



This bulldog gets NO RESPECT

EMD's dual-service FP7 — misidentified and misunderstood by many — often operated in virtual anonymity

By J. David Ingles

Photos from the author's collection

Electro-Motive's FP7 diesel is the Rodney Dangerfield of cab units. Of all the builder's fabled "bulldog-nose" cab units, it's the least understood, among the least remembered, and is often misidentified.

Perhaps this is because there was never an FP7 decorated in Santa Fe's revered red-and-silver "Warbonnet" scheme. Or because several other popular roads didn't buy any: B&O, Burlington, Great Northern, New York Central, and Rio Grande, to name five. To be sure, some "big name" roads did own FP7s: Pennsy, SP, and UP, for three, but when you

think of their passenger cab units, you probably won't think of their FP7s.

When is an "FP7" not an FP7? Too much of the time. An FP7 was not an F7 with a steam-generating boiler and/or pass-through steam lines. The FP7, offered from mid-1949 through late 1953, rang up 378 sales, including 57 in Canada and 18 in Mexico. It was a specific model, 4 feet longer than an F7, "lengthened to supply extra steam generator and water capacity for passenger service," to quote Kalmbach's 1973 *Second Diesel Spotter's Guide* ("DSG-II"). Specifically, "950 gallons more train-heating water,"



SOO LINE, whose train 18, soon to be named *Laker* (above), nears Chicago's Grand Central Station in May '51 behind FP7/F7B 2501A&B, was among FP7 owners that ran few passenger trains. **GEORGIA 1004** (inset), in Atlanta in late 1966, clearly exhibits the FP7's 4 feet of extra length, behind the forward truck.

Main photo, Mert Leet; inset, John Stubblefield

according to David P. Morgan in Kalmbach's 1971 *Our GM Scrapbook*, an assemblage of chapters from TRAINS in the era when most readers needed to be educated about diesels. Whoever named the chapters, though, stumbled on one — the section on EMD's B-B cab units was entitled "F Means Freight." Yep, more disrespect for the FP7!

Of course, FP7s did haul freight for many owners, and not just after the passenger-train timetables thinned. But that was EMD's intent — a true "dual-service" unit. The FP7 was versatile, designed to be at home on varnish or ton-

nage. North American FP7 purchasers — 25 U.S. roads plus 2 in Canada and 2 government buyers in Mexico, among the 60-plus entities that bought new F units of all models — can be generalized in three categories:

- Carriers with minimal passenger trains and few or no other passenger diesels, because the FP7 was a slam-dunk to enter freight service when the time came
- Railroads with significant passenger schedules but which, often because they were mountain roads, preferred B-B cabs for their varnish
- Systems with healthy passenger traf-

fic that often ran second sections of regular trains and/or frequent special trains. These buyers maintained sizeable stables of FP7s, normally using them on freight until passenger duty called.

One reason the FP7 was misidentified was that many roads had F7s equipped for passenger service, both A (cab) and B



CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS' 10 FP7s were ubiquitous. Two clear Thornton Junction, Ill., with the *Georgian/Humming Bird* on June 24, 1965. J. David Ingles



SOUTHERN PACIFIC's FP7s were versatile. No. 6447 (left) is ready to depart Ogden, Utah, for Salt Lake City on March 24, 1970, with the short-lived extension of the *Rio Grande Zephyr*. SP inherited Cotton Belt's FP7; on February 6, 1966, it and GP9 3003 are in San Francisco on train 122. Left, Rick Burn; right, photographer unknown

(booster) units. Several had both F7s and FP7s. I cannot begin to count the number of times, though, I've read or heard an F7 on a passenger train called an "FP7." My longtime friend Jerry Pinkepank, who wrote the *DSG-II*, couldn't have phrased it better when he penned, "[The FP7 and FP9] are a type to themselves, not to be confused with ordinary F3s, F7s, and F9s equipped for passenger service." Trouble is, they *were* regularly confused. (We'll get to the FP9 in a bit.)

True, that extra 4 feet on an FP7 can be hard to discern from trackside or in photos. The *DSG-II* pictures a Frisco FP7 broadside, where it's easy to see that difference, generally below the forward porthole; ditto Georgia 1004 on page 56.

