



— Donald Duke Photo

# WHISTLES **W**EST

*A Pageant of Western Steam Locomotives in Sound*

Published by Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Inc., Southern California Chapter

FULL FREQUENCY RANGE RECORDING BY E. P. RIPLEY

STORY BY JOHN B. HUNGERFORD

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## Perpetuating a Chapter In Western Steam Railroading

The purpose of this record of sounds of steam locomotives of the West is to preserve for the present and future certain nostalgic sequences of what was once familiar to all of us. Most of the sounds recorded here will never be heard again except on rare occasions and such occasions are becoming increasingly farther between.

The presentation is the outgrowth of several years of collecting of steam locomotive and railroad sounds throughout the West by E. P. Ripley. The result is a blending of the best examples of Mr. Ripley's effort, the choice having been made by a committee of Southern California Chapter after numerous sessions and critical conferences.

The project was not conceived until some 65 per cent of steam in America had yielded to the diesel, so that many railroads could not be adequately represented. Fortunately, Southern Pacific still had a good deal of nearly all classes in California to draw from — which accounts for the predominance of Southern Pacific engines in the recording.

It is hoped that the various sequences will bring back pleasant memories and add something to the historical material on railroads in the West.

The record is being published by the Chapter and margin above costs of production will be used for maintenance and upkeep of the historical locomotives which the Chapter displays in its exhibit near Los Angeles.



Action starts with Side I, Scene I. Descriptions are word pictures of the scene being heard, and photographs are of the actual engines you are listening to.

Scenes are separated by intervals of ten seconds. One second intervals, as in the first scene, indicate a minor change in the scene or passage of a short interval of time, and do not denote a change from one scene to the next.

Locomotives are large and powerful machines and they make a lot of noise when working. To bring out the full richness, detail and realism of the sound of these great machines, it is recommended that this record be played on Hi Fi sets and at strong volume, but subject to the capacity of the system to reproduce this sound volume without distortion.

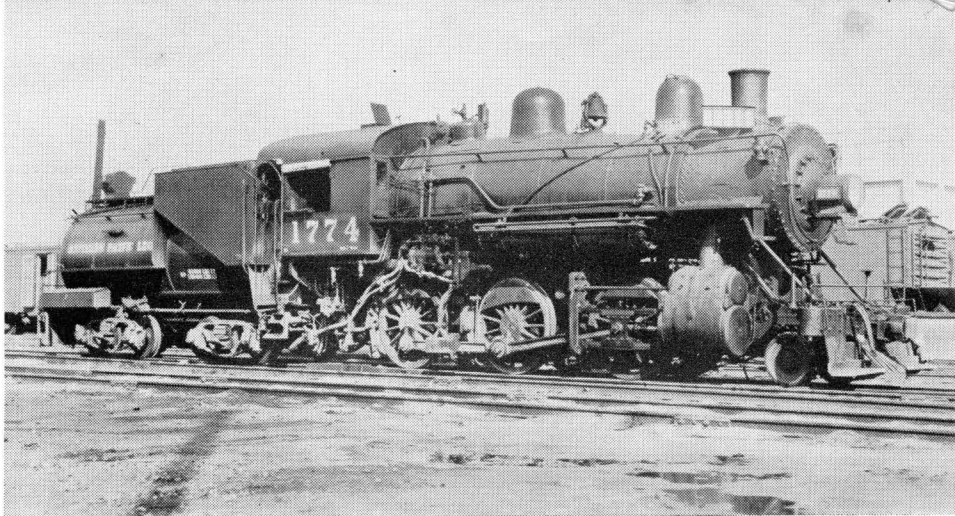


# SIDE ONE

## Scene 1

This pageant of the sounds of western steam locomotives opens with what was once a common scene on all railroads. It is the little engine on the local way freight, old and small, long ago downgraded from the rigors of mainline schedules. Here we follow Southern Pacific No. 1774, Mogul type

2-6-0, as with 25 boxcars it gallops home through the vineyards and among the sheds and farmhouses in the San Joaquin Valley of central California, finally emerging close to the highway as the scene closes.



