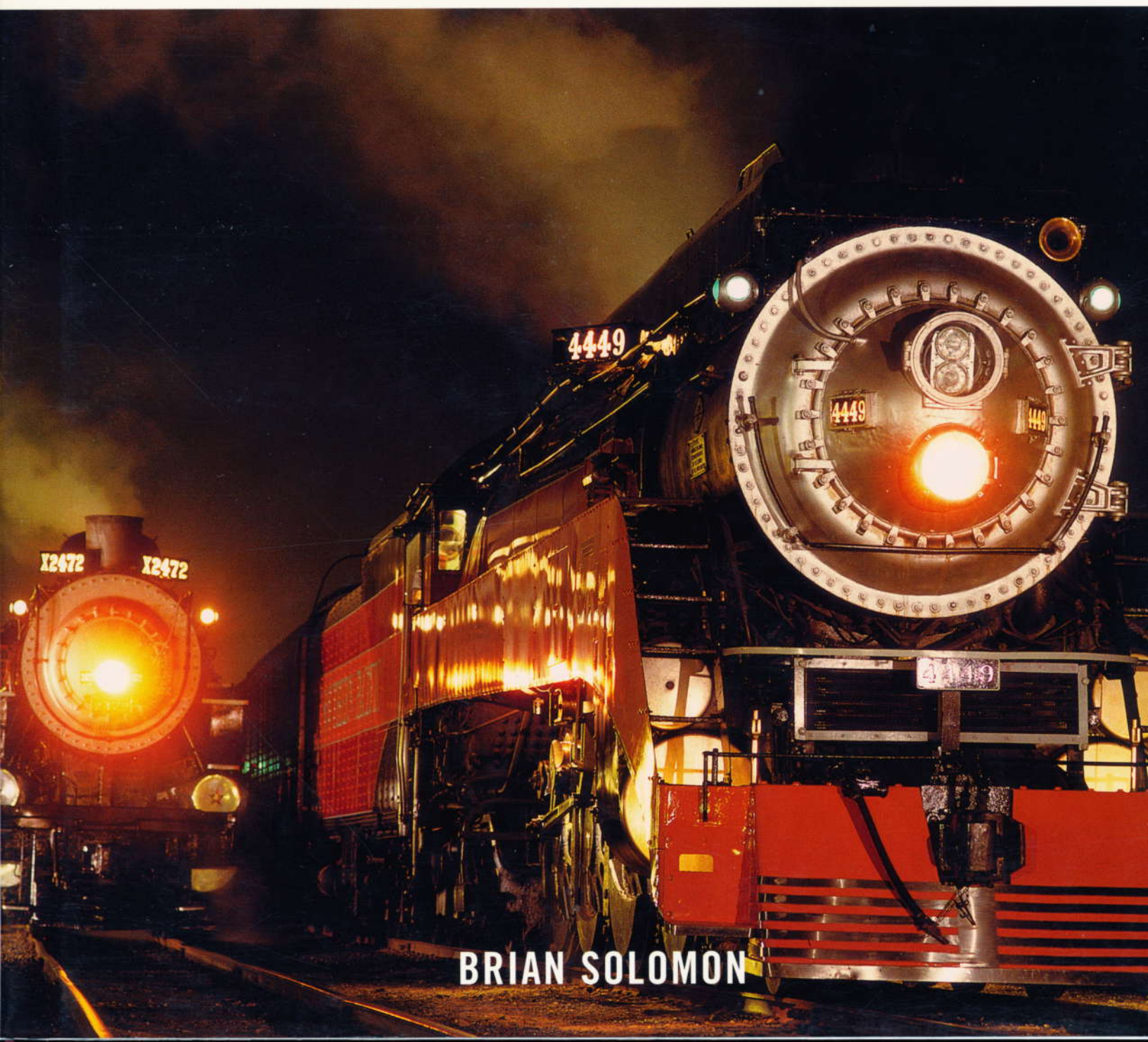
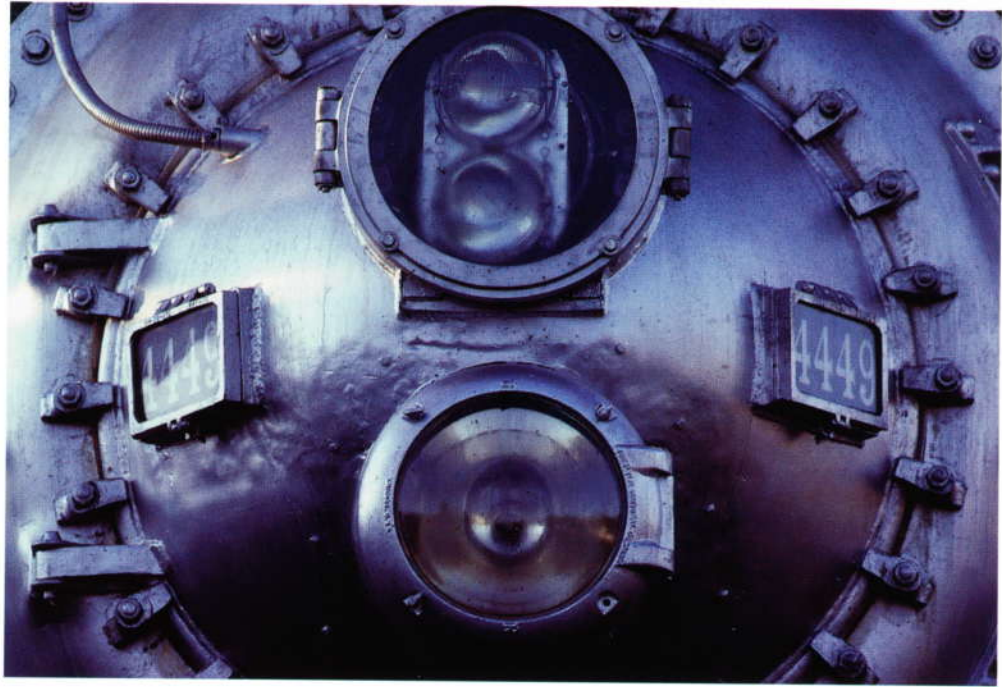


