

One day at . . .

Classic rail action from
Vermont to Wyoming to Mexico





One day at . . . North Philadelphia

By James A. Neubauer • Photos by the author

In 1965 I was working as a writer and audio-visual specialist for Rotary International in Evanston, Ill. The service club held its district governors seminars at the Lake Placid Club in upstate New York in May, and I rode New York Central's *New England States* from Chicago to Albany to attend one of the conferences. From Albany, I rode a bus north into the Adirondacks, but coming out afterward, it was a different story—the delegates had their own, all-sleeping-car NYC special train out of Lake Placid.

I had a roomette in a Southern Pacific 10-roomette, 6-double bedroom car off the *Sunset Limited*. The special connected at Utica with eastbound and westbound NYC mainline trains. I was headed east, and upon arrival at New York's Grand Central Terminal in the morning, I met up with an old Army buddy and rail hobbyist, Les Dean, who had arranged an itinerary to see as much railroading as possible on the long Memorial Day weekend.

Les met me on arrival. Forsaking New York City, we took the subway to Hoboken, N.J., and spent the first day riding "something exotic," the former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western local (this was five years after the Erie

Lackawanna merger) from Hoboken Terminal out to Branchville, N.J., and back. I stayed overnight in a hotel; Les went home.

The next day, Sunday, May 30, we transferred to New York's Penn Station, where we caught Pennsylvania Railroad train 121, the *Mid-Day Congressional*, to 30th Street Station, Philadelphia. From nearby Reading Terminal, we then took Reading Company train 7, the *Pottstown Express*, out as far as Norristown, riding the front platform of the lead Budd RDC. At Norristown, we caught a Brill "Bullet" on the Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Co.'s high-speed, third-rail line to 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby.

At 69th Street, we connected with Philadelphia Transportation Co.'s Market-Frankford subway-elevated line, which took us back to center-city Philadelphia. From the Pennsy's Suburban Station (named for the destinations of its trains, not its downtown location), we then rode a Budd Silverliner M.U. commuter train out to Chestnut Hill, end of the line but still within the city of Philadelphia.

On our return trip, we rode only as far as North Philadelphia, where the Chestnut Hill branch joined the New





The first train I saw during my couple of hours at North Philadelphia on Sunday, May 30, 1965, was a baseball special bringing fans in for a Phillies game at nearby Connie Mack Stadium. The special unloaded at the normally eastbound platform (left) and was carrying at least one head-end car, typical of PRR's "move it now" practice. Toward the end of my visit, both the *General*, bound for Chicago, and the *East Coast Champion*, for Miami (above, left and right, respectively) and running a bit late, were at the westbound platform together. (North Philly had two double-facing platforms, one for each direction.) The "*Champ*" will exchange its GG1 for diesels at Washington Union Station for the trip on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac to Richmond, Va., where it will gain the rails of its sponsor, Atlantic Coast Line.



Freight action during my Sunday visit was limited to a pair of locals. After the baseball special's appearance, a Baldwin switcher (above) trundled west with five coil-steel gondolas. That's the Chestnut Hill branch's separate North Philly station to the left. Soon an Alco RS11 (left) rolled through on a westbound platform track with a local.

York-Philadelphia main line. We spent the last couple of hours there, before I had to head for home, watching the parade of Pennsy trains pass on the eight tracks through the station.

Not since the years I spent as a youth on the platforms of Englewood Union Station in Chicago, watching New York Central Hudsons and Niagaras battle it out with doubleheaded Pennsylvania K4s Pacifics, had a station been so exciting for me. Pennsy's magnificent GG1 electrics, when they dug in and got their trains rolling again, were almost as thrilling to watch as steam had been at Englewood.

"North Philly" had trains to and from just about anywhere on the vast PRR.



The sun popped out for the arrival of the *Silver Meteor*, bound for Miami via Richmond and the Seaboard Air Line, behind one of PRR's handful of latter-day Tuscan red GG1's, the 4907 (above). While the *Meteor* made its station stop, a train of Silverliner electric M.U.'s diverged onto the Chestnut Hill branch (right); Connie Mack Stadium is visible in the background. After the suburban train cleared, the *Meteor* left on time at 5:20 p.m. (below); its next stop: 30th Street Station, PRR's primary intercity terminal.



The railroad kept this important corridor fluid—PRR was known to attach mail cars to the rear of a chartered special train run by someone else just to keep the traffic moving. At North Philadelphia, one didn't have long to wait to see a train with every sort of equipment: head-end cars, coaches, lounges, diners, sleepers, and observation cars would breeze up to the high-level platforms, make a brief stop, and upon a wave of a conductor's arm or two quick tugs on a communication cord, would quickly get rolling again.

This visit was on the middle day of the three-day Memorial Day 1965 week-end—railroading, after all, went on round the clock no matter what the calendar said, especially if there was a mail contract to fulfill. At the end of the day, as I recall, I was the only passenger to board the pride of the Pennsy, train 29, the *Broadway Limited*. It appeared to be devoid of passengers; businessmen who patronized the *Broadway* didn't do





After the *Meteor*, the next intercity train to show up was the New York-bound *Sunland*, (above), a maid-of-all-work off the Seaboard that originated in Tampa, Fla., 27 hours before its scheduled 6:14 stop here.

so on a long holiday weekend.

That evening in observation-lounge-sleeper *Mountain View*, only one other passenger and I were on hand to enjoy our martinis. When I went to the dining car, the wide door opened to reveal a vast emptiness . . . with, of course, a steward and four waiters, resplendent in white uniforms, at their duty stations as always. As I entered, the waiters came to attention with military precision, and one swung a chair out from under the table: "Here, sir?"

The prime rib was superb. I noticed the change from electric to diesel power at Harrisburg, and I thought the E units had to work much harder than the GG1 did to get a wheel on No. 29. The smooth acceleration just wasn't there anymore; with the diesels, it seemed labored.

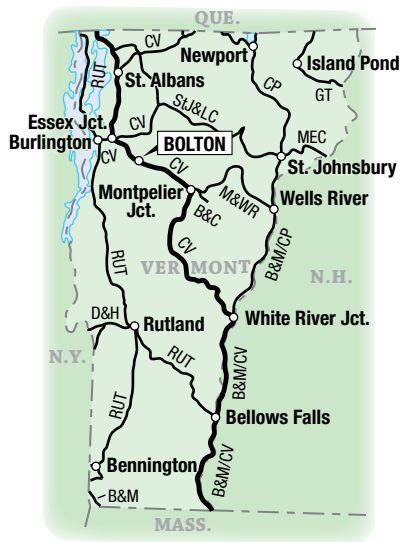
On an empty train at night, there isn't much to do. I was fast asleep in my roomette by Altoona. I think it was near Valparaiso, Ind., that I awoke the next morning. I quickly dressed and went for breakfast. At Hobart, the train went into emergency and used up its cushion of time waiting for a signal to change. Somebody had stabbed the *Broadway!* Nevertheless, we arrived at Chicago Union Station on time.