Contemporary B units didn't have that 4-foot difference, by the way, because there is no such thing as an FP7B. Some F7Bs had steam generators, but there was never a 4-foot-longer version. What's strange about this, though, is that EMD's official *Locomotive Reference Guide*, which lists all locomotive unit-by-unit, simply labels groups of other F-series units with the letter F and one letter or number: FT, F2, F3, F7, and F9. If you want to know A units from B units, you have to look through the section under each railroad, line by line. And yet, for our subject here, the *Locomotive Reference* listing is "FP7A." That's redundant. It must have been EMD's way of telling us that there is no such thing as an FP7B.

Kings, queens, and loners

EMD built two demonstrator FP7s in late 1949, after completing Rock Island's order for 10 and another dozen for other buyers. Each was mated with two F7Bs, and although they were built at La Grange, they were to tour in Canada and so were lettered GENERAL MOTORS DIESEL LTD. First was 9051-9052-9053, which worked on Grand Trunk Western and Canadian National, according to the definitive book on the model, *EMD's FP7 and FP9* (Withers Publishing, 2009). Similar demos 7001-7002-7003 followed, and showed their stuff on Canadian Pacific and Algoma Central. (Ironically, ACR in the Wisconsin Central era, from 1995 to 2002, would have one ex-CP FP7

among its 10 Fs, all acquired for passenger service from VIA Rail Canada.)

All the demo FP7s/F7Bs were bought (at a slight discount) by frugal **Soo Line**, which serves as a good example of many owners. Soo wasn't a big passenger-train operator but bought 6 FP7s new in addition to the demos. As the quantity of its passenger trains dwindled, the road favored its 13 passenger GP9s for the remaining varnish, especially east of Minneapolis-St. Paul, and its FP7s mostly worked on freights. Both ex-demo FP7s survive, 500 (*née* 9051) on display at Ladysmith, Wis., and 2500 (*née* 7001) in operable condition at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth.

Three roads, each with 40 or more FP7s, account for almost one-third of the total: Louisville & Nashville, Atlantic Coast Line, and Pennsylvania. Five roads had only two or three, and Clinchfield and Cotton Belt each had just one.

Ironically, both CRR 200 and SSW 330 went on to later careers. **Clinchfield** had just one passenger train, and when it quit in 1954, No. 200 went into freight service. Later, it became a star for successors Seaboard System and CSX as 118, being used on business trains, excursions, and RoadRailer freights, and it's among two dozen or so FP7s that survive [see list at www.ClassicTrainsMag.com].

When **Cotton Belt's** passenger trains ceased in 1959 (it also had two Alco PAs, some RS3s, and a GP7 with steam generators), parent **Southern Pacific** requisitioned SSW's FP7 (by then numbered 306), renumbered it 6462 above its own 16 FP7s, and put it on San Francisco commute trains. SP's FP7s, incidentally, were standard power on selected long-distance trains, but they likely rank way below PAs and E units in most fans' SP memory banks and photo collections.

Interestingly, Cotton Belt's FP7, but not SP's, wore the attractive "Daylight" red and orange [page 16]. SP 6446-6461 were painted in the "Black Widow" freight black and silver, a very nice color scheme but no Daylight for sure. All became gray with a red nose, and 14 (all but 6452 and 6460) were taken by Amtrak, numbered 110-123, and assigned to BN's shop at Havre, Mont. Some were repainted in the silver scheme with a red nose and the "pointless arrow."

In common with the Soo and a few other carriers, the **Reading's** eight FP7s were the anthracite road's fanciest passenger power — the "queens of the fleet" according to Reading authority Dale Woodland. They wore black with a light



CHESAPEAKE & OHIO owned 16 FP7s, delivered in passenger colors as on 8002 (top), leading a freight north at Fostoria, Ohio, in July 1961. The experimental scheme on 8000, with an E8 on train 21, the *George Washington*, arriving Louisville in early '63, was short-lived. Duty on specials was common, as above at Williamsburg, Va., April 28, 1960, on a stockholders' extra.

Top, J. David Ingles; middle, Tom Smart; above, Roy Blanchard



CLINCHFIELD had 41 F units of four models but only this FP7, in fresh paint at Kingsport, Tenn., waiting with a borrowed Southern sleeper for CRR 4-6-0 No. 1 and other cars to join them from Erwin to deadhead to Elkhorn City, Ky., for the 1968 edition of the annual Santa Claus special.

