

Classic Trains
SPECIAL EDITION NO. 18

Great Trains

Extra 2016

WEST

The golden age of
transcontinental
rail travel



*Super Chief • California Zephyr
Empire Builder • UP's City streamliners
San Francisco Overland • SP's Daylight fleet
Sunset Limited • Rocky Mountain Rocket • AND MORE!*



In the Rocky Mountains, Canadian Pacific's *Canadian* follows the Bow River east toward Banff, Alberta, in July 1977. Bringing up the rear is one of CP's famous *Park*-series sleeper-observation-dome cars.

J. W. Swanberg

GreatTrains WEST

The golden age of
transcontinental rail travel

EDITED BY **ROBERT S. MCGONIGAL**

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ON THE COVER:

Electro-Motive E1 diesels in the Santa Fe's famous "Warbonnet" colors stand at Albuquerque, N.Mex., with the Los Angeles-Chicago *El Capitan* in summer 1939. Photo by H. W. Barber, William R. Barber collection.



Routes of the great trains

This map shows the routes of the 18 passenger trains covered in the 12 feature articles in this publication. Most are “transcontinental” trains between Chicago (or, in one case, New Orleans) and the West Coast. Two are Chicago–Colorado trains. Five are regional trains in California, Oregon, and Washington. Trains that share a route for most or all of their runs are shown in the same color. Not shown for reasons of clarity are the routes covered in the two-page “Great Trains in Photos” series distributed throughout the issue.

Editor **Robert S. McGonigal**
Art Director **Thomas G. Danneman**
Senior Editor **J. David Ingles**
Senior Graphic Designer **Scott Krall**
Senior Graphic Designer **Drew Halverson**
Editorial Assistant **Diane Laska-Swanke**
Contributing Illustrator **Bill Metzger**
Librarian **Thomas E. Hoffmann**
Production Coordinator **Sue Hollinger-Yustus**
Editorial Director **Diane M. Bacha**

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Editorial

Phone: (262) 796-8776
E-mail: editor@classictrainsmag.com
Fax: (262) 798-6468

Display advertising sales

Phone: (888) 558-1544, ext. 625
E-mail: adsales@classictrainsmag.com

Customer service

Phone: (800) 533-6644
Phone outside U.S. and Canada: (813) 910-3616
E-mail: ClassicTrains@customersvc.com

Selling CLASSIC TRAINS magazines or products in your store

Phone: (800) 558-1544, press 3
Outside U.S. and Canada: (262) 796-8776, ext. 818
E-mail: tss@kalmbach.com
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Visit our website

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Go West!

Ours is an east-to-west continent. Ever since European settlers began landing along the Atlantic Seaboard, we in North America have looked westward for opportunity and adventure. As settlement progressed, the definition of “The West” changed, encompassing in turn the Appalachian mountain chain, the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, the Great Plains, and the spectacular lands beyond. Still, the majority of the population remained in the East, and for those millions the West was exotic, romantic, alluring.

The railroads played a major role in redefining the West as their tracks pushed across the continent. Well before 1900, several main lines had been completed to the Pacific Ocean, and lines connecting the coastal cities had been established. Over these lines ran a breathtaking variety of fine passenger trains, carrying people to and through a land that was familiar to a few, novel and exciting to many more.

In this special publication we celebrate the great passenger trains that served the West during the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. The 12 feature articles originally appeared in TRAINS magazine, spanning from 1942 to 1962, but they have been completely redesigned. In addition, 7 two-page photo spreads spotlight yet more trains.

We hope you enjoy this first installment of our “Great Trains” series.

Robert S. McGonigal



The Chicago–Los Angeles *Golden State*, a joint Rock Island-Southern Pacific operation, rounds a curve at El Casco, Calif., in January 1948. The SP E7s wear a special paint scheme to match the train.

Frank Peterson, Alan Miller collection

UP'S CITY STREAMLINERS

YELLOW TO COLORADO



TRAINS

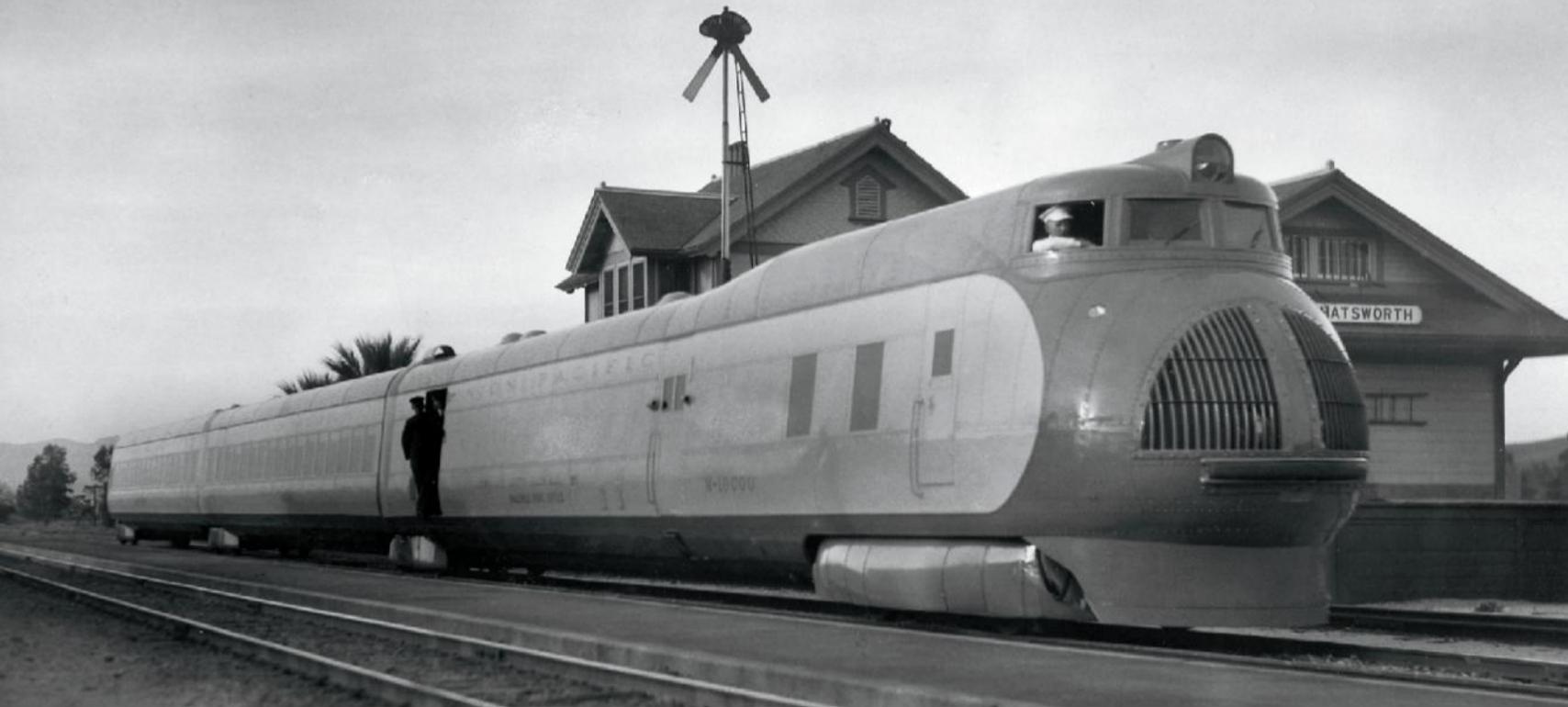
AND THE COAST

UP's streamliners have evolved from a 3-car experiment to 17-car transcontinental luxury trains

BY A. C. KALMBACH

One of the 1936-built *City of Denver* trains nears the end of its run from Chicago on June 29, 1952. The original 2,400 h.p. locomotive has been upgraded to 3,600 with a third unit.

Dan Peterson



UP's original streamliner, the little M-10000 of February 1934, is at Chatsworth, Calif., on the Southern Pacific during its national tour.

Gerald M. Best



Upper photo: Having been on Chicago & North Western rails since Council Bluffs, Iowa, M-10001, the original *City of Portland*, skims through West Chicago on August 4, 1935. Above: A couple of years later, the same train is serviced between runs in Chicago; although dirty, the streamliner stands out from older steel and wood cars in the yard.

Upper, A. W. Johnson, Krambles-Peterson Archive; above, Alexander Maxwell

Union Pacific, with its endless miles of open-country running, was a logical birthplace for the streamliner. On May 23, 1933, W. Averell Harriman, chairman of the UP board, said, "The executive officers of the Union Pacific several months ago reached the conclusion that to save and restore passenger business to the rails would necessitate the development of a radically different type of passenger equipment."

It seems strange today, when railroads are carrying their largest passenger business ever, that less than 10 years ago a carrier would commit to "save and restore passenger business to the rails." The train rider of wartime 1942 has all but forgotten the slow, non-air-conditioned, and relatively uncomfortable trains of the early '30s, so great has been progress over the past decade. Looking back, however, we find the best minds of the railroad business were discussing whether fares should be reduced, whether greater speed would regain passengers, and in some cases whether the railroad passenger business was worth saving after all.

Union Pacific was in the vanguard of this issue. Its problem was not just to provide more comfortable and somewhat faster equipment; the challenge was to radically change the service to meet new competitive conditions. The UP served mostly long-distance travel, and a relatively high percentage of that was pleasure and vacation business, all of which had easily shifted to the automo-



The second edition of the *City of Portland*, two-unit diesel M-10002 and 16 cars, departs Cheyenne, Wyo., on November 11, 1939.

R. H. Kindig

bile. Thus it had to do something far different to save its passenger business than could be done, for instance, by a typical Eastern road boasting plenty of short-distance, business-related patronage.

The standard UP passenger train of 1933 required two days and three nights between Chicago and the West Coast. To be practical, any reduction in running time had to be one entire day in order to maintain convenient departure and arrival times. This meant a schedule between Chicago and the Coast of two nights and one day, or some 40 hours, quite a change from the approximately 60-hour schedules in effect at the time.

BIRTH OF THE M-10000

Research and development work for an entirely new type of train was assigned to E. E. Adams, then vice-president in charge of engineering for UP, and now an officer of the Pullman Company. The first requisite dictated by the great distances and the lack of local business in the West was that one locomotive be used all the way from Chicago to the Coast, to save time over the previous practice of changing engines four or five times. Further, if the fueling and watering distances of the locomotives could be increased to 500 miles, more time could be saved. This would cut fuel and water stops from some 20 points to about 5. Another objective in the new design was to use lightweight cars without sacrificing strength, thus reducing motive-power requirements. Aluminum alloy, much lighter than steel, was chosen as the basic material.

Out of the conferences came plans for an experimental three-car train weighing less than 80 tons, or approximately the same as a conventional Pullman car, and mounted on only four trucks. The train was to have a combination power-baggage-RPO car, a coach, and a buffet-coach — hardly a tool for transcontinental work, but instead purely a



In 1935, before reassignment to Portland service, locomotive M-10002 and its train are operating as the *City of Los Angeles* at Riverside, Calif., before a group of onlookers.

Above, Railroad Photographic Club; below, Michael Zega collection





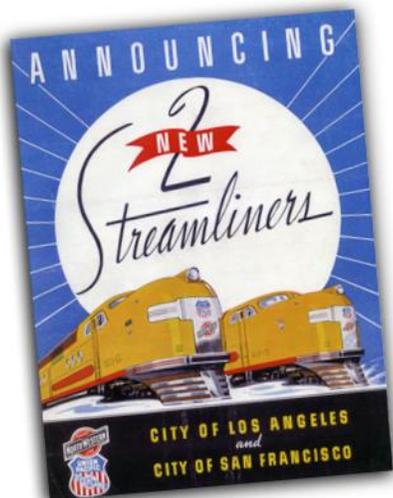
Brand-new in mid-1936, one of the two *City of Denver* trains poses on the Lane Cutoff west of Omaha, a favorite spot for UP publicity photos. The portholed cab and booster units rode on two trucks each, but were connected by a span bolster, not couplers.

Union Pacific



The first two generations of UP streamliner styling are on view as the *City of Portland*'s M-10001 (right) stands beside one of the *City of Denver* locomotives, either No. M-10003 or M-10004, at Chicago in the late 1930s. Both trains cut a striking profile.

Above, CLASSIC TRAINS collection; below, Joe Welsh collection



demonstration train that would, by its operating results, show whether a larger version could be built with sleeping cars for Chicago–West Coast service.

Power was furnished by a 690 h.p. Winton distillate-burning, spark-ignition engine connected directly to a generator driving motors on the front truck. The body design was narrower, lower, and more tubular than any used before. With a train of such light weight, engineers estimated that full streamlining would save 50 percent of power at 100 mph, so a streamlined front and rear end were carefully chosen after exhaustive wind tunnel tests with a 3/8-inch scale model, using removable end pieces.

Perhaps the most radical innovation was not visible. Structurally, the railroad car had always been based on a strong underframe taking all the buffing, pulling, and supporting strain, with the car's body simply sitting on the underframe and adding nothing to the strength of the assembly. The first UP streamliner changed this basic concept. The carbody was a tubular structure, with no underframe and with floor, walls, and roof all contributing to the structural strength. The result was much less wasted weight, and this idea has been carried out in most light-weight cars built since. This first three-car experimental streamliner based on UP specifications, dubbed the M-10000, was built by the Pullman Car & Manufacturing Co. in Chicago, where it was first shown to the public on February 14, 1934.

Even before the debut of the three-car train, Pullman began to build a six-car job, a train specifically designed for the Coast service and including three sleeping cars. Meanwhile, the M-10000 traveled from one end of the country to the other, ostensibly showing off to the public but at the same time accumulating valuable test data covering performance under various conditions of grade and curvature. The train wasn't tested for out-and-out speed, but it did maintain the fastest schedules on each road over which it ran. It was also given a series of high-speed braking and acceleration tests between Grand Island and Columbus, Nebr. Further tests evaluated the effect of various minor adjustments that UP had made. Thus the first train was used as a laboratory to work out the specifications for the next generation of high-speed equipment, much the same as automotive designs are often tested in actual



1



2



3



4

LOUNGE CAR VARIETY. 1) The Frontier Shack lounge in 1936 *City of Denver* cars CD-70 and CD-71 featured a rough-hewn look. 2) The 1937 *City of Los Angeles's* *The Little Nugget* was gaudily Victorian. 3) The 1941 *City of San Francisco's* *Embarcadero* had a photo mural of the city on its curved bar. 4) Round windows marked the 1941 *City of Los Angeles's* swank lounge car *Hollywood*.

1, 2, and 4: CLASSIC TRAINS collection; 3: Krambles-Peterson Archive

experience at proving grounds.

Finally, on January 31, 1935, the M-10000 went into service on the short 187-mile run between Salina, Kans., and Kansas City. The incubator stage of the streamliner was over and the experimental equipment was put to work earning back at least part of its cost.

MORE AND BIGGER TRAINS

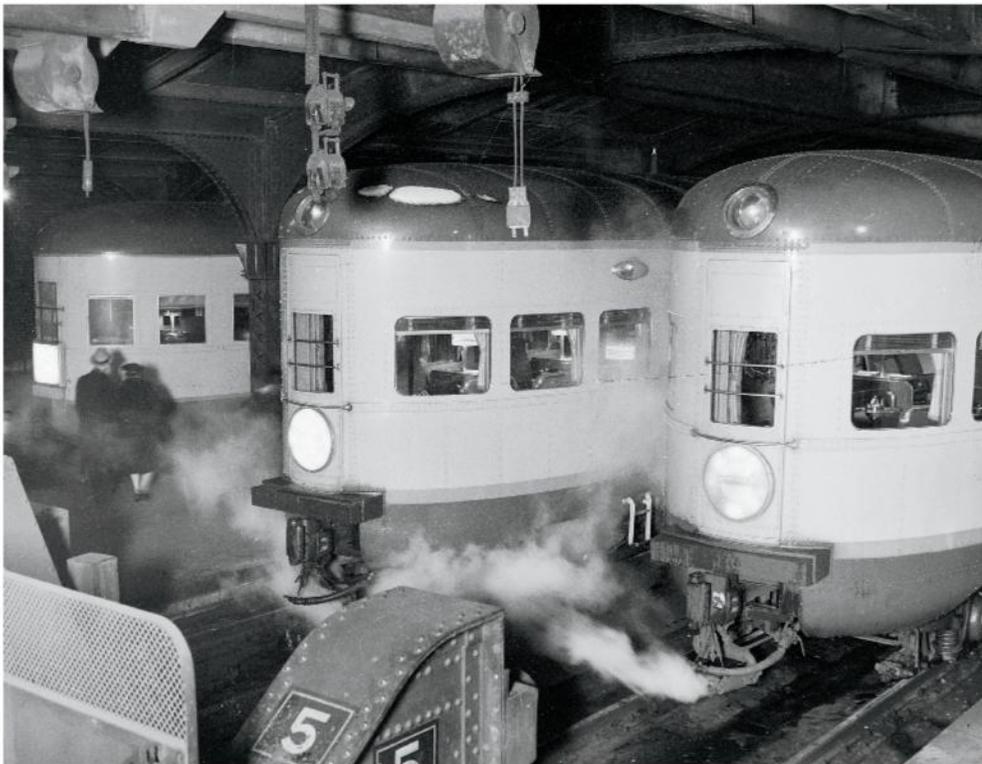
But even with the delivery of the second train, the six-car M-10001 of October 1934, UP's development had only begun. At first this new train was powered with a 900 h.p. Winton diesel installed by Electro-Motive Corp. The entire first car was a power car, including a 120 h.p. diesel for lighting, air-

conditioning, blower fans, battery charging, and other auxiliaries. The second car was for mail and baggage, the next three were sleepers, and the sixth was a coach-buffet.

After several tune-up runs, UP took the M-10001 to Los Angeles and on October 22, 1934, started its record-breaking coast-to-coast run of 56 hours 55 minutes. This trip wasn't made to break speed records, especially as the route east of Chicago was on the New York Central, using the regular *20th Century Limited* schedule, then 18 hours. Had maximum speed been the object, 50 hours would have been feasible. The Los Angeles-Chicago portion of the run was to weigh the practicality of a proposed 39-hour

schedule. Nevertheless, the M-10001 did set a record, as the best previous full coast-to-coast time had been 71 hours from San Francisco to New York by UP's "E. H. Harri-man Special" of 1906.

Braking was one of the greatest problems in the technical development of these high-speed trains. Friction between brake shoe and wheel decreases rapidly at high speeds, where it is most needed. Thus, if a high-speed train is to be stopped quickly, the brakes must be applied with great pressure and gradually released as the train slows down. If the pressure is not released, the wheels will reach a point where they lock and slide. It was considered inadvisable to rely on



The obs cars of three UP streamliners are lined up at North Western Terminal, Chicago. From left: 1936 *City of Denver*, 1937 *City of San Francisco*, and 1937 *City of Los Angeles*. Chicago & North Western



The E2 diesels (left) for the 1937 *City of San Francisco* and *City of Los Angeles* were a big step away from the custom power of the early streamliners, although their bulbous noses were unique. In 1941 the two California trains received standard E6 units (right). Above two photos, CLASSIC TRAINS collection; below, Joe Welsh collection



the engineer to accurately graduate the pressure as the train slowed, so a new device was developed to control brake-cylinder pressure, applying a very high initial pressure and then automatically graduating it according to speed until the train was finally brought to a smooth stop.

Apparently UP was satisfied with the initial experiments because late in 1934 the railroad ordered two more trains, each of nine cars. Union Pacific announced that the M-10001 would run between Chicago and Portland, and the two new nine-car trains would run to San Francisco and Los Angeles, all on schedules of under 40 hours.

Meanwhile, the M-10001 went into the shops for a major surgical operation: the addition of another car, a diner-lounge that was spliced in ahead of the Pullmans. Also, Elec-

tro-Motive replaced the 900 h.p. prime mover with a new 1,200 h.p. engine, necessitating a lengthening of the power car's body. New trucks were installed, better adapted to the operating conditions and specially designed to control sway and vibration at high speeds. Plenty of minor adjustments and changes were inevitable. The train emerged to be rechristened the *City of Portland*, and on June 6, 1935, it began every-fifth-day service, soon to become an important part of Union Pacific's passenger fleet.

To maintain the 39¼-hour schedule for the 2,272 miles between Chicago and Portland, speeds of 83 mph and better were required, although the average was 57 mph. The train covered the Chicago & North Western portion of the route between Omaha and Chicago in 8 hours at an average 61 mph, and sustained an average 56.5 mph over the UP's portion, including the mountains of Wyoming, Utah, and Oregon.

The *City of Portland* at once demonstrated its ability to attract business. Travelers were even willing to use upper berths when they wanted lowers, with the result that space was consistently sold out and no business to intermediate points was taken until the last day before departure. If space were left, tickets would be sold to stops short of the terminal. The M-10000, rechristened *City of Salina*, wasn't doing badly, either. In 1935, W. S. Basinger, UP's passenger traffic manager, reported that several times the original lightweight train had carried 250 passengers into Kansas City, in spite of the fact that it provided only 112 seats. "People seem so anxious to ride the streamliner that they will even stand in the aisles or sit in each other's laps if need be," he commented.

Small wonder that even before completion the UP expanded the Los Angeles and San Francisco trains to 11 cars each, equipping the Los Angeles train with a two-unit, 2,100 h.p. locomotive and the San Francisco train with 2,400 h.p. They were the most powerful diesel locomotives used for passenger service up to that time, and each set of two power cars could be uncoupled from the rest of the train. In fact, a spare 2,400 h.p. locomotive was built at the same time.

A FLEET OF STREAMLINERS

The railroad almost immediately ordered two more trains for Chicago–Denver service. These were originally 12 cars with 2,400 h.p. locomotives, later increased to 3,600 h.p. with 13, then 14, cars. These two Denver streamliners, on the fastest schedule of more than 1,000 miles, have not missed a run since. The *City of Los Angeles* went into service May 15, 1936, followed by the *City of San Francisco* on June 14 and the two *City of Denver* trains on June 18. Thus, in little more than a year, UP established its basic route network of streamliners.

Things did not stop there, however. The



The E2-powered *City of San Francisco* is about 75 minutes into its eastbound voyage as it crosses SP's big Carquinez Straits bridge near Martinez, Calif., in fall 1941. About this time, new E6 diesels and a second consist enabled service to double to every third day.

W. B. Wolverton, W. H. Wolverton collection

new trains seemed almost unlimited in their traffic-attracting potential. The road ordered two new 17-car consists, veritable hotels on wheels, for the Los Angeles and San Francisco runs. These trains had three-unit, 5,400 h.p. locomotives and are still in service on these runs. The two original California streamliners went into the UP shops for rebuilding and emerged as a single new train of 13 cars with a new two-unit, 4,000 h.p. locomotive. This train included the famous *Copper King* observation car with the round windows and was initially used as a second train on the Los Angeles run. However, after the advent of the latest *City of Los Angeles*, the rebuilt trainset was expanded to 16 cars and replaced the original *City of Portland*.

The latest additions to the UP's fleet of streamliners are the 6,000 h.p., 17-car *City of Los Angeles* and a similar *City of San Francisco*, which entered service in fall 1941. Now there are two trains each on the Los Angeles and San Francisco runs, all of 17 cars, the older 16-car *City of Los Angeles* rechristened *City of Portland* and serving very capably on that run, and the two original *City of Denver* trains, still handling the Chicago-Denver run on a schedule only slightly slowed by the difficulties imposed by the war. The original *City of Portland* has been scrapped, and leftover cars from the second *City of Portland* are working as a stub train that extends Portland streamliner service to Seattle.

And what of the Union Pacific's original



Having spawned a great fleet of streamliners, the three-car M-10000 lies in an Omaha scrapyards in 1942. Wartime demand for aluminum sealed the landmark train's fate.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection

streamliner, the M-10000? It did its stuff and earned its cost just as an experiment, and then went on to serve in revenue traffic until January 25, 1942. Then it was withdrawn from service and, as duralumin scrap, probably has been incorporated into American-made fighting planes. ■

A. C. KALMBACH, a Milwaukee printer with a passion for railroads, launched his magazine business with *MODEL RAILROADER* in 1934, followed by *TRAINS* in 1940. He was chairman of the board of Kalmbach Publishing Co. when he died in 1981. Today KPC publishes 14 print magazines and a variety of digital content.

OLYMPIAN HIAWATHA

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



The premier train on the Milwaukee Road's Pacific Extension was the *Olympian*, running between Chicago and Seattle/Tacoma. MILW relaunched the train in 1947 with streamlined cars and a revised name inspired by the road's fleet of Midwestern speedsters: *Olympian Hiawatha*. With a "Little Joe" electric up front and a Skytop sleeper-observation on the rear, the *Olympian Hi* is near Butte, Mont., in May 1951; the following year, a full-length Super Dome car was added.

H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Archive

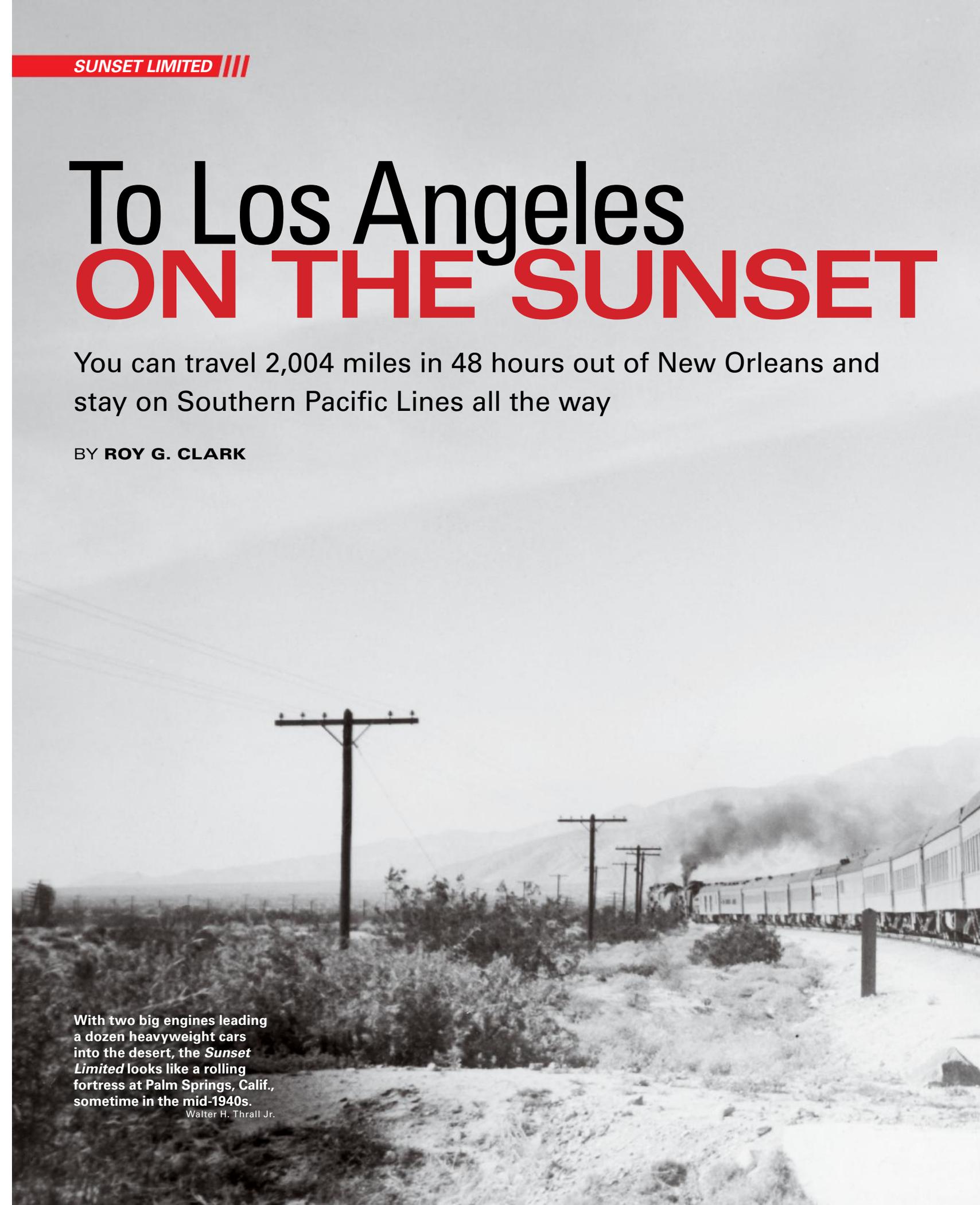


SUNSET LIMITED ///

To Los Angeles ON THE SUNSET

You can travel 2,004 miles in 48 hours out of New Orleans and stay on Southern Pacific Lines all the way

BY ROY G. CLARK



With two big engines leading a dozen heavyweight cars into the desert, the *Sunset Limited* looks like a rolling fortress at Palm Springs, Calif., sometime in the mid-1940s.

Walter H. Thrall Jr.

The Southern Pacific ruined a time-honored joke when it speeded up the *Sunset Limited*," a rancher in San Antonio said to me.

"How come?" I asked.

"For many years that train took its own good time ambling along from San Antonio to El Paso," was the reply. "Naturally, some folks used to complain. When they did, someone would always ask, 'Why don't you walk?' The standard reply was 'I would, but the folks at El Paso don't expect me until train time.'"

Southern Pacific has by now definitely killed that alleged joke, and folks along the *Sunset's* route certainly have no cause for complaint. The new *Sunset Limited* covers the 2,004 miles between New Orleans and Los Angeles in just 5 minutes less than 48 hours, at an average speed of 41.8 mph. If the 2 hours consumed in service stops are eliminated, the actual running speed is 43.6 mph, a creditable performance for any long-distance train and particularly good in this instance, considering the route's rough terrain.

Nothing spectacular was required to bring about this speed-up. The 48-hour schedule was made possible largely by eliminating several station stops, by reducing time at service stops, by limiting the tonnage, and by assigning to the train SP's splendid GS-series 4-8-4s that run slick as a pocket watch.

The entire route is protected by block signals and uses centralized traffic control (CTC) between Alpine and Paisano, Texas, and between Indio and Colton, Calif. These control systems, together with a superb roadbed

laid with 112- and 131-lb. rail, provide the proper foundation for smooth and fast operations.

Let's get aboard the rejuvenated *Sunset* at the Illinois Central's Union Station in New Orleans, where SP and Missouri Pacific are tenants. Such bright and sparkling trains as the *Sunset* and the IC's *Panama Limited* seem very much out of place in the dingy setting of the antiquated Union Station, which is neither union (there are four other terminals in town) nor scarcely a station by today's standards. None of the platform tracks is





Framed by trees heavy with Spanish moss, the eastbound *Sunset* crosses a bayou near Morgan City, La., about 80 miles west of New Orleans, in 1958. Diesels and streamlined cars came in 1950.

Above, CLASSIC TRAINS collection; below, Joe Welsh collection

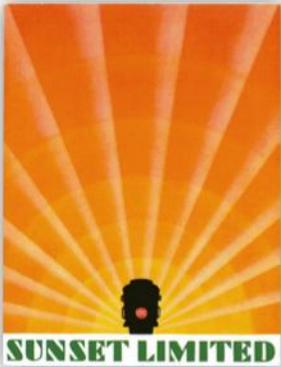
long enough to accommodate modern trains. Incoming passengers step from the Pullmans into a maze of frogs and switches, often scuffing their shoes in the process. However, there are plans for a genuine Union Station one of these days, and the sooner the better.

We walk forward on the platform and see that 4-8-4 No. 4432 is assigned to the *Sunset* today. Behind the locomotive we count 1 Railway Post Office, 4 chair cars, 1 diner, 1 full-length lounge car (with special nonglare windows to filter out the desert sun tomorrow), and 4 Pullmans, for a total of 11 cars, the maximum possible under the new fast schedule.

HIGHBALL OUT OF NEW ORLEANS

The conductor gives the highball at 11:30 a.m., and in 9 minutes we're at Carrollton Avenue, a popular suburban station. The inbound and outbound tracks are about a fifth of a mile apart here, resulting in two Carrollton Avenue stations and some consequent confusion.

Seven minutes later we leave the IC tracks and swing to the left onto the New Orleans Public Belt Railway. We are now ready for the steep climb to the renowned Huey P. Long Bridge over the Mississippi River, one of the most spectacular spans in America. The tracks and highway were raised from the flatlands at river level to a height of 135 feet in order to clear ocean-going vessels. This was accomplished by building a long approach at each end of the bridge proper, the approaches totaling over 3 miles with



grades of 1.25 percent. The entire structure, 4.4 miles long, comprises a huge reverse curve, with the result that passengers can become bewildered about the directions they are going. When we first see the bridge from our window it is at right angles to us and it doesn't seem possible we will cross it.

As we slowly climb the approach we are even more confused as we note that the skyscrapers of downtown New Orleans seem to be ahead of us although we have just left them.

However, directions become clearer as we get on the bridge itself and seem normal as we swing through the other end of the reverse curve on the western approach.

The Huey Long Bridge took three years to build and allowed SP trains to save 45 minutes over the previous train ferry operations. The first regular passenger train crossed the bridge on December 17, 1935. SP guarantees a minimum payment of train tolls to the Public Belt, making possible the financing of the project.

Our *Sunset* picks up speed as we clear the Avondale terminals, erected upon completion of the Long Bridge to supplant the old Algiers terminals of train ferry

days. Soon we're in the bayou country of Louisiana, crossing frequent drawbridges, catching glimpses of muskrat hunters poling their flat-bottomed bateaux along the water.

The line to Lafayette, 145 miles west, was built as the Louisiana & Texas Railroad & Steamship Co. When the SP took over the railroad and ships in the early 1880s, it had the only truly transcontinental line in the United States. A passenger might travel under the Southern Pacific flag all the way from San Francisco to New York, going by train to New Orleans and then spending "100 golden hours at sea" on an SP ocean liner to New York. Steamship service was discontinued in 1941.

From Avondale to El Paso, we'll be riding SP subsidiary Texas & New Orleans, which dates from the 1850s, has been in the SP family since 1881, and took in a dozen other SP Texas/Louisiana roads in a 1934 corporate simplification.

We stop at Lafayette at 3:15 p.m., then head west past the rice fields of the romantic Cajun country, settled by Acadians from Nova Scotia, immortalized in Longfellow's epic poem *Evangeline*. Here the romantic past juts up against the utilitarian present as we see oil derricks and rigs spotted along the landscape beside old-time windmills that pump water into the rice fields.

We have a typically fine "meal select" in the dining car, and at 7:55 p.m. we are in hustling Houston, the "Chicago of the Southwest." Our 15-minute stop here allows us to go up through



the passenger subways to the imposing concourse of Grand Central Station, opened in 1934. Although used exclusively by the SP, the station is busy, with lines in all directions. The *Sunbeam* and *Hustler* streamliners streak across the Texas plains to Dallas, averaging nearly 60 mph over the 264-mile run. From here you may take the *Border Limited* to Corpus Christi and Brownsville, in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas; or you may take a sleeper to oil-drenched Shreveport; or to Austin, the state's historic capital city. And if you want to see a Gulf beach at its best, it's less than 2 hours to Galveston, with the trimmest and huskiest 4-4-0 you ever saw handling your three-car train.

We drop a coach at Houston. While we're asleep tonight (everyone goes to bed early the first night out of festive New Orleans), we'll pick up a Los Angeles sleeper at San Antonio at 12:45 a.m. We'll also sleep through the fantastic Devil's River country just west of Del Rio and miss seeing the Rio Grande, with Mexico just a stone's throw from the track.

And we'll miss the thrill of going over the new Pecos River bridge, a 1,390-foot-long continuous cantilever structure that stands a sheer 362 feet above the river. The bridge can't be seen from the car window, and it seems as if the train is traveling slowly through mid-air. Incidentally, the last spike was driven near this spot on January 12,



P-6 Pacific 612 of SP subsidiary Texas & New Orleans is 126 miles into its run as it moves a 12-car *Sunset* west out of New Iberia, La., in mid-1939. A decade later, a big GS 4-8-4 was assigned.

