

The Hetch Hetchy Railroad

Prototype Description & Operation

Rev 3/27/2021

San Francisco's Water Project

The City of San Francisco determined after the 1906 earthquake and fire that a large and secure supply of water was critical. It was decided to build a 160 mile aqueduct system that would take water from a concrete dam that would flood the Hetch Hetchy valley *inside* the Yosemite National Park. The system would include a massive concrete dam, 64 miles of tunnels (35 miles through granite), two hydro-electric power houses, and over 100 miles of new transmission lines

The Railroad

The City built and operated the 68 mile standard gauge Hetch Hetchy Railroad to support construction of the dam and 35 miles of tunnels and the power houses. It branched off the Sierra RR at Milepost 26 (Hetch Hetchy Junction) at elevation 935 feet. It crossed the high point of 5064 feet at 62 J (62 miles from the Junction) at Poopenaut Pass then dropped 1194 feet in 6 miles to the dam site. The line began operation in October 1917. By 1925, with construction complete, the road ceased regular operation. Minimal operation thereafter supported project operation and maintenance except for heavy hauling to raising the 344 foot high dam another 85 feet in 1935-1938. Operation ceased and the line was torn up in 1949.

Railroad Operation

The principal freight was bulk cement for the dam, shipped in box cars. The heaviest load that could be hauled up the steep grades was 150 tons in three cars. As many as 12 carloads per day were needed at the dam, seven days a week. The lower end of the Hetch Hetchy was packed with cement cars waiting to be hauled up the grades and "must have resembled a 27-mile-long railroad transfer yard" (Wurm, Ted. *Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Railroad*).

For revenue the railroad hauled lumber from the California Peach Growers Association's High Sierra sawmill to be used for packing crates in California's central valley. Additionally, passenger service connected with busses that took tourists further on to the National Park's Yosemite Valley. There were also sightseeing trips to the dam site. Passenger and freight services ended in 1924.

Engines & Rolling Stock

Steam Engines

<u>No.</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Builder</u>
1	2 Truck Heisler	Heisler
2	3 Truck Heisler	Heisler
3	2-8-2	Baldwin
4	2-8-2	A-Schen.
5	2-6-2	A-Cooke
6	3 Truck Shay	Lima

Gasoline-Engine

5 Track Trucks

5 Track Busses

3 Plymouth locos (used in 1930's)(2 8-ton, 1 20-ton)

1 Rotary snowplow (built from wrecked caboose)

7 Speeders used in "revenue " service

Rolling stock

5 passenger cars

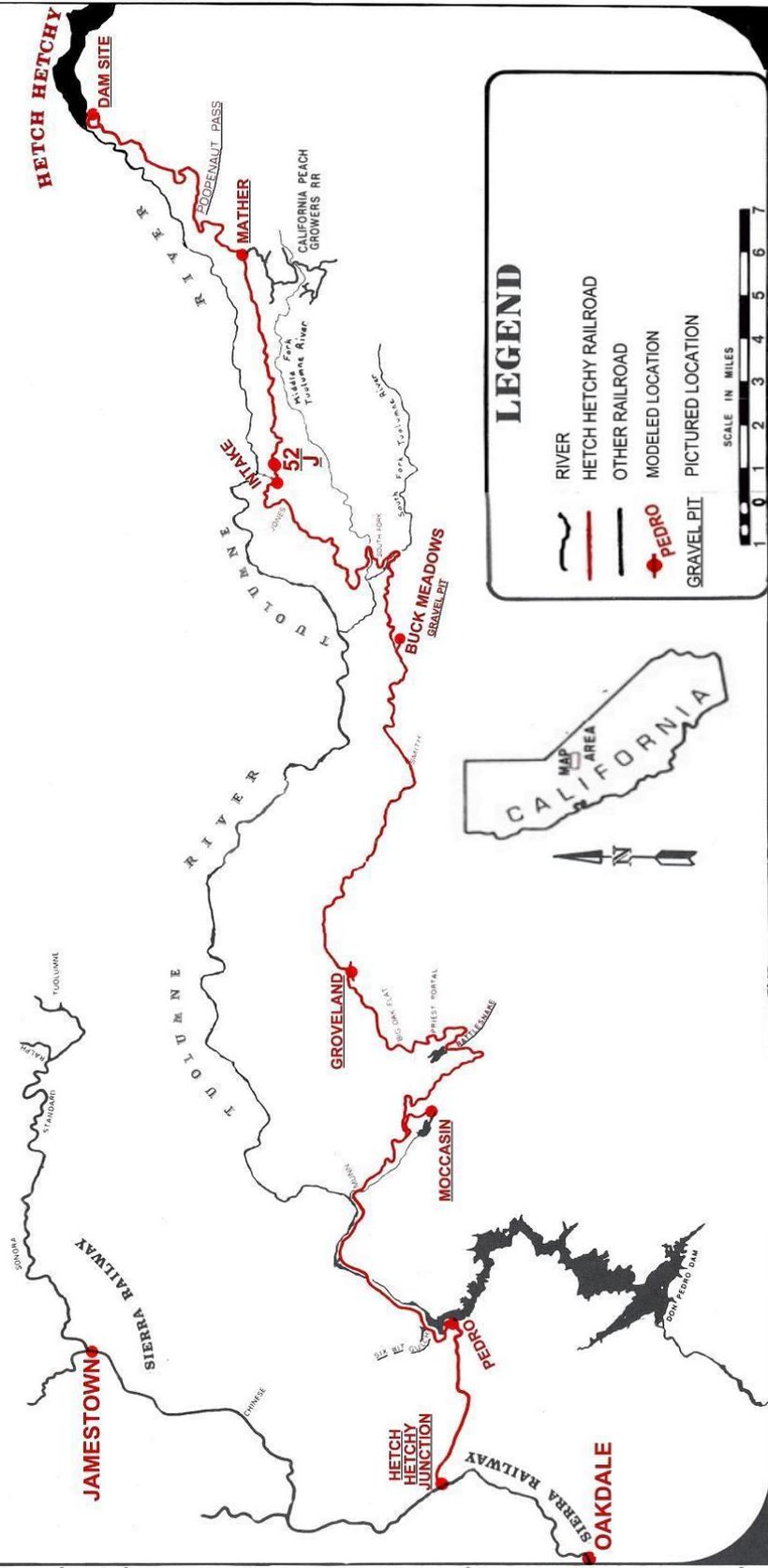
41 freight cars (including dumps)

Other

Link Belt steam crane, 40 ton steam shovel, 50 ton wrecker, wedge snowplow

Reference: Wurm, Ted. *Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Railroad*, Appendix 2

HETCH HETCHY RAILROAD



LEGEND

- RIVER
 - HETCH HETCHY RAILROAD
 - OTHER RAILROAD
 - MODELED LOCATION
 - PEDRO
 - GRAVEL PIT
- SCALE IN MILES
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