David W. DeVault



SOUTHERN had 20 FP7s; they had a long career, and five survive. No. 6137, with an E6 (left) on Washington–Atlanta local 35 at Manassas, Va., March 9, 1964, flies green flags. In May '75 during Southern's Amtrak-holdout era, four FP7s halt at Lynchburg, Va., with the *Piedmont*.

Left, George H. Menge; above, Mike Schafer



ATLANTIC COAST LINE diesels had long traded purple for black by May 30, 1966, when 890 left Waycross, Ga., with local 189 to Montgomery, Ala., a typical FP7 secondary train assignment.

J. David Ingles

green band set off by yellow pinstripes, as did Reading's freight Fs and Alco FAs, vs. the solid olive or Pullman green of its hood units and switchers. Although out-numbered on the Reading by boiler-equipped EMD, Alco, Baldwin, and FM road-switchers, one or two of the attractive FP7s were a reliable sight on certain trains, such as the Philadelphia–Jersey City *Crusader*. The arrival of RDCs and the decline in intercity passenger service saw five of the FP7s leave the roster in the mid-'60s, leaving three to rotate on a commuter consist until SEPTA retired them in 1981 ["Classics Today," page 92].

The same "general usage" was true on other roads, most of similar size to Reading. **Chicago & Eastern Illinois** had three E units, but they ran either solo or with F units, and the road's 10 FP7s were a good bet to be on almost any of its passenger trains out of Chicago, as well as freights; C&EI also had nine F3s (six As, three Bs) with steam generators. The three partners of the **Georgia-West Point Route** corridor had nine FP7s among them, plus one F3A and 18 GP7s set up

for passenger work . . . but no E units.

Chesapeake & Ohio was an interesting case. It had 16 FP7s, the first 14 bought with 7 F7Bs in three-unit sets as freight units able to go into passenger service when needed, but wearing the attractive passenger blue, gray, and yellow. They were "southern district" denizens ("real" C&O vs. former Pere Marquette), but with 12 E7s (from the PM side) and 31 E8s on the roster, they mostly hauled secondary trains or specials. These FP7s had dynamic brakes and 1,150-gallon steam generators, but had 62:15 gearing for the standard 65-mph maximum freight speed. The last two, Nos. 8014–8015, were bought as a passenger pair (no F7B) for the Louisville–Ashland, Ky., route and lacked dynamic brakes. After BL2s took over there, they were renumbered 7094–7095 atop C&O's freight F7s and had their boilers removed.

Those two, and 8 of the first 14, were sold in 1968 to C&O affiliate Baltimore & Ohio, most having been repainted in C&O's freight blue-and-yellow or solid blue. Their boilers were deactivated. Inci-

dentally, do not be fooled today by the existing F unit painted in C&O passenger colors, No. 8016. A veteran of West Virginia's *Potomac Eagle* tourist train, and present at the May 2014 Streamliners at Spencer event in North Carolina, it was built as Clinchfield F3 800 [page 69].

Southern's 20 FP7s, in the 6130–6149 series, were seen in many places, despite sharing the roster with 46 E units, 68 passenger Fs (2 F2s, 51 F3s, 15 F7s), 19 boiler-equipped GP7s, and some Alcos. Assigned, on paper, to the road's Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific subsidiary, the FP7s worked passenger trains on that Cincinnati–Chattanooga line but were not confined there, often teaming with older E units systemwide. Initially painted Virginia green, then black, they all survived into the Amtrak era, going into freight service but also seeing use on Southern's two post-1971 secondary trains, the Washington–Atlanta *Piedmont* and Salisbury–Asheville, N.C., *Asheville Special* (E8s handled the non-Amtrak *Southern Crescent*).

TRAINS Editor Jim Wrinn gives us a "modern history" lesson on the fleet. In 1976, FP7s 6133 and 6141 went back to green — to match the *Southern Crescent's* E8s — for the *Skyland Special*, the 1975–77 weekend mountain excursion train between Asheville and Old Fort, N.C., that replaced the Salisbury train. The other 18, still black, were leased to Amtrak for a time, and some got clear out to Seattle. They returned home to finish their days in ballast-train service.

