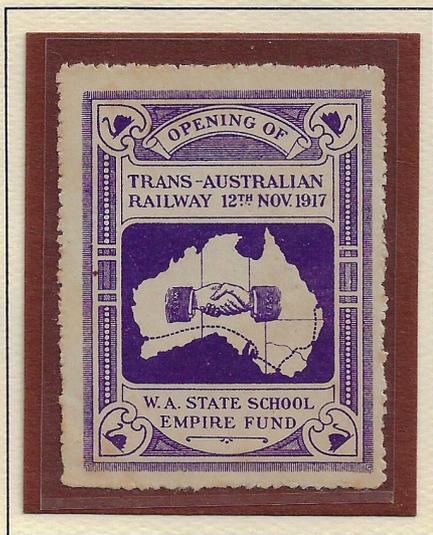


THE TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY

Brief History of the Railway

In 1907 a Federal Act was passed providing for the expenditure of a sum of £20,000 for a preliminary survey of a railway line connecting Western Australia with the Eastern States. This survey was commenced in 1908, and was completed in March, 1909. The estimated cost of construction and equipment of the line on the basis of a 4-ft. 8½ in. gauge, from Port Augusta in South Australia to Kalgoorlie in the Western Australian goldfields, a distance of 1051 miles, was £4,045,00.

In September, 1911 a Bill was introduced into Parliament to authorise the construction of the line. It became law in the following December. On 12th September 1912 the ceremony of cutting the first sod was performed at Port Augusta by the Governor-General Lord Denman. On the 12th February, 1913, a similar ceremony was performed at Kalgoorlie by the Prime Minister of Australia The Right Hon. Andrew Fisher, and thus began the commencement of the Trans-Australian Railway line at both ends.



Scope of the Exhibit

Shown here are the **very first selected postcards to be issued specifically for sale on The Trans-Australian Railway**, commissioned by the Commonwealth Railways to be produced by George Rose. **These 24 postcards representing the complete first series** issued in early December, 1922 were broken up into 4 sets of 6 cards selected by Mr Rose. Originally 6 cards were returned due to spelling errors, delaying the issue date. The views from these real photo white border lithograph postcards were taken by two photographers. Captain F.W.T. Saunders, an amateur photographer and supervising engineer, for the eastern end, who carried out lengthy tours of inspection on camel-back, with his Eastman-Kodak No. 2a Box Brownie camera that took 2½ x 4¼ inch exposures on size 116 roll film. The other being George Rose, a professional photographer commissioned by the railways to publish these cards and also photograph the interior of the new carriages for publicity purposes. Identified by their sepia toning involving a process of replacing the silver in the black and white photographic print by silver sulphide, which is brown. The print is first bleached, briefly washed and then treated with the sulphide toning solution. The other identifiable difference between these cards and the reprints is the Commonwealth Railways logo which printed down the centre on the reverse side of the card, with 'Trans-Australian Railway' printed across the top. Many of these postcards have since been reproduced in black and white form, with a brief description of the view on the reverse side replacing the logo. All copyrights for the views were retained by the Railways.

The Frame Schedule

Beginning with a 1920's timetable containing photos from the postcards advertising the journey, the exhibit continues showing 2 covers new and used for the inaugural journey, along with the actual envelope given on the purchase of a set of cards. The exhibit then follows the construction of the railway beginning in 1912 as one team worked from the eastern end and the other from the west. From then on the Trans-Australian Railway was the work of hundreds of horses, camels, donkeys and hard bitten navies, with the help of a few machines, eventually laying 2½ million sleepers and 140,000 tons of railway iron through the parched earth of the Nullarbor surviving under gruelling extremes of climate in some of the worst terrain in the world. These teams had to be equipped not only with the materials to build the railway but also with food, water, accommodation and other supplies for the workers. Despite all tribulations and great distances, when the two teams met they were less than a metre apart on a north-south line. These postcards show the profound effect on the lives of many Aborigines as 'well meaning' Europeans attempt to change their way of life. The first 18 unique views in this exhibit were taken by Capt. Saunders. The final 6 photographs of this display taken by George Rose show the finished interior of seven wooden sitting cars purchased from Clyde Engineering, NSW. Initially used during construction, for hospital and accommodation purposes, were later remodelled by master craftsmen in the Port Augusta workshops. The views date from c1912 to c1920 and include a new lounge car when regular maintenance proved a problem. Each car shown was 51ft 2ins in length and 10ft wide with no end platforms, a unique feature of the time making this journey equal to any train ride in the world.

