

— Jim Ehernberger

*The Unforgettable Sound Drama  
of Steam Engines in Action*

Published by RAILWAY & LOCOMOTIVE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
Southern California Chapter

*Recorded by* E. P. RIPLEY  
*Story by* JOHN B. HUNGERFORD

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# STEAM ECHOES



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Published by Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc

*SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER*

In this year of 1959, ten of the fifteen engines heard in STEAM ECHOES have been destroyed, or tagged for destruction. Happily, one has been preserved by the Chapter. The remaining four still operate, albeit perhaps only occasionally. Soon these too will be memories, "great steam ghosts." In a sense, however, they will continue to live, in the hearts of many people, in pictures taken by thousands, and in the echoes we have here preserved.

As with WHISTLES WEST, the first record published by the Chapter, STEAM ECHOES is made from the tapes of member E. P. Ripley. These tapes have been reviewed, carefully selected and edited by a committee of members of the Chapter.

The scenes are selected for listening pleasure as well as to create an historical document. They represent the everyday workings of our old steam friends, selected for the most interest, or the most beauty. The scenes are purposely kept short to preserve their brilliance. They show the steam engine in all four of the ways it may be heard at work—riding in it, on the train behind it, travelling along beside it, and standing at trackside while it goes by, or stops and takes off again.

This booklet has been prepared by John B. Hungerford, also a member of the Chapter, and well-known writer and publisher of railroad books and articles. It faithfully describes each scene you will hear, so you may "picture" it as well.

As with WHISTLES WEST, STEAM ECHOES will help to provide for the maintenance of the Chapter's six locomotives. If it meets with the same enthusiastic acceptance as WHISTLES WEST, the Chapter will publish two additional records before the end of the year, somewhat different in content from these two.

We greatly appreciate the generosity of those who have contributed their photos for our use, and only regret we could not publish more of the many fine pictures so freely offered.

It is suggested that this record be played at a good firm volume to bring out the realism of the great steam machines. Their sounds are vastly improved when played through a high fidelity system.

We wish you many hours of listening thrills.

— RAILWAY & LOCOMOTIVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.,  
Southern California Chapter

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# SIDE ONE

## Scene 1

Everybody hurries in the rush hour. A sense of urgency prevails about the Redwood City station and along the double track stem of the Southern Pacific at this early hour as big engines on fast trains pick up their hurrying passengers, bound for San Francisco.



SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4328 TO 4376, CLASSES MT3 TO MT5, 4-8-2,  
SOUTHERN PACIFIC SACRAMENTO SHOPS, 1925 TO 1930

— Stan Kistler

Mountain type Engine 4347 opens this scene as it whistles for the crossing and speeds through town, northbound. Following the racket of its passing, a baggage wagon clatters down the platform as southbound Pacific 2487 comes in and stops before us. The noise of this engine departing obscures the approaching sounds of northbound Mountain 4358, whose rods and crosshead finally announce its approach to pick up the passengers that the first train passed by. Loosed steam bursts skyward as it starts. Its long departure and distant whistles close the scene—but not quite, for immediately another distant whistle signals the approach of Mountain 4376. In a rush, and with her bowler-hatted engineer holding down the whistle cord, this engine roars through town and fades into the distance.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC 2487, CLASS P-10, 4-6-2, BALDWIN 1924

— Charles Heimerdinger



## Scene 2

In the little beach community of Carpinteria one summer day were a lot of kids to be picked up for an excursion on Southern Pacific's coast mail run, train 90. Three extra coaches had been added, and Conductor Henry Harvey had his orders. To keep the kids off the track the engineer gives an extra crossing signal on his air horn, then comes in on a long stretch-stop. Intimate sounds that could never be described in words come from the great machine as 4445 stops only twenty feet from us.

Engineer Charles Safford leans from his cab to justify the unprofessional start he suspects is coming and shouts "I've got sixteen cars and no sand."

The start—brakes released, one exhaust forward, hiss of the steam reverse, the cross-head "clunk" and one exhaust back to put slack in the couplers, then—but we can hear what happens as the train comes taut—and then happens again on the curve a mile out of town.

