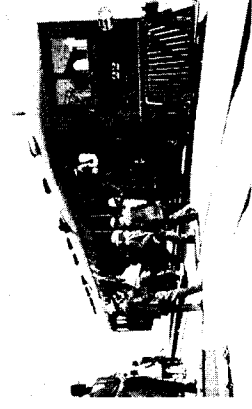
The History of the McKeen Motor Car, V&T No. 22

William Riley McKeen Jr. (1869-1946), the former superintendent of motive power for the Union Pacific, began producing motorcars in 1904 to answer the need for low-cost operation on low-revenue lines.

Inspired by new high-speed torpedo boats powered with internal combustion engines, McKeen's cars represent the first practical application of the internal combustion engine to rail service. McKeen built just over 150 motorcars. The Virginia & Truckee paid \$22,000 for the 70-foot motorcar, which arrived under its own power in Carson City from Omaha, Neb. on May 9, 1910.

When the car last ran in revenue service, on October 31, 1945, it was believed to be the only McKeen motorcar still powered with its original engine. Even so, the car already had been modified from its original configuration, with most of its passenger spaces converted to Railway Post Office and express compartments in 1932.

The McKeen Restoration



The Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City began restoration of the McKeen Motor Car in 1998. The restoration team found the remains of the car devoid of its trucks, power plant and air and fuel tanks. When it was donated to the museum, it was discovered the car body was modified further to conform to the needs of its successive uses as a diner, lounge, pottery shop and plumbing supply store.

"Enough of the body remained to justify a thorough rehabilitation," said Chris DeWitt, Restoration Supervisor. "So much was missing, that restoring it to its as-built appearance was no more difficult than any other option."

Rebuilding the car involved the replacement of much of the body framing and sheet metal below the window line. One bulkhead, and several roof panels, where vents had been added or doorways raised, were also replaced. The floor, composed of sheet steel, sound-deadening material and maple, is entirely new. More than five thousand rivets were replaced.

To save weight, McKeen used aluminum castings wherever possible. Of the 33 aluminum-framed porthole windows, 19 are original. Although McKeen plated the castings with brass, the aluminum pieces for the restored car are powder coated. The top-hinged portholes are held open with ceiling-mounted hooks. A few of the original sprung hooks remained to serve as patterns for replacements.

Originally, the interior of the car was illuminated with acetylene lamps. This system was converted to electricity in 1923, and, other than the acetylene pressure-gauge mounted beneath the car, all lighting components had disappeared by the time the car was acquired. Fortunately, two of the original lamps were found and donated. These provided an authentic pattern for aluminum replicas. The brass headlamp is a replica.

No examples remain of the car's seats. Although no photographs of the original interior of this car are known, images of other cars reveal that McKeen used a wide variety of seats, apparently obtained from various suppliers. The museum furnished the car with newly manufactured seats appropriate to the era. Two replica dry hoppers were made for the salons. One of the original mirror frames was located.

Since no McKeen engine could be found, a modern diesel engine is utilized. Like the original, it is mounted on the front truck. To recreate the outward appearance of the car with its McKeen engine, a faux flywheel is mounted on the right-hand side of the truck. Both trucks were replicated at the museum, based on specifications, drawings and photographs of the originals. Although originally driven through a gear transmission and chain drive, the 42-inch driver of the rehabilitated car is driven hydraulically. Brake components and sundry parts were obtained from one of only two other McKeen cars known to exist.

The unusual rear coupler, provided for pulling a light trailer, was found in place beneath the car. It provided samples of the original green paint used on the car's undercarriage. A piece of sheet metal at the nose, crumpled in an early grade-crossing accident and covered with a patch for nearly a century, preserved the body's original maroon color. Likewise, examples of the original brown roof color were found under layers of paint. The interior walls are paneled in new mahogany veneer and board wainscoting, while the original headliner was restored.

The original air whistle, found in the car's engine room, has been restored to its proper place. The bell of the gong is new, but the crank and clappers are original. The patent plate was still in place on the car when donated, and the original builder's plate was acquired from a collector.

Special Recognition

According to Peter Barton, acting administrator of the Division of Museums & History, "Virginia & Truckee motorcar No. 22 bears witness to the innovative endeavors of William R. McKeen, Jr. The restored car is an operating monument to donors Al and Lenore Bernhard, to the dedicated museum staff and to the volunteers who contributed labor. It also testifies to the vision and commitment of the Nevada legislature and nearly one hundred individual donors who contributed to the estimated one-million-dollar cost of the project. It is the goal of all involved that the car will provide satisfaction and pleasure to many future generations of Virginia & Truckee fans and visitors to the Nevada State Railroad Museum."

