

## Santa Fe's NCX Freight Train - Final Report

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JThomp1945@...

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To all:

I'm late with this final report on the NCX train, but better late than never:

**Train:** ATSF's SCX.

**Direction:** Westbound only. (The eastbound version was the NCX train.) (The SCX was timetable EB from the Bay area to Barstow, then WB from Barstow to SB.)

**Description:** Southern California Express (or South Coast Express, according to the ATSF 1944 schedule). A general manifest train. These were fairly long, heavy trains (in 1945), ranging from 48 to 71 cars—the vast majority of them loaded.

**Origin:** Richmond, CA (with cars from the Northwest added at Stockton).

**Destination:** San Bernardino, CA.

**Railroads Represented:** ATSF, SP, GN, WP, NP, SP&S, Milw, CN, CP, IC, CN&W, MP, PFE, SFRD, FGEX, WFEX, ART Wood reefers from FGEX, WFEX, ART, DRGW., NYC, PRR, and others.

In the 54 derailed cars in the 1949 SCX wreck, there were:

ATSF 13 cars, SP 7 cars, DRGW 5 cars, NYC 5 cars, TNO 2 cars, PFE 2 cars, RI 2 cars, IC 2 cars, MP 2 cars, CNW 2 cars, PRR 1 car, LN 1 car, NH 1 car, NWP 1 car, LAPX 1 car, ERDX 1 car, FGEX 1 car, ITC 1 car, WP 1 car, SLSF 1 car, NP 1 car.

**Products:** Lots of lumber (on flats and in boxcars), Washington State produce including apples, canned fruit, potatoes, onions, grapes, strawberries, poinsettias, and beer. Oil and other petroleum products including asphalt, sulphur, sulfuric acid, etc. in Warren, Anchor, Hooker, Spencer, etc. tank cars. Also included "shook" shipments in NP boxcars. Bulk cement in covered hoppers from the Tehachapi area. Carloads of tree fruit from the central valley of Calif. in SFRD cars, and onions and potatoes from the same source in cars with the hatch covers open for ventilation. D&RGW gons of coal for Kaiser.

SP-interchanged lumber traffic, Sierra RR, and NWP-interchange lumber traffic (off the Richmond car float), merchandise boxcars, canned goods, petroleum and chemical tank cars. Limited perishable traffic can also be seen from the San Joaquin Valley to Southern California. Handled canned goods, raisins and nuts, and general merchandise.

Tank cars with westbound oil and refinery products mostly ran in SCX trains, which passed through Bakersfield, and in the TDF trains from Texas.

Almost half the 54 cars that derailed in the SCX wreck in 1949 had some kind of forestry product coming from the Northwest: lumber, poles, ties, paper goods. Probably a handful of cars in addition to the D&RGW coal gons were added at Barstow. Coming from the Northwest, the number of SP and PFE loads is not surprising, nor is the presence of NYC cars, which were

among the most numerous on the nation's railroads. We would have expected an equivalent number of Pennsy cars, but there was only one. Every single car of the 54 that did derail was a load; there were no mtys.

**Train Length and Weight:** Typical trains c.1950 had around 70-90 cars and weighed around 3000 to 4000 tons (longer in the 1950s than in the 1940s). Almost all cars were loads.

**Car Types:** Boxcars, flatcars, tank cars, gondolas, reefers, and covered hoppers. It was mainly boxcars and flatcars.

### **Typical Schedule:**

1943-44 at SB:

- 1:00 a.m. -- Train SCX (from Richmond) arrives from Barstow
- it left Barstow at 9:00 p.m. the night before
- 2:00 a.m. -- Train SCX leaves for L.A. via 3rd District
- it will arrive in L.A. at 6:00 a.m.

Aug. 2, 1947 sample time: dep. SB at 10:30 am

The SCX passed Summit in the evening (c. 1950).

The SCX train was pretty reliable. Coming from Oakland on a hot schedule, it was usually on time, leaving Barstow in the late evening (c.1956).

