

JUL 77

THE TRAINMASTER

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pacific northwest chapter

THE TRAINMASTER

July 1977

Number 205

PNW CHAPTER TIMETABLE

Sat/Sun LIVE STEAMERS MEET

30/31
July

The second of two weekends of the Pacific Northwest Live Steamers Annual Meet will take place at their outdoor layout at Shady Dell. Detailed directions to their large outdoor layout can be obtained locally at Molalla, Oregon.

Thursday thru Monday NRHS 1977 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Monday

1 thru 5
September

This annual event will take place over the Labor Day weekend in Roanoke, Virginia with Convention Headquarters at the Hotel Roanoke. A very interesting itinerary has been planned by the Roanoke Chapter, NRHS, Convention Hosts.

Sat/Sun/Mon EASTERN OREGON WEEKEND

3, 4, & 5
September

This "three-day weekend" trip to the Gold Rush Country near Baker, Oregon will feature a ride on the "Stump Dodger", a historic narrow gauge logging railroad in the Sumpter Valley. Transportation will be via the Chapter-owned sleeper-lounge car "Mt Hood" from Portland to LaGrande behind Amtrak's new train "The Pioneer". Private autos will be used from LaGrande to Baker and other local points of interest. For more information see the flyer enclosed with this issue.

Friday REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING (3rd Friday of each month)

16 September

The September meeting of PNW Chapter will be held in the BN Safety Assembly Room. Program and other details to be announced in the September issue of "The Trainmaster".

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAPTER
 NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LAST OF THE MAIL BY RAIL RPO RUNS*

The last Railway Post Office in the United States made its final run between New York City and Washington, DC on Thursday, 30 June 1977 marking the end of a historic system that began over 100 years ago.

The Washington-New York RPO, involving two four-car trains on which the mail was sorted enroute, had been the Postal Service's only RPO since 1972. It began operating on October 15, 1864 which was five months after the system was inaugurated between Chicago, Illinois and Clinton, Iowa on the Chicago and North Western on August 28, 1864.

At one time, shortly after World War II, there were 1,500 RPO routes criss-crossing the United States with 30,000 men working in more than 4,000 individual RPO cars. By 1961, the number of routes had declined to only 262 and 10 years later there were only 8 routes.

A special last-day cachet honored the historic occasion. (Amtrak News)

* From July 1977 issue of NRHS News Extra, Vol 6, Number 9.

THE GOLDEN SPIKE LIVES ON!*

The summer interpretive program at Golden Spike National Historic Site began on Saturday 11 June. Seven actors dressed in period clothes present a re-enactment of the "Driving of the Golden Spike" every day at 10 AM, 1 PM, 3 PM, and 5 PM.

This program, which was viewed by more than 33,000 visitors last summer, re-creates the ceremony conducted by railroad officials on that momentous day in 1869 when the nation's first transcontinental railroad was completed.

Complimenting the restored scene are two vintage steam locomotives and a replica of a rugged "end-of-track" construction camp. Auto tour-drives along the abandoned railroad right-of-way will also be conducted during each day.

Visitors to the Golden Spike National Historic Site should plan on spending about two hours to view the entire program. The visitor center is open from 8 AM through 8 PM daily through Labor Day. The site is located 32 miles west of Brigham City along Utah State Highway 83 and paved county roads. No fees are collected.

* From July 1977 issue of NRHS News Extra, Vol 6, Number 9.

Much has appeared in print about Amtrak's "Transcontinental Steam Excursion" from 13 April through 01 May 1977 which featured the return of 4449 to Portland, Oregon in passenger service. The following article which was representative of the coverage given is reprinted from the June 1977 issue of "Wheel Clicks" (official publication of Pacific Railroad Society, Inc). It is regretted that the good photo coverage included in the original publication could not be duplicated here. Editor

STEAM ON COAST ROUTE THRILLS NEW GENERATION OF FANS

By Ed Sinclair

It really all began when the plans for returning the ex-Southern Pacific GS-4 to Portland, Oregon were finalized. When I learned that the Daylight would definitely operate via Espee's Sunset route and then up the coast to the Bay Area, I knew that I would just have to be on that trip.