Harold K. Vollrath

1883, marking the completion of SP's line from San Francisco to New Orleans. We make plans right now to come back on the *Argonaut*, which crosses this country in daylight.

Early in the morning the *Sunset Limited* makes a 10-minute service stop at windswept Sanderson in west Texas, and we step down before breakfast to get some air. We get plenty, as the winds blow continuously in this high country. We'll be climbing all the time now, and we'll hit the highest spot on our entire trip about 10:30 this morning at Paisano, at an elevation of 5,074

feet above sea level. Tomorrow morning, along the Salton Sea in California, we'll be 220 feet below sea level.

LONG CLIMB IN WEST TEXAS

The 103 miles from Sanderson to Paisano are a steady climb, with a ruling grade of 1 percent over the 12 miles between Alpine and Paisano. Our 4-8-4 takes the 11 cars up without help, averaging better than 40 mph all the way. The entire terrain lies very high, with only occasional buttes and mesas jutting upward from the sagebrush plateau. However,

the serpentine trail of our track shows that we're twisting this way and that to gain the necessary foothold for the climb. From our window we can see nothing but sagebrush, tumbleweed, mesquite, and rocky desert. The only other sign of life is an occasional automobile hurrying along U.S. Highway 90, within our sight for many miles. We're now in rugged Brewster County, Texas, just north of the forbidding and little-explored Big Bend country.

At Sierra Blanca, 107 miles east of El Paso, the tracks of the Texas & Pacific join us on the

A passenger train on the main span of the Huey P. Long Bridge is dwarfed by the giant structure, which replaced a ferry across the Mississippi River west of New Orleans in 1935. Including approaches, the rail-highway bridge measures 4.4 miles in length.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection





Although much shorter than the Huey Long Bridge, SP's crossing of the Pecos River, 65 miles west of Del Rio, Texas, stands more than twice as high: 362 feet above the river. It opened in 1944.

Southern Pacific

right. Around 2 p.m. we see patches of green in a valley to our left. We are nearing El Paso and are entering the valley of the Rio Grande, which supplies water to the surrounding farmland.

We have a 25-minute stop at El Paso, during which a Dallas-Los Angeles chair car and Pullman off the T&P are added to our train, together with a chair car destined for San Diego. This brings the consist up to the allowable limit of 14 cars. We take a few minutes to admire El Paso & Southwestern locomotive No. 1, a

trim 4-4-0 displayed on the station grounds, and then we wander into the waiting room, where the flavor of Old Mexico is strong. The equipment for National of Mexico train 8, due to depart at 2:05 p.m., has gotten snarled up somewhere on the International Bridge and isn't in the station yet. Consequently, an array of Mexican nationals is waiting. El Paso station is used by SP, National of Mexico, Santa Fe, and T&P. The lone train of the Mexico North-Western terminates at Juarez and does not come over the river.

At El Paso the SP line to Tumcari and Dawson forks off to the northeast, forming an important link in the famous SP-Rock Island Golden State Route. Down this line come the new *Golden State*, the *Californian*, and the *Imperial*. The latter train is routed west of Yuma via the Inter-California Railway through Mexico, then back into the United States through the Imperial Valley of California.

Our *Sunset* pulls out of El Paso at 2:35 p.m., Mountain Time, and we get our last look at the Rio Grande from the bridge west of the station.

A short distance west, SP's border line (the old EP&SW) forks off to the south while we continue along the north line toward Lordsburg, N.Mex., and Benson, Ariz. This north line is the original SP route and was built through from Yuma to El Paso in 1881.

Because of the shorter mileage and more favorable grades, most freight trains use this line, although most passenger trains use the southern border line.

Closely paralleling the Mexican boundary, the border line was built by EP&SW between 1901 and 1912. It began as a short line constructed by Phelps

Dodge & Co. to haul ore, but it grew to a system of 1,139 miles by the time it was consolidated with SP in 1924.

Through the desert lands of New Mexico and Arizona we travel the 312 miles to Tucson. This city was once the headquarters of the turbulent Southern Overland Mail stage line. The first SP train from California reached here in 1880. Building eastward from Yuma hadn't been child's play, as the Apaches were hostile; military escort was needed most of the way.

Today Tucson is a sophisticated resort city of 40,000, and at the station the resorters may board a Pullman that will carry them through to New York without change. Here the border line and the north line of the SP meet and become one for a short distance, and the station is a hot spot several times each 24 hours. It hosts 12 through trains a day.

JUNCTION FOR THE SP OF MEXICO

Tucson is also the junction point for the line to Nogales, Mexico, whence the Southern Pacific of Mexico hops off for its 1,095-mile jaunt to Guadalajara, with through Pullman service to Mexico City via the National of Mexico. Before World War II, through Pullmans were also operated from Los Angeles to Mexico City via this route — and also, at one time, via El Paso — but today the passenger from the west must take the coach train from Tucson to Nogales to get started.

At Picacho, 46 miles west of Tucson, the north and south lines again diverge, the north line running through Phoenix and the south line via Gila Bend. Naturally,

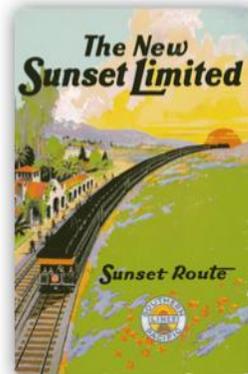
most passenger trains operate via Phoenix; only the *Argonaut* provides service on the south line. However, most through freights use the shorter south line.

The south line is the original route. The north line through Phoenix is comparatively new; its completion in 1926 put the city on a direct transcontinental



SP's *Apache*, a Los Angeles-Chicago train via the Golden State Route, steps through downtown El Paso in the late 1930s. A tunnel that opened in 1950 removed trains from the city's streets.

Above, CLASSIC TRAINS collection; right, Joe Welsh collection



route and contributed not a little to its phenomenal growth. In 1878, Phoenix consisted of a few buildings at a crossroads. Today the state capital is a bustling trade center and swank resort spot of 70,000 people. It boasts big-city skyscrapers, luxurious hotels, dude ranches, and a healthful desert climate.

Our *Sunset* arrives at Phoenix at 12:15 a.m. and we stay up to see what we can of the town in the 15-minute layover. The imposing Mission Revival-style Union Station is owned and operated jointly by SP and Santa Fe and is very much in character with the town. Here is a demonstration of the power of water when applied to desert land. The Salt River Valley produces some of the finest grapefruit in the world, together with domestic dates and all sorts of whopping-size vegetables. Across the road, where the water doesn't reach, is the same old barren expanse of cactus, sagebrush, and sand.

We're asleep when the *Sunset* pauses at Yuma, on the Arizona side of the Colorado River. This city is noted chiefly as the spot where many movie people elope



Yet another major bridge on the Sunset Route carries trains over the Rio Grande just west of El Paso. Here, the streamlined *Sunset Limited* leaves New Mexico and enters Texas in the early '50s.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection

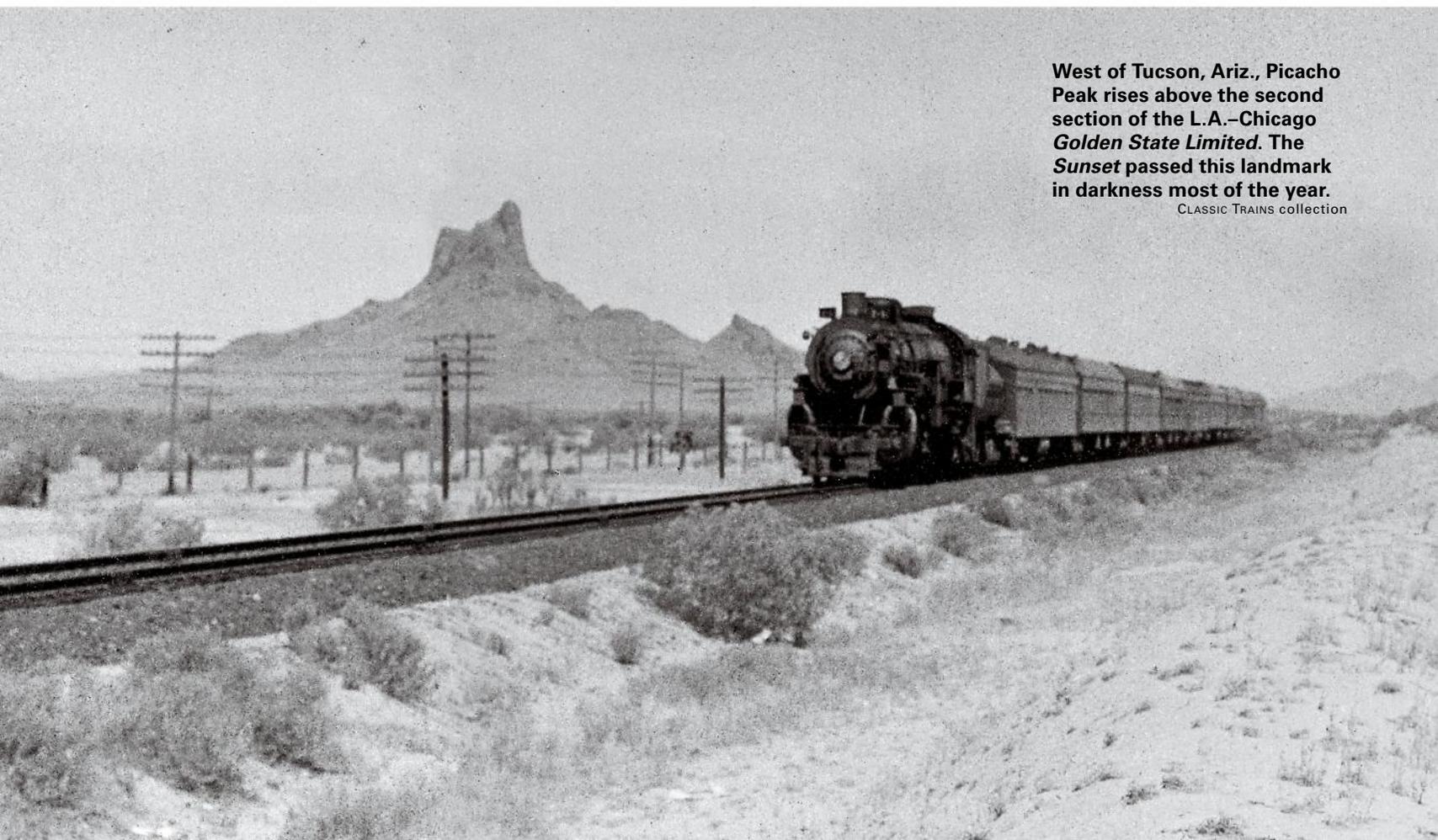
for their next marriage, and also for the Indians who sell trinkets on the station platform.

Just west of Yuma, in California, the Inter-California Railway branches off toward Mexico and runs south of the border for 52 miles to Calexico. This is the route taken by the *Imperial*. It is

also used by connecting coaches and sleepers from the *Imperial* for the spectacular Carriso Gorge route via SP to El Centro and via the San Diego & Arizona Eastern line to San Diego, hopping in and out of the United States several times in the process. One section of 37 miles in Mexico

from Tijuana to Tecate is owned by the Tijuana & Tecate Railway. All three lines are SP subsidiaries.

Sunset passengers are amply rewarded if they get up just before 5 a.m., in time to view the Salton Sea, a 30-mile-long body of water created by accident. In 1905 and '06, a defect in the ir-



West of Tucson, Ariz., Picacho Peak rises above the second section of the L.A.–Chicago *Golden State Limited*. The *Sunset* passed this landmark in darkness most of the year.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection



Mt-1 Mountain 4326 has just entered Arizona from California as it brings the *Sunset* into the station at Yuma in the 1940s. On the platform are local Indians with souvenirs to sell to passengers.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection

rigation canals in the Imperial Valley caused the waters of the Colorado River to overflow into a marshy depression where the sea now lies. The overflow was stopped in 1907, but the water stayed and remained about the same in area because of seepage from the valley. It is salt water, as it has no outlet.

Salton Sea is 264 feet below sea level and is almost as large as the Dead Sea in Israel. The SP tracks parallel the Salton Sea for a dozen miles at an average of 165 feet below sea level.

At 6:32 we stop at swank Palm Springs, popular rendezvous for Hollywood people and the rich. The number of station wagons

and sport coupes at the station tells the story. Palm Springs isn't for the fellow who must watch his dollars on his vacation.

At Indio, 4-8-2 No. 4328 backs in ahead of our 4-8-4 to doublehead up the steep grade to Beaumont, over the San Bernardino Mountains. Indio is 20 feet below sea level and we'll climb to 2,559 feet above sea level in the next 49 miles. Most of the rise is in the 12 miles between Cabazon and Beaumont. This is the sort of mountain railroading the railfan traveler hopes to see, but seldom does on main lines today. It is the only stretch in the *Sunset's* 2,004-mile run where the flanges shrill against

the rail and you can see the next car ahead of you on the curves.

CITRUS GROVES AND VINEYARDS

Over the hump, we drop down to Redlands. From here on we begin to see the part of California that actually looks like the magazine advertisements. Citrus groves stretch for miles; a bit farther on we see endless rows of vineyards and great walnut groves. Every highway is lined with royal palms and eucalypti.

Near Colton we glide smoothly over the double-track Santa Fe-Union Pacific crossing, which reminds us that Santa Fe's main line from Mojave to Needles was built originally by the SP. The intention was to build eastward via Needles, bypassing Los Angeles, then a sleepy town of 10,000. Sleepy or not, it had some wide-awake boosters, and they raised such a storm about being passed up that SP relented and built via Los Angeles. Suddenly SP didn't need the Needles line so it was leased to Santa Fe in 1884 and sold in 1911.

From Ontario to Pomona we closely parallel the Union Pacific main line. We get a real thrill as UP's *City of Los Angeles* diesel streamliner, running a few minutes late, pulls up abreast of us from behind. We make the Pomona stop and the *City* doesn't,

and we never catch her again.

Right on the advertised 9:25 a.m. we swing into the throat tracks and pull into Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal. It is very much *à la* Hollywood, as most everything is in Los Angeles, and ultra-modern in every way. It was completed in 1939 under joint agreement between Santa Fe, SP, and UP. A small crowd of bored-looking people, with some yawning photographers, is waiting for us on the platform. We learn this is one of the regularly staged performances the movie people put on whenever some celebrity comes to town on one of the transcontinental trains.

Southern Pacific can keep a railfan happily engaged for a full week around Los Angeles, what with its tremendous railroad scene. There is SP's sprawling Pacific Electric system with 441 miles of electric and steam lines; the original SP line down to Wilmington; the fruit belt line through Anaheim and Santa Ana; the gigantic Freight Terminal warehouse, spreading over 22 acres. And there's the busy station at Burbank.

At Burbank the lines diverge for San Francisco, via either the Coast Line or the San Joaquin Valley route. A railfan can have no greater thrill than to station himself at this spot and watch the *West Coast Limited*, destined for Portland and Seattle via the San Joaquin Valley, pull out in the early evening. Up ahead there will be one of SP's mighty cab-forward 4-8-8-2s needed for the Tehachapi Mountains.

A short time later comes the *Lark*, the swank all-room train to San Francisco via the Coast Line. In the morning and evening you can see the famous *Coast Daylights*.

Southern Pacific means California and California means Southern Pacific. What this grand railroad with the traditions of the Central Pacific's Stanford and Huntington and Crocker and Hopkins can offer you is limited only by the time you have at your disposal. ■

ROY G. CLARK wrote nine feature articles for *TRAINS* between 1944 and 1951, most about journeys on passenger trains.



With the Salton Sea off about 600 feet to the left, an SP freight takes siding to clear the eastbound *Sunset* in November 1941. A sign notes the place's extraordinary geographical position.

J. L. Watson



Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal serves as a fitting entry to the city. Opened in 1939, it's the epicenter of the rich world of L.A. railroading.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection



Santa Fe's *San Diegan* streamliners dated from March 1938, when an E1-powered Budd-built consist began making two daily round trips between Los Angeles and San Diego. By 1955, when Alco PA1 diesels 77 and 74 prepared for an afternoon departure from San Diego, service had doubled to four round trips each day.

Dan Pope collection





Three F7s curve past the beach at San Clemente with a southbound *San Diegan* in November 1970. Miles of running beside the Pacific Ocean earned Santa Fe's Fourth Subdivision the name Surf Line.

G. Mac Sebree, Krambles-Peterson Archive

TRAIN OF two countries

Canadian Pacific, Soo Line, Omaha Road, and Chicago & North Western all team up to run this vacation-time train between Vancouver and Chicago

BY FRANK P. DONOVAN JR.

The *Mountaineer* shares much of its route with the *Dominion*, Canadian Pacific's cross-continent flagship. Here the *Dominion* has just exited the lower Spiral Tunnel as it climbs the west side of Kicking Horse Pass in September 1946.

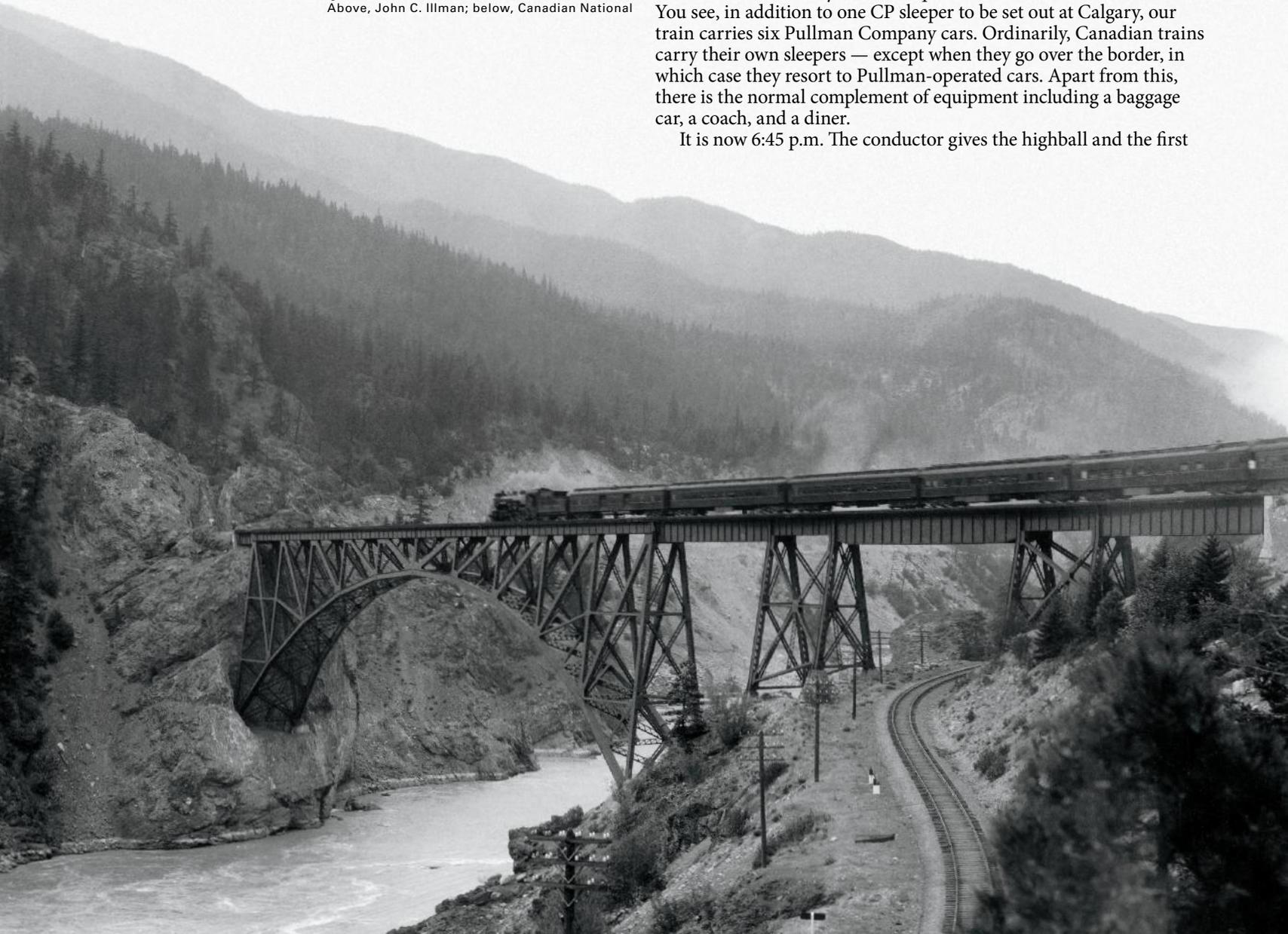
Fred C. Stoess





Oil-fired G3 Pacific 2388 (above) awaits departure from Vancouver with the *Dominion* on a June 1952 evening; the *Mountaineer* left an hour earlier. Some 150 miles east (below), the CP leaps over the Canadian National main line and the raging Fraser River, as seen in a circa 1940 photo of an eastbound CP train.

Above, John C. Illman; below, Canadian National



Today we're going on a 2,200-mile trip to see the Canadian Rockies and our neighbors to the north. We'll take that popular international train the *Mountaineer*, running from Vancouver to Chicago. On this train we'll observe the most spectacular mountains in North America and meet some of the nicest people — democratic folk without pretense or show, yet friendly and talkative. And the *Mountaineer* itself? It's a train primarily for vacationers, for passengers who want to enjoy the scenery, to relax and chat.

So much for the introduction; now let's get down to business, down to track 2 in Canadian Pacific's spacious Vancouver station, where train No. 14, the *Mountaineer*, is ready to leave.

It so happens the date is July 2, which directly follows Canada's Dominion Day and precedes our Independence Day by 48 hours. It so happens, also, that July 2 commemorates the first trip of the season for the eastbound *Mountaineer*. Incidentally, we'll celebrate the Fourth of July half in Canada and half in the States, because No. 14 crosses the border a little after noon on that date.

There is nothing spectacular about the *Mountaineer*; it's just a good solid train with standard equipment — 11 cars in all — headed by an oil-burning Pacific. At the tail end, however, is a strange type of observation car, open at both ends and closed in the center, carried on nearly all through trains between Vancouver and Calgary. These "mountain" obs cars afford a splendid view of the Rockies.

I have said the *Mountaineer* has standard equipment — standard, that is, to American eyes but not quite so orthodox to Canadians. You see, in addition to one CP sleeper to be set out at Calgary, our train carries six Pullman Company cars. Ordinarily, Canadian trains carry their own sleepers — except when they go over the border, in which case they resort to Pullman-operated cars. Apart from this, there is the normal complement of equipment including a baggage car, a coach, and a diner.

It is now 6:45 p.m. The conductor gives the highball and the first



In a June 1952 view from the *Dominion's* rear-end "mountain" observation car, Pacific 2387 stands in the siding at Basque, 50 miles west of Kamloops, B.C., with the westbound *Dominion*.

John C. Illman

The mountain obs cars afford a fine view of the CP's engineering landmarks. This August 1942 photo shows the west portal and ventilation equipment of Connaught Tunnel on Rogers Pass.

Andre Morin

run of the season for No. 14 begins. We are sitting in the last seat of the open-end observation car, our feet propped up on the railing. Ah, this is the life!

Slowly the four-track station recedes into the background. Just behind it are the piers where CP ships leave for Victoria and Seattle as well as to ports of call in China, Japan, and Australia. To the right is placid Burrard Inlet, which we follow closely for 25 miles, and to the distant north the snow-capped twin peaks of The Lions.

At Port Hammond we get our first view of the Fraser River, now calm and a little higher than normal. Wasn't this the same waterway that overflowed its banks and played havoc in British Columbia only a month ago? Our question is answered at Hatzic, where we slow down to a walk over the temporary single-track trestle. "Built in five days in 60 feet of water," observes our flagman, "after the Fraser cut a 550-foot gash in our right of way."

We see the washed-out highway and autos standing helplessly on either side of the break. Water can be seen in fields where water was never seen in recent history. Indeed, it was 19 days after the flood before a CP train reached Vancouver. Our conductor says he has "19 flimsies, mostly slow orders" on this 129-mile division as a result of the flood.

It's getting dusk now, yet it's nice to sit and listen to the click of the wheels, to see the river shining in the waning light and the mountains looming against the sky. And it's nice to breathe the fresh cool air. We hold out a little longer and then hurry back to our Pullman, *Clover Valley*, and tumble into our berth.

UP EARLY FOR THE SCENERY

Next morning we're up with the sun so we won't miss anything. The *Mountaineer* is slowing for a stop as we regain our observation seat. The town is Sicamous; the lake, Shuswap; and the setting — it's serene. On the left are Tuscan red cars, one a coach, the other a parlor-observation, which will be used on the Okanagan Valley branch. They have a Pennsylvania Railroad look, but no Pennsy mixed train that I know of sports an observation car. "Mixed" is the official classification of the branch's eastbound No. 708 and westbound No. 707. This early morning scene is idyllic — the quaint green station, the gabled inn, and the boats on the lake surrounded by steep shores.

Now we're in the mountains, and the best is yet to come. To the east are formidable-looking, snow-capped ranges higher than we

have ever seen in the States. Our train speeds past Craigellachie, hardly more than a whistlestop and yet a name to remember. Why?

It was here the last spike was driven on November 7, 1885, marking the completion of Canada's first transcontinental railroad. This spike was not of gold, nor was there an elaborate ceremony. As CP's energetic general manager and construction boss William Van Horne put it: "The last spike of the Canadian Pacific will be the same as every other spike — just plain iron. And anyone who wants to see it driven can pay full fare for the privilege."

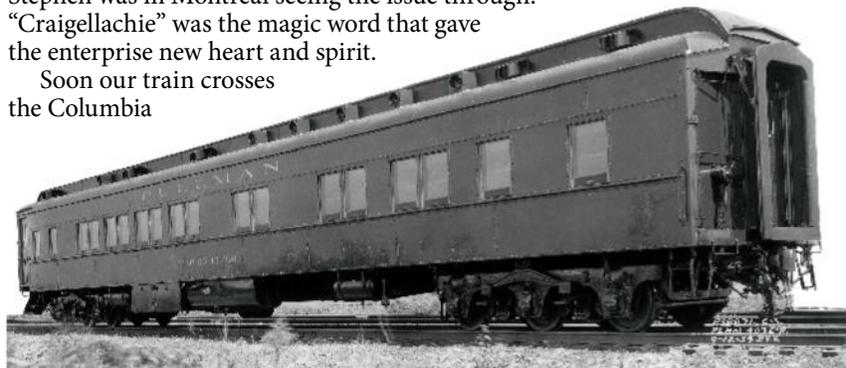
And so it was. The last spike *was* iron, the same as all the others. Except for the directors and railway officials, anyone else on the scene at Craigellachie that memorable day paid full fare. That's typical of the Canadians — no "passes," no golden spike, no nonsense.

So much for the setting. What about the name Craig something-or-other?

C-R-A-I-G—e-l—l-A—c-h-i-e.

That's a Gaelic word which, freely translated, means "stand fast." This rallying cry of the Highland clans was the single word flashed via telegraph from Lord Strathcona to his cousin, Lord Mount Stephen, first president of the Canadian Pacific syndicate, when the financial affairs of the pioneer transcontinental railway were at their lowest ebb. Strathcona had gone to England to negotiate for funds; Stephen was in Montreal seeing the issue through. "Craigellachie" was the magic word that gave the enterprise new heart and spirit.

Soon our train crosses the Columbia



Author Donovan's car on the *Mountaineer*, *Clover Valley*, was one of 124 sleepers of various configurations that Pullman rebuilt with 8 sections and 5 double bedrooms during 1934–40. All were renamed, most to the *Clover* series; this is *Clover Field*.

Pullman-Standard, Krambles-Peterson Archive



By the time of this August 1960 photo east of Golden, B.C., a dozen years after Donovan's trip, GP9s had replaced steam up front but the *Mountaineer* was still a largely heavyweight train.

Bob Johnston



CP's 16 mountain obs cars in service during the 1920s–50s, like this example, were rebuilt from old wooden "colonist" sleepers. A final 3, converted from steel coaches, entered service in 1956.

David W. Salter

River and slows for Revelstoke. Here we swap our 4-6-2 for two 2-10-4 Selkirk types, named for the mountain range we enter after leaving Revelstoke. The train hugs the side of the mountain through Albert Canyon and we can see the churning waters of the Illicillewaet River nearly 150 feet below us. If we miss anything, it's not the fault of the news butcher; he peddles booklets and pictures in one hand and points out mountain peaks with the other.

"Better step inside," he warns. "Connaught Tunnel's just ahead."

We've gone through numerous tunnels while sitting in the open end of the car, but Connaught is something else again — more than 5 miles long with a strong forced ventilation throughout. So we join the other passengers and all huddle in the center of the car like so many sheep. Our train swings off single track onto the left-hand lane of the double-track line in the bore so as to give the engineer the best possible view of what's ahead. This "big hole," as the trainmen call it, shortens the line by 4½ miles and replaces the old route across Rogers Pass. It eliminates curves equivalent to seven complete circles and reduces the summit by 552 feet.

We come into daylight again at Glacier and soon reach the summit of the Selkirks, 3,788 feet above sea level. Cameras click as passengers try to snap the snowy summit of Mount MacDonald.

One of our locomotives is cut off near Stony Creek station; it is

downhill nearly all the way from here to Golden, a division point and junction for the branch running through the fertile Columbia Valley to Colvalli, where it connects with the Crowsnest Pass line and the southern route through the Rockies. Here we pick up a sturdy-looking 2-10-0, for the toughest part of the 2,200-mile trip is just ahead.

It's a long uphill drag, filled with curves, bridges, and tunnels practically all the way to the Great Divide, 5,332 feet above sea level. The drawbars are taut as both engines work hard up the grades and curves right out of Golden. We twist around the bends of the Kicking Horse Canyon, close by the turbulent Kicking Horse River. The canyon deepens and the mountainsides become vertical as we hear the roar of the river through the narrow gorge. Over yonder is Mount Goodsir, towering 11,786 feet into the clouds. A few miles away lies Emerald Lake, of which, along with Lake Louise, CP men speak with reverence and with hotel reservation memos close at hand. Canadian Pacific has hotels as well as trains and planes, buses, and ships. They are top-flight hostleries, too, ideally situated at Emerald Lake, Banff, Lake Louise, and many other points along the vast system.

Next stop is Field, only 35 miles from Golden but 1,500 feet higher, with more to go, brother, much more. We're coming to the famous Spiral Tunnels, built to eliminate a 4.5-percent grade and as nasty a piece of track as could be found anywhere in North America. The grade is now reduced to 2.2-percent although the mileage is about double that of the old line.

Here's the first of the spirals, Tunnel No. 2, which is 2,922 feet long and swings around 230 degrees of a circle on a 1.6-percent grade. Our sense of direction is lost as we come out going west. Indeed, we are now passing over the tunnel from which we've just emerged. Our train labors up a 2.2 grade at a little more than a walk, belching smoke. Before reaching the second spiral we take a siding for No. 7, the *Dominion* from Montreal. We are still facing west, No. 7 is west-bound, and we see it going west high up in the mountains. But when it comes out of the upper spiral it's going *east* and we're going *west*. What confusion! We're just trying to get oriented when we black out again, mentally and physically. It's 3,255 feet of darkness as we hug 234 degrees of a circle while climbing up the same grade as that of the lower spiral. Again we groggily face reality as the train comes out of Tunnel No. 1. Next time we'll carry a compass. At any rate, the



Selkirk 5923 accelerates a long *Dominion* west out of Banff in July 1948. CP's 16 semi-streamlined T1b and T1c 2-10-4s, built in 1938 and '49, were the largest steam locomotives in Canada.

Maurice Chandler, Robert Turner collection

flagman says we're now going east, and he should know.

They held us up quite a while for the *Dominion*, which was carrying green flags indicating another section of the train. But things are beginning to click as we pass Second 7 at Partridge, Third 7 at Hector, and Fourth 7 at Stephen. The summer tourist traffic has begun, and section follows section as closely as safe operation permits.

We've been so interested in the succession of meets that we almost overlooked the Great Divide, the highest point on the Canadian Pacific and the border separating British Columbia from Alberta. The tough going is over, so we uncouple the helper engine. Our Selkirk road engine will take us through to Calgary.

From now on it's downgrade, a nice transition from mountain to hill, from rolling plateau to prairie. Meanwhile, we pause at fashionable Lake Louise and at smart Banff, both high up in the Rockies. It's a pleasant ride down the mountains past the triple peaks known as the Three Sisters, through the Gap, then on to the green foothills. The plains likewise have their charm, particularly along the cool, clear Bow River, which we follow all the way to Calgary. Cattle and sheep graze peacefully on the vast plains, and great fields of wheat winnow in the breeze.

PLAINSMEN, NOT COUNTS OR DUKES

You can spot a plainsman anywhere, because he's an amiable soul who wants to make friends and pass the time of day. Now is a good

place for us to become better acquainted with our fellow travelers, our crewmen, and our train. At one time I had thought of comparing the *Mountaineer* to the famous *Orient Express*. True, our train has the aspects of that trans-European limited because it links two great countries and carries passengers from many others. Here, I think, the analogy ends. You won't find much intrigue on No. 14, and we have only one border to cross. Again, the majority of our riders are ordinary people, not counts or dukes or Parisian actresses.

The Canadians we meet are like American Midwesterners except that in place of the familiar "you bet," it's "aye," and apparently every third male sports a mustache. Not a few of the passengers are from England, Scotland, Australia, or points in continental Europe. After some brief introductory words you'll quickly start comparing the respective merits of the States with England and Australia.

In the U.S., trainmen are either talkative or reticent, depending on the railroad that employs them, their somatic make-up, or what they had for breakfast. Canadian railroaders are somewhere in between. You don't have to figuratively use a crowbar to get a conductor to answer a question, nor is information proffered without the asking. CP employs only white waiters in the diners and they are alert and courteous, but no more so than good dining-car personnel in the



A 2-10-2 helper and 2-10-4 road engine thunder up Kicking Horse Pass with the eastbound *Dominion* in June 1949. Minutes earlier, the train disappeared into the portal below the engines to negotiate Spiral Tunnel No. 2, the lower of the two curved bores.

Walter H. Thrall Jr.



One of CP's 173 G3 Pacifics steams east out of Calgary station with a regional train in June 1949. One track over, a mountain obs car has just been added to the westbound *Dominion's* tail.

Walter H. Thrall Jr.

States. Meals are substantial and appetizing, without frills or unusual entrees. The fresh mountain trout and broiled salmon are delicious.

The train itself is typically Canadian, neither streamlined nor outdated, just built for utility and service. Whether you have a drawing room or berth, if you ride first class, tourist, or coach, you're entitled to use the observation car to your heart's content. The regular Pullman obs car (which, incidentally, has an open platform and attractive wooden carvings) is, of course, restricted to first-class riders.

The *Mountaineer* is the summertime version of the *Soo-Dominion*.

The latter, however, runs only between the Twin Cities and Vancouver. Our train first started running back in 1922 and operated each summer until 1931. The Depression made a big dent in tourist travel, so the *Mountaineer* was not returned to the schedule until 1935. In 1941 the war made it necessary to curtail passenger operations once again, and the *Mountaineer* quit running until 1947, when it was restored. The summer train does a land-office vacation travel business.

We're now approaching Calgary, business center of Alberta and a railroad community of considerable importance. A half-hour wait while our train is serviced gives us a chance to inspect the modern station and to get a glimpse of the city. We watch the depot employees re-ice the train and set out the CP tourist sleeper and mountain observation car. A freshly painted Pacific takes the place of the Selkirk. There is some commotion as numerous passengers get off and others board. The tourist-heavy flavor of the train changes, with some overnight travelers to Moose Jaw and other passengers of a strictly local nature between Pasqua and Portal.

Night overtakes us soon after we leave Calgary, and when our smiling porter says the berths are made up, we are glad to crawl under the covers.

MOOSE JAW IN THE MORNING

We awaken in the morning while the train stands at Moose Jaw for 1 hour 40 minutes, thereby enabling overnight passengers from Calgary to get sufficient sleep. The usual crew and engine change is made here, along with servicing. Too, we must make connections

The 10-coupled power doubleheading the eastbound *Dominion* up Kicking Horse Pass looks puny amid the majestic Rockies.