The Nevada State Railroad Museum is located on Route 395 at the south end of Carson City at the intersection of Fairview Avenue. A yellow train station and red water tank at the entrance to the museum grounds are landmarks. For more information, please call 775-687-6953. It is one of seven museums of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs. The Department serves Nevada's citizens and visitors through cultural and information management, presentation and promotion of cultural resources, and education. The Department also includes the State Historic Preservation Office, Nevada State Library and Archives and the Nevada Arts Council. For more information, please call Teresa Moiola at (775) 687-8323 or visit the department's website at www.NevadaCulture.org.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2010

Contact: Frank Ackerman 775-687-6953 ext. 224

Teresa Moiola 775-687-8323



- Chad Lundquist/Nevada Appeal

Out of the shadows: The McKeen Motor Car

After a decade in the shop, restoration of nearly 100-year-old railroad icon should be completed in 2008

JARID SHIPLEY
APPEAL STAFF WRITER,

Lee Hobold recently spent a day at the Nevada State Railroad Museum aligning, measuring and securing bench seats back into place on the McKeen Motor Car No. 22.



It was a significant day, both for Hobold and for the car. After nearly a decade of working on the car, Hobold said it finally felt like they were making progress. At the same time, it was the first time since 1945 the benches were in their original place.

Hobold is one of four restorers who have worked on the nearly century-old car off and on for the last 10 years, laboring to restore a machine that has spent its whole life in and around Carson City.

When the restoration is complete in 2008, at a cost of about \$1 million, the car will be the only one of its kind and a fully-restored example of railroading history. For the men and the museum, the car will become a jewel in their collection.

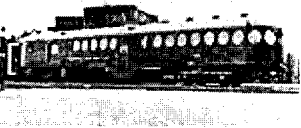
"The McKeen Car really represents the best in innovation and imagination," said Peter Barton, Nevada State Railroad Museum director.



[Watch the video slideshow](#)

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Before the McKeen car, railroads were forced to make a huge capital investment to provide passenger and freight service to lighter branch lines. It meant supplying a steam engine, passenger and freight cars as well as five or six crew members to staff each line.



When the McKeen car began rolling off the line in 1905, railroads had an internal combustion engine capable of up to 50 mph on a level grade, a baggage section and a divided car for smoking and nonsmoking sections. The entire car could be staffed by a crew of two at a much lower cost.



"The car represents the earliest example of a self-propelled railcar. It was a major paradigm shift and McKeen was the genius behind it," Barton said.

The McKeen Motor Co., run by William McKeen Jr., produced about 200 of the cars between 1905 and 1920.

"To our knowledge, only three of them remain. Two of them are here at the museum and one is in Alaska," Barton said.

The car under restoration by the museum was purchased by The Virginia & Truckee Railroad for \$24,000. It arrived in Northern Nevada on May 4, 1910, and made the first passenger trip to Minden on May 13th.

"E.H. Herriman (owner of the Union Pacific Railroad) saw in this self-propelled internal combustion powered car, the future of railroad and for many years it was," Barton said.

For the next 35 years the car made daily 15-mile trips to Minden as well as the 31-mile trip to Reno twice a day.

The V&T also considered using the car for the Carson City to Virginia City route, but reconsidered after a long and very arduous test run up the 2 percent grade.

The car was officially retired on Sept. 21, 1945, after the railroad decided it wasn't worth the cost to repair it.

"While it was the earliest internal combustion engine, it was somewhat unreliable and underpowered. By the 1940s, we had many more advances, there were better power plants, better breaking systems, better alloys for car bodies and these advances really put the McKeen car into obsolescence," Barton said.

The shell of the car was sold for \$1,000 and became a diner on South Carson Street where it remained until 1957. It was then sold to Al Bernhard and incorporated into his plumbing business for storage and office space.

"In 1996, the family realized the significance of the car and donated it to the state of Nevada," Barton said.

• • •

"We spent roughly a day to get it to the museum. We had to go underneath it, jack it up and get it prepared. We had a flat bed truck come in and a couple of cranes lifted it up and finally got it on," Hobold said. "The yard was really muddy, it was raining so it was quite a venture to get the car here and unloaded."