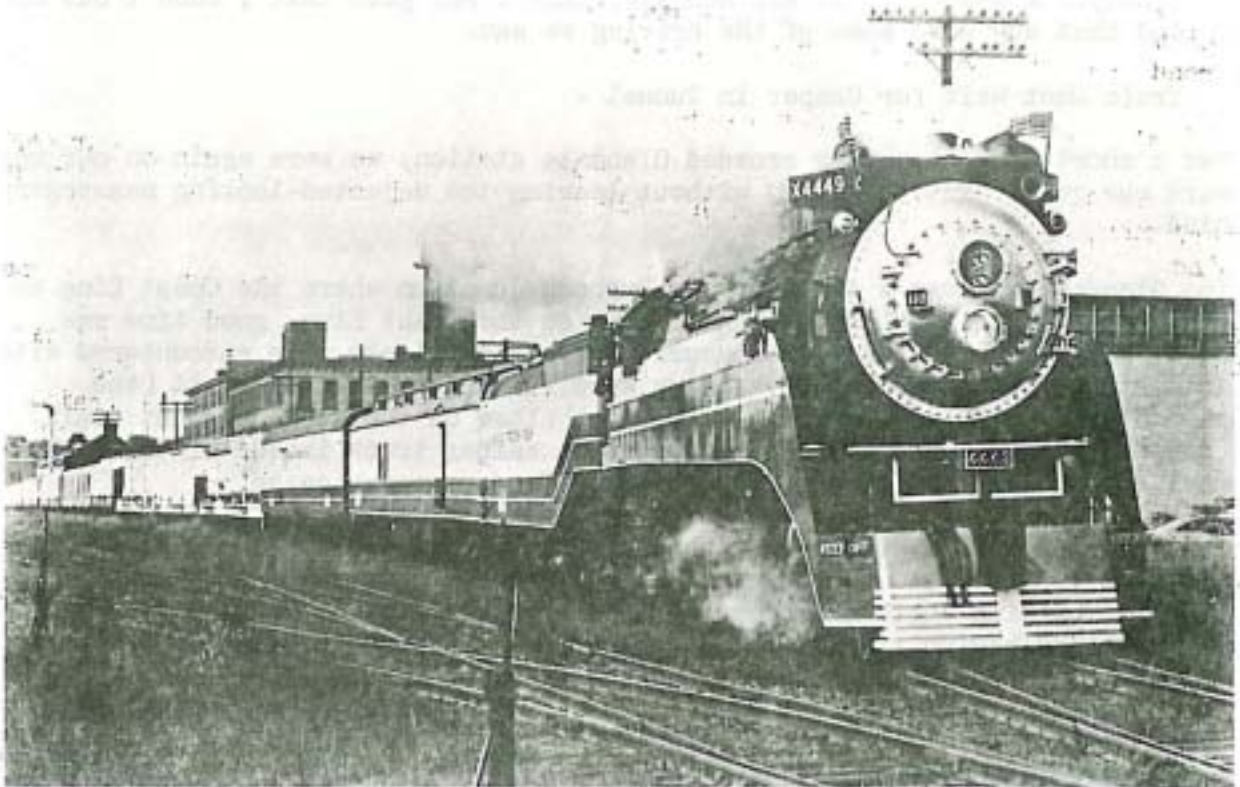


Photo shows Ex-SP 4449 pulling American Freedom Train during two-year tour of the United States. Location and date not given. (Photo by Jerrold Hilton, courtesy National Railway Historical Society.) (SP-3)

"Steam on Coast Route", cont'd

After viewing and photographing the arrival of the 4449 as it steamed majestically across the Los Angeles River and past Mission Tower on April 24th, the big day of the departure, April 26th finally arrived.

Desiring to avoid the traffic crunch at Union Station, my friend and I boarded the Amtrak "San Diegan" at Fullerton for the short half hour ride to LAUPT.