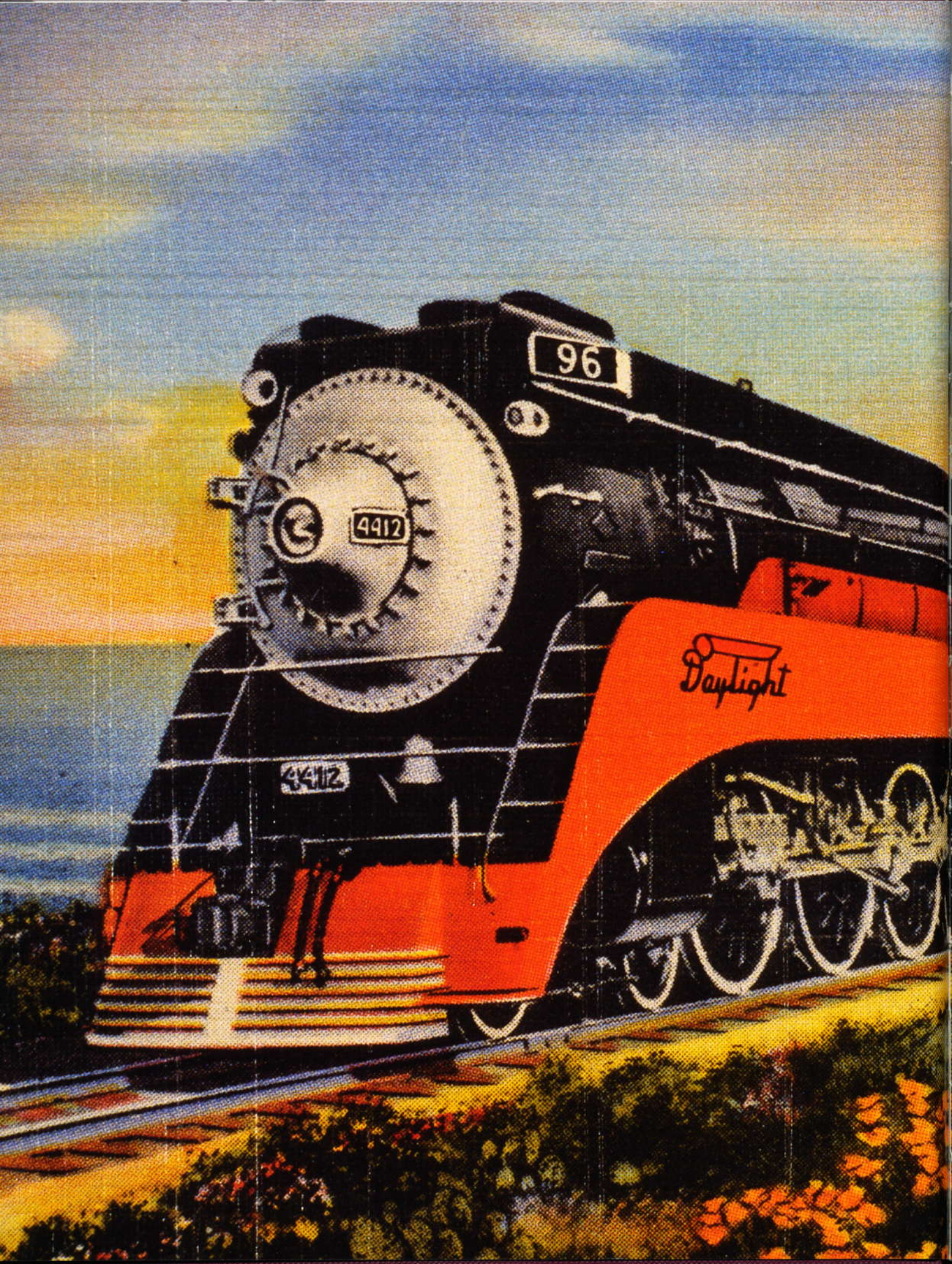
GREAT PASSENGER TRAINS

SOUTHERN PACIFIC PASSENGER TRAINS



BRIAN SOLOMON





A halftone illustration of a Southern Pacific passenger train at sunset. The train, with a red and black livery, is moving from left to right. The lead locomotive is numbered 4412. The train is framed by a row of tall palm trees. The foreground is filled with colorful flowers. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, red, and blue.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC PASSENGER TRAINS

BRIAN SOLOMON

MBI

Dedication

To Tessa

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On the front cover: *Two generations of Southern Pacific passenger steam. On the left is Baldwin-built P-8 Pacific-type 2472, one of 15 locomotives delivered in 1921. On the right is the famous Lima-built GS-4 Daylight 4449, delivered to SP in 1941. When new, both types represented the best of the railroad's fast passenger locomotive, featuring tall driving wheels and high-horsepower output.* Brian Solomon

On the frontispiece: *Distinguishing features of Southern Pacific's famed GS-4 and GS-5 locomotives were the dual headlights in the streamlined smokebox door. The oscillating top headlight was designed to make a sweeping figure-eight pattern to announce the train's approach at night; the bottom headlight is of the conventional variety. SP's other 4-8-4s didn't use this characteristic arrangement; the streamlined GS-2s, GS-3s, and wartime GS-6s featured just a single headlight.* Brian Solomon