— G. M. Best Photo

SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 1774 — BALDWIN 1902.

## Scene 2

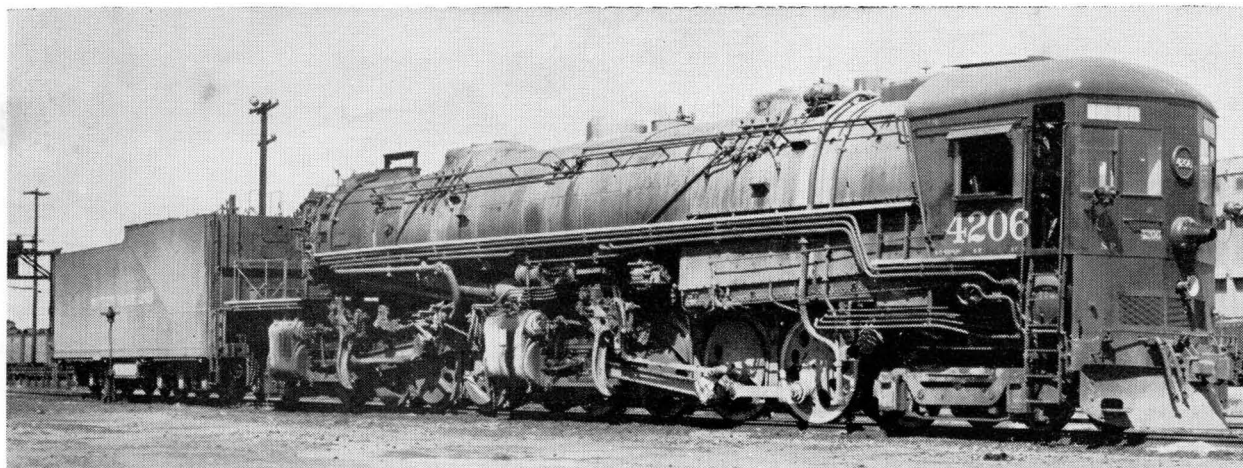
Most steam locomotives are powered by two cylinders, which give off four exhausts to the turn of the wheels, as the one you have just heard. You can quite often count them. The two articulated locomotives you are about to hear are in reality two engines under one boiler; therefore, they have four cylinders, making eight exhausts. Since the two engines are not geared together, you often hear them in different degrees of synchronization. In the first scene you will even hear the cadence change.

Union Pacific No. 4005, the 4-8-8-4 Big Boy, largest engine in the world, pulls westbound out of Cheyenne, Wyoming, with 117 loads of 3496 tons. We follow beside it as it passes behind the piers of the Colorado and Southern Railroad viaduct and starts immediately the long climb up Sherman Hill. A road crossing brings out the sonorous call of its whistle.

UNION PACIFIC NO. 4005 — ALCO SCHENECTADY 1945

— Jim Ehernberger Photo





SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 4206 — BALDWIN 1942

— G. M. Best Photo

### Scene 3

Another big engine, over 500 tons, is Southern Pacific's famous cab-ahead articulated 4-8-8-2. Locomotives of the 4200 class, or AC for Articulated Consolidation, have a peculiar whistling exhaust to their air pumps, and this haunting tune plays melodious accompaniment to their main exhausts and high-toned whistles.

In this scene No. 4206, running as Extra 4206 East from Oakland, California, to Roseville, departs from Davis. Since she tails 104 cars totaling 5127 tons, she may be excused for twice slipping her rear set of drivers in getting this load under way. Then she moves out comparatively easily on a great wide curve while the conductor cons his train from the caboose. Finally, at 18 miles per hour, she really goes to work when the engineer widens on the throttle, and we leave her at the end of the scene rolling easily along at 28 miles per hour.

