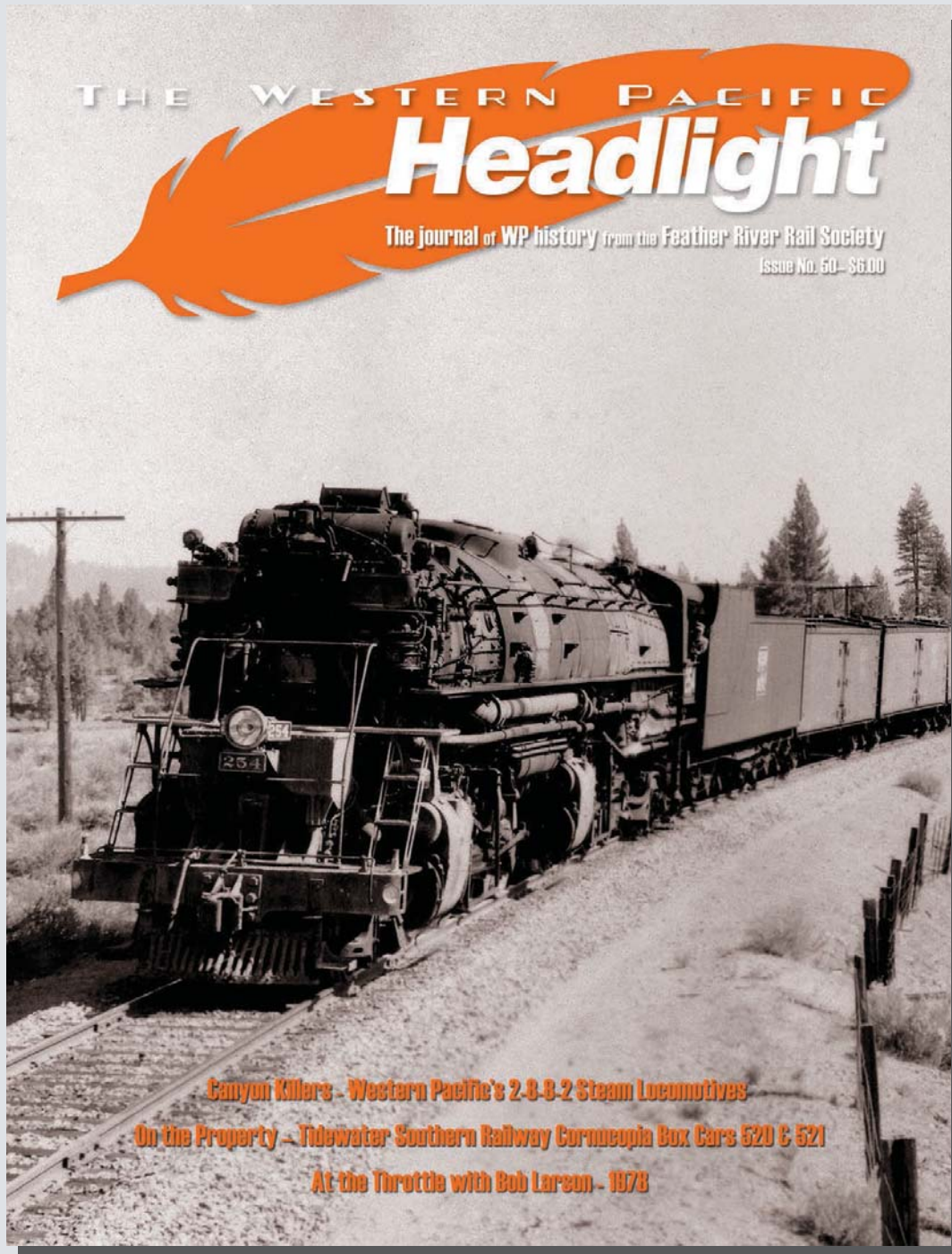


TIDEWATER SOUTHERN'S Cornucopia Boxcars

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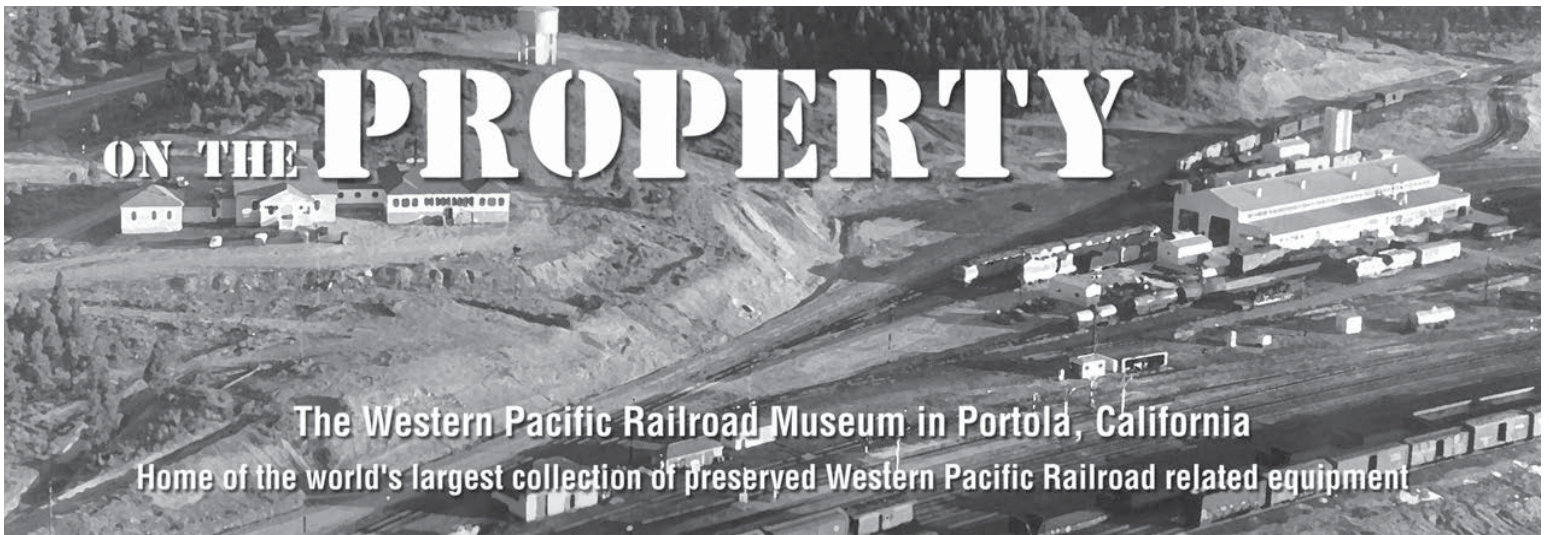
Shortly after entering service, Tidewater Southern 524 was photographed in Vancouver, British Columbia after delivering its load and preparing to return to California.

– Walter E. Frost, City of Vancouver BC collection



Color photo of TS 516 when the car was nearly new. The colors on the decal were very vibrant.

– photographer unknown, FRRS Archives



Tidewater Southern Cornucopia Box Cars 520 & 521

by Eugene Vicknair

Usually found tucked away on the Western Pacific Railroad Museum's RIP (Repair In Place) tracks alongside the UP mainline, Tidewater Southern boxcar 520 is often noticed by visitors for its large, multicolor Cornucopia logos, painted on the car by FRRS member Odie Lorimar many years ago. Few visitors, however, realize one of her sisters also resides at the museum, painted WP maintenance of way silver and typically found with the rest of our MOW cars near the parking lot. Both of these cars came from a somewhat unusual freight car order that gave the little Tidewater its most visible image.

The Tidewater's 501 series comprised 25 cars delivered in 1955. They were the first real fleet change freight cars owned by the railroad. The 501 series appear to have been a follow-on to a Western