On the title page: *The back of this vintage postcard reads "The brightly colored, orange and red, Million Dollar Southern Pacific Daylight speeds daily along the magnificent California coast between San Francisco and Los Angeles—the route of the Missions." Pictured leading the train is GS-2 4412, one of the six original streamlined Daylight locomotives.* Author collection

On the front endpapers: *California sunshine graces the Shasta Daylight at 16th Street Station in Oakland. Lower-quadrant semaphores were still the norm here in 1961, and Train 27 has the signal to depart once the baggage is loaded. Freshly painted Alco PA/PBs will lead today's train to Portland, Oregon.* Bob Morris

On the back endpapers: *Southern Pacific's 1940s-era route map illustrates its "Four Scenic Routes." Typical of railroad maps from the period, this one distorts the United States somewhat to favor SP's service area.* Author collection

Back cover, main: *In April 1991, Southern Pacific 4449 and a re-created Daylight followed much of the route of the old Shasta Daylight on its way to the Sacramento Railfair. Keeping a tight schedule, the train follows the Sacramento River near Dunsmuir, California.* Brian Solomon

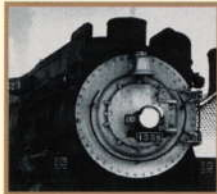
Back cover, inset: *In 1951, Southern Pacific used this advertisement for the new streamlined Sunset Limited to stress its enormous postwar investment in new equipment.* Author collection

Editor: Dennis Pernu
Designer: LeAnn Kuhlmann

Printed in China



SP's Sunset Limited insignia on the side of a corrugated Budd stainless-steel passenger car catches the last light of an autumn day. Brian Solomon