I was fortunate to ride several all-Pullman trains: the *Night Ferry* from London to Paris; Illinois Central's *Panama Limited* between Chicago and New Orleans; Union Pacific's *City of Los Angeles*; Southern Pacific's *Lark* from Los Angeles to San Francisco, and Santa Fe's *Super Chief*. It's the *Broadway Limited*, though, that stands out. ■



As a “Clocker” for New York made its station stop (at right in photo above—note the Pullman sleepers in parlor-car use on the rear), the Florida-bound *West Coast Champion* showed up to share the westbound platform with a Clocker for 30th Street (at left in middle photo). Minutes later, the Clocker’s GG1 (No. 4910, at right, below) accelerated past the 4894 on the *Champ*, heading for Zoo, where most Chicago and St. Louis trains diverged west, skipping 30th Street (hence North Philly’s importance).





One day at . . . Bolton, Vt.

Photos by Mert Leet



October 1953 found Chicago-area resident Mert Leet on a family vacation in Vermont, amidst the usual splendid fall color. Central Vermont, whose single-track main line bisected the state, was still a heavy user of steam, although it had purchased Alco diesel switchers as early as 1941. Parent Canadian National first assigned diesel cab units to through CV freights in 1953, but the locals were still in the charge of some of the 16 class N-5-a 2-8-0's built by Alco at Schenectady in

the 1920's ["Connecticut's Other Railroad," Winter 2004 CLASSIC TRAINS].

When Mert saw smoke, he'd break from normal sightseeing activities and get trackside (the same was true on business trips in the Midwest). On Friday, October 16, such occurred at Bolton, a small place 54 miles south of the Canadian border and, on the CV, about halfway between stations at Essex Junction (near Burlington) and Montpelier Junction (outside the state capital).

Turns out the local freights were

meeting, and Mert stationed himself at the south switch of the passing siding. First, the southbound, behind engine 470, crept up on the main line and stopped. Soon its northbound counterpart showed up, in the charge of sister 469, and clattered by into the siding. After it passed, the southbound's brakeman realigned the south switch and climbed aboard as the 470 headed out.

With the show at Bolton over, Mert and Mary Leet resumed their "normal vacation activities."—*J. David Ingles*





CV locals meet at Bolton: First the southbound, with 2-8-0 470, eases up on the main and stops (above). Its brakeman lines the south siding switch for its northbound counterpart, which arrives (top) behind sister 469 and takes the siding. After it clears, 470 starts up (left) and the brakeman, having realigned the switch, climbs aboard (right) as the train heads out.



One day at . . .

St. Louis Union Station

By Mike Schafer • Photos by the author

A slide show presented by my friend Jim Boyd one Friday evening in 1965 at the Forest City Model Railroad Club in my hometown of Rockford, Ill., prompted my first trip to what would become one of my favorite big cities: St. Louis, Mo. Jim and a couple of other older club members had driven to St. Louis, and now Jim was wowing us high-schoolers with brilliant Ektachromes of a dizzying variety of trains arriving and departing Union Station, a most amazing railroad terminal to me.

As an east-west gateway, St. Louis in

1965 was still a busy hub for passenger trains arriving and departing in all directions. I already had spent considerable time photographing Chicago's astonishing array of passenger trains, but they were spread out over a half dozen terminals, so what struck me about St. Louis was that everything arrived and departed at one location. (The only other downtown St. Louis end-point rail passenger terminal was that of electric interurban Illinois Terminal, whose last cars ran in 1958.)

Moreover, it was relatively easy to see and photograph nearly all Union



GM&O's Midnight Special, train 5, with its usual pair of E7's up front, makes ready for its 12:25 a.m. (CDT) departure from Chicago Union Station on August 4, 1966, for its overnight journey to St. Louis. As things turned out, the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio was the only one of St. Louis's 10 passenger railroads whose trains we did not photograph during our busy day on two overhead street bridges near Union Station.



Missouri Pacific's *Texas Eagle*, train 2 and the flagship of the St. Louis-based 11,000-mile system, was the third passenger train we photographed. It was due in at 9:30 (all times expressed are Central Daylight). Behind its E7 and two passenger GP9's are 19 cars, from Fort Worth, Alexandria, La., Houston, San Antonio, and Mexico City. The 11th car back is a dome coach. We're looking at the Terminal Railroad Association's (TRRA) coach yard, which served all roads except GM&O, which had its own facility on Union Station's west perimeter. Today this yard site is traversed by St. Louis's light-rail line to the airport, which swings in from the right and heads west; the light-rail shops are beyond the Jefferson Street bridge, seen beyond the coach yard. MP and N&W each carded 12 St. Louis trains.



Norfolk & Western's *St. Louis Limited*, train 3 from Detroit, begins its back-up move into the station with a flagman "tail-hosing" in the vestibule of sleeper *Western Sunset*. Due in at 9:10 via the riverfront "High Line," the overnighter was the first train we shot.



Burlington train 8 from the Twin Cities, once named the *Zephyr Rocket*, arrives an hour or so off its 8:30 schedule as the four units off N&W 3 change station tracks to park for the day. Rock Island handled the train north of Burlington, Iowa; the roads' E units alternated trips.



Louisville & Nashville's *Georgian*, train 92 from Atlanta and Nashville, where it connected with the New Orleans-Chicago (via C&E) *Humming Bird*, pulls in not far off its 9:55 schedule behind an FP7 and an E unit. Only recently had it lost its Atlanta-St. Louis sleeper.

Station arrivals and departures, from the 18th and 21st Street overhead bridges that flanked the depot throat's overlapping double-track wyes. With rare exception, all trains backed into Union Station, which gave you two cracks at photographing a train's arrival.

It wasn't until the following year that I had the means to go to St. Louis, but Union Station still saw 56 trains a day from 10 railroads. A buddy and fellow passenger-train fan, Bill Wagner from nearby Dixon, Ill., and I schemed to pull off a one-day trip. In summer 1966, Thursday was my only day off, and we chose August 4 for the adventure. Since there was no need for a car to photograph around Union Station, and neither of us had access to one anyway for such a long-distance trip, we planned a rail itinerary.

