



Caboose

Saga of the 999197

-or-

"Have I got a deal for you..."

Errol Spangler

Gather around railfans and I'll tell you a little tale about speeders, the Santa Fe, and caboose 999197.

This little saga starts at Portola during the first weekend in August, 1986. As you may recall, that was the occasion of the National Motor car races. Three of our group were in Portola that weekend, and we had a ball watching the race and meeting new friends.

Now, as you may also recall, one of the entries in the race that year was a hand pump car from Sacramento sent there to advertise the hand car races held in that fair city. My friends, caught up in the spirit, tried to convince me that we should put together a team to run a hand pump car. Well sir, after watching that Muscle Beach crowd from Sacramento, I decided what we really should do is buy a motor car and get it tuned up instead.

Well friends, have you tried to purchase a motor car out here on the West coast lately? Believe me brother it ain't easy. Oh, don't get me wrong, they are here if

you happen to be in the right place at the right time, or if you can talk the guy who happens to have nineteen of them in boxcars out of one (thanks Norman, no he doesn't want to part with any of them). Oh yes, they are available all over the East coast at bargain basement prices. But do you know what they want to truck one of those babies out here

Well OK you say, but what about the railroads themselves, what do they do with their old speeders.

Friends, I can't tell you here what the SP does with its speeders, since this little paper is read by the entire family and only the strongest of heart could bear that tragic tale of brutality.

Next I turned to our benevolent friend Uncle Pete. After a few phone calls I was directed to a gentleman in Omaha who explained that the UP would only sell excess/

scrapped speeders to selected organizations as they were very concerned about private owners taking unauthorized rides down the UP right of way. Fair enough, I could only agree with him.

About this time my friend Bob came up with an 800 number for the Santa Fe. "Well why not, it won't hurt to call them will it?", you notice he gets me to do the dirty work. The 800 number turned out to be the freight forwarding offices in Chicago, but they did happen to have the number of someone in Albuquerque I could try.

Now the Santa Fe, being the progressive railroad that it is, keeps up with the very latest innovations in communications and two years ago changed their phone system in Albuquerque. However, they just haven't quite got around yet to publishing a new internal phone directory.

After my fifth call back to Chicago (they really are patient people) I was switched over to another office and finally found a lady who happened to know the new phone numbers in Albuquerque. She directed me to the office of a Mr. Strong in the purchasing department and I was finally able to get through.

Where, as it turns out: "the Santa Fe is not purchasing any new speeders as we are replacing them with Hi-Rail equipment instead. Any old speeders on the road in need of repair are sent to Albuquerque and either repaired and sent back on the road, or dismantled and used as spare parts for the remaining fleet. Sorry I can't help you with speeders but we do have a large number of cabooses coming up for sale if you are interested".

Cabooses?

What am I going to do with a caboose? Well, I thanked him for his time and glumly hung up.

Still no speeder, but a caboose? That evening I reported back to the group that we had struck out again unless we wanted to put a motor in a caboose. "Well," Bob chirps up again, "remember the speeder races last year and how we were spread out in motels from Quincy to Reno? Why not get a caboose and then we can use it whenever we go up to Portola". I always knew there was a reason we kept Bob around.

Back on the phone to Albuquerque again, "about those cabooses"? "You say you live in California, well my friend we have cars at Barstow and San Bernadino, which would you like to see"? Barstow seemed to be the closest, and be-

sides we could always spend a day or so railfanning on Tehachapi loop. My next call was to Mr. B.L. Martin in Barstow and I agreed to meet him in his office on Friday May 1st for a look at his cabooses.

The only one of the group available to go with me on that day was the bright idea guy, the one who got me into this in the first place. We made our plans to leave San Jose on Thursday evening, drive to Bakerfield where we would spend the night, and then on over the hill the next morning. Have a look at the cabooses on Friday, drive back up to Walong siding, pitch our tents for the evening and then make our way back North on Saturday as I had to catch a plane for Mexico early Sunday morning.

Watch for the ending of this great story in the next TS with PHOTOS...

A TENDER STORY.....

Norm Holmes

Finally, after being donated to our Rail Society three years ago, our WP 481 class steam locomotive tender is on our museum property. This is one of the few pieces of equipment offered to our Society by Union Pacific instead of being requested.