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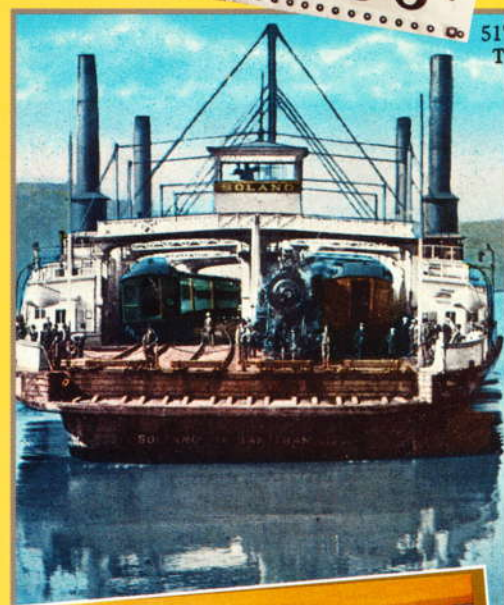
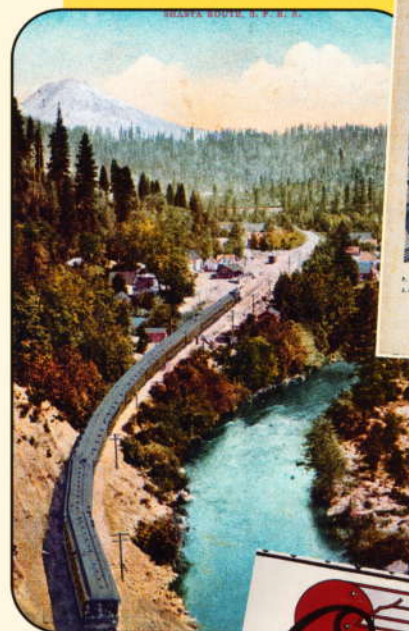
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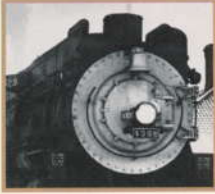
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Acknowledgments

Southern Pacific (SP) has long been one of my favorite railroads. When I was a teenager, my parents, brother, and I took a trip over the SP on Amtrak's Coast Starlight. I still vividly recall winding over Cuesta, hanging from the Dutch door of a Budd-built streamlined passenger car. Although I'm not old enough to have recollections of SP's revenue long-distance passenger trains, I spent many years photographing its freight trains, as well as historic passenger trains. Fellow enthusiasts Brian Jennison and J. D. Schmid further encouraged my interest in SP.

This book would not have been possible without help from many people. I'm indebted to Fred Matthews who enthusiastically supported the project from the beginning, suggested sources for material, lent me his copy of Gregory Lee Thompson's *The Passenger Train in the Motor Age: California's Rail and Bus Industries 1910-1941*, and composed the detailed personal essay that is Chapter 1. In addition, Fred generously provided many of the photographs featured in the book. Bob Morris of Dunsmuir, California, is an old friend, accomplished photographer, and SP enthusiast. He lent me source materials, provided photographs from his archive, and recalled his experiences with SP passenger trains. He and his wife Rhian also provided accommodations in Dunsmuir. Thanks to John Signor for helping with photo acquisition. Robert A. Buck of Warren, Massachusetts, supplied vintage images and has provided numerous leads and personal connections over the years. Special thanks to the Golden Gate Railroad Museum in San Francisco for providing access to their collection of preserved SP passenger cars. For those interested in seeing examples of the cars featured in this book, a visit to this museum is highly recommended. My father Richard Jay Solomon was very helpful in providing original illustrations, including his own photography of SP trains, as well as giving me insight to period passenger train operations and proofreading texts. John Gruber helped with research and provided personal connections. He and I have traveled in California on several occasions to inspect Southern Pacific railroad stations and lines.

Thanks to J. R. Quinn, Jay Williams, Brian Jennison, and Doug Eisele for access to their photo collections. Special thanks to Michael L. Gardner for use of his dark-room to make black-and-white prints for this project and for use of his photo studio.

There was considerable travel involved with this project. Thanks to Tom Hargadon and to Tessa Bold for providing accommodations along the way. Much of the finished text was composed on hot August days in Tessa's air-conditioned Washington, D.C., apartment. Also, thanks to my brother Seán and my mother Maureen for their support.

Writing the text and selecting images are only part of the process. Thanks to Dennis Pernu and everyone at MBI Publishing Company for their parts in making this book a reality.





