

Decision No. 24112.

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

**ORIGINAL**

In the Matter of Application of the  
NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY  
for authority to close the agency at  
San Geronimo, County of Marin, State  
of California.

Application No. 17433.

In the matter of the application of  
the RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY, INC., for  
authority to abandon its agency at  
San Geronimo, County of Marin, State  
of California.

Application No. 17663.

- Roy G. Hillebrand, for Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company,
- R. S. Elliott, for Railway Express Agency, Inc.
- Chas. R. Kenyon, for Marvelous Marin, Inc., Protestant.
- A. L. Moses, San Geronimo, in propria persona.
- Mahlon Farley, Nicasio, in propria persona.
- Mrs. Carl Schusster, for Lagunitas Canyon Club.
- Mrs. D. R. McNeil, for Forest Knolls Improvement Club.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

These applications are of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company and Railway Express Agency, Inc., respectively, to abandon their agencies at San Geronimo, Marin County.

A public hearing was conducted by Examiner Satterwhite at San Geronimo on September 23, 1931, at which time evidence was taken and the matter submitted.

San Geronimo is a village on the Point Reyes line of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad, located approximately midway

between San Anselmo and Point Reyes. The population is estimated to be approximately 150 permanent residents, with a large number of summer residents. It is also the nearest point on the railroad for residents of Nicasio.

The nearest existing agency stations are Fairfax, 4.8 miles south, and Point Reyes, 13.3 miles north.

The communities of Woodacre, Forest Knolls and Lagunitas, although located on the railroad, do not have the services of an agent available and make use of the San Geronimo agency, this being the nearest agency station. The station hours are 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., being closed one hour during that period for lunch.

The carrier presented an exhibit showing an estimate of the passenger revenue for the year ending July 31, 1931, based on actual agency and conductors' report for alternate months. The exhibit shows a total of 5,170 passengers, with a revenue of \$1,076. During a similar period ending July 31, 1930, there were 8,018 passengers, with a revenue of \$1,600. Records as to the freight forwarded and received show the following revenue received:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Year Ending July 1931</u>	<u>Year Ending July 1930</u>
Carloads Forwarded	\$790.	\$1,335.
Carloads Received	633.	512.
Less than Carloads Forwarded	56.	184.
Less than Carloads Received	<u>420.</u>	<u>468.</u>
Total	\$1,899.	\$2,499.

Shipments of cattle constitute the principal movements forwarded, while feed is the principal commodity received. This business is all handled in carloads.

The records of the Railway Express Agency, Inc., show the total earnings for shipments to and from San Geronimo for the 12 months ending July 31, 1931, to be \$1,504.46. Commissions paid

the station agent on this business amounted to \$150.46. In addition, the station agent handled 43 Western Union messages and 22 pieces of baggage during the year.

The record shows that the total railroad station expense during the 12 months ending July 31, 1931, amounted to \$1,782., or an average of \$148. a month. The total revenue derived from less than carload shipments was \$476., or \$40. per month, while the agency reports show passenger business amounting to \$922., or \$77. per month, these two items failing to meet the station expenses by \$31. monthly. The express commissions paid the agent are not included in the figures above quoted.

Some 15 witnesses testified on behalf of the protestants, seeking the retention of the agency. The most serious complaint was lodged against the plan of the railroad to leave the less than carload shipments in the freight house unlocked. Other protests were directed at the inconvenience caused in handling carload shipments through the necessity of working through the agent at Fairfax or Point Reyes and the necessity of meeting trains in order to transact express business.

The record in this case is similar to that in many abandonment cases before the Commission in recent years and is without doubt the result of the increased use of the private automobile and commercial truck operated on the highways in competition with the rail line. This was evidenced by the testimony of a number of the protestants. The station business has dwindled to the point where the record shows the total revenue received from less than carload shipments and the agency passenger business is materially less than the station expenses without any allowance for cost of transportation, station expenses at the other

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end and supervision costs.

On the other hand, the Commission must consider the fact that the carrier has held out to serve this territory for many years. San Geronimo is the center for a number of communities and is the only agency station at present serving the district. It does not appear that the removal of the agent would result in any hardship to the passengers now using the line, as all one-way and round trip tickets will be sold by conductors on the trains, while commutation tickets will be available at the San Francisco and other agencies and can be sold by conductors on trains, if the demand warrants.

It is concluded from the record in this case that the petition of the carrier should not be granted as applied for. It appears, however, that an arrangement should be provided whereby a caretaker may be available at San Geronimo to receive and release less than carload freight shipments, keeping the station locked. The caretaker should also be provided with the necessary supplies for the convenience of shippers and should be able to communicate with the nearest agency without expense to the shipper. An order will accordingly be entered requiring the carrier to submit a plan along the general lines mentioned above for the approval of the Commission. The express company should also join in the negotiations with the carrier, having in view that the caretaker may become the express agent at this location.

O R D E R

Public hearing having been held, the matter being ready and under submission; therefore,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that as an initial step applicants, Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company and Railway Express Agency, Inc.,

shall submit a plan for providing a caretaker at San Geronimo Station, Marin County, California, in accordance with the proposal described in the Opinion preceding this Order.

Upon receipt of such plan the Commission will make its further order in these proceedings.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1931.

C. J. Jensen  
Leon Whitely  
M. J. Lee  
W. B. Harris  
Fred A. Bennett  
 Commissioners.