Armed with my brand-new Pentax H1a camera and two 36-exposure rolls of Ektachrome-X (all I could afford), on Wednesday evening, August 3, I rode a Peoria-Rockford Bus Co. motor coach from Rockford to Oregon, Ill., where I joined Bill to board the Burlington's Minneapolis-Chicago *Afternoon Zephyr* at 9:30 p.m. We arrived at Chicago Union Station at 11:20 for a comfortable connection to Gulf, Mobile & Ohio train 5, the *Midnight Special*, due out at 12:25 a.m. Both trains had expanded consists owing to a nationwide airline strike then under way—which would provide extra-interesting consists for us at St. Louis. Our *Midnight Special* had three Pullman sleepers rather than the normal one, although we two impoverished high-school seniors rode coach.

GM&O No. 5 backed in to St. Louis Union Station about 40 minutes after its scheduled 8:30 arrival; we'd been delayed at Springfield, Ill., by loading Army inductees destined for Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. It was a beautiful sunny morning, so we made haste for the 21st Street bridge west of the station for our first targeted departures. The *Official Guide of the Railways* was our "bible," and Bill and I had used one of my *Guides* (which I still have) to list all St. Louis arrivals and departures in order.

Armed with the list, we'd plotted on which bridge we needed to be for the trains we wanted to see the most. For example, we gave high priority to the 9:55 a.m. departure of the *Oklahoman*, the Frisco's "new" day run to Oklahoma City. (When Frisco cut from two trains to one on the route in September 1965 after losing mail contracts, this name replaced the daytime *Will Rogers* and the overnight *Meteor* passed into history.) To us, the Frisco was perhaps the most exotic railroad serving St. Louis,



MP's Missouri River Eagle, train 17, is just a few minutes off its 9:50 departure for Kansas City behind E8 No. 34. Among its six cars is a dome coach. By this time it was the MP-T&P system's only named train besides the *Texas Eagle* and *Aztec Eagle*. Approaching in the distance is Frisco's *Oklahoman*, due out at 9:55 for the Sooner State. The 21st Street bridge, our vantage point here, now is gone.



Frisco's Oklahoman, train No. 1 and our "prize of the day," follows MoPac's *Missouri River Eagle* out behind two of the road's 17 E8's—2017 *Pen-sive* and 2010 *Count Fleet*—which along with SLSF's 6 E7's were all named for horses. The consist is swollen to 12 cars by additional express owing to the airline strike, plus four extra coaches on the rear for Army inductees. Normally the train carried several head-end cars but only two coaches, one of them a coach-buffet-lounge.



New York Central 315 arrived from Cleveland about 10 a.m. behind two E7's. It did not carry passengers west of Indianapolis; a crew rider coach splices the conventional head-end cars and Flexi-Van flats. At left, a TRRA SW1 shuffles an IC RPO and an express boxcar.



N&W's Blue Bird and Wabash Cannon Ball, trains 124 (for Chicago) and 4 (for Detroit), which ran combined to Decatur, Ill., heads out at 10:10 behind a Wabash-painted GP9/E8 duo. The *Blue Bird's* portion of the consist, including a dome parlor car, is forward.

and this train's departure could not be photographed from the 18th Street bridge to the east. Loaded with grounded airline passengers and the inductees from Springfield and other locations, Frisco No. 1 did not disappoint. Its twin red, named E8's, 2017 *Pensive* in the lead, rolled out from the grand trainshed with a 12-car train, including some extra heavyweight cars on the rear for the "Fort Wood"-bound inductees.

Morning arrivals of note that we shot from 21st Street while waiting for the *Oklahoman* included a gigantic Missouri Pacific *Texas Eagle* and Norfolk & Western's Detroit-St. Louis overnight *St. Louis Limited*, which we called the "Wrong Way Wabash" train, whose 10 cars were trailed by blue Wabash Pullman *Western Sunset*. Our monicker for this train stemmed from the fact that it, and its counterpart *Detroit Limited* that left in the evening, were the only Wabash St. Louis trains that bypassed Delmar Station on the city's west side in favor of going via the "High Line" along the (Mississippi) riverfront. This *St. Louis Limited* had one of our day's more notable locomotive consists: an ex-Wabash freight GP7, a freight GP9 still in Nickel Plate livery, an E8 still lettered Wabash, and an original (though now blue) N&W passenger GP9. Unbeknownst to us, the two freight Geeps would haul us north later that day.

After the 10:15 departure of N&W's *City of Kansas City*, we went over to, and spent the remainder of the morning on, the 18th Street bridge for the better sun angle, then took a break during the noontime lull to check out the grandeur of Union Station itself and snag some food at the depot lunch counter. We traipsed back to 21st Street for the early afternoon hours.

Not every train we photographed hauled passengers. Both bridges, as well as a pedestrian overpass, crossed TRRA freight tracks and MoPac's 23rd Street yard, enabling photography of freight activity. We shot some MP EMD GP18's moving, but for me, the freight catch of the day was the arrival of a New York Central-MoPac run-through from Indianapolis with a quartet of NYC F7's.

The afternoon was rippling with train movements of all sorts, and at one point I shot a scene in which all five items visible were moving [page 59]! A highlight of the afternoon arrivals was the newly extended (from Cincinnati) *George Washington*, now a joint venture of affiliated Chesapeake & Ohio-Baltimore & Ohio. The *George's* shiny and clean blue, yellow, and stainless-steel consist was a standout among its peers.



N&W's *City of Kansas City*, train 203, with an airline-strike-boosted consist of nine cars behind freight GP30 552, followed the *Blue Bird/Cannon Ball* out by five minutes. Like all but one N&W outbounds, it will first stop at Delmar Station on St. Louis's west side.



New York Central's *Southwestern*, train 312 for Cleveland (with through cars for New York), leaves at 10:45 with seven cars behind its E8A/E7B power. We have walked east from the 21st Street bridge to the 18th Street bridge for the rest of the morning.



Pennsylvania's *Penn Texas*, train 4 for New York departing at 11 a.m., has a nice E8A-E7B-E8A trio as power as it swings around and under 18th Street. We're unaware, but the two N&W Geeps in back (one in blue, one in Nickel Plate colors), will take us to Chicago later.



Illinois Central train 101, the St. Louis-Carbondale (Ill.) connection with through coaches for the daily *City of New Orleans* and every-other-day (including today) *City of Miami*, gets out on-time at 11:20 a.m. with E7 4009 and five cars passing TRRA's Tower A.