Heavily patronized afternoon commute train 138 warrants 11 Harriman coaches hauled by an MT-4 Mountain type. The vantage point from above Tunnel 1 at Potrero Tower was long a favorite among photographers. *Fred Matthews*





The Standard Railroad of the West and Its Passenger Service 1945–1971

By Fred Matthews

Dunsmuir, California, was cold and damp on December 28, 1951. This quintessential railroad town, nestled deep in the Sacramento River Valley, served as a crucial hub for Southern Pacific's operations. On the left, the Portland-bound *Shasta Daylight*, makes its station stop, while on the middle track, steam-powered train No. 328 is destined for Grants Pass, Oregon, via the Siskiyou Line. *Fred Matthews*

My memories of riding, watching, and photographing Southern Pacific (SP) passenger trains may differ from those of most railfans who still recall SP varnish at all. They are likely to remember most vividly the painful days of the 1960s (which in this case began around 1958), when SP, led by the forceful innovator of modern railroading, Donald J. Russell, set out to discourage its passenger business by every imaginable means—negative advertising, side-tracking passenger trains for freight, rebuilding coaches with cramped seating, and in one case even trying to prevent people from boarding a scheduled train.

Until the late 1950s, though, SP was still “Your Friendly SP,” a kind of standard railroad of the West—certainly of the Southwest, including California. “Standard” suggests a number of things—including the standardization of locomotives and cars, which SP displayed as its inheritance from a decade of control by E. H. Harriman, the great modernizer of the Western railroads at the beginning of the twentieth century. SP became more independent



from the other Harriman roads (Union Pacific and Illinois Central) after a federal antitrust suit brought in 1913, but Harriman-trained executives continued in office, and the Harriman style persisted for decades in loco and car design. Southern Pacific equipment was distinctly SP, or “Espee,” in appearance—certainly in the 1940s with the standard silver smokebox, but even earlier there was a powerful house style—gleaming, graceful black locomotives, equally shiny Pullman Green coaches, distinctive Victorian depots in Huntington Yellow (a lighter version of Austria’s Schoenbrunn Yellow), and twentieth-century city stations, either Mission Revival or a standard Harriman “shoebox” with Renaissance detailing, which came in various sizes. Oakland 16th Street, Sacramento, and San Jose survive (for the moment, in the case of 16th Street) as examples of this style, though with different exterior facings.

SP in the 1940s was a standard railroad in another sense of “standard”—predictability, reliability, tradition, and conservatism. SP passenger trainmen wore high collars and high, stiff hats; they were usually formal and courteous, if sometimes a bit condescending, to passengers. The tone was decidedly Victorian—courteous but also distant and reserved—the polar opposite of the culture of the early twenty-first century. Of course, this Victorian tone came in part from the fact that most SP passenger trainmen of the 1940s had been born before Queen Victoria died in 1901. The Great Depression had meant little new hiring, and older trainmen tended to prefer the regular hours of passenger service. So most passenger trainmen were well over 50, some in their seventies. Mandatory retirement did not apply on railroads.

There was also a “standard,” conservative quality to Espee’s operating style—cautious, precise, correct. Despite generally excellent track, steam trains were limited to 70 or 75 miles per hour; after the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) imposed a 79-mile-per-hour limit for lines without Automatic Train Stop, diesel streamliners observed it carefully. This operating style was in dramatic contrast to the hot-rodding

In mid-1949, Southern Pacific reorganized its passenger schedules. Among the changes, the overnight Oakland–Portland *Beaver* was dropped when the new diesel-powered, streamlined *Shasta Daylight* was introduced. On July 9, 1949, SP GS-6 4463 departs Oakland’s 16th Street Station with the very last *Beaver*. The platforms on top of the station once served SP’s electric services.
Fred Matthews



The popularity of the *Daylight* often resulted in the train running with 20 or more cars. On February 14, 1948, train 98, the *Morning Daylight*, gets assistance from one of the railroad's legendary cab-ahead steam locomotives. No. 4237, pictured here, was a Class AC-10 built by Baldwin in 1942. Southern Pacific had been using cab-ahead locomotives since before World War I to combat smoke problems in long tunnels and snow sheds. *Fred Matthews*

Santa Fe, whose *Golden Gates* continued to streak down the Central Valley at well over 90 miles per hour, sometimes over 100 miles per hour. SP was smoother and safer, if less exciting, but it was also brisk and efficient. One morning in 1948 my father and I photographed the *Morning Daylight* as it rolled around the curve into Santa Margarita, where it stopped to add a 4-8-8-2 helper on the point. We strolled back to the car and drove through town, only to discover the double-header already blasting off. It couldn't have taken more than 4 minutes.