F. L. Jaques





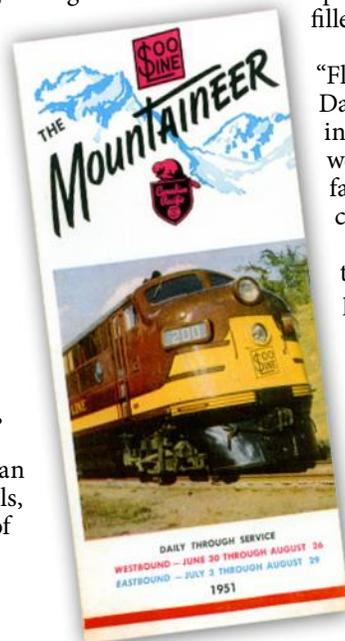
In Minneapolis, Soo 4-6-2 No. 2717 passes the GN station (right background) and the city's Post Office with the *Mountaineer* on July 25, 1950. The train is near the end of its 550-mile trip over the Soo, which uses the Milwaukee Road station in Minneapolis.
Above, Robert Milner; below, Joe Welsh collection

with nameless transcontinental train 1 at Pasqua, but not until 7:45. So we lay over at Moose Jaw.

At Pasqua we pull onto the single-track line to Portal to allow the Toronto-bound *Dominion* to zoom by, then back up to load the Royal Mail and passengers from westbound No. 1. Oh, yes, there's a little four-footed friend waiting for us, too — a favorite of the chef's. We see the dog's head cocked and tail wagging as he looks straight up at the dining car's kitchen. Presently the chef tosses out a bone, which is eagerly received. "Now we can go," the waiter says with a grin.

A couple of minutes later we're speeding through a fertile area of Saskatchewan. Every town has one or more large red grain elevators. Occasionally there are clay and coal deposits, but mostly it's wheat in this breadbasket of Canada. Soon we are in North Portal, Sask., about a train length from Portal, N.Dak. The customs officers, who boarded the train 23 miles back at Estevan, are through with their interrogating, so we're cleared across the border. At Portal, a 4-8-2 of CP-controlled Soo Line replaces the CP 4-6-2, and an American crew takes over. Our train becomes No. 4.

Normally we pick up a tourist sleeper from the westbound *Mountaineer* at Portal, but no Pullman is in sight as we pull out of the border station. "Three's late," our flagman says, "so we'll pick up the sleeper at Bowbells, 19 miles down the line. This is the Fourth of July, you know, and she's running heavy."



Half an hour later we stop, seemingly in the middle of nowhere, to meet the westbound *Mountaineer*. The open-platform observation car is still on our train, and it's nice to lean over the rail and get a whiff of the North Dakota breeze. It takes time to cut both the trains in half, then switch the sleeper from No. 3 to No. 4, and finally hook up both *Mountaineers*. Some 20 minutes pass before our heavily filled counterpart chuffs toward the border.

This section of the trip from Portal to Harvey might be called "Flaxland," for flax is particularly adapted to the soil of the North Dakota prairie. Later on we'll pass into the great wheat belt extending through the north central part of the state and to Elbow Lake in western Minnesota. However, we won't see much of the diversified farming and dairying country from the lake to Minneapolis because our train covers that part of the run at night.

A good part of the way we run along the Riviere Des Lacs and the Souris, valley country with slightly rolling terrain. Soon we pull into Minot, the largest North Dakota town on the Soo and the second-largest distributing center in the state. It is beginning to get dark as we reach Valley City, but it's still light enough to see the only trolley line in North Dakota, the Valley City Street & Interurban Railway running from the Soo station to the main line of the Northern Pacific about a mile and a half away.

Next stop is Enderlin, where we change engines and set off the CP diner. This place was originally called "End of the line" in 1891, when Soo rails terminated here. The town later grew up and the informal name was contracted to Enderlin.



Omaha Road 600, a sister of the heavy Pacific that hauled Donovan's *Mountaineer* between St. Paul and Adams, Wis., storms through the snow with the Minneapolis–Chicago *Victory* in 1951.
P. McMahon

We've met a lot of crewmen from division point to division point, but of course our porter, like our *Clover Valley* Pullman, goes right through. No need to ask if our berths are made up, for we've come to rely on this genial gentleman of service. So it's good night for the third and last evening we'll spend on the *Mountaineer*.

FAST RUN ON C&NW'S OMAHA ROAD

Our intentions are sincere even if the body is weak. We wanted to arise with the chickens and see Minnesota's dairy country. Too late now; the train is already backing into the Milwaukee Road's depot in Minneapolis, so we'll have to be content sampling the state's dairy products at the breakfast table. Moreover, before we are fully awake and dressed, our train grinds to a halt at St. Paul Union Depot. We have a 20-minute stop, so we walk up to the huge concourse and then hurry back to the platform to see the train being reshuffled. Off go the Soo sleeper, coach, and two head-end cars. In exchange we get a Chicago & North Western combination car and diner. Best of all is the Pacific, a big class E-3 fresh out of overhaul that is clean and tidy as in earlier years when an engineer had his own locomotive.

"She'll go like a deer," avers the flagman, seeing our interest. "Engineer says the 605 is the fastest steam engine on the Omaha, and with those new roller bearings she just eats up the miles. We're a little late, so hold on to your hat when we get to rollin'."

They hook up the Mars light on the observation railing, test the brakes, and off we go. We thought we were on the Chicago & North Western, but OMAHA ROAD is emblazoned on the cuffs of the trainmen, and "Omaha" it technically will be to Wyeville, Wis. — and as far as the crews are concerned, to Adams. The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway has been an integral part of the C&NW since 1882, although it retains its own identity, illustrated by its trains operating right-handed when on double track.

We reach for our watches as telegraph poles flit by like fence posts. The *Mountaineer* is making a little better than 90 mph. We're on the route of the 400s, going like a streamliner but with standard equipment and a little soot and cinders for some character. As we approach the St. Croix River on a downgrade, we slow for the gantlet track on the bridge that leads us into the pretty Wisconsin town of Hudson.

The train rips across the lush rolling countryside, past farm and barn and hamlet, pausing only at Eau Claire. Soon we cross the Wisconsin River, which, like the St. Croix and the Chippewa, requires a slowdown over gantlet track. When we pull into Adams, we've made



In Chicago suburban territory, C&NW 4-6-2 2906 races the *Mountaineer* through the station at Lake Bluff, Ill., on June 29, 1947. The train is 30 miles into its 2,200-mile voyage to Vancouver.

Willard V. Anderson

up most of our time, thanks to our fast, powerful 4-6-2 and an able engineer. A North Western-proper 4-6-2 takes over and we hightail it to Clyman Junction, where we cross C&NW's original line and stop for water. We see the tri-weekly Milwaukee–Adams mixed train on the wye. Five minutes later, we're speeding, running left-handed on double track all the way to Chicago. At Milwaukee we pull alongside the *Peninsula 400*. The diesel streamliner is having some minor trouble so we go around it with a shower of cinders.

Here's Racine; then Kenosha, Waukegan, a dozen or more commuter stations, the university town of Evanston, Ill., and — well, there's the porter with our luggage. Now we shake hands with the man from Australia, the highlander from Scotland, and our neighbor from Canada.

We have had an enjoyable three-day trip, half in Canada, half in the United States. It has been unique, too, in that the *Mountaineer* is America's longest-distance international train — that is, the longest run starting in one country and ending in another. We've come exactly 2,200 miles in a friendly, comfortable train, across parts of three provinces and four states. From the snow-capped Rockies to the Saskatchewan plains, from Dakota's prairies to Wisconsin's hills, we've enjoyed every minute of it. ■

FRANK P. DONOVAN JR. (1909–1970) wrote this story during his two-year stint on *TRAINS'* editorial staff. He had a 30-year career in research and writing during which he wrote scores of transportation articles, many for the State Historical Society of Iowa's *Palimpsest* as a free-lancer. He also worked for AAR, M&STL, and Hennepin County, Minn.

MAINSTREETER

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



WESTERN STAR





Northern Pacific, the “Main Street of the Northwest,” called its Chicago–Seattle/Portland train launched on November 15, 1952, the *Mainstreeter*. Although it played second fiddle to the *North Coast Limited*, the *Mainstreeter* was a full-service train, with lounges, diner, and a variety of Pullmans (but no dome or obs cars). Its slower schedule included a stop at Helena, Mont., which the *NCL* avoided in favor of going via Butte. In May 1968, F9s in NP’s 1954 “Loewy” passenger livery, lead the *Mainstreeter* out of St. Paul.

Tom Smart, Krambles-Peterson Archive



Great Northern’s secondary transcontinental train was the *Western Star*, inaugurated June 3, 1951, using streamlined cars built in 1947 for the *Empire Builder*. At Laclede, Idaho (far left), F units head up the Chicago-bound *Western Star* in December 1955. Again eastbound (left) and with a *Coulee*-series sleeper-observation on the rear, the *Star* is stopped at Grand Forks, N.Dak., a point not on the *Builder*’s more direct route, in March ’53.

Far left, N. MacDonald; left, A. Johnston; both, Krambles-Peterson Archive

SCHEDULED FOR SCENERY

The *California Zephyr* takes its time between Chicago and the Pacific Coast for a very good reason: it's meant to hit the scenic high spots in daylight

In a classic view from the second dome coach, four Rio Grande F3s curve through the Rocky Mountains with the west-bound *California Zephyr* in August 1951.

Gordon Odegard

BY WILLARD V. ANDERSON

A cool wind fans your face as the ferry *Berkeley* takes you across San Francisco Bay on the first leg of your journey from the West Coast to Chicago. Your luggage is safely stowed with a redcap in San Francisco, and you have his assurance that it will come aboard the *California Zephyr* in Oakland. Consequently, your hands are free to manipulate your exposure meter and camera, and you spend the 20-minute boat ride photographing the shoreline and the magnificent Bay Bridge to Oakland.

You had arrived early at the ferry dock, but still you almost missed the boat. The man at the gate said you had to have your ticket validated before he could honor it. This was the first time in 50,000 miles of train travel that you had to have a ticket validated, so you were a little green. The man at the desk re-

quired that you sign the ticket coupon, then he stamped the ticket and handed it back to you. The other man then passed you through the gate.

Now you're on the ferry, looking back at Nob Hill and remembering the Swiss bell ringers who entertained you at Ray Goman's "Gay '90s" in the International Settlement last night. Within a few minutes you're docking at Southern Pacific's Oakland Pier station, where Western Pacific, one of the three *California Zephyr* partner railroads, is a tenant. You've got a half hour before train time to walk up to the head end to see the WP diesels. To people on the West Coast, the *California Zephyr* is a WP train. To residents of the Old West, it belongs to the Denver & Rio Grande Western. To you and to millions of others, Z-E-P-H-Y-R spells Burlington, the road that

originated the name with its *Pioneer Zephyr* back in 1934.

To all three of its operators, *California Zephyr* is synonymous with *full load*, for this comparatively slow, no-extra-fare train is attracting passengers who would ordinarily fly or take a different and faster rail route. The slow schedule, purposely arranged to take the train through the most scenic spots in daytime, is partly responsible for this. The rest of the credit goes to the Vista Domes that enable you to really see the scenery while in it.

Your inspection is eminently satisfactory. The three silver, orange, and red F3 units that will haul the train from here to Salt Lake City are coupled snugly to the stainless-steel baggage car, through whose open door you can see a flag-draped casket en route to its final resting place. Behind the baggage car are two



The *California Zephyr's* signature sleeper-observation-dome car, complete with neon tail sign, gleams in Southern Pacific's Oakland Pier station 10 minutes before departure on June 15, 1958.

John C. Illman



In an incongruous prelude to mountain scenery, Western Pacific F units ease the CZ down Oakland's Third Street in June 1955.

Francisco Oliva-Estevé

dome coaches (the usual consist is three, but today one car is in the shops for an overhaul), followed by a dome buffet-lounge car, a diner, four sleepers (one of which is bound for New York via New York Central from Chicago; on alternate days the New York car runs via Pennsylvania Railroad), and a dome solarium lounge. You learn later that the domes over the buffet-lounge and the solarium lounge are reserved for Pullman travelers; the domes in the coaches are for the people who have reserved seats on the lower level. You also discover that the reserved seats are the ones that go abegging in these transcontinental chair cars; most coach travelers prefer to ride high, wide awake, and handsome in

the Vista Domes, day and night.

Train time approaches, and the arrival of a crowd of people off the 9 o'clock ferry warns you you'd better get aboard. You do, and you find your baggage is not yet stowed away in Roomette 1, car CZ-15. You return to the station platform and ask your porter if he's seen your bags. He hasn't, but a redcap returning from the head end with an empty luggage cart assures you your bags are aboard.

"Sure," he says, "I remember you. You came over on the early ferry. Your bags are in Roomette 1." Ah, but in which car?

The train starts, and your porter begins to make a quick survey of all Roomette 1's in the train. He's lucky, and so are you:

your bags are found in Roomette 1, car CZ-14, just one car back from where they belong. You can shave tomorrow after all.

ON THE MOVE THROUGH OAKLAND

Now the *California Zephyr* is moving slowly through Oakland, and you go to the diner for your third breakfast this morning. You had a cup of coffee at the hotel in San Francisco, and another, plus a doughnut, in the San Francisco Ferry Building. Consequently, you're not too hungry as the steward seats you, and you find the 90-cent breakfast just the thing to tide you over until later in the day: fruit juice, cereal with cream, toast, and coffee. Soon you return to your roomette to pick up your camera, exposure meter, and some extra film before walking back to the solarium and climbing into the Vista Dome.

Only a few people occupy the dome as you enter, and it's easy to get a seat right up front. The countryside here isn't particularly interesting, but you decide the dome is as good a place to ride as any, and you want to be

sure to get a seat for the scenery to come. So you stay in the dome and exchange pleasantries with an Air Force lieutenant who occupies a front seat across the aisle. He, too, has a camera.

"I read someplace," you begin as a starter, "that you have to double the normal exposure when taking pictures out of one of these domes. Seems the glass has the effect of a 2x filter."

"Yeah, I read that too," he says. "But that must be for the benefit of people who aren't using an exposure meter. As I see it, the exposure meter sees the same light the film does. I'm going to go according to my meter readings."

"As a matter of fact," he continues after taking a reading out the window, "right now I get just half the reading I did out on the station platform just before the train started."

He's interrupted by an announcement on the train's public address system. A pleasant voice introduces itself as belonging to Miss Delores Justin, the Zephyrette hostess for this trip. She repeats the admonition about film exposures and announces that your eastbound train will meet the westbound CZ in a few minutes. The meet is made at South Sacramento, and it has special interest today because the

westbound's gleaming stainless-steel consist is accented with an orange-and-maroon *Empire Builder* duplex roomette car.

"At last, the *Empire Builder* will reach San Francisco!" you think, as you recall that Great Northern and WP built the Bieber Line from Klamath Falls, Ore., to Keddie, Calif., in the early 1930s for the express purpose of giving GN's *Builder* direct access to the Bay

Area. The Depression killed that; the Bieber Line has been freight-only ever since.

And now you are witness to the fact that an *Empire Builder* car finally made the grade and has run from Chicago direct to Oakland Pier. Through its kinship to Great Northern (GN and Northern Pacific each own half





During its 924 miles on the WP, the westbound *Zephyr* passes through the barren hills of Altamont Pass, Calif., on March 15, 1953.
W. E. Malloy Jr.

of Burlington), CB&Q has leased the duplex roomette car to replace one of the regular *California Zephyr* sleepers while it goes through the shops, just as one of the eastbound train's coaches is doing at this moment.

LOSING ALL TRACK OF TIME

From here to Chicago, approximately 2,500 miles away, you lose all track of time and sequence. You become aware that this 50½-hour trip seems like the shortest train ride you have ever taken, and your opinion is shared by other travelers, some of whom canceled reservations on faster competing trains when they heard about the scenic wonders of the Feather River Canyon and the daylight ride through the Rockies. You meet a host of people, all with one thing in common: this is the finest train ride they have ever taken.

You meet your hostess, Delores Justin, face to face; and from then on you can see her in your



In the months before the CZ's March 20, 1949, launch, the new train's cars began filtering into the heavyweight consist of its predecessor on the CB&Q-DRGW-WP route, the *Exposition Flyer*, seen here on the WP at Keddie, Calif., with a baggage car and two domes built for the streamliner.

Donald Duke



The eastbound *California Zephyr* catches the morning sun at Soldier Summit, Utah, in August 1959. Ahead: a full day of breathtaking scenery on the Denver & Rio Grande Western, which the train used for 570 miles of its 2,518-mile, three-railroad route.

Fred Matthews

mind's eye every time she makes an announcement. You meet conductors and brakemen who are friendly and efficient, and you chuckle with the rest of your trainmates on the second night, when the Pullman conductor turns on the lights in the dome, asks for tickets of travelers on at Denver, and then turns off the lights again as he departs. "Who am I to interfere with romance?" he says as he disappears down the stairway to the lounge.

You thrill to a snowstorm in the Feather River Canyon. The storm blots out the view through the front dome windows, but it adds a touch of Christmas to the trees in the deep defile. You walk the length of the train time after time, making use of the coach travelers' dome seats just as they occasionally make use of those reserved for sleeping-car passengers in the domes. No one objects to this swapping of seats, though there are times when the rearmost dome is filled to overflowing while the other domes are partially empty. That last dome is *the* dome in which to take pictures of the train snaking through the gorges. The *California Zephyr* must be the most-photographed train in America,

and most of its pictures are taken from *within* the train.

Night comes, and you go back to your roomette for some sleep. But you take one more look at the country outside. Through the wide window of your darkened roomette you see mountains looming darkly on the horizon, and the first thing you know you've lost all thought of sleep and are walking once more down the aisle toward one of the domes. Up there, the view is magnificent in the middle of the night as well as during the day, and you feel a sort of envy for the coach riders who have to sit up all night anyway. As for yourself, you have a bed waiting, and it's a shame not to use it. Back in your roomette, you finally go to sleep.

The next morning you awake to the steward announcing the last call for breakfast. You shave and dress as if you were still at home and had to catch the 7:48

to the office. You get to the diner in time for a breakfast of fruit, fish, potatoes, and muffins, and reflect that even if you'd missed breakfast in the diner, you still could have had a snack and coffee in the buffet-lounge, one car ahead. This is one train on which you need never go hungry; the buffet is open practically all the time.

You shoot roll after roll of film, sometimes pointing the lens out the dome windows, sometimes focusing on the passengers inside. You admire the work of a coach passenger who invades the first-class rearmost dome with a

Polaroid camera and proceeds to show the other passengers what they look like as they gaze out the windows.

The *California Zephyr* is well equipped with bars; there's one in the buffet-lounge and one in the observation-lounge. But business tends to be poor, except when there's a load of conven-

tioners aboard. Most of the people who patronize lounge cars do so to pass the time away; on the CZ there are so many interesting things to watch out of the windows that people just don't find time to use the bars.

The trip demonstrates that WP, Rio Grande, and Burlington have got cooperation down to a fine point when it comes to operation of the *Zephyr*, but they still have some way to go when it comes to making reservations. For some strange reason, Roomette 1 of car CZ-15 was sold to three different people on this trip, and you're lucky you were the first aboard at Oakland. Early on the second day, a man gets on at Salt Lake City and is perturbed to find the door of Roomette 1 locked as you lie asleep inside. That evening, a young woman gets on at Denver and also claims Roomette 1. Fortunately, the CZ is carrying a comparatively light load this trip and it's an easy matter to transfer the man from Salt Lake City to Roomette 2, and ditto for the woman from Denver after the Salt Lake man gets off at the station where she gets on.

You find, too, that bugs have developed in the train's radio





A PA, PB, and F3B lead the CZ through South Boulder Canyon on the Front Range in 1951. The PA and PB wear D&RGW's short-lived orange and silver; the F is in black and gold.

W. H. Mitchell

and wired-music system, and for this trip all channels are playing the same tunes and making the same announcements. Ordinarily, you'd have your choice of radio or wire-recorded music.

And if you had your choice, chances are you'd skip the commercial that comes over the radio the second day as Zephyrette Delores tunes in a new station while you're having dinner: "Have you ever noticed," the radio pitchman asks, "how friendly the people are who ride the buses?" Whoever timed that announcement to coincide with Miss Justin's tuning-in deserves a medal of some sort, even though the reaction aboard the train isn't what the commercial-writer wanted.

"They're friendly on this train, too," says the young lady across the table, and then you find she's the wife of a Navy lieutenant who has a few days' leave in New York. She's from Fresno, Calif., and she's on her way to see her man after an absence of 10½ months. When you join the Navy you may see the world, but you don't see much of your family.

DECODING DOTSERO, AND MORE CZ INFO

All through the trip, you make good use of the pamphlet "Vista Dome Views Aboard the California Zephyr," which you find in your roomette. You're



East of Glenwood Springs, Colo., in about 1955, the Zephyr's stainless-steel cars follow four gold, silver, and black Rio Grande F3s along the Colorado River. This is Glenwood Canyon, a CZ highlight.

Jim McClellan

riding eastward, so you have to read the booklet backward, but you soon get used to that, and you discover many interesting facts. For instance, you've heard that Orestod, Colo., got its name by reversing the spelling of Dotsero — but until now you've never known how Dotsero got its name. And, for your money, the naming of Dotsero is far more interesting than the naming of Orestod, now that you have read this entry in the CZ's booklet:

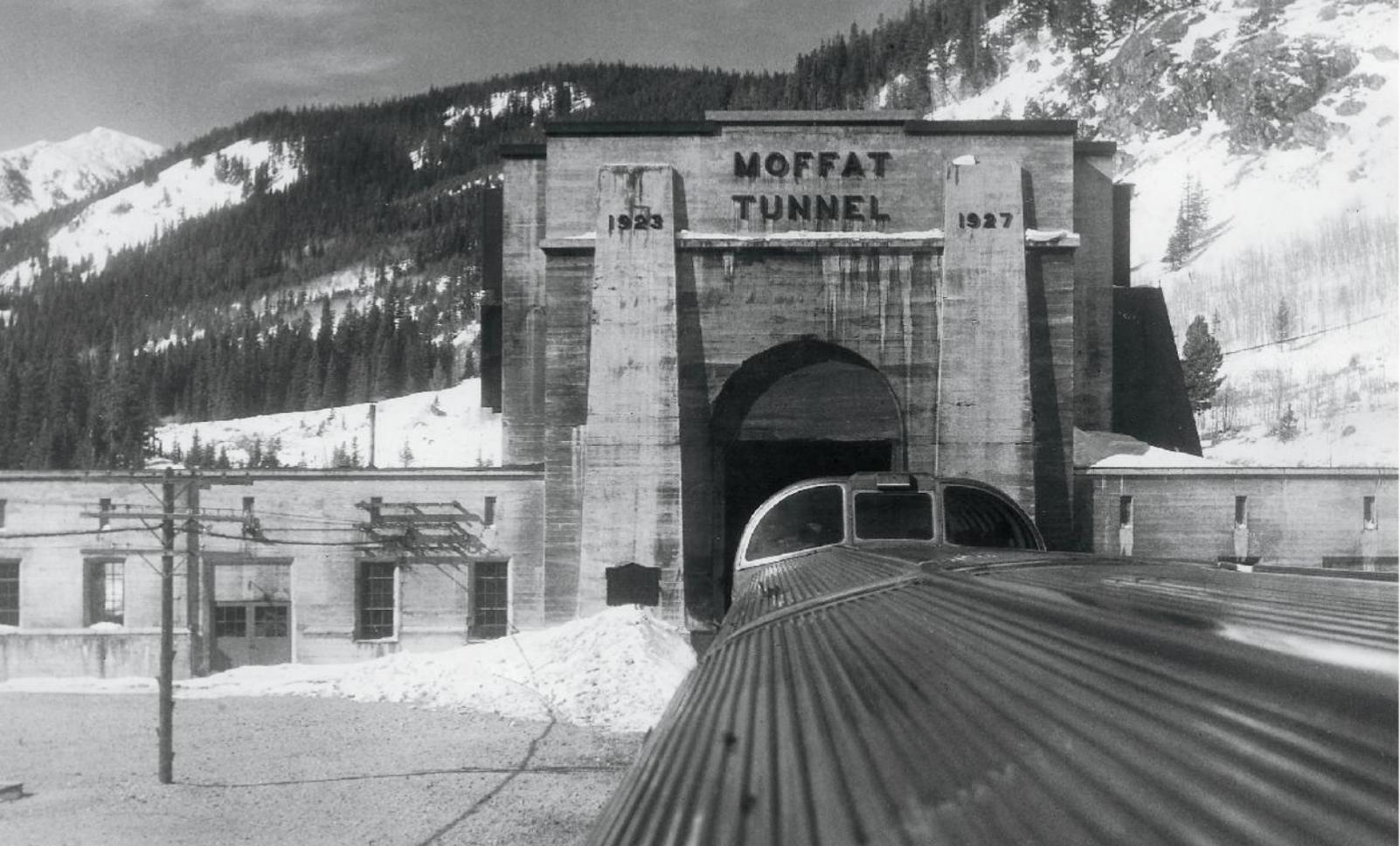
"Dotsero, Colo. Altitude: 6,155 ft. San Francisco: 1,331 mi.

Chicago: 1,206 mi. Here the Eagle River joins the Colorado. And here the railroad joins the Rio Grande's Royal Gorge route from Pueblo. From this point a survey was made of the Colorado River in 1885. As the initial point, it appears on the record as '.0' (dot zero). Hence the name."

Your booklet tells you that, besides being the backward spelling of Dotsero, Orestod also is the eastern terminus of the Dotsero Cutoff, the 40-mile link connecting the Moffat Tunnel and Royal Gorge routes of the

D&RGW. This is meaningful to the railroad and the *California Zephyr*, for until the Moffat Tunnel was opened to traffic in 1928, Rio Grande trains had to cross the Rockies by way of Rollins Pass at an altitude of 11,676 feet. It was a costly, slow operation; through trains such as the CZ weren't even contemplated in those days. It was only after the opening of the 6.2-mile tunnel and its companion cutoff that Denver became a station on a transcontinental railroad.

The ride through the tunnel is



Dome cars flow into the Moffat Tunnel as the westbound *Zephyr* courses through the Rockies in the early 1950s. Completed in 1927, the 6.2-mile bore was on a dead-end line until 1934, when the opening of the Dotsero Cutoff linked it to the Rio Grande's main line.

Wallace W. Abbey



Zephyrette Delores Justin looks after a little girl in one of the CZ's dome cars during author Anderson's February 1950 ride.

Willard V. Anderson

less awe-inspiring than your thoughts as you realize you're 9,239 feet above sea level at the center yet there's still 4,021 feet of mountain above you. Your ears are already popping, and you wonder how it must have

been in the old days, when trains used the pass. It is snowing fitfully when you enter the tunnel, but as you emerge you are greeted by a blizzard, and now you know why it was that the westbound *California Zephyr* was late

when you met it this afternoon. The blizzard doesn't bother the eastbound run, however; it's downhill from the tunnel to Denver. And it's dinner time. You eat as the *Zephyr* drifts down to the city that's a mile high.

That evening, like the first, is spent in darkened Vista Domes watching the moonlit scenery go by. You also realize that the time is passing swiftly. This is your second night on the train; Denver is behind you and Chicago is only a handful of hours away. You tour the entire train once more, stopping at the rear of the first coach to exchange words with the train conductor, a Burlington man who got on at Denver. He has a neat little office at the right side of the car, complete with two gauges that tell him when the brakes are being applied. The needles of both gauges rest on zero; one gauge shows the amount of pressure reduction for the electro-pneumatic brakes, the other for the ordinary air brakes. As long as you stand there, the gauges remain static. This is the fastest part of your

San Francisco–Chicago run, and you don't make speed with the brakes on.

You pass on through the train, from chair car CZ-21, where you talked with the conductor, to coach CZ-20 and on to *Silver Club*, which is not only the buffet-lounge with dome but also contains the crew's quarters. Behind *Silver Club* is the diner, with its waiters polishing the silverware, and then your car, line number CZ-15, name *Silver Surf*. Behind *Silver Surf* is *Silver Mountain*, CZ-14, and then *Silver Palm*, CZ-12. Then comes *Silver Glacier*, CZ-11, which will leave Chicago tomorrow on New York Central's *Lake Shore Limited* to New York, and finally *Silver Solarium*, CZ-10, which has a few rooms in it cared for by the valet-steward-porter.

You return to *Silver Surf*, pull down the bed in Roomette 1, and go to sleep. It doesn't seem possible that this is the second night you've done this, the ride has seemed so short; but it's true, and you find yourself dreaming of wonderful things to come, only



The westbound CZ pauses on the middle main track at Aurora, Ill., outer end of the Burlington Route's Chicago suburban territory, beside another train in mid-1951. CB&Q initially assigned three-unit sets of F3s to the CZ, as here, then switched to pairs of E units.

Gordon Odegard

to awaken in the morning with the realization that it's almost over.

ACROSS IOWA AND ILLINOIS

The sun is shining on Iowa as you stand by the cut-down foot of your bed and release the catch allowing you to raise the bed without stepping out into the aisle or without even opening the sliding door. Once more, you've slept later than you would have liked, and you've missed everything from McCook, Nebr. (whose station was deserted when you set your watch up from 11:14 p.m. to 12:14 a.m.), to a point just west of Burlington, Iowa, where you awoke. You wash and shave and head for the diner, where you yawn widely as you await your last breakfast on the *California Zephyr*. As you yawn, your ears give a resounding squeak as the last effects of mountain altitude leave you, and you can hear clearly once more.

This last morning is a kaleidoscopic sequence of new scenes and old memories and young memories too: the railroad's huge shops at West Burlington; the crossing of the Mississippi;

the red brick streets of Galesburg, Ill.; diesel unit 9926-A arriving in Galesburg at 11:04 just as your eastbound *California Zephyr* leaves; Aurora, where the Burlington Route was born in 1849; Downers Grove, where you lived as a kid and thus must be mentioned in any story you ever write about the Burlington; La Grange, birthplace of the General Motors diesels pulling this train; the westbound *Empire Builder* at La Vergne, bound not for San Francisco but for Seattle on the Great Northern; the big bottle-shaped water tower in the yards in Chicago; and finally Chicago Union Station.



You leave the train, reluctantly, and say goodbye to a host of people you never knew three days ago: the Navy lieutenant's wife from Fresno; the woman who giggled when you told her she must be a movie actress because she said she was from Hollywood; Delores Justin, the gracious Zephyrette; little Kathy, the three-year-old who wouldn't tell you her name until you had told her yours; the man with the Polaroid camera; the steward; the porter. . . . All of these people, and more besides, have become bosom



Having discharged its passengers at Chicago Union Station after a 1,024-mile run across the CB&Q, the *California Zephyr* backs past Harrison Street tower en route to the coachyard in mid-1957.

Jim Shaughnessy

friends in the past 50½ hours, and you hate to leave them here in the murkiness of Chicago Union Station.

And you resolve, as you stroll into the concourse, that you'll tell your friends how well you liked your trip, but you won't say much about what you saw. The scenery is far too marvelous to describe with words or even with a camera. Carefully chosen phrases might tell what you felt as you looked upon the Feather River and Ruby Canyon and Glenwood Canyon and Byers

Canyon and Winter Park; a camera might possibly show what you saw.

But to get the full import of a trip on the *California Zephyr*, you must see and feel for yourself, at one and the same time. No one else can do it for you. ■

WILLARD V. "ANDY" ANDERSON joined Kalmbach Publishing Co. in 1936 as a linotype operator and retired as executive editor of *MODEL RAILROADER* in 1978. He was editor of *TRAINS* during 1948-52. He died in 1989.

SP DAYLIGHTS

WEST COAST MONEY MACHINES

Southern Pacific finds profit carrying passengers
up and down Oregon and California

BY WILLARD V. ANDERSON





The Los Angeles-San Francisco *Noon Daylight*, one of Southern Pacific's fleet of colorful — and profitable — West Coast regional trains, cruises up the Coast Line at Santa Susana in June 1948.
Frank J. Peterson



Alco PAs depart Portland Union Station with the *Shasta Daylight* at 7:45 a.m. May 31, 1951, for the 13-hour, 714-mile run to Oakland.
George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive

Conventional wisdom says that when passenger revenues begin to drop, all a railroad can do is go before the Interstate Commerce Commission and ask for a rate increase. It's also commonly argued that empty trains, not low fares, are the prime reason for insufficient revenues.

Out on the West Coast there is a railroad that takes the latter view. It is the Southern Pacific, and it is demonstrating that it is quite possible to operate luxury trains at low rates and, by keeping an eye on the expected loadings, to change the consist to that happy point where the train is comfortably crowded rather than half full. This cuts empty car-miles and allows SP to show an operating profit on these passenger operations.

Of course, SP has an enviable setup for its coastal passenger traffic. And it loses money on some passenger trains, just as the rest of

the railroads do. Like other carriers, SP has petitioned for fare increases in suburban commuter service.

The unique thing about SP's *Daylights* and the *Starlight* and the *Lark* is that each has long-haul patronage that compensates for terminal expense. In the passenger business, as in the freight business, it's the long haul that counts.

While SP has the distances required to ring up an operating profit on a passenger's ticket, it is also beset by competition — swift competition, hard competition — in the

form of airlines whose operators sometimes stray from the truth in advertising. The airlines would have you believe, for instance, that they operate the cheapest system of transport between Los Angeles and San Francisco, failing to mention that what they are offering is the cheapest *air* transport between the two cities. They ignore the fact that Southern Pacific trains run regularly, fog in, fog out, with comfortable accommodations for as little as \$7.50 for the 470-mile run. Round trips are even cheaper: \$13.50.

SP's prime selling point is the low fare between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the *Morning Daylight*, the *San Joaquin Daylight*, and the *Starlight*, and between San Francisco and Portland, Ore., on the year-old *Shasta Daylight*. But the railroad doesn't stop with low fares. At no added cost, your seat is reserved — a convenience that permits you to wander the train with the knowledge your seat will be waiting for you when you return.

SP's cars are modern, easy-riding, and restful. Crews are well trained and courteous. Even the matter of loading and unloading baggage has been made convenient; when the train stops, there is no waiting for baggage to be unloaded from the vestibules before the passengers can detrain. Passengers get primary consideration on SP's modern trains.

SERVICE AND REVENUE

Southern Pacific has worked out a reservation system designed not only to give the greatest possible service to the customer but also the greatest possible revenue to the railroad. Your call to SP for information can result not only in your getting the information but in your finding yourself the holder

The Oakland-bound *Shasta Daylight* rumbles over the big, curved trestle at Redding, Calif., in mid-1950. The *Shasta* was diesel-powered from its July 1949 launch.

James L. Martin





The *Shasta* has just curled through the Cantara Loops as it passes Small siding near Dunsuir, Calif., en route to Oakland in 1953.

W. E. Malloy Jr.

of a reservation as well. Calls go through the switchboard 1-2-3, and even in rush periods there is little waiting.

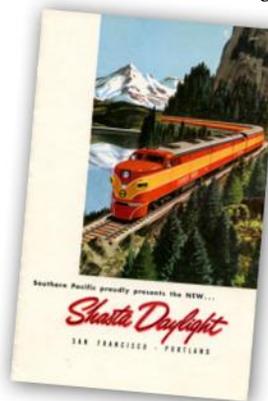
The reservation system is expensive. However it not only yields higher sales but also allows the operating department to determine just how many cars the *Starlight* should carry tonight. If traffic dwindles, cars can be taken off right up to an hour before the train starts. If fog sets in and an airline calls for a block of seats to take care of its passengers, cars can be added. Only rarely does SP tote an empty car from one terminal to another; when it does, it's due to an unequal traffic flow that demands that cars be deadheaded so the next train in the opposing direction will have sufficient capacity.

Just how well does SP's formula of traffic potential, long haul, low fares, and excellent service add up? Is the resulting revenue really worth shooting for, or is it only a nominal figure? In other words, does it pay to go out after passenger business, or would you be just as well off if you said, "Let the competitors have it"?

