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PHOTOS: SHANTAY IOSIA



Historic Angels Flight cars *Olivet* and *Sinai* are stored on special stands at Metro Rail Division 20.

A Century of History is Stored at Metro Rail Division 20

By SHANTAY IOSIA

- Angels Flight cars await return to service on Bunker Hill.

(August 27, 2004) More than a century of Los Angeles transportation history is being preserved at Metro Red Line Division 20.

The two cars of the Angels Flight Railway, a funicular railway originally built on Bunker Hill in downtown Los Angeles in 1901, are being stored temporarily at Division 20.

The two railcars, *Olivet* and *Sinai*, for many years ascended and descended Bunker Hill along a right-of-way adjacent to Hill Street at the northern entrance to the Metro Red Line's Pershing Square station.

An accident in early 2001 badly damaged the two historic cars and forced temporary closure of Angels Flight. Subsequently, the cars were restored and housed



at a warehouse on 6th Street – until this year – when a new owner bought the warehouse to convert it into residential loft housing.

Manuel Precie, Metro Rail assistant rail fleet services manager, stands at the bottom entrance to a funicular car.

Needed temporary storage

This summer, John H. Welborne, president of the Angels Flight Railway Foundation, and other supporters contacted CEO Roger Snoble to seek a temporary resting place for the cars.

“We were happy to accommodate their needs,” says Manuel Precie, Metro Rail assistant rail fleet services manager. “It goes in conjunction with the Metro Red Line and making history. Having old and new vehicles in such proximity is like having the past with the future.”

Olivet and *Sinai*, named after biblical mountains, now rest on special 33-degree angled stands awaiting the day of their return to their sloping home near the corner of 4th and Hill Streets.

Metro anticipates remaining as the cars’ temporary host for about 10 to 12 more months.

The Angels Flight funicular was built by an entrepreneur at the beginning of the 20th Century to connect the affluent residential community at the top of Bunker Hill with the commercial district along Hill, Broadway, Spring, and Main Streets at the bottom.

Operated for 68 years

Angels Flight operated for 68 years and was dismantled and temporarily stored during the redevelopment of Bunker Hill in the 1970s and 80s.

Following Angels Flight’s reopening in 1996, the Railway became an important part of the resurgence of 21st Century Bunker Hill and downtown Los Angeles. After 1996, the historic cars were transporting more than 60,000 passengers monthly along their 298-foot long incline, leading to the Flight’s nickname as “Shortest Railway in the World.”

The historic Railway is now owned and operated by the nonprofit Angels Flight Railway Foundation.

“Angels Flight is truly beloved by the community,” says Welborne. “Throughout its 104-year history, whenever there has been discussion of the Railway’s possible demise, there always has been a hue and cry of support from the citizenry.”