Union Station's semi-circular ticket counter was one of the attractions for us during the midday lull of trains when we took a break to look around the huge terminal and grab a bite of lunch. We also stepped across Market Street for the fountains photo (page 50).



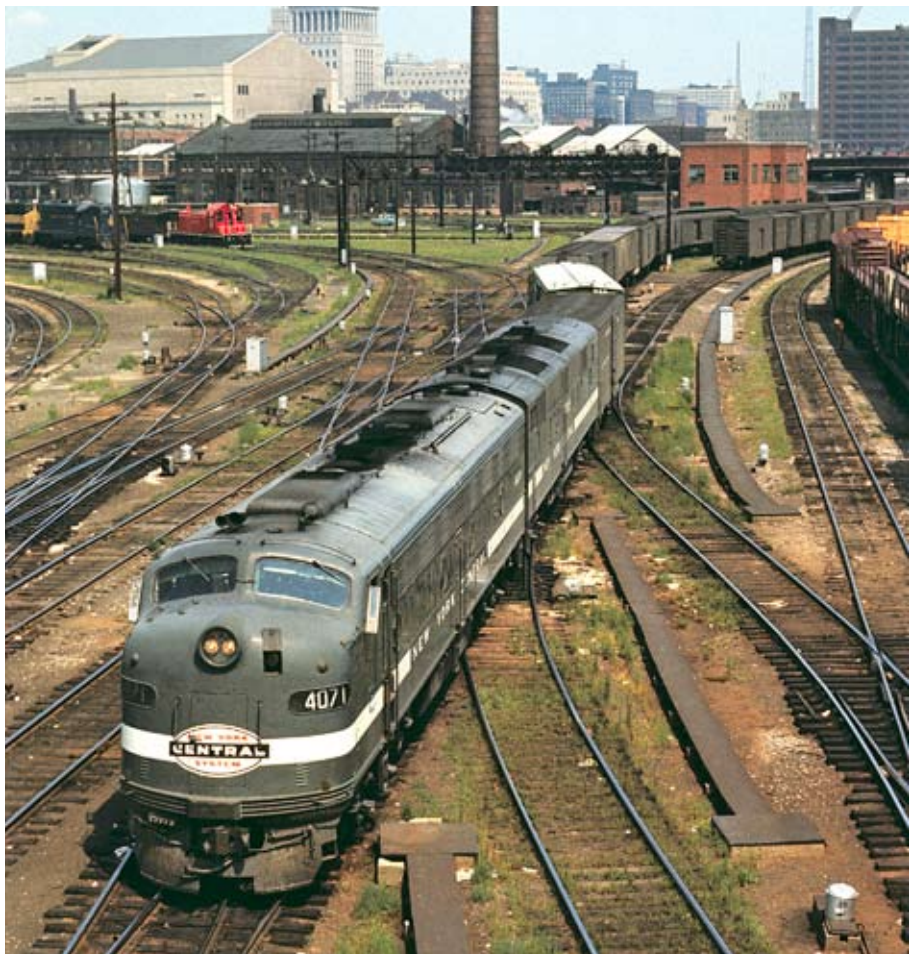
B&O's *Metropolitan*, train 11 from Washington, advertised as “primarily a mail train” and scheduled in at 8:25 a.m., was at least three hours late when it finally showed up with 14 cars behind E8's 1446 and 1442. That's the 21st Street bridge at the far left.

Counting the train we departed on, during our 8½ hours on “sentry duty” we photographed 22 passenger trains from nine railroads. Ironically, the one road whose trains we missed was GM&O. We shot only our *Midnight Special's* front end the night before in Chicago, and we had to forsake the 9:58 a.m. St. Louis departure of the *Abraham Lincoln* so we could get the *Oklahoman*, a small price to pay to shoot a road whose passenger trains would be extinct by the end of the following year.

For excitement, the award went to Illinois Central's *Green Diamond* from Chicago, which pulled up to our vantage point, stopped to make its reverse move into the station—and promptly caught



PRR's *Spirit of St. Louis*, train 31 due in from New York at 12:50, has three E's and 15 cars as it passes the site of today's Amtrak station in this view from the 18th Street bridge.



NYC's *Knickerbocker*, train 341 from Cleveland with cars from New York, toddles in about an hour after its 2:40 scheduled arrival, soon after MoPac 15 left at 3:30 (page 59).



IC's Green Diamond, train 21 from Chicago, was late when it pulled up—only to have a fire erupt in the E9's steam-generator area, setting back its station arrival as well as its 3:40 departure as 22. It was due in at 2:40, an hour after PRR's *Spirit of St. Louis* (not pictured) left.



A run-through freight off New York Central from Indianapolis, which showed up soon after NYC's *Knickerbocker* arrived, rolls through MoPac's 23rd Street freight yard south of TRRA's station-area main line. For me, its F7A's were the day's non-passenger highlight.



B&O's George Washington, train 1 from Washington (via Chesapeake & Ohio) and Cincinnati, backs in close to its scheduled 3:20 arrival time. Two B&O E8's are up front, but most of the rear passenger-carrying cars in its 12-car consist are from partner C&O.



MP 15, a nameless train to Kansas City, had two E7's and 11 cars (an RPO and one coach on the rear), when it left on-time at 3:30. We missed the 2 p.m. departure of MP 3, a similar train to Texas, and did not see N&W 210, the *City of St. Louis*, due in at 3:55 from Los Angeles.



IC 108 from Carbondale, a connection off the *Creole*, backs in near its 3:30 due time with an E7 and seven cars, as two TRRA switchers, a set of PRR E's, and the two N&W Geeps for our *Banner Blue* all move at once! IC 108 was the last train we shot before heading for the station.



MoPac GP18's in the yard broke the "passenger monotony" as a set of six rolled west under the 21st Street bridge about 2 p.m.

fire! A good 20 minutes passed before the problem was doused and the train was allowed to back in.

Our afternoon got cut short by the fact that I had to be at work the next morning at 7, precluding a full day's stay in St. Louis that would have ended with a return ride on the *Midnight Special*. Consequently, our fast trip home began at 4 p.m. on N&W's *Banner Blue*, and by 9:30 we were in Chicago's Dearborn Station, arriving simultaneously



PRR's Penn Texas, train 3 from New York due in at 3:30, backs in a tad early. During our 8½-hour visit, we missed seeing or shooting just six trains: N&W 210 and mixed 214 from Council Bluffs, plus GM&O's "Abe," B&O's "George," MP 3, and IC's *Green Diamond* departing.