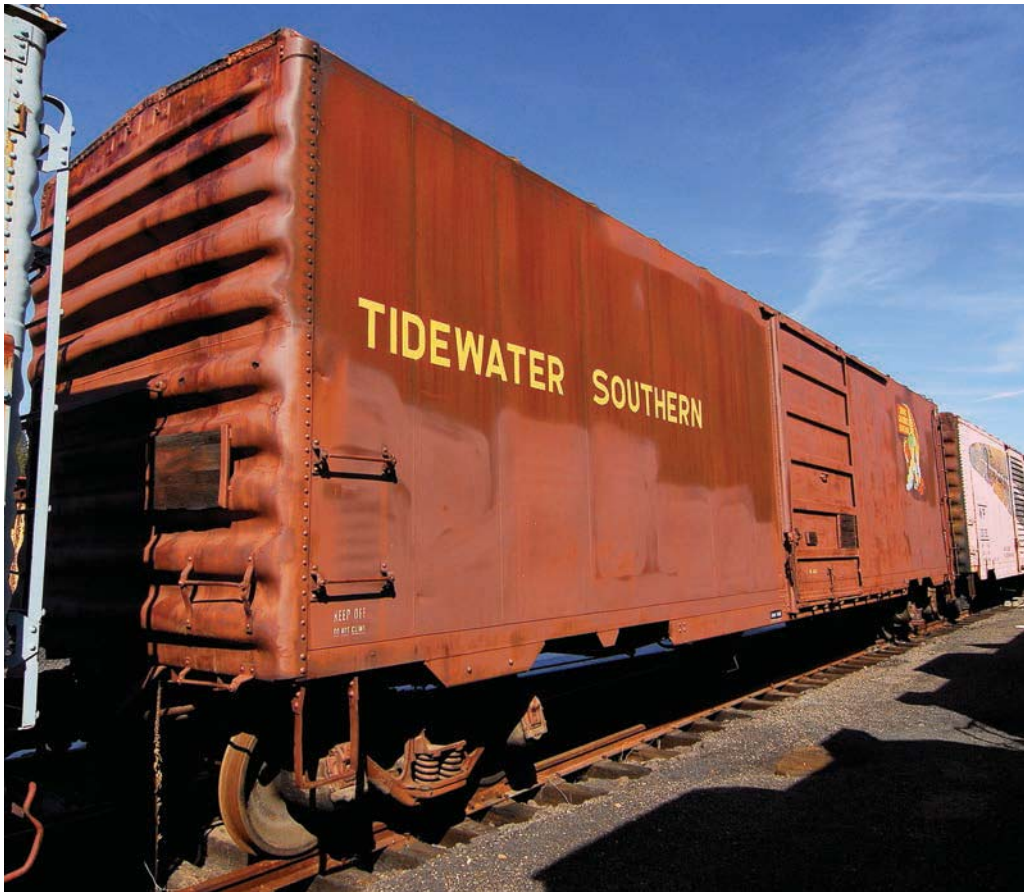
Pacific order delivered in June 1955 numbered 36001-36025. WP 36011 is also part of the WPRM collection.

All 50 cars were XM-class PS-1s built by Pullman-Standard. They featured 8-foot Superior 6-panel doors, welded sides and Scullin A-3 Ride Control plain bearing trucks. They would be the only TS boxcars without roller bearings. They were also the only uninsulated boxcars owned by the railroad and were used for general merchandise, as opposed to the canned goods service that would dominate the use of the Tidewater's other boxcars. They had a capacity of 50-tons and did not appear to have been equipped with the special loader cushioning devices of later TS cars.

The most interesting aspect to the Tidewater cars was the unique logo they were delivered with. This special logo depicted a cornucopia, or "horn of plenty", with the slogan "Serving California's Heartland". This was one of the most colorful logos ever used in railroading and was only used on these 25 cars. These logos were large, full color decals \$80 (in 1955) per car to create and (That is over \$730 per decal in 2017 rs.)

The lettering scheme was also different from other WP family cars of the time, although the typeface for the road name and all data were a WP standard type. The 501 series appears to have been the only time that the TS or SN inherited such an individual identity on freight equipment during the diesel era. The reason behind this unique scheme is unknown.