As the "San Diegan" pulled into Union Station, I immediately concluded that we had arrived none too soon. As we pulled alongside the special, it was easy to see that the train was already packed with eager railfans. Frankly, I thought that it looked more like a stock train with passenger cars. My suspicions were confirmed when we finally boarded the train. It seems that Amtrak had "slightly" oversold the train. Seats were finally located, however, and we were ready for departure.

At approximately 10:15 AM, we started to move slowly out through the throat trackage of Union Station. As the train began to parallel San Fernando Road, it was obvious that any railfan that wasn't on the train was most certainly on the highway. I must say, in all honesty, that I was glad that I wasn't out on the road that day with some of the driving we saw.

Train Must Wait for Camper in Tunnel -

After a short stop at a very crowded Glendale station, we were again on our way toward our goal. Not, however, without leaving two dejected-looking passengers behind.

Leaving Glendale, it was a short run to Burbank Junction where the Coast Line and the San Joaquin Valley Line diverge. Once on the Coast Line, good time was kept as far as Chatsworth where a series of yellow blocks were encountered with a full stop finally being made. As we were running as second No. 14 (the "Coast Starlight"), we knew that we must be close on the heels of that train. We found out later that someone had driven a camper truck inside of the long tunnel and that it had caught fire inside. Wonders never cease!

After clearing this obstacle, we continued on without further incident. A short stop was made at the town of Oxnard, home of some railfan friends of mine. Highballing north again, we soon entered the town of Ventura, where the Espee mainline begins its 113 mile trek beside the blue Pacific. It was on this particular stretch of track that the 4449 and her sisters were so much at home wheeling trains 98 and 99 the "Coast Daylight".

I must confess that it was quite a sight to see that engine curving through the beautiful approach to the city of Santa Barbara.

The station at Santa Barbara was another mob scene. Southern Pacific's finest were at wit's end as persons were even crawling under the train. Of course all of this activity led to a lengthy stop at this station.

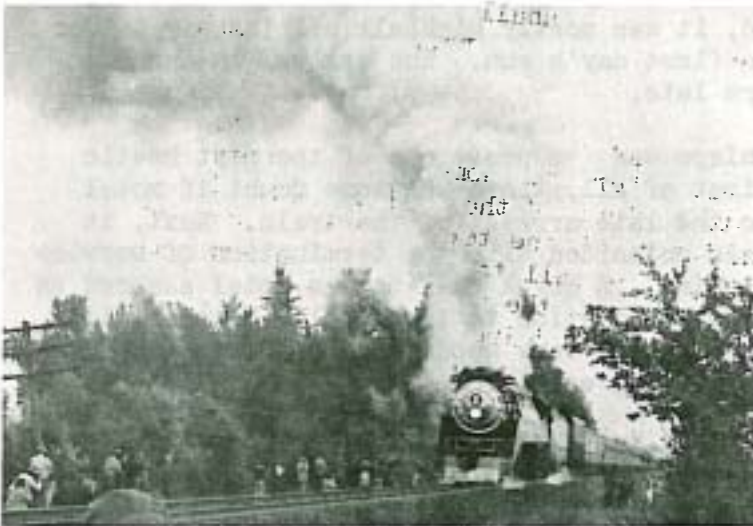
July 1977

Number 205

"Steam on Coast Route", cont'd



Ex-SP 4449 at Eugene, Oregon on Sunday morning, 01 May 1977 prior to departure for Portland on the last leg of Amtrak's "Transcontinental Steam Excursion" which originated in Birmingham, Alabama on Wednesday 13 April.



Final photo run-past near Albany, Oregon on Sunday 01 May 1977. Drizzle ("Oregon mist") did not dampen enthusiasm on last day of the special run.



A star-spangled welcome home was given to Ex-SP 4449 on Sunday, 01 May 1977 on arrival at Portland, Oregon. City of Portland Commissioner Francis J. Ivancie greets crowds on hand for the ceremonies at Portland Union Station.