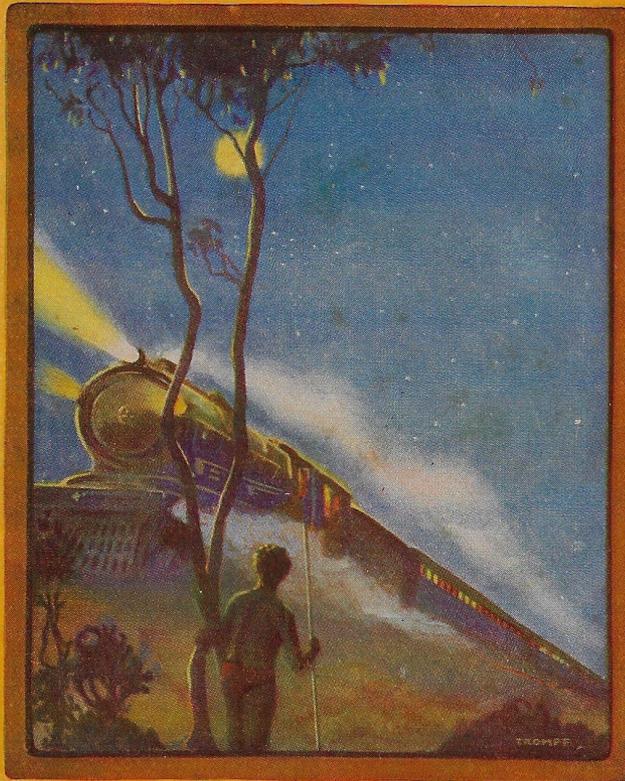
References

The Desert Railway - Patsy Adam Smith 1974
Queensland State Archives of Australia

National Archives of Aust
Rose Stereographs Melbourne



COMMONWEALTH RAILWAYS



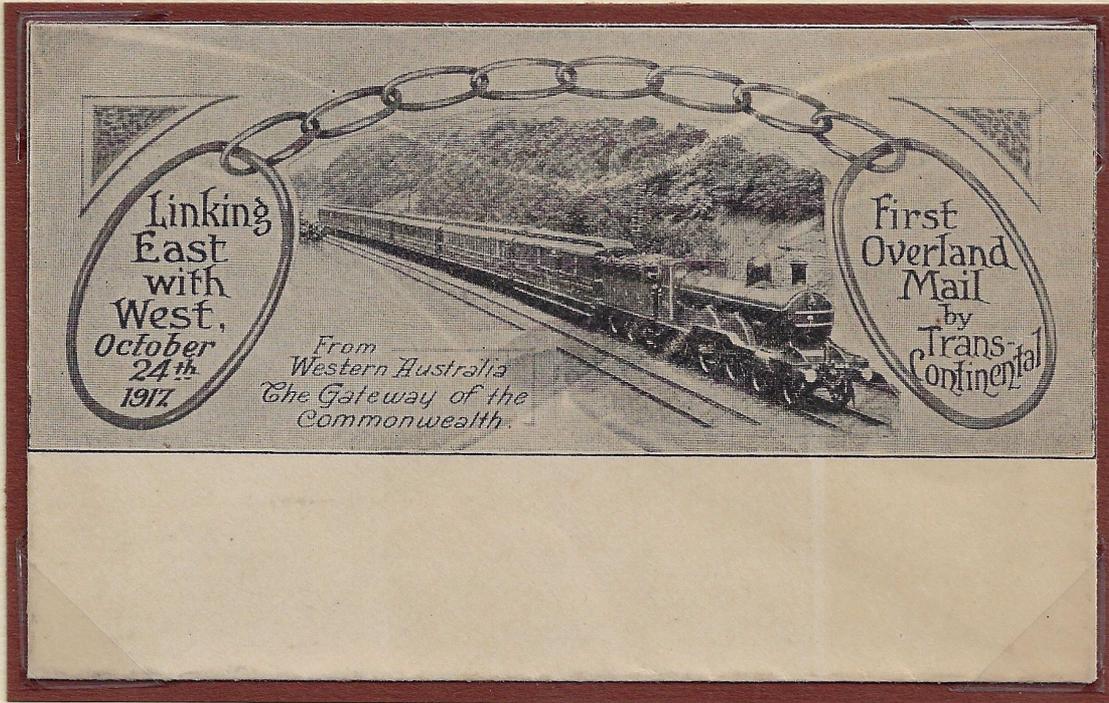
Travel in Comfort
ACROSS AUSTRALIA
on the
**TRANS -
AUSTRALIAN
RAILWAY**

