

Cars of the 1953 Super Chief
Contributed by Robert Hoffman

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The society has offered brass car sides for several different types of cars used on the Santa Fe for several years. The cornerstone of this offering and the group that I am most familiar with is what they are calling the "1953 Super Chief." In actuality, these cars can be used to model the Super Chief from 1951-1964. The name Super Chief first appeared in the last 1930s. The schedule and physical consist changed several times between 1937 and 1951. In January 1951 the final revamping of the train was placed in service and continued to run with few equipment changes well into the Amtrak years. The 1951 Super Chief typically consisted of a baggage car, RPO, 600-606 series diner, 500-505 series dome lounge, 1339-1344 series dormitory lounge, Vista series observation, and six to eight sleepers build by American Car and Foundry, Budd and Pullman Standard.

Pullman 4-4-2 (4 bedroom, 4 compartment, 2 drawing room) built in 1948:

Regal Center

Regal City

Regal Creek

Regal Cross

Regal Crown

Regal Gorge

Regal Hill

Regal House

Regal Oak

Regal Pass

Regal Ring

Regal River

Regal Ruby

Regal Stream

Regal Temple

Regal Town

Regal Vale

Total of 17 cars originally built for 1948 Super Chief.

American Car & Foundry 4-4-2 built in 1950:

Regal Arms

Regal Corps

Regal Court

Regal Crest

Regal Dome

Regal Elm

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Regal Gate
Regal Gulf
Regal Hunt
Regal Inn
Regal Isle
Regal Lane
Regal Lark
Regal Manor
Regal Spa

Total of 15 cars originally built for the 1951 Super Chief

American Car & Foundry 10-6 (10 roomette, 6 bedroom) built in 1951:

Palm Arch
Palm Dome
Palm Haven
Palm Leaf
Palm Loch
Palm Lore
Palm Path
Palm Star
Palm Stream
Palm Summit
Palm Top
Palm Tower
Palm View

Total of 13 cars originally built for 1951 Super Chief.

Budd 10-6 built in 1950:

Pine Arroyo
Pine Beach
Pine Bell
Pine Bluff
Pine Brook
Pine Cavern
Pine Cove
Pine Creek
Pine Crest
Pine Dale
Pine Dawn
Pine Fern
Pine Gem

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Pine Gorge
Pine Grove
Pine Hill
Pine Island
Pine King
Pine Leaf
Pine Lodge
Pine Mesa
Pine Pass
Pine Peak
Pine Range
Pine Rapids
Pine Ring
Pine Shore

Total of 27 cars built for general pool service.

In 1958 the Super Chief was combined for much of the time with former 21 & 22 the El Capitan and in 1964 twelve duplex sleepers of the Indian class were upgraded to an 11-bedroom floor plan and were added to the consist, quite often replacing the 4-4-2 sleepers.

Indian Arrow
Indian Canoe
Indian Drum
Indian Falls
Indian Flute
Indian Lake
Indian Maid
Indian Mesa
Indian Pony
Indian Scout
Indian Song
Indian Squaw

A very informative article appeared in the August 1993 *Model Railroader* written by Andy Sperandeo about the 1951 Super Chief. The article was specifically targeted at the Super Chief's consist and operations during the years of 1951-1953. Floor plans and diagrams for eight types of cars most commonly used on that train were featured. The eight cars offered by the society as the "1953 Super Chief" are the same cars featured in the article. To date, I have purchased brass car sides for the baggage car, 10-6 and 4-4-2 sleepers, as well as the dome and dining cars. The depth of the fluting and the detail is excellent! The holes are even cored for grab irons to be added later. In

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rating these car sides, I would say that they are superior to what Soho and Lambert offered in brass, but not quite as good as Coach Yard and Challenger Imports. Along with the car sides you get an Eastern Car Works core kit. I started to build two of the sleepers when I was told by a vendor at the NMRA show in Cincinnati that Train Station Products was planning on coming out with some core kits of their own that were cut with closer tolerances at the joints. Thus, I stopped working on the cars. He also showed me a couple of kits that TSP is currently offering to detail the bottoms of passenger cars. The kits include battery boxes and generators, etc.

While waiting for the new core kits to be released I decided to experiment with paint. I want the cars to have a uniform look to them, which means painting the plated brass sides as well. A friend suggested that I consult race car modelers as to what paint to use to achieve the bare metal look. They suggested a company called SNJ out of Sacramento. (Funny, I lived in Sacramento off and on for ten years and never heard of them. Had to move to Kentucky to find out they existed.) I was impressed, this stuff stands and delivers! It even gives off a reflection. The color I selected was Aluminum because it was the only color that the hobby shop had in stock. The hobby shop sent them an email asking if Stainless Steel was available, but no reply as yet. It is simple enough to use and is so thin that thinner is not required. After spraying on a couple of coats and letting it sit for about twenty minutes or so I applied the powder that can be purchased in conjunction with the paint and buffed it into the paint. I have used Metallizer but was far more impressed with this. If Stainless Steel is not available, I will conduct some experiments to darken the paint a shade and see how it works. I might just go with the aluminum.

Regarding the dome and dining cars. I suggest buying the Concor kits and using the roofs. To be honest, it is the only way you are going to get the dome. The rest of the car can be discarded. Interestingly enough the Concor diner and Pullman dome models are based on the 500 and 600 series cars used on the Super Chief. The roof of each of these cars is just slightly too long, however a file or milling machine will take care of that. The ends and floor can come from the core kit. The diner could be done the same way and I do recommend it because of the ventilation detail on the roof.

If you wish to add variety to the train and use cars that are not available through the society, Walthers new baggage car is supposedly based on a Santa Fe Budd prototype. This car would also be good for the El Capitan and would look sharp with the hi-level cars currently available. We can only hope that TSP will produce the lounge car and finish the set. I have heard that the upcoming RPO is a Santa Fe prototype as well but will not swear to it. The coach is also supposedly a Santa Fe prototype copied from the final order of non hi-level coaches purchased by the railroad. These would be accurate for the Chief and San Francisco Chief.

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My Super Chief is supposed to represent the train as it looked between 1958 and 1964 (post El Cap consolidation and pre-Indian class rebuild). To do this accurately I needed more types of sleepers than offered by the society. The most common were the Budd 10-6 variety and here the modeler has a choice. The Concor 10-6 can be modified to look like a Santa Fe Pine series by plugging three windows on the isle side of the car, lengthening the name plate below the windows and adding the small plate that says "Pullman" next to the door. Or you can use the new Walthers 10-6 sleeper which is supposedly modeled after a Union Pacific Ocean series sleeper. In this case the fluting above the window needs to be added. I used Evergreen 2020 to achieve this. The Pullman 4-4-2 is still under investigation. Someone wrote in an email a couple of days ago that the Eastern Car Works 4-4-2 is accurate for the Santa Fe. I guess I will have to order one and check it out.

Some of my references include:

From Zephyr to Amtrak, by David Randall and Allan Lind 1972.

A Quarter Century of Santa Fe Consists, by Fred W. Frailey and David Randall 1974.

Model Railroader, August 1993

The Official Pullman Standard Library, Vol I, Santa Fe, by W. David Randall and William M. Ross 1986.

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