(Above photos by Irv Ewen)

"Steam on Coast Route", cont'd

Amtrak Plans a Photo Stop -

Finally the head end whistled off, and we were again on our way toward the first and only photo runby of the day.

The scene of the first photo stop was Honda, where, in the 1920's, several US Navy warships ran aground. The Southern Pacific played an improtant role in the rescue of several hundred sailors.

The photo run was in a beautiful location, on a slight curve. However, no "people filter" could hope to contend with the large number of fans that continued to swarm over the right-of-way even after the train began to move. I did manage to get some acceptable footage of the locomotive (I still don't know how).

After the photo run was completed, it was mostly highball all the way to San Luis Obispo, the terminus of the first day's run. The arrival in San Luis Obispo was approximately two hours late.

The overnight stay in San Luis Obispo was to prove one of the most hectic adventures of the whole trip. First of all, there was some doubt if motel reservations would be held due to the late arrival of the train. Next, it seems that the arrival of the train coincided with the termination of service of the city bus system for the evening. A quick call to the motel assured us that it was "only" three miles from the station to the motel. However, it turned out that the motel manager wasn't a very good judge of distance (it was only about a mile). It still was quite a walk!

Arising in Early Morning to Catch the Train -

On the morning of the 27th it was up at 5 AM to allow time for the walk back to the station. All of the town's taxicabs were already taken.

The morning was bright and beautiful as the 4449 walked the train out of the station and began the hard climb toward the summit of the Santa Lucia Mountains at Cuesta.

The first photo stop of the day was on the famous horseshoe curve, north of the city of San Luis Obispo. The train was stopped at the lower end of the curve to let those of us who were so inclined to crawl over barbed wire fences to take pictures. With only a few slips of those eighty inch drivers, the engine started the train around the curve as hundreds of shutters recorded the great event. This, as it turned out, was to be the best photo-run of the entire trip.

Back on the train, it was on toward Cuesta and the summit. Engineer Doyle McCormack was really working the 4-8-4 now as the exhaust blasted skyward. Those vestibules got rather warm and smoky through the tunnels on the upgrade.

July 1977

Number 205

"Steam on Coast Route", cont'd

When we emerged from the last tunnel, someone shouted, "Hey, look at the engine". The 4449 was no longer red, white, and blue, it was black. The stack had steam cleaned all of the soot of years of diesel exhaust from the roof of the tunnels and deposited it on the 4449.

Locomotive Leaves Coast Route for Last Time -

Another photo-run was staged near King City, with a "people filter" and a lot of patience again being necessary.

Two more short service stops were made at Salinas and Watsonville Junction before heading on to San Jose. After a fairly short stop at San Jose, we said good-bye to the original route of the "Coast Daylight" and headed around the south end of San Francisco Bay toward Oakland.

It was always quite entertaining to see the startled look on the faces of factory workers as they ran out of their plants at the sound of that big "Steamboat" whistle.

Finally, it was up the middle of the Embarcadero and through Jack London Square. The arrival at Oakland 16th Street was again about an hour and a half late. Things were beginning to fall into a familiar pattern as far as timekeeping was concerned.

Friday morning, the 29th, was slightly overcast as the Amtrak Transcontinental Steam Excursion left Oakland at 8 AM. All went smoothly until Martinez, when 4449 tripped the first hot box detector of the day. For the next two days, the train stopped at every scanner between Oakland, California and Eugene, Oregon. The run up the Sacramento Valley was made with stops at Davis, Orlando, and Redding. At each town along the route, there was a large crowd out to greet the train.

Great Event for Dunsmuir -

The arrival in Dunsmuir, California, was again about two hours late. The small town took the large crowd in stride however, with the restaurants going full blast all night.

The next morning was rainy in Dunsmuir, with people huddled under any shelter available. A water stop was made at Black Butte, and a photo-run at Grass Lake. The weather cleared shortly before Klamath Falls, Oregon, and it made for a beautiful run along Upper Klamath Lake.