SAVE



DAYS

FIRST OVERLAND MAIL BY TRANS-CONTINENTAL



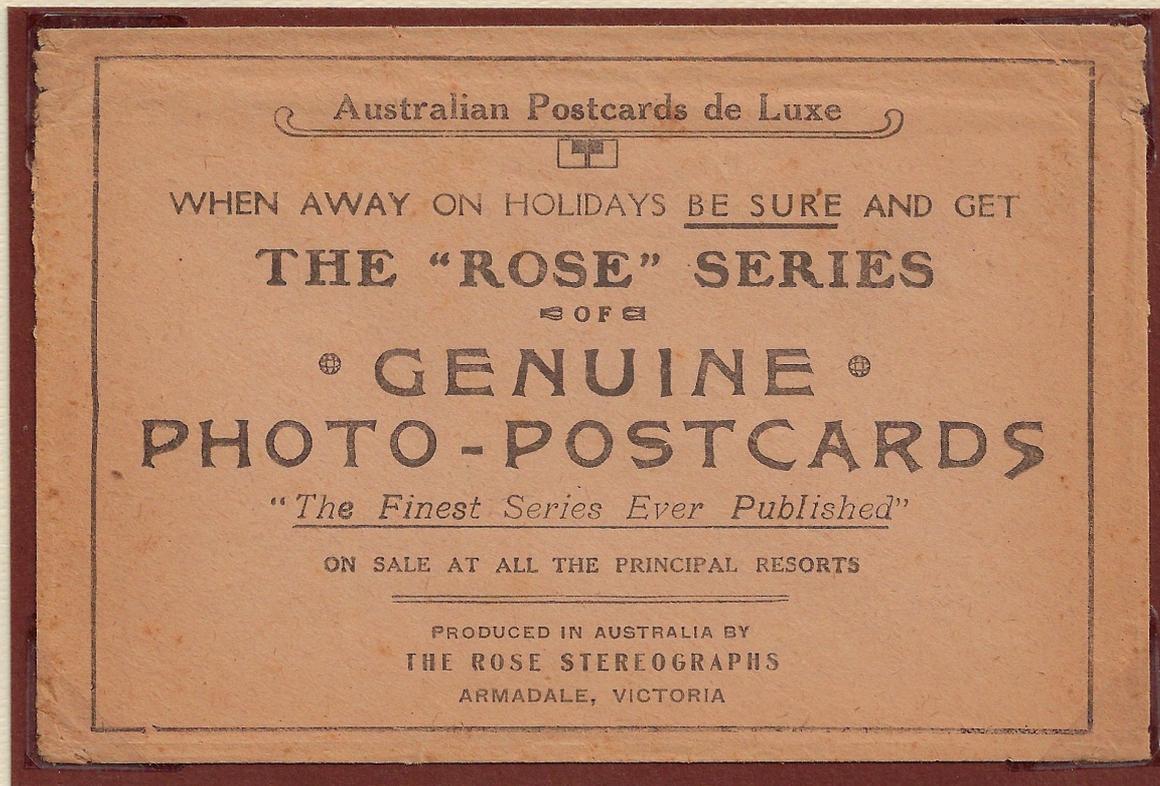
Unused cover available for use on the inaugural Eastbound journey 25th October 1917