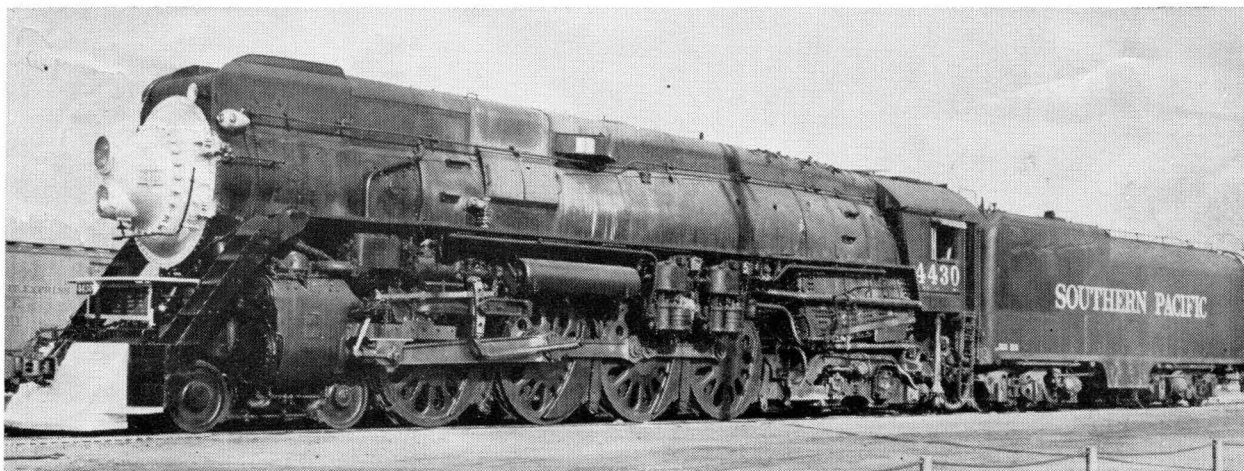
### Scene 4

Many railroads used the 4-8-4, or Northern, wheel arrangement for their big mainline fast haulers. On the Southern Pacific these are known as the 4400 class, designated G. S. for General Service, freight and passenger, and their streamlined version in orange and red cowling is famous for hauling such name trains as the Golden State and the Sunset, the Lark and the Daylights.

Here we follow Engine 4430 as she pulls Train No. 90 down the Coastline for a mail and passenger stop at Santa Susana, California. First heard pulling up a slight grade at forty miles an hour, she tops the hill and runs easily for a few moments at 55, then cuts off and drifts. Soon the hiss of brake-shoes on wheels announces the approaching stop, where she passes behind the station in coming to a halt. Then we follow her start as far as the crossing, where we must let her pass ahead of us, to the tune of fading exhaust, passing carwheels and the crossing bell.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 4430 — LIMA 1941

