

The Union Pacific Railroad: In the late 1930s, Hollywood made a movie starring Joel McCrea called "Union Pacific." As I remember it, it was basically a story of Buffalo Bill shooting American Bison for the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad soon after the first transcontinental trains began operating between the east and California in 1869. Henry Tatnall, of Wilmington and Hockessin, told me his father, born in 1852, made this trip in 1872, and it was an adventure he never forgot.

Although the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (AT & SF), the Northern Pacific, and the Great Northern certainly made their marks as transcontinental carriers in the years to come, there was something magical about "Union Pacific." It's "Overland Limited" was a famous train before the introduction of the "City" streamliners with the coming of diesel power in the late 1930s. Edward H. Harriman, president of the railroad, and his son Averill built and promoted the ski resort of Sun Valley, Idaho, served from UP's Portland line at nearby Shoshone, Idaho. The railroad also developed lodges at Bryce Canyon, Zion National Park, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, all easily accessible from the Los Angeles line. In the several decades when summer rail tours were popular, UP published a tour booklet in which were listed western tours of from 10 days to one month in length. UP was indeed a model for passenger railroading.

Actually, the original Union Pacific never touched Chicago or other eastern cities, nor did it reach California. A railroad line had reached Omaha before the Civil War, so, a few years after the war ended, the newly-formed Union Pacific began building west from there. Shortly thereafter, California interests represented by that state's "big four," C. P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and Leland Stanford (all of whom had mansions on San Francisco's Nob Hill), formed the Central Pacific Railroad, and construction of a rail line pushed eastward from Sacramento. It is well documented that the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific met at Promontory Point, Utah, and the Golden Spike was driven there to make the connection on May 10, 1869. For the next 25 years at least, the action and growth in California was around the Bay Area; southern California came later.

I don't have an accurate account of which came first, but the growth of railroads in the United States was phenomenal during the last 30 years of the 19th century. The Southern Pacific (SP), soon becoming a huge railroad with a main line extending from New Orleans to Portland, Oregon through the major California cities, took over the Central Pacific with SP owning the railroad to its junction with UP at Ogden. UP built its own railroad from Ogden to Los Angeles, passing through Salt Lake City and the southern Utah parks. It also built a lengthy extension from the Overland Route in Wyoming across southern Idaho to the Columbia River and on to Portland.

Featuring good meals at Harvey Houses along its route, the AT & SF, extended its railroad to nearly 2,200 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles. The Northern Pacific was built from Duluth on Lake Superior to Tacoma on Puget Sound in 1888 (later the "main line" in the east started at St. Paul). Great Northern followed suit with Jim Hill's railroad connecting St. Paul with Seattle. There were other ways a rail traveler could go on name trains from Chicago to the west coast, such as the Exposition Flyer on a combination of the Burlington, the Denver and Rio Grande Western, and the Western Pacific, and the Gold Coast Limited, which used the Rock Island to Tucumcari, New Mexico, and the Southern Pacific through El Paso on the New Orleans line.

The "Chief" on the Santa Fe gave the most competition to Union Pacific on the Chicago-Los Angeles run. With the coming of diesel streamliners in the late 1930s, a new era of long-distance railroading began. The Santa Fe's "Super Chief" (an all first-class train) and its "El Capitan" (a reserved-seat all-coach train) each advertised a schedule of under 40 hours for the 2,200-mile run. These trains were matched by Union Pacific, whose "City" streamliners also made history. The "City of San Francisco" ran from Chicago to Oakland in less than 40 hours, as did the "City of Los Angeles" to the destination of that name. The "City of Portland" competed with the "Empire Builder" of the Great Northern, the "North Coast Limited" of the Northern Pacific, and the "Olympian Hiawatha" of the Milwaukee Road for service to the Pacific Northwest. UP, however, had no rails east of

Council Bluffs (Omaha), and used Chicago and Northwestern tracks on the eastern section of the run. Replacing the Exposition Flyer on its three railroads was possibly the most famous of all the western trains, the “California Zephyr,” which provided unmatched scenery of the Rockies and the Sierras viewed from its several dome cars, but this train took about 46 hours from Chicago to Oakland over the Burlington, Rio Grande, and Western Pacific.