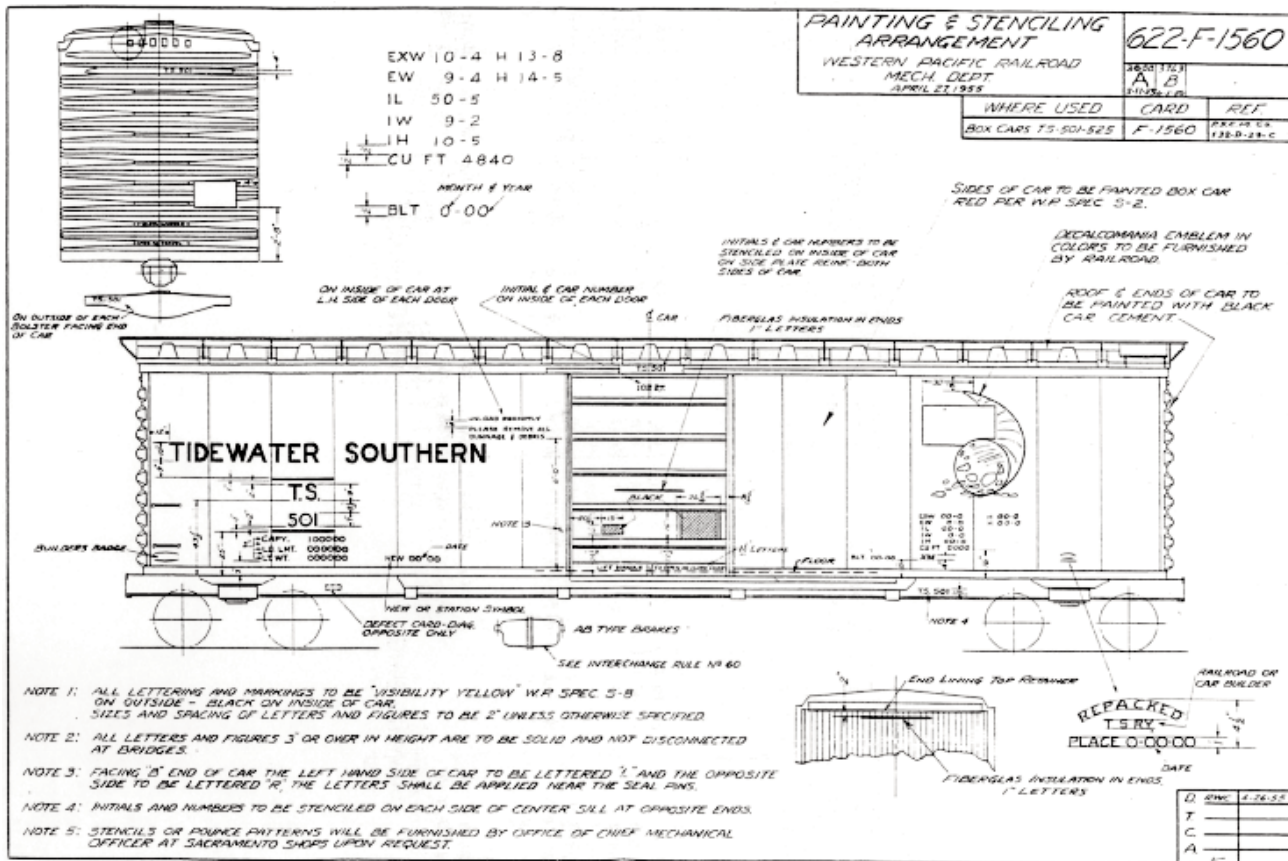
Still showing off the colorful cornucopia logo applied by FRRS member Odie Lorimar many years ago, Tidewater Southern 520 waits for spring to arrive at WPRM on February 22, 2009.

— Michael Mucklin

Before it was donated to the museum, Tidewater Southern 521 was reassigned to maintenance-of-way and renumbered WP MW 37-10. Here it basks in the sun as it appears today at WPRM in Portola.

— Greg Elems





These cars were used all across the country. When they reached home rails, they were typically loaded with supplies for the canneries that had grown up along the TS main. In 1975, the WP made plans to renumber all the TS 501 series cars into its 36026 series, behind its own single door PS-1s, however this was not done quickly nor did it reach all the cars. TS 521 for example, was renumbered directly into WP MOW service as WPMW 37-10.

With the formation of the museum in 1984, the FRRS acquired TS 520 with the goal of restoring it to full TS livery. TS 521 came along when elements of the WPMW 37 wreck train was given to the museum. Today, TS 520 is partially restored with its painted cornucopias. Artwork has been created to reproduce the full decals and plans are to fully repaint

the car in the coming years. WPMW 37-10, the former TS 521, is used for storage and is slated to retain its silver paint. When the light is just right, you can still see the remains of the colorful cornucopias under the thin MOW silver.

An interesting side note: the only

other known surviving TS boxcar is another of the Cornucopia Cars: TS 512 sits in an industrial park in Beckworth, near Portola, still bearing the Tidewater name and the scarred remains of the logo.