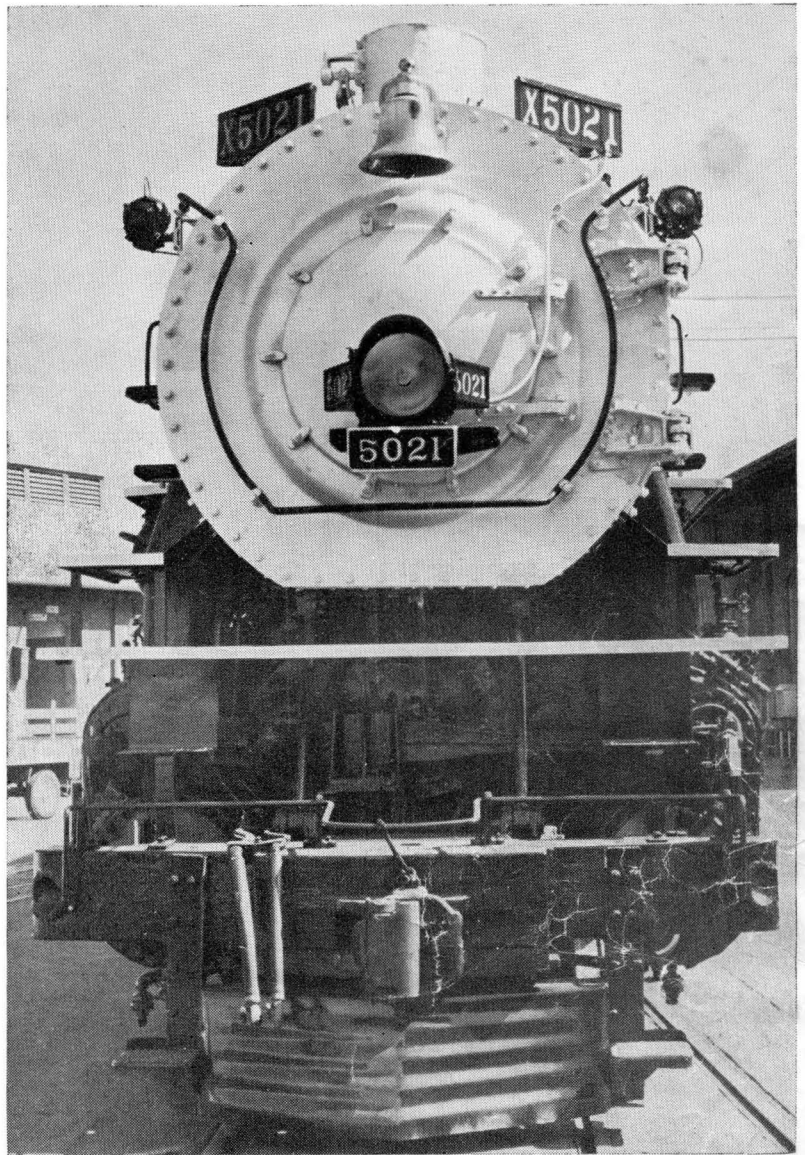
— G. M. Best Photo



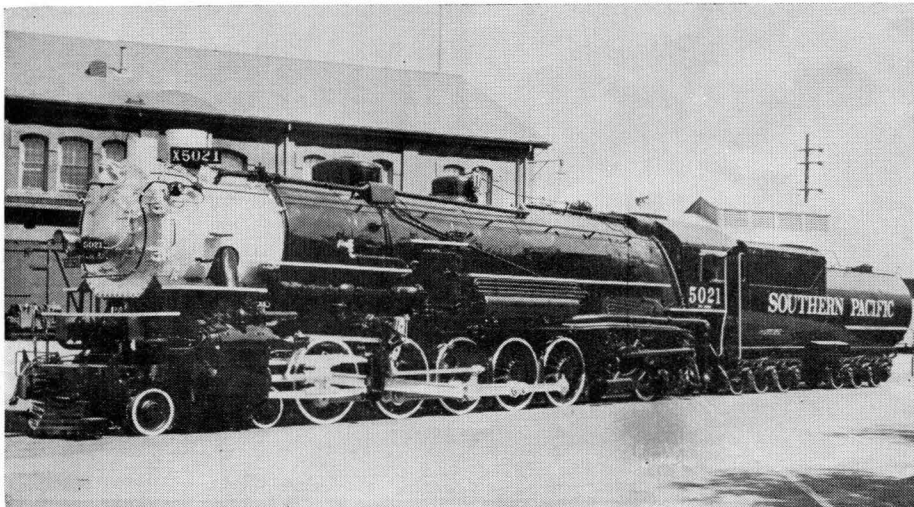


## Scene 5

A different breed of locomotive, never very numerous, is the three cylinder, the third cylinder being in the center under the smokebox. These engines give a loping six exhausts, and this scene at San Fernando is of Southern Pacific No. 5021, 4-10-2, proceeding deadhead into Los Angeles. Engineer Joe Davis is an artist with the whistle, and he does his best to drown out the ominous purr of the diesel idling on the siding nearby.



SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 5021 — SCHENECTADY 1926



— R. W. King Photos

END OF  
SIDE ONE

# SIDE TWO

## Scene 6

Boys, little and big, like to ride close as possible to the engine — and with the vestibule door open if they can get away with it. Here, from right behind Southern Pacific No. 4436, is a highspeed passenger run westward from Ontario, California, to Pomona.

No. 4436, with Engineer Floyd Simmons at the throttle, starts leisurely from Ontario and is shortly passed by the eastbound hurrying diesel-drawn Sunset Limited. The big engine works gradually faster 'til past the two highways, then with air horn blowing and whistle screaming at the crossings, she hammers her heavy train right up to sixty miles per hour. A few minutes later she pulls down to a stop at Pomona.