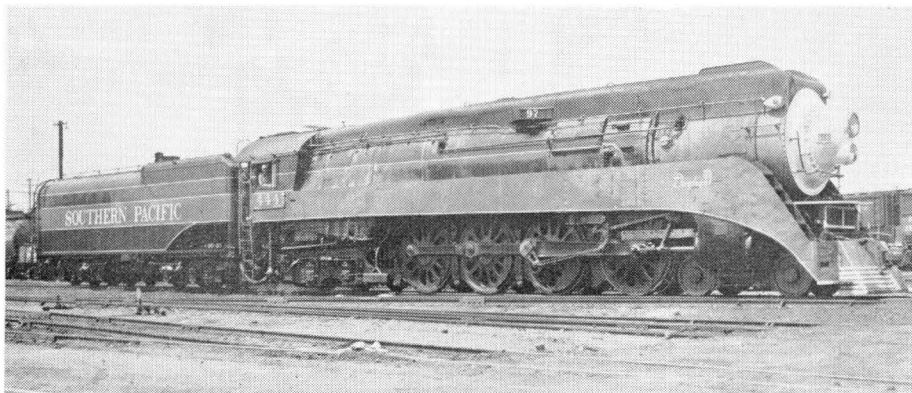


SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4445, CLASS GS-4, 4-8-4, LIMA 1941

— Stan Kistler

"IN RED AND ORANGE COWLING"

— G. M. Best



## Scene 3

Remember the brass-railed rear platforms on the crack trains of some years ago, when fifty miles an hour was pretty fair going, and for no extra charge you could have fresh air, rail clicks, sand and cinders, and a real intimate experience in train riding?

Just sit back and close your eyes for this one. Imagine the rails feeding out into the distance, feel the errant wind on your face, smell the good coal smoke that wafts from forward, and listen to the clickety-clack of wheels on rail ends. Let the steady low hum seep into your consciousness, if you would philosophize a bit, for this is the sound of the fundamental principal of railroading . . . the steel wheel spinning along the steel rail.

## Scene 4

While on the rear platform, listening to the rails clicking by beneath you, did you ever wonder what it would be like to ride in the engine, that wonderful high place of steel, fire and noise forbidden to all but the elect?

Here you are in the cab of Union Pacific Engine 836, westbound out of Omaha on the section of line that began the first historic spanning of the continent. You are approaching the first crossing of the Elkhorn River and the little village of Waterloo. In the commodious cab are Engineer Bill Buckridge, Fireman Bob Dorn, Engine Foreman Sid Chadd and you. You glance at the gauges and dials on the hot black backhead, and at the speedometer which reads a steady 60 miles an hour, an easy gait for an engine that can readily pass the hundred mark.

As 836 leans into the curve that is the approach to the bridge, Bill pulls the whistle cord way down. After this first blast you hear the deep rumble of the bridge crossing, followed by the whistles for the dirt roads of Waterloo. You see the raised hand of the station agent as you flash by, and then 836 is out on the open prairie again, and you are listening to the steady fast churn of the rods as they roll their wheels ever westward. (*See cover photo*).

UNION PACIFIC 836, 800 SERIES, 4-8-4, ALCO 1944  
SAME AS 824 SHOWN



— Walt Thrall

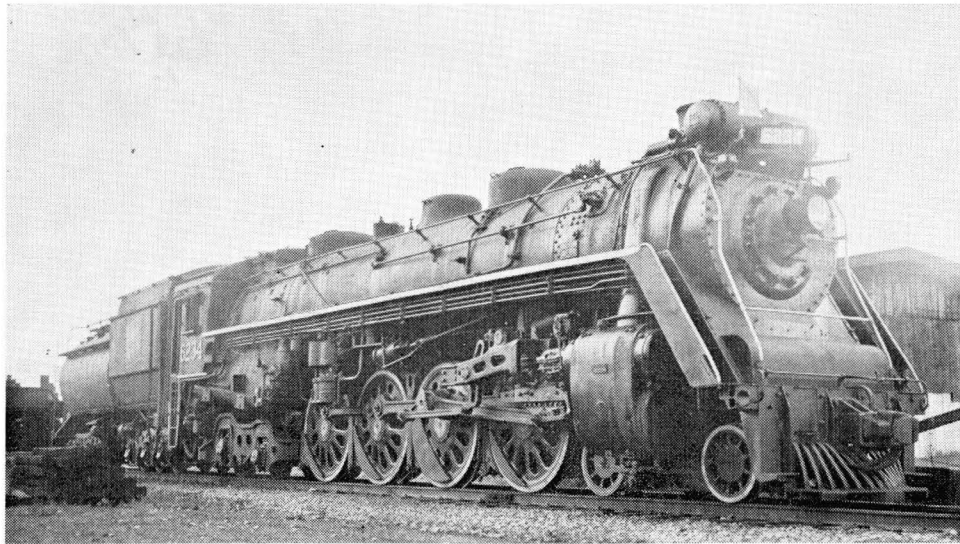


— Walt Thrall

## Scene 5

On the Canadian National Railway, at the town of Dundas, Ontario, the rails and station are above the town on a steep slope clothed in dark pines interspersed with the yellowing trees of Fall. On this day a quarry train had been working the spur just west of the station, and had set out torpedoes on the main for protection. The weather is overcast and sprinkling.