SP as a "standard" railroad also affirmed another meaning of the term: high standard. Track on mainlines was well maintained and manicured, almost like the British Rail I saw in the 1960s. Locomotives and passenger cars were almost always gleaming and spotless, no matter which of the several paint schemes was present—Pullman Green, "overnight" (and *Overland*) two-tone gray, *Golden State* dusty-tomato red and silver, the handsome Sunset scheme, and, of course, the legendary *Daylight* red-orange-black.

Dining-car meals were also standardized to a very high level, so much so that a recipe book published in the early 1920s sold well and was reissued as late as 1952. Otto Paul Reuss, a German immigrant who was SP's supervising chef from 1922 into the 1950s, compiled it. Aside from checking quality on the line, Reuss also wrote



internal guidebooks for dining-car staff and pioneered partially prepared ingredients like soup stocks, and blends for making biscuits and hotcakes. And SP's entrées, like "Halibut baked in Parchment," "Trout à la President," and "Sweetbreads, Overland," went far beyond the steak-and-potatoes stereotype of railroad meals in the mid-twentieth century. Even hamburgers served in the cost-cutting Hamburger Grill cars that appeared starting in 1954 (as Reuss retired) were excellent and filling.

SP's stations, cars, and locomotives were also standard in the sense of ubiquity—they were everywhere. Certainly on my home turf, the Bay Area, there were far more SP trains than those of its two rivals combined. SP was still the dominant road, if no longer quite the octopus monopoly of the era from 1869 to 1895, when the Santa Fe arrived in the Central Valley. There was a spot in East Oakland, around 5th Avenue, where SP's dominance was expressed visually. SP's five-track Niles Subdivision, the original Central Pacific of 1869, swept through on the flat, while the "new" Western Pacific (built in 1909) had a slightly undulating single track next to it, like an interurban electric line.

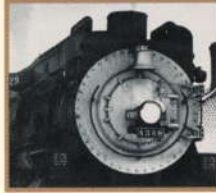
Even after branch and some secondary main passenger trains were dropped just before World War II, SP ran a copious passenger service, with the comprehensiveness

This silhouette of action on the Coast Line at Watsonville Junction, California, in 1950 captures the spirit of Southern Pacific's streamlined steam era. On the left, train No. 99, the San Francisco-bound *Daylight*, overtakes late-running local passenger train No. 71, led by GS-5 4459. Fred Matthews

Among the finest visions of the SP's early diesel era were its A-B-A sets of Alco PA diesels dressed in the *Daylight* livery and hauling long streamlined passenger trains. With 66 units, SP had the largest roster of these well-proportioned diesels. Here, SP PA 6007 departs the Oakland Pier with the *Shasta Daylight* in 1951. This locomotive is a PA-2, built in 1948 and rated at 2,000 horsepower. Fred Matthews



it valued provided in the form by buses connecting to the trains. As Gregory Lee Thompson chronicles in *The Passenger Train in the Motor Age*, the service I saw in the late 1940s was the result of a Depression-era revival. SP had lost much business, and money, to improving highways after the mid-1920s. At the trough of the Depression, SP President Angus McDonald made the risky decision to invest heavily in the passenger business, and not just in the famous streamlined *Daylight* and the premium-fare *City of San Francisco*, but also in a massive rebuilding of older steel coaches into air-conditioned chair cars with reclining seats. McDonald's heir, Armand T. Mercier, continued the renaissance, supporting his dynamic passenger traffic manager, Claude Peterson, in ordering hundreds of new cars in the mid-1940s to re-equip existing trains and inaugurate new ones. Mercier also continued the Depression-era policy of charging very low fares to make the trains competitive with driving. I still recall my shock, upon arriving in Boston in 1959, at realizing that most Eastern fares were too high to afford.



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SOUTHERN PACIFIC PASSENGER TRAINS



From the late nineteenth century to the late 1950s, Southern Pacific passenger trains represented the standard of long-distance travel on the California coast. In addition to serving the Golden State, "Espee" provided a safe and stylish network that stretched to the Pacific Northwest, Los Angeles, the great Southwest, and on to Texas and New Orleans. *Southern Pacific Passenger Trains* chronicles the story of Southern Pacific's famous passenger operations, discussing not only the famed *Daylight* trains, but also the rest of the railroad's fleet, including the *Larks*, *Limiteds*, and *City* trains. Each of Southern Pacific's "Scenic Routes"—the Shasta, Overland, Sunset, and Golden State—are also examined in detail, as are motive power, passenger equipment, and the fleet's decline throughout the 1960s. Dozens of black-and-white and color photographs, period ads, route maps, and interior views round out a compelling account of one of America's truly great passenger fleets.



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