The crossing of the Cascade Mountains was made in the late afternoon. It was quite an interesting trip as Amtrak's "Coast Starlight" traverses this area at night. After taking on water at Wicopee, the train continued on downgrade through Oakridge. Again, the arrival in Eugene was about two hours late.

"Steam on Coast Route", cont'd

Sunday morning, May 1st, was overcast and cool as 4449 departed Eugene for Portland and home. When we arrived at the Eugene station that morning, we noticed that Amtrak SDP40F 527 (which had been on the train since Los Angeles) had been removed from the consist, and Espee's business car Oregon had been added.

The run to Portland was made through an occasional slight drizzle. One big thing was different today; the train ran right on time.

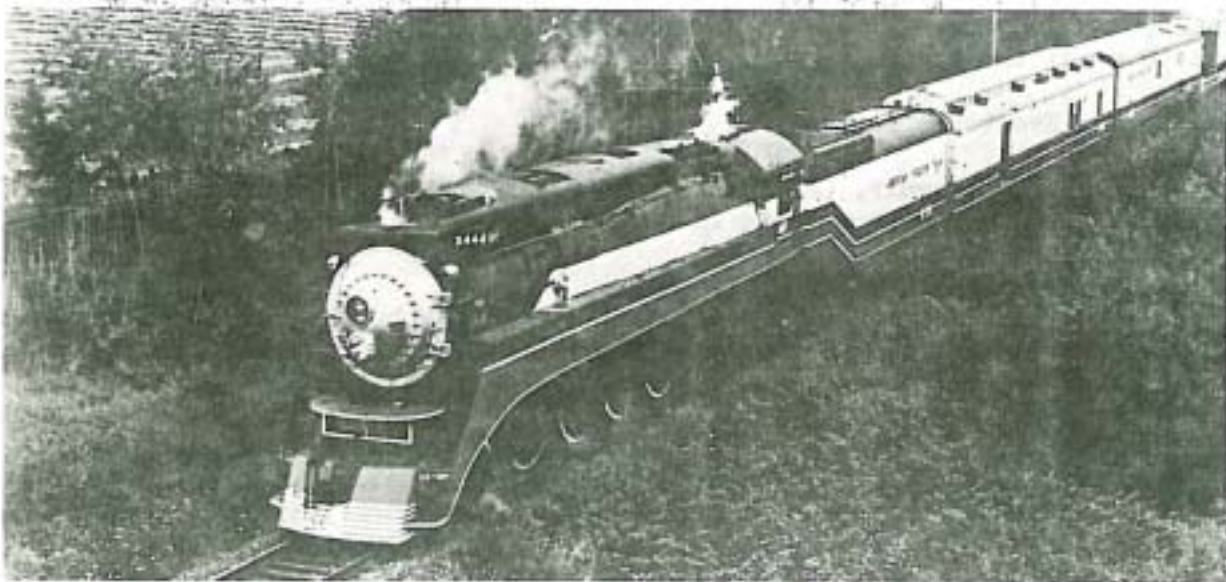
Steam Returns, Triumphant, to Portland -

We were now on the Brooklyn Subdivision and making good time. It was good to know there was no diesel up front, and the 4449 seemed conscious of it. One slightly soggy photo-run was made near Albany.

The arrival in Portland was spectacular with the train making the sharp turn to the left to cross the drawbridge over the Willamette River and into Portland Union Station.

After the train arrived, there were bands and speeches by Amtrak officials, the Governor of Oregon and other dignitaries. The Queen of Portland's Rose Festival placed a wreath of roses on the lower headlight of 4449.

Thus ended a trip, an adventure of almost one thousand miles behind steam. I believe more than one railfan had a lump in the throat as the fire was killed for the last time. I am also sure, that each one of us felt that this would not be the end, but hopefully the beginning, of a successful fantrip career.



Another photo of Ex-SF4449 pulling the American Freedom Train "through the farmlands of the midwest to the Rockies". Location and date not given. (Photo by Jerrold F Hilton, courtesy National Railway Historical Society.) (SP-4)