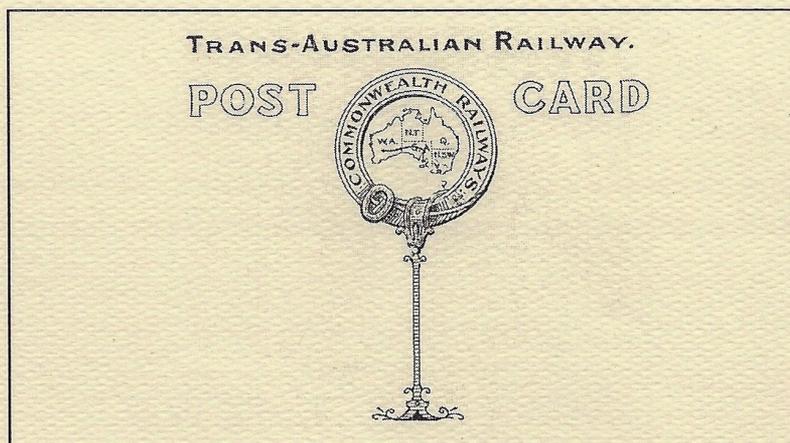
Used cover available for use on the inaugural Eastbound journey 25th October 1917

THE "ROSE" SERIES POSTCARDS

These postcards were commissioned by The General Superintendent of the Commonwealth Railways Mr Brennan, to be produced by 'The Rose Stereograph' a company owned by George Rose. Initially 500 cards of each 24 views was quoted {12,000} to be later reduced to {6,000} at a cost of £6-12-6 per 1,000, offered for sale to passengers at 1/3 per set of six. The quote included 4 sets of six views per set, packed in envelopes ready for sale. All photographs were to be supplied by the Railways. Single copies were not available. Delivery was made 4th December, 1922.



Shown is an **original envelope** that contained six cards from series one.



Facsimile used on address side for the 1922 series.
The logo colour was brown (later changed to black)

- Set (1) 5, 8, 12, 15, 18, 20.
- Set (2) 6, 9, 17, 16, 19, 24.
- Set (3) 4, 7, 10, 11, 21, 22.
- Set (4) 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 23.