After a *Southern Crescent* derailment took some E8s off the roster in December 1978, two more FP7s, 6143 and 6147, were repainted green to join the remaining E8s until Southern conveyed the train to Amtrak on February 1, 1979. Southern donated the 6133 to the North



FLORIDA EAST COAST's five FP7s mostly worked on freights. No. 575, in the blue that followed red-and-yellow, leaves Hialeah in March 1970.

Keith E. Ardinger



LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE replaced its first livery (above, in 1960) with black; gray came later. No. 667 and two sisters are on a Derby Special at Louisville May 4, 1968. FP7s gather at Nashville's Radnor Yard April 8, 1966 (right).

Two photos above, Tom Smart; right, J. David Ingles

Carolina Transportation Museum at Spencer in 1980 (where it still operates), and repainted and rewired the 6138 to join the other three "greenies" for use on office-car trains and excursions.

In 1983 the new Norfolk Southern renumbered the four to 3496-3499 (but kept them in Southern livery), and they hauled specials until 1989, when they were sold. Two went to R.J. Corman for its *Old Kentucky Dinner Train* out of Bardstown, while the other two went to the Atlanta-based New Georgia tourist-train operators, repainted into a Central of Georgia-like livery. After New Georgia quit, nearby Stone Mountain Park bought the two in 1995 for its scenic railroad loop, and in 2011 it overhauled them. So, Southern's final five FP7s all survive.

Fleets of the "big three"

Quantities on the top three FP7 fleets were 45 for Louisville & Nashville, 44 for Atlantic Coast Line, and 40 for Pennsylvania. Among U.S. fleets, Milwaukee



Road was fourth with 32, then Southern's 20; other roads bought 16 or fewer.

Atlantic Coast Line historian Larry Goolsby says the road's FP7s initially were used mostly in passenger service but gravitated to being anonymous members of the freight fleet (if you can call purple-and-silver cab units "anonymous"), especially in summer when ridership lessened. (ACL began replacing purple and silver with black and yellow in late 1957.)

Their early assignments were local and secondary trains such as the Richmond-Jacksonville "Florida Mail" mainline locals, and trains on the hilly "west-

ern" lines such as Waycross-Atlanta locals 101 and 102, that leg of the *Dixie Flyer*, and Waycross-Montgomery secondary trains 180 and 189. Goolsby says the FP7s rarely showed up on ACL's top streamliners, though they were known to run occasionally on the *South Wind*, whose ACL leg was Jacksonville-Montgomery. Seaboard Coast Line inherited all 44 ACL FP7s, 850-874 becoming 675-698 (855 was gone) for passenger work, and 875-893, having shifted to ACL 430-448 when they lost their boilers, becoming SCL 316 and 318-335.

Louisville & Nashville's FP7s were de-



ONTARIO NORTHLAND diesels were hardy. Two of its FP7s on mixed train 622 wait at Moosonee, Ont., in minus-30 (F.) cold December 9, 1972.

J. David Ingles



ALASKA had just three FP7s, but over time they wore four ARR color schemes, arguably the prettiest being this original, at the Anchorage shop in February 1966. Two still work in Arizona.

P. D. "Denny" Custer

livered during 1951–52 when “The Old Reliable” still ran many passenger locals and secondary trains on its 4,700-mile system. A fleet of 32 E units covered most of the mainline trains. For years, the St. Louis trains rated a pair of FP7s, as did the Evansville–Nashville portion of the “Dixie Route” trains to and from Chicago via C&EI. Farther south, FP7s worked passenger and freight into New Orleans and east into the Florida panhandle. After the 1957 merger of Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis, which had relied on its F3s, F7s, and five GP7s for varnish, L&N FP7s began running to Atlanta.

L&N authority Ron Flanary reports that as passenger train-offs mounted, L&N removed the steam generators from many of its FP7s and regeared them for freight work. In late 1966, 10 — from both the 600–621 and 650–672 series — were segregated for passenger service and renumbered to 690–699. Eight of

C&EI’s 10 FP7s, which had become Missouri Pacific 933–942 in the 1963 merger, went to L&N (as 670–677) in the ICC-imposed 1969 split of C&EI’s assets. L&N 693 was the last one retired, in ’75.