1956 sample times at SB:

- 12:40 am, 5:25 am, 4:55 am, 11:50 pm, 12:35 am, 1:50 am, 1:55 am, 1:10 am
- median time: 1:10 am to 1:50 am (varies a lot)

**Road Power:** 4-unit freight FT sets, until 4-unit freight F3/F7 sets arrived in 1948-53. 2-10-2s during the June spud rush in the 1940s (and on some other days in the 1940s).

**Helper Power:** 2-10-2s, 4-8-2s, 2-8-2s, also FT sets (full or partial), until GP7s arrived in 1950-53, and GP9s in 1956-57. Number of helpers west from Victorville depended on train weight, normally at most one helper.

### **Operations Details:**

Handles all traffic Richmond-Stockton-Bakersfield for all Southern California points including San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and beyond. Gave traffic to many local trains.

Stockton was the interchange with WP and the Northwest roads, so they would fill out shorter EB trains from Richmond with more cars at Stockton. Northwest cars would show up in the SCX as well as the GWS.

When they had more than enough cars in the Bay Area for one SCX train, they filled the first section exclusively with cars destined for Los Angeles. Then they put the rest of the Los Angeles cars in the second section and filled it out (at Stockton) with cars from the Northwest. Barstow probably added cars to the SCX too. So while the core of the second section was still Los Angeles cars, the rest was a dog's breakfast to be split up and sorted out in San Bernardino.

Trains arriving Barstow: if the train was light, a cut of Kaiser coal was added to the rear to fill the train to max tonnage. If the train was heavy and exceeded tons per operative brake, a cut of empty reefers was added for braking power down the big mountain. Trains from the north destined south, i.e. SCX and GWS, generally were switched from one end to the other to dig out

east traffic and any Victorville shorts. Those trains were put back together mine-run (mixed order). This was done on the passenger station tracks, probably on track three. Track one was the WB Main and track four was the EB Main.

There was an April 16, 1949, wreck of the SCX westbound freight just west of Summit. Chard Walker confirmed that a 2-10-2 helper on the rear had cut off on the fly at Summit, and the train went on through

Summit without its required stop to turn up retainers. Chard wrote, "All I can assume is that the engine crew was asleep. ... The conductor or rear brakeman could have pulled the air to stop the train, but neither did. All I can assume is that they were asleep too."

The D&RGW gons on the end of the wrecked SCX are coal loads that the UP brought to Barstow and were picked up on the SCX or other freight and carried to San Bernardino, where they would be consolidated into the "Turn" and move to Kaiser steel west of SB.

When the SCX got to the SB A Yard, it was completely disassembled and reclassified into various local freights. Some of its cars were taken out at Barstow, and the rest of their cars went west mixed together in any scrambled order ("mine run"). Switchers attacked both ends of the train, taking out the cars needed for local trains and adding in some cars bound for LA. Then the trains went on to Los Angeles. The cars that were taken out were switched into various local freights, such as 2nd District locals or turns, 3rd District locals or turns, the San Jac Turn, and the Redlands Loop local. Cars bound for industries along the 2nd or 3rd District were called "shorts."

Regarding arriving WB freights in general, most trains had a cut of coal taken off, usually from the rear. Empty SFRD reefers were taken out, usually from the front.

Shook shipments came in NP boxcars into SB then distributed to the various packing houses for assembly. Perishables were primarily shipped in SFRD reefers but when short of these, ART & FGEX reefers were used.

There were countless times when a symbol train was filled to tonnage. Hence, you might see a 2nd SCX.

During one week in May, 1945, on two days there was no SCX, but on two other days there were two sections. All but one of them had FT road engines; the exception had a 3800 Class 2-10-2 road engine. All had one or two 2-10-2 helpers from Victorville to Summit. One of them dropped almost half of its cars at San Bernardino before departing for Los Angeles. Two of them ran through San Bernardino to Los Angeles with no change in cars—only a change of road engines. The two that ran through San Bernardino were the first sections on days when the SCX ran in more than one section. SCX trains that were reblocked were in San Bernardino for 3 to 6 hours each. Road engines for the trip over the Third District into Los Angeles included 2-8-2's, 2-10-2's and a 4-8-2.