Coverdale & Colpitts, a New York engineering consulting firm, has the answer. According to a C&C survey, streamlined lightweight high-speed passenger trains throughout the country were, on the whole, profit-

able enterprises in 1947 and '48. Topping the list of was SP's *Morning Daylight*, which showed gross revenues of \$8.48 and \$8.64 per mile in '47 and '48 respectively, and net operating revenues (before allocation of fixed costs) of \$5.09 and \$4.65 per mile. In 1949, the *Morning Daylight* showed gross revenue of about \$8.50 per mile. Although figures are not available, it may be assumed that net operating revenue was somewhat less than in 1948, due to higher costs. Still, the train undoubtedly made a substantial operating profit.

Also in 1949, SP's *Lark*, an all-sleeper night train with substan-





GS-4 4-8-4 No. 4454 hurries a 14-car *Lark* through San Bruno, 11 miles from the end of the all-Pullman train's L.A.–San Francisco overnight run, at 8:45 on a 1954 morning.

Frank and Todd Novak collection



Even though most of the *Lark*'s 12-hour, 470-mile run was at night, like many SP day trains it carried a graceful, round-end observation-lounge car, seen in a public photo (upper) and at Glendale in 1956.

Upper, SP; above, Stan Repp, Krambles-Peterson Archive

tially higher fares than the coach-and-parlor *Morning Daylight*, showed gross revenue of about \$6.50 per mile. The new *Shasta Daylight*, inaugurated July 10, 1949, earned a similar amount. The *Starlight*, an overnight San Francisco–Los Angeles coach train, averaged \$5.75 per mile from October 2, when it first went into service, until December 31, 1949. The *San Joaquin Daylight*, a coach-parlor train via the San Joaquin Valley, grossed about \$4.25 per mile.

If you operated a cash register on the *Morning Daylight*, ringing up \$8.50 every time you passed one of the 470 mileposts separating California's two largest cities, you would find a total of \$3,995 on the tape at the end of the run. If you worked seven days a week and 365 days a year, as the *Daylight* does, \$1,458,175 would pass through your hands — not counting the federal transportation tax and the change that you undoubtedly would have to return to the customers.

And while you were engaged in this delightful occupation of collecting the cash, another person just like you, working the opposing train, would be doing likewise, in like amounts. At that rate, Uncle Sam's 15 percent travel tax in 1949 amounted to some \$437,450 from the *Morning Daylights* alone.

SAMPLING THE TRAINS

I spent a delightful two days and a night riding the *Shasta Daylight* from Portland to Oakland, the *Starlight* from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and the *Morning Daylight* back to San Francisco. It was a pleasurable combination of trips, enabling me to see many of the things that appeal to travelers — things the SP has cooked up to make the trips a

little more pleasant, a little more comfortable, a little less expensive. It enabled me, too, to see the fire-department efficiency with which servicing crews get to their posts and give the train a quick going-over while the locomotive takes on fuel.

It was a dreary morning when I left Portland. A wisp of steam curled from the end of the train line and fogged out the neon *Shasta Daylight* tailsign as the train stood in the station. It was a raw day in January, and Portland had just experienced a snowfall the night before, so the warmth of the parlor-observation car was welcome. I left my bags with the porter, who loaded them into the baggage compartment from outside the car. Later, I was to see just how this baggage compartment saves time and tempers when it comes to unloading, when a whole carful of passengers wants to detrain at once.

Car S-99 had modern reclining, swiveling armchairs, matching the comfort of the modern seats up forward in the coaches and providing a degree of privacy, if you wanted it. My neighbor and I didn't particularly care to be lonely, however, and we soon struck up a conversation. He was a traveling representative of a movie-distributing firm, and he told me he much preferred night trains such as the *Cascade*. The *Cascade* had been sold out the night before, however, and he considered himself lucky to have been able to buy seat 13 in the *Shasta Daylight*'s car S-99.

"You can usually get seat 13," he told me. "Lots of people won't take it because of the number."

My neighbor was a good guinea pig for me. This was his first trip on the *Shasta Daylight*; it had been more or less forced on him by lack of space on the *Cascade*. It was interesting to watch him react to the scenery the *Daylight* offered, to hear him comment that this was the most restful day he had had in months of traveling. Before the ride was over, he was convinced that the next time he made the same trip it would also be on the *Daylight* rather than on a night train.

His reaction was typical. Back in August 1949, when the *Shasta Daylight* had been in service only a little more than a month, the traveling passenger agent passed out questionnaires to passengers in a weeklong survey. The results showed that more than half the passengers were *new* train riders: 37.1 percent would have used some other form of transportation (plane, bus, or private auto) if the *Shasta* had not been in operation, and 13.5 percent said they would not have made the trip at all if the new train had not been running.

Of all the riders, 97.3 percent said they would use the *Shasta* on future trips. The daytime schedule appealed to 27.6 percent. The route's magnificent scenery was the prime reason why 24.3 percent chose the *Shasta*. Nearly a fifth — 18.9 percent — wanted to ride a new train. The low fare (\$12, coach) for

The *Starlight* sets out from SP's San Francisco terminal on its maiden run to Los Angeles on a windy October 2, 1949. The all-coach overnighiter used equipment from the discontinued *Noon Daylight*.

Richard Steinheimer





the 718 miles attracted 17.9 percent. SP's other *Daylights* had convinced 11.3 percent of the travelers that the *Shasta Daylight* would be the train to ride.

Even the inveterate *Daylight* rider, however, must have been pleased when he first rode this newest *Daylight*. Let's look at some of the features of the *Shasta*, whose normal consist is a Railway Post Office, nine coaches, parlor-observation, tavern car, and a three-unit articulated diner-kitchen-coffee shop, all built by Pullman-Standard and pulled by three Alco-GE 2,000 h.p. diesels.

Cars for the *Shasta* were designed with the scenery in mind. Although they do not have domes (more's the pity), their windows

are one third larger in area than the ordinary wide window, offering an extended upward view as well as a broad angle horizontally. SP fittingly dubs them "picture windows."

As the *Shasta* is a long-distance train, all coaches are of the 48-seat variety, allowing ample legroom between the "Dreamliner" seats. High-speed air conditioning permits smoking in any seat without offense to other riders. Each seat has its own ashtray.

Doors between cars are electro-pneumatically controlled. A slight touch on the doorplate on the outside or a slight pull of the handle on the inside causes the door to open automatically. Passengers on this modern train do not have to struggle against vesti-

bule vacuums when opening doors.

There are, of course, other features found on almost any other modern train, including a public-address system the traveling passenger agent puts to good use, explaining how the reclining seats work, asking the passengers to identify their baggage so the porter can rearrange it in the baggage compartment for quick unloading, and so on.

The baggage compartment is unique to SP trains. It was invented by A. D. McDonald, a former SP president, and consists of two movable shelves suspended on four elevator worm gear screws operated by an electric motor. As the train is loaded at the start of the trip, the porter places the luggage inside

The original L.A.–San Francisco *Daylight* crosses the Cañada de Alegria trestle, 2 miles up the coast from the more famous bridge at Gaviota, shortly after SP relaunched the train with streamlined equipment in 1937.

Southern Pacific



One of the *Daylights'* unique baggage compartments, accessible from both outside and inside the car, has its exterior door open as passengers board at Santa Barbara.



Two passengers watch as a 2-10-2 helps a GS-4 4-8-4 lift their Los Angeles–San Francisco *Daylight* up Cuesta Grade, a few miles above San Luis Obispo, in the late 1940s.

Two photos, Linn H. Westcott

the compartment through a door in the outside of the car. As the first shelf becomes filled, he presses a button to raise the shelf and give access to the second shelf. When the second shelf is filled, it is also raised, and any remaining luggage is stored on the floor of the compartment.

After the train is under way, the agent asks passengers who will detrain at the first stop to identify their luggage. The porter, now working through the inside door, sorts the bags and places them in the lower position in the compartment. If a lot of bags are to be removed at the next stop, more than enough to fit the lower compartment, he places the overflow on the next shelf above.

Thus the baggage is all sorted and ready to take off the train upon arrival and passengers pass through the vestibules unrestricted.

On my *Shasta Daylight* trip I witnessed the unloading of 125 passengers, complete with their luggage, in just 3 minutes at Martinez, where many people bound for Los Angeles change from the *Daylight* to train 58, the *Owl*. Later, an SP official told me the *Morning Daylight's* 19 cars have been emptied of 650 passengers in from 5 to 10 minutes. The use of the elevator baggage compartments was a big factor in setting up *Morning Daylight* schedules; with ordinary baggage-handling the trip would take 15 to 20 minutes longer.

SP trains run with a reasonable degree of regularity, although of course they are sometimes delayed by weather. The *Shasta Daylight* I rode arrived at Oakland Pier right on the minute, but on the preceding day and again on the day afterward it was several hours late. Heavy snows were the reason in

both cases. My southbound train had arrived late in Portland on its preceding northbound trip, and the dining car crew had had little sleep as a consequence. Meanwhile, however, snowplow crews had been busily at work, and the southbound *Shasta* passed easily through heavy cuts in the snowbanks. Section houses were completely buried.

After the passage of my *Shasta*, it snowed again. A snowplow derailment held up traffic for several hours.

POWER OF ADVERTISING

Southern Pacific is a firm believer in passenger advertising. From the *Shasta Daylight* poll made last August, SP learned that 59.9 percent of the passengers had learned about the train from the railroad's ads. The railroad is a consistent rather than sporadic advertiser; on-line newspapers carry the SP message at regular intervals.

The railroad's messages are invariably good reading, and the ones aimed at unfair



An unusual combination of a GS 4-8-4 and AC 4-8-8-2 heads the Los Angeles–Oakland *San Joaquin Daylight* through the Tehachapi Mountains in December 1952. Standard SJD power between L.A. and Bakersfield was two class Mt 4-8-2s or a 4-8-2/4-8-4 pair.

Above, Stan Kistler; below, Herb Danneman collection

advertising by the airlines are exceptionally good. SP's advertising team obviously feels that a little good-natured kidding never hurt anybody, and instead of blatant demands for truthfulness from the offending airlines, the ad writers turn out copy like this:

Western Airlines has been advertising "Lowest Fares on the Coast" but they tell us they mean just air fares. That's all right with us as long as *you* understand rail fares are lower. . . . We're proud of our *Daylight* streamliners and we think their fares are a bargain. And you don't have to take a long bus ride at each end of the trip at \$1.25 per copy. So we hope you'll pardon our mild squawk at the airlines' unintentional inaccuracies.

Most advertisements, of course, are more prosaic, and merely promote SP's services — always carrying the slogan "The friendly Southern Pacific."

And the SP *is* friendly. Trainmen cooperate with camera fans in pointing out scenic spots, or places to shoot a passing train. On both the *Shasta Daylight* and the *Morning Daylight* I saw the train passenger agent accompany photographers to a vestibule and open the top half of the door for them. Friendliness is not confined to passenger agents, however; it extends right through the entire train crew, and even to the passengers. It's easy to engage a *Starlight* or *Daylight* passenger in conversation, and the talk is not only interesting but also revealing and, often, amusing.

On these West Coast trains, you'll find people of all social levels and of many races, local travelers and tourists from distant places. Even in peacetime you'll see soldiers

and sailors and Wacs and Waves. The day I rode the *Shasta Daylight*, there was a coachload of Hawaiian seamen going to San Francisco to catch a boat back to the islands. They belonged to the Army Transport Service and had just taken a ship to Seattle for scrapping. A few of them made their way to the tavern car, and there, nourished by bottles of beer, they strummed a guitar and sang in their native tongue.

"Now we have a floor show and everything," said the bartender.

SP's tavern cars, incidentally, do not follow the railroad practice of serving liquor from miniature bottles. Instead, the bartender uses "fifths," measuring the individual drinks with jiggers. There are some exceptions; odd brands are served from individual bottles.

NO "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT"

The railroad's passenger operations are under the jurisdiction of a department called the Train Service Bureau. It works in close collaboration with the operating department and recommends schedules and keeps an eye on reservations so that consists can be altered. Its recommendations cannot always be followed because of operating difficulties, but the operating department tries to give the bureau what it wants.

In other words, SP makes every effort to tailor its passenger service to the needs and desires of the traveling public, rather than just to operate trains at its own convenience and then tell the



The cars of the *San Joaquin Daylight*, launched July 4, 1941, carried signs that indicated their dedicated assignment.

Southern Pacific

people, "Take it or leave it." Its policy is simply stated in a paper handed to me by a p.r. representative in San Francisco: "Continued popularity of the trains depends upon the trains themselves, and the railroad has made a special point of never relaxing the quality of service. It believes satisfied travelers are its best advertisements."

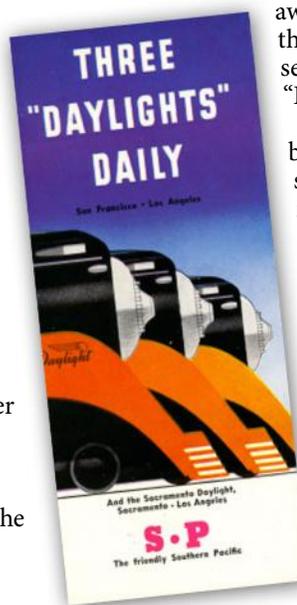
This policy has been carried out ever since the inauguration of Los Angeles–San Francisco streamlined *Daylight* service on March 21, 1937. The trains (one each way) were immediately popular and very profitable, and three years later the *Noon Daylight* was added. This train was taken off in October 1949 and its equipment was used to inaugurate the *Starlight*, as research had shown more people would be served by a night coach train than by one leaving at noon.

One popular feature of the *Starlight* is the fact that its snack lounge car remains open for business all night. It's a little like raiding your own icebox to be able to get a cup of coffee and a donut or sandwich before stretching out in your reclining seat to sleep. You have a comfortable sense of well-being as you walk slowly back through the darkened cars to your own seat, and sleep comes easily.

The return to consciousness touches you, ever so lightly, as the sky begins to gray in the east. One by one, passengers awake, yawn, stretch, and look at their companion in the adjacent seat. A common first remark is "Did I snore?"

In the washrooms, a line forms before the washbasins. Most passengers merely dab a little water in their eyes and comb their hair. Others do a bang-up job on themselves, topping it off with a shave and a tussle with the toothbrush.

Throughout the night, the passenger agent sees to the needs of the passengers. On rare occasions he finds that the train has been oversold, but he usually manages to find seats for everyone. He might, for





The *Morning Daylight* is poised for its 8:15 a.m. departure from track 8 in SP's station at 3rd and Townsend streets, San Francisco.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection

instance, notice that the occupant of a certain seat is in the tavern car, and, knowing this particular seat will be vacated a short distance down the line anyway, gives it to the seatless person "temporarily; I may have to move you later." Chances are the other passenger will stay in the tavern until the train reaches his station, and then it's only a matter of removing his luggage from the rack. Then the "temporary" seat assignment becomes permanent.

Oversold trains, I was told, are the exception. They occur when more than the usual run of last-minute ticket buyers line up at the

ticket windows in that last hour when it's too late to change the train consist. Some allowance is always made for last-minute sales, but sometimes a sudden change in weather or some other factor causes a large crowd to storm the ticket windows.

MORE MAGNIFICENCE

After a trip on the *Shasta Daylight* and the *Starlight*, a ride on the *Morning Daylight* is routine. You're used to the courtesy of the crews and you're used to eating good meals in the diners, so about all that's left for you to marvel over is the scenery. At least, that's the

way I found it. And I found, too, that SP's Coast Line scenery is truly magnificent, although in a different way from the magnificence of the Shasta Route. On the Shasta line, it's the mountains that intrigue you; on the Coast Line, it's the broad Pacific.

And up ahead, GS-4 No. 4458 rolls you on toward San Francisco. Its exhaust is muffled back here in the coaches; the smell of its oil fire is lost in the air-conditioned interior. The engineer minds his signals and the fireman tends his fire, but of this you are unaware. You are a passenger on the *Daylight*; you're comfortable, drowsy, and happy. ■



As diesel streamliners proliferated across the West, the Denver & Rio Grande Western refurbished a fleet of old wooden cars for its two narrow-gauge name trains, the Salida–Gunnison, Colo., *Shavano* and the Alamosa–Durango, Colo., *San Juan*. On a cold February 8, 1937, K-28 Mikado 471 stands with a freshly overhauled *San Juan* consist on display at Alamosa.

D&RGW

Parlor-dinette car *Durango* (complete with SAN JUAN drumhead), two vestibuled coaches, a baggage car, and a baggage-RPO follow K-28 No. 478 up Cumbres Pass in June 1947. The *San Juan* made its last run on January 31, 1951, but Cumbres & Toltec Scenic steam trains still climb this grade on day-long tourist trips between Chama, N.Mex., and Antonito, Colo.

H. R. Griffiths





The *San Juan/Shavano* coaches could accommodate 24 passengers in 5 double seats, 8 singles, and 2 sofas, all with mohair upholstery of various patterns. Other improvements: tile flooring, electric lights powered by a generator in the baggage car, steam heat from the locomotive, and a second washroom. After the *Shavano* came off on November 24, 1940, the *San Juan* enjoyed a decade as America's only narrow-gauge name train.

John D. Denney Jr.

Short hop on EL CAPITAN



Board Santa Fe's biggest moneymaker in Kansas City and ride to Chicago. It's a fast trip and a revealing one despite the darkness

Death Valley Scotty was a slow-poke. And besides, as a frightened porter aboard his "Coyote Special" put it, it was "plumb ridiculous" to want to go from Los Angeles to Chicago on the Santa Fe in 46 hours.

BY WALLACE W. ABBEY

TAN

In mid-1939, when Santa Fe's *El Capitan* was a year and a half old and departing L.A. and Chicago just twice a week, E1A No. 4 and an E1B are serviced during the eastbound train's stop at Albuquerque.

H. W. Barber, William R. Barber collection



But the adventurer whose real name was Walter Scott wanted to, and he was willing to pay well to see that it was done. It was. The Santa Fe put the Special into Dearborn Station just 44 hours 54 minutes after it left Los Angeles. The ride cost Scotty \$5,500.

Scott's 1905 dash set a speed record for the Santa Fe. But by modern standards somebody was dragging his feet. For today the road will put a cowboy or anyone else into Chicago in 39 hours 45 minutes. The ride, if he takes the de luxe coach *El Capitan*, will cost \$61.86.

Death Valley Scotty rode in a sleeper-observation car on his one-off train. A passenger on the *El Capitan* would be riding in a coach. There are those travelers who abhor coaches, especially at night. But there are enough who will ride them to give the 350-



Publicity photos inside the postwar *El Capitan* show (clockwise from above) the lounge car, a coach, and the lunch-counter diner. In 1956, the all-coach train was re-equipped with innovative new “Hi-Level” double-deck cars.

Three photos, Santa Fe

seat *El Cap* a near-full load out of Chicago and Los Angeles almost every trip. And there were enough who rode in them to cause the *El Cap* to run in two sections last summer.

Santa Fe’s *El Capitan* was born as a twice-weekly streamliner in the blaze of stainless steel that on February 22, 1938, produced the road’s fleet of streamlined transcontinentals — the two *El Cap* consists, six *Chiefs*, and a second *Super Chief*. The *El Cap*’s success was immediate.

Six years after its inauguration the demand for space had brought the *El Cap*’s consist from the original 5 cars to 12. In July 1942 the running time was increased by 2 hours out of deference to Santa Fe’s heavy wartime traffic. The old schedule was resumed on June 2, 1946, and in September that year the *El Cap* began alternating with the *Super Chief* on an every-other-day basis. By fall 1948 new Ridemaster coaches were rolling out of Pullman-Standard’s plant, and on September 29 the *El Capitan* went daily.

The ability of a train to earn money is not directly proportional to the ability of its passengers to earn money. If so, undoubtedly the fancy *Chief* or the ultra-fancy *Super Chief* would be the Santa Fe’s greatest moneymaker. But it is the *El Capitan*, which is almost prosaic alongside its higher-extra-fare brothers, that pulls down the greatest return per passenger mile for the road.

For the \$5 (plus tax) extra charge for riding the *El Capitan*, the passenger gets the best coach ride on the Santa Fe. Speaking now for the railroad and for the rider — is this “plumb ridiculous”?

CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN K.C.

Kansas City’s vast, high-ceilinged Union Station definitely was not having its greatest rush of customers. There have been times when the benches were packed, when the ticket windows were swamped, when you couldn’t find the orange nub of a key in a parcel locker to save yourself. On Christmas

night 1950 the traveling public was at home with the children.

The big clock said it was 10:15 when I walked past the ticket office, candy counter, and bookshop, and down the concourse. I was paying the price of spending the yuletide holiday more than 500 miles from my desk in Milwaukee, and I was returning via Chicago on the *El Capitan*.

Somewhat I’ve always felt a bit as if I were intruding when I boarded this extra-fare streamliner for the last 450 miles of its 2,224-mile journey. But it’s comforting to know — and I learned it in the days when *any* space was hard to come by — that inside that fancy coach there’s a seat with my name on it. That feeling is reason enough for spending the \$1.44 for the Kansas City–Chicago extra fare.

I walked down the concourse to gate 8, where the sign said the *El Cap* would load. The train was marked up on time — in at 11:05, out at 11:20. I sat down on a bench and prepared to indulge in an interesting hobby

— watching the people watch the people.

A small crowd was gathering at gate 12, and the sound of a diesel's bell filtered up the escalator shaft. That would be the *California Limited*, due for a 45-minute layover and an 11 o'clock departure. We'd overtake it somewhere in Missouri, for the *El Cap* is scheduled into Chicago 75 minutes before its more leisurely brother.

The public-address system boomed an announcement that "all persons holding tickets on the 11:20 *El Capitan* to Chicago" should check their reservations at the gate before they boarded the train. The depot passenger agent actually takes up the tickets, and the train conductor merely collects the passengers' receipts and puts a hat check above each seat. It's annoying on some trains to have to fish out your ticket when a new conductor takes over in the middle of the night. On the *El Cap*, you see only the first conductor with the hat check. Your ticket is passed along to the next conductor by the one going off duty, and you can pound your rented pillow in uninterrupted slumber.

The agent checked my reservation (seat 17 in car 228) against his diagram, and said the train would be ready about 11:10. I pocketed the receipt, remembering how my transportation had been lifted on the *El Capitan* out of Chicago three nights before. On that trip we'd hardly more than cleared the depot when I looked up to see *three* trainmen working tickets in the same coach!

I was able to get down to track level a few steps ahead of the rest of the passengers. At 11:05 the *El Cap's* headlight brightened the sides of the diesels heading up the Frisco's *Kansas City-Florida Special*, loading on the next track for an 11:30 sailing to the sunny South. It'd been a warm enough Christmas in Kansas City — 70 degrees — but as a coachful of passengers stepped to the platform I heard complaints about the cold weather.

Nearly all the passengers in car 228 detrained at Kansas City. Now, as it filled again with newcomers, I decided the best place to see the railroad would be the armchair in the rear of the coach-observation car. I threw my coat onto the baggage rack above my seat and started walking back through the train. There'd been a mild shifting of occupants of the car behind mine, which was almost filled. The coaches behind the club car were partly full, although back that far in the train there hadn't been anybody for Kansas City and the lights had been left off. The club car was doing a rousing business, but the last coach and the coach-observation car were empty. This, I knew, was not typical of the *El Cap's* load. The past Friday it had left Chicago in two well-filled sections.

I pulled the armchair up close to the little table and sat in the quiet darkness watching the activity in the big station. The two red-and-gold Frisco E8 diesels — named *Whirl-*



A four-unit FT set, still wearing blue-and-yellow freight colors, ascends Raton Pass with the *El Cap* on November 19, 1945. Previously, steam helped E units up this grade.

Lucius Beebe

way and *Big Red* — were right outside the window. In the strawberry patch of signals one went yellow. The Rock Island's *Golden State* climbed the hill to the Kansas City Terminal "high line" that would carry it across the Kaw River and into Kansas.

It was past time for the *El Cap* to be under way. A Wabash E unit backed into the station. At 11:29 we slipped quietly between the long rows of coaches and Pullmans. The car squeaked a little and rocked gently as we glided past the east end tower, around a slight curve and out of sight of the station. I could feel the grip of the running brake test, and the free-rolling sensation when the engineer kicked them off. We passed a billboard advertising the *Kansas City Chief* and ducked into the depression that carries the KCT's four tracks under Kansas City's boulevards.

We glided effortlessly past Sheffield, Rock Creek Junction, and Congo and out of the maze of trackage that is webbed around the city. The lights of Kansas City stood out against the semi-blackness. It wasn't totally dark, though it was late on a moonless night. We were out of town now, and the *El Capitan* was really beginning to move. We seemed eager to keep our tight schedule and to regain the 9 minutes of terminal delay. The train actually surged ahead.

ACROSS DARK MISSOURI

Once out of Kansas City the Santa Fe winds through the bluffs on the south side of the Missouri River for a while, swings across it at Sibley, and hurries along the rich bottom land on the north side of the river. An eastbound freight was in the siding at Atherton to let us pass and to nurse a hotbox. The crew had pulled the flaming waste out of the hot journal, and it burned brightly on the ballast.

A Wabash freight train was passing CA Junction, headed back toward Kansas City, as we swept past in the other direction. Beginning at CA Junction the Santa Fe and Wabash have 30 miles of joint track.

There is hardly a faster meeting or a faster

parting on the Santa Fe than that of the two *El Capitan*s on the Missouri Division each night. That is, if they meet in the flat river bottom between Henrietta and Hardin where we met our westbound counterpart. It didn't take long for her red-and-yellow tailsign to become merely a bright pin point in the night.

The armchair in the very rear end of the *El Capitan* is an excellent place to see all that is going on railroad-wise, but I don't think I'd like to ride 2,224 miles in the last car. Up ahead, closer to the engine, the coaches ride nicely, but my chair in the obs car skipped across the carpet as the car banged from side to side. But after all, 90 mph was quite fast and our diesel was wagging quite a long tail.

I'd been looking for the *California Limited* to be in one of the sidings along this stretch of the line, but no sign yet. We clattered across the frogs at WB Junction, where the Wabash and the Santa Fe go their separate ways, and hustled past the big brick depot at Carrollton. East of there the eastbound and westbound tracks are on slightly different alignments, and it was here that we met the westbound *Kansas City Chief*. The Santa Fe's newest bid for the Chicago-Kansas City trade is a de luxe coach-and-Pullman over-nighter with a slower (and therefore more restful) schedule than the transcontinentals or the Texas trains.

There were lights in the telegraph office at Bosworth and the operator was on the platform to look us over. The *California Limited* was waiting at the east end of the siding, her coaches dark, her headlight extinguished.

We were leaving the river country now and entering northeastern Missouri's hills. An approach-lighted signal went on, and the westbound *Super Chief* slammed by and disappeared around a curve. The cuts get deeper and the fills get longer toward Marceline and on east of the Missouri Division headquarters. The hills and curves have been bothersome to Santa Fe locating engineers to the point that they've filled and shoveled away



Chairs in the postwar *El Cap*'s roomy 44-seat coaches reclined, lined up with the windows, included leg rests, and accommodated a six-foot man in relative comfort.

Santa Fe

until old rights of way are visible at many places. We were going up Cardy Hill when I decided that if I were to be in any position to report on the sleeping qualities of a reclining coach seat I'd better try mine out.

The lounge car had closed, and in the darkened coaches the passengers were sleeping soundly. I met Conductor J. S. Durham coming back through the train, looking for a passenger he'd had a ticket for out of Kansas City but hadn't found in car 228. I produced the missing ticket receipt and we chatted about the *El Capitan*, the Santa Fe, and Durham's son. He gave me our train's vital statistics: 14 cars, 125 passengers, 850 tons. It was indeed an off night, for the seating capacity of the train was 306. We had this consist, from the rear: the coach-observation car, a coach, a lunch-counter diner, two coaches, the lounge car, two more coaches, another lunch-counter diner, another coach, a dormitory-baggage car, a storage mail car, a Railway Post Office, and another storage mail car. Our diesel was No. 30, a 6,000 h.p. A-B-B-A set of F3s. We were missing a coach from the advertised consist, but the extra head-end car made up for it.

By the time Conductor Durham and I had finished our conversation we were nearing La Plata. The last thing I saw before trailing off into a sleep in which I could hear — or better, could feel — the humming of the wheels was La Plata's modernized station. The lighted temperature indicator said it was 13 degrees above zero.

Sleeping in a coach can't compare, of course, to sleeping in a berth. But sleeping in a modern *El Capitan* coach is definitely an improvement over sleeping in even a car from the 1938 *El Cap*. The seating capacity of each car has been cut from 52 to 44, and

the seats are farther apart. You wouldn't want any more leg room in the daytime, and a six-footer hardly has to curl up at all when his full-length leg rest is extended at night. The seats recline just far enough so that you don't feel that you're lying in a dentist's chair. There's a window for each seat — no more looking smack into a big hunk of wall. And the cars are tastefully decorated. The *El Cap*, of course, has its special services — courier nurses, wired music, a public address system, and the fastest Chicago to Los Angeles coach schedule.

Eighty-five of the *El Capitan*-type 44-seat coaches are in service, and they are used also

on other trains. The *Kansas City* and *Texas Chiefs*, the *Grand Canyon*, and the *Kansas Cityan* and *Chicogoan* usually have them in their regular consists.

I awoke as we stopped at Shopton, Iowa, the midway operating point and, as its name implies, site of repair facilities, and watched the servicing crew water the coach. It was 3 a.m. and we were on time. We moved ahead 2 miles to Fort Madison and paused again while the Illinois Division train crew took over. (The new engine crew took over at Shopton.) Then we were on the long bridge across the Mississippi River and I was lulled back to sleep by the rocking of the train as it ticked off the last-lap miles over typical Prairie State terrain.

We were slowing down when I next looked out the window. We stopped, moved ahead slowly, and stopped again. I saw we were just west of Edelstein, Ill., when we passed over the Chicago & North Western's St. Louis line. The landscape brightened in the headlight of an approaching westbound train, a freight behind dual-service F7 set No. 312. In its headlight beam I saw that it was snowing hard. Snow, after a 70-degree Christmas?

DOWN EDELSTEIN HILL

We picked up speed again at Edelstein and descended the 8-mile hill into the Illinois River valley at the timecard maximum. The division yard and dispatchers' office are at Chillicothe, and there we overtook No. 10, the *Kansas City Chief*, which the dispatcher had put on the "wrong main" at Edelstein. Evidently that had been the cause of our delay. No. 10 couldn't use the westbound track until the freight had cleared, and we were right on 10's block. The two trains pulled out



***El Cap* passengers check in with Santa Fe staff at Dearborn Station, Chicago, in 1950. The all-coach, extra-fare streamliner was Santa Fe's most profitable passenger train.**

Bill Wight



Signs on the bumping post and the train's observation car identify the *El Capitan* for passengers boarding at Dearborn Station.

Bill Wight

of Chillicothe together. No. 10's coaches were full and people were sleeping in the lounge-diner *Centennial Club*. And we had a half-empty train!

There wasn't much activity among the *El Capitan*'s slumbering passengers this early in the morning, but the dining car staffs were on their way to work. The attendant turned off the blue overhead lights and snapped on the fluorescents at 6 a.m., just as a waiter announced the "first and last call for breakfast." The idea of food made several passengers sit up, and soon the car was filled with yawns and the sound of snapping suitcase latches. The rasp of an electric razor came from the men's washroom.

The fellow across the aisle from me in the table section of the diner decidedly was not completely awake. Neither, for that matter, were many of the small group that waded through the snowdrift in the vestibule and

into the cheery car. A pot of average Santa Fe coffee and some good French toast warmed my insides. I'd hardly noticed that we were on the outskirts of Chicago. We'd passed Joliet with its Union Station, Lemont with its refinery bubble tower decked out in Christmas-tree lights, and were plunking across the B&OCT diamonds at McCook when I went back to my coach.

Chicago was in the throes of a blizzard. Our headlight played on a thick snowfall as we rounded the sharp curve across a canal 10 miles out. Where a train hadn't passed recently the railheads were drifted over. Switch heaters were very much in evidence at the junctions that funnel trains into the nation's rail center. We glided past Nerska, Corwith, Panhandle, Drawbridge, and C&WI Junction (called 21st Street Tower on some other roads there). One of the Santa Fe's new *Super Chief* dome cars was under a blanket of snow in

the road's 18th Street coachyard.

The last mile into Dearborn Station is eternal. The track winds under the La Salle Street Station leads and between long freight houses. Switch engines and section gangs sweeping snow were everywhere. We stopped under the depot canopy at 7:15, on time. The passengers, coated and booted (those who had them), edged toward the door, but there was the routine wait while all the luggage was pulled out of the vestibule.

I stepped down into a dark and snow-bound Windy City. So far the trip had been swell. Now, could I find a taxi on a morning like this? ■

WALLACE W. ABBEY (1927-2014), a rail journalist and photographer, had a long career that included employment at TRAINS, Railway Age, Soo Line, Milwaukee Road, Trailer Train, and the Transportation Test Center.

TRAIN OF TOMORROW IIII

ASTRA DOMES in the Northwest

The traveling public saw them touring country-wide as the
Train of Tomorrow; now they belong to Union Pacific

BY **COURTLAND MATTHEWS**

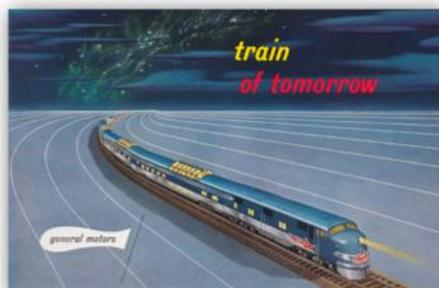


Until summer 1950 one of the big things to complain about in the Pacific Northwest was the pool service operated by the Northern Pacific, Great Northern, and Union Pacific between Portland and Seattle. Not infrequent slurs about Civil War-vintage equipment and slow schedules (more than 4 hours for 183 miles) were indicative of a growing tendency for businessmen to drive or take a plane between the two cities.

The Union Pacific, however, rather quietly and effectively clamped shut the critics' mouths by coupling into Portland-Seattle trains 457 and 458 on June 18,

1950, the cars of General Motors' lyrical *Train of Tomorrow*, which the UP had bought earlier in the year. The timings were quickened a little, too; on August 13 No. 457 was given a new schedule that put it into Seattle's Union Station a minute under 4 hours after it departed Portland.

The diesel-powered train that leaves Portland's Union Station every day at 8 a.m. carries this consist: baggage, mail and express cars; five or six modern 48-seat coaches; a parlor car; a Chicago-Seattle sleeper (off UP's *City of Portland*), and the four "Astra Dome" cars that



GM promoted the 1947 *Train of Tomorrow* with a big, colorful booklet.

Greg Palumbo collection

set new standards of rail luxury on their country-wide junket. They are diner *Sky View*, coach *Star Dust*, sleeper *Dream Cloud*, and observation-lounge *Moon Glow*. The round trip is made in the daytime, so *Dream Cloud* is

used for parlor seating. The train's make-up on the return trip out of Seattle at 4:45 p.m. is practically the same.

There's now another northbound train that makes the 183-mile run in 4 hours, and still another does it in 4 hours 15 minutes. Southbound, No. 458 uses 4 hours 30 minutes, while two other trains take 4 hours. The Astra Dome train (which has no official name) allows a traveler who wants to go back to Portland the same day almost 5 hours in Seattle. It's a big convenience for businessmen.

You pay a special coach fare in the regular coaches on Nos.

