

UP's WB FAP Freight Train - Final Report

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To all:

It's time to finish up the UP's FAP train with whatever we've learned so far, so here goes:

Train: UP's FAP

Direction: Westbound only.

Description: "Forwarder - Auto Parts" (we think). A hotshot "Trailer Freight Service" train. This was an experimental service that ran only in certain years, phased-in during 1953 and disappearing by 1957. This service was designed to handle LCL (boxcar) shipments, the new TOFC service, as well as other priority traffic moving in the Salt Lake City to Los Angeles corridor, especially auto parts.

The FAP appears to be an entire train, not a block within a longer train.

Origin: Salt Lake City.

Destination: Los Angeles.

Railroads Represented: UP and connecting roads like the MILW, IC, Wabash, CB&Q, and especially the C&NW. Also foreign-road cars from the Northeastern and Midwestern industrial belt, especially PRR, NYC, and B&O.

Products: High-priority merchandise and auto parts.

Train Length and Weight: Around 85 cars and 3000 tons (typical) for the entire train.

Car Types: Any car types that carry high-priority merchandise and auto parts (mostly boxcars and automobile cars) and piggyback cars (TOFC).

Typical Schedule:

1955:

Salt Lake City - lv 8:00 am

Las Vegas - ar 10:15 pm, lv 10:45 pm

Yermo - ar 5:45 am, lv 6:15 am

San Bernardino - lv 11:15 am

Colton - lv 11:45 am

Los Angeles - ar 3:00 pm

Road Power: It was probably GP9 sets that took over the trains in 1954 from the FA and F3 sets.

Helper Power: One helper was often used from Victorville to Summit. In 1954 the TR5s were replaced by GP9 helpers (with GP7s still in the helper pool too).

Operations Details:

The train was made up in the SLC yard from traffic that had come from Pocatello on train 280, from Provo on train 306, from Green River on the LAF train, and from Denver on the ADP and DP trains, as well as other "high-class" traffic, plus fill that was gathered from local customers and connections.

There was probably only one of these per day, and probably not running all days each week. It looks like FAP was the counterpart to the eastbound "MDSE SPL" out of LA. See p. 175 of Hemphill's excellent Salt Lake Route book for more on this service.

The U.P. handled auto parts for the Ford Plant in Long Beach. The Mead Local took them from Los Angeles to Long Beach. The auto parts were just a portion of the train. The Ford plant in Long Beach was at the water's edge. While water transportation might not be fast, it would have been available.

The Ford assembly plant in Long Beach was in operation between 1930 and 1959. One of the reasons it was located on the water was some of the production was for export. The Long Beach plant was basically replaced by the Santa Fe-served Pico Rivera plant, which operated from 1957 to 1980. After that the U.P. handled few auto parts cars.

The auto parts cars were mainly assigned boxcars modified with racks to hold specific auto parts for the current year's production, such as motors, fenders, doors, and the like. They were not suitable for general loading. They were cars from eastern railroads. Auto parts cars had a small white stencil on their door, a circle with a bar coming out of each side.

There were a few cars of completed automobiles (Cadillacs) arriving in Los Angeles. They were unloaded at the Auto Dock in the freight house complex at 8th and Alameda. Completed automobiles were carried in auto rack cars.

A lot of important traffic moved through Denver to the UP in the 1940s & '50s. The CB&Q handled significant amounts of merchandise traffic west from Chicago in the 1970s and before. The CB&Q delivered a lot of So. Cal. traffic to connections via Kansas City, but their preferred interchange point for West Coast traffic in the '40s & '50s was Denver, since that gateway maximized the 'Q's revenue by giving them the longest possible haul. Much of that traffic moved on CB&Q train "CD" from Chicago to Denver. From there, much of it was routed via the UP through Ogden & Salt Lake City.

That CB&Q-Denver-UP route was significant for West Coast traffic up until the Grand Island interchange opened for run-through trains around 1960 – that resulted in the Q-UP traffic being diverted away from the Denver gateway.

There was probably some Coors beer on those trains at times, as So. Cal. has traditionally been a strong market for that brewer.

So the ADP and DP trains arriving Ogden & Salt Lake City were handling "hot" West Coast traffic at that time, although most of it was diverted to other routes & modes during the 1960s.

Traffic for Los Angeles from Co. Bluffs, Kansas City, Denver and Pocatello would flow through to Ogden / Salt Lake City and enter the yards there. As is always the case in railroading, the number of cars from each origin would vary daily, with something in the range of 20-100 cars daily coming from each origin.

Ogden / Salt Lake City yards would consolidate the arriving trains and send them south (timetable

"west") toward Las Vegas & LA. Traffic from Pocatello was added to the trains that had come through from the east, with the yards attempting to build trains as closely as possible to the optimal size, about 85 cars (if too large they were slow and unreliable; if too small they weren't economical).

As an example, using 1955 symbols, on a given day SLC may have had enough traffic to build five westbound trains, with symbol "ACB/AKC/LAF" departing first, followed by "FAP", then a "CB/KCLAF/ADP" next. A little later, "DLS/DP" would leave, with the "IMX" bringing up the rear of the parade.

Westbound trains were routed through the A Yard at San Bernardino to stay out of passenger tracks at the station.

Modeling the Train: Use a mix of boxcars, automobile cars, and piggyback cars. Use cars from UP and connecting roads like the MILW, IC, Wabash, CB&Q, and especially the C&NW. Also foreign-road cars from the Northeastern and Midwestern industrial belt, especially PRR, NYC, and B&O.

If you can make corrections to this, please let us know.

Thanks,
John Thompson