The museum undertook a large feasibility study to determine what the car originally looked like, how to restore it and what the cost would be. Hundreds of photos and documents were scoured in search of the most minuscule details, from the position of the door handles to where the porthole windows were latched.

"We disassembled the car and recorded what we took off. Anything not germane to railroading was discarded and we took samples of everything where there was a pattern. Then we began to replace the materials that were not reusable," said Chris DeWitt, restoration supervisor.

A second McKeen car, in much worse shape was purchased to provide parts for the restoration project at a cost of \$10,000 by the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum. The group has also contributed more than 25 percent of the total funding to restore the car.

Part of the reason for the slow process and high cost is the lack of replacement materials. Because much of the car was badly deteriorated, a substantial portion of the restoration had to start at ground zero.

"You can't go buy parts off the shelf, be they new parts or replicas, that will work in this car. It's not like restoring an automobile, there are people who reproduce parts for auto restoration, we don't have the luxury," DeWitt said.

Since the rainy day it arrived at the museum, the McKeen Motor Car has been stripped and sanded down to its base metal. The inside was gutted and the windows and doors were taken off. The once mighty machine became little more than a metal shell.

"It was very impressive how long it was when you are standing at one end and looking down at the other. It was hard trying to visualize what this big long tube was going to look like and now that's coming to fruition," Hobold said.

• • •

While Hobold installs the seats in the forward section, Loren Jahn is working on repainting the decorative pattern on the ceiling in the back section.

Each of the 16 examples of the 1910-style pattern takes about six hours to complete and is an exact replica of the original.

"Each one of these patterns has to be done individually, so in many cases I am painting overhead, which makes it difficult to try to get the base pattern to stick to a concave panel," Jahn said. "It's like painting a broom closet in a U-boat."

With the interior nearly restored and the outside coming along, the main project remaining for the restorers is replicating the engine.

"The most difficult part of repowering the car will be the replication of the truck frame, which will have to be a from-scratch reproduction," DeWitt said. "The system that drives the car won't be difficult at all to put together. It's merely a function of purchasing and assembling."

Each of the men working to restore this piece of history said they are looking forward to different things once it's completed. Some just want to see the final product, while others look forward to the satisfaction of bringing an icon back to life.

"I never thought I'd see this car going from Al's Plumbing to this 3-D version of what it must have looked like. It's a unique specimen of the railroad and the evolution of transportation from the steam era to the era of the combustion engine," Jahn said.

As he measured the space of the next row of seats, Hobold said, "I think people will marvel at the size of it. When it rolls out at 70 feet long with the inside and the seats, that will impress people. It's just going to be impressive.

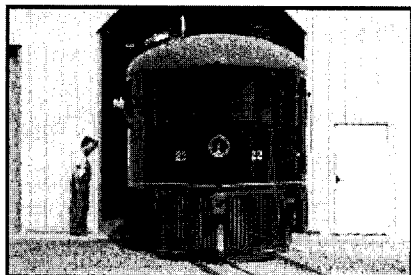
"I'll be impressed, it's been a long time coming."

- Contact reporter Jarid Shipley at jshipley@nevadaappeal.com or 881-1217.

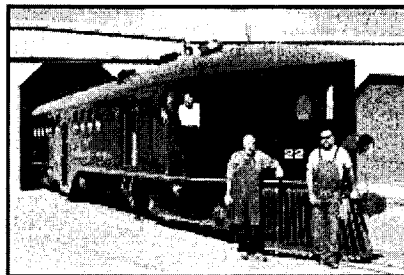
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McKeen Motor Car No. 22

Photos courtesy of Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City
Click on thumbnail for higher resolution



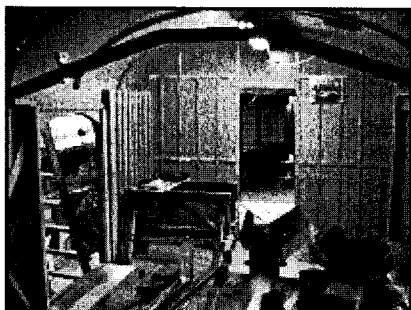
Restored McKeen Motor Car
Nevada State Railroad
Museum, Carson City
10/15/2009



Restored McKeen Motor Car
Nevada State Railroad
Museum, Carson City with
Chris DeWitt, Lee Hobold and
Rick Stiver.
10/15/2009



