

A black and white photograph of the California Zephyr train. The train is a streamlined passenger train with a distinctive rounded roof and large windows. It is traveling along a track that curves through a steep, rocky mountain landscape. The train is composed of several passenger cars, including a dome car. The text "CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR" is visible on the side of the train. The background shows a steep, rocky mountain slope with some sparse vegetation. The overall scene is dramatic and scenic.

Final Run

*Western Pacific Railroad's
California Zephyr*

Western Pacific's California Zephyr

TODAY'S FINAL RUN of No. 18, eastbound, and No. 17, westbound, of Western Pacific's California Zephyr trains brings a nostalgic closing to the railroad's passenger service. When the Interstate Commerce Commission ordered continuance of the California Zephyr on February 13, 1967 for another year it stated: "No carrier to the Commission's knowledge has been more diligent than Western Pacific in fulfilling the obligations of a passenger carrying railroad".

It is important to view the operation of the California Zephyr, and now its discontinuance, in the light of the history of Western Pacific passenger service and the hopes of visionary men who created the California Zephyr as a bold business experiment in railroad passenger service.

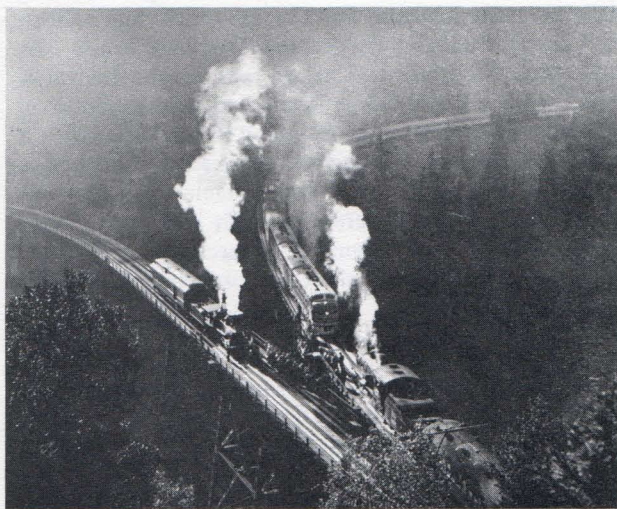
Western Pacific began transcontinental passenger service on its newly constructed route in 1910 which was 40 years after transcontinental trains had begun steaming daily between California and Chicago on the much shorter Central Pacific-Union Pacific Overland Route. At that time, our route to Chicago was via the Denver & Rio Grande's Royal Gorge Route which was more than 400 miles longer than the Overland Route with which it directly competed. The trains operated in connection with this route had some proud names, but through service was, in fact, merely through cars which were incorporated in other trains of connecting lines beyond junction points at Salt Lake City, Utah and Pueblo and Denver, Colorado.

On June 15, 1934 the "Dotsero Cutoff" was opened to connect the Moffat Tunnel route of the Denver and Salt Lake Railway with the lines of the Denver & Rio Grande east of Grand Junction, Colorado. This new route saved 175 miles as compared with the Royal Gorge Route and, for the first time, made possible for Western Pacific a San Francisco-Chicago passenger service which would be even remotely competitive with the Overland Route.

Western Pacific's passenger officers dreamed of a high quality through transcontinental train via the Moffat route but tentative plans for such a train made in 1937 were shelved because of the depression and the fact that both the Western Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande

were undergoing reorganization under Section 77 of the Bankruptcy Act. Transcontinental passenger service via both the Moffat and Royal Gorge routes continued only in the form of through cars operated on changing schedules which were generally much longer than service available on the Overland Route. From what can be learned, it would be charitable to describe the service as even mediocre, and during those and several preceding years Western Pacific passenger expenses as determined by I.C.C. accounting procedures were two and one-half to three times passenger revenues. The resulting losses contributed significantly to the overall operating losses which brought about the depression years' bankruptcy of Western Pacific.

The dream of a through transcontinental train was revived again in 1939 when Western Pacific began operation between San Francisco and Chicago via the Moffat Route of the "Exposition Flyer" in connection with the Denver & Rio Grande and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. With equipment, including diners, operating through between Oakland and Chicago on an approximate 60-hour schedule, the service for the first time was reasonably competitive with the secondary train on the Overland route.



Ruby Jubilee

40 year celebration of the driving of the last spike of Western Pacific Railroad November 1, 1949. California Zephyr Train 17 meets Steam Engine "Jupiter" from the V & T and W.P. 94 which was the first Western Pacific passenger train through the Feather River Canyon on August 22, 1910. Meeting took place on the Keddie Wye over Spanish Creek.

