

# Santa Fe, all the way...

Rides on AT&SF's two transcontinental routes opened up new vistas

BY J. DAVID INGLES

Photos by the author

**F**or a railfan with a bit of "Santa Fe blood" in my veins, even by 1962 my AT&SF "mileage map" of lines ridden could be described as pathetic. Our family lived in south suburban Chicago until moving to Dearborn, Mich., in 1956, but all except a couple of our annual two-week summer vacation trips in the 1950s were by rail from Chicago to Colorado. (We drove east in 1953 and '57.) Until 1959, all the Denver trips were on the Burlington Route [see "Overnight to Denver," Spring 2004 CLASSIC TRAINS].

Those "blood links" were twofold, in-

centally. My paternal grandfather was a true boomer railroader, working as a trainman for Santa Fe out of Arkansas City, Kans., and for Soo Line out of Glenwood, Minn., depending on the agricultural season. Dad was born in Glenwood in October 1907; his father took ill on a trip for the Brotherhood, I believe in St. Louis, but died soon after his union brothers made sure he got home to Minnesota safely. Dad and his mother then returned to "Ark City," where, now a widow, she was eligible to return to her job from a few years before as a Harvey Girl in the Ark City Harvey House restaurant at the Santa Fe depot. Harvey Girls had to be unmarried.



# to the 1964 ROSE BOWL

Interestingly, much of my early Santa Fe mileage would be on unscheduled trains, specifically “football specials.” The first was in fall 1959 when I attended the University of Colorado at Boulder. Each year an alumni group would set up a special train outing from Denver to an away game, this time overnight to Norman, Okla., on the Santa Fe for the October 3, 1959, contest against the powerful Soon-

ers, who drubbed Colorado 42-12 in the third game of the season. The train’s 759-mile route was direct for the Santa Fe but seemed exotic to me, via La Junta, Colo., and Newton, Kans. F7 quartet No. 40 led a mix of Hi-Level coaches and Pullman sleepers; unfortunately we didn’t see the sun the entire trip. TRAINS Editor David P. Morgan printed a photo of mine of the train in Denver as a “News Photo” in the

February 1960 issue.

My second Santa Fe ride was on regularly scheduled trains, the middle link in a don’t-change-Chicago-stations, three-railroad itinerary to go home for the 1959 Christmas holidays, riding Missouri Pacific’s *Colorado Eagle* from Denver to Kansas City, then Santa Fe’s *Chicagoan*, and finally Grand Trunk Western’s *Inter-City Limited*, in a roomette on the



Santa Fe F3s 28 and 29 fly green flags on sections of train 18 at Albuquerque on January 3, 1964, during author Dave Ingles’ return trip from Los Angeles to Chicago.



Dad signed up for a package by train, of course. There were charter flights out of Chicago, but the majority of students, plus plenty of alums and friends, went by train.



Crews work to rerail Alco RSD5 2111, which apparently had an earlier incident while working at Pampa, Texas, prior to Dave's train passing it on December 27.

Chicago–Detroit Pullman via Durand, Mich. On my westbound return, I rode GTW's *La Salle*; the first section of Santa Fe 19, the *Chief*; and again the *Colorado Eagle*. That was it for my riding Santa Fe until the waning days of 1963.

#### SIXTH SECTION WESTBOUND

My parents were University of Illinois graduates (they'd met at school), and they were loyal, meaning they wrote decent checks annually to the alumni association. The Fighting Illini have not been a consistent football power, but they've had their shining moments, and the 1963 season was one. Today it may not generally be recalled, but in that era, for the Illini the season didn't begin until the last Saturday of September and encompassed only nine games! They finished 7-1-1, including 5-1-1 in the Big Ten; their two non-conference games were victories over California and UCLA in what was then the Athletic Association of Western

E8m 80 on a two-car consist rests between Dave's special and two business cars at Amarillo on December 27, 1963. It is one of eight such units on the roster rebuilt from EMC E1s dating from 1937.



F7 No. 31 leads train 1, the *San Francisco Chief*, at Amarillo while sister No. 28 stands with one of the University of Illinois alumni association Rose Bowl specials on December 27. In the distance at right is another Warbonnet F unit, likely on another football special.



Universities (AAWU). Illinois, after beating Northwestern and tying Ohio State, broke into Associated Press's Top 10 and would fluctuate between No. 2 and No. 8.