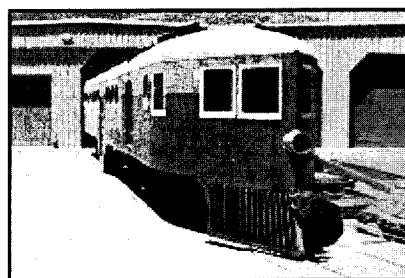
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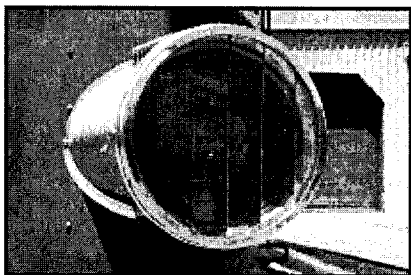
Baggage Compartment under
restoration.
12/31/2001



Driver pattern bev
1/21/2004



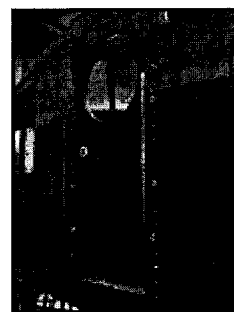
McKeen Motor Car before
repaint.
5/26/2005



Brass headlamp replica.
5/26/2005



Lee Hobold works on McKeen
engine compartment.
12/26/2001



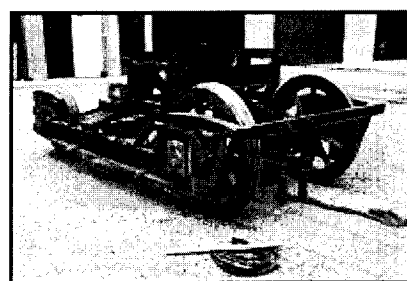
Engine room door exterior
under restoration.



Repaint of McKeen Motor Car.
5/1/2008



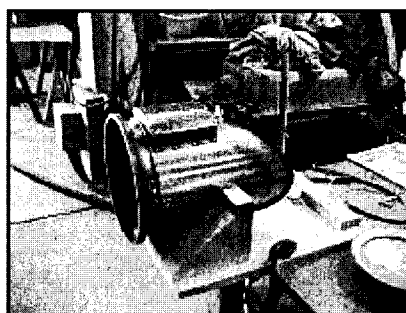
Repaint of McKeen Motor Car
9/30/2008



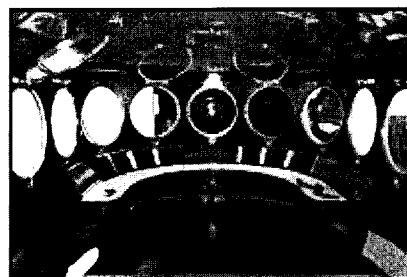
McKeen restoration
6/1/2009



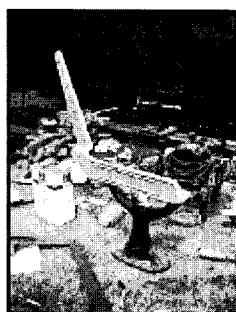
Lee Hobold on restoration.
1/21/2004



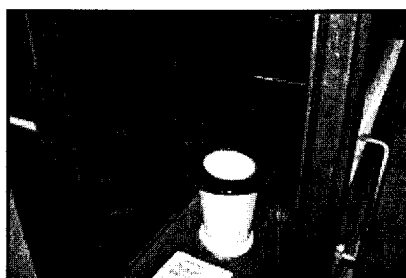
McKeen headlamp replication.



McKeen interior porthole
windows.
5/26/2005



Replication of McKeen seats .



Replication of McKeen salon.
9/21/2004



McKeen under restoration
before repaint.
10/13/2004



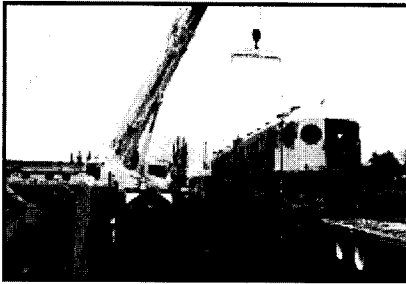
Rear truck build with Rick
Stiver. .
12/26/2001