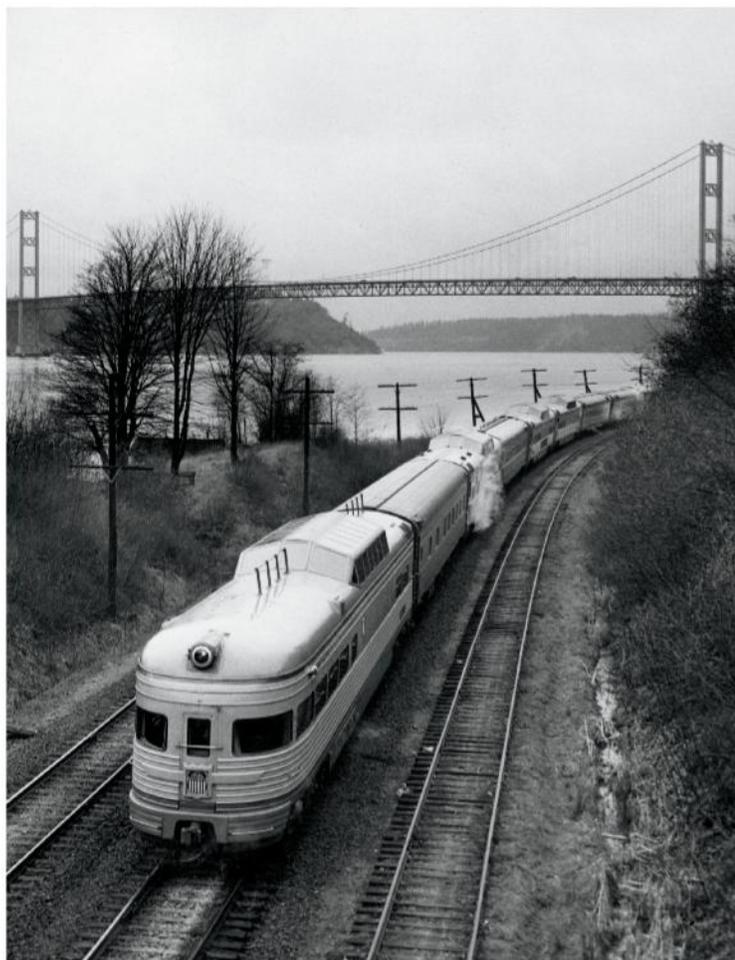
Spliced by a standard coach, the four ex-*Train of Tomorrow* dome cars bring up the rear of Portland-bound train 458 at Black River, Wash., about 10 miles south of Seattle, on May 29, 1951.

H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Archive



Ready to enter service on the UP, the former *Train of Tomorrow* engine and cars pose for a portrait. The E7 was GM 765 on the *ToT* tour, then became UP 988. For this publicity photo, it carries the number of the *City of Los Angeles*, 104, in its indicator boxes.

Union Pacific



The dome-obs formerly named *Moon Glow* trails train 457 at the Tacoma Narrows highway bridge in the early '50s. Besides yellow paint, UP added a red warning light and its shield to the car.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection



A two-page spread (above) in the *Train of Tomorrow* booklet shows the dome diner, a pioneering concept that UP later adopted for its *City* streamliners, as seen in the magazine ad at right.

Above, Greg Palumbo collection; right, CLASSIC TRAINS collection

457 and 458: \$6.84 including tax, for the Portland–Seattle round trip. (This is the fare on the other trains in the UP-GN-NP pool, too.) In the Astra Dome coach, it's a little higher: \$9.49. A ticket to ride in the parlor car or in the dome-sleeper is \$15.65, and entitles you to use the dome-observation-lounge. This fare, by the way, is \$2.64 less than a round-trip fare between the two cities by a DC-6 airliner. The Astra Dome diner is open to all passengers, so for the price of a special coach ticket you may dine under the sky.

It's the Astra Domes that make trains 457-458 distinctive. Let's step up into the dome of *Sky View*, unique among diners on U.S. railroads because it is

the only one to exploit the dome idea. Sit down in one of the leather chairs at a table adorned with gleaming silver.

You are speeding along in a glittering, glamorous, yet soft atmosphere that makes you feel relaxed, contemplative, and as if you were a million dollars richer than you are. You sip your coffee and watch the top of the train as it follows a bend in the Columbia River, and you can see the semaphores drop and the lights go red. The river is close and contains sea-going ships, fishing boats, and log rafts. There's Mount St. Helens, the snow-capped peak that makes you think of pictures of Fujiyama in Japan. And then you see another mountain — Rainier, which



Diner 8010 (the former *Sky View*) is serviced between runs at Union Station, Seattle, in June 1959.

J. William Vigrass, Krambles-Peterson Archive

Tacomans insist on calling Mount Tacoma. Everywhere is the lush green countryside of the Northwest.

No. 457 is rolling northward, and now skirts the shore of Puget Sound. The color of the water is dependent on the day — it's gray if the day is cloudy, sparkling blue if it's sunny. Maybe you've seen these things before, but from this vantage point they look fresher than ever. You're not driving; there's nothing to worry about; you can relax and take it all in.

The waiter brings your food from the front of the dome, where it was brought up from

below on a dumbwaiter. "Downstairs" is a kitchen that Chef H. W. Lang and his three cooks declare is the coolest, most pleasing dining car kitchen they have ever worked in.

The cheerfulness of the Astra Dome cars is reflected in the attitude of the attendants. The employees like this train — they're as proud of it as the crew of the trimmest craft afloat — and they want you to like it, too. Conductor G. J. Leavens enjoys telling how prominent businessmen have switched from the airlines

to his train. Talk to any of the personnel on the train and you'll hear enthusiasm and praise. And you're likely to hear, "I hope you're enjoying your trip," too.

It'd take you about 2½ hours to fly from Portland to Seattle, counting the driving time to and from the airports. You can make the trip on the Union Pacific in one 4-hour jump, in a roominess and luxury that invites relaxation. Travel by rail can never be as fast as travel by air, but railroads can give their passengers conveniences and luxuries that

the airlines can't equal.

In less than a year of revenue service the *Train of Tomorrow* has shown that while speed is essential, not every passenger wants to shoot across country like a rocket. Give him the accommodations that the airlines can't and perhaps he'll come back to riding the train. ■

COURTLAND MATTHEWS (1897–1974) was a poet, salesman, social worker, and magazine editor/publisher in Portland, Ore. This was his only story in TRAINS.

Train of tradition

The *San Francisco Overland*, queen of Western trains for more than half a century, is still riding along in fashionable estate

BY DAVID P. MORGAN

A trim Southern Pacific 4-6-2 makes better than 60 mph with *Overland Limited* east of Elko, Nev., in 1918, when Overland Route rail service was already nearly 50 years old, and the top trains were numbered 1 and 2.

Fred Jukes





A three-unit set of 2,000 h.p. Alco-GE passenger units (a PA, PB, and PA in later parlance) awaits the *San Francisco Overland's* departure time at SP's Oakland Pier station in March 1958. Seven years previously, author Morgan's train also had PA-PB-PA power.

Tom Gildersleeve



In the late 1940s, shortly before diesels took over on the SP portion of the run, 2-8-0 2519 helps cab-forward 4-8-8-2 4268 lift the eastbound *San Francisco Overland* up Donner Pass. A green ex-Army hospital car clashes with the train's two-tone gray livery.

Jim Morley

History on that bleak Sunday morning, March 4, 1951, was the clock tower of the Ferry Building at the foot of Market Street, San Francisco. On another bleak morning 45 years before, the hands of its timepiece had suddenly stopped at 5:08 as a great city fell by fire and quake before its doors. The Ferry Building had stood then as it stands today, tall and stately.

History was also the rain-sheeted decks of the steamer *Berkeley* as her lines were cast off for the 18-minute, 4-mile run to Oakland Pier. She was an old ferry, older even than the quake; the stained-glass windows on the deck where I drank a mug of hot coffee said as much. A handful of passengers left the cabin and braved the wet cold for a look upward at modernism, at the immense Oakland-Bay Bridge. The rumble of a Key System train sounded across the choppy waters and the exhaust of diesel trucks echoed clear and sharp. It was something to ponder that man — weak little six-foot man — had blueprinted and erected such a structure, mainly because he lived too fast for ferries like the *Berkeley*.

The ancient steamer vibrated to the reversal of her propellers, blew her bilious fog

horn, then relaxed in the wooden pilings of Oakland Pier. Here again history could be felt and seen. The great dark trainshed of the archaic waterfront depot seemed one with the Erie's Jersey City edifice and the museum that the Pennsylvania maintains as a waiting room for Cleveland. Had I found a tandem of Vauclain 3000s or a brace of Pullman Palace Cars within this one-time Central Pacific terminus, nothing would have seemed amiss.

Of the three transcontinental trains that Southern Pacific was to dispatch eastward that day, only No. 28 — the *San Francisco Overland* — had any historical right to the Pier. The others, the leisurely *Gold Coast* and the high-speed *City of San Francisco*, are children among trains. The *City* was born in 1936, while the *Coast* is simply the "economy" *Challenger* with a new label and without tourist sleepers. But the *Overland* was in daily service on that dreadful morning when the clock on the Ferry Building across the Bay was stilled at 5:08. In 1918 Fred Jukes' camera immortalized her one wintry day as she hurried across the Nevada desert behind a neat Baldwin Pacific [preceding pages]. Until the *City* air-horned its way onto the scene, the *Overland Limited* was the highest expression of luxurious Western travel.

Even today this grand old lady is riding along in considerably better estate than many a contemporary: Santa Fe's *California Limited* has fallen upon evil times, while Great Northern's *Oriental* is again on the discard pile. But the old lady is the second-fastest train between Chicago and the Golden Gate (48 hours 55 minutes), and she grosses more per mile (\$6.20 in 1950) than any other SP Pacific Lines run except the *Morning Daylight*. There was pride to be felt in holding even a coach reservation slip on this train of tradition.

No. 28 was parked on track 10; 12 cars forward, beyond the protection of the shed, a 6,000 h.p. Alco-GE (cab 6013, booster 5914, cab 6010) stood in the cold driving rain, whistling through its turbosuperchargers. The three-unit diesel was Ducoed in *Daylight* orange, red, and black, and it mounted a sizable flanger plow on its flat nose.

Behind the Alcos was a consist of inconsistency: a streamlined mixture of fluted roofs, riveted side paneling, older rebuilt chair cars with skirts, spanking-new equipment unashamedly displaying its battery boxes, numbered instead of named sleepers, Union Pacific yellow splashed in between No. 28's orthodox gray, and a Pullman name — *American Flyer* — more reminiscent of toy trains than of domestic gait. Included in the train was a through chair car, for St. Louis, and five sleepers, variously bound for Salt Lake City, St. Louis, Chicago, and New York City. Missing was the ex-*Noon Daylight* observation-parlor which No. 28 has been carrying as far as Reno with good success. It was being refurbished in Bayshore Shops.



The *San Francisco Overland*'s cars — a mix of heavy- and lightweight types — follow their doubleheaded steam leaders up the west side of Donner Pass in the late 1940s.

Jim Morley



A "Black Widow" F7 helper ahead of the *Daylight* PA-PB-PA road power leads the *San Francisco Overland* down the west side of Donner Pass at Emigrant Gap in June 1958.

Above, Tom Gildersleeve; below, Joe Welsh collection

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Rain ran in ribbons across the chair car windows as the *Overland*, at 11:30, began her 2,252-mile course across two-thirds of the continent. The yards at Oakland fanned out, an enginehouse of silvered smokeboxes slipped by, and there were local stops in the East Bay Area. The Alcos accelerated along the double track that hugs the shore of San Pablo Bay, leaned left and rolled onto the 5,603-foot Martinez-Benicia Bridge that spans the Carquinez Straits. Then No. 28 stopped dead — 70 feet above water — and was juggled gently up and down while a freight pounded past in the opposite direction. After that the routine of a ride over rain-soaked marshes and meadows was broken only by overshooting a flag passenger at Suisun-Fairfield (and obligingly backing up for him) and spotting, at Davis, a freight from the Shasta Division, waiting on the wye behind four diesel units to trail us into the state capital.

Now running late, the *Overland* walked across the Sacramento River bridge and halted before an impressively large brick station. Across the tracks stood the black buildings of SP's Sacramento Shops, largest west of the Mississippi and birthplace of many a 4-8-2.

Roseville: yard tracks spreading out like the tail of a peacock, an ice factory and ice docks, the roof of the roundhouse visible over a car of lumber, the boiler top of an AC 4-8-8-2, diesels and more diesels, then the modest frame station. We were at the foot of the "Big Hill," Southern Pacific's renowned grade across the Sierra Nevada range. At 2:24 p.m. three V-16 diesel engines wound up and

the 12 cars of No. 28 started up the Mountain Subdivision, up through the green and rocky slopes of the foothills, divided by orchards and vineyards. One tunnel followed another and a faint powdering of snow fell across our path. An SP billboard facing a wet, slippery curve on nearby U.S. 40 displayed a mother hen and brood with the logic of "Next time try the train — SAFE."

Speed fell off and visibility was cut back. At Colfax the snow lay nearly 2 inches deep and the ceiling was less than 1,000 feet. It was soothing to feel the six-wheel trucks of my car gripping 132-pound rail.

Alco diesels like those on our train hummed past downgrade with 18 cars of the westbound *Overland*. At 15 to 20 mph our train kept slugging it out with weather that was changing rapidly into solid snow. At Gold Run men in black slickers were sweeping out switch points. A few miles beyond, the westbound main was covered in white and gave no evidence of the train we had passed near Colfax.

Inside the warm coffee-shop lounge, passengers had forgotten conversation and cocktails for a look forward, on the sharper curves, to our locomotive. A steady stream of snow was being funneled back by its plow and its trucks were dusting the white stuff against underslung fuel tanks. Great gray valleys reached out into the milky atmosphere beyond the rails the diesel rode. Now and then

a woman would exclaim as the track came beside a sheer drop of several hundred feet.

An Electro-Motive freight diesel, whining in the throes of dynamic braking, loomed up and passed; the trucks of the high cars it led churned up thick snow. At 5:10 the *Overland* rolled inside a snowshed and stopped. It was almost unreal and imagined — this mountainside breather within the dark shelter of a timber structure at Norden. A lantern glinted occasionally and a diesel threaded switches in the gloom. The train moved and, within moments, was topping the summit at 7,018 feet. Outside the sheds the eastern approaches to the Sierra unraveled down through Anderson. Another diesel growled past up-grade, with a charging 4-8-8-2 cut in toward the rear of its tonnage. No. 28 went into Truckee, dead on time.

As the train flanged the tenacious curves out of Truckee, then coasted alongside the Truckee River, I listened to a dice gambler giving a fatherly lecture to two women tourists. An hour or so before, in the company of a man, the gambler had been quietly cursing Reno as the citadel of all things evil. But now he spoke as a university graduate (which he was), accurately explaining the mathematical odds of the roulette wheel, poker, horses, dice, and the machines. Previously I had easily imagined him in a green eyeshade, standing cool before a table of chance. But as we came through the dusk into Reno the man could have been a parent advising his daughter about the ethics of campus life.

RENO — THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD: thus glared the electric banner across the city's main drag. The service in the diner was slow and the food mediocre. And No. 28 was delayed a mile east at Sparks while steam supplanted the Alcos on the front end. I reclined my chair and dozed as the train picked up speed to a mile a minute and better. A muffled growl and a stream of lights identified the westbound *City of San Francisco*. Then there were only the sagebrush miles being steadily clicked off through Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, and Elko.

It was dark outside when I awoke. The chair car lights reflected down on the steel plates of a trestle and salt water washed in waves around the pilings. As we came off the "railroad that goes to sea" across Great Salt Lake, Southern Pacific's 778-mile responsibility for No. 28 was virtually all wrapped up. And we were on time.

4-8-4 OUT OF OGDEN

On the station platform at Ogden the Union Pacific traveling engineer assigned to accompany me nodded when the vestibule next to us moved a trifle.

"OK, we can go ahead now. She's on."

"She" was the 836, a great





Dwarfed by the majestic Sierras, a cab-forward rounds the Stanford horseshoe curve above Truckee with the westbound *Overland*.

Jim Morley

gray-boilered 4-8-4 standing on 80-inch drivers. She was double-stacked with smoke deflectors and driven by tapered rods. She was an Alco, built in 1944. Up in her roomy four-seat cab (with sliding metal doors to keep out the cold) the steam pressure gauge needed 300 pounds. I pulled on goggles and gloves and took the seat behind the engineer. Exactly 18 minutes late, because of a switching delay, the throttle came back on its quadrant and she moved effortlessly. Her drivers skidded on the first crossover, then were caught by the brake test.

“Green!” The light on the signal bridge beckoned us on. The 836 left the yard limits at 35 mph and charged through Uintah at 50, headed straight for the snow-encrusted Wasatch Mountains. The 4-8-4 roared into Weber Canyon, hitting the 1.14-percent grade hard in the crevice where there was just room for two tracks, a river, and a road.

“Got a 35-mile-an-hour curve here,” my host commented, “and that’s all it’s good for, too!”

Yellow diesel units blurred by with tonnage; then a 4-6-6-4 went wheeling past. Here the double track was together, there it



A puff of oil smoke hangs in the air over Truckee as AC No. 4185 gets the westbound *Overland* moving after a station stop. In 6 hours, the train will arrive at Oakland Pier.

Jim Morley



Future excursion star UP 844, having just taken over for an SP locomotive, departs Ogden Union Station with the *San Francisco Overland* on June 18, 1950. The Fairbanks-Morse "Erie-built" diesels at right will follow with the *Los Angeles Limited*.

Don Sims



On October 10, 1946, the *Overland's* 4-8-4 has been given a 4-6-2 helper for the long climb from Ogden to Wahsatch. The pair rushes uphill at Uintah, 7 miles east of Ogden.

Robert F. Collins, Louis A. Marre collection



Northern 827 on the westbound *Overland* has her rods greased and tender filled with water at Rawlins, Wyo., on August 17, 1951. The eastbound *Idahoan* loads at right.

Above, John F. Endler Jr.; right, Joe Welsh collection

was apart. Curve followed curve as Echo Canyon passed the cab windows. Finally the grade leveled out at Wahsatch. In 65 miles we had climbed more than 2,500 feet up from the Salt Lake Valley to the dusty plains of Wyoming. The Northern drew up to the water plug at Evanston and a hostler climbed atop her 23,500-gallon pedestal-type tank.

On the platform it was cold and quiet, with the silence broken only by the thump of the engine's pilot-mounted air pumps. There was time to survey the 836, to absorb the lines of her straight running boards, bare boiler, enclosed-coupler pilot, and Mars light. She was as free from extras as a Chesapeake & Ohio engine is full of them. She was a great dual-service 4-8-4 from the 20-year era after 1927 that had produced so many of them.

Fifteen minutes at Evanston and No. 28 was out of town, her Northern slipping a bit on snow-dusted rails. The speedometer needle swung upward to 30, then moved swiftly past the black dial notches to 45, 50, 55, 60. Back along the train, the speed swirled the light lineside snow into a mist of white.

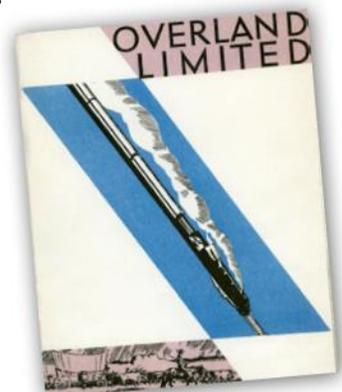
Speed stayed in the upper brackets except for one reduction to 20 mph, out of consideration to maintenance-of-way crews inside the new Altamont Tunnel. As we coursed into the fresh concrete, the engineer pointed out the mouth of the shorter, 5,900-foot Aspen Tunnel nearby. Once this single-track bore had flumed all traffic here — including the biggest of the articulateds before diesels began hauling most of the tonnage west of Green River, Wyo.

"If you rode a Big Boy west through Aspen with a drag," the engineer said, "you knew what *hot* was."

Granger swept past the cab windows and the sun came out for the first time. Running like a thoroughbred, the seven-year-old Alco came into the Green River station ahead of the timecard at 10:26.

The platform at Green River was a harsh mixture of cinders and sand, blown with hurricane force by a stiff prairie wind. No. 836 took on fuel oil and water and got a shot in the arm from the Alemite guns. Standing beside her was an older, lower-driven sister: No. 809 with Second 24, the *Idahoan*, from Seattle and Portland. Out of Green River the *Idahoan* would pace the parade east, with the *San Francisco Overland*, *Utahn*, *Los Angeles Limited*, *City of Los Angeles*, *City of San Francisco*, and *City of Portland* all following within a space of 3 hours.

Wyoming was tremendous — unlimited acres of arid plains, cold and uninhabited and stretching to



the horizon. But as the Union Pacific gradually ascended to the Continental Divide, the grade was easy and the line double track. After 80 years the Overland Route was still the main way west. Not the scenic way or the romantic way, perhaps. But in the realm of railroading nothing else west of the Mississippi had yet matched the UP Trail in sheer capacity or tonnage handled. In the physical dimension of track and locomotive power and signaling, it was like a Norfolk & Western transplanted from the valleys of West Virginia to the open spaces.

Wham! The *City of Portland* streamed by west, followed hard by Extra 4017 with uncountable cars tied on behind its 4-8-8-4. At precisely 12:38 p.m. — on the advertised — No. 28 rambled over the Divide, 7,104 feet up from sea level and the highest spot on the entire UP. The throttle was pushed in as we drifted at a mile a minute. The *City of Los Angeles* drilled by and we were into Rawlins.

ACROSS THE HIGH PLAINS

Once again the engine crew changed (as they did four times in the 484 miles from Ogden to Cheyenne) while the 836 took on more water. Because she was burning oil, the one fuel stop back at Green River had replaced the four halts for coal that had once been required. But on the ready track at Rawlins there was plenty of coal-fired power: a Big Boy and three 4-6-6-4s. They looked dirty, unkempt, and murderously powerful.

Out of Rawlins the 836 kept exhibiting the one failing of the run, excessive smoke. Firemen, engineers, and traveling engineers all tried their know-how on the blower and oil valves to no avail. The younger men experienced real difficulty holding back grins when the senior enginemen miserably flunked out at the task of keeping the stack clean.

Far ahead a yellow ribbon inched its way across Wyoming behind a blob of black. It came nearer and was the *City of San Francisco*, 1½ hours late and running like fury with a 4-8-4 leading its three diesel units. Our crew laughed and crossed to the left-hand side to shout unintelligible advice to the streamliner. Mile after mile our own 4-8-4 roared eastward beside the Lincoln Highway, through a bleak uplands country speckled by patches of dirty snow. Always there was the ceaseless passage of westbound traffic. Coming into Laramie No. 28 was slowed by a yellow signal, then stopped by a red while two freights crossed over our main on their way west out of the yard.

The station at Laramie was typical of all Union Pacific division point depots — a red-brick structure fronted by a cinder-coated lawn. It was dirty, substantial, and built to more or less heroic proportions because, it seemed, the UP main line demanded suitable lineside buildings.

East of Laramie the east and west mains diverged once again. At times the westbound



Challenger 3904 works up Sherman Hill with 17 cars near Hermosa, Wyo., in July 1937, when train 28 was still all-Pullman and named *San Francisco Overland Limited*.

R. H. Kindig



Dressed in two-tone gray, FEF-1 816 and FEF-2 824 make 55 mph up Sherman Hill near Otto, Wyo., on October 21, 1949. Green flags and "1-27" in the 4-8-4s' train indicator boxes tell that at least one other section of the *San Francisco Overland* is following.

Ross B. Grenard Jr.

line, constructed in 1917, was 2½ miles due south of us. The grade was 0.82 percent and the 836 was working hard as she exhausted into Hermosa Tunnel and on up the final slope to the summit of Sherman Hill, which was topped at 50 mph. A certain relief spread about the cab and the cigarettes came out. The hump of the Union Pacific had been breasted only a minute late and there was little to do now except keep a hand on the brake valve and watch the westbound traffic struggle up the 1.5 percent.

And the traffic was coming . . .

At the summit a drag's helper was just uncoupling. Four miles downgrade No. 28 sliced through between two more freights. Moments later two more, one east and one west, swished past.

"Yellow!" Profanity was distributed about the cab as the train slowed to a walk. Straight ahead then was a red block, just behind the rear Pullman of the *Idahoan*. It was stalled at the west end of the Cheyenne yards on the markers of a freight going in on short time



Engine 812, from UP's first group of 4-8-4s and not yet converted to oil fuel, whisks the 12-car *Overland* east up Archer Hill, a few miles out of Cheyenne, on November 30, 1941.

R. H. Kindig



FEF-3 836, the same engine Morgan rode between Ogden and Cheyenne 9 months later, departs Omaha Union Station with the *San Francisco Overland* on June 19, 1950.

Above, Don Sims; right, Michael Zega collection

— and apparently finding trouble locating an open track in the terminal ahead. No. 28 stopped dead.

I lit another Camel and crossed the cab to take in the glory of what Al Kalmbach would call a “soul-disturbing sight.” Headed west for Sherman was a smoke-deflected 4-6-6-4 leading a 4-8-8-4 on long tonnage — eight high-pressure cylinders talking themselves hoarse through four stacks on the big hill. Hallelujah and damn the diesels!

No. 28 eased on through the yards, idled past rows of dead 2-10-2s near the great Cheyenne roundhouse, and came to rest at 5:17 p.m. Back in the chair-car restroom I found it took much soap and many towels to wash away the grime accumulated during nearly 500 miles aboard a Northern. It was relaxing after dinner to sit in the lounge and watch the passengers take full advantage of a well-stocked bar. At length I asked a sailor what he thought of the trip across Wyoming.

“Pretty dull, fellow,” he said. “How was it with you?”

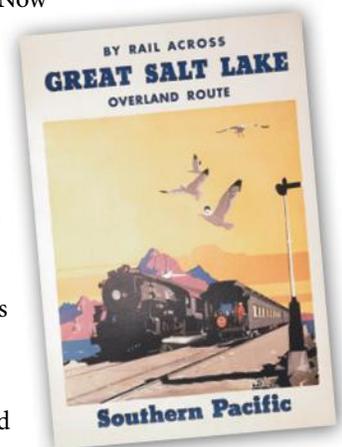
As comfortable as a lounge chair is after 10 hours in a locomotive cab, I felt an urge that evening to still be riding up front. A solid roadbed, roller-bearing trucks, and heavy rail could not muffle the fact that the *San Francisco Overland* was running as never before since departure from Oakland. The brick platform at Sidney, 102 miles from Cheyenne, slid beneath the windows in just 87 minutes; the next 123 miles to North Platte took only 110 minutes flat. Those 80-inch drivers were producing what the Union Pacific calls “streamliner speed.”

The chair-car porter shook me. “This is Omaha we’re coming into, sir,” he said.

It was 3:15 a.m. and dark and chilly. On the next track the *Los Angeles Limited* came in behind No. 836. In keeping with the UP’s engine-rotation policy at Cheyenne, she had been taken off our train there, fueled and serviced, then placed on the next train east. In less than 24 hours she had come 990 miles.

E7s TO CHICAGO

March 6, 1951: 3:49 a.m. The engineer depressed his deadman’s control pedal, switched off the cab lights, and latched out 4,000 horsepower. Now in the hands of the Chicago & North Western, and powered by Electro-Motive E7As 5011B and 5010B, the *Overland* was off on her last lap into Chicago. We paused before the C&NW’s old Council Bluffs depot while the automatic train control was plugged



in and the key to it handed the conductor.

A high-speed, double-track railroad stretched ahead in the beam of our headlight — a railroad strangely free of lineside signal masts. With ATC, someone in the cab explained, all indications were picked up on the engine itself and transmitted directly to the cab-signal box mounted between the split windshield.

After hugging the Missouri River for 24 miles, the *Overland* swung east at Missouri Valley and paced the Illinois Central's Omaha line. At Carroll, Iowa, there was a pause to let a Baldwin switcher couple up a standard diner on the rear of the train; it had served meals earlier that same evening on our westbound counterpart, No. 27.

The EMDs ticked off the Iowa miles — one per minute — as the first fringe of dawn crept across an overcast sky. Back in Pullman berths and chair-car seats the passengers slept soundly while the dining car crew made coffee and set out silver for breakfast. The girders of the tall, double-track bridge across the Des Moines River trembled beneath the passage of our two diesel units and eight cars. I dozed a while in the center cab chair, lulled into sleep by the cushioned quiet and warmth and the monotones of V-12 diesel engines. Occasionally, then more frequently, a rebuilt 4-8-4 or a diesel would go slamming past with westbound freight.

East of Nelson, Ill., No. 28 became a light on a centralized traffic control panel (mounted in the C&NW terminal at Chicago, 104 miles away) and at Malta that CTC went into action for us. There we crossed over from the left main (which is the eastbound line on the lefthanded North Western, of course) to the right and “ran around” a diesel-powered freight that was switching on our normal route. Twenty miles beyond, east of Elburn, we sighted a red-over-green-over-red signal and crossed back to the lefthand line. No written order had been issued, no stop had been made, no switch had been hand-thrown — and no time had been lost.

We were loafing at Geneva, and there was still time to spare at West Chicago where suburban equipment suddenly became an essential part of the C&NW scene. A tall-driven Atlantic, backing to the engine terminal there, glanced at the train of tradition that she and her sisters had once powered.

Chicagoland: The engineer latched back the throttle and the speed picked up to 65. Proviso, world's largest yard, loomed up, then we were swinging around its vast content of high cars and flats and hoppers. No. 28 swept through Oak Park, raced along a fill that kept the tracks above city streets, and came on past the C&NW coach yards. A1A trucks thumped over the Western Avenue crossing of the Milwaukee Road and heeled to the sweeping curve past the Merchandise Mart. Before the windshield of 5011B there was track after track, punctuated by electric



Two C&NW E7s like the ones that powered Morgan's *Overland* out of Omaha are at Council Bluffs, Iowa, with the Omaha–Minneapolis *North American* on May 21, 1950.

Krambles-Peterson Archive



The *San Francisco Overland* rounds the final curve into North Western Terminal, Chicago, circa 1950. The second car, lettered OVERLAND, is a former Army hospital car.

Wallace W. Abbey

switches and paragraphed by brick signal towers. Straight ahead the dark mouth of the terminal yawned and swallowed us on track 4. Stale air exhausted from the brake stand in the cab and No. 28 walked down to the bumper post. At 12:42 p. m. — 18 minutes ahead of time — the *San Francisco Overland* wound up 2,252 miles of traveling.

Once again the grand old lady of Western trains had come home from California. Back along her path were the ghosts of Dodge and Harriman, of compounds and palace cars, of more than six decades of *Overlands*. Back there in a plush and nostalgic past were the years when SP's massive steam ferries carried the limited — locomotive and all — across the stern undercurrents of the Carquinez Straits . . . when a Pullman passenger could arise in the morning for a brisk shower, then stroll down to the lounge-car barber shop for a shave . . . and when the unique adventure of a transcontinental journey was a chair on

the observation platform as the train clicked across Great Salt Lake.

Back there, too, were all the locomotives that had hauled the *Overland*: SP's cab-in-fronters on the Big Hill of Donner Pass, the 84-inch-drivered and streamlined E-4 Hudsons of the North Western, the always individualistic power of the Union Pacific.

This March morning the *Overland* stood in Chicago on track 4 with diesel power and streamlined equipment. She wore a proud name and she wore it like a true train of tradition. ■

DAVID P. MORGAN joined the *TRAINS* staff in 1948, became the magazine's editor in 1953, and retired as editor/publisher in 1987. He wrote many hundreds of articles, from brief but evocative essays to 10,000-word studies of railroading to news stories. Widely regarded as the greatest 20th-century railroad writer, Morgan died in 1990 at age 62.

COLORADO EAGLE

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



Delivered in June 1942, Missouri Pacific's St. Louis–Denver *Colorado Eagle* was the last streamliner to be built before World War II production restrictions halted such projects. The train used D&RGW trackage north of Pueblo, Colo., hence the dual MISSOURI PACIFIC and RIO GRANDE lettering below the eagle emblem on the rakish nose of E6 7002, departing Denver in 1947.

Frank and Todd Novak collection



No. 1 makes up

The thermometer lingers near zero in Montana as the *North Coast Limited* battles the clock across Northern Pacific's toughest division

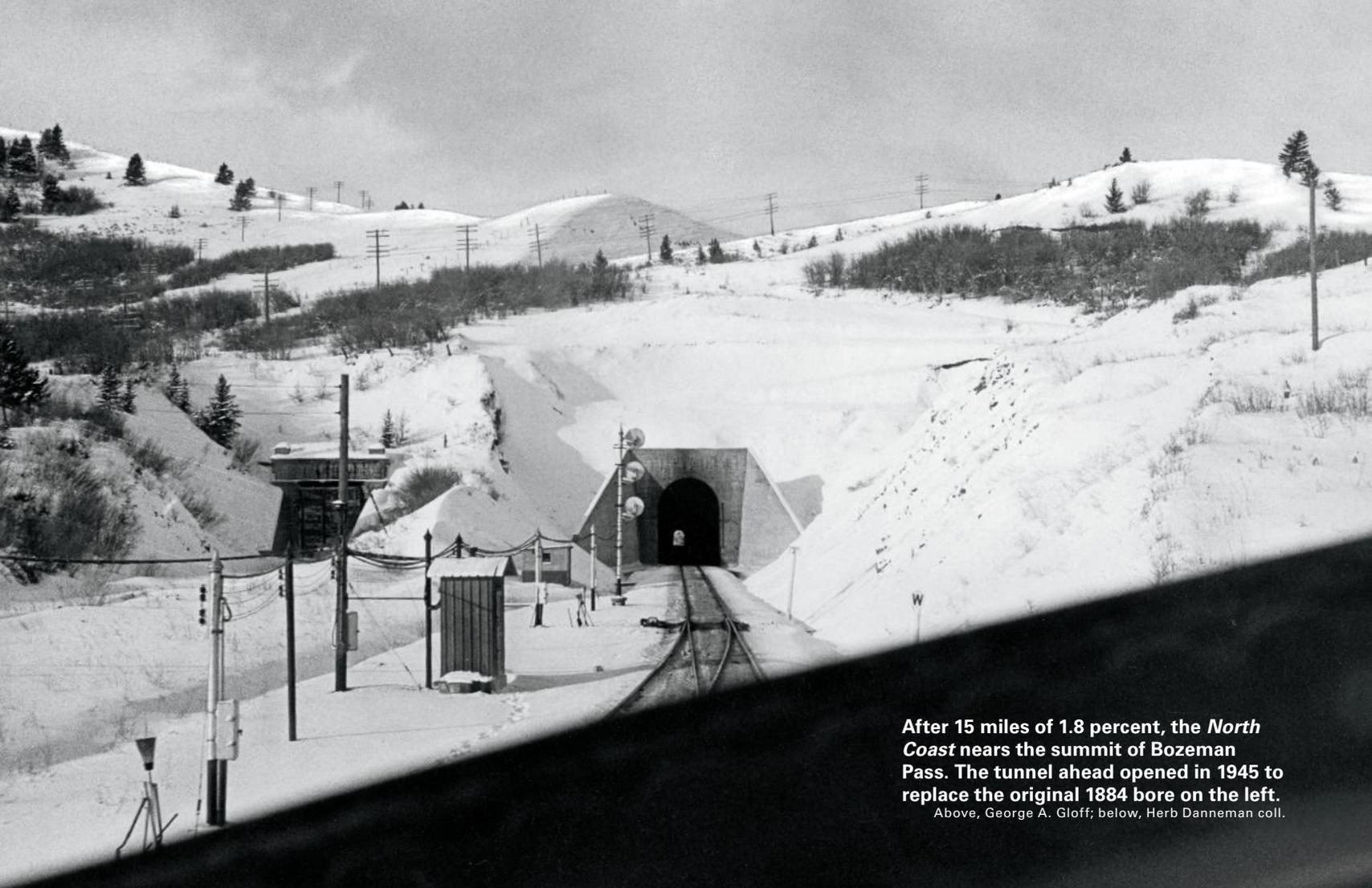
BY DAVID P. MORGAN



time

Seen from the cab of NP No. 1, four FTs and a 2-8-8-4 pusher lift a freight up Bozeman Hill, west of Livingston, Mont., in late 1951, when TRAINS Associate Editor David P. Morgan and art staffer George A. Gloff rode the head end.

George A. Gloff



After 15 miles of 1.8 percent, the *North Coast* nears the summit of Bozeman Pass. The tunnel ahead opened in 1945 to replace the original 1884 bore on the left.

Above, George A. Gloff; below, Herb Danneman coll.