Pennsy’s 40 FP7s and 14 concurrent steam-equipped F7Bs, delivered in mid-1952, were PRR’s largest group of official dual-service cab units. Classed EFP-15, they gave PRR more flexibility in assignments, according to the 2002 Hundman Publishing book *Pennsy Diesels 1924–1968*, by Ken Douglas and Peter Weiglin. Many trains didn’t need an E8A with the 98-mph gearing Pennsy used — the EFP-15s were geared for a maximum 77 mph, satisfactory for their standard assignments on freights and secondary passenger trains. Their flexibility was seen when they would be called for extras such as mail-and-express trains and end-of-year holiday sections. All EFP-15s had cab signals, train phone, and dynamic

brakes, and by the early ’60s most of them got nose multiple-unit receptacles.

Reflecting their dual-service role, Pennsy’s FP7s and companion F7Bs came in both freight and passenger color schemes. Most wore the dark green with a single thin buff stripe, PRR’s standard for freight cabs and boosters. Two A-B-A sets got the Tuscan red with five buff pinstripes that Pennsy adopted for passenger covered wagons in 1952.

The EFP-15s were assigned primarily west of Pittsburgh. At the end of 1952, 12 were transferred to Enola, Pa., a freight terminal; in 1958 these moved to Columbus, Ohio, to join the rest of the fleet. By the mid-’60s, all were maintained at Conway, Pa. They held down regional freight assignments but were also seen on passenger trains through 1967. Penn Central inherited them all and assigned them to mail trains in four- and five-unit sets; the FP7s became 4332–4371. When Conrail took over in 1976, it got 17 FP7s and 2 of the F7Bs, but all were retired by late ’78. None made it into Conrail blue.

Mountaineers, hide-and-seek, and the great white north

Most “transcontinental” western railroads favored F units over E units to haul their limiteds through the mountains, including Great Northern, Northern Pacific, Rio Grande, Western Pacific, and Santa Fe. Of those, only GN and Santa Fe had Es, and used them elsewhere, while only NP and WP had FP7s.

Northern Pacific, with no Es, relied on straight F3, 7s, and 9s for its long-haul trains. Its two FP7s, 6600–6601, handled locals out of St. Paul to Duluth and International Falls, Minn. Later they were



PENNSY FP7s 9832-9871 often teamed with passenger F7Bs, all in class EFP-15. A trio is off its holiday mail extra at Dayton, Ohio (left), in December 1960 to pick up and set out cars. Only two A-B-A sets wore the red passenger colors, as on 9834 at East Altoona, Pa., January 2, 1959.

Left, J. David Ingles; above, William D. Volkmer

on the Winnipeg train, until an RDC came in 1962. Unique among NP Fs, they lacked dynamic brakes, so when in M.U. with straight Fs, the FP7s always led. NP expert Bill Kuebler adds that also in 1962, after four major passenger-train derailments, the FP7s did pinch-hit on the *North Coast Limited* and *Mainstreet-er*, but only as far west as Livingston, Mont. They hauled St. Paul–Jamestown (N.Dak.) locals 3 and 4 in their last season, 1966–67. Then during 1968–69, the FP7s helped on the *Mainstreet-er*, again only to Livingston. Both units got Burlington Northern numbers; 9792, still in NP green, was scrapped in '73, but 9794 was painted Cascade green and renumbered 726 in the freight series in 1976.

Western Pacific's California Zephyr power fleet was a mix of three F3A-B-B trios, two F7Bs, and four FP7s, all in the low 800-series (the FPs being 804A&D and 805A&D) and with red "wings" sprouting from WP's square emblem on the cabs' orange noses. WP also had 12 900-series F7Bs with steam boilers.

Virtually all FP7s were built with steam generators, but three roads stand out to me for seldom using them on passenger trains, at least late in their careers.

Chicago Great Western had two, 116A and C, and while sources confirm their early passenger work, by the 1960s CGW preferred the F3As and F7As in its 150–156 series for its short trains. As on WP, the CGW had eight steam-equipped F7Bs, and A-B consists were common before train sizes shrank. One FP7, 116A, teamed with F7A 156 on an October '59 Iowa Chapter NRHS fan trip from Oelwein, Iowa, to Dubuque and back. Today 116A reposes in red and maroon at the Hub City Heritage Railway Museum in Oelwein, CGW's old backshops town.