“City” trains on the UP also had shorter runs like the “City of Denver” (Chicago to Denver), where competition was from the “Denver Zephyr” on the Burlington and the Rock Island’s “Rocky Mountain Rocket.” Railroads’ names were kept in front of the public through their big-name long-distance passenger trains, but profitability was often from the freight business, and in this UP had few rivals. All the big railroads in this country have long since merged, and the Union Pacific-Southern Pacific merger has been highly successful, but not for its passenger service. Union Pacific is still a magical name.

Work Report: On Tuesday, June 20, our first Ice Cream Run of the season took place at the same time as our work session. A total of 20 volunteers and our Education Director Michelle Nowling took part.

On the “run” were our Models EX, 76, 725, 735, and 740, with the following volunteers: Kelly Williams and Tim Ward (EX), Steve Bryce, Ann Bryce, and Michelle Nowling (76), Richard Bernard and Aaron Ferguson (Mansion Interpreter) in the 740, Bob Wilhelm, Jared Schoenly, and Sam Gregg (735), Jerry Lucas with students John Schubel and Mark Bodenshtab (725), and Tom and Ruth Marshall (modern car). Nothing serious occurred with any of the cars. A rear hub cap fell off the 76 on the outbound trip but was found and recovered on the return -- good job!

Working at Auburn Heights were Ted Kamen (in charge in place of Tom Marshall), Bill Scheper, Brent McDougall, Dennis Tiley, John Bacino, and Dennis Dragon. Ted worked on conforming the trim strips for the ’37 Packard running boards. Bill Scheper worked on the electric trains. Dennis Tiley and Brent McDougall refined the alignment and elevation on the Auburn Valley Railroad, and Dennis Dragon brought back the 1924 Seth Thomas wall clock, properly cleaned and lubricated, and hung it in its position in our shop. The Rockwell milling machine in the shop was moved toward the large door for future installation in our secondary shop in the old grease rack room. A small hole in the shop floor was patched. It was determined that the feed water heater on the Model 87 is leaking badly, so it was by-passed. The pumps still did not work 100%, so this problem will be worked on further.

On Wednesday, June 21, only two volunteers were on hand, as earlier in the day Dave Leon and Pete Higgins ran a train on the Auburn Valley for a field trip. Jerry Lucas and Gary Fitch adjusted the engine on the Model H-5, giving each crosshead about .004” more clearance. The boiler on the 735 was filled (it did not syphon from the evening before), and the pilot was cleaned on this car. Packings in the engine of the 740 were checked, and additional packing needs to be added.

On Thursday, June 22, eight volunteers were on hand, viz: Jerry Novak (in charge), Geoff Fallows, Jim Personti, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Steve Bryce, Bob Stransky, and Tom Marshall.

The cranky pumps on the Model 87 were checked again, this time specifically the line from the water tank to the pumps. The screen was removed from the water filter, but nothing obvious seemed to be wrong. The dash gauge glass (3-tube indicator) was cleaned, and the small chain attached to the filler cap on the water tank was re-soldered. The copper engine case was tightened on the rear baffle, which should reduce the loss of crankcase oil. (On June 25, the Model 87 was driven 10 miles with good results.)

On the Model 76, the slightly damaged hub cap was repaired, polished, and reinstalled. A boiler fitting under the water column for the 3-tube indicator developed a leak, and when this was investigated, it became apparent that the leak was inside and required the dropping of the burner for it to be repaired. The car was moved to the upper garage, and the burner was “dropped.”

On Locomotive 402, a temporary fix was made to the front truck with installation of an axle (with wheels) from our other locomotive now undergoing a complete mechanical restoration. All is back in position on the 402, which

should be ready for its July 2 operation. On the '37 Packard, the trim strips were conformed and installed, and the running board is now completed on the driver's side of the car.