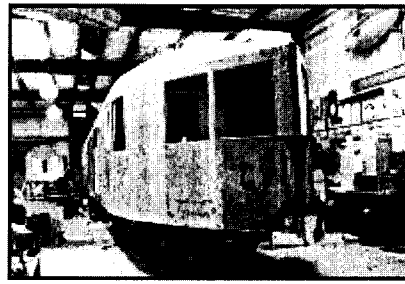
McKeen vestibule grinding.
1/21/2004



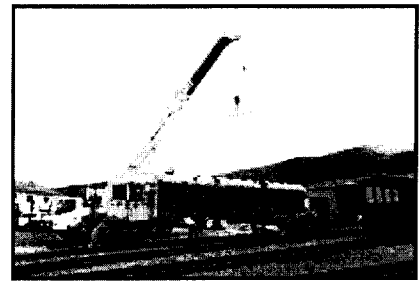
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada
State Railroad Museum.
1997



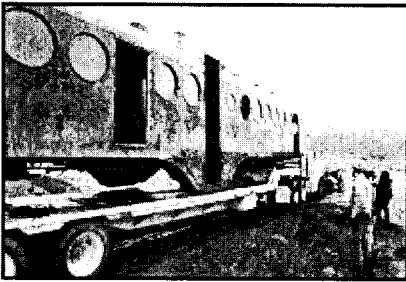
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.
1997



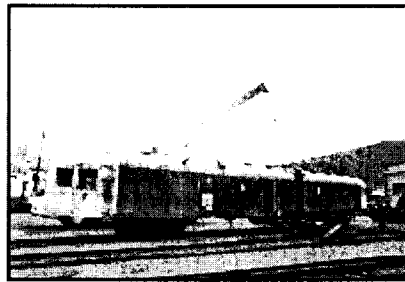
McKeen inside restoration shop.



Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



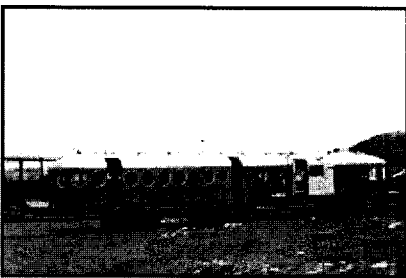
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



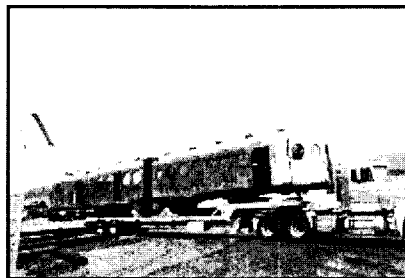
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



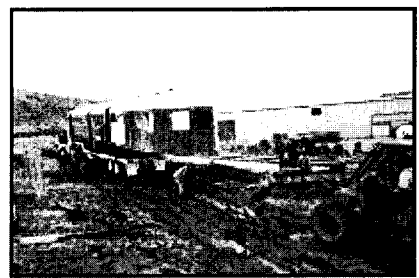
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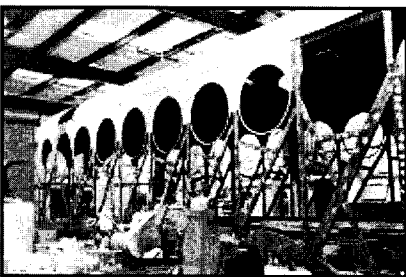
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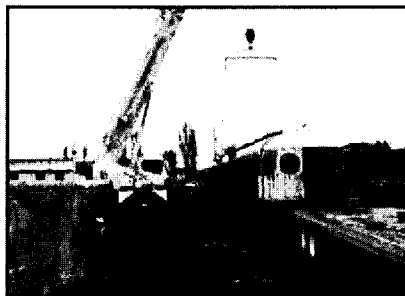
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



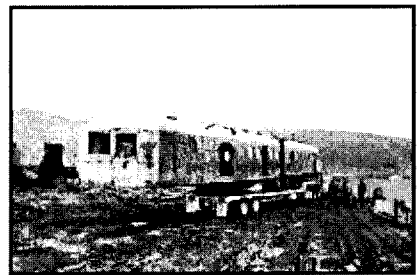
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



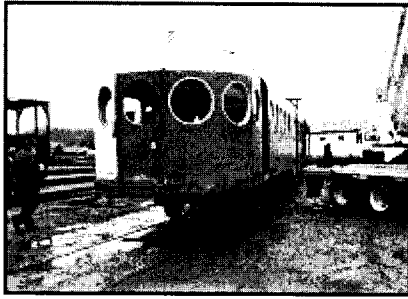
Restoration work on the McKeen begins at Nevada State Railroad Museum.
1998



