

Western Pacific 805-A Runs Again

As told to and written by Dave McClain
(Part 2)

After doing the final repairs on Tuesday, April 13th, the oil suction line to the block, and Larry Hanlon getting all the electricals to work, we were done. But since the locomotive was sparkly clean, we did not fire it up and do a test.

Wednesday was D-Day for the museum and its contribu-



tion to the collection and display at Sparks for the Western Pacific Convention. One more task at hand before the zero hour, was to remove a head from 708 and load it on to the 805, with the expectation that the low compression problem in #13 cylinder was due to the lack of good valves.

With everything supposedly in order, Rod and Steve fired up the other 3 units. On the front was the venerable GP-7 707, second out was EMD's answer to the second generation of diesel locomotives, the first turbocharged locomotive they ever built, GP-20, 2001. Third was our F9-B, 925 C, originally CN 9190, and fourth out, the pride of the fleet our very own FP7, 805-A. Along with Habeck's hack, we had the other WP caboose in tow. What a consist of color, mighty sound, and history were in the making for us and the Union Pacific. Silver and Orange are our trademarks, every unit clean and tidy, just as when they were built. All engines running, but the B, she would not load, (power into the traction motors), anyway, it was good to hear her engine rev-up. One small step for the Union Pacific, one large step for the Feather River Rail Society!

All engines watered and running, (nee805), we backed

out of the # 4 onto the West Pass. A throw of the switch, and Eastbound here we come. With Rod running and smoke pouring out of our stacks, all these babes were anxiously ready to be exercised on the High Iron. To finally be out of the confines of a museum ground, never run above Run 4, I just know our steeds were knocking the fence down to be let loose. With a stop at the yard office, Rod and Steve exchanging orders, Steve hopping into his caboose, and Rod into the golden right hand seat of the 707, Chooch from the UP as fireman, the mainline switch was thrown and we were on our way.

My job was to keep these old girls running, the youngest of our fleet at 45 years! We never knew what kind of problems we would incur until a consistent load was run through their motors. But with only two cabooses, we could make it with only one on line.

As usual, the B was not loading, so we isolated her to idle. Out on the main past Hawley, we passed a no name train on the siding doing 50! 707 and 2001 were running smoothly with clear stacks. Through the tunnel at Beckwourth and around the bend, we had our first red over yellow signal indicating that as previously known, a train behind us had to pass. A blast from

their whistle, a roll-by and we had a green.

Back out on to the mainline, we whisked past Doyle, only to take the siding at Herlong. Here, we paused for pictures,



as we had quite a wait for the FRA Track detector that was checking rails behind us. They rushed by at speed, we hopped into our respective seats, and we were on our way again to Winnemucca.

Out across the flats to the Modoc connection at Flanigan, thinking of all the activities and trains that vied for the WP Rails here, and now knowing that time may be at hand the end of any interchange traffic meeting at the switch, my feelings and emotions were swaying back and forth along with our train, of a once

orange and silver against a backdrop of desert and blue sky made for a great picture. And again thinking of history again, these are the first F's east of Portola since 1975, when Bob Larson pictured our 921-D in Winnemucca, last run of a WP F East. And since Gerlach has a water hose, we watered all the units before crossing

the Black Rock.

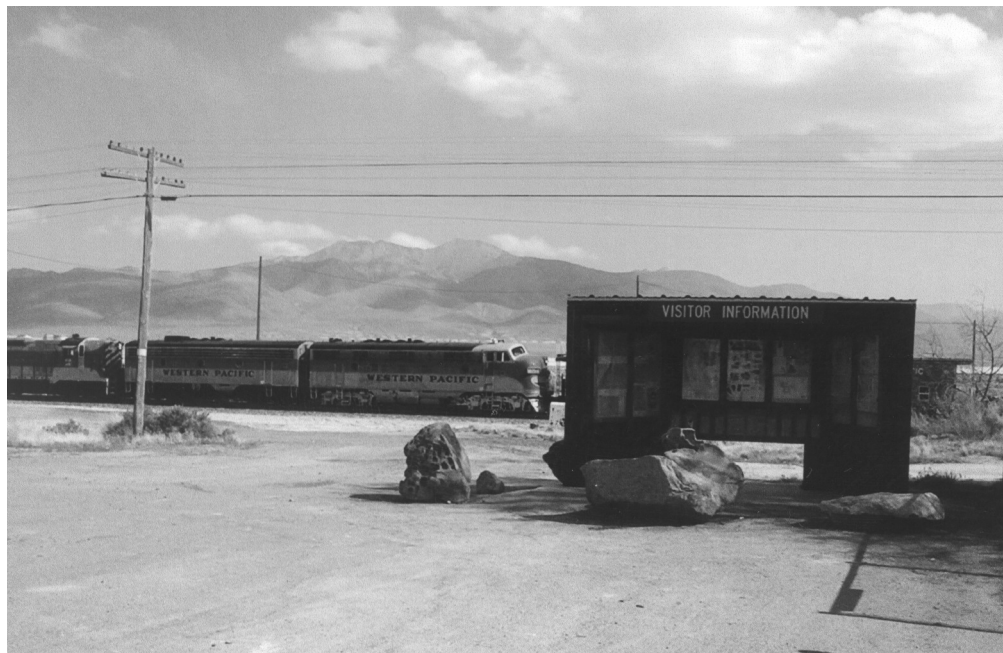
An Eastbound green at the east end of Gerlach siding, and we were back on the main. Desert colors were beautiful, blue skies, setting sun, and of course the sounds of our beloveds. Seeing braces of F's on the WPE's and WPW's, and sets of six GP-20's on the TOF's make for me Black Rock synonymous with the WP. And lucky for me, I had a tape deck to record those sounds.

Then the 2001 started having trouble with transition. Every time increasing speed through 30-45 mph, wheel slip lights would illuminate, unloading all units. Isolating her, and then putting her back on line, she would be fine, as long as Rod kept our speed up. Through Trego, Ronda, Sulphur, Floka, Coyote and Phil,

no more stops until arriving Winnemucca. We decided to wye the train at Winnemucca, on their short lead. It was so short, that only the four units and one caboose would fit. So we dropped Habeck's hack on the forward leg of the wye, turned the rest, ran down west past that leg, backed in and reconnected it.

Only this time, it was running opposite direction, but with a little attention, Steve had her set up for the trip to Sparks.

We backed down the siding, and switched into the yard spur, where upon our arrival, a passing EB UP Freight had to stop, take notice of us, and salute our WP babes. With their hats held to their hearts, ceremonies were consummated and on the way they went. We shut the units down, locked all the doors and rode to our destination motel. Thanks to Rod and Steve, I had a bed for the night. I offered to bunk out in the 805, but I would have to leave her idle the night burning sweet diesel!!



mighty joint operation of the Southern Pacific and Western Pacific. Camping here in 1975, and seeing 6 SP lumber drags, and 10 WP freights, Flanigan was a busy spot, and probably busier before the SP abandoned the Pyramid route to Wadsworth. One remnant of the abandoned SP that could be seen from the window of the 2001, was a SP trademark concrete phonebox. My, the history here.



On our way through Sand Pass, and then on to the Smoke Creek Desert, we confronted a sand storm. Signals could only be seen from a couple of hundred yards. Windows closed, engines running, we arrived Gerlach around 1pm.

Decision was made here to take the siding and have lunch at Bruno's. This brought memories of my father and I having breakfast here with the #18 CZ crew beckoning the arrival of WP's finest in November 1966.

After lunch, coming out of Bruno's, seeing the bright