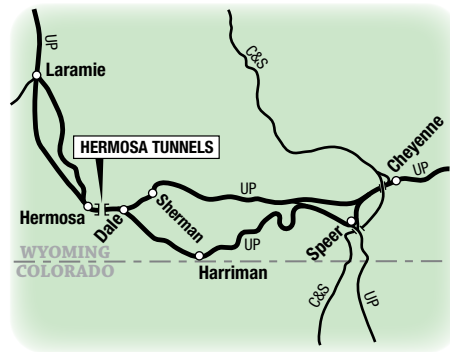
with Santa Fe's *Chicagoan* from Dallas behind E units. An hour later we were out of Union Station on Burlington's overnight combined *Blackhawk-Main-streeter-Western Star* for the 99-minute ride back to Oregon, Ill., where we arrived shortly after midnight. At that late hour, there were no connecting buses to Rockford, so Jim Boyd—who inspired the trip to begin with—came down to give me a lift home as Bill's parents gave him a ride back to Dixon.

I would return to St. Louis many times, including a few more occasions in 1966, but that inaugural trip easily remains my most memorable. Interestingly, on August 4, 1991—25 years to the day later—I was, by coincidence, invited to the Gateway City by the Terminal Railroad Association Historical Society to present a program. Central to it was the two boxes of slides from the first trip, including some of the images you see here. **1**



Sherman Hill, Monday, August 5, 1974: For author Harrop, this was the final day of a three-day visit, an annual pilgrimage he began in 1970 and kept up until 1985. To kick off the 4½-hour interlude these photos depict, in mid-morning he sat down above the twin Hermosa Tunnels' west portals to shoot Amtrak's *San Francisco Zephyr*, trains 5 and 6. But first, at 11 a.m., a long intermodal train (above) came east with a GP30, two DD units, an SD40, and a GP20. Soon Amtrak 6 appeared (right), with two new SDP40F's as power and a UP business car on the rear.





One day at . . .

Hermosa, Wyo.

By Doug Harrop • Photos by the author

When Lucius Beebe, the noted historian-photographer-writer, wrote in the June 1952 *TRAINS* magazine about the magic of railroading on Sherman Hill in eastern Wyoming, it was strong stuff for this pre-teen railfan, for I was familiar with the Union Pacific to the west, in Weber (WEE-ber) Canyon, Utah. Why, the passenger trains Beebe described storming

west out of Cheyenne and climbing to the 8,000-foot summit at Sherman were the same ones Dad and I watched at Ogden Union Station! Oh, how I wanted to see them on those high Wyoming plains, but during that Korean War period, Sherman was a world away, and for me would remain so.

By September 1957, I had a driver's license and my own car, earned by working long summer hours in the Ogden Valley hayfields. Before high-school football practice started on a Monday, I set out for a weekend in Wyoming. I would finally reach Sherman Hill. After spending an exhilarating day at Granger, junction of the Oregon Short Line with UP's main line, I threw my sleeping bag down 50 yards from the tracks just east of Green River. UP was once again using a dozen of its famous Big Boy steam locomotives between Green River and Cheyenne to protect the fall perishable rush, so all night long, the trains pounded upgrade, headed by steam; sets of F3, F7, and GP9 diesels; or gas-turbines. Talk about variety! I didn't sleep much.

By the next afternoon I was being mesmerized by the same parade of trains and motive power as they climbed eastbound out of Rock River, northwest of Laramie. I thought about football





starting the next day, though, and realized I would not make it to Sherman Hill this trip.

I finally first saw Sherman Hill in July 1960 . . . from a locomotive cab! I'd boarded No. 104, the *City of Los Angeles* streamliner, to begin a trip to Boston (east of Chicago, I rode New York Central's *New England States*). At Evanston, Wyo., I followed the prompting of my neighbor, a UP engineer, and ran up to the locomotive. I yelled up to the hoghead, "Hey, you know Wells Stoker?" "Sure," he replied. "He said you would give me a cab ride," I said, full of hope. "Well, climb on up," he yelled back.

It was my first cab ride, and what a trip. Twice we topped 100 mph on the fast track east of Rock Springs and Rawlins. After the same verbal exchange as in Evanston, at the next crew change I found myself still aboard the lead E

unit. Soon we were swinging around the big curve out of Laramie, so my first visit to Sherman Hill would be in the cab. It was almost too good to be true.

I saw Sherman in the gathering dusk, and what I remember most are the signboards of the fabled stations: Hermosa, Dale, Buford, Borie, and so on, by then just sidings, mostly, but filled with trains, generally eastbounds, in the clear for the varnish. Through the Hermosa tunnel we went, and on to Dale Junction. It was all a blur, but a wondrous one. All day I'd been looking for steam, but finally a crewman told me all the steam was stored, available if needed for the fall rush. It wasn't used—1959 had been UP steam's last year. I was grateful for my 1957 trip.

I climbed off the engine at Cheyenne, very hungry, wondering how much farther east I could have ridden. Probably

not much. By then, I'll bet no one would have heard of Wells Stoker. Still, it had been quite a ride.

