

**Submerged History -Trackside Series - #19**  
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Part II

Continued from the February 2008, *Yaquina Shortline*, Lloyd continues his search of the former grade and Southern Pacific track right-of-way that was moved to higher ground on the South side of Lookout Point Reservoir, East of Eugene, Oregon. His examination was done in the fall when the water level was at its lowest.

*(see reference map in part I)*

Having located this point, we began our day's adventure by hiking west on the old grade. For the first half mile or so the alignment actually skirts the edge of the reservoir before reaching a point where it's normally under water. Along this portion of the grade we located a couple more rock cuts and the concrete abutments from a bridge that had been used to cross a small stream.

Continuing west we finally reached the point where the railroad grade left the shoreline and started out across the dry bed of the reservoir. The grade began curving towards the right and we noticed that it also got quite a bit wider. It was also at this point that we spotted two small concrete pads, one on either side of the roadbed. The shape of the pads indicated that they had once been used to support semaphore block signals. With these, and the fact that the grade got wider here, we determined that we had reached what had been the upper end of the Lawler siding.



Hiking on west, we had gone about half a mile when we spotted an old concrete foundation resting along the south side of the right-of-way. It appeared to be the remnants of a small building but we were unsure as to what its function had been. Subsequent research determined that it had probably been the second location of the Armet depot but more on that later.

A short distance to the west we reached the place where the original Armet siding and station had been located. Here we located several concrete remnants including more semaphore pads, a flat slab that had held a structure of some kind, a couple hundred feet off the grade and other features. We also discovered several of the old wooden ties in the area where the siding had been located.

The locality of Armet has an interesting past in itself. It was originally known as Blakelyville when the first post office was established there in January 1910, about the time the railroad was built. It had been named for the Joseph Blakely family, early settlers in the area. However, the railroad chose the shorter name Eula for their station, naming it after the daughter of Joseph Blakely. The Blakelyville post office and the Eula station co-existed until 1918 at which time the post office department changed their name to Eula to avoid confusion.

That was all well and fine until late 1924 when the railroad company decided that the Eula name sounded too much like the name Eola, which was located in Polk County, so they arbitrarily changed the name to Armat. The new station name first showed up in SP's Portland Division timetable No.106, dated September 7, 1924 but in the very next timetable the spelling

of the name was changed to Armet. The post office decided that one change was enough and their Eula name existed until the post office was closed October 31, 1943.

A check of early Southern Pacific timetables seems to indicate that other changes concerning Armet took place. The first timetable that shows the extension from Natron to Oakridge is No.70 dated May 1, 1912. It lists Eula (later called Armet) at MP 672.5 with a siding 1000 feet long and shows Lawler at MP 673.6 with a 3200 foot siding.

The mile post designations changed in timetable No.109, Supplement No.1 dated September 19, 1926, reflecting the completion of the Cascade line through to Crescent Lake and on to Kirk and Klamath Falls. Armet and Lawler were now stations on the mainline rather than near the end of what had previously been a branch line to Oakridge. Lawler was now located at MP 590.9 and Armet at MP 592.1. Both were still listed with the same length sidings noted earlier.

In timetable No. 117 dated October 20, 1929 Armet is shown as a spur for the first time, rather than a siding. It would seem to indicate that one end of the siding had been removed and the second track at Armet was now only a dead end spur. Lawler was still listed with a capacity of 81 cars. (SP timetables had gone from listing siding lengths in feet to showing them in car lengths in timetable No.75 dated November 2, 1913)

Lawler, having been increased to a capacity of 123 cars only a couple of months earlier, was dropped for the first time in timetable No.136 dated June 7, 1942. Armet was still listed at MP 592.1 but now shown as a siding with a capacity of 123 cars. It was at this time that a new station was built at Armet but at a point a short distance to the east, at the west end of the former Lawler siding. Apparently the siding that had been called Lawler was changed to Armet and although the new station had been relocated Armet continued to be listed at MP 592.1.

Leaving Armet we continued hiking west and a short distance beyond we encountered the largest structure remaining along the old grade. The abutments of the bridge that once spanned Armet creek stand about fifteen feet high, one located on each side of the stream. Located nearby we also discovered the old wooden bridge used by the first wagon and auto road through the area. Amazingly enough a couple of its wooden beams still span the creek.

From here the former railroad grade leaves the flat lake bottom and begins skirting a steeper hillside as it continues westward. Rock has raveled down onto the old roadbed along this segment of the line and it becomes more difficult to walk. It was along here however that we located the post of an old sign. Sticking out of the rock, we found a piece of round steel tubing with a flattened end that was bent over at a 90 degree angle. This was a common practice used by many railroad companies. They used discarded boiler flue tubing for many of their trackside signs. They would flatten about a foot of the bottom end and bend it over at a 90 degree angle before burying it in the ground so as to make it much harder to remove.

A short distance beyond the steep hillside the grade again extends out onto the flatter lake bottom and becomes easier to hike. Next we encountered a couple of old wooden culverts still in place under the old grade and came upon the large concrete culvert at the crossing of Cain Creek.

Continuing to hike westward we found that the grade disappeared for a couple of short segments where it had been obliterated by the lake's wave action and silt deposits from nearby streams entering the reservoir. However, we were still able to locate several more of the bases that had held the semaphores and two more fairly substantial concrete culverts, one of them at School Creek.

Finally we came to the end of our hike. We reached the point where the slightly elevated, ballasted grade dropped beneath the existing water level of the reservoir. The exposed grade

continued in a straight line for a couple of hundred feet, water lapping at both sides, before it disappeared below the surface. We could still look to the west and see where it went through a cut at the next point of land but it was under water between us and that distant location. Later, when we were up of the gravel road, we stopped at that same point to look down onto the lake and could see the grade continuing on from where we had stopped as it was still apparent beneath the surface of the water.

Having reached the end of the grade we took a few last photos and turned around to head back to our rig, parked on the road near the upper end of the reservoir. It was three and a half miles back, making the total distance for the day seven miles. By the time we reached Scott's pickup our feet were letting us know it had been a long day. However, we had accomplished something that we had wanted to do for several years. Now when we're driving Highway 58 along Lookout Point Reservoir in the fall months we can look across the lake and view the exposed grade with a little more appreciation.