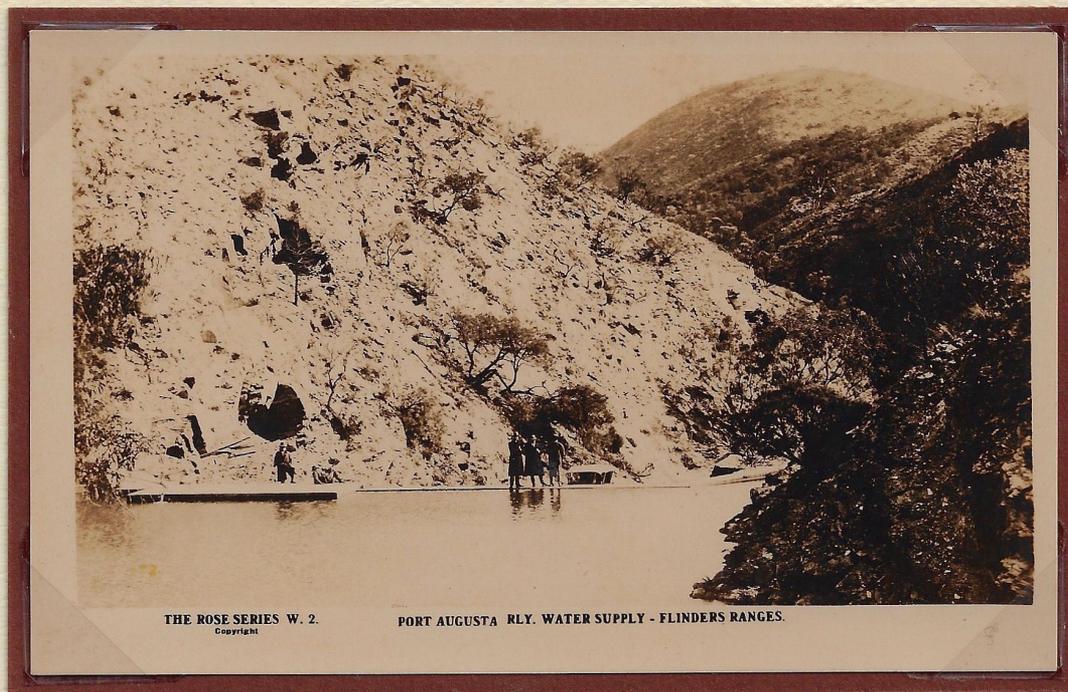
PORT AUGUSTA



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders c.1 917}

At Port Augusta it was necessary to erect a new station on a fresh site {the original station site being entirely unsuitable for the purpose of the new line}. The station buildings were constructed so as to accommodate the officials of the various departments connected with the railway. Port Augusta {often referred to as "The Back O' Beyond"} suddenly became a thriving railway town.

FLINDERS RANGES



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders c.1912}

Absence of water along the route was one of the main obstacles to construction. The main supply of water for the eastern railway construction workers was Flinders Ranges. Named after Matthew Flinders, the first European explorer to visit the area in 1802.

WATER CARTAGE



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1912}

From the beginning, the construction of the railway depended on the camel. Between 10 and 14 camels were used to draw the much needed water and supply wagons. From wherever the new-laid rails ended the camels took over, for in these inland desert areas, they were without equal.

PLOUGHING THE WAY



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1912}

A survey team in 1908 had previously studied the geology of the route and the trail mark was blazed by a heavy chain dragged by camels. This line was then ploughed by a team of camels during the construction earthworks.

THE CAMEL TRAIN



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1912}

A team of camels advances across heavy earthworks, transporting feed for horses in the camps beyond the railhead. Some 250 desert schooners' worked on the construction of the Trans-Australian Line. One of the railway engineers was heard to declare "Why we'd never have built that line if it hadn't been for the camels". They became so valuable changing hands for up to £100.

CARTING RAILWAY SLEEPERS



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1912}

The first sleepers were laid at Port Augusta in September, 1912. All sleepers for the line were made of Australian hardwood. Using a standard gauge (the width of the railway track) a total of 40 tons of 80 pound rails to construct the line, together with 2,500,000 sleepers of the best Australian Timbers were laid.