Tidewater Southern 520 and 521 Specifications

Builder.....	Pullman-Standard
Builder Lot Number.....	8240
Built	July 1955
Type	PS-1 XM Box Car
Volume.....	4844 cubic ft
Capacity	50 tons
Operational Weight.....	52,000 lbs
Interior Length	50 ft 5 1/16 in
Interior Width	9 ft 2 1/16 in
Interior Height	10 ft 5 1/2 in
Length Over Strikers	51 ft 10 in
Overall Width	10 ft 5 1/16 in
Overall Height	14 ft 11 1/16 in
Clear Door Opening	8 ft 0 in W X 9 ft 10 1/16 in H
Door Type	Superior 6-panel sliding
Trucks	Scullin A-3 Ride Control



The WP company photographer recorded the Cornucopia cars being delivered in July 1955.

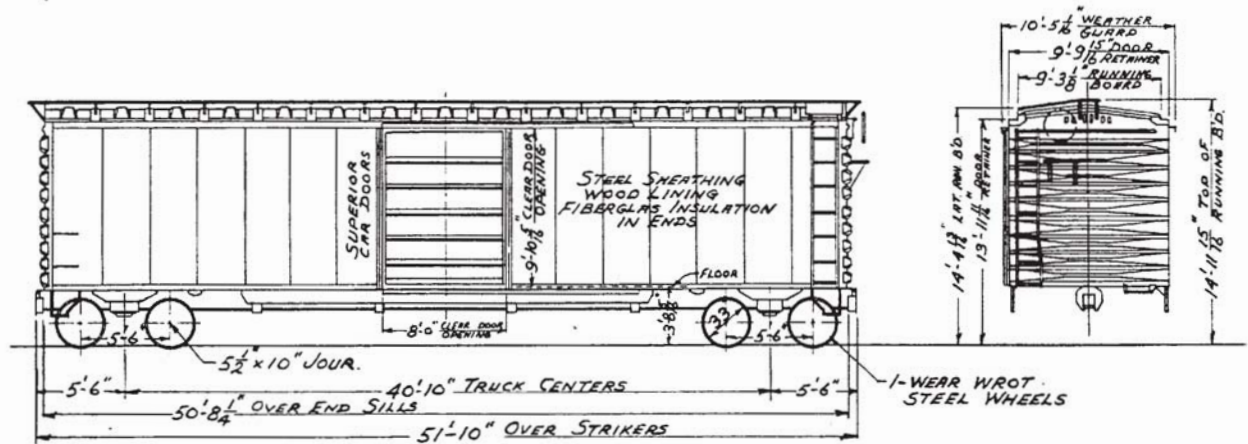
- all photos on this page: FRRS Archives, Western Pacific Railroad Corporate Archives / Kenneth J. Meeker Collection



BUILDERS LOT NO 8240

BOX CAR, CLASS XM
 BUILT BY PULLMAN STANDARD CAR MFG. CO.
 AFE T.S. 23-55.

CAR No. 501-525
 ORIG. No. OF CARS 25



SCULLIN A-3 RIDE CONTROL TRUCKS	LENGTH INSIDE	50'-5 9/16"	CAPACITY	100000 LBS.	WEIGHT - BODY
N.P. & S.C. Co. TYPE MF-275 RUBBER DR. GEAR	WIDTH	9'-2 1/16"	"	4844 CU. FT.	TRUCKS
WESTINGHOUSE TYPE AB-1012 AIR BRAKES	HEIGHT	10'-5 1/2"			TOTAL 52000 LBS

ANL. 5-1-58.