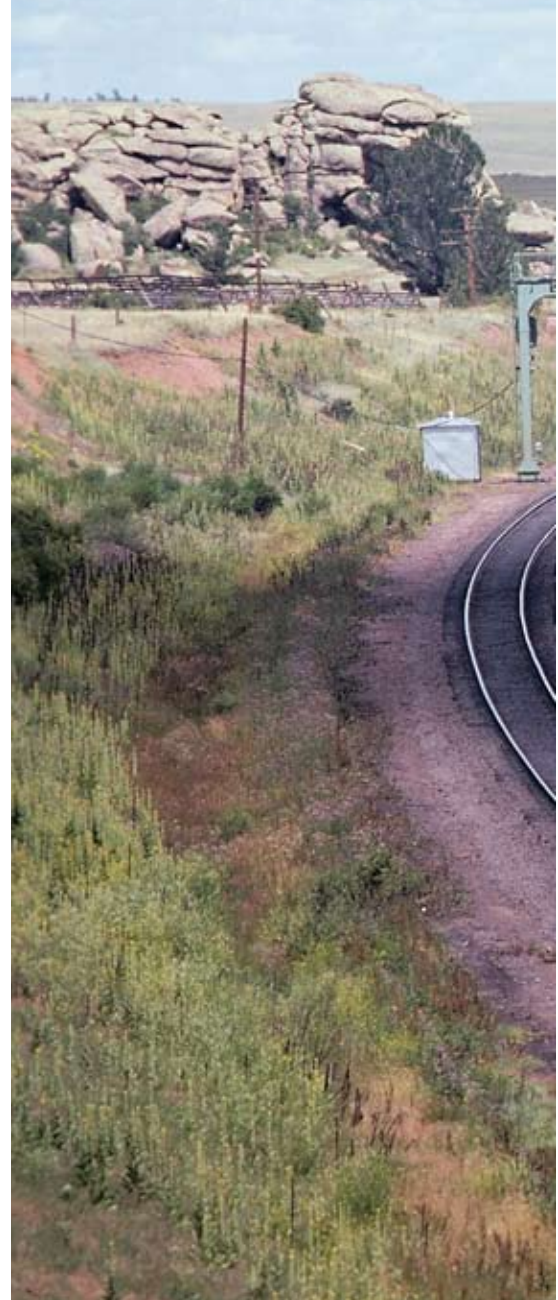
On the ground on Sherman Hill, at last

I finally made my first visit on the ground to Sherman Hill in 1970. It is a unique place, not like the other great mountain crossings in the West. It is boulder-strewn, desolate, high country with its own beauty, vastness, and charm. Trains must work hard to cross the summit, then and now. The grades, only 0.82 percent eastbound at Hermosa, coupled with the incessant winds and the seemingly never-ending parade of trains, immediately made it a "favorite place" for me. I revisited Hermosa and east to Dale Junction for several days every year until 1985, when to me, the interesting motive power was gone.

Waiting on the bluff above one of the



As expected, not long after the eastbound *San Francisco Zephyr* passed, westbound counterpart No. 5 (top left) popped out of the tunnel. After the Amtraks, Harrop set up facing the east portals and was rewarded with a flurry of 10 trains. First was Extra 855 East (left center) with a GP30, two SD40's, and an SD45 on a boxcar train. On his block was Extra 6913 East (above) with more boxcars behind two Centennials. The rear of the next train, Extra 3276 West (left), a run-through to Western Pacific at Salt Lake City, had two classic UP cabooses behind trailers whose blue U.S. Mail placards identified this hotshot as the OMW, Overland Mail West.



Following the OMW was another hot train for WP, the “Ford Fast” (top left), bound for the auto plant at Milpitas, Calif., with three WP GP’s among its six units. Harrop crossed to the north side of the cut, just in time for the best consist of the day, on Extra 3629 East (center left): two SD45’s, one of them SP; two DD35B’s; and a GP9B. As the caboose cleared, a third WP train showed up (left): UP 3074 West with a UP SD40 and four WP units. On his block was Extra 6912 West (above), two 6900’s with another UP office car, this one right behind the power, a better place than the rear for handling in a freight train.



Hermosa tunnel portals was an amazing experience. During that decade-plus, any one of two dozen locomotive models might be leading a train out of the bores. Imagine the anticipation. To me, there was nothing like it anywhere else, and the best catches were the “double units.” The GE U50C’s were used on the point as late as 1974, and back in consists until 1976. The earlier U50’s (a.k.a. U50D’s) were retired by 1973, and the unique Alco C855 trio, built in 1964, was gone by 1970, but the EMD DD35’s and DDA40X Centennials all lasted into the 1980’s.

For my “one day” at the Hermosa tunnels, I’ve selected Monday, August 5, 1974, the final day of a three-day visit. (At the time, I was in my seventh year as a Southern Pacific official.) I broke camp down at the Hermosa county road grade crossing and shot a few morning

trains prior to the selection of photos you see in these pages, all of which were taken between 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. I sat down above the tunnels’ west portals to shoot Amtrak’s *San Francisco Zephyr*, trains 5 and 6, running daily through Wyoming at this time. First, a long intermodal train came through, Extra 841 East with a GP30, two double units, an SD40, and a GP20. It would probably take the No. 2 main track at Dale Junction to free up the No. 1 main for Amtrak 6, close on its tail.

A UP business car brought up the rear of Amtrak 6, which meant the engineer would have to be on his “A” game, as it was not unheard of for a UP vice president to call the hogger on the radio from the business car to comment on any slack action at the rear. (This comes from first-hand experience. In 1977, I’d entered engine service for SP at Ogden,

and I had pulled my share of “brass” in office cars who, either on the radio or while riding in the engine, never hesitated to remind the engineer of who they were. It was when they asked to run the train that often they were brought down a peg or two, as these instances sometimes would end with the official jumping up from the right-hand seat, saying, “Maybe you better run this thing.”)

As expected, Amtrak 5 soon popped out of the tunnel. It probably had come up from Cheyenne on the “new” (1953) No. 3 main to Dale so nothing was delayed. With CTC and three mains between Dale and Cheyenne, the dispatcher had several options. The SDP40F’s on the *Zephyr* were new, and some immediately entered service at Chicago on this train. During my earlier visits, these trains were still hauled mostly by



To work another angle, Harrop next went to track level for an eastbound leaving the tunnel, which turned out to be Extra 2880 East, with a fairly new U30C in the lead on a lumber train off the SP at Ogden. After firing a telephoto coming-on view (top left), he moved away from the track for a going-away shot of the power (top center), and soon Extra 1401 West rolled around the curve at him (above). As the trains passed on each side of him, he vowed—railroad employee or not—he'd never be caught in that position again. The conductor in the SP caboose of the 2880 East just gave him a bemused look.

former Union Pacific E units.