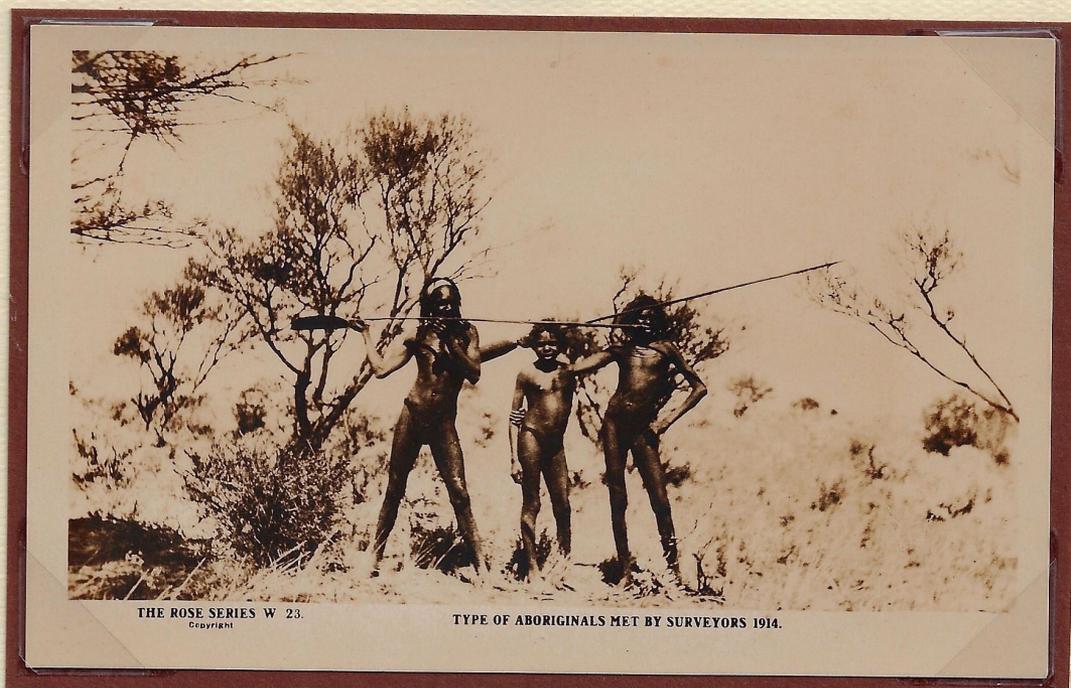
CAMEL BUGGY



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1912}

Beyond the railheads all supplies and materials were conveyed by pack camels, or camel wagons. Maintaining supplies of the 3,500 workmen and 750 camels and horses, proved to be a mammoth task.

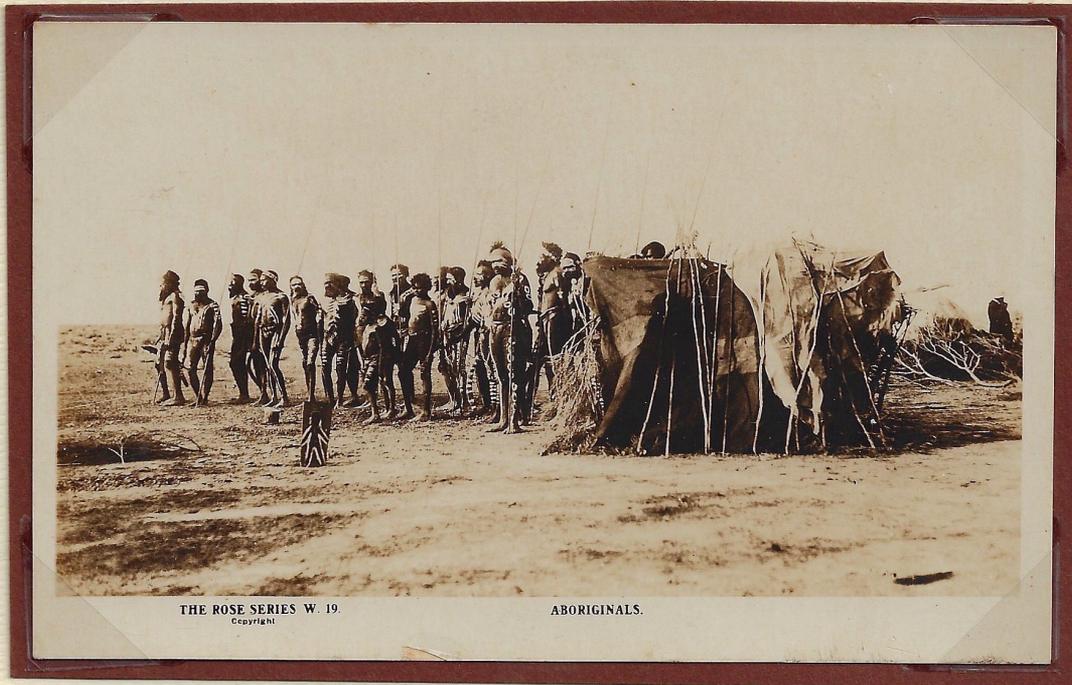
OOLDEA



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1915}

The name Ooldea is Aboriginal and means 'a meeting place where water is obtainable'. Sacred to the Aboriginals, and on the edge of the Nullarbor plain, it was the first and last watering hole for the construction workers until Kalgoorlie. Tribes from near and far would gather regularly for their ceremonies, corroborees, bartering and tribal customs.