The Tidewater Southern Railway

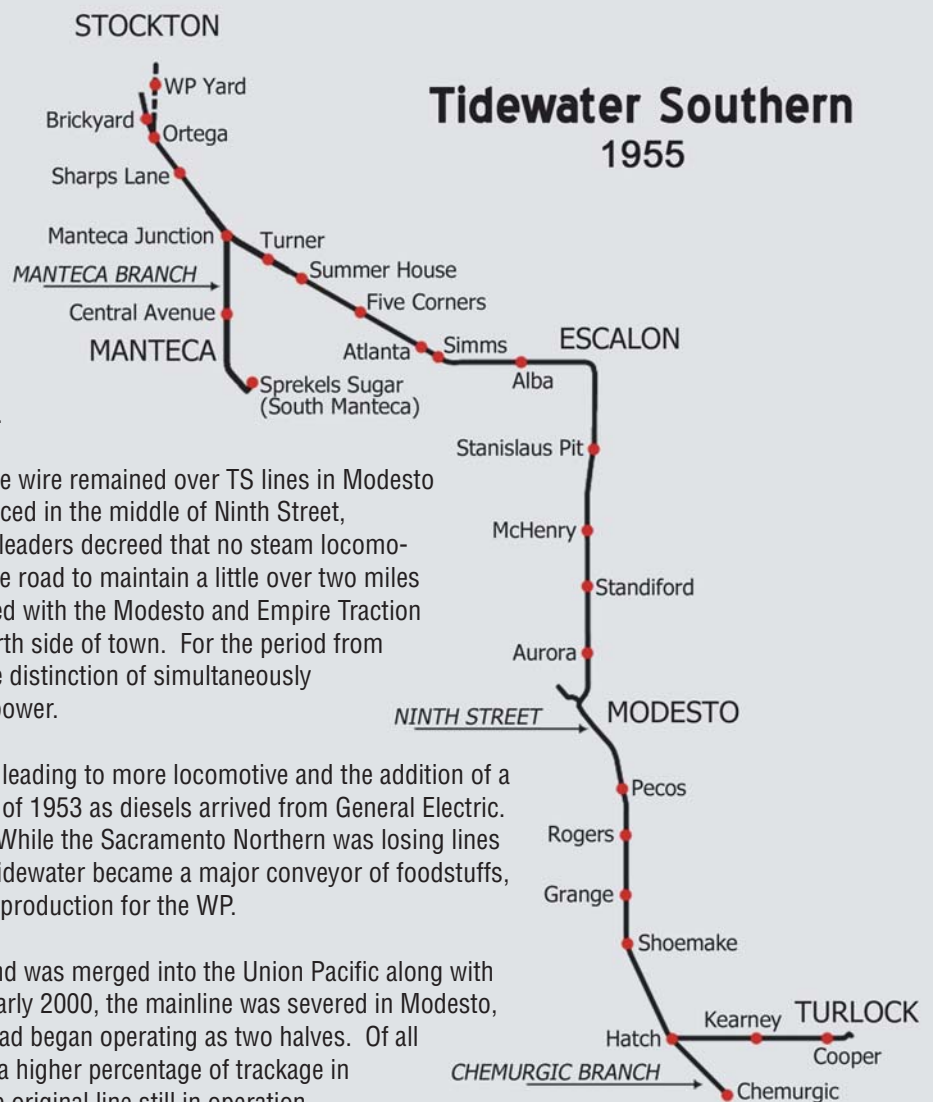
originated in 1910 as an electric interurban running south from Stockton, California through the fertile Central Valley. Its route connected several agricultural towns, including Escalon, Manteca, Turlock, Hilmar and its central base of Modesto.

Purchased by the Western Pacific in 1917, the Tidewater was an important feeder for the Feather River Route. Together with the Sacramento Northern, the road was a major extension of the WP's presence in California.

Though interurban service ended in 1932, the wire remained over TS lines in Modesto until 1948. When built, the mainline was placed in the middle of Ninth Street, Modesto's major north-south thruway. City leaders decreed that no steam locomotive could operate on Ninth Street, forcing the road to maintain a little over two miles of electrification running from the yard shared with the Modesto and Empire Traction Company to the station of Aurora, on the north side of town. For the period from late 1946 until mid 1948, the TS had the rare distinction of simultaneously operating steam, electric and diesel motive power.

The 1940s-50s were boom years for the TS, leading to more locomotive and the addition of a fleet of freight cars. Steam ended in the Fall of 1953 as diesels arrived from General Electric. Later, second-hand Alcos joined the roster. While the Sacramento Northern was losing lines to trackage rights and declining traffic, the Tidewater became a major conveyor of foodstuffs, feed grain and produce, tapping the Valley's production for the WP.

The road lost its identity in the mid 1970s, and was merged into the Union Pacific along with the Western Pacific in December 1982. By early 2000, the mainline was severed in Modesto, ending service on Ninth Street, and the railroad began operating as two halves. Of all California interurbans, the former TS retains a higher percentage of trackage in service than any other, with about 60% of the original line still in operation.





A well-worn, but all-original Tidewater Southern 506, Klamath Falls, OR, May 1972

– Peter Arnold



Compare this view of Tidewater Southern 524 taken in August 1976 at Winnemucca, NV against the shot of the same car on the inside front cover taken shortly after it was built. In the mid-70s WP shopped and modernized a lot of their old boxcars, including 524, removing their roofwalks and applying a simplified paint scheme which extended their service lives by several years.

– Peter Arnold