FP7 usage on **Florida East Coast** was similar. FEC had five FP7s, 571–575, but photos of them on varnish, usually



FRISCO favored its red E7s and E8s for mainline trains, but FP7s 5040–5051 helped. The 5047, parked at Fort Smith, Ark., July 5, 1962, will go north to Monett, Mo., in the evening as train 710.

Louis A. Marre

paired with one of FEC's 31 E units on an advance or second section, seem rare.

Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac was a third example — its three FP7s, 1201–1203, were employed on extra sections and passenger specials, but its 20 E8s predominated. RF&P also had three GP7s with boilers. In 1963, all three RF&P FP7s got a taste of slow-speed drag service while on lease to Clinchfield during a coal-traffic surge.

Union Pacific's two FP7s are a special case. They and two steam-generator-equipped F7Bs were built for National of Mexico, which defaulted on financing. Delivered as UP 911–912, the FP7s later became UP 1498–1499 (the F7Bs with "C" suffixes), slotted above the freight F7s, and worked the *Butte Special* north from Salt Lake City and UP's Seattle–Portland train. All four units were regeared for freight service in 1956.

Canadian Pacific had the fourth-largest FP7 fleet with 35, plus 9 passenger F7Bs, all built by GMD in London, Ont., and it continued with 10 FP9s and 29 passenger F9Bs. CP expert Greg McDonnell tells us that as it began to dieselize,

CP, which had no straight F7As, was uncertain about steam generators. Its first Fs (4028–4037) were ordered as FP7s but came in 1950 without boilers. CP in mid-1952 sent them back to GMD for outfitting with boilers and steam lines. Over the years, CP renumbered many FP7s, F7Bs, and F9Bs back and forth between 4000s and 1400s (for cabs) and 4400s and 1900s (boosters) as they changed gearing between passenger and dual service, 4000s being for the latter. VIA Rail Canada in the late '70s took 10 CP FP7s.

The other 22 Canadian FP7s were **Ontario Northland** 1500–1521, its only cab units. They were used in both passenger and freight service, and some were among the last in use by original buyers, three not being retired until 2004. (They were ex-1502, 1509, and 1521, rebuilt as Nos. 2000–2002 with Caterpillar engines for passenger duty.) ONR retired two in 1965, and 10 went to GO Transit in the 1970s to become non-powered cab cars.

Alaska Railroad had three FP7s for its Anchorage–Fairbanks train. Two, still in their Alaska numbers 1510 and 1512 but painted in a fancy green and cream with



MILWAUKEE FP7s came in trios with F7Bs, in orange and maroon. Eventually broken up, they wore UP yellow after 1955. Three roll the *Morning* and *Olympian Hiawatha* at Deerfield, Ill. (above), in July '61. On October 8, 1960, No. 100C is on a suburban train at Rondout, Ill.

Above, R. Paul Meyer; left, William D. Volkmer



line (GP7, SD7, F7) to the "9s," the FP7's descendant FP9 didn't sell a single new unit in the U.S. It's why CN had no FP7s but 43 FP9s and 38 companion F9Bs, most of which survived to serve VIA and many of which still haul tourist trains or are in museums, in both countries.

Chicago & North Western did not originally buy FP7s or 9s but in 1955 traded-in its 10-year-old FTs for 4 A units (and 4 Bs) for 1,500 h.p. rebuilds designated FP9M. Initially used on passenger trains, they were retired in 1975. C&NW did become an FP7 owner in '71, though, for among its 18 secondhand Fs acquired [page 87] were all 5 FEC FP7s (which became C&NW 240-244) and 3 ex-Katy's (78A, 79A, 79C to C&NW 231, 246, 258). All were retired by June 1976.

The extra 4 feet of length on an FP9 is not as obvious at a glance as on an FP7 because the lead porthole is farther back, with a carbonyl filter ahead of it (as with regular F9s). The FP7's other cousin was the FL9, 60 of which EMD built for New Haven during 1956-60 [pages 78-83].



NORTH WESTERN had the only U.S. "FP9s," 1955 FT rebuilds rated at 1,500 h.p. and designated FP9M. Their careers in passenger service, and in this livery (at Duluth), were relatively short.

Robert C. Anderson

eagles on their flanks, haul the Verde Canyon tourist train near Sedona, Ariz. After leaving Alaska, they first worked on short line Wyoming & Colorado.

Mexican railroads took 18 FP7s, and EMD exported 2 to Saudi Arabia, the

only non-North America sale.