ABORIGINAL CAMP



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1915}

The 'Ooldea Soak' {the only water supply for miles} proved invaluable to the Railway Construction Department, and was further developed until the output of water exceeded 100,000 gallons per week. Aboriginal tribes would often camp in the vicinity.

SPECTATORS



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1915}

Curious spectators of the construction, the Aborigines would gather and follow all the railway camps and stopping places along the route. For most it was the first time they had ever seen a white man.

THE ABORIGINALS



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

Aborigines in ceremonial attire for one of their Corroborees {a gathering of many tribes for ceremonial dancing, singing and oration}. The railway construction workers took over the Ooldea water supply causing starvation to the Aboriginal people.

PROGRESS



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

Along with the railway came the western culture, and the Aborigines at Ooldea became the subject of well-meaning attempts to induce progress by westernisation.

THE NULLARBOR PLAIN



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

On the perimeter of Ooldea, begins the Nullarbor Plain {a combination of two Latin words meaning no trees} with its extremes of climate and devoid of trees stretching out for 420 miles. Several bores were drilled for water during construction but most were found to be undrinkable.

EAST MEETS WEST



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

The platelaying was done by a tracklayer at each end, and the progress rate of 2 miles and 40 chains in one day established a record in Australian railway construction. The last rails of the Trans-Australian railway were laid on 17th October 1917. When the two teams met at a point on the Nullarbor Plain they were less than a metre apart on a north-south line.

330 MILES WITHOUT A CURVE



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

The Trans-Australian Railway runs without a curve for over 300 miles across the Nullarbor Plain. This is the longest stretch of straight railway line in the world.

THE INAUGURAL JOURNEY



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

The train which made the first official eastbound historical crossing on 25th October, 1917, a journey taking 37 hours 20 minutes inclusive of stoppages. The cost of the 1,051 mile ride one way was £8.10s.0d. {1st class} and £5.16s.10d {2nd class}.

WATER FROM THE WEST



{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

Engineered by C.Y. O'Connor for the goldfields in W.A. and opened in 1903 this reservoir was an engineering feat of its time. Servicing the construction needs of the Trans-Australian from the Western end of the railway at the time and is still a major source of water supply today.