This is the scene then, as Engine 6234, with train 83, whistles the station in the distance. Soon after she hits the first torpedo, then the second, its echoes ringing back from the woods. No. 6234 stops at the station for passengers and mail. Then, on slippery rail, Engineer Rylot takes her off again to the west, continuing up the hill toward Copetown.



CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY 6234, 4-8-4

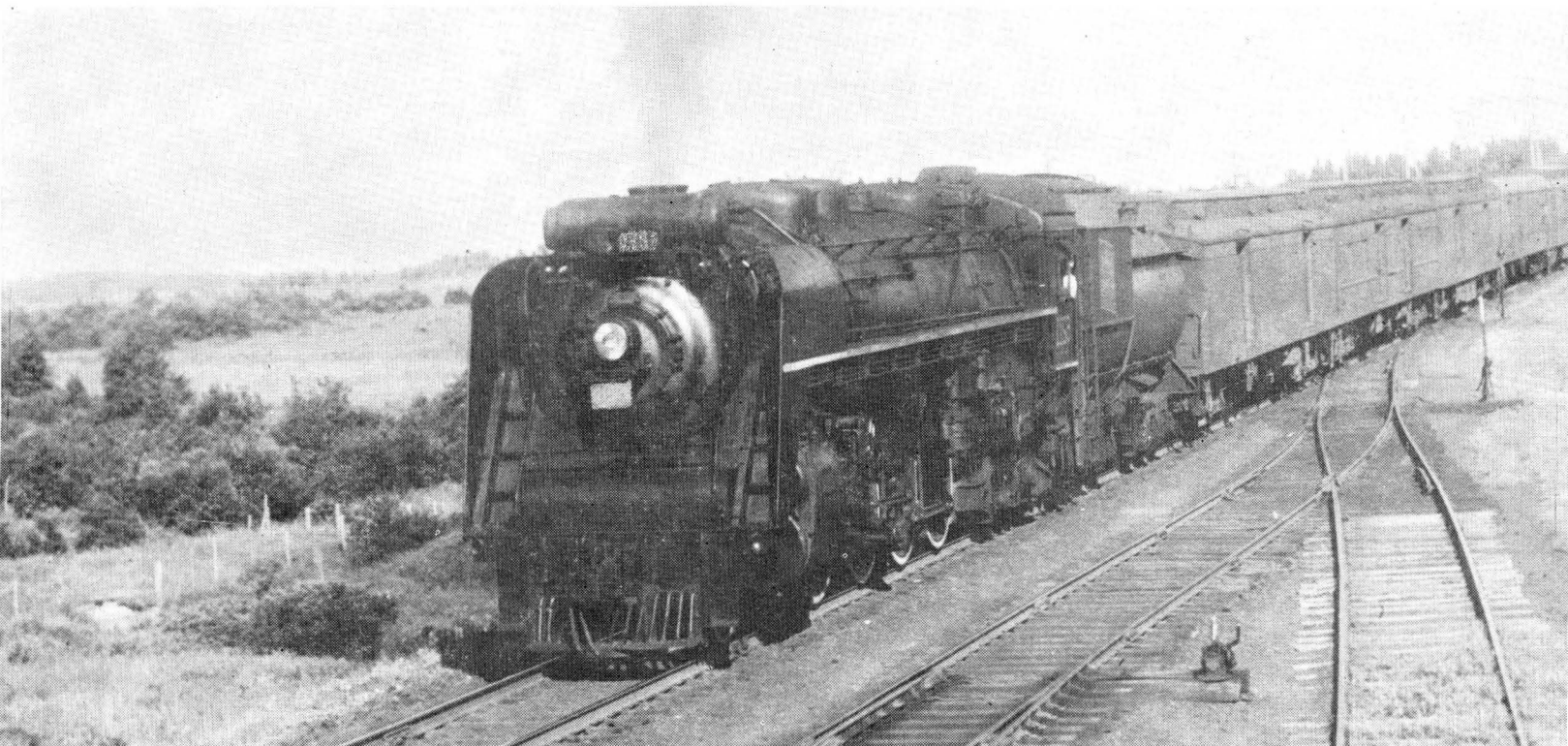
— G. M. Best

## Scene 6

West of Dundas the main line continues upward, cut along the sides of gently rolling hills. There are yellow trees with red apples, dark green firs, cows and horses on the hillside pastures, dogs barking. Then, standing at trackside, we become aware of a speeding engine in the distance. You may often have heard a fast-running engine, but you have rarely heard one pulling five cars up a grade at 75 miles an hour, working just hard enough to make a distinctly audible beat out of four exhausts to each turn of the drivers, as 6211 literally "ticks" off the miles.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY 6211, 4-8-4

— Canadian National Railway





CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY 6211, 4-8-4

— Canadian National Railway

## Scene 7

A few miles west of Paris, on the Canadian National main line to London, is the small farm community of Princeton. White houses border the single, shaded main street, which extends across the tracks. The sultry summer silence is suddenly shattered by the urgent shriek of 6211 as she races over the crossing at 90 miles an hour.



## END OF SIDE ONE

# SIDE TWO

## Scene 1

As on most railroads, Consolidations were really freight engines. On the Southern Pacific they were main line haulers of the early 1900's, later down-graded to local and branch line service. Occasionally they found their way into passenger service.

Here we ride the first vestibule behind Southern Pacific Consolidation 2728, as she pulls a special passenger consist near San Francisco. Her start is vigorous and noisy, and she pulls her heavy coaches up to 35 miles an hour in a furious hurry.