**Modeling the Train:** As usual, 1/4 to 1/3 of the train should be ATSF and/or SFRD cars. Use mostly boxcars, and plenty of flatcars with lumber loads, and some tank cars, gondolas, reefers, and covered hoppers. Use mostly cars from Northwest railroads, but some from all over the country (see Railroads Represented, above). If the train is short, add D&RGW gons of coal on the end. If the train is heavy, add some reefers on the front for braking.

Footnote for modelers: here are the 54 cars and loads in the 1949 SCX that wrecked:

1. ATSF - 2115 - CABOOSE - CREW
2. DRGW - 41389 - GONDOLA - COAL
3. DRGW - 42132 - GONDOLA - COAL
4. DRGW - 45171 - GONDOLA - COAL
5. DRGW - 42197 - GONDOLA - COAL

6. DRGW - 71884 - GONDOLA - COAL
  7. SP - 79907 - FLAT - POLES
  8. SL-SF - 95772 - FLAT - LUMBER
  9. MP - 86594 - BOX - H.H.GDS.
  10. PFE - 68315 - REFER. - SPUDS
  11. IC - 16963 - BOX - SALT
  12. NH - 35419 - BOX - SALT
  13. NYC - 176958 - BOX - AUTO. PTS
  14. NYC - 499747 - FLAT - MILITARY
  15. NWP - 5695 - GONDOLA - LUMBER
  16. ERDX - 1041 - REFER. - CAN.GDS.
  17. FGEX - 39074 - REFER. - CAN.GDS.
  18. ATSF - 140266 - BOX - BKRY.GDS.
  19. SP - 80369 - FLAT - LUMBER
  20. CNW - 43847 - FLAT - LUMBER
  21. SP - 49670 - FLAT - LUMBER
  22. ATSF - 138520 - BOX - ASPHALT
  23. PFE - 91821 - REFER. - MDSE.
  24. ATSF - 91114 - FLAT - PIPE
  25. IC - 33640 - BOX - CASES
  26. ATSF - 9190 - BOX - MDSE.
  27. ATSF - 8986 - BOX - H.H.GDS.
  28. NP - 63009 - FLAT - LUMBER
  29. RI - 90315 - FLAT - LUMBER
  30. PENN. - 474518 - FLAT - LUMBER
  31. RI - 90730 - FLAT - LUMBER
  32. ATSF - 64604 - BOX - BEER
  33. ATSF - 139010 - BOX - BEER
  34. ATSF - 170962 - GONDOLA - STEEL
  35. LAPX - 149 - BOX - OXYGEN
  36. SP - 15816 - BOX - LUMBER
  37. TNO - 22377 - BOX - LUMBER
  38. ATSF - 212125 - BOX - LUMBER
  39. SP - 49644 - FLAT - LUMBER
  40. CNW - 76450 - BOX - LUMBER
  41. NYC - 495692 - FLAT - LUMBER
  42. LN - 91204 - BOX - TIES
  43. SP - 33308 - BOX - LUMBER
  44. TNO - 59512 - BOX - LUMBER
  45. ATSF - 4359 - BOX - PAPER CAN
  46. ATSF - 8508 - BOX - COFFEE
  47. ATSF - 275086 - BOX - COFFEE
  48. SP - 26621 - BOX - LUMBER
  49. ITC - 1017 - FLAT - LUMBER
  50. SP - 43129 - FLAT - LUMBER
  51. MP - 34470 - BOX - TIES
  52. WP - 20326 - BOX - TIES
  53. NYC - 66251 - BOX - H.H.GDS.
  54. NYC - 124120 - BOX - BARLEY
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Please review this and send us suggested changes and additions. The plan is to go back and update all the final reports once they are all done.

Thanks for your help,  
John Thompson