KALGOORLIE



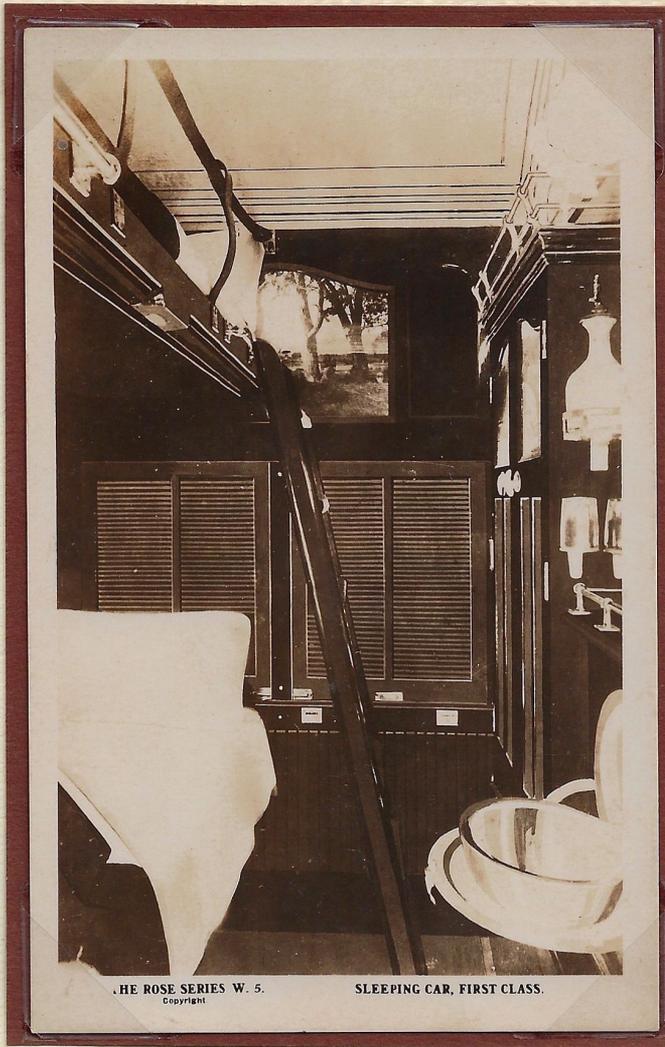
{Photograph by Capt. Saunders Ca. 1917}

Hannan Street, the main thoroughfare of Kalgoorlie, and the end of the Trans-Australian Line.

SLEEPING CARS

A contract was issued on 12th June, 1916 for ten express sleeping car bodies to the Meadowbank Manufacturing Company, NSW. The first was to be delivered on 13th December, 1916 and the last on 4th April, 1917, at a cost, delivered at Port Augusta of £2,300 for the first eight, and £2,350 for the remaining two, for a total cost of £23,100. The remaining two were delivered to the western end of the line rather than being held at Port Augusta.

First class passengers have 2 berth compartments and are fitted with wardrobes. Showers-baths were also provided along with a supply of warm water for toilet purposes.



The **second class** sleeping facility was more compact with 4-berth compartments. Conductors were provided in both first and second class cars with instructions to give ladies, children elderly people, and invalids special attention.

A novel feature of these cars was the lack of any side doors. Passengers could only leave the train by passing through the connecting doors into another carriage.



THE DINING CAR



{Photograph by George Rose ca. 1920}

The dining car was waited on by a chef and staff of 2, serving breakfast, lunch & dinner. Tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, postcards, confectionery, playing cards, novels and magazines could all be obtained from the waiters on the dining car. Meals were extra and passengers were required on purchasing their ticket to pay for meals provided and a coupon was given for each meal.

RESERVATIONS CAR



{Photograph by George Rose ca. 1917}

Prior to completion, the Commissioner decided the Governor General would need a special car for use during the inaugural train run. This was temporarily fitted out with compartments, dining room, toilets and support staff accommodation. This was later used for hire to groups of up to eight persons at a cost of £75 one way.

LOUNGE CARS



THE ROSE SERIES W. 4
Copyright

LOUNGE CAR.

The lounge car, limited to first class passengers only was built at a cost of £3,530 9s. 5d. Measuring 51ft. 2ins. in length and 10ft wide, it was fitted with plush lounge chairs, a writing desk, mirrored panels and hand coloured scenic photographs. Two compartments were provided in each car, one for women, the other for men, later being classified as smoking and non-smoking, rather than along traditional sexist lines. Card playing and reading were the most popular pass times of the day. Afternoon tea with cakes was served at 4 o'clock with coffee after the evening dinner, when the news of the day was posted. A visit from the Commissioner in early 1920 resulted in a piano being installed for passenger use on 7th April, 1920.

{Photographs George Rose {left} c. 1917
and {below} c. 1920}



THE ROSE SERIES W. 3
Copyright

LOUNGE CAR.

Routine maintenance proved a problem and in 1920 approval was granted for the construction of a new lounge car. Enhancements included an ornate bevelled glass door, matching light fittings, oval cathedral glass window at either end, turtleback roof, polished wooden interior and a pressed metal ceiling.