



No. 04 Orange Belt Railroad Car Lantern

The lantern pictured here is from an **Orange Belt Railroad** car that made its first trip through Dunedin from Sanford, Florida on its way to St. Petersburg, Florida in June 1888. At this time, Dunedin's train station was nothing more than a railroad car parked alongside the tracks. The tracks themselves were "narrow-gauge," meaning that they were narrower (only three feet across) than standard-gauge tracks, which were a little over four feet wide. Because the tracks were narrow, the train cars were also narrower than what was standard. There were two seats on one side of each car and one seat on the other side. The aisles were so small that two people were not able to walk past one another.

At the time, the Orange Belt Railroad narrow-gauge locomotives had wood-burning engines. Their preferred fuel was fatwood pine. This was essentially the heartwood of local pine trees, which is a very flammable type of wood. It is able

to light quickly even when wet, is resistant to wind, and burns incredibly hot, which allows it the ability to light larger pieces of wood. Because of the wood burning engines, water towers had to be strategically placed along the train tracks in case of emergency. And, it would have been rare to pull into a station without seeing large piles of wood stacked on top of the platform.

The Orange Belt Railroad train was notorious for being off schedule. Because the tracks were built quickly over rough terrain, the train had to move slowly – it kept up a pace of about twelve

miles per hour. It also provided an unbelievably bumpy ride and made unscheduled stops for maintenance. Dunedin pioneer and citrus grove owner Fred Emerson remembered a long stop on one of his trips. He later learned that a nut had come loose from the machinery, gotten lost, and the train couldn't proceed until it was found. Another passenger in Dunedin noted being surprised one day when the train arrived at the station as scheduled. Later, he learned the train which arrived that day was in fact a train that had been scheduled to arrive the day before!

Below: The Orange Belt Railroad station in Dunedin (Source: DHM)