As Big Ten champions, the Pete Elliott-coached Illini were, of course, invited to the 1964 Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif., on New Year's Day, that year a Wednesday; the AAWU representative would be the University of Washington.

The Uoff alumni association went into high gear, and Dad signed up for a package by train, of course. There were a handful of charter flights out of Chicago, but the majority of students, plus plenty of alums and friends, went by train, and to the Santa Fe in that era, special trains were routine. My sister Janis and I were both home from school for Christmas, and, having driven over from Michigan,

we celebrated the holiday itself with relatives on my mother's side in Chicago's west suburbs.

The next day, Thursday the 26th, having left our car at my maternal grandmother's house in south suburban Homewood and taking an Illinois Central suburban train downtown, at dusk we gathered among throngs of Illini faithful at Dearborn Station. Our train was com-



Dave's special overtakes eight SD24s, led by 926, on a westbound freight at Vaughn, N.Mex., on December 27. Santa Fe's 80 SD24s were delivered 1959-60.



An A-B-B-B-A set of F units heads a freight at Vaughn while Dave's train west passes. Vaughn is where Santa Fe's southern main line crosses above SP's Golden State Route.



Five blue-and-yellow Fs bring a freight into Belen in golden evening light. Note the block of home-road reefers at the head end. Today, Belen is a major point on successor BNSF Railway's Southern Transcon route.

prised of mostly, if not all, Pullmans, and the Ingles contingent had en-suite double bedrooms with the separating wall pushed back. We were to operate as a following section of train 17, the combined *Super Chief-El Capitan*, due out at 6:30 p.m. and running as separate sections over the holidays. Turns out that our Pullman was in what would be the sixth section of train 17, meaning there were at least four Illini football specials that evening.

This was foremost a family vacation, so train photography opportunities were limited, and my photo notebook contains mostly just engine numbers. Vividly remembered, however, is that when Dad and I woke up next morning and looked

out the window, he instantly knew where we were — approaching the crossing of the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle. Out of Kansas City in the wee hours, we'd become the second section of train No. 1, the *San Francisco Chief*, which operated over what is today's BNSF "Transcon" freight artery. Decades later, I'd refer to this ride "treasured rare mileage."

The first slide of the day, taken from an open vestibule Dutch door, was of Alco RSD4 2111 being rerailed at Pampa, Texas. Evidenced by the accompanying photos, there was time at service and/or crew-change stops, such as Amarillo, to step off for shots from the ground. At Vaughn, N.Mex., we encountered three

freights. The last rays of sunlight for the day were at Belen, and we passed through Arizona in darkness.

I don't recall our passage over Cajon Pass, and I have no idea how our time-keeping was relative to the other Illini specials. However, to top off the rare mileage aspect of our westbound run, out of San Bernardino we were routed via the Third District through Riverside and Fullerton, today the only possible route to L.A. Union Station but in 1963 the one hosting a minority of Santa Fe's varnish, most trains using the First District via



**Baldwin DS-4-4-10 2295 works at Clovis, N.Mex., on December 27. The unit's single stack shows it to be a six-cylinder turbo-charged variant. The railroad had 41 such units, along with 59 V01000s and a single V0660, the former demonstrator 62000.**



**Another DS-4-4-10, 2292, works in the sun at Vaughn, with a trademark Santa Fe cupola caboose. The caboose number, 2089R, indicates that the car is radio-equipped.**

Pasadena. I'm guessing the fleet of Uofl specials had an effect on train-crew rosters in both Kansas and California.

### SEEING THE SIGHTS

Since this family trip was our first time in the Los Angeles area, our priority was several well-known tourist attractions. We rented a car upon arrival Saturday morning, and on the rest of the weekend plus Monday, December 30, we took in Disneyland, Marineland, and Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, with its Rio Grande-equipped 3-foot-gauge steam "Calico Railroad." Dad and I also visited Travel Town in L.A.'s Griffith Park, with its locomotive displays.

The last day of 1963 was when Dad and I got in most of our railfanning.

While Mom and Janis went off on their own, my friend Alan Miller of Glendale, with whom I'd been trading slides by mail for some time, guided Dad and me first to Santa Fe's Redondo Junction roundhouse, home to its "high-hood" Alco switchers. The majority were in storage around the turntable, but a few were still in use, and only a handful had been repainted from their original black with silver stripes to blue-and-yellow. We then visited Southern Pacific's Taylor Yard, where I took copious diesel roster shots, SP being a road I rarely saw.