— G. M. Best Photo

SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 4436 — LIMA 1941

## Scene 7

What does it sound like in the engine cab, better yet, what do two engines sound like from the cab of one of them? With Engineer J. M. Colberg we ride a fast start in the cab of Western Pacific No. 94, 4-6-0, lead engine of a double header with No. 334, 2-8-2, right behind. First heard is the push of No. 334, then our own deeper exhaust goes to work, then another push by No. 334, then the two sets of exhausts join in a wild scramble of locomotive racket as the two engines hoist their passenger consist up to 50 miles per hour in a hurry in Niles Canyon, California.

WESTERN PACIFIC NO. 94 — AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE CO., 1909  
WESTERN PACIFIC NO. 334 — AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE CO., 1929

— Hugh G. Martin Photo







SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 4376 — SACRAMENTO SHOPS 1930

— G. M. Best Photo

## Scene 8

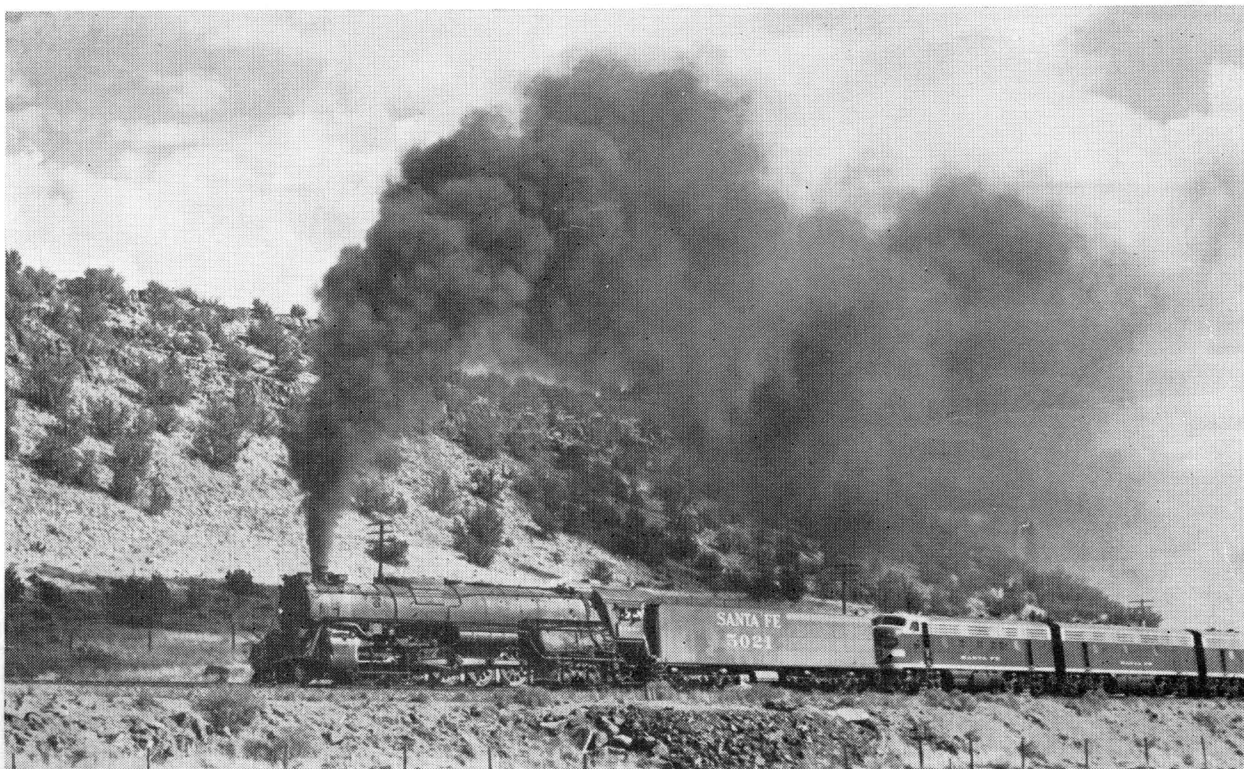
Big engines also pulled fast commuter trains in short runs on as little as three minute leads. Southern Pacific's commuter service from San Francisco to San Jose was pulled by Pacifics, Mountains, and Northerns just prior to dieselization in January of 1957. In each of the two high-density commuter hours each week day, 12 trains ran in the prevailing direction and one the opposite way. Except the latter, which made nearly all 25 stops, each train stopped only at every second or third station, roaring right through the others.