Northern Pacific train No. 1 has been bucking the cold west from St. Paul. It was 6 degrees below zero out of the Twin Cities, 25 below at Miles City, Mont. There's been snow on the ground all the way along, acres and miles of it — but not enough to call out the rotaries or flangers.

This cold has been more insidious than that.

This cold has sheathed passenger-car trucks in dirty ice, glazed brick platforms, and snapped rail bond wires. It's bundled up trainmen in fur caps with ear flaps, made switches hard to throw, congealed the oil in journal boxes. And this cold has been complemented by its December companion in arms, the U.S. Mail. With Christmas less than two weeks distant, the floors of Railway Post Office and storage mail cars are burdened with bags upon bags of cards and letters and packages.

So this December 16, 1951, train No. 1, the *North Coast Limited*, is into Livingston, Mont., 2 hours late. Along the 999 miles it has traveled from St. Paul the cold has been too severe, the mail too heavy, to keep on the

advertised. All along the way it's been a contest with the clock — usually a matter of recovering 15 minutes across an engine district only to drop twice that many loading the RPO in a terminal. Now it's in the lap of the Rocky Mountain Division to recover time over the toughest stretch of the trans-continental's run. For the next 6½ hours and 240 miles, No. 1 will be in Montana's high-altitude country, up against the vicissitudes of 2.2 percent ruling grades and powdered snow — but with three V-16 diesel engines and 12 traction motors on hand to see that the fight's kept fair.

It's 6 degrees above zero and the sun is seeping through the overcast as engineer Jack O'Neill slips in behind the dash of No. 6500, the Electro-Motive 4,500 h.p. A-B-A set of F3 units that is No. 1's power straight through from St. Paul to Seattle, 1,892 miles. While O'Neill is setting up the brakes for the car inspectors, his fireman, Jim Hethrington, goes back to check the temperature of an ailing steam

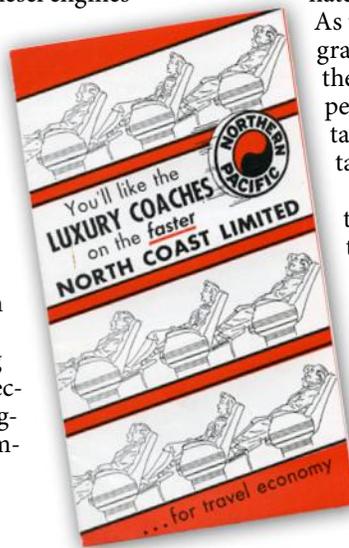
generator. He returns to the cab satisfied, rolls down his window and looks back along the green streamliner. At 10:07 a.m. he sees what he's looking for.

"Highball!," he calls to his engineer.

15 MILES OF 1.8 PERCENT

O'Neill boots the 6500's chime horn twice, releases his brakes, latches back on the throttle. The diesels take their time about revving up enough to move, which is fortunate for an impetuous motorist. As the locomotive goes over the grade crossing, O'Neill flips off the bell and mutters something pertinent about drivers who take advantage of an engineer tackling a grade.

For the next 15 miles up to the summit of Bozeman Pass the grade is 1.8 percent, compensated. When steam pulled the *North Coast*, the big Baldwin 4-8-4s needed a helper on this grade with anything more than 12 cars. Today the diesel goes up alone with 13 cars at a consistent 30 mph — and



it could take 18 cars without assistance.

The relentless drone of the 6500 working its way upgrade through a bleak winterized land is pierced by the alarm bell. The fireman disappears into the heated noise of the engine room to find that the cold is again trying to play tricks on the timetable.

“Overheated engine,” Hethrington reports. “The automatic shutter control’s frozen. But I think it’s fixed now.”

“It’ll cool off coming down the other side of the mountain,” reasons O’Neill.

At 10:33 No. 1 swings off double track and threads the new Bozeman tunnel completed in 1945. It’s a big bore, unlike the one it replaced. A 2-8-8-4 fit the old tunnel like a bullet fits a gun barrel, and the men remember how the heat used to burn the skin off their hands and ears.

At the 3,015-foot tunnel’s west end No. 1 enters double track again and slips past long tonnage headed by a 5,400 h.p. FT diesel set and assisted at the rear by a 2-8-8-4.

“Biggest steam engine in the world,” remarks the engineer as the Yellowstone helper slams past.

“Used to be,” says the fireman. “Union Pacific’s got bigger ones now.”

“That so? Well, a 5000’s still plenty big.”

The fireman laughs and rolls down his window to give his train the once-over as it gathers speed downgrade. O’Neill closes his throttle and reaches around the control stand to grasp the lever that controls the dynamic brake. This system, in effect, makes generators of the traction motors, and retards the train without brakeshoe wear and tear. But the engineer judiciously mixes a little air into the transition lest the slack between cars bunch up too suddenly behind the diesel and upset somebody’s drink in the Pullman observation-lounge. Now leaning against its engine, the train comes down from 55 mph to 40 with air brakes in full release. The sweeping curves that lower the Northern Pacific down into the broad Gallatin Valley are beautifully banked, and there is a minimum of sidesway felt in the cab.

No. 1 gains a little time, promptly loses it in a long station stop at Bozeman, then begins to earn it back. Experience, years of it, pays off as O’Neill brakes for each curve, always easing off in time to negotiate it at all the speed the book allows. He instinctively knows when to supplement the dynamic brake with a trace of air, what each needle flicker on the dash dial means, how much momentum is packed by 13 cars and a three-unit diesel rolling 70 mph. Meantime, he remembers to hold down on the whistle cord for a long last blast at the crossing in Manhattan. Last week a brakeman driving his son to school misjudged the speed of a 5000 or failed to hear its whistle — with fatal results.

NP’s line west to Garrison divides at Logan. The older and easier route, used by all through freights, is via Helena. Only No. 1



F3 diesels lead the *North Coast Limited* west along the Jefferson River near Cardwell, Mont., about 40 miles east of Butte, in March 1953. Domes, and a new two-tone green paint scheme inspired by the scenery in this canyon, would arrive the following year.

Don Sims



Workers at Butte service the westbound *North Coast* not long after the delivery of the train’s streamlined *Club-series* observation cars, built in 1948 by Pullman-Standard.

Frank McKinlay

and a daily merchandise train fork south via Butte. The *North Coast Limited* pauses long enough at Logan to transfer Helena passenger’s and mail to No. 221, a two-car local headed by a heavy Pacific. Hethrington hits the ground for an inspection of the diesel’s running gear and returns to the cab with advice from an RPO clerk.

“Mailman says for you to stop at Homestake,” he tells O’Neill.

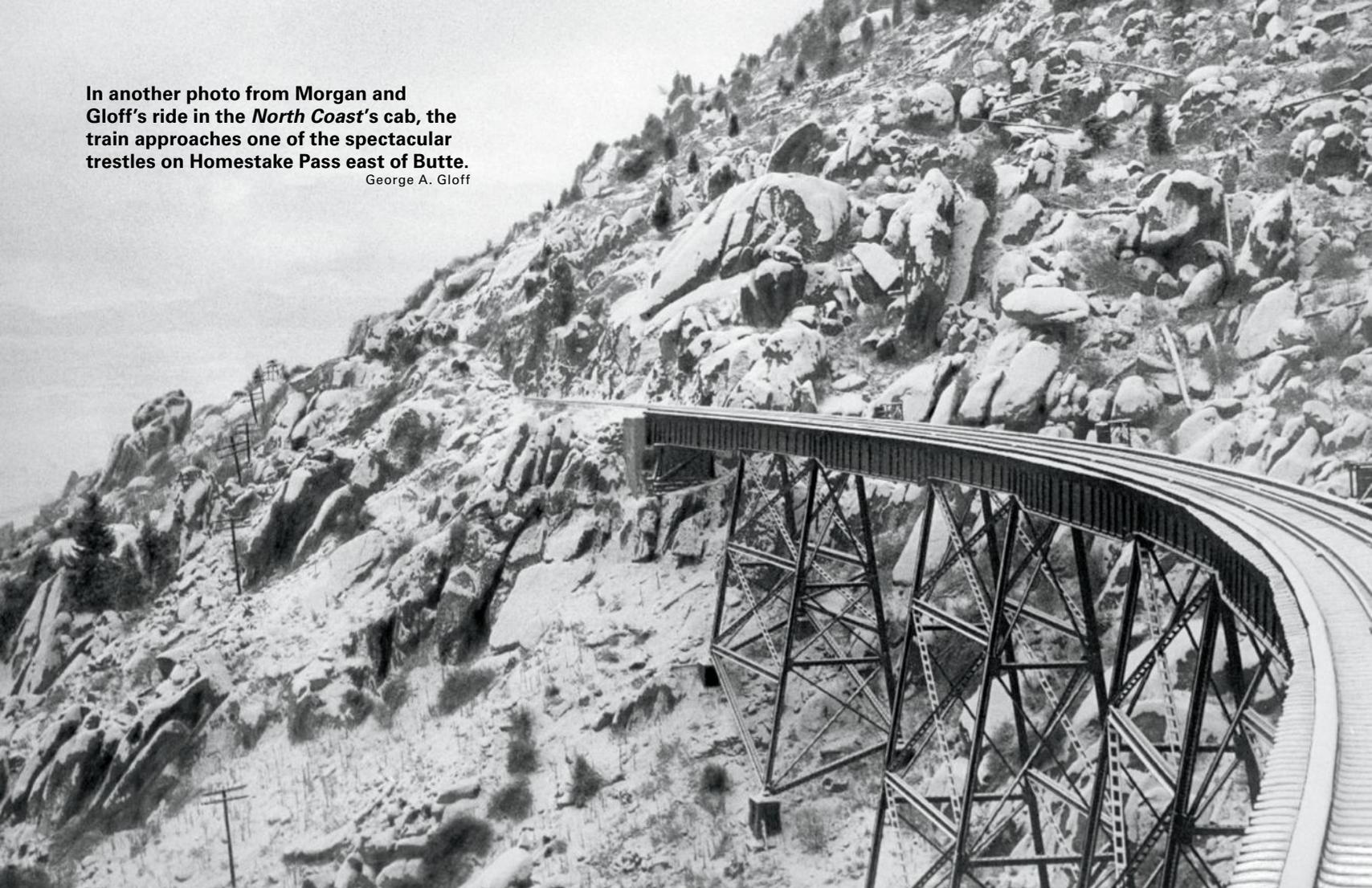
“At Homestake?! Damn, we never stop there. What’s up?”

“Too many mail bags to throw off on the fly, I guess.”

The *North Coast* gets under way at 11:35, swings past Three Forks where the Gallatin, Jefferson, and Madison rivers marry to produce the Missouri, and puts its nose into the gale-swept snow of Jefferson Canyon. Here, in a narrow crevice of saw-tooth reefs of rock, the Northern Pacific hugs one bank, the Milwaukee Road the other. Between them there is just room for the ice-blocked Jefferson River.

In another photo from Morgan and Gloff's ride in the *North Coast's* cab, the train approaches one of the spectacular trestles on Homestake Pass east of Butte.

George A. Gloff



Eventually there is action across the way: a pair of “Little Joe” electrics running multiple whips past with a freight.

No. 1 comes out of the canyon near Whitehall and begins its real climb to the Continental Divide at Homestake Pass.

UP AND OVER HOMESTAKE

It's quite a mountain railroad, this line to Butte. The last 16½ miles from just east of Pipestone to Homestake are graded at a steady 2.2 percent, and 12-degree curves are so frequent as to be common. Where the big 4-8-4s had to have a helper, the 6500 again does it alone. The speedometer needle gets stuck on 25 mph and the driving snow starts the wheel-slip light flashing — but the diesel keeps moving.

Mile upon mile of snow-laden valleys stretch away to the south in an enormous, incomprehensible vista of winterland. The line itself and the views it unfurls are comparable to the more spectacular sections of the Rio Grande, which is by way of paying the highest possible compliment. But how did steam ever negotiate these interurban curves?

“The 2600's a good mountain engine,” says the fireman of the 4-8-4s that once ruled here. “Trouble was on these curves. They're

so sharp that the sanders would cover everything but the rail and she'd begin to slip.”

The air communication whistle sounds off three times in the cab — the signal to stop at the next station.

“Mailman must have told the conductor, too,” observes O'Neill.

Homestake is a mean place to halt a 13-car train. The depot lies just east of the tunnel that cuts through the Divide at an elevation of 6,356 feet. Stopping there means holding and starting a train on a 2.2 percent grade and a 5-degree curve. At 1:12 p.m. the *North Coast* halts.

A minute or so later O'Neill gets a high-ball and latches back on the throttle. He feeds sand to the rail and eases off on the brakes gradually so the train won't roll back until the engine has a grip on it. The 6500 quivers, makes loud diesel talk, moves. A routine performance, but still a performance.

Butte — built on “the richest hill on the world” — shows on the horizon as No. 1 comes downgrade on dynamic brakes. It arrives at 1:39, having recovered almost 30 minutes of lost time. O'Neill and Hethrington pick up their bags and climb down into the rail-deep snow.

The frozen countryside doesn't disturb

H. L. Dittmeier, who'll take No. 1 into Missoula over the last lap of the Rocky Mountain Division. He came west from the dairy country as a young man and he would do it all over again.

"I wouldn't give one acre of Montana for the whole state of Wisconsin," he says, as if the point is obvious. His adopted land is big and uncrowded, and he likes it that way.

MORE MAIL AT BUTTE

Mail once more ties up No. 1. There are not even enough baggage wagons at Butte to hold it all, and many sacks are simply stacked on the platform. This in spite of extra cars and extra help. The engineer wonders aloud what the delay is, and each time fireman W. A. Hauck tells him what he already knows: "They're still loading."

At 2:15 the *North Coast Limited* gets the high sign.

Out of Butte No. 1 goes under the electrified line of the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific, then into a canyon shared with both it and the Milwaukee Road. Once free of this crevice and its speed restrictions, Dittmeier gives the 6500 the reins, and speed hits 60, 65, 70, and 75 mph. The systemwide track improvement program that NP undertook before the war ended is now clearly apparent. Wide curves and heavy rail bring the long streamliner off the mountain at a safe, swift pace that would have been uncomfortable only a few years back.

At Deer Lodge the NP runs parallel to a modest Milwaukee Road yard that discloses more Little Joes as well as older box-cab motors.

The snow returns. At Garrison, where the Butte and Helena lines again shake hands, visibility is poor. At Garrison, too, heavy tonnage is secured by one 4-6-6-4 on the head end and another at the rear. Because it burns coal from company pits, the NP has been in no rush to dieselize. It has cost sheets to prove that it can afford to take its time, which is well for the connoisseur of the big steam engine.

Beyond Garrison, in the Canyon of the Hell Gate, is a strange circumstance of railroad history: two "last spike" markers located within a walk of each other. First is a board that reads:

LAST SPIKE OF THE NORTHERN PACIFIC
RAILROAD DRIVEN HERE IN 1883

A brief distance beyond, beside the other railroad in the canyon, is an enormous (perhaps 16-foot-tall) replica of a gold spike. It marks where the Milwaukee Road completed its Pacific Coast extension on May 19, 1909.

Appropriately enough, the rival road's eastbound *Columbian* swirls past in a stream of orange and maroon. Its box-cab motor stirs memories of an age when the mechanical world could offer nothing so marvelous as this long mountain railroad electrification.

Except for a few 50-mph curves, the rest



A metal blue flag hung on F3 6500 ensures that the train will not be moved while carmen work around and under the cars. This is Butte, one of several places the *North Coast* was delayed by the loading of sacks of Christmas mail on December 16, 1951.

David P. Morgan



Also at Butte during Morgan and Gloff's ride, one of Northern Pacific's colossal 2-8-8-4 Yellowstones is seen across the nose of the *North Coast Limited's* lead F unit.

David P. Morgan

of the route down into Missoula is fast track and Dittmeier takes fullest advantage of it. The timecard allows 1 hour 20 minutes for the last 68½ miles into Missoula from Garrison, but No. 1 manages to do it in 1 hour 6 minutes. We're into Missoula at 4:27 p.m.

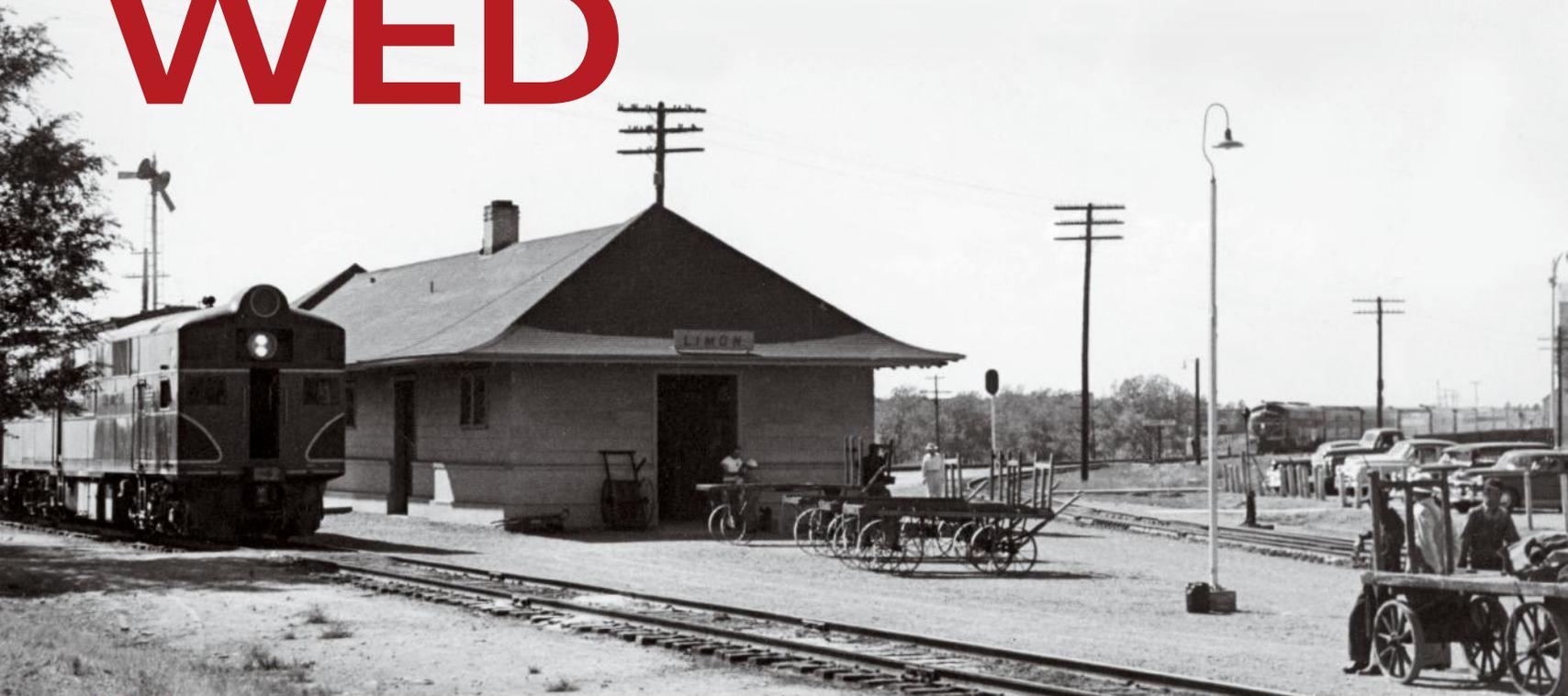
Missoula is a busy terminal in the late afternoon — especially nine days before Christmas. Heading east is No. 2, the other side of the *North Coast Limited*. Linger on its markers is Second No. 4 — or what NP men refer to as the "Santa Claus train." It's a

three-unit diesel, 16 cars of mail and express, and a rider coach for the crew. But for its annual Christmastide operation, the streamliners would be delayed indefinitely loading mail and even diesels couldn't breast the Rockies unassisted.

As it is, No. 1 has recovered a solid 30 minutes of lost time coming across the Rocky Mountain Division — in spite of snow, stops, and mail sacks.

Routine running is what they call it on the Northern Pacific. ■

Where the ROCKETS WED



1 IIII The 8-car section from Colorado Springs waits at the Limon depot as the 7-car Denver section approaches in the distance.

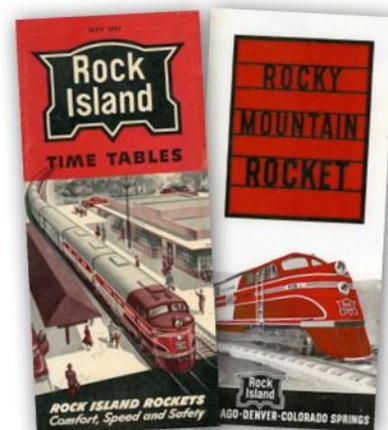
Below right, Joe Welsh collection

In 15 photos, the *Rocky Mountain Rocket* from Denver marries its mate from Colorado Springs at a prairie tank town

BY **EARL COCHRAN**
PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Barely an hour out of Denver, your eastbound *Rocky Mountain Rocket* slows, curves into the little town of Limon (population 1,471) on the plains of eastern Colorado, and stops. The other train you see parked beyond the frame depot is the explanation for this brief pause, for at Limon the Denver section of No. 8, which has come down from the Mile-High City over Union Pacific rails, meets and merges with its Colorado Springs counterpart. The Rock Island is the only road from Chicago to the Rockies (others are Burlington and UP) that directly serves both Denver and the Springs, so at Limon its longest *Rocket* divorces or weds, depending on which direction it's going.

Because it took approximately 3 hours longer than its Q and UP rivals, there was some skepticism back in 1939 when Rock Island introduced its *Rocky Mountain Rocket* — but its unique service to both Denver and the Springs, plus hard promotion, turned the tide. Of the nearly \$8 million of *Rocket*-fleet revenues in 1951, Nos. 7 and 8 contributed more than \$2½ million. And this traffic trend continues steadily upward.





2 // The Springs section's AB6 and E7A pull ahead with the mail-express car. EMD built only two AB6s, both for this service.



3 // The Denver section's E8A has pulled up, cut off from its train, and passes the waiting AB6 and E7A of the Springs train.



4 // The E8A from Denver backs onto the Springs section's locomotives. The AB6 was custom-designed with a flat front to give the combined train's power a symmetrical A-B-A appearance. All photos are from September 14, 1952.



5 Pulled by the combined A-B-A set of diesels (out of view to right), the mail-express car passes the Denver section's consist.



6 The mail-express car from the Springs is backed toward the Denver train's baggage car on hand signals from the conductor.



7 The Colorado Springs train waits at left as the Denver train is positioned for its coaches to be uncoupled from its sleepers.



8 /// The coaches and club diner from Denver are pulled away from the sleepers. The Springs section carried a full diner.



9 /// Club diner *Pikes Peak* leads the back-up move past the rear part of the Denver train and toward the Colorado Springs section.



10 /// More hand signals to the engineer as the front portion of the Denver section approaches the Springs train.



11 Locomotives, head-end cars, Denver coaches, and the Springs cars are all together now; the Denver sleepers are at right.



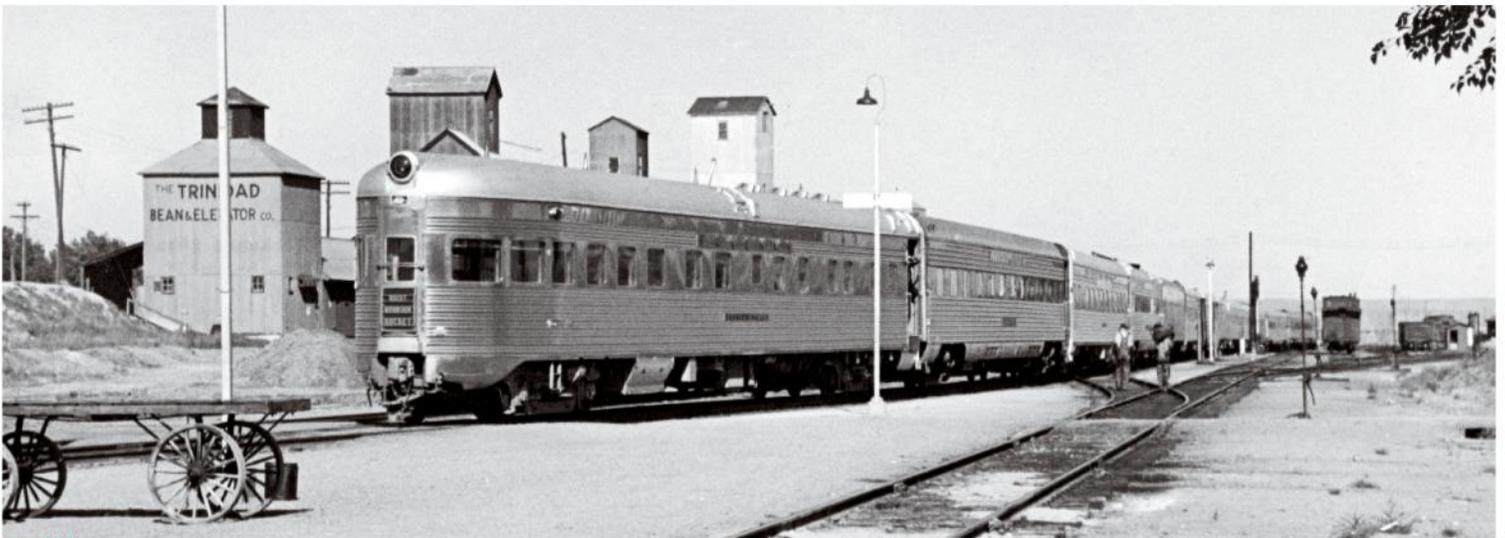
12 In an eastward view, the three E units are ready to pull the majority of the train past the waiting Denver sleepers.



13 A carman stands ready to make the joint between the dining car from Colorado Springs and the first of the Denver sleepers.



14 The complete train, including a sleeper still lettered for the stillborn RI-SP *Golden Rocket*, prepares to head east to Chicago.



15 After less than 20 minutes at Limon, the 15-car *Rocky Mountain Rocket* departs, a bedroom-observation bringing up the rear.



After the landmark three-car *Zephyr* of 1934, the Burlington Route built up a fleet of ever-larger diesel-powered, stainless-steel trains. On November 8, 1936, the road launched the *Denver Zephyr* in overnight service to and from Chicago. Here, brand-new 1,800 h.p. cab 9906 *Silver King* and 1,200 h.p. booster *Silver Queen* pose with one of the two DZ consists. The trains were built by the Budd Co. and powered by Electro-Motive.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection

CB&Q replaced the original DZ trainsets with two 14-car consists in October 1956; they were the last all-new, full-service streamliners built before Amtrak. The new Budd trains featured the first Slumbercoaches and three dome cars. Parlor-observation-lounge *Silver Veranda* is pictured at Denver Union Station in 1959.

J. David Ingles





One of the original *DZ*'s observation cars stands at Denver in 1939. As built, each 10-car consist carried a head-end-power/RPO/baggage car, a baggage/dorm/lounge, two coaches (short- and long-haul), a 40-seat dining car, three 12-section sleepers, an all-room sleeper, and an observation/lounge. Five of the cars were articulated in groups of two and three.

Jim Seacrest collection

On the Burlington's triple-track Chicago-Aurora "raceway," three E units speed the westbound *Denver Zephyr* past the Fairview Avenue suburban station in Downers Grove on Sunday, June 16, 1968. CB&Q considered the *DZ*, not the more celebrated *California Zephyr*, its top train.

J. David Ingles



A car washer puts GN's passenger theory into practice at the Seattle coachyard.



THE clean-window TRAIN

If passenger service is the window through which the public views his railroad, reasons Great Northern President John Budd, "we must wash it and shine it, or else cover it with a dark shade." Here is his road's top train

BY **DAVID P. MORGAN**
PHOTOS BY **PHILIP R. HASTINGS**



The four F units and 16 cars of the *Empire Builder* heel to a curve on the plains near Blackfoot, Mont. In 25 miles, the dome-liner will be into the Rocky Mountains.

Each afternoon in Chicago Union Station something extraordinary and unique in the overland transport experience of man presents itself on track 24. It is 1,415 feet long and 10 feet wide, weighs 1,450½ tons, and stands on 148 flanged steel wheels. It is crewed by 35 men and it can accommodate 323 passengers.

Ready to run, it's worth about \$3½ million. By running at speeds up to 90 mph, it can cover 2,210 miles in 43 hours 50 minutes.

As for the comfort this vehicle affords, let's look first at its competition . . .

¶ The big news today in buses is that one model actually includes a small toilet — and the innovation is so amazing to its sponsors that it is breathlessly blurbled on Steve Allen's Sunday night TV show.

¶ Airliners — prop, turboprop, or pure jet — are barely out of the meal-on-a-lap-pillow stage (now they lock a portable tray onto the seat arms), and sleeping accommodations never got beyond the upper-and-lower-berth principle that George Pullman installed in a car that conveyed the Lincoln funeral party to Springfield.

¶ Automobiles, for all of their headlights and fins, are still essentially seats for six on pneumatic tires — no meals, no lavatory. But belts and padded dashes are optional at extra cost for those who do not consider themselves invulnerable to the hazards of 50-decisions-per-hour driving.

Now back to Union Station, track 24, and the *Empire Builder* — more than a quarter-

mile of Pullman-green and Omaha-orange cars, striped and lettered in gold Scotchlite, coupled to silver locomotives. Aboard this transcontinental streamlined train you can *sleep* . . . in a room, in your pajamas, in a bed 3 feet wide and 6 feet long. You can *eat* . . . a full-course meal, complete with a light wine if you desire, at a table with the amenities of a menu, silverware, and a waiter — and there's a coffee shop for snacks or just a cup of coffee. You can *loung*e . . . away from your seat or berth and upstairs in 789 square feet of space under glass that affords 360-degree vision under the sun or stars — or in one of two cocktail lounges that hurry the miles with a beer or a Martini.

And speaking of lavatories as we were, there are 18 of them on this train, not counting those in the Pullman rooms.

In terms of comfort, only an ocean liner surpasses such a train, and nothing else that moves man can come even close.

In terms of *you*, the price of commanding space aboard this mobilized Hilton confounds popular assumption. These are one-way rates, Chicago–Seattle:

Air, coach	\$80.05
Air, first class	120.35
Bus	46.40
Car (2,118 miles at .07 cents per mile)	148.26
Car (2,118 miles at \$25 per 1,000 miles)	50.00
Rail, coach	59.10
Rail, first class + duplex roomette	109.35

These quotations exclude the 10 percent



A passenger for the *Empire Builder* checks in at a sleeping-car kiosk in the concourse of Chicago Union Station.

Federal tax on common carrier transportation and, except for first-class air, do not include meals. And in the instance of the car, no allowance is made for motels. A rail round-trip ticket would offer not only a saving but optional routings at little or no extra cost, whereas in the case of car or air coach travel, a round trip simply means doubling the one-way cost.

As for time, a Northwest DC-7C makes it nonstop in just 6 hours 45 minutes; the *Builder* takes 43 hours 50 minutes; express Greyhound Sceni-cruiser service requires 59½ hours; and safe but no-sightseeing personal driving should take about 4 days at 500 miles per. Incidentally, the automobile rate of 7 cents per mile is a standard business allowance covering such items as depreciation and insurance; more practical for the tourist, perhaps, is the AAA's estimate for gas and oil of \$25 per 1,000 miles.

Shall we take the train?

BIG G's BIG SHOW

The *Empire Builder* that shimmers beneath the platform lights on track 24 is, in essence, a Great Northern proposition since Big G is responsible for the 1,783 miles between St. Paul and Seattle. However, Burlington moves the train over the 427 miles between Chicago and St. Paul, and Spokane, Portland & Seattle handles the through Portland cars over the 380 miles beyond Spokane. Both of these "Hill lines" (in which GN has a 48.59 and 50 percent stock interest, respectively) own a share of the 85 cars that make up the *Builder* pool of five complete trains. (Actually, Great Northern owns the equivalent of a sixth edition of the *Builder*. This equipment rotates, protecting the pool when cars are withdrawn every 24 to 30 months for shopping — a procedure that takes between 30 days and 6 weeks. Everything except sleepers goes to the Jackson



The *EMPIRE BUILDER* tailsign glows on the rear of a *Coulee*-series observation car as workers prepare for the streamliner's departure from track 24, Chicago Union Station.



In a rearward view from a dome coach, the *Builder* passes between CB&Q (left) and PRR coachyards on its way out of Chicago.

Street Shops in St. Paul; sleepers go to the Pullman Company's Calumet [Ill.] Shops.)

Today's *Builder*, train No. 31, is due out at 2 p.m. Its equipment arrived from the West Coast exactly 24 hours ago and since then has been turned, washed, and scrutinized by air-brake men, carpenters, cleaners, electricians, truck repair men, general servicemen, and — of course — inspectors. For example, Burlington's 14th Street Yard, Chicago, replaces 31 pairs of wheels per week on the *Builders* and up to 60 pairs in winter on account of "shellout," which occurs when rapid wheel cooling takes place after braking in low temperatures, causing steel fragments to flake off the wheel tread. Also, 245 clasp and 6 disc brake shoes per week. Drinking and lavatory water has been pumped aboard; girls working in pairs have taken 1 hour 45

minutes per Pullman to dust and scrub and wipe; porters have reported by 11:30 a.m. to make up 129 beds; propane has filled the tanks of the underbody motor-generator sets that provide power for lighting and air conditioning. And at 12:30 p.m. a yard switcher reached in for the move backwards into Union Station. The road engines — a pair of CB&Q 2,400 h.p. E9s — left 14th Street at 12:45 p.m., picked up a mail-express car at the loading dock and doubled over to No. 31 by 1:45. Then an air test, and the domeliner was ready.

All the *Builder's* cars date from 1951, except the observation (1947) and the domes (1955). Moreover, the train is a handsome, more or less equal representation of the handicraft of the car-building Big Three. ACF nameplates are on the lunch-counter-

lounge, diner, headend cars, and one coach; Budd is responsible for the dome cars; and Pullman-Standard appropriately authored the sleeping cars. Electro-Motive will do the honors on the head end on all three roads the *Builder* rides.

There's time for just a quick count: 1 mail-express; 1 baggage-dormitory (21 bunks plus a stewards' room); 1 "flat-top" 60-seat coach — just footrests in this car because it's for local passengers ("shorts") only; 3 dome coaches (one of which goes to Portland) with 46 leg-rest seats below, 24 non-reserved dome seats up above each; 1 Ranch Car (as GN calls the lunch-counter-lounge); 3 sleepers (two of 'em for Portland); a dining car; a full-length Great Dome car; 2 more sleepers; and the sleeper-observation. Total: 15 cars. This is the peak season consist. In the winter



Passengers wait as the *Builder* noses into the East Dubuque, Ill., station. In the distance is the IC bridge over the Mississippi.



CB&Q engineer L. E. Freyhoff has his E9s making 90 mph through the rain between Prairie du Chien and La Crosse, Wis.



Out in the Montana Rockies, where the Great Northern skirts the southern edge of Glacier National Park, this is the fireman's view as the *Builder's* F7s exit one snowed before entering another — and then a tunnel — on the west slope of Marias Pass.

months a dome coach and a sleeper are dropped, except during the December 10–January 15 holiday period.

OUT OF CHICAGO

“All aboard!” Two o'clock on the second, and four V-12 diesels wind up as many main generators; the D.C. warms and rotates eight traction motors; and No. 31 slides down the platform, out of the darkness and into a sunlight that makes one squint a bit at first in

the dome. Recorded music filters out of the p.a. system; wheel clicks are all but muffled into silence within the carpeted interior.

Flanges gently tug the cars around the sweeping curve at 16th and Halsted, and then the E9s gun No. 31 into its fastest lap: 427 miles to St. Paul in 6 hours 45 minutes with six possible intermediate stops. Until recently the *Builder* shared honors with a *Zephyr* as the world's fastest train because of an 84.4-mph sprint along the Mississippi,

and even today's slightly eased time card permits no loafing. Out of Chicago the dome gawking may be divided into three parts: the triple-tracked speedway through suburbia to Aurora; a pleasant swing across undulating cornfields to the river; then 300 swift miles up the Mississippi.