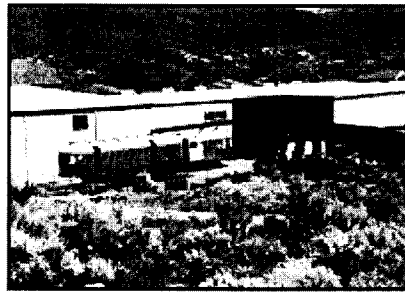
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



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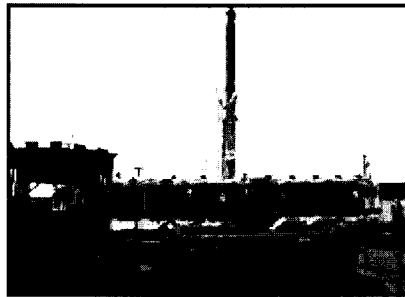
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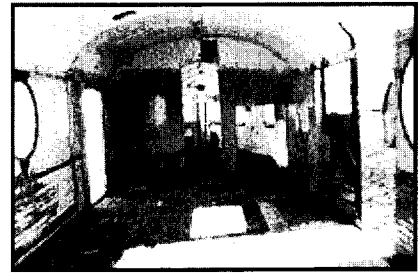
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



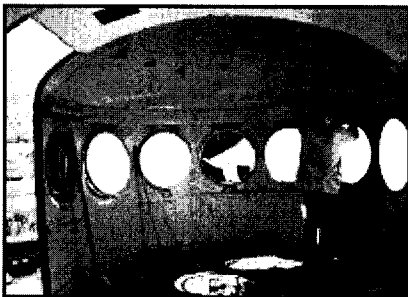
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



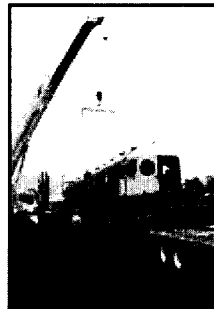
Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



McKeen interior before restoration.



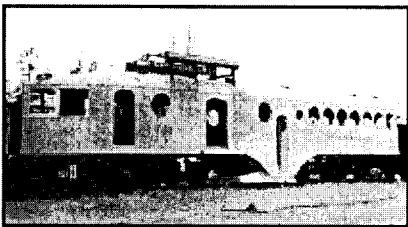
McKeen interior before restoration.



Delivery of McKeen to Nevada State Railroad Museum.



Historic McKeen Letterhead.



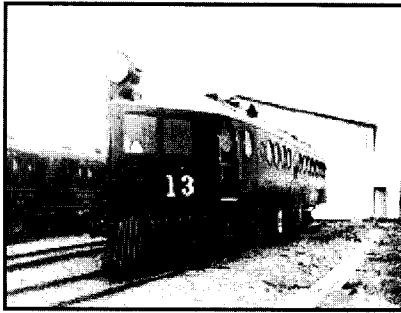
Red River Lumber Co. -NV-12 - 72 - McKeen - Ex Silver Peak RR - Westwood 6-1-40 L.T (Note: This is not the V&T McKeen, historic reference photo only.)



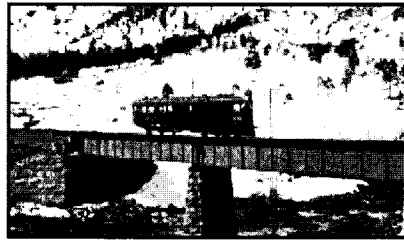
Silver Peak RR Co. McKeen Car -72- Mary 1912-13 R.H (Note: This is not the V&T McKeen, historic reference photo only.)



SP - McKeen - 72 - #31 (Note: This is not the V&T McKeen, historic reference photo only.)