In this scene in industrial Redwood City, 4-8-2 No. 4376, outbound with train 110, stops at 7:55 a.m. to board the commuting passengers. Automobiles and voices are heard. Then as she leaves the station her start is bracketed by approaching horns, and out of her departing exhausts there suddenly bursts 80 inch drivered No. 4421 with train 131, San Francisco bound and holding down the advertised at a full 75 mile an hour clip.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 4421 — LIMA 1937

— G. M. Best Photo





SANTE FE NO. 5021 — BALDWIN 1944

— Jim Ehernberger Photo

## Scene 9

This is the inevitable end of the steamer. The largest and most powerful, even the newest, must give way to the more efficient diesel. Some few have had temporary respite, waiting throughout the years in some distant roundhouse, to be used in helper service for two, three, or four weeks during the potato rush, or the sugar beet rush, or some other extra movement of freight. But the end is always sure.

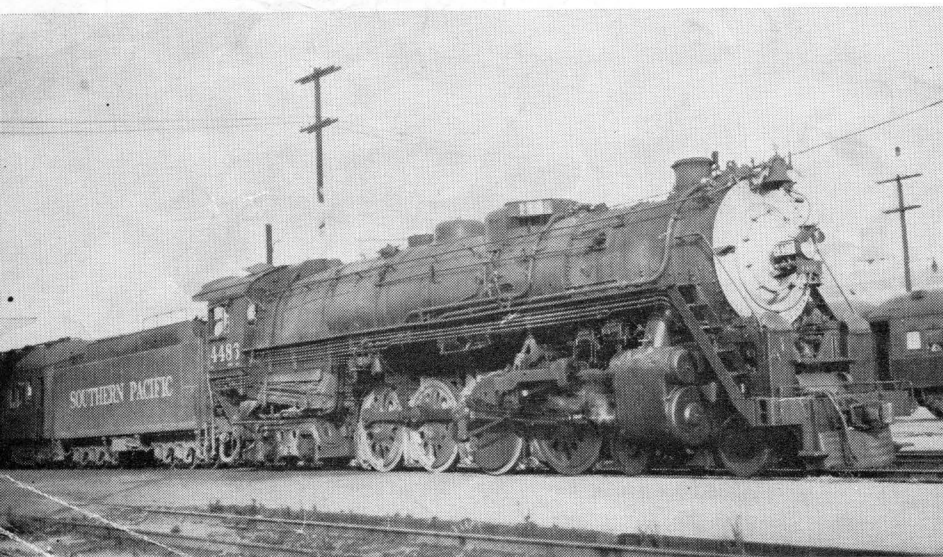
This is the fate of Santa Fe No. 5021, Texas type 2-10-4. In this scene we hear her, under the gloved hand of Engineer Crawford, blasting up the desert canyon and under the highway bridge, from Belen, New Mexico, to Mountainair, with four diesels and a hundred reefers in tow.

## Scene 10

This is for you who have lived in small towns where the daily mail and passenger train was an event, and where the whistles echoed. For a hundred and twenty years this scene was the orchestra of travel and the call

SOUTHERN PACIFIC NO. 4486—ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN 1942

— G. M. Best Photo



to wander in America. At the little town of Moorpark, California, at 3:45 on a warm afternoon, Southern Pacific 4-8-4 No. 4486, ex-Cotton Belt No. 817, with Train 90, whistles down to a stop at the freshly painted station, takes mail and passengers quickly, rolls out of town again with Engineer John S. Simpson playing one of the last beautiful whistle calls to be heard on the vast Southern Pacific system.