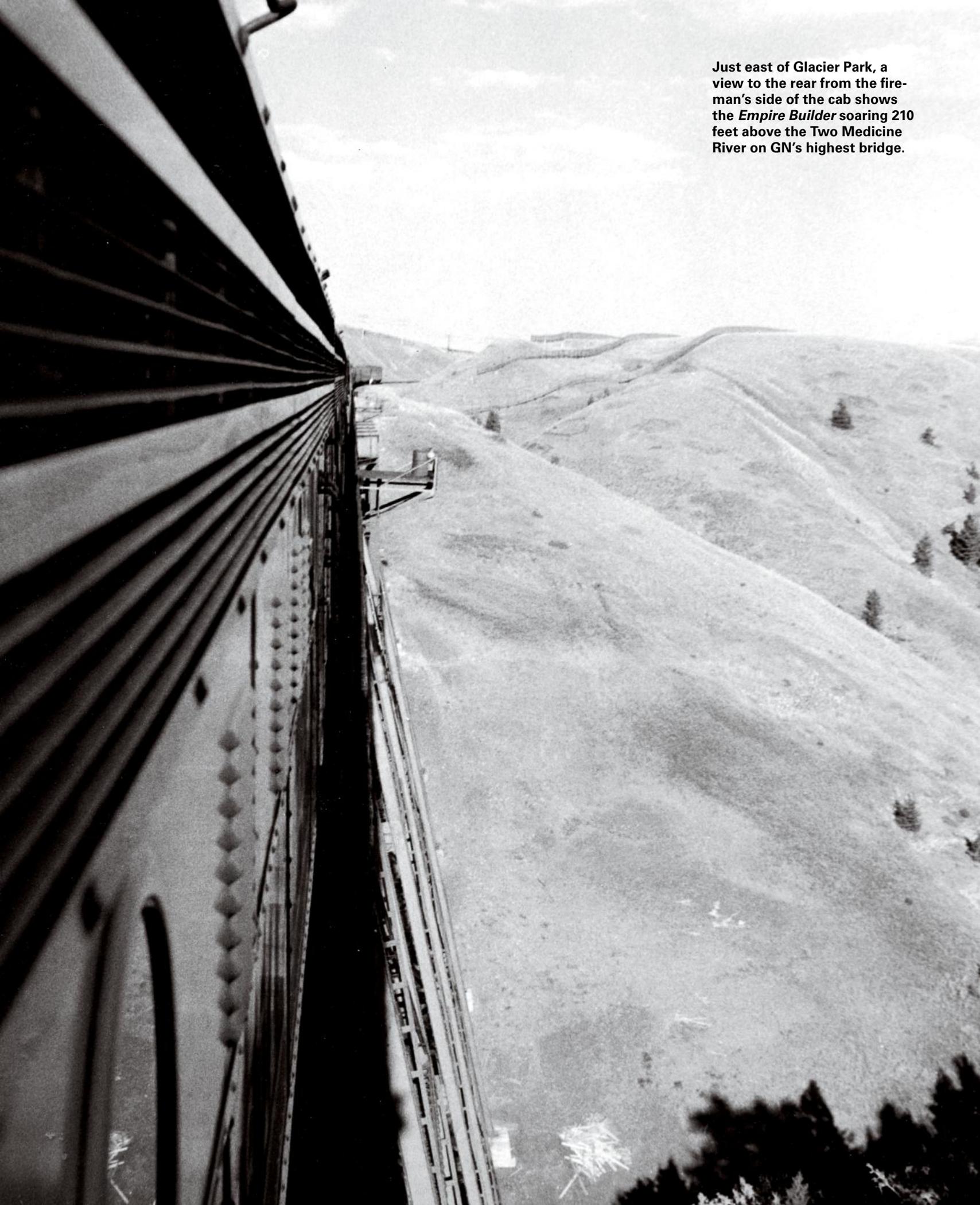
How about a cup of coffee (15 cents) in the Ranch? Open to all but patronized mainly by coach passengers, the coffee shop-lounge operates continuously from 6:30 a.m. until quite late; is manned by two cooks, two waiters, and a steward; and serves up a good plate meal (including soup, pork chops, spuds, vegetable, pie, and coffee) for \$1.85. For those so inclined, there's beer or bourbon. And the décor matches the name, what with oak walls, cedar-log bracing, leather upholstery, even a “G Bar N” brand officially registered in Helena with the Montana Livestock Association. On a busy day the Ranch serves up to 180 breakfasts, grossing between \$300 and \$400. Ranch cars are changed out in Seattle, and the supplies put aboard there for a 4,420-mile round trip include 24 pounds of bacon, 50 chickens, 36 loaves of bread, 9 gallons of ice cream, 14 cases of beer, 30 pounds of baked ham, and 30 pounds of coffee. These may be topped off en route, often in Chicago.

As for the Ranch's crew, they join the car at St. Paul on the eastbound trip and make a complete circuit, five days on and five off.

TOWARD THE TWIN CITIES

The sun keeps the shades drawn on the left side of the aisle, sinks to a ruddy reflection on the river — and then in darkness No. 31 becomes a pair of headlights (one of them oscillating), an irregular band of lighted windows, and a squarish illuminated tailsign reading EMPIRE BUILDER. Threatening

Just east of Glacier Park, a view to the rear from the fireman's side of the cab shows the *Empire Builder* soaring 210 feet above the Two Medicine River on GN's highest bridge.





The *Builder* carries three leg-rest dome coaches (two in winter) for long-haul passengers. Of 16 in the *Builder* pool, 12 are owned by GN, 3 by CB&Q, and 1 by SP&S.



GN Great Domes *Glacier View*, *Ocean View*, *Mountain View*, *Lake View*, and *Prairie View* and CB&Q-owned *River View* serve the *Builder*'s first-class passengers.



Diners *Lake Wenatchee*, *Lake Ellen Wilson*, *Lake Union*, *Lake Minnetonka*, *Lake of the Woods*, and CB&Q's *Lake of the Isles* provide full meal service on the *Builder*.



The steward in the Great Dome's lower-level lounge tends to some bookkeeping at one of the tables. The six cars are decorated with Northwest Indian imagery.

clouds bring a soft rain, whose drops tumble down the curved flanks of the domes. At 8:45 p.m. the beautiful streamliner is in St. Paul Union Depot.

The Twin Cities originate considerable business for the *Builder*, including oilmen who fly up from Texas and Oklahoma, then

take the train overnight out to the Williston Basin derricks. And while the gateman is checking coach reservation slips and Pullman space, there is switching to be done. A storage-mail-and-express car is picked up: it left Chicago 3½ hours ahead of No. 31 on Milwaukee Road's *Morning Hiawatha*, was

filled out in St. Paul, and is destined for the postal terminal in Spokane. A St. Paul-Seattle RPO-baggage car is added as well.

All told, the *Empire Builder* will be moving 2,000 or so mail sacks west tonight. Power changes too. A switchman's lantern beckons four upgraded F units onto the train in A-B-B-A multiple: the 6,000 h.p. team will make the 1,783 miles into Seattle without change.

At 9:10 the *Builder* eases off, rides GN's Stone Arch Bridge across the Mississippi, pauses just 5 minutes in Minneapolis, then is off across the heart of Minnesota averaging better than a mile a minute.

Just as soon as tickets have been collected, the lights blink out in the domes. Now and again the portholes on the sides of the diesel units coil into view on the curves . . . lonely street lights flick by in sleeping farm towns . . . the Ranch calls it a day . . . a young mother tucks in baby, rents a pillow, then settles down in a reclining seat for the night.

Ah, now is the hour for the Great Dome — the 12-wheel, double-decked, 96½-ton wonder with a full-length dome above (seats for 75!) and a 34-passenger cocktail lounge-bar below. The thing to do is order something cool, then carry it up the steps to the rear of the dome where there are five small tables and semicircular leather lounge seats. Then . . . relax. What a way to grow drowsy. Incidentally, this is Pullman country up here; coach passengers aren't allowed to the rear of the diner.

Speaking of lounges, there's one more open to Pullman patrons only: the observation. Before the full-length dome was added in 1955, the first-class lounge on each *Builder* was a high-windowed *Mountain*-series observation car, built for the train in 1951. Since the Great Dome, though, the full-lounge *Mountain* cars have been reassigned to the *Western Star*, and the *Star*'s *Coulee*-series sleeper-lounge-observations have been put on the *Builder* (put back, actually, as the *Coulees* were in fact built for the first streamlined edition of the *Builder*, in 1947). The current lounge space is just a tiny nook in the extreme rear of the car — minus beverage service. Still, externally the car retains its graceful taper, for GN has resisted any urge to square off the end in the lamentable manner of certain other Western roads.

Now back to the Great Dome . . . Who's for a nightcap?

EMPIRE BUILDER

Passenger-carrying cars

	PORTLAND				PORTLAND
COACH 60 seats ACF	DOM COACH 24 dome seats 46 lower seats Budd	DOM COACH 24 dome seats 46 lower seats Budd	DOM COACH 24 dome seats 46 lower seats Budd	RANCH LOUNGE CAR 18 lounge seats 12 dining seats 14 coffee shop seats ACF	SLEEPING CAR 4 sections 3 bedrooms 1 compartment 7 duplex roomettes Pullman-Standard



Passengers, including author Morgan (far right), enjoy morning coffee and breakfast in the *Builder's* "G Bar N" Ranch lounge car.

WHEAT, THEN MOUNTAINS

Sleep as late as you like — but you might raise the shade in Minot, N.Dak., even if it does come at 5:26 a.m. It's the site of Great Northern's new \$6½ million Gavin Yard with automated retarders — and it's the last place of size (22,032 population) till Spokane. Ahead is a day of wheat country — plus some oil derricks — and mountains. Operationally, it'll be busy, too. In fact, this is how No. 31 looks to the brass back in St. Paul (mileages are listed from that city):

Willmar, Minn., 102 miles: add engine water.

Breckenridge, Minn., 215 miles: change engine crews, add fuel and water.

Fargo, N.Dak., 262 miles: change train crew, RPO clerks.

New Rockford, N.Dak., 386 miles: change engine crew, add water in winter.

Minot, N.Dak., 495 miles: change engine crew, add fuel and water, also water train.

Williston, N.Dak., 615 miles: change engine and train crews, RPO clerks, maybe add fuel in winter.

Glasgow, Mont., 771 miles: change engine crew.

Havre, Mont., 924 miles: change engine and train crews, add fuel and water, also water cars.

Shelby, Mont., 1,029 miles: change RPO clerks.

Whitefish, Mont., 1,180 miles: change engine and train crews, add fuel and water, also water cars.

Troy, Mont., 1,314 miles: change engine crew.

Spokane, Wash., 1,453 miles: change engine and train crews, add fuel and water, water cars.

You can figure that those four F units up front are burning 4½ gallons of No. 2 diesel distillate a mile — and that includes what the steam generators consume. And for each gallon of fuel, you need 12 gallons of water to keep up heat. Outside temperature varies from 100 degrees in summer to 40 below zero in the winter, which will affect these figures, of course.

The *Empire Builder* is riding a pair of unending rails into a huge, vast country, an ocean of prairie producing wheat in train-load lots. Now and again there's a landfall, a town marked by scores of Commodity Credit Corp.'s silver grain containers, a farm implement dealer, elevators, a Main Street, and homes with TV aerials. No. 31 honks and hurries on, on into country where the snow fences guarding cuts tell of what winter is like, on toward the mountains.

PORTLAND						
SLEEPING CAR 2 compartments 5 bedrooms 6 roomettes Pullman-Standard	SLEEPING CAR 4 sections 3 bedrooms 1 compartment 7 duplex roomettes Pullman-Standard	DINING CAR 36 seats ACF	GREAT DOME LGE. CAR 18 dome lounge seats 57 dome coach seats 34 lower lounge seats Budd	SLEEPING CAR 4 sections 3 bedrooms 1 compartment 7 duplex roomettes Pullman-Standard	SLEEPING CAR 2 compartments 5 bedrooms 6 roomettes Pullman-Standard	SLEEPER-LOUNGE-OBS 1 compartment 4 bedrooms 6 roomettes Pullman-Standard



No. 31's Pullman conductor confers with one of the porters beside a *River*-series sleeping car at St. Paul Union Depot.



The *Empire Builder's* cars carry the train name amidships, with the name or initials of the owning railroad at each end, plus PULLMAN on the sleeping cars. This is the Great Dome, whose downstairs lounge is doing a brisk business during the stop at St. Paul.



During the 11-minute stop at the division point of Havre, Mont., the *Builder's* train and engine crews are changed and the locomotives and cars are fueled and watered.

The *Builder* is a distinct, different world passing by. A porter counts his supplies on a Pullman: 26 pillows, 120 sheets, 200 towels, 52 soap cakes, 6 laundry bags, 120 pillow cases, 26 blankets, 30 hat bags, 6 porter coats. . . . The fireman calls "Green." . . . Somebody notable is aboard — Big G has played host to Bing Crosby, actor Monty Woolley, William Boyd (Hopalong Cassidy, that is), Elvis Presley (!), Sen. Richard Neuberger of Oregon, TV's Fran Allison, boxer Floyd Patterson. Everyone in the crew remembers Elvis, and the steward got a nice note from the senator. . . . And *you*, why, you can read anything from magazines to weather reports to the

Hotel Red Book, or play cards (single decks 70 cents, bridge sets \$1.35, score pads free), or use train stationery for a postcard, letter, or telegram. Or just sit. Nice place to sit, too; no phone calls to answer, no seat belts to buckle, no detours to drive. Very nice.

Lunch? A lot of people skip the midday meal, which makes noon a good time to sample the diner. It's a car to fascinate any woman — seats 36 and is staffed by three cooks, four waiters, and a steward. Yet in peak summer months the kitchen (roughly 26 x 7 feet) can serve from 400 to 500 meals a day! That can mean a gross of \$295 at dinner alone. Great Northern, incidentally,

makes no calls in the Pullmans, which generate the main diner business; when you're ready to eat, the diner is ready to serve. And except for wine, no alcoholic beverages are served in the diner. People tend to linger over their cocktails, which would upset the dinner-by-reservation system. Also, GN figures the revenue isn't worth the embarrassment caused when the man with too many drinks under his belt lapses into profanity.

The meals (and this is a personal estimate) are good. Use of prefrozen steaks, however, isn't worth whatever savings may be involved because even if the chef can cook 'em and hold the juice, the taste isn't up to par. Regardless, no one ever left the *Builder's* diner feeling hungry and the stewards are gracious men indeed.

And in case any housewives are listening in, GN figures 36 dining-car seats mean 80 teaspoons, 24 coffee pots, 80 forks, 12 steak knives, 18 finger bowls, 48 dinner plates, 3 infant chairs, 18 oyster forks — but just one ice tong. Plus prayer cards for three faiths.

INTERESTING DIESELS

Those diesels are interesting specimens of their breed. They're out of a pool of 67 similar F-type units that protect all passenger trains on the St. Paul–Seattle run, as well as St. Paul–Duluth. Originally F3s, they were upgraded into F7s at the Jackson Street roundhouse in St. Paul. Horsepower, at 1,500 per unit, remained constant in the revamp, but there were engine refinements as well as new traction motors of increased capacity. To adapt them for passenger work, all the units got steam generators and a revised gear ratio with a maximum speed of 89 mph. (In actual



A passenger and a porter are out on the platform at Spokane as the cars for Portland are switched out of the main train, to which is added a Spokane–Seattle sleeper.



Crewmen go over paperwork amid piles of mail sacks during the Spokane stop.

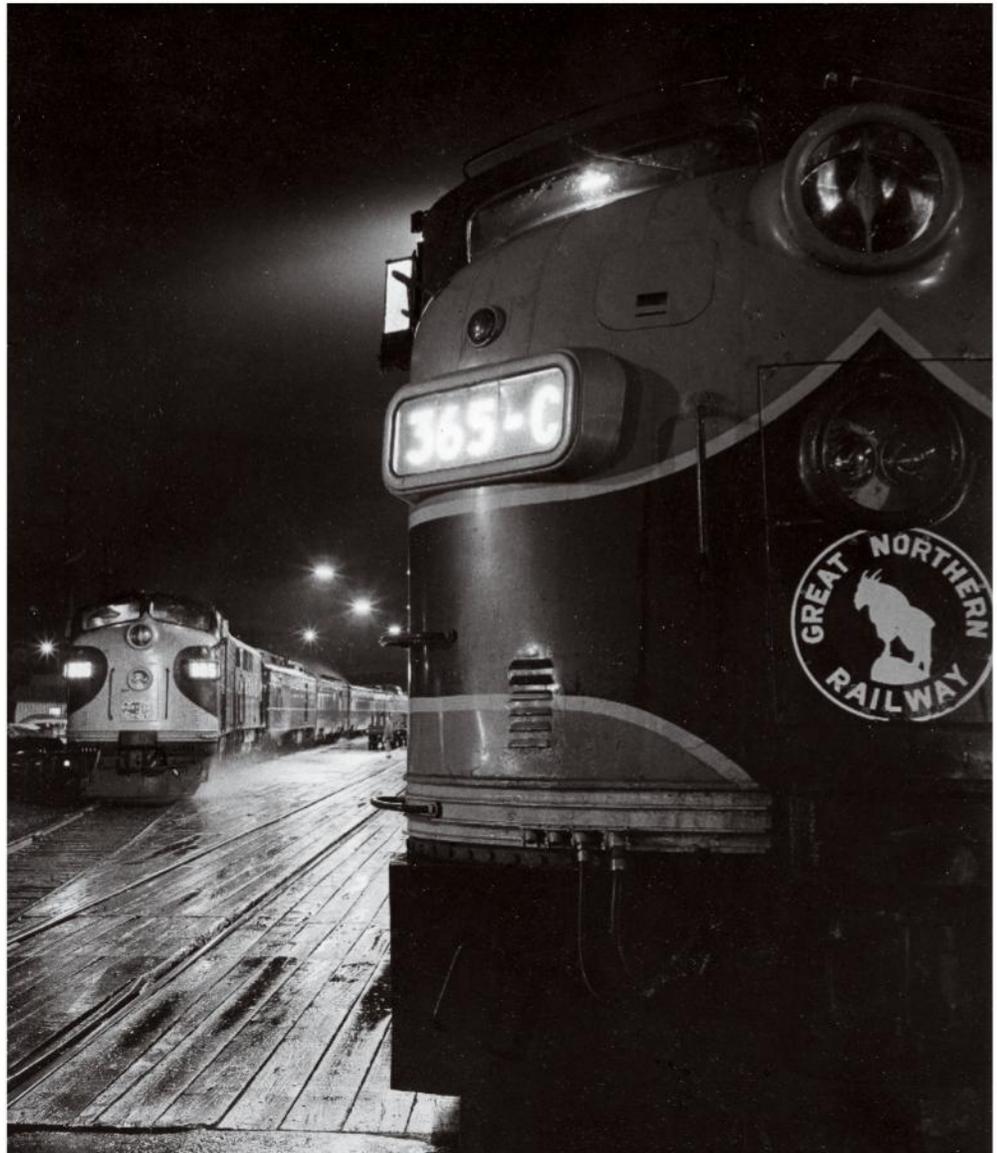
practice, Interstate Commerce Commission regulations hold GN's top speed to 79 because the line has neither cab signals nor automatic train control.) Locomotives make a round trip on Nos. 31 and 32, changing out at Havre on the eastbound run, and the pool system produces between 18,000 and 19,000 miles per month per unit. Every 20 months the F7s are pulled in for class repairs including new pistons and rings; and every five years (*i.e.*, each million miles) they get a major overhaul in St. Paul.

Something of the rising power demand for limited passenger trains may be gauged by the fact that the first *Builder* of 1929 rated 4-8-2s and 4-8-4s on a 63-hour schedule; the original streamlined version of 1947 — 12 cars on a 45-hour schedule — required two E7s totaling 4,000 h.p.; and the longer, completely reequipped *Builder* of 1951 needed a three-unit, 4,500 h.p. F7 combo. A tightened timetask and addition of domes necessitated the extra unit in 1955.

The maximum grades involved, 1.8 percent in the Rockies and 2.2 in the Cascades, are not exceptional — but add snow of as much as 452 inches a winter (including a slide 20 feet deep and 553 feet long at one spot in 1956) and life is hardly humdrum for the EMDs. Their pilot-mounted plows aren't there for show.

ACROSS THE DIVIDE

No. 31 takes just half an afternoon and the 126.4 miles between Cut Bank and Whitefish, Mont., to go up and over the Continental Divide, making it nonstop at an average speed of 40.5 mph. The ruling grade westbound is 1 percent and the diesels take that in the last notch at 40 or better, accelerating to 79 around the flowing curves when the profile eases. Vertical semaphores beckon the *Builder* past Triple Divide (from the mountain of the same name in the distance,



Spokane, Portland & Seattle F3s wait to forward the *Builder's* Portland cars in SP&S train No. 1; the Great Northern F7s will continue to Seattle with GN 31. At Pasco, 148 miles west, SP&S No. 1 will pick up Portland cars from NP's *North Coast Limited*.



A foggy morning along Puget Sound south of Everett, Wash., finds the *Builder*, having lost 3 cars and gained 1 car at Spokane, on the last lap of its Chicago–Seattle journey.

whence the waters flow to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic) . . . across Two Medicine River bridge — the highest the 8,300-mile GN owns . . . on by Glacier Park station . . . swinging ever upward and nearer the Montana Rockies, the rails seeking a low-altitude crossing. They find it at Marias Pass, only 5,213 feet up; and a lineside statue of John F. Stevens — the man who found it in 1889 — faces resolutely west. Ah, what names these mountains recall. A Chief Little Dog originally told the white man of the existence of the pass. As for Marias (pronounced MARYE-us)— why, Meriwether Lewis named a river Maria’s in honor of Miss Maria Wood, the woman he knew as “that lovely fair one.”

The stubby throttle is notched back, 64 cylinders slow down to a well-deserved idle,

and No. 31 is rolling down a 1.8 percent grade through the forested western slope of the Montana Rockies . . . around the horseshoe curve at Blacktail (where the public relations department has posed everything from 2-8-8-2s to F7s for publicity stills) . . . on down through tunnels and snowsheds in wild, unforgiving country (witness the three rotary plows stationed in Whitefish) as the line crosses and recrosses the Flathead River . . . and then suddenly you’re out of the curves and rolling straight into Whitefish.

RIVALS TO SEATTLE

As night settles over the Northwest, the darkness is broken not alone by the headlight and windows of No. 31. Also boring westward are three arch rivals — Northern Pa-

cific’s *North Coast Limited* (which has the advantage of serving more sizable on-line communities); Milwaukee Road’s *Olympian Hiawatha* (a spirited if money-losing effort by the “newcomer”); and Union Pacific’s *City of Portland* (with a through sleeper into Seattle). All boast domes, good meals, scenery. There’s even more rail competition if you include the Canadian transcontinentals.

Is it worth the effort for Big G? Thus far, yes. Briefly, the *Builder* grossed (in 1956) \$5.35 a train-mile vs. out-of-pocket costs of approximately \$4.50 — which left something to write off against an ICC formula passenger ratio of 193.8 percent in 1956. The *Builder* has doubled its business (which is about 80 percent coach, 20 percent Pullman) since the 1930s in the face of some severe competition and a lack of on-line camps to generate much military business. Many factors enter the picture: rent-a-car and travel credit programs, national advertising, incentive plans for Pullman space sales, a virtual taboo on reduced rate tickets and passes. But the *Builder*’s biggest asset is itself . . . its de luxe equipment, polite employees, 43-hour 50-minute schedule to Seattle, good meals. There is reason to believe that Nos. 31 and 32 promote a considerable freight business by pleasing shippers who always book space on the *Builder*. It is also a fact, contrary to what the skeptics say, that Easterners do fly to and from Chicago, riding the *Builder* beyond.

Regardless, the train abides by management’s dictum: If you’re going to run passenger trains, make ‘em good — otherwise clear out of the business.

SWITCHING AT SPOKANE

It is raining in Spokane, Wash., (and it usually isn’t) when No. 31 arrives at 11:20 p.m. Two switchers cut into the long streamliner because a mail storage car terminates here and a dome coach and two Pullmans are shifted over to Spokane, Portland & Seattle No. 1 — which will have them in Portland by 7:15 a.m. The *Builder* also picks up a 16-duplex-roomette/4-double-bedroom sleeper that provides a local overnight Spokane–Seattle service (eastbound it rides in No. 4, the *Western Star*).

In 30 minutes the switching is done, the air tested, the highball swung, and the *Empire Builder* is off with one more mountain range to climb: the Cascades. A couple of passengers linger in the Great Dome, reluctant to face the fact that tomorrow their withdrawal from care is over, wishing somehow that No. 31 could roll another 2,000 miles, what matter the destination. But by 3:20 a.m., in Wenatchee (where Appleyard originates some 20,000 cars of apples a year), everyone but the train crew is asleep. It is in the deep of dark that the great train rides up and up 2.2 percent and finally bores through 7.79-mile Cascade Tunnel — the longest in America.



At Seattle's King Street Station, baggage is carted from the just-arrived *Builder* (left) as GN E7 511 waits to depart with the *International* to Vancouver, B.C.

When morning comes you raise the shade on Puget Sound (it's still raining) and suddenly Chicago seems years ago. Indeed, there's just time for eggs, toast, and coffee in the Ranch. Edmonds — the spanking-new passenger station GN built to serve the suburbia of Seattle — slides by the window; this is the place where business jumped 800 percent when the railroad went after people who find it hard to park in downtown Seattle.

Now as the diesels wind up for the last time, porters are stacking up the baggage in vestibules . . . the dining and lounge crews are sorting laundry and changing into street clothes . . . Canadians are asking where to find the Vancouver-bound *International* (and being told, "Next track over at King Street — can't miss it") . . . small boys are being asked not to run up and down the aisle but to wait for mother and look out the window for grandmother.

And at 7:50 a.m., 2,210 miles from track 24 in Chicago Union Station, No. 31 stops . . . in King Street Station, Seattle. ■



As workers unload mail sacks from the *Builder's* RPO, King Street's tower rises above the *International's* obs car. Between the two trains is the *Cascadian* for Spokane.

GreatTrains
IN PHOTOS



In the early 1960s, Canadian National acquired dozens of cars made surplus by train-offs on U.S. roads. Among these were six Super Dome cars and six Skytop sleeper-observations from the Milwaukee Road's *Olympian Hiawatha*. CN coined the names "Sceneramic" for the domes and "Skyview" for the obs cars. Both car types are in the consist of the Vancouver-Toronto/Montreal *Super Continental*, stopped at Jasper, Alberta (right), and rolling east of there (above) on September 12, 1970. (At the time, Skyviews were in Jasper-Prince Rupert service, not on the *Super Continental*, so the obs may simply be deadheading east.)

Two photos, James A. Brown





On a fine July 1954 day, CN's *Continental Limited* from Montreal and Toronto is at Hope, B.C., 92 miles east of Vancouver. Nine months later, on April 24, 1955 – the same day rival Canadian Pacific launched its all-new *Canadian* – CN inaugurated the *Super Continental*, relegating the venerable *Limited* to secondary status. The two Alco-MLW diesels and train wear the green-black-yellow scheme CN adopted for its passenger cars earlier in 1954.

David W. Salter

Story of the SUPER CHIEF

First with heavyweight cars, then as a dazzling streamliner, Santa Fe fielded America's first all-Pullman train designed for diesels

BY STAN REPP

On the 18th of May, 1937, an all-Pullman train of nine stainless-steel cars carrying 104 passengers accelerated smoothly out of Chicago's Dearborn Station and headed west to California. By the time its glowing purple drumhead cleared the yard limit, the *Super Chief* — America's first streamlined diesel-powered all-Pullman train — and a Santa Fe Railway tradition had been born.

Twenty-five years later the impact of that first departure is still felt; the *Super Chief* has achieved a reputation and stature that other trains have worked longer to attain yet never quite reached. Actually the *Super* gained its enviable standing long ago, but the passing years have heightened its luster. Eminence of this sort and duration is not accidental. Three factors aided vitally in pushing the *Super* to the top, and keeping it there:

1) From the beginning the *Super Chief* — thanks largely to the consistent patronage of motion-picture people — has enjoyed extraordinary press. Much of the coverage glossed over salient features of the train, highlighting instead the doings of the passengers. But while the tastes and habits of the stars became common knowledge, the *Super's*

stock rose with the appearance of each new story. Even Frederic Wakeman's salty prose about *Super Chief* "life" in his book *The Hucksters* kept the publicity pot boiling and, more important, the train's name squarely in the public eye.

2) Besides the muscular assist from the Fourth Estate, an astounding amount of unsolicited advertising, ranging from spot mentions in TV commercials to detailed model trains, has given the *Super Chief* a familiarity rating unmatched by anything else hauling passengers.

3) *Super Chief* rolling stock has consistently been built and maintained to the highest standards. And items such as radio and recorded music in every room — a *Super* exclusive — and the choicest products for dining and wining go a long way toward making the 2,224-mile run a pleasurable experience.

Granted, then, the *Super Chief* has logged enough wordage and cost a sufficient amount of money to deservedly rank as the most written-about and most expensive train in history. This is the story of how the great train came to be.

THE DRIVE FOR DIESELS

The master plan that spawned the *Super Chief* — and for that matter, the Santa Fe's

entire diesel-powered stainless-steel fleet — was an out-and-out necessity. It was not primarily a means by which the *Super*, Santa Fe's first diesel train, could be put in service. Although competition with the Burlington and the Union Pacific (already operating streamliners with diesel and distillate fuel) was a point with which to reckon, this was not the motivating force. The thought uppermost in the mind of John Purcell, Santa Fe's superintendent of motive power, was how to whip the water problem. Confronted with hundreds of miles of desert right of way through New Mexico and Arizona, where no dependable supply of boiler water existed, Santa Fe was forced to haul millions of gallons of the precious stuff to water stops (at a cost of 40 cents per 1,000 gallons) to slake the thirst of its big-boilered steam engines. Purcell, a chunky, hard-bitten man, wrestled with his problem, ignoring the doleful philosophizing of contemporaries, then he turned to his own stable for the solution.

The road had been running diesel switch engines for a couple of years — why not use scaled-up versions on *real* trains? Thus Purcell planted the diesel seed and at the same time dismissed the "toy trains," as he called them, running on other Western roads. In W. K. Etter, vice president in charge of op-

Artwork from a 1948 booklet shows the *Super Chief* shining amid heavyweight steam trains at Dearborn Station, Chicago. The observation car is of the style used on the original streamlined *Super* of 1937, with a newer tail sign.

Santa Fe





Two-unit box-cab diesel No. 1 is eastbound with the first, heavyweight iteration of the *Super Chief* about 15 miles east of Flagstaff, Ariz., in mid-1936. The B-B, twin-engine, 1,800 h.p. units were based on Electro-Motive demonstrators 511-512 and B&O 50.

Above: Santa Fe; below, Joe Welsh collection

erations, he found a willing and enthusiastic ally who promptly took the matter “upstairs.” The dynamics of Purcell’s and Etter’s thinking spread through Santa Fe echelons from President Samuel T. Bledsoe’s office on down the line, and soon the Master Plan became the Santa Fe Survival Plan.

Retooling a sprawling railroad to accommodate entirely new motive power was an awesome undertaking, compounded by difficulties inherent to the lean times during which it was begun. In short order, lean times or no, Santa Fe offices in Chicago’s Railway Exchange Building echoed with the hum of conferences, and large yellow note pads were in great demand.

Many man-hours later, a long-range program — the ramifications of which would fill volumes — was adopted. The die was cast. Santa Fe had committed to the diesel, and it became the prime mover in the road’s opera-

tion. With the diesel, the road could eliminate the fund-draining cartage of boiler water, pare running times by a half day at a crack, add greatly to the life of rail, and appeal to a public eager for something new. A new Chicago–Los Angeles train was to act as a downfield blocker and also to serve as a showcase for the road’s wares.

Santa Fe decided to release the new train in two stages, first as a heavyweight stopgap model, second as an all-stainless-steel consist a year or so later — but it would be diesel-powered from the start. Now all Santa Fe needed was that first road diesel. After lengthy translation of need into horsepower figures, motive power men agreed upon 3,600 h.p. as adequate for the job and set

the Electro-Motive Corp. to work on the propulsion systems and the St. Louis Car Co. on the bodies to house them. In August 1935 Santa Fe took delivery of its newborn passenger locomotive, two-unit box-cab No. 1.

Done up in cobalt, Saratoga blue, olive, and scarlet, and with a bizarre eyebrow cowl over the end of each unit, the diesels looked every inch the downfield blockers they were intended to be. And Santa Fe had them in training in no time. In the nine months that followed, No. 1 ran, walked, and plodded the length and breadth of an engine-killing system in all kinds of weather — and pulled everything but the foundation out from under the roundhouse. In diesel No. 1, Santa Fe had a real comer.





On its inaugural Chicago–L.A. run, the streamlined *Super Chief* climbs Raton Pass with help from a 1903-built 2-10-2 on May 19, 1937. The road engines are box-cabs 1A and 1C, the latter built as EMC 512 and temporarily lettered and numbered for the Santa Fe.

Otto C. Perry

While the diesels were out proving themselves, Passenger Traffic Manager W. J. Black had the mechanical department sprucing up a half dozen standard Pullmans, a diner, and a club car (borrowed from the pool that supplied cars for the road's premier train, the *Chief*) for the forthcoming service. To top off the upgrading of the cars, a striking new drumhead in royal purple and scarlet was designed to grace the observation car's open-platform railing.

The title on that drumhead, SUPER CHIEF, evolved rather easily. The Santa Fe, aware of the value in a household name, wisely chose to retain the word *Chief* and prefaced it, logically and prophetically, with *Super*.

Inasmuch as the *Super Chief* would, in one stroke, cut 15¼ hours from the schedule of the *Chief*, it was evident that drastic improvement of track and signals was in order. Never before had the road's rails been made to withstand such high sustained speeds as the *Super Chief* schedule would dictate. By the time diesel No. 1 was ready to haul the *Super* on test runs, Santa Fe had spent more than \$4½ million reshaping its right of way: \$1,827,000 for new 112-pound rail; \$1,500,000 straightening curves; \$700,000 superelevating curves and rebalancing track; and \$500,000 on the signal system. This out-of-pocket spending is doubly significant when one considers the fact that this was done in the midst of the Great Depression.

With the right-of-way phase of the Master Plan completed, only testing with a full train

was left to be done. The diesels performed their work in businesslike fashion, and in the process turned in some eye-popping sprints and a few hair-raising episodes as well. Santa Fe of course frowns upon stunting in its locomotive cabs, but old engineers who ran the box-cabs love to recall how they roared down on a desolate desert grade crossing, "widenin' on the sy-reen," and scared the wits out of an unsuspecting Navajo couple in a Model-T Ford. On one transcontinental run, a timing of 39 hours 34 minutes was made. The swift diesel duo trundled into Chicago, washed up, and settled back to await Dedication Day and the *Super Chief's* maiden run.

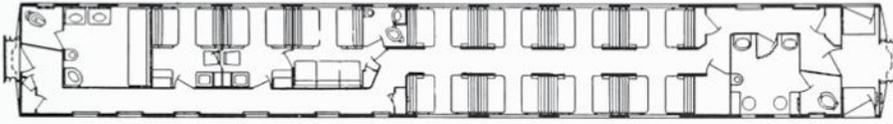
On May 12, 1936, at Dearborn Station, Chicago, the first edition of the *Super Chief* met its public for the first time. Santa Fe handled the christening ceremony with élan worthy of Hollywood. There was, of course, the time-honored champagne ritual; harried photographers took scores of flash pictures; and cut flowers bedecked the observation-car platform from which celebrities of "stage, screen, and radio" played to the crowd. Radio station WGN beamed a quarter-hour broadcast of the festivities lauding Santa Fe's "progressive ideals" and the *Super's* "epoch-making schedule." Just when the throng of well-wishers was really warming to the occasion, the diesels cleared their throats coarsely,



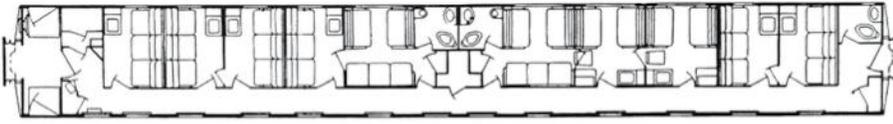
Diesel No. 2 missed the streamlined *Super Chief's* debut, taking the reins a month later. Underneath their streamlined styling and Warbonnet livery, and above their A1A trucks, the E1A-E1B duo was internally similar to the original *Super's* box-cabs.

