

UP's LA Forwarder Freight Train - Final Report

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To all:

It's now Saturday night and time for this week's final report on the LA Forwarder train.

Last time I asked how many cars were in a typical block moving west. I'm going to estimate that by looking at several trains that Mark Amfahr listed in his essay, which each had 3 or 4 named blocks combined into a single train. If we take a typical train length back then as 80 cars, then each block may have been about 20 to 25 cars long.

I'll now take last night's temporary report and change it to neutral language, eliminating the first-person language:

Train: UP's FWDR / Adv. FWDR / FRWDR (alternate spelling) / LAF (mid-1950s and later).

Direction: Westbound only.

Description: Los Angeles Forwarder. Manifest freight includes auto parts to LA. This was a block of cars, not an entire train.

Origin: Salt Lake City (from Green River).

Destination: Los Angeles via San Bernardino.

Railroads Represented: Union Pacific, PRR, Wabash, DT&I, NYC, MILW, ATSF, CNW, CB&Q, and others.

Products: Auto parts and general merchandise.

Train Length and Weight: Around 80 cars and 3000 tons (typical). (Total train, not the LAF block, which may have been about 20-25 cars long.)

Car Types: Automobile boxcars, regular boxcars. Few flats, gons, hoppers, reefers, or tank cars.

The auto parts cars were mainly special 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, such as Cadillacs arriving in Los Angeles. Completed automobiles were carried in auto rack cars which were assigned boxcars and had a narrow white bar painted across the door.

The auto parts were in box cars, both 40ft. and 50 ft. cars, usually with double doors, which were also used to transport finished automobiles with collapsible racks (inside

the cars, but the cars were marked on the doors if the racks were installed).

There are several examples of color photos of car loading during WWII in Chicago in vintage freight car calendars. It would be a mix of railroads but mostly box car traffic. In 1945, that would be predominately 40 foot box cars of all types, heights, and roads, which makes for a good mixed freight.

Trains were filled out with whatever was handy.

Typical Schedule: These combined trains would normally appear in a "fleet" over Cajon in the late afternoon – late evening hours (roughly 6pm to 3am).

1946:

LA FRDWR Los Angeles Forwarder Arr SB Noon, Arr East Yard 4:00 PM

1947:

FWDR. - leave Yermo at 6:15 am, arrive San Bernardino at 12:05 pm.

"FWD. trains will handle all Forwarders, auto parts for Los Angeles territory."

Adv. FWDR. - leave Yermo at 2:30 am, arrive San Bernardino at 9:00 am.

"FWD. trains will handle all Forwarders, auto parts for Los Angeles territory."

1949:

LA FWDR Los Angeles Forwarder Merchandise, auto parts Arr SB 8:00 AM, Arr LA 12:15 PM

1955:

LAF Yermo 11:30 AM, SB 4:30 PM

1957:

LAF Los Angeles Forwarder Salt Lake-LA, Yermo lv 5:45A , arr Berdoo 11:00A, Colton 11:45A, LA 3:00P

1964:

LAF Dep Yermo 12:05 pm, Lv Berdoo 3:35 pm, Colton 3:50 pm and Ar LA 6:00 pm

Road Power: 4-6-6-4s into 1947. Once the diesels arrived in 1947, the normal road power was Alco FA ABBA sets, sometimes EMD F3 ABBA sets. It was probably GP9 sets that took over the train in 1954 from the FA and F3 sets.

Helper Power: One helper was often used from Victorville to Summit. There were some steam helpers at first into 1947 (2-10-2s, 2-8-2s, 4-8-2s, 4-10-2s), but the FM H20-44s took over from 1947-1950. Then there was the return of the same steam helpers during 1950-1951, until being replaced by TR5s and GP7s in 1951. In 1954 the TR5s were replaced by GP9 helpers (with the GP7s still in the helper pool too).

Operations Details:

The "forwarder / merchandise" trains were designed to carry merchandise, auto parts, high-value / priority loaded cars and were "filled out" with other traffic (loads and/or empties) as necessary.

Those were often consolidated as they moved west such that something like 2-4 of these trains would move over Cajon during a typical 24-hour period. Because of delivery schedules & customer commitments, these trains would normally appear in a "fleet" over Cajon in the late afternoon – late evening hours (roughly 6pm to 3am) so that freight could be handled overnight & available for customers the following morning.

The Auto parts traffic was for Kaiser (bodies shipped vertically on a flat car show up in Trains and Model Railroader in the early 1950's) but the traffic did not last.

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

The Forwarders were important customers and got good service from the railroad. The forwarders consolidated small shipments into a carload. They made their money charging LCL rates to their customers, and paying carload rates to the railroad. The contents of their cars was listed as merchandise, abbreviated as MDSE on train lists.

The names of a few of them on the U.P. were: Universal Carloading, Custom Cartage, Western Transportation, Transport Cartage, and Lifschultz. Terminal Freight was associated with Sears.

Most of the forwarders on the U.P. in Los Angeles were in the freight house complex at 8th and Alameda. Completed autos were unloaded at the Auto Dock in the freight house there.

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 only a portion of a train. In 1959 the Ford plant moved from Long Beach to Rivera, adjacent to the ATSF main line. After that the U.P. handled few auto parts cars.

Modeling the Train:

Use lots of automobile box cars (40' and 50') and regular boxcars, lettered for UP, PRR, Wabash, DT&I, NYC, MILW, ATSF, CNW, CB&Q, and others. Use few flats, gons, hoppers, reefers, or tank cars. Combine this LAF block with other blocks of more general cars, so that the LAF block is about 1/4 to 1/3 of the complete train.

Some but not all boxcars for autos were recently painted, even if not new. (Unlike most box car traffic, which was dirty with soot,)

Please review this and send any comments or corrections.

Thanks,
John Thompson