At this point in time, Western Pacific could have chosen to discontinue transcontinental passenger service by simply dropping through cars from its Oakland to Salt Lake service. No train discontinuance would have been involved. Indeed, it was decided to take a positive approach and, based on faith in the growth of travel in the West, strongly advocate to our connections the inauguration of a high quality through train service on the WP-D&RGW-CB&Q route, concurrently expressing optimism that such a train would be operated profitably. The Exposition Flyer was the first step in that direction.

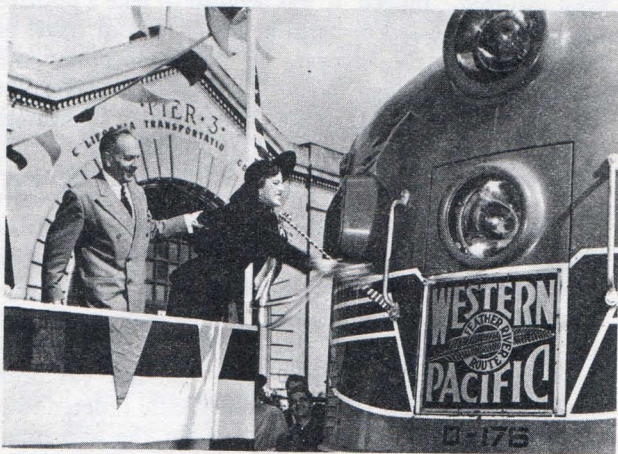
In June, 1940 representatives of the three connecting lines met and agreed that the Exposition Flyer should be re-equipped with the most modern streamlined equipment and reached a decision as to what equipment each line would furnish. This was the genesis of the California Zephyr although that name had not yet been developed. In early 1941, Western Pacific ordered four streamlined stainless steel chair cars for the new train, but before these and other cars could be acquired, World War 2 intervened and the project was again shelved.

Beginning in 1943, the three lines again discussed the proposal for a through streamlined train service after the war. Plans were laid for an ultra-modern, light weight, streamlined Diesel powered daily train service between San Francisco and Chicago on as fast a schedule as possible, without extra fare. Recognizing that a more than 250-mile distance disadvantage would impose a several hour handicap as compared with the fastest trains on the Overland Route, this planning emphasized ultra-modern, high quality equipment, and service and careful scheduling to take advantage of the scenic route.

In Denver, on October 16, 1945, the Chief Executives of the three connecting and cooperating lines formalized arrangements for operation of the new train between San Francisco and Chicago under the name "California Zephyr". Those arrangements included equipment specifications calling for use of the newly developed Vista Dome car design. This great new train began service on March 20, 1949, replacing the Exposition Flyer.

Inauguration of this service gave meaning to the faith of Western Pacific officers in the development and expansion of California, Nevada and Utah. It was a bold implementation of their conviction that an ultra-modern train which provided excellent food and excellent accommodations and service in every respect, plus equipment and schedules designed for scenic viewing would be used by the traveling public and could be operated

profitably, contrary to the sad experiences on the same route in earlier years. Western Pacific invested over \$6,000,000 of its funds in the purchase of new locomotives and cars to support that faith and that conviction.



Movie Star Eleanor Parker, assisted by Lieutenant Governor Goodwin Knight, christened the California Zephyr on March 19, 1949 as the train was on display near San Francisco's famous Ferry Building. Next day the sleek streamliners went into service for the first time.

During the early years of its operation, the California Zephyr was profitable on Western Pacific. Aggressive promotion of the train and the high quality service which it offered attracted excellent patronage and operating costs had not yet shown substantial increases. However, the profitability of its operations was continuously monitored, and in the mid-nineteen fifties there were indications that its profitability was becoming marginal. In the more recent years it became clear that costs had risen to a point where they were exceeding relatively stable revenue levels and that Western Pacific was losing money on the Zephyr.

Patronage was maintained by means of aggressive promotions at a high level, and cost reduction efforts were moderately successful, but cost savings achieved fell far short of offsetting gross increases in operating costs.

The fact that increasingly large amounts of money were being lost on this fine train of which we were so proud and for which we had had such great hopes, was an emotionally difficult thing to accept. Our decision to seek its discontinuance was made reluctantly only after we were convinced that there was no way within our control to put it on any basis even approaching

profitability, and that, on the contrary, every indication pointed to increasing losses.

OUT OF POCKET LOSS ON AN AVOIDABLE COST BASIS

1966	1967	1968	1969
\$1/2 million	\$1.2 million	\$1.7 million	\$2.5 million

The I.C.C. held in its Order served on February 13, 1970: "Too many factors preclude our finding that continued operation would not be an undue burden on interstate commerce. Foremost is the massive drain upon this small railroad, driving it into a deficit position. Next is the need in the public interest for maintaining this carrier as a sound and vigorous competitor for rail freight. Third is the manifest inability of the railroad to muster the capital immediately required for rehabilitation of the equipment. Others are - the total lack of response by most of the protestants, the desultory response by others, the failure of cooperation by labor, the indecision of governmental bodies on the matter of public support programs, the declining patronage and its nonessential nature.