Santa Fe

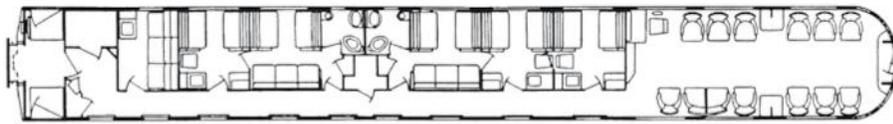
THE SUPER'S SLEEPERS



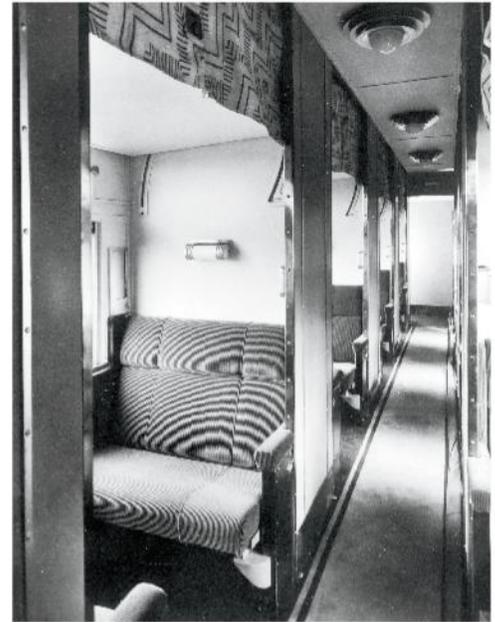
Isleta and Laguna — 8 sections, 2 compartments, 1 drawing room



Oraibi and Taos — 6 bedrooms, 2 compartments, 2 drawing rooms



Navajo — 3 compartments, 2 drawing rooms, 1 bedroom, observation lounge



The first streamlined Super was all-Pullman but not all-room, as evidenced by a view of sections in Isleta or Laguna. The interior finish and materials were carefully chosen and of the highest quality.

David Lustig collection

took hold of the well-groomed Pullmans, and ambled off into the gathering darkness.

Still trailing flower petals as it rounded the curve south of Roosevelt Road, Santa Fe's first diesel train, the *Super Chief*, was on the timetable . . . and in business.

A STREAMLINED SUPER

Even before the *Super*, stage 1, left Dearborn to ply its trade between Chicago and the Coast, work on stage 2 — the stainless-steel model — was well under way at two locations in Philadelphia: the Hunting Park plant of the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Co., and the Sansom Street office of architects Paul Philippe Cret and John Harbeson. Although Santa Fe had no way of knowing it at the time, the road's choice of builder and architects was one of the soundest in all its years of operation. From that pairing would come an unparalleled dividend. Santa Fe contracted for a fine train; it received instead a masterwork.

Budd's sales order for the first lightweight *Super Chief* bore the date April 14, 1936 — and work started that day. Santa Fe's representatives — unlike so many clients who bug an architect or builder with bundles of clippings, unworkable suggestions, and out-of-scale doodlings — came lightly equipped. The road specified a few basics and let it go at that. There was to be a single consist of nine nonarticulated, standard-size

cars to sleep 104 passengers “in sophisticated surroundings” and to house a crew of 12 onboard service personnel. The breakdown read: 32 in sections, 26 in bedrooms, 22 in compartments, and 24 in drawing rooms; the diner and lounges would seat 78. The train would consist of 1 RPO-mail storage car, 1 mail-baggage, 5 sleepers, 1 diner, and 1 full lounge (with crew quarters and a barber shop). One of the most refreshing of the

basics — the car names — was the work of Roger Birdseye, Santa Fe's advertising manager and a noted authority on Southwest Indian culture. Taking his inspiration from Indian pueblos in New Mexico and Arizona, he chose six — *Isleta*, *Laguna*, *Acoma*, *Cochiti*, *Oraibi*, and *Taos*; the observation car would be *Navajo*. The head-end cars were numbered.

With the essentials settled, Cret and Harbeson, who had previously done work for Budd, got the green light on the preliminary phase. So far as the exteriors were concerned, patterns for primary structure and sheathing, with the familiar ribbing at the roof, letterboards, and skirting, and the fluting at the belt rails, were already established in Budd's jigs and dies. Outside, the *Super Chief* would thus be largely “stock” Budd. Inside, the train was unlike any other, completely custom-designed. Filling seven stainless-steel shells meant, first off, exhaustive research and study — with precious little time to do it. But Cret was a born student; hence the

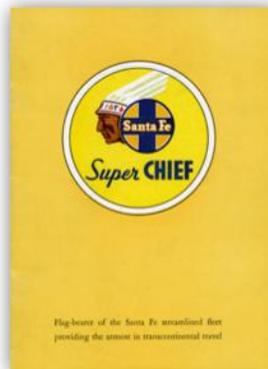
Super Chief design would reflect the academician's touch but be inventive as well as utilitarian.

Cret and Harbeson, with a staff of 10, approached the *Super Chief* commission with the same thoroughness that they applied to a “solid-ground” practice and to their positions at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture (Cret was its dean and Harbeson was a professor). They commenced work blessed with as natural a theme for a train as any architect could wish for. The Southwest Indian country, dear to Santa Fe hearts, was a veritable font of legend, craftsmanship, and particularly color. All of these Cret and Harbeson drew upon. In six short weeks, the researching, the studies, the preliminary drawings, and the color illustrations — two schemes for each car — were ready for presentation to Santa Fe officials.

Approval was quick. Working drawings and construction began the end of May 1936.

MAGIC WITH FLEXWOOD

For all its color and striking detail, what really made the first lightweight *Super Chief* — and set it head and shoulders above any public train before, then, or since — was a material specified by John Harbeson, and one that he used with consummate facility. That material was Flexwood veneer. In Flexwood — nothing more than a thin (1/85 of an inch) layer of wood mounted on canvas — Harbeson found a medium capable of design effects of the broadest range, and with it, he gave the *Super Chief* a warmth and presence that made even the old-timers in





The observation lounge area of *Navajo* had upholstered seating for 13 plus a chair at a writing desk. This view (above) looks forward from the rear; Pullman rooms occupied the front two-thirds of the car.

David Lustig collection

the game marvel. Equipped with this palette of woods from the deepest to the brightest shades, Harbeson “painted” interiors of such elegance that they are unmatched to this day.

In keeping with Cret’s principle of varying the treatment in cars of a train, Harbeson made each of the *Super’s* seven passenger cars a self-contained design unit, yet he did it in such a way that the transition from car to car was experienced rather than noticed. A Santa Fe ad man hit the nail on the head when he wrote, “The *Super Chief* is beauty wrought in wood.”

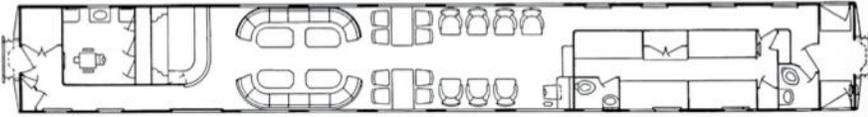
The Flexwood names, in themselves,



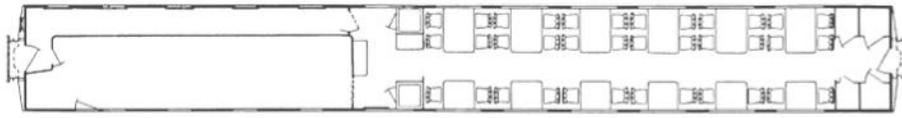
A tight photo of *Navajo* gives no clue as to its unusual location, Denver, through which the *Super* is detouring on September 7, 1939. Custom-designed on the inside, the car resembles others Budd built for Santa Fe, Rock Island, and Reading on the outside.

R. H. Kindig

THE SUPER'S LOUNGE AND DINER



Acoma — barber shop, 29-seat lounge with bar, 12-bunk crew dorm



Cochiti — kitchen, 36-seat dining room



An image from a booklet promoting the twice-weekly *Super Chief* and daily *Chief* shows a mid-train lounge car. The 1937 *Super's Acoma* was laid out this way but with different finishes and decoration.

Santa Fe



Two women look out from a table in the lounge area of club car *Acoma*. It's doubtful they'll be visiting the car's other major spaces: the barber shop and crew dormitory.

Santa Fe

made pretty heady reading, and a Santa Fe booklet, "Exquisite Interiors," lists those names in a few neatly turned phrases:

Bubinga, White Harewood, Macassar Ebony, Avodire, Ribbon Prima Vera, Zingana — on and on runs the catalogue of rare and beautiful woods, drawn from the four quarters of the globe, that have been applied, in Flexwood veneers, in the finish of the cars of the new, streamlined *Super Chief*. Brazilian Rosewood, Ebonized Maple, American Holly, Red-

wood Burl, Gumwood, Teak, Aspen, and Satinwood — from the jungles of Burma and West Africa and the Ivory Coast they come, from North America and South America and Europe. And behind each there is that rich story of man's everlasting search for beauty, regardless of time and distance and circumstance.

THE SUPER TAKES SHAPE

By mid-summer 1936, Budd and the Cret-Harbeson office had set a steady pace

with the new *Super Chief*, and out of their calculations and drawings the cars grew and flourished. Rough-surfaced underframes soon sprouted walls, and it wasn't long until the monotonous snap of the Shotwelder took over. Shotwelding was Budd's bread-and-butter item, and in John Harbeson's succinct architectese, it worked like this: "Two pieces of stainless steel are welded together by means of the passage of a measured 'shot' of electricity strong enough to melt together the touching surfaces, but of such short duration that the exterior surfaces are not altered. Ordinary 'spot' welding so alters the composition of the alloy at the surface that it is no longer 'stainless,' changes color . . . and rusts."

As they will in any building venture, problems unsettled the *Super Chief* program now and again. For one thing, "getting the Flexwood to adhere to the Masonite backing panels was a difficult matter to solve," according to Harbeson. Also, manufacture of the Indian motif fabrics — laid out with great care by Harbeson and Darwin Urffer — wasn't altogether as it should have been. Although "woven" patterns were specified, some of the material arrived at Hunting Park printed with dyes. To illustrate just how carefully the fabric designs were planned, the weaving mill was instructed to arrange its Jacquard cards to drop a stitch now and then to simulate the handwoven look. Other points, more worrisome than difficult, needed looking after: noise, vibration, corrosion, air filtration, and the wearing qualities of materials. But liberal amounts of drawing-board time canceled out these irritants, and



Acoma's back bar featured a Navajo "sand painting" rendered in inlaid wood. A genuine Navajo rug hung on the opposite wall.

David Lustig collection

the *Super Chief* continued to develop according to schedule.

While the cars took shape in Philadelphia, Electro-Motive Corp. at La Grange, Ill., was breathing life into a new diesel locomotive to replace the box-cabs that were powering the heavyweight *Super*. It was a two-unit model with 3,600 h.p., like the No. 1 pair, but there the similarity ceased. The new diesel had vastly better lines — it was a true streamliner. The air-scoop cowl had been replaced by a crimson nose that wrapped around the cab and curved boldly down into a narrow band that ran the length of both units at the base of the carbody (suggesting, in profile, an Indian head and the trailing feathers of a warbonnet). The rest of the locomotive was silver, just like the cars behind it. Across the red nose, EMC emblazoned a brilliant yellow elliptical Santa Fe herald, a modification of the road's traditional circle-and-cross emblem. The crimson nose and its yellow insignie went on to become one of the most

recognizable images in all of railroading. As a pair, the new units — the first examples of what would come to be known as Electro-Motive models E1A and E1B — carried Santa Fe road number 2.

Above and slightly behind the new diesel's automobile-like hood was the equally automobile-like windshield of a cab so spick-and-span that it brought about a complete change of dress among the sharp-eyed men who occupied it. For the E1's engineers and firemen, dirty old denim overalls were out, replaced by something closer to street clothes. Beyond and below the insulated back wall of that cab, all sorts of things had been added or the existing ones improved since the box-cabs had left La Grange. Summed up, the second *Super Chief* diesel was a beaut.

A SHINING SILVER VISION

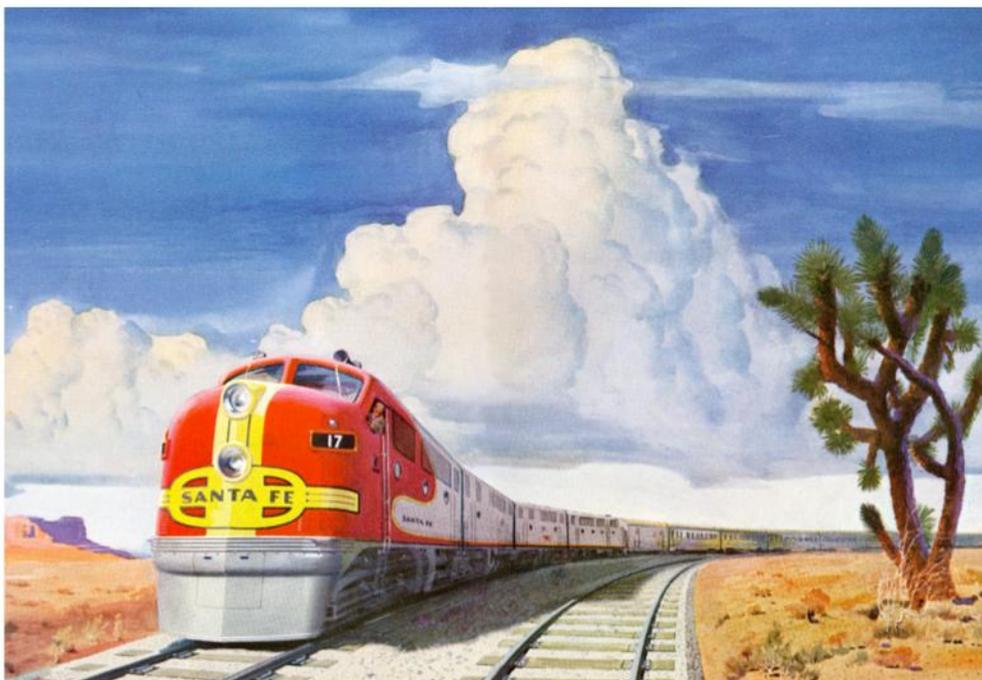
At dawn on April 14, 1937, had you stood in the yard of Budd's Hunting Park plant, an unforgettable sight would have been your

NEARLY \$1,000,000 OF LUXURY ON WHEELS

CAR	DESCRIPTION	COST
3400	30-foot RPO-mail storage	\$53,859
3430	Mail-baggage	48,166
<i>Isleta</i>	8 sections, 2 compartments, 1 drawing room	74,330
<i>Laguna</i>	8 sections, 2 compartments, 1 drawing room	74,329
<i>Acoma</i>	Barber shop, full lounge with bar, crew dorm	77,605
<i>Cochiti</i>	36-seat diner	82,787
<i>Oraibi</i>	6 bedrooms, 2 compartments, 2 drawing rooms	82,509
<i>Taos</i>	6 bedrooms, 2 compartments, 2 drawing rooms	82,509
<i>Navajo</i>	3 compts., 2 drawing rms., 1 bedroom, obs lounge	85,984
Locomotive No. 2	2 diesel units (E1A and E1B)	\$279,619
Total cost, cars and locomotive		\$941,698



Obs cars of (from left) one of the two 1938 *El Capitan* consists, the second (1938) streamlined *Super Chief*, the *Chief*, the other '38 *El Cap* set, and the original streamlined *Super* are lined up in Chicago. Santa Fe



Following tests with FTs in 1945, Santa Fe replaced its E units on transcontinental streamliners with F units. Artwork from a 1948 *Super Chief* booklet depicts F3s in a desert setting. Santa Fe had an F3 No. 17, and the westbound *Super* was train No. 17. Santa Fe

reward for braving the chill hour. There on a setout track and coated with a fine layer of white frost was the glistening end product of exactly one year's thought and labor — the cars of the new *Super Chief*. The train had been finished the night before about 7 o'clock, and then rolled out to spend the dark hours in solitude, contemplating its future many

miles from this corner of Philadelphia's Nicetown section. As the sun rose higher, the *Super's* 716-foot length of gleaming stainless steel was reflected crisply in scattered puddles and grease slicks indigenous to all sites where rails and machinery mingle. Out of this handsome string of nine cars, seven would live to celebrate their silver anniversary,

two would not. But this was a beginning, a glory day for the *Super Chief*, and hardly the time to talk of life expectancy. (Sleepers *Laguna* and *Taos* were victims of wrecks. As of 1962, sleeper *Isleta* is still operating but as a dormitory car and renumbered 3476; lounge *Acoma*, diner *Cochiti*, and sleeper *Oraibi* still operate in mainline service; observation car *Navajo* is stored at the Topeka shops, awaiting possible business-car use; and 3400 and 3430 are in head-end service.)

The remainder of April 14 was given over to photographing, to touching up here and there, and to just admiring the new *Super*. Perhaps the Budd men at Philadelphia knew they'd never see her likes again. On April 15, the *Super* took a trial spin over a local belt line, got a shot or two of aluminum paint on dirtied journal boxes, and went back to the setout track. Around 8 or 9 o'clock on April 16, another sunny morning, without ribbon-cutting or ceremony of any kind, the *Super Chief* took leave of its Hunting Park birthplace. How it was hauled and delivered to the Santa Fe in Chicago was not recorded, and is not remembered. That it did make Chicago is the main thing.

A MONTH ON TOUR

For the next 30 days the *Super Chief* did just what other new trains do: exhibited itself, ran "wind sprints" for the benefit of



In 1951, Santa Fe added a Pullman-Standard dome to the *Super*. These Pleasure Dome cars (Santa Fe's moniker) had 8 swivel and 8 fixed seats in the dome, a cocktail lounge, and the private Turquoise Room dining area — a favorite of the Hollywood crowd.

Left: Santa Fe; right: Wallace W. Abbey

invited members of the press, and submitted to what must have seemed interminable trackside eulogizing. The *Super's* E units weren't completed in time to handle the publicity junkets, so to the delight of steam fans, "regular steam locomotives," as *The Santa Fe Magazine* for June 1937 reported, hauled the brilliant stainless-steel cars. Concerning the first of those trips, the magazine — with an understandable trace of deprecation, considering Santa Fe's eagerness to embrace the diesel — had this to say: "While this was not expected in any way to be an

accelerated run, the steam locomotives alone were used, the train often registered more than 90 mph en route — and no one was aware of any burst of speed." No doubt sensing the import of the situation, the steam locomotives rose to the occasion and sent the publicity special skimming over Santa Fe trackage, asserting their soon-to-be-usurped speedmaking capabilities. Of course the effort, though gallant, was to no avail — the future was indeed with diesels.

For the final preinaugural run on May 15, 1937, the new *Super Chief* had box-cab duo

No. 1, plus Electro-Motive No. 512, a demonstrator unit mechanically similar to but plainer in appearance than the Santa Fe box-cabs, on the head end. The Los Angeles-Chicago special carried 70 "California business and cultural leaders." More than 5,000 people came down to Le Grande Station in Los Angeles to see them off that night and to listen to the singing of the University of Southern California choir.

At 8 p.m. sharp, the *Super* "with needle-like, scarcely audible precision" ducked under the First Street bridge and began thread-

GOURMET'S HAVEN

DINING ON THE *SUPER* WAS LIFE AT ITS BEST

A fine meal in *Cochiti* was one of those bright, warm pleasures that one hears about but rarely experiences.

Just to be seated in the elegant setting — African rosewood walls, Irish damask napery, burnt-orange leather chairs, brick-red and ebony carpet, softly lighted flesh-colored ceiling, Indian motif china and silver service, and yellow roses on each table — was life at its best.

Presiding over the haute cuisine of the *Super Chief*, and planning “delights for the inner man,” was stocky, amiable Peter Tausch, who before assignment to the *Super Chief* had been a Fred Harvey steward aboard the old *California Limited* and the *Chief* for nearly a quarter of a century. Like any “natural caterer,” Tausch had that peculiar talent for cataloging in his mind the eating habits of his regular guests, and he ordered for them, on sight sometimes, with an easy grace that was a joy to watch. He did not indulge in the caprices ascribed to his colorful contemporaries, but was content to provide abundantly and flawlessly for all who entered his domain. Although dishes weren’t named after him, no one can forget his scrupulous attention to the smallest detail of ordering, preparation, and serving.

If Peter Tausch did favor any one *Super Chief* specialty, it was the Colorado Mountain Trout Grillade. At dinner the first night out, passengers who wished trout for dinner next day placed their orders. Tausch would then wire ahead to the Harvey creamery at Las Vegas, N.Mex., and when the *Super* arrived in the afternoon (1:35 p.m. westbound, 4:52 p.m. eastbound) the caught-that-morning trout were waiting. With the trout, Tausch might suggest marinated hearts of California artichokes, cottage fried potatoes crisp and golden, zucchini, and a demi of Cresta Blanca Souvenir.

An after-dinner Corona, smoked watching the moonlit desert flash past *Cochiti*'s tan-draped window, was a fitting finish to dinner in the grand manner. — Stan Repp

ing its way through metropolitan Los Angeles, Chicago-bound. Behind it were the “diminishing crescendos of 5,000 voices,” all of whom would have better cause to cheer later after the *Super Chief* had turned in the record run it had kept up its sleeve. The train arrived at Chicago 36 hours 49 minutes out of Los Angeles. In ticking off the 2,224 miles at an average speed of 60.5 mph, the *Super* had treated the dignitaries to one dash of 202 non-stop miles, from La Junta to Dodge City, in 139 minutes, averaging a flashy 87.2 mph. With that bit of internal-combustion exhibitionism, the three diesels put paid to steam power on the Santa Fe. John Purcell's big growler had given everything expected of it — and more.

From the time it landed in Chicago, a day out of the Budd plant, until it started regular service, the new *Super Chief* did more than 7,300 miles of good-will running and was boarded by 55,000 to 60,000 visitors during public displays. Santa Fe had seen to it that the *Super* would not want for riders because of an uninformed market.

On May 17 and up until 6 p.m. of the 18th, the *Super* was scrubbed, polished, and restocked with fresh bedding, and food and beverage enough to burgeon a hotel wine list. By the time the train was due to back from the coachyard to Dearborn Station, the lus-



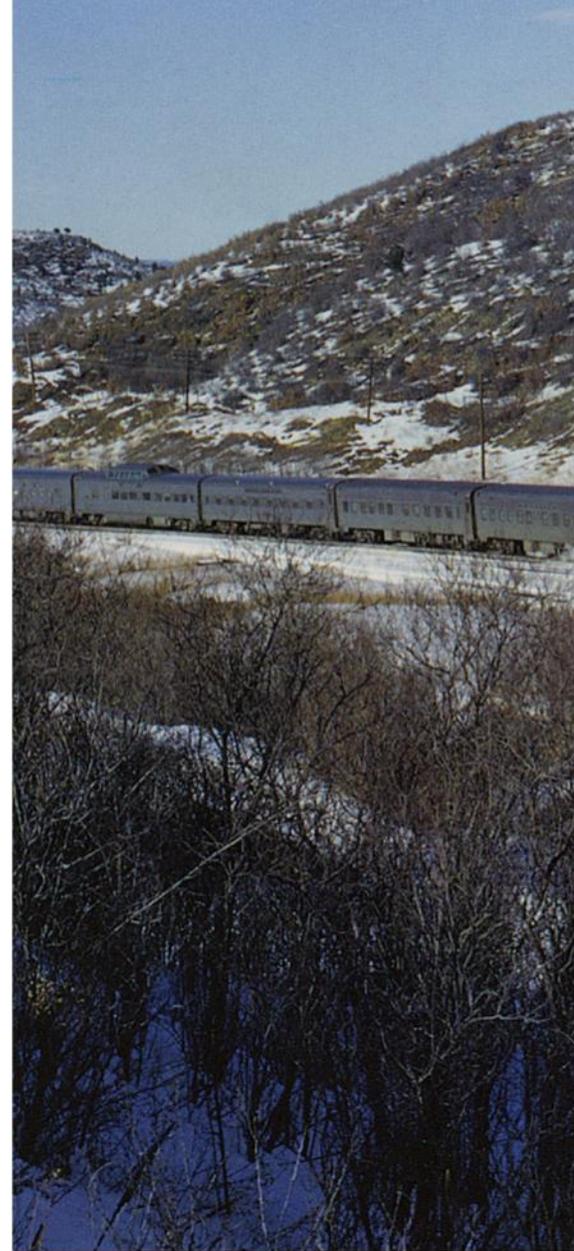
cious raisin pies were baking in *Cochiti*'s ovens. The smell of crisp new bedding, the glow of light in *Acoma*, and the turquoise ceiling in *Navajo* made the train an alluring string of varnish. Six o'clock straight up, and it eased out of the yard — a sparkling touchstone, closely watched by the car toads who stood beside it.

Spotted on Dearborn's track 4, the *Super Chief* was poised for its first revenue trip. It was not quite complete, though, as Electro-Motive

still had not released streamlined diesel No. 2. Standing in for the EIs were two box-cabs: one of the units from locomotive No. 1, and EMC No. 512. The christening ceremony went well and finished on time. At 7:15 p.m. engineer Manley Marsh pushed the reverse lever to Forward, flipped the toggle switch of the bell ringer, advanced the throttle a couple of notches, gave two short pulls on the horn cord, and the *Super Chief* was under way on its 39¾-hour dash to Los Angeles. The “War-bonnet” EIs took over from the box-cabs one month later.

TWICE-WEEKLY SUPERS

The streamlined *Super Chief* was a hit, routinely carrying capacity loads on its once-a-week sailings from Chicago and Los Angeles. Additional capacity was needed, and Santa Fe inaugurated its second lightweight



In 1958 the *Super Chief* and *El Capitan* began running as a single train, except in times of heavy travel. Such is the case on New Year's Day 1968 as the westbound *Super*, running solo, crests Raton Pass.

Above: Steve Patterson; left: Joe Welsh collection

Super on February 22, 1938, enabling twice-weekly operation: Tuesdays and Saturdays out of Chicago, Tuesdays and Fridays from Los Angeles. Made up mainly of Pullman-Standard equipment, the second streamlined *Super* consist lacked the flair of its elegant predecessor, but still gave Santa Fe the only pair of all-first-class diesel-powered trains in America. Like those of the 1937 model, the passenger-carrying cars of the second lightweight bore Indian names (from front to back): *San Acacia*, *Chimayo*, *Talwiwi*, *Tchirege*, *Agathla*, *Awarobi*, *Tsankawi*, *Tyu-onyi*, and *Puye*. Tongue-twisters, to be sure, but also eye-catchers. Now with two stainless-steel drawing cards, the *Super Chief* tradition was maturing nicely.

July 7, 1942, saw the *Supers* go on a war-time schedule of 41 hours 45 minutes, with



Hi-Level *El Capitan* cars up front contrast with the *Super's* standard-height equipment in an April 16, 1967, view of the combined train racing west at Mindeman, Colo., 28 miles west of La Junta. The obs car is gone, but a drumhead bears the names of both trains.
 Steve Patterson



Author Repp prepared this graphic chronology of the *Super's* rear cars in conjunction with his 1962 article. It's unlikely he intended it for publication, and *TRAINS'* editors omitted it when they ran his story. We include it to illuminate the train and its biographer.

Stan Repp

departure days unchanged. The trains left Chicago at 5:30 p.m., arrived Los Angeles 9:15 a.m.; eastbound, they were out of Los Angeles at 6 p.m., into Chicago 1:45 p.m. The *Supers* maintained the slow-paced schedule until June 2, 1946, when they returned to the prewar 39-hour 45-minute timing.

Four months later, on September 29, 1946, the *Supers* began departing Chicago and Los Angeles on even numbered days of the month with the same elapsed time of 39 hours 45 minutes: leave Chicago 7 p.m., arrive L.A. 8:45 a.m.; and leave L.A. 8 p.m., arrive Chicago 1:45 p.m.

Finally, almost 12 years after the heavy-weight pioneer consist entered service, the

Super was placed in daily operation. At the time of the advent of daily running — February 29, 1948 — Santa Fe had built up five complete *Super Chief* consists, giving the road the largest and finest pool of first-class rolling-stock in America. For the next decade, Santa Fe provided daily service from Chicago and L.A. in an all-Pullman train

COACHES ADDED, SORT OF

In spring 1958, bowing to the overwhelming odds of automobiles and jetliners, the *Super Chief* was consolidated with the all-coach *El Capitan*, which since 1956 has been running with unique Hi-Level cars. For the first time, the *Super* began sharing locomo-

tives and marker lights with coaches. The *Super's* 21st birthday, then, was not altogether a happy one, but even so, no more striking wedding of first- and second-class equipment could have been devised. In timetables, the *Super* appears as a separate, all-Pullman train, and, with two sets of diners and lounges in the consist, passengers from one train need not venture into the other.

In 1962, Santa Fe endeavors to limit the *Super Chief-El Capitan* to 16 cars, and a typical consist, with motive power, reads something like this: 5 EMD F3 or F7 units, 1 baggage car, 1 Railway Post Office, 1 dormitory-baggage car, 2 Hi-Level coaches, 1 Hi-Level diner, 1 Hi-Level lounge, 2 more Hi-Level coaches, 2 standard Pullman sleepers, 1 Pleasure Dome car, 1 standard diner, and another 3 standard Pullmans. Each train cost approximately \$3 million, or about \$15 million total for the 25 diesel units and 80 cars required for daily service.

Present-day *Super Chief* interiors, although they don't offer room after room of Flexwood or handmade fabrics, do provide ample luxury, and dining is still a delight whether it's in the standard diner or the plush Turquoise Room. It is in the Turquoise Room — a private dining area in the Pleasure Dome car — that the 1962 *Super Chief* approaches most closely the refinement and rich ornamentation of the 1937 train. Here in a space of 120 square feet — seated beneath gold-flecked cloth and natural wood walls and a softly lighted glass-enclosed genuine turquoise-and-silver plaque, and listening to recorded background music — one can indulge practically any gastronomic wish, guided by an *à la carte* menu nearly 2 feet in width. The Chateaubriand *à la Jardinière* at \$9 (for two) is a glorious steak of chuck-wagon proportions that would gladden the heart of every mangeur. Matchless fare and impeccable service make dining in the Turquoise Room an unrivaled experience.

Thanks to the dedicated attention of everyone who works aboard it, the current *Super Chief* — combined or not with a coach train — bears the Santa Fe banner proudly and, with a trace of bittersweet, carries on the tradition originated 25 years ago with seven passenger cars and high hops.

To the *Super Chief*; long may it run! ■

STAN REPP, who died in 1983 at age 63, was an architectural and railway illustrator; he also specialized in nighttime rail photography. Born in Buffalo, he lived in California after 1936. His book, *The Super Chief . . . Train of the Stars*, was published by Golden West Books in 1980. Since this article originally appeared, in May 1962 *TRAINS*, research by Larry E. Brasher and others has revealed information that contradicts some of Repp's text. The article here has been modified to include those new findings. Santa Fe's *Super Chief* lasted until the start of Amtrak.

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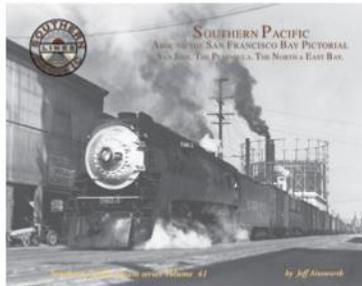
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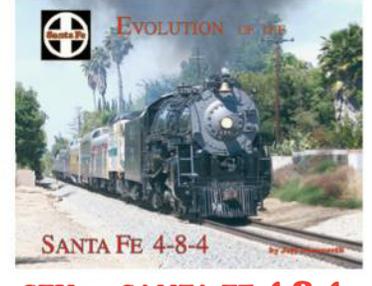
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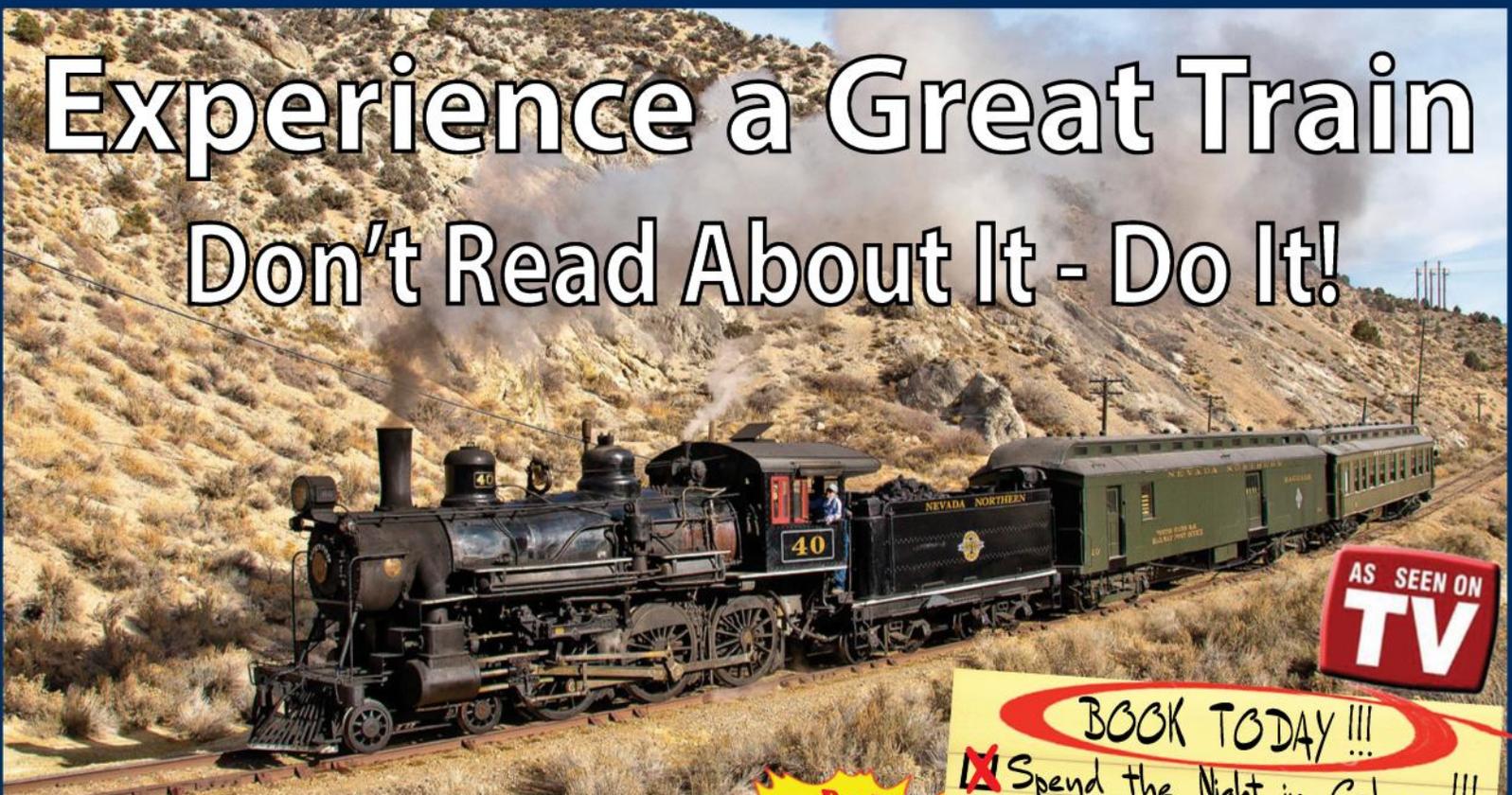


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