

THE MIDWEST CHALLENGER SPECIAL

Saturday, November 7, 1992

Kansas City

Sedalia

Jefferson City

Washington, Mo.

St. Louis

Sponsored by the St. Louis Chapter, National Railway Historical Society
In Cooperation with Union Pacific Railroad

Welcome Aboard!

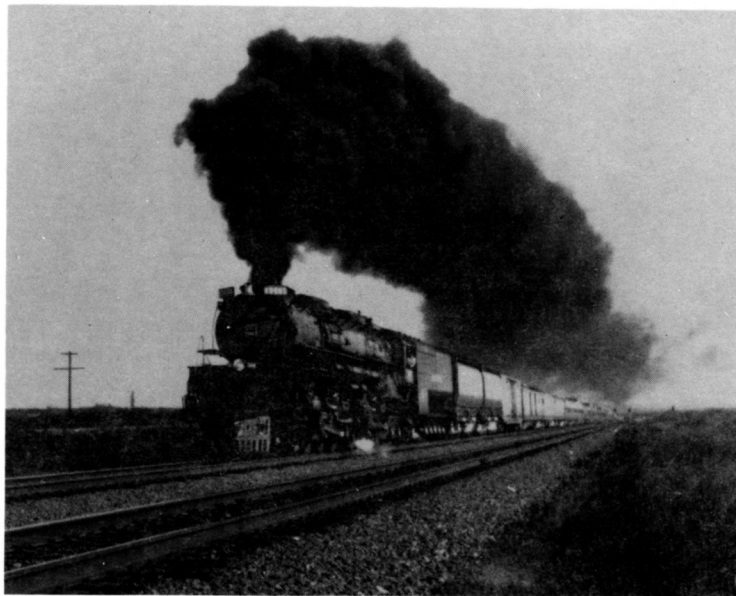
Your hosts in the St. Louis Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS), along with the members of the St. Louis Steam Train Association, and Union Pacific Railroad, welcome you aboard this special steam-powered excursion train.

Today's excursion is powered by the world's largest operating steam locomotive, Union Pacific 3985. Built in 1942 by the American Locomotive Company of Schenectady, N.Y. for the Union Pacific, the 3985 was a powerful workhorse pulling freight trains across the railroad's rugged territory in the West.

Our trip today is also part of the 1992 Union Pacific Steam Excursion Program, the nation's oldest continuous program of steam-powered rail passenger excursions. Of all American railroads, only Union Pacific never

fully retired its entire steam locomotive roster, maintaining its big Northern-type locomotive no. 844 (formerly 8444) in service without retirement to the present day. Later, the 3985, the world's only operating Challenger-type, was returned to service through restoration.

We are pleased and privileged to host this unusual late autumn steam excursion, made possible as the 3985 heads east onto the CSX system to pull the 50th anniversary trip of the **Santa Claus Special** on the former Clinchfield Railroad in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee. Sincere thanks to Union Pacific Railroad for its generous cooperation in making this very special excursion possible.



Union Pacific 3985 with a special excursion for the Union Pacific Historical Society convention earlier this year. Photo courtesy Union Pacific Historical Museum.

For Your Safety and Comfort

Safety First! These are the two most important words on the railroad, and they should be your two most important words today, too. For safety's sake:

- * **Always watch your step!** Be especially careful...
- * Getting on or off the train, or
- * When walking about the train or between cars.

- * At stops, watch your footing on uneven ground, gravel, and track ballast stone.
- * Always step **over**, *never* on top of, a rail.
- * Always **walk**, *never* run.
- * Keep your head, hands and arms fully inside the train at all times!

- * If you get a wind-blown particle in your eye in a vestibule area or while in the baggage car, do not rub the eye. Let the eye's natural watering action remove the particle.
- * A medical team is on board. **For medical assistance, contact any crew member.**
- * Children should not play in the aisles.
- * Packages, camera bags, suitcases etc. must be kept out of aisles and off seats. Please use the overhead baggage racks.
- * Union Pacific does not permit coolers to be brought aboard the train. Your cooperation is appreciated.
- * Please always follow the instructions of your car host or other NRHS or railroad crew members, especially at photo stops.
- * No sandals, thongs or bare feet permitted. We reserve the right to insist on appropriate, safe footwear.
- * **Alcoholic beverages may not be brought aboard or consumed on the train, nor anywhere on railroad property.**

THE FIRST RAILROAD WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI



"A Service Institution"

1928 logo

Your trip today on Union Pacific Railroad's Sedalia Subdivision will take you over one of the most historic rail routes in North America: the oldest operating locomotive-hauled common carrier railroad west of

the Mississippi River. Railroading, so crucial to the settlement and development of the American West, began in the trans-Mississippi West on this line.

To the Pacific!

The year 1848 brought two events which were crucial to western expansion and railroad development: the annexation of California by the United States from Mexico as a result of the treaty between the two countries concluding the Mexican War; and the discovery of gold in California. Pressure mounted to find an easier and faster way west. The 49ers, as they would come to be called, wanted a fast route to the gold fields; farmers and ranchers had their eyes on the rich prairie soils and vast grasslands. Most importantly, the government wanted to tie the developing country together, lest it split in two. Until this time the main transportation choices to the Pacific coast were a long sea voyage around South America, Atlantic and Pacific voyages combined with a gruelling and dangerous trek across the Central American isthmus, or the long overland journey across the new lands west of the Mississippi.

Business and civic leaders in St. Louis concluded they could provide the vital service, make a profit, and promote the city by building a railroad westward. Accordingly, in February 1848, Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton submitted a plan to Congress for a railroad to the Pacific from St. Louis. It was only one of a number of such plans at the time, and was in fact one of the least practical. Benton had become smitten with the idea that a line directly west from St. Louis across

the Rocky Mountains and on the Pacific coast was the most desirable. While the line across Missouri and Kansas was not particularly problematical, Benton's proposed route would have taken the line across some of the most rugged sections of Rockies in Colorado, rather than skirting them to the north or south, as in other plans.