After our railfanning, it being New Year's Eve, we four joined other out-of-towners, and a lot of locals, in walking

among the buildings and sites where the Rose Parade floats were getting their finishing touches. Next morning, we rode one of the alumni group's chartered buses to reserved bleacher seats along the parade route. Unfortunately for Dad and his camera, the parade approached us coming right out of the sun, so he took only a few parade slides to help remember the day. The afternoon Rose Bowl game was memorable: In a rare Big Ten victory for the era, Illinois beat Washington, 17-7.

Next day, Thursday, January 2, 1964, was departure day, but not until late afternoon, so Dad and I dropped by Mission Tower near LAUPT for a short time, specifically to see Santa Fe Alco PAs, then



On a December 31 tour of Los Angeles rail facilities, Dave found a sextet of F units idling between freight assignments at Redondo Junction.



Also at Redondo Junction, 1939-built Alco HH1000 switcher 2310 rests with a sister. Today, this is the site of Amtrak's L.A. maintenance facility.



EMD F7 21 leads a section of train 18, the *Super Chief-El Capitan*, at Kennedy, N.Mex., just west of Lamy. Dave got this shot from the Dutch door of his eastbound train.



Baldwin DS-4-4-10 2283 works at Albuquerque on January 3 while passengers stroll along the station platform. Note the Hi-Level passenger car in the *El Capitan* to the right.

regulars on the five *San Diegans* in each direction. We turned in the rental car at the station, and boarded our special train for Chicago, again ensconced in adjoining double bedrooms.

### EASTWARD DIFFERENCE

Nearly six decades after the fact, specifics are hazy and slides almost non-existent, but we ran all the way to Chicago on the route of the *Super Chief* and *El Capitan*, marking my first ride over the main passenger route via Raton Pass. The *Super* and *El Cap*, still running as separate sections three days after New Year's, weren't

Alco PAs 77 and 58 power one of the five daily *San Diegans* past Mission Tower in Los Angeles on January 2, the morning before the Ingles family returned east.



## My “grand finale” photo of the Rose Bowl odyssey was of a westbound Santa Fe freight powered by four GP20s just west of Joliet.

due out of L.A. until after sunset, but we left ahead of them, although by the time we arrived in Chicago, we were behind them. From the photo on pages 58–59, it’s possible the overtake occurred during the lengthy service stop at Albuquerque. I did not record, nor do I remember, any references as to our train being an extra or a section of a scheduled train.

Pasadena, the first stop on the First District out of L.A., in the fading afternoon light, took longer than normal. Our train had a baggage car up front, and it turns out our special was carrying the members of the Fighting Illini’s marching band; their instruments took some time to be loaded. The band’s hotel had been in Pasadena, logistically superior, especially with the instruments, to fighting L.A. traffic to and from Union Station.

I confess to remembering little of this eastbound trip, other than the slides I took at such places as Winslow, Ariz., and Gallup and Albuquerque, N.Mex. A family with a son about my age had a bedroom suite near ours, and I remember playing a lot of cards with him in a lounge car. It could be I was low on slide film, as the only entries in my photo notebook east of Albuquerque are single Santa Fe GP20s parked at Fort Madison (Shopton), Iowa, and Streator, Ill.

In late afternoon on Saturday, January 4, on the separated double track coming



Four Santa Fe GP20s led by 1155 hustle a westbound freight through Joliet on January 4. In 37 miles, Dave and his family will arrive in Chicago, ending their Rose Bowl adventure.

into Joliet, Ill., my “grand finale” photo was of a westbound freight from a Dutch door. Its power was four GP20s, about the only Santa Fe road units you’d see east of Kansas City in those days because of cab signal requirements. Coincidentally, immediately thereafter I took my last slides of the odyssey, the subject being of all things three Alcos at Gulf, Mobile & Ohio’s Joliet yard, an RS3 and two ex-Alton RS1s. I was attending college in central Illinois on a GM&O secondary line and 30 miles west of its Chicago–St. Louis main line, so that power was old hat to me.

But I’d seen the mainline world of Uncle John Santa Fe, from end to end, adding significant mileage to my log of a railroad of my grandfather. Filling in some of the “far corners” — to Richmond, Calif.; Pekin, Ill.; and several secondary lines in Texas and Arizona — would come later. ■

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