

Santa Fe's Freight Trains 33-43-53 - Final Report

JThomp1945@...

To all:

It's time to reorganize all the notes into the final report, so here goes:

Train: ATSF's Train 34 / MX-34

Direction: Eastbound only. (The westbound version was Train 33.)

Description: Manifest Freight from LA to Kansas City. The symbol changed to MX-34 around 1950, and it was called Motor Empties East. Train 34 was the manifest freight train from California to the East going back almost to the beginning of the railway.

According to Lloyd Stagner in Vol. 3 of his "Santa Fe in Color" series (p. 58), "MX-34 was a symbol freight train operated from Los Angeles to Argentine for the purpose of returning empty auto parts cars from the numerous automobile assembly plants that were in existence in Southern California in the 1950s." In the 1940s these cars could move on Train 34 or even on GFX trains that weren't otherwise up to full tonnage, but by the 1950s there was apparently sufficient traffic to justify a dedicated train (MX-34).

Origin: Los Angeles (Hobart Yard).

Destination: Kansas City (Argentine Yard).

Railroads Represented: ATSF, Wabash, Erie, PRR, NYC, B&O, GTW, PM, DT&I, and AC&Y.

For petroleum tank cars, UTLX, Shell (SCCX), Shell Chemical (SCMX), Union (UOCX), Associated (AOX), and Richfield (ROX) were represented.

Products: Handled empty auto cars and auto parts cars, dry freight, petroleum products. Perishable traffic was not placed in this train. The train was mostly high-priority empties in the postwar decade.

Train Length and Weight: Around 80 cars and 3,000 tons.

Car Types: Empty auto parts cars and other special-equipped empties destined to Kansas City and beyond, and some tank cars of petroleum. Mostly newer auto cars (often steel sheathed) XMs and XAPs, as well as XARs, and empty gondolas fitted with racks for auto frames.

Typical Schedule:

Circa 1943-1944:

11:59 a.m (noon) -- Train 34 (first section) leaves SB for Barstow (bound for Argentine)
- it leaves in up to 4 sections (numbered 1 - 4) (all day, as needed)

Aug. 2, 1947:

Train: 1st 34, Depart SB 11:35 pm.

February 13, 1948:

1st/34-M, 0-88-2316 tons. Crew on duty 9:30 am

2nd/34-M, 2-88-2456 tons. Crew on duty 10:45 pm.

1949:

34-44 (Calif to KC) - departs LA at 1:15 am, SB at 11:59 am (noon), Barstow at 9:00 pm.

1951:

8/20/1951 MX-34 FRT SB 3:45PM, BAR 10:20PM

9/2/1951 MX-34 FRT SB 3:00PM, BAR 8:35PM

9/7/1951 MX-34 FRT SB 7:35PM, BAR 12:20AM

MX34 - 1955

Lv. San Bdn. 3:30 a.m., Ar. Bar. 7:00 a.m.

Lv. San Bdn. 5:00 p.m., Ar. Bar. 9:50 p.m.

MX34 - 1956

Lv. San Bdn. 11:45 p.m., Ar. Bar. 3:50 a.m.

In summary, Train 34 / MX-34 departed SB at widely varying times, but often in the afternoon during the postwar decade.

Road Power: 4-unit freight FT sets, until 4-unit freight F3/F7 sets arrived in 1948-53. (3800 2-10-2 during each June Spud Rush in 1940s.)

Helper Power: 2-10-2s, 4-8-2s, 2-8-2s, also FT sets (full or partial), until GP7s and H16-44s arrived in 1950-53, and GP9s in 1956-57.

Operations Details:

Empty cars to be returned east were collected at Hobart Yard, adjacent to the LA Stockyards and UP's East Yard. At San Bernardino, eastward loads and waybilled or "special" (XAR, XAP) empties were run in eastbound redball trains like 34.

At Barstow Train 34 combined with Train 44 (as of 1944). It connected with Train 140 at Argentine, which was a train that handled Argentine loads and special empties destined to points west of Chicago.

Train 34 was shown in the freight schedules, but if enough GFX trains were called to handle the eastward redball traffic, there might be no need to run 34. On some days it ran in multiple sections.

Modeling the Train: Use lots of newer, empty 50' and 40' automobile parts cars from ATSF, Wabash, Erie, PRR, NYC, B&O, GTW, PM, and DT&I, and AC&Y. Also include some empty gons with auto frame racks, and maybe a few loaded petroleum tank cars, but the train was almost all high-priority empties.