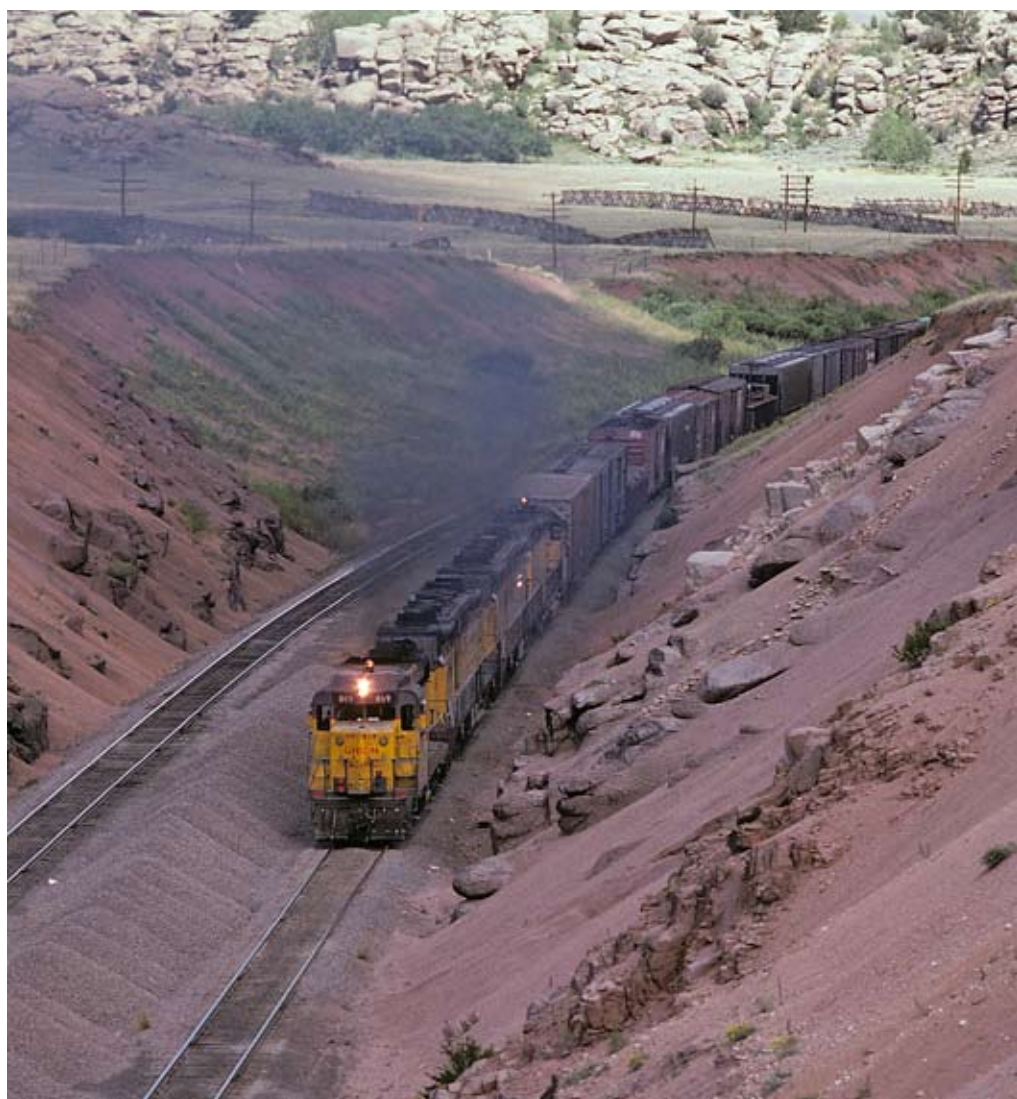
I next set up at the east portals of the 1,800-foot tunnels, and after the Amtraks were gone, was rewarded with a flurry of 10 trains. Interesting to me was the types of trains that did *not* pass—no coal, soda ash, green fruit, ore, or automobiles, mostly just general merchandise. First was Extra 855 East with a GP30, two SD40's, and an SD45 on boxcars. On his block was Extra 6913 East with more boxcars behind two Centennials.

The rear of the next train, Extra 3276 West, a run-through to the Western Pacific at Salt Lake City, had two classic UP cabooses behind trailers whose blue U.S. Mail placards identified this hot-shot as the OMW, Overland Mail West. A second WP train, the "Ford Fast" for the auto plant at Milpitas, Calif., followed with three WP GP's among the

six units. During the late 1960's and early '70's, these WP trains—as well as many Southern Pacific run-throughs and those to the east with other roads—often had a "foreign road" unit leading, but by 1974, a UP unit would almost always be the leader to comply with cab-signal rules.

Best consist of the day

I crossed over to the north side of the cut, and out came the best consist of the day, on Extra 3629 East: two SD45's, one of them SP; two DD35B's; and a GP9B. This illustrates why I loved the UP on Sherman Hill—variety! UP had only 50 SD45's and 27 cableless DD35's, and on some days it seemed like they all passed through Hermosa. Just as the caboose cleared, here came a third WP train in a row, a westbound running as UP 3074 West with four WP units—one



EMD and three GE's—trailing the UP SD40. During this recession year, you could drive along the WP across western Utah and Nevada and be lucky to see a single WP train (SP's, though, were frequent on the paired track), yet here were three westbound WP's in a row! On 3074's block came Extra 6912 West, two Centennials with another business car right behind the power, a placement that aided train-handling.

Next I went to track level to shoot an eastbound leaving the tunnel, Extra 2880 East, with a fairly new U30C in the lead. Bought mainly to haul coal out of the Hanna, Wyo., coalfields, this GE was leading a heavy lumber train

off the SP at Ogden, likely from Eugene, Ore., to judge by the consist. The 2880 had been added at Ogden to an SP SD40 and two SD45's that likely brought it in from the west. After firing telephoto coming-on views, I stepped away from the track for a going-away shot of the power, and soon Extra 1401 West rolled around the curve at me. The lead unit was rare, an SDP35, one of just 10 on UP, so this was a nice catch. Despite the wide track centers here—the tunnels were bored in 1901 and 1918—I vowed I'd never be caught in this position again! At least the conductor in the SP caboose just gave me a bemused look, not realizing, of course, that I was a railroad employee, albeit of the SP.

So, I headed to the top of the tunnel, where I shot the last train of my visit, Extra 869 West, a GP30 leading two DD-35B's and an SDP35. It was nearing 4

Harrop's last train photos of the day, from above the tunnels, were of Extra 869 West, a GP30 leading two DD35B's and an SDP35.

p.m., time to begin the 400-mile drive back to Ogden. This three-day visit was no different from a lot of others I spent on the hill, and this was just a typical day. I saw a variety of power, and although none of the older double units was on the point, the elegant Centennials made up for that.

At this time the country was in a recession, stressing many eastern railroads financially, but on Union Pacific on Wyoming's fabled Sherman Hill, it was just business as usual, and big business at that. Despite the lack of steam, I would wager that even Lucius Beebe would have been impressed, and I was already looking forward to visiting again in 1975! 📷

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See clips from Herron Rail Video's program *Rails West* of Union Pacific mainline turbine and diesel action at ClassicTrainsMag.com



Approaching Pimienta (above), ex-Nickel Plate 2-8-2 2211 and NdeM original GR-34 class 2-8-0 1414, with 58-inch driving wheels, work hard up a 1.5 percent grade.

Helper engine 2210 shows off its custom-painted "face" at Victor Rosales, awaiting a southbound train it will help to Zacatecas. Locomotives and crews were usually assigned together, and crews would decorate their charges, often with stars, flags, and cast eagles, or combinations thereof.

In a prelude to the top photo, helper 2211 (far right) prepares to back up at Victor Rosales and couple onto 2-8-0 1414, coming up the main line with the southbound freight.





One day at . . .