A note on the FP9: Railroads in America's neighbors, both north and south, were a few years behind their U.S. counterparts in dieselizing. This is why, when EMD in 1954 went from the "7"

Finding "Waldo the FP7"

How anonymous was the FP7? When I tried to recall whose FP7s I might've ridden behind, it became a long, arduous exercise culminating in a list of eight original FP7 buyers in regular service.

Frisco is one, for a roomette ride on



ROCK ISLAND had 10 FP7s, Nos. 402–411 and among the first built. They wore many liveries, but here are two matching pairs, on *Peoria Rocket* No. 504 (above) April 2, 1959, at Sankoty, Ill., and on train 17, the *Plainsman*, at Newport, Minn., in June 1968 (right).

Above, Monty Powell; right, Hector T. Smart

the “Meteorite,” the Fort Smith, Ark.–Monett, Mo., connection [page 63] to the mainline *Meteor*. In its later years, this little train usually had an FP7, with the 23 horse-named red E7s and E8s handling Frisco’s mainline varnish.

Milwaukee is another, because after a few years in A-B-A sets, its 32 FP7s and 16 passenger F7Bs were scattered systemwide, mixed with MILW’s first 18 E9s. Exemplifying this is my May 1967 St. Paul–Chicago trip on *Morning Hiawatha* No. 6 in Skytop *Dell Rapids*, behind FP7s 101C and 99A bracketing F7B 103B and E9B 33B. Like Milwaukee, the **Katy** also came to regularly mix its 8 FP7s (plus 4 passenger F7Bs) with its 9 E8s, and while I saw such a duo in Oklahoma, I never rode a Katy train.

It’s likely I rode behind a **Rock Island** FP7, but I can’t prove it. At first, its 10 FP7s frequented the *Peoria Rockets* and secondary trains in RI’s southern reaches, but later, some were on Chicago suburban trains, where I photographed them. (Be careful, though — RI also had three A-B passenger F7 sets, 675–677.)

My most memorable FP7 experience was in Southern 6139’s cab, with my wife Carol on No. 4 on August 27, 1974, from Asheville “down the loops” to Old Fort, N.C. We’d boarded the dome coach but were invited up front by engineer Frank Clodfelter. Once into Salisbury, we got on *Piedmont* No. 6, which had four FP7s, a baggage car, two coaches, and TTX flats. Southern FP7s pulled me elsewhere, too.

On June 13, 1968, my *California Zephyr* left Oakland behind WP FP7 805D and two F3Bs. I also rode FP7-powered



UNION PACIFIC, known for its E units on varnish, acquired an FP7-F7B-F7B-FP7 quartet ordered by Mexico. In August 1960, FP7 1498 and F3B 1455C are on the *Butte Special* at Salt Lake City.

Ken Crist

trains of L&N, CP, and ONR. In 1978, on Carol’s and my first visit to Alaska, one of ARR’s two FP7s in Bicentennial garb, and a GP40, led our train to Fairbanks.

In FP7s’ “later lives,” Carol and I have ridden behind Verde Canyon’s ex-Alaska pair, and over Donner Pass in 1975 behind SP 6453 on Amtrak’s *Zephyr* [page 63, Winter 2014]. FP7s have pulled me on old home rails on a CP Montreal commuter train (CTCUM 1305, ex-CP 4075) and on a 1995 Duluth museum fan trip to Ladysmith (Soo 2500). Also in my log: R.J. Corman’s Kentucky dinner train and a New Georgia outing to Savannah behind ex-Southern FP7s, and a Wisconsin & Southern circus train and Indi-

ana’s FairTrain with ex-Milwaukee FP7s.

What was the most attractive color scheme on an FP7? That’s a matter of personal preference, but I’d nominate five, in no order: Alaska’s original blue and gold; CP’s classic maroon and gray [page 31]; Soo’s original maroon and gold [pages 56-57]; NP’s *North Coast Limited* two-tone green; SP’s Daylight colors on Cotton Belt’s unit; and C&O’s passenger dark blue, yellow, and gray.

Regardless of all that, I hope this ray of light shined on an oft-forgotten or misunderstood off-the-shelf EMD cab unit, with the classic “bulldog nose,” has helped gain the FP7 some respect. It certainly needs it. ■