

# THE STREAMLINED SUNSET LIMITED

It would turn out to be the last splash; the final time champagne would christen the pilot of a new streamlined passenger train on the Southern Pacific, when on August 20, 1950, the lightweight *Sunset Limited* was placed in service between Los Angeles and New Orleans.

The crown jewel of SP's \$36 million dollar post-war passenger improvement program, the new *Sunset* would represent many firsts and lasts for the railroad. The re-equipping of the *Sunset* required the railroad to place its largest single order ever for lightweight passenger equipment – 78 cars for five full trainsets (including spares) – and in a surprise move, the \$15 million contract was awarded to the Budd Company of Philadelphia.

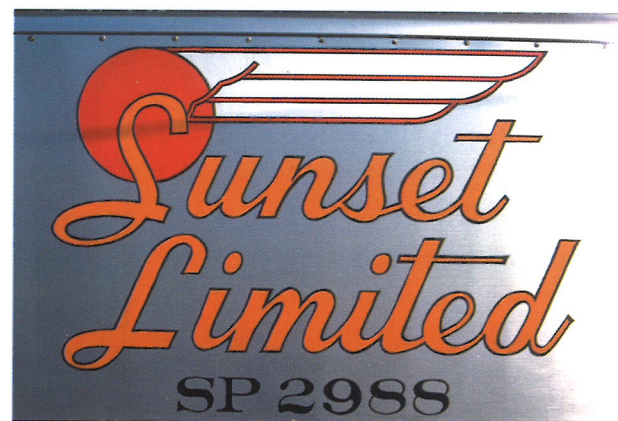
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Opposite: The clock on Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal's tower reads about 7:29 p.m. "Pacific Standard Time" (daylight savings time would not be adopted by the railroads until passage of the Uniform Time Act of 1966) as passengers, mail and baggage are loaded aboard train No.2 in the mid-1950s. E7A 6001 is the second of three delivered in April of 1948, originally intended and painted for the ill-fated *Golden Rocket* in the half-red / half-silver scheme. Now in standard "Daylight" dress, modifications of late include nose multiple-unit cable receptacles, sealed beam oscillating light, M-5 multiple-chime whistle, and roof radiator air baffles to induce greater airflow through the radiators. If all goes well, this evening's No. 2 will be underway in 31 minutes for New Orleans. -Don Sims

This must have been an enormous blow to the Pullman-Standard Company, which since 1936 had been the exclusive supplier of SP lightweight passenger equipment—to the tune of 323 cars to date (including cars transferred from joint Overland route and Pullman ownership). Amazingly, the gigantic *Sunset* order was given to the Budd Company without SP ever having sampled their product. Apparently the severe equipment delivery delays of the post-war Pullman-Standard orders (*Shasta Daylight* equipment was ordered in June of 1946, promised by the end of the year, but not delivered until June of 1949) along with a continued backlog was a deciding factor in SP shifting their business to the Budd Company.

Bids for the train were received from American Car & Foundry, Pullman-Standard, and Budd. The Budd Company came in between the two with ACF the low bidder, but in a memo to SP President Armand T. Mercier dated June 10, 1948, G.M. Betterton of the railroad's Passenger Department wrote "The Budd Company promised deliveries starting in the third quarter of 1949, American Car & Foundry in the second half of 1950, and Pullman-Standard during first quarter of 1950. Based on performance since resumption of

passenger car building, plus actual observation by our mechanical officers at all plants, it seems apparent that the promises of the Budd Company and American Car & Foundry are more realistic than that of Pullman-Standard, and it is felt that if ordered from the Budd Company deliveries would probably be obtained one



*Sunset Limited* train insignia as applied to the emblem shields on the sides of equipment delivered for the train in 1950. Inspired by the Charles Eggleston designed 1937 *Daylight* herald, lettering was in heavy script "Daylight" orange with a "Daylight" red solid-ball and wing-outline over the stainless steel, all edged in 1/8-inch black. The car initial and number below the herald was in 2 1/4-inch solid black. The painted background behind the wing was a later addition to better highlight the wing over the stainless steel. -Bruce Heard