This tender once supplied water and oil for one of WP's 481 class 4-8-4 steam locomotives; we believe it belonged to No. 484. The six Lima's as they were called by the crews, were part of an order of General Service (GS-6) locomotives requested by SP to help handle the increasing wartime traffic. They were similar to SP's earlier DAY-LIGHT engines, but lacked streamline skirting and had smaller drivers found on previous models. To satisfy WP's need for power, the War Production Board allocated six from SP's order to be sold to WP. Delivered in July, 1943, they were regularly assigned to WP's EXPOSITION FLYER and extra military trains. The Limas were an immediate hit with the crews, the only complaints were exhaust smoke coming back into the cab and some trouble with slippery drivers in the Canyon. The smoke problem was somewhat eliminated with the addition of "elephant ears" smoke lifters, giving WP's GS-6's a different appearance from the SP engines. The author can attest to their good riding qualities and easy steaming capabilities, having fired several of them in 1945.

WP's first diesel road units were delivered in 1942. When the war ended in 1945, more diesels were ordered and the hand writing was on the wall for steam on the WP. Nos. 482 and 483 were sold for scrap in 1953 & 1956. Nos. 481, 484, & 485 were sold, less tenders to SP for parts and finally No 486 was scrapped in 1957. Our tender was sent to elko where it was used to supply fuel and water for steam derrick No 27. While cleaning up a derailment near Quincy, Jct., in May 1979, the derrick and tender along with rest of the outfit got away from the train crew, rolled about five miles and derailed on a curve just east of Keddie. The derrick was moved to Sacramento Shops and unfortunately scrapped. The tender, which skidded on its side for 100 feet, was rerailed, moved to Oroville and then to South Sacramento for possible use as a fuel storage tank. In 1983, I recieved a call from Mr Flannery's secretary wanting to know if we wanted the tender for our museum. The only stipulation was that we keep it WP.

The reason the tender remained in Sacramento so long after it was donated was the condition of the trucks. They were damaged in the derailment and UP officials were reluctant to move it on its own wheels and have a problem develop that would cause trouble enroute. For one thing the journals have 7X14 brasses, a rare size and almost unavailable today. Delligent efforts were made to find substitute trucks, but to no avail. Aletter to the Buckeye Corp. brought a set of blueprints.

As the UP was closing parts of the Sac yard, it was getting imperative that the tender be moved or scrapped.

Scrapping was out of the question, so UP's mechanical department agreed to load the body on a flat car, the trucks on another. They would use their 135 ton Petty Bone mobile crane if we would hire a second crane to assist. This cost us \$600. The cars arrived in Portola last December and were spotted opposite the wrecker for unloading. The tender body (50 tons) was well within the 250 ton capacity of the derrick, but the tenders size would make it difficult to handle alone. About this time UP honored our request for the donation of the 50 ton MW crane, WPMW 90. It was hoped this unit could assist the derrick in unloading the tender, however, when the crane arrived it was unservicable.

The UP anxious to get their flat cars back in revenue service, so it was necessary for us to hire a crane service out of Reno; this cost us \$1040. The unloading was done on April 24th, using the UP's derrick and the Reno crane. Members assisting the UP crew were Norm Holmes. Jim Ley, Bill Magazin and Hap Manitt. A special thanks to Joe Beardin, UP Trainmaster, for his assistance. Also John Ryczkowski for finding the crane service at a fair cost. The tender is now inside our grounds, waiting for someone to adobt it as a restoration project.

How We're Doing

Construction of WP's new train ferry, *Las Plumas*, is ahead of schedule. Tentative schedules now are for launching at Portland, Oregon, on June 27; a trial run on San Francisco Bay July 24; start service August 1.

Legal arrangements nearly completed with State of California for exchanging present Western Pacific line Oroville to Intake for new main line to be built around future Oroville Dam.

California Zephyr load averaged 63.4 per cent of capacity in April, 1957, compared with an average load of 65.2 per cent for April of last year.

Gross freight revenue for month of April, 1957, showed increase of some \$225,000 compared with April, 1956. Commercial traffic increased 6.4 per cent; Government traffic decreased 9.3 per cent.

Deraillment of the eastbound *California Zephyr* on May 18 at Milepost 228.9, about 23 miles east of Oroville, caused by a dirt and rock slide following six and two-thirds inches of rainfall recorded nearby between 6:00 p. m., May 17, and 4:00 p. m., May 18. Total damage to three diesel units, a baggage car and coach estimated to be \$90,000, of which \$79,000 is covered by insurance as is the entire cost for rerailing the equipment. Estimated cost to repair track damage and work still necessary to completely clear slide area is \$15,000, all Western Pacific expense.

MILEPOSTS

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