SOUTHERN PACIFIC 2728, CLASS C-8, 2-8-0, SCHENECTADY 1904  
SIMILAR TO 2771 SHOWN

— John Shaw

## Scene 2

Southern Pacific Consolidation 2583 has been gathering cars at waypoints in the San Joaquin Valley of California to take back to Fresno. She has just completed her chores in Kingsburg, and switched onto the main line north of town.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC 2583, CLASS C-9, 2-8-0, BALDWIN 1906  
SAME CLASS AS 2837 SHOWN — Donald Duke

Here she is with nearly all her forty cars stretched out on the main, only a few to follow up from the siding. She is slowing down for the rear end brakie to finally throw the switch and signal the highball, then she takes off for home with a cloud of smoke — a little engine raising an awful ruckus.





### Scene 3

There is a line on Southern Pacific that runs through narrow and wooded Niles Canyon to the grape vineyards of gentle Livermore Valley and on through the barren hills of Altamont Canyon to Tracy. In this pleasant course it joins the Coast Line with the San Joaquin Valley Line. But the grade is sometimes stiff, the fruit blocks heavy, and the district is definitely one for helpers.

Here, at Stoney Creek, in the deepest part of Niles Canyon, shaded by great oaks, the rail line lies on a shelf above the river and the highway. There is a sharp curve around the hill and so Extra 4433 East suddenly bursts upon us, engine 4433 at the head, 4463 pushing hard on the caboose. No clanking rods here, for these engines are tuned up tight. Nor are there rattling cars, for these are heavily loaded reefers on a hotshot freight. And on the siding close by, which ends almost in front of us, cab-forward 4211 steams quietly, returning from the previous helper assignment, and waiting patiently for Extra 4433 East to go by so she can chuff out on the main and go home. This we hear her do. Out of earshot is the conversation between the fireman and the signal maintainer on his motor car, as the former closes the switch. Heard, too, are the never-to-be forgotten exhausts of the pumps on the famous cab-in-fronters.



