

Western Pacific Railroad 501

This locomotive was built in **1939**. Other events from that year...

- The Hewlett-Packard Company is founded.
- Golden Gate International Exposition opens in San Francisco, California.
- Students at Harvard University demonstrate the new tradition of swallowing goldfish to reporters.
- World War II begins when Germany invades Poland.
- Spanish Civil War comes to an end.
- John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* is published.
- Howard Carter, British archaeologist known for discovering King Tut's tomb, dies.
- New York World's Fair opens.
- Batman, created by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, makes his first appearance in a comic book.
- American baseball player Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees announces he has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), now known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.
- Mike Farrell, American actor best known for playing B. J. Honeycutt on "M*A*S*H", is born.
- Pan-American Airways begins trans-Atlantic mail service with the inaugural flight of its Yankee Clipper from Port Washington, New York.
- The First World Science Fiction Convention opens in New York City, NY.
- John Cleese, member of "Monty Python's Flying Circus" and actor / writer of films and television, including "A Fish Called Wanda" and "Fawlty Towers", is born.
- The Great Depression, while nearing its end, will continue for several more years.
- MGM's musical film version of *The Wizard of Oz* premieres at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, California.
- A Heinkel 178, the first turbojet-powered aircraft, makes its first flight.
- Sigmund Freud, famous developer of psychoanalysis, dies.
- Marvin Gaye, American singer known as the "Prince of Motown" and famous for songs like "How Sweet It Is" and "What's Goin' On", is born.
- Nylon stockings are introduced to the public at a store in Wilmington, Delaware.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt lays the cornerstone of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington DC.
- Gangster Al Capone is released from Alcatraz.
- American film director Francis Ford Coppola is born.
- *Gone with the Wind* premieres at Loew's Grand Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia.
- La Guardia Airport opens for business in New York City, New York.
- General Motors introduces the Hydra-Matic drive, the first mass-produced, fully automatic transmission. It is an option on 1940 model year Oldsmobiles.
- Albert Einstein writes a letter to President Franklin Roosevelt about developing an Atomic Bomb. This led to the creation of the Manhattan Project.
- While a form of television was developed 11 years earlier, the United States has no commercial television networks or broadcasting. Radio is the popular method of home entertainment. Commercial television service will not begin in the US until 1941.
- The Western Pacific Railroad introduces the "Exposition Flyer" passenger train, replacing its premier "Scenic Limited" train.