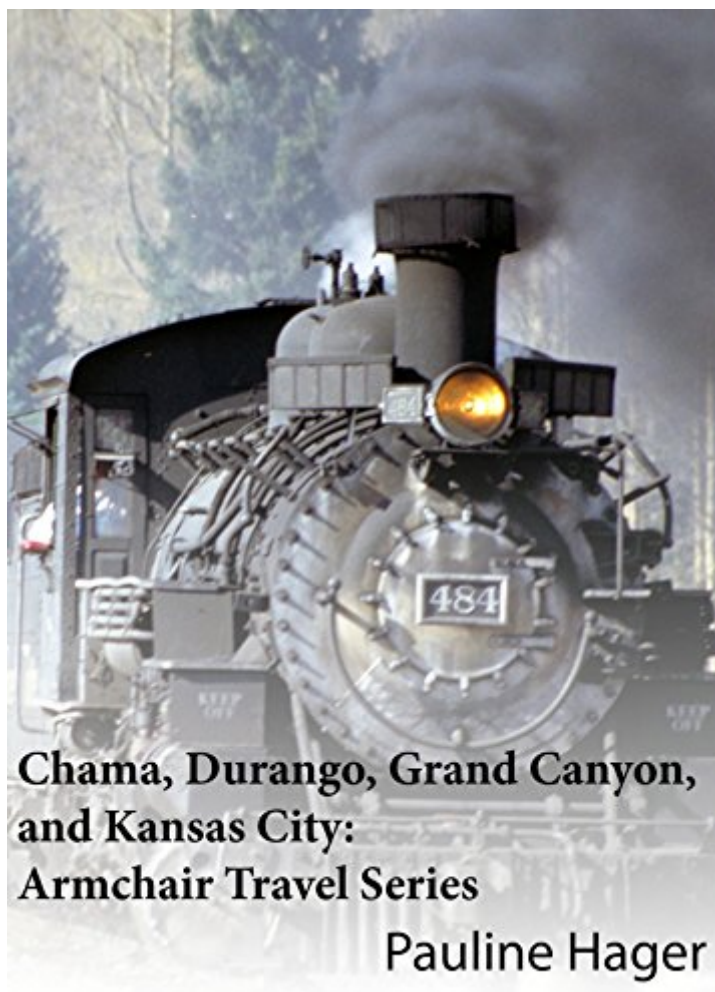


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Chama, Durango, Grand Canyon, And Kansas City: Armchair Travel Series



Synopsis

Pauline, husband, son and grandson flew to Durango, CO, located in the Rocky Mts. nestled in the Animas River Valley at 6512 ft., to ride on the historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. A coal-fired steam powered engine built in 1882, was to pull the train from Durango to Silverton, CO, an old mining town, 9305 ft. high. Due to deep snow drifts blocking the narrow mountain pass at higher elevations, they settled for a round-trip from Durango to a "wye" at Cascade Canyon, 7750 ft. The wye, a section of track, allows an engine to be turned around. Beautiful snow-bound scenery was just compensation as they rode the old steam engine, enjoying the ride and spectacular wintery splendor in the mountains. Photos by Pauline tell it all! The Hagers chose the Grand Canyon for their next trip. They boarded the Southwest Chief to Williams, AZ, and transported to the South Rim in the park, arriving at historic Grand Canyon RR Station, constructed 1909. Booked at the Yavapai Lodge, the elder Hagers were ready to relax but 13 year old grandson had other plans; anxious to see it all within a three day school holiday. The foursome circled the South Rim from east to west, watching the sun cross over rocky buttes and mesas with clusters of clouds casting deep shadows. From various overlooks along the rim of the Canyon, hikers were seen, some on mules, working their way down to Phantom Ranch, located on the Colorado River. Due to the canyon's immense depth it was not always easy to spot the river, but Pauline managed to snap shots of the seemingly calm river, when in reality it is constantly moving, rapidly. Their last day, heavy snowfall covered the canyon, creating a beautiful winter wonderland, a lasting image of this magical place. The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad tour from Chama, New Mexico to Antonito, Colorado was the Hager's next train excursion. This scenic railroad, completed in 1880, is America's longest and highest narrow gauge railroad. The steam engine pulls the train between Chama, N M and Antonito, CO, over 7,000 ft. in the Rocky Mts. They boarded Amtrak's Southwest Chief to Chama, NM. Next morning they were informed that a fire partially burned a portion of the Lobato Trestle, where the train crosses 100 ft. above Wolf Creek. The company provided a bus for those willing to continue to Antonito, enjoying spectacular mountain scenery; the bus climbing steep grades, going through tunnels, and careening along narrow roads above breathtaking gorges. Arriving in Antonito they boarded the waiting C&TSRR for their return trip to Chama. They rode in the open observation car, viewing breathtaking scenery, including spruce, ponderosa pine and shimmering aspen trees. The train took hair-raising turns, looping down, up and around sides of the mountains, winding around a horseshoe curve, and inched its way along the rim of 800-foot-deep Toltec Gorge, 600 ft. above the Rio de Los Pinos; all the while traversing between northern NM and southern CO, enjoying the splendor of mountain scenes. Pauline's photos included. Each summer, the National Garden

Railway Society holds a convention in a major US city. This year was Overland Park, KS, a suburb of Kansas City. A standard garden railroad is of varying scales from 1/32 to 1/20, but the track gauge is generally 2 3/4 in. Requirement is a yard large enough to handle the track ft. desired, and ambition to construct the various buildings either by kit or scratch-built, with all the material to create a truly authentic railroad scene. Pauline and Randy drove to KS and visited over 25 gardens, driving between Kansas and Missouri, viewing yards built of various sizes and motifs. One yard included 2500 ft of 7.5 in. gauge main line running on the ground, much larger than a typical garden railroad; hefty enough to seat 3 people. A live steam engine pulled the train. Returning home they visited Omaha, NE, driving by Randy's childhood home, high school and Hanscom Park. Layout photos by P

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Customer Reviews

This is a great book written by the author who has first hand information on these different trains trips since she was on each trip. How better to learn about The Grand Canyon, Durango, and Kansas City by reading her book. Great book for travelers. Linda Meckler

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