Scenic Railways, Inc. Records

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Scenic Railways, Inc. Records

Dates: 1968-1980

Collection Number: MS 608

Creator/Collector: Scenic Railways, Inc.

Extent: 1 box

Repository: California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives
Sacramento, California 95814

Abstract: This collection includes selected business records and other documentation for Scenic Railways, Inc., operator of two excursion railroads, the Tahoe, Trout Creek & Pacific Railroad, and the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

Language of Material: English

Access

This collection is open for research at our off-site storage facility with one week's notice. Contact Library & Archives staff to arrange for access.

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Preferred Citation

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Acquisition Information


Biography/Administrative History

Scenic Railways, Inc. was incorporated in California on May 25, 1970 by Dr. Robert E. Keller, John W. Houghton, Jr. and John Allan, Jr. to operate excursion railroads. Scenic Railways participated in a joint venture to develop the Tahoe, Trout Creek & Pacific Railroad, as an alternative mode of transportation to nearby recreational areas. The line began limited operations along 1-1/4 miles of track in South Lake Tahoe on July 4, 1970. The operation was not financially successful nor were the partners able to negotiate long-term property agreements, and only operated for two full seasons (1971 and 1972). The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad operated along the former Denver & Rio Grande's Alamosa to Durango, Colorado route, completed in 1880. It ceased passenger operations in 1951, and the line was abandoned in 1967. In 1970, after plans to scrap the line had been announced, the states of Colorado and New Mexico jointly purchased a scenic 64-mile portion of the line over Cumbres Pass between Antonito, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico and selected Scenic Railways to operate the line. On May 15, 1972, Scenic Railways entered into a twenty-year lease with the Colorado and Mexico Railroad Authority. Scenic Railways operated the Cumbres & Toltec until 1981. Dr. Robert E. Keller was the President, Director, and one of the founders of Scenic Railways. Previously Dr. Keller had been employed by Hewlett-Packard Company as a research engineer and also taught mechanical engineering at Stanford University.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection includes selected business records and other documentation for Scenic Railways, Inc., operator of two excursion railroads, the Tahoe, Trout Creek & Pacific Railroad, and the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Documents include correspondence, a company prospectus, financial statements and reports, promotional brochures, clippings, and maps. Subjects include Scenic Railways development of a narrow-gauge steam excursion railroad for the South Lake Tahoe area, what eventually became the short-lived Tahoe, Trout Creek & Pacific Railroad; an effort by Scenic Railways management to take the company public; and, plans to improve the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad operations. This collection, acquired by the donor from Scenic Railways founder Robert E. Keller, is organized by corporate entity.