"Alternate transportation by automobile, bus, airplane and thrice-weekly train service of Southern Pacific and Rio Grande are adequate to the needs of both local and interline passengers. However, since it will take a period of time for the Southern Pacific and the Rio Grande to make arrangements for alternate through service, we are of the opinion that the Western Pacific should continue operation for a 30-day period so that the public will not be deprived of any direct rail service through the center of the Nation. And, such a short period of continued operation will not unduly burden interstate commerce. However, in view of the critical depletion of the Western Pacific and other considerations, we have no basis for making the statutory findings necessary to order the continuance of Western Pacific's Zephyr other than for the above-mentioned 30-day period."

In the Commission's decision, serviced February 13, 1970 they carefully analyzed passenger utilization and stated: "The decline from 1960 to 1968 was more than 50%, and the twelve months ending May 1969 show the decline continuing at an accelerated pace.

"On the basis of passenger patronage for the year ending May 31, 1969 Western Pacific's out-of-pocket loss on each Zephyr passenger averages more than \$20. Most

of these passengers are attracted to trains by aesthetic, rather than utilitarian considerations. Western Pacific, with its entire system operating at a loss, can no longer afford to subsidize what is primarily a sight seeing excursion."



Passengers have deserted the Zephyr for air transportation and private car. Interior of Vista-Dome on February 5, 1970 with one passenger.

HOW MANY PASSENGERS BOARD AND DETRAIN DAILY?

Station	Pop. Date	City Population	Average Number 1968 Passengers Daily
Oakland-S.F.	1/65	1,128,000	197
Fremont	11/66	90,776	28
Pleasanton	6/65	7,925	1
Stockton	9/66	97,100	29
Sacramento	7/66	265,790	37
Marysville	1/67	11,053	9
Oroville	4/60	6,100	20
Keddie	12/67	310	20
Portola	4/60	1,894	11
Herlong	12/67	2,500	1
Gerlach	12/67	200	1
Winnemucca	12/67	5,750	3
Elko (C of C est)	1967	10,500	2
Wendover	12/67	600	1*
Salt Lake City	12/66	200,000	18
TOTALS		1,828,498	377

1969 down 20% from 1968

* 1 every 5th day.



California Zephyr at Pleasanton, California ... through Fisheye lens. May 5, 1970.

In continuing its discussion, the Commission emphatically recited the critical situation now facing Western Pacific in continued operation of the Zephyr when it stated:

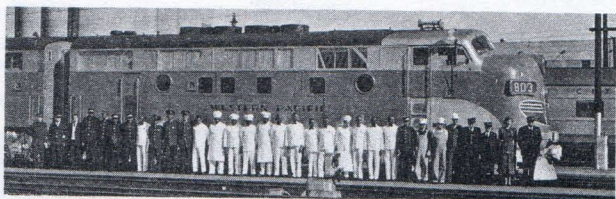
"Now the Zephyr deficit has risen to well over a million dollars. That amount is beyond challenge, though in actuality the current deficit may be running at an annual rate beyond \$2 million. On the basis of 1968 returns, which included a \$6 million profit on operating revenues of some \$64 million, Western Pacific would have to devote its entire freight operation at least three months out of the year to support this single pair of passenger trains."

WHAT IS THE ZEPHYR'S CAPACITY

The regular consist of the Zephyr is as follows:

Cars	Passenger Capacity
4 Coaches	186
4 Pullmans	84
1 Pullman observation car	8
1 Baggage car	
1 Dining car	
1 Buffet car	
12 Cars	Passengers ... 278

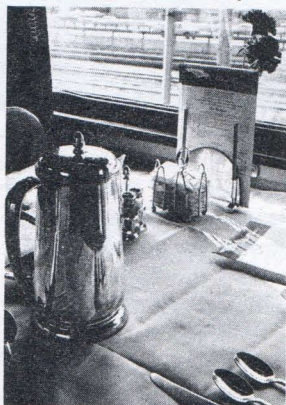
Average consist in the peak season is 13 cars and in the off season, 9 cars.



One of the first California Zephyr crews in Oakland, California

NUMBER OF WESTERN PACIFIC EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY THE DISCONTINUANCE

Approximately 253 persons, out of a total Western Pacific work force of 3,203, will be affected by the discontinuance. However, a great majority of these employees will continue employment due to attrition and exercising of seniority.



*A beautiful table setting
to the very end!*

The Western Pacific Railroad wishes to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the tremendous devotion to duty of all present and past employees, who over the years, have made the California Zephyr the "most talked about train in America," and gained it a legal description by the Interstate Commerce Commission as a "unique national asset."



Eastbound at James, California - - "A Last Farewell"