St. Francis turntable now in use at railroad museum

trucks moved into St. Francis to lift turntable which was back in the brush and trees just north of the days of maneuvering before the turntable, removed in two sections, lift it. was moved to the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden.

Recently, an article written by Kleran Nicholson, appeared in *The* Denver Post which talked about the installation of the turntable which now helps with restorations

According to the article, Bill Gould, the executive director of the museum, can move 80,000 pounds of timber and steel with the turntable. Detailed engineering, balance and lots of grease enable Mr. Gould, and others, to spin a massive turntable at the museum, pushing it with a large wooden lever.

"Getting her going is not problem. Stopping is her problem," Mr. Gould said with a laugh. "We'll be able to turn a locomotive by hand."

Recently, the turntable spun a 40,000-pound passenger coach to line it up with track leading to the museum's roadhouse.

"We spun the coach with two guys," said Gould. "It was no prob-

Museum officials plan to keep the 72-foot-long turntable busy, funneling railroad cars and locomotives into the roundhouse to be pampered and restored.

Visitors can watch workers inside the roundhouse from a public viewing area, but a sign warns: "Don't Stare at Welding Arcs."

The turntable and roundhouse are the final stage of a six-year, \$1.5 million improvement project at the museum that includes a library built to resemble a train depot and a looped track.

Large wooden doors, 17 feet tall and weighing 1,200 pounds, are attached to five roundhouse bays with custom-made, 40-pound hinges. The doors and surrounding detailed brickwork are true to original roundhouse details.

Before the roundhouse was built, restoration work was done outside.

"It isn't really pleasant to crawl under a car in the middle of January in the snow," said Rich Fare- members as a child, watching men Golden. well, 54, president of the

Several years ago, cranes and museum's board of directors. turn the table with a large engine "Now it's a luxury to be able to which was operated with manout and carry away the old train work in a place that is well lighted and heated."

The turntable, built in 1927, was engine. main tracks. It took a couple of hauled to Golden from St. Francis where it took two 70-ton cranes to powered by air pressure but when

thing. Getting it to work was an-

"Nobody had a degree in Turntable 101," Mr. Gould said. "But it has worked out rather well."

The museum, owned by the nonprofit Colorado Railroad Historical Foundation, takes great pride in offering a hands-on experience.

day, children climbed in and out of locomotives, passenger cars and was turned on the table and headed cabooses. The clang of engine bells filled the air.

The museum fires up its narrow gauge, steam locomotive only bitterly cold temperatures that the about four times each year.

Taken from the Oct. 3, 1996 The St. Francis Herald

St. Francis is the end of the line for the railroad and, in the early days, the turntable was used to turn the trains around and head them back in the direction they had come when maintenance work was done on the engines.

The turntable in St. Francis had not been used for a number of years as, today, there are two engines one facing each way — which pull place. Besides the depot and round

The St. Francis Herald on Oct. 3. 1996, it was printed that Marilyn Holzwarth, Cheyenne County historian, said that the Chevenne John Finley now lives and it was County Rustler reported that the train whistle was heard for the first ing transported. time on June 26, 1888. At that time, and roundhouse were put in soon

Ken Quigley, who was the depot 1991 said that the turntable was used occasionally while he was it being used was around 1980.

power. Mr. Quigley also remembers using manpower to turn the

Ordinarily, the turntable was it was not used very often, it did not Getting it to Golden was one work right and it was necessary to use the long poles on either side of the table to turn the engine. Mr. Quigley also noted that another secret to having the engine work properly was making sure that the engine was perfectly balanced on

The tracks which led to the round house were made of very light Recently, on a mild November metal. Mr. Quigley remembers one very cold morning, the big engine toward the roundhouse when the tracks shattered like glass.

"I suppose it was because of the track shattered," he said.

A special crew was called and the engine jacked up so new track could be laid.

The round house, which was constructed in August 1888, was torn down round 1970. It was a wooden frame but bricks had been from. The turntable was also used laid between the studs. Mr. Quigley was not sure if the bricks had been laid for insulation or to make it more fire proof.

Mr. Zweygardt remembers when the train depot was a very active house, there was a windmill and In an article which appeared in tank with a spout to supply the trains with water, a coal house, section house and an ice house. The ice was cut from a pond near where used to keep foods cold while be-

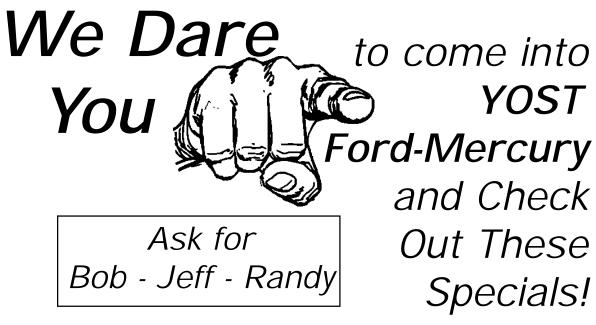
The June 21, 1888, issue of The the tracklayers were a few miles Rustler reported that the Burlingeast of St. Francis. The turntable ton and Missouri Company (railroad company) expected to make St. Francis a division station by locating machine shops in the area agent in St. Francis from 1966 to but this did not happen. Today, St. Francis is still the end of the line.

There were several people who still an agent as sometimes, a train showed up to see the turntable off would come in with only one en- and it is good to know that the old gine. The last time he remembered turntable that once served trains coming to St. Francis is now being Tobe Zweygardt, St. Francis, re-put to good use in the museum in

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TRAIN TURNTABLE was removed from St. Francis in 1996 and it took two cranes to remove the huge piece of equipment.



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