Nonetheless, the Missouri Legislature, focusing as much on local needs within the state as the broader goals of a railroad to the Pacific coast, chartered the Pacific Railroad of Missouri on March 12, 1849. Thomas Allen, an energetic St. Louis businessman, was named president of the road. Its charter was to build from St. Louis west to Jefferson City and on to near Kansas City, with an ultimate goal of reaching the Pacific coast.

Early Development

On July 4, 1851, amid a great celebration that included parades, fireworks and speeches, St. Louis Mayor Luther Kennett broke ground for the Pacific Railroad just south and east of present-day St. Louis Union Station. Actual construction got underway very quickly, and within a year more than five miles of track had been laid to Cheltenham. Common wisdom at the time was that the mighty Mississippi River would never be bridged, so James Kirkwood, chief engineer of the railroad envisioned a completely independent railroad with no connection to the railroads of the east. Based upon this presumption, he recommended that the track be laid with a gauge of 5 feet 6 inches instead of the soon-to-be "standard gauge" of 4 feet 8½ inches.

On August 20, 1852, the first locomotive of the Pacific Railroad arrived at St. Louis by steamboat. It was appropriately named the *Pacific*, and assigned the number 3. History was made on December 9, 1852 when the locomotive pulled two coaches over the first five miles to Cheltenham – the first locomotive-hauled train west of the Mississippi River.

Further work progressed quickly. Less than a year after the first operation, the rails had been pushed almost 30 miles to Franklin, today known as Pacific. Railroad operations between Franklin and St. Louis began

immediately. However, in reaching Franklin the railroad made a serious mistake which affects operations even today.

The Route West From St. Louis

The original route survey approved by chief engineer Kirkwood took the line northwest out of St. Louis along Deer Creek, through the present-day communities of Ladue and Creve Coeur, past Creve Coeur Lake, and then along the Missouri River west to Jefferson City. Under pressure from landowners and hoping for a more direct route, the Pacific's management decided instead to build the line westward from St. Louis over the divide between the River Des Peres and Meramec River valleys to what is today the city of Kirkwood. From there, the line dropped down into the Meramec River valley to Franklin, where it then left the Meramec valley to cross another divide to reach the Missouri River. This route, shorter in mileage but harder to build and operate, resulted in two steep grades and operating conditions which would hamper the railroad to the present day.

The more notable of these two grades is Kirkwood Hill, crossing the ridge between the River Des Peres and Meramec River watersheds. Halfway down the western side of the hill, two tunnels were constructed at Barretts, the present site of the National Museum of Transport. These tunnels, the first built west of the Mississippi, still exist today on the museum grounds. Due to their early date of construction, they were soon undersized as locomotives and cars grew in size, and they restricted the size of locomotives allowed on the line.

Construction over the other divide, between the Meramec and the Missouri River valleys at Gray Summit, also required heavy grades. As a result, construction between Franklin and Washington, Mo., a distance of 17 miles, took 19 months to complete. The rails finally reached Washington on February 11, 1855. Construction along the Missouri River, where a low water-level gradient made work much easier, moved along handsomely. Progress was so rapid that by November 1855 the tracks had reached Jefferson City, the state capital.

The Gasconade Disaster

The haste to operate the first train to the capital city led to miscalculation and the Pacific Railroad's first major tragedy. On the morning of November 1, 1855 locomotive no. 8, the *Missouri*, was coupled to fourteen coaches and left Hermann for Jefferson City. The train

was filled with St. Louis civic leaders and other prominent people traveling to ceremonies at Jefferson City. The main span of the Gasconade River bridge had been completed, but the approach spans had not. In order to meet the deadline for the special train, temporary trestles were hastily built. As the *Missouri* entered the east approach span, the temporary trestle failed. The locomotive made it over the first section, but the first eight coaches did not, pulling the locomotive backwards and into the river. In all, 31 people were killed, and another 70 injured. Among the fatalities were Thomas O'Sullivan, James Kirkwood's successor as chief engineer, prominent St. Louis businessmen Henry Chouteau and E.C. Yost, and several state legislators. The injured included St. Louis Mayor Washington King, then-Congressman Luther Kennett, and Hudson Bridge, president of the Pacific Railroad. Clean-up after the accident and the subsequent rebuilding of the bridge approaches delayed the arrival of the first train in Jefferson City until March 13, 1856.

The Impact of the Civil War

The Missouri River turns to the northwest at Jefferson City, but to achieve a more direct route to Kansas City the Pacific built straight west across Missouri's great rolling western prairie. By May 14, 1858 the rails had extended 25 miles to California, Missouri. Tipton was reached on July 26, and on August 1 they had reached another six miles to Syracuse, 168 miles from St. Louis. Sedalia was attained by February 1, 1861 and Dresden became the western terminus on May 10.

But progress soon slowed due to the Civil War. The Pacific passed through a part of the state active with raids by Confederate forces. For this reason the track beyond Tipton was rarely used, and Tipton was considered the end of the line. In 1861 forces led by pro-Confederate Missouri governor C.F. Jackson partially destroyed the Osage and Gasconade River bridges, and tore up track west of Jefferson City. Despite Union troops guarding the line, Confederate guerrillas staged a number of raids against the railroad and its trains. In the last raid, Confederate troops under General Sterling Price destroyed tracks, bridges, depots and equipment worth more than a million dollars.

Completion Across Missouri

When the war ended repairs were made to the line and westward construction continued. The line reached Pleasant Hill on July 26, 1865. Equipment was then sent to Kansas City in order to begin building eastward.