SP - McKeen -72 - 2-11-10
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



SP - McKeen #13 -72
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



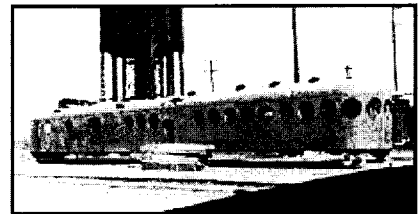
SP - McKeen - 72 - #43,47,29 -
Sac - 2-6-1911
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



SP - McKeen - 72 - #9
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



SP - McKeen - 72 - Ceres
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



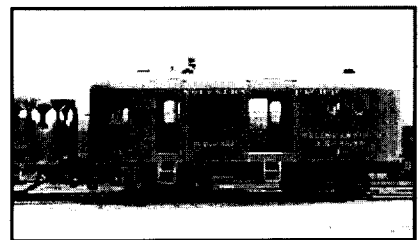
SP - McKeen - 72 -on blocks
Roseville circa 1938
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



SP - McKeen - 72-
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



SP - McKeen -72 - #45 - Sac 3-
13-36
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)

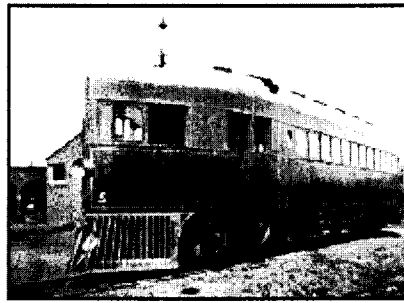


SP - McKeen-72-Baggage-
Wells Fargo #16 - Sacramento
circa 1926
(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



SP -McKeen -72 - #27 & 29
Fresh out of paint shop - 1909_
D.L

(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



UP - McKeen - 72 - #5 - West
Oakland - 1906 R.H

(Note: This is not the V&T
McKeen, historic reference
photo only.)



V&T - McKeen #22 Reno
about 1947 - R. H



V&T McKeen No. 22 - R.H



V&T McKeen No. 22 - Reno -
11-23-39 W.C



V&T McKeen - No. 22



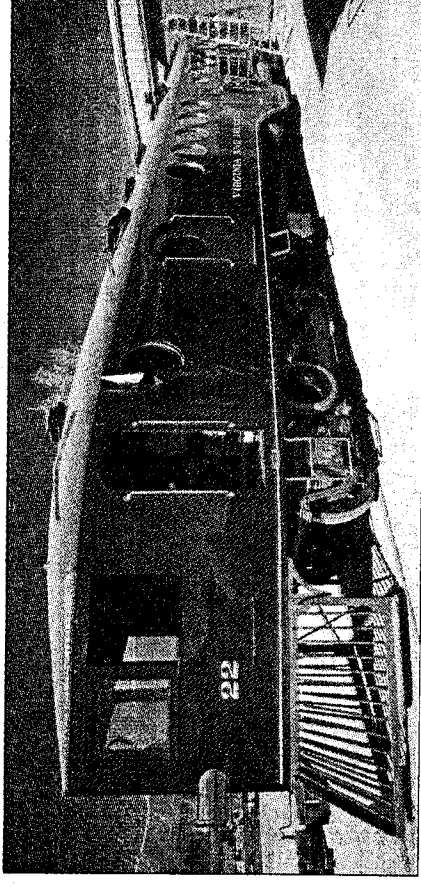
V&T McKeen No. 22



V&T McKeen No. 22 Reno
1935

McKeen Motor Car to reveal makeover

Crews cleaned the McKeen Motor Car at the Nevada State Railroad Museum on Friday morning in preparation for its unveiling Sunday.



BY SANDI HOOVER
shoover@nevadaappeal.com

After 12 years of restoration, the McKeen Motor Car, V&T No. 22, will make its debut again Sunday, exactly 100 years ago to the day that it arrived in Carson City 100 years ago.

When the McKeen runs again, it will be the first time the car has been in passenger service since it was decommissioned from the Virginia & Truckee Railway in 1945, said Teresa Moiola, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Cultural Affairs.

The ceremony will begin at noon Mother's Day, at the Wabuska Depot in front of the Nevada State Railroad Museum, 2180 S. Carson St.

"We found some people who rode the McKeen in its last day of service, and they'll be there, too," Moiola said.

The depot will be transformed into what it looked like 100 years ago, with old cars and period re-enactors, she said.

The officials and donors who made the McKeen restoration possible are scheduled to be on hand to participate in the ceremony.

The McKeen is considered a valuable asset in the national records of railroad history throughout the world. William Riley McKeen Jr. began producing motorcars in 1904. McKeen's cars represent the first use of the internal combustion engine in rail service. McKeen built

"We found some people who rode the McKeen in its last day of service, and they'll be there, too."