Zacatecas, Mexico

By Stan Kistler • Photos by the author



In January and February 1960, I had spent almost five weeks photographing Mexican steam with friends Harold Stewart and Phil Kauke. Traveling by car from our homes in Pasadena, Calif., we had covered about 7,000 miles down to Mexico City, Puebla, and Veracruz in central Mexico, and back. The items we saw and photographed made us realize we'd have to go back to cover what we'd missed, or had been able to see only briefly.

Thus in that following autumn, I once again found myself in Mexico in search of *la locomotora de vapor*, the steam locomotives of the Mexican National Railways (NdeM, Nacionales de Mexico), which still were abundant on almost all lines in the central and southern portions of the country. My first big goal was the city of Zacatecas in central Mexico, summit of a grade in each direction on the Mexico City–Ciudad

Juarez main line. I spent the entire day of Wednesday, October 26, 1960, there, photographing trains.

This trip began on October 22; I was in the company of fellow railfan and Santa Fe railroader Warren Sattley. We loaded my 1959 Ford F-150 truck with food, water, spare tires, film, and several still and movie cameras, plus a tape recorder. We had planned on three weeks, taking our time to visit spots I had missed on the previous trip, and which Warren had never seen, or spending more time where the steam railroading was especially good.

We left Pasadena in the early morning and made it to Willcox, Ariz., east of Tucson, for our first overnight stop. The following day we crossed the border from El Paso into Ciudad Juarez, and that evening we were settled in our motel in the city of Chihuahua, capital city of its namesake Mexican state 230



Still on the 1.5 percent grade, the 2211 and 1414 are working hard near El Bote. GR-34 class 1414 was one of 55 Cooke 2-8-0's of 1902-03.



At El Grillo, the 2211 and 1414 are only about a mile and a half from the summit. Freights typically ran only about 2,000 tons on this grade.



miles south of El Paso/Juarez.

The next morning we were out shooting the Ferrocarril Mineral de Chihuahua, a 14-mile, 3-foot-gauge line that employed little oil-burning 2-8-0's, hauling lead and zinc ore between an aerial tramway at Santa Eulalia and a smelter at Avalos, outside Chihuahua. We got some great shots of this little line, which still used link-and-pin couplers and whose brakemen rode the cars, setting brakes on the downgrade on the loaded trains.

We left Chihuahua that afternoon, and that evening we were in Parral, a reasonable distance—about 250 miles—north of Zacatecas, our planned destination the following day.

The city of Zacatecas is the capital of the state of the same name and is at an elevation of 8,075 feet. Its importance to me, from a railroad standpoint, was that it was the summit of an NdeM helper district in both directions, north and south. Doubleheaded steam on a mountain grade seemed appealing, reminding me of my great times in earlier years on the Tehachapi grade and the Cajon Pass in California.

This line through Zacatecas, completed in 1884 as the Mexican Central, led northwest out of Mexico City to Juarez via Queretaro, Irapuato, Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, Torreon, and Chihuahua. In fall 1960 it hosted two daily passenger trains and about six freights

Consolidation helper 1582 and road engine 2-8-2 2209 approach Zacatecas from the south (above). Soon, the helper cuts off (right) and heads for Victor Rosales, as the Mike waits for its turn to follow downhill.

in each direction. The passenger trains were diesel-hauled, but the freights were 100 percent steam south of Felipe Pescador, a division point about 70 miles north of Zacatecas. Moreover, the locomotives were predominantly 2-8-0 and 2-8-2 types from two U.S. roads, the Chicago & North Western and the Nickel Plate.

NdeM's GR-43 class 2-8-0's were formerly of C&NW's Z, or "Zulu," class, with various road numbers between 1458 and 1898. Built around 1910 by Baldwin and American, they were declared surplus by C&NW in 1942-43. A total of 37 went to NdeM and were put in series 1550-1586. They had 61-inch drivers and carried 185 pounds boiler pressure.

The former Nickel Plate 2-8-2's, 25 in number, became class KR-3 after purchase by NdeM in 1945-46 and were put into series 2200-2224. They had 63-inch drivers and carried 200 pounds boiler pressure. On the NKP, they had been class H-6; Baldwin and Lima had built them, and some were of the USRA standardized design of 1918. I should note that Nacionales de Mexico's 1946-built QR-1 class 4-8-4's, which attracted



many American visitors, were rarely seen on this line, being kept mainly on the routes from Valle de Mexico (Mexico City) to Escobedo and Irapuato, only occasionally straying north as far as Aguascalientes for shop work.

NdeM's Central Division (Aguascalientes Subdivision, Zacatecas District) spanned 140 miles south from Felipe Pescador to the city of Aguascalientes, where the system's major steam locomotive shops were located. Southward from Felipe Pescador, the line climbed on a gentle 0.5-percent grade to Victor Rosales, where a steady climb of 1.5 percent began for 18.6 miles to reach the summit at Zacatecas. Likewise, northbound trains started out of Aguascalientes on a light 0.5-percent grade until reaching Barrioazabal, where the



28.5-mile, 1.5-percent climb to Zacatecas commenced toward the summit.

Leaving either Felipe Pescador or Aguascalientes, the ex-C&NW 2-8-0's and ex-NKP 2-8-2's could handle trains of 2,000–2,100 tons toward Zacatecas, but at the foot of the 1.5-percent portions in either direction, this tonnage rating was reduced by more than half to reach the summit. Thus, helpers of either class were stationed at Victor Rosales on the north and at Barriozabal on the south. At Zacatecas, helpers would cut off and run light in either direction to where they'd be needed next.

Our all-day effort on October 26 was rewarded with doubleheaders of various combinations of the 2-8-0's and 2-8-2's, as both road engines and helpers. The big surprise was on a southbound in the early afternoon, whose road engine, 2003, was an ancient Baldwin 2-6-6-2 Mallet, built in 1911! Slogging upgrade with 2-8-0 1552 as its helper, the 2003 made an imposing sight (and sound). I later learned it had been running out its miles (flue time) in captive service between Felipe Pescador and Aguascalientes, where its frequent ailments could be expertly tended to.

This afternoon at Zacatecas got our three-week trip off to a fine start. The following day we moved on south toward Mexico City, looking forward to the steam locomotives we would encounter, both standard and narrow gauge. We were not to be disappointed. Mexico in 1960 was an exciting adventure for us steam-locomotive fans who managed to get there. 📌



The serendipity of the day occurred in the afternoon, an encounter with ancient 2-6-6-2 Mallet 2003 as road engine on a southbound, being helped by 2-8-0 1552. After rounding a curve (top and middle), the doubleheader neared the summit at Zacatecas (above).