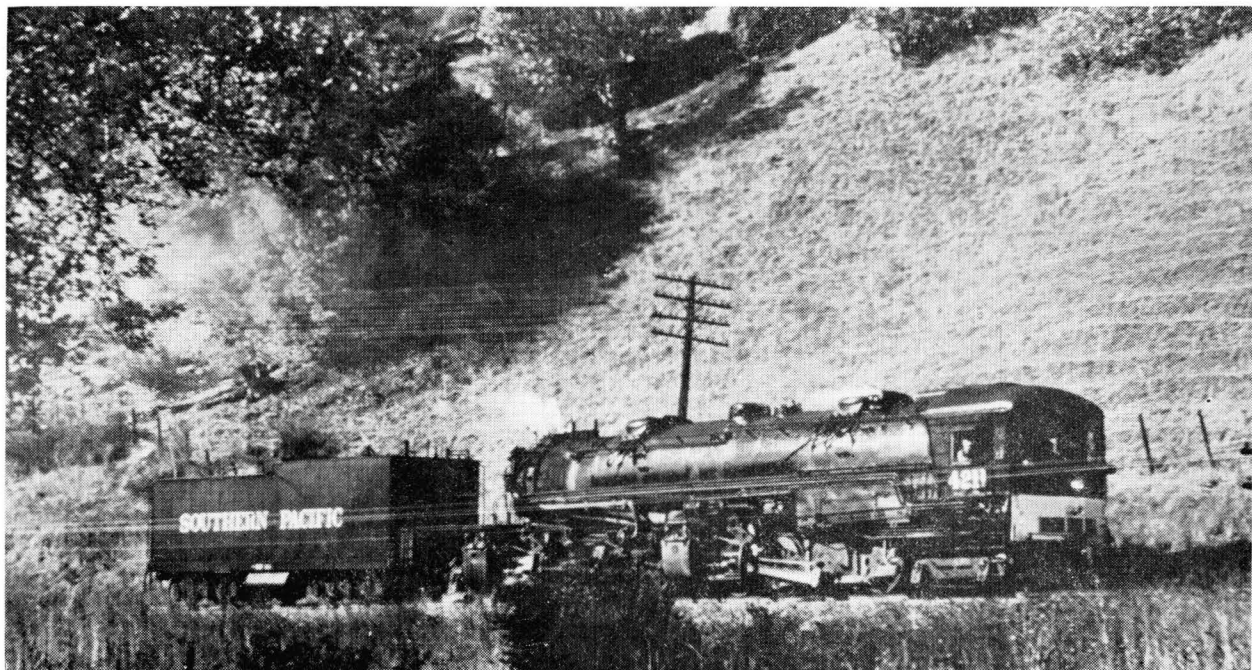
SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4463, CLASS GS-6, 4-8-4, LIMA 1943

— Stan Kistler



SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4211, CLASS AC-10, 4-8-8-2, BALDWIN 1942

— John B. Hungerford



## Scene 4

For several years Sherman Hill has been the last stronghold of those great Union Pacific steamers, the Big Boys, simple articulateds of 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement, and largest engines in the world.

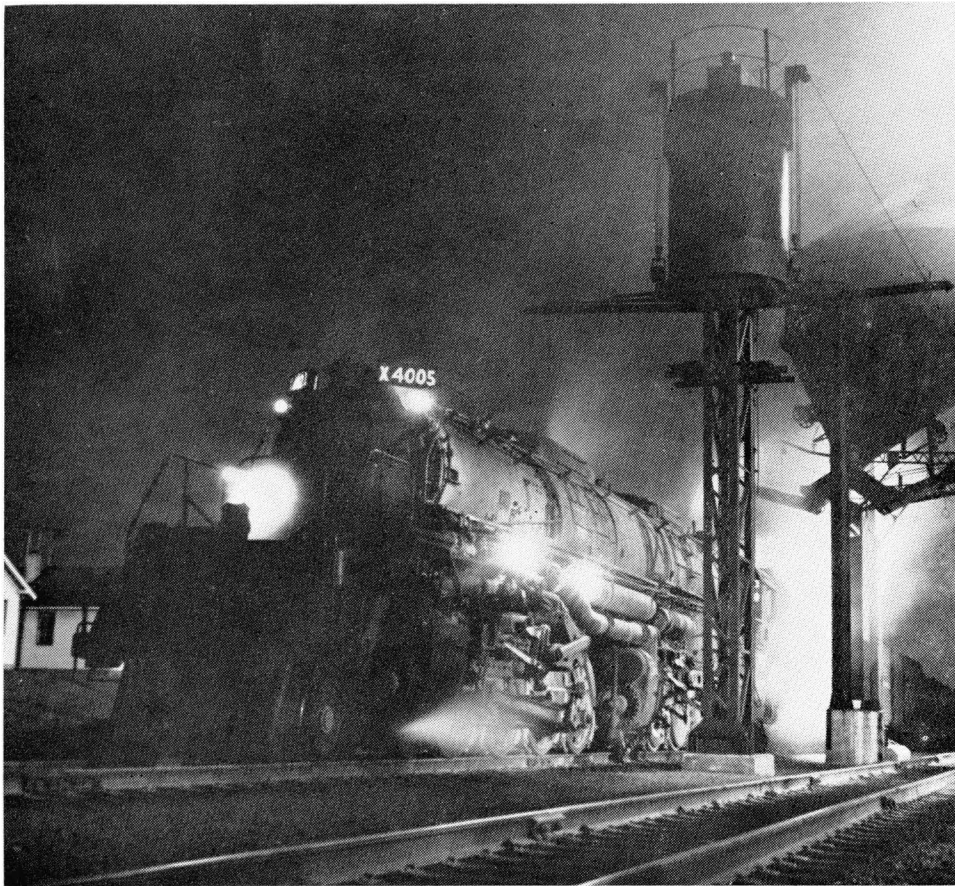
Sherman Hill westbound is almost a straight .82% grade and these machines drag upwards of 4000 tons over its 47 miles of ascent. The grade starts in the flat lands right out of Cheyenne at 6060 feet elevation and the track winds around through barren hills until near Harriman it enters a belt of low pines, before finally reaching a summit of 7933 feet at Hermosa Tunnel.