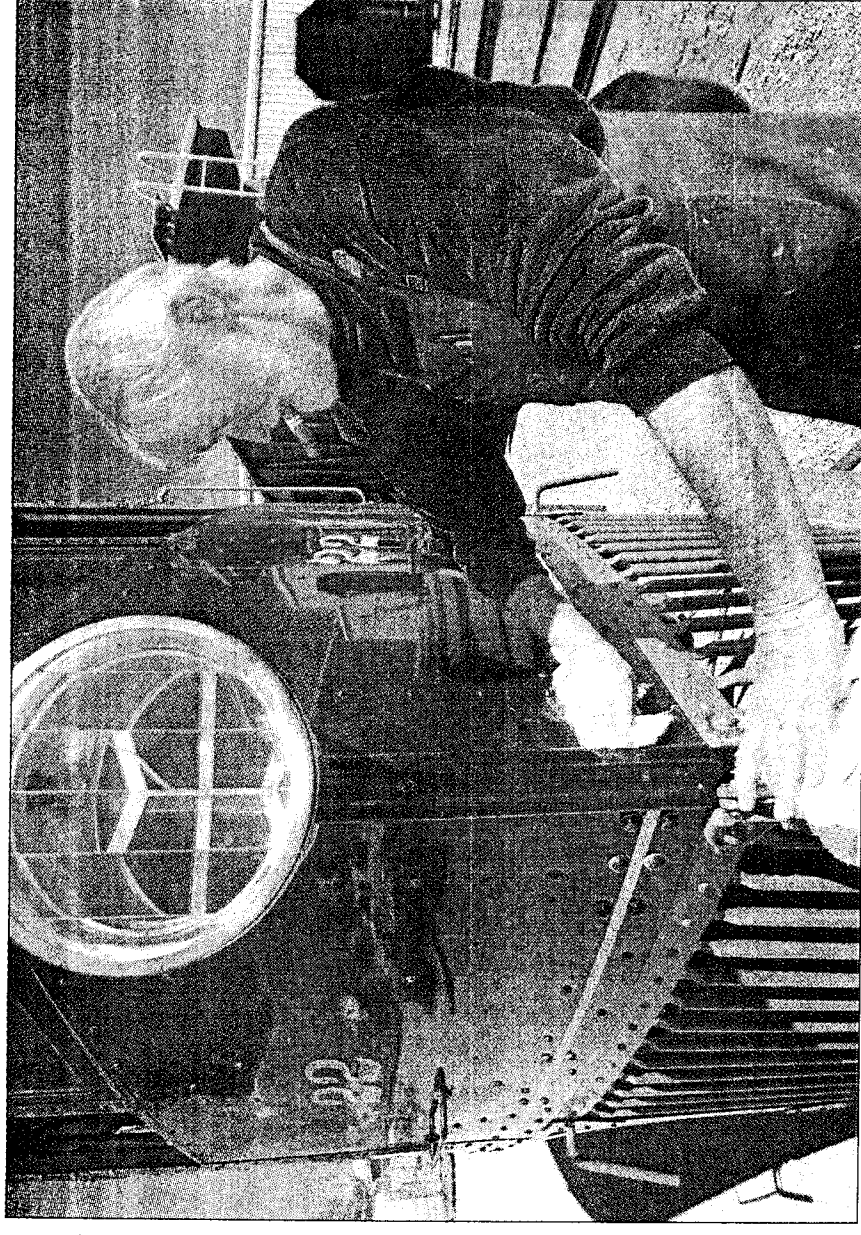
— TERESA MOIOLA
spokeswoman for Nevada
Department of Cultural
Affairs

about 160 of the cars between 1904 and 1920.

The Virginia & Truckee paid \$22,000 for the 70-foot motorcar, which arrived under its own power in Carson City from Omaha, Neb., on May 9, 1910. The restoration started in 1998 and cost just under \$1 million.

When the McKeen Car was donated to the museum, the restoration team discovered that the car body had been modified for use as a diner, lounge, pottery shop and plumbing supply store.

After a public ceremony and inaugural trip, rides will be available to the public every half hour from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.



ABOVE: Lee Hobold, a restoration specialist, cleans the McKeen Motor Car at the Nevada State Railroad Museum on Friday morning. The historic Virginia & Truckee Railway car will be unveiled during a special Mother's Day event after 12 years of restoration. Its debut will be 100 years to the day of its arrival in Carson City.

LEFT: Volunteer Karen Stiver uses compressed air to help clean the McKeen Motor Car at the Nevada State Railroad Museum Friday morning.

PHOTOS BY CATHLEEN ALLISON/NEVADA APPEAL