At Harriman the heavier drags stop to coal and water on the single track that is the New Line, although one siding is also available to coal a second train or allow for passing. A third track takes the coal dumps that serve the large black overhead bunker.

On one side of the tracks is a row of neat grey houses where the coal bunker crews and the local section hands live, and on the other dark pine trees.

Our scene opens at 10 p.m. of a crystal night made brilliant by millions of stars in the clear Wyoming sky. 4005 (as Extra 4005 West) is cautiously easing into position under the lights of the coal bunker. The headlight stabs the night ahead, white classification lights indicate her "extra" status, number board numerals are sharply white. Lights burn under the running board, a soft glow outlines the cab windows, and steam ghosts about the engine. Tied on behind are 117 cars, 3496 tons, yet Engineer J. B. Rasmussen so spots this train on the grade that the after bunker of the tender is exactly under the chute — sure sign of an expert hand.

Water hatches bang open. The coal chute operator tips downward a complaining chute and coal rattles down into the tender. Midway in the filling, the engineer inaudibly backs up a few feet to fill the forward bunker, and at the same time put slack in the couplers for the start. The operation finished, the bunkerman horses up the chute. The fireman calls "OK" as he pushes aside the water column. Engine brakes release. The water hatch bangs closed. Popped steam jets eerily up into the night. Two deep whistles alert the conductor a mile to the rear. Then come eight exhausts, or one turn of the drivers, and the forward wheels lose their hold and spin out a great shower of sparks and racket. Listen carefully for the clank of both sets of rods and cross-heads as the great machine comes by us to move on up the hill, across the country road and on westward into the distant night.



UNION PACIFIC 4005, 4000 SERIES, 4-8-8-4, ALCO 1941

— William Kratville



UNION PACIFIC 9000, 9000 SERIES, 3 CYLINDER 4-12-2, ALCO 1926

— Don Lidikay, Union Pacific

## Scene 5

Union Pacific 9000, three cylinder 4-12-2, passes through Riverside, California, on its way to retirement and display at the Los Angeles County Fair grounds in Pomona, gift of Union Pacific to the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc., Southern California Chapter. In her bunker is just enough coal to get her to Los Angeles. She pulls only a caboose. First engine of her class, she is the only one to be preserved, all of the other 87 having fallen to the torch. She is probably also the longest rigid wheelbase engine ever built.

We hear her whistle in the distance, and the peculiar loping sixbeat of her three cylinders. A truck sees her coming and guns across. She is about to pass us by at the station when Engineer P. S. Peters discovers the next street crossing is unprotected, pulls her down fast to a stop in front of us. The crossing tended finally, 9000 moves on down the tracks, her whistle and beat echoing back to us from between the industrial buildings which line the tracks. And, unconsciously prophetic, a resident walking past the station remarks "Can't hardly get them any more."





"TO RETIREMENT . . . GREY EUCALYPTUS TREES . . . LAST WHISTLES"

— John Shaw

## Scene 6

Almost the last whistles ever to come from 9000, nearly the last mile to be run, she comes down the line west of Pomona through the grey eucalyptus trees. A whistle of recognition comes as she clatters by, followed by whistles for some of the very last of the thousands of country roads she has crossed during her life on the great plains. (*See album cover*).

"LONGEST RIGID WHEEL BASE"

— Jim Ehemberger

