## HOW THE FRISCO GOT TO FRISCO (ALMOST)

By Anton Andersen

**HISTORY** The Atlantic and Pacific Rail Road (A&P) began as a joint venture of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (Santa Fe) and The St Louis & San Francisco Railway (Frisco) under an Act of Congress in 1866. The Southern Pacific (SP) obtained the rights to meet the A&P at the California border under the same Act.

Let's turn back time and assume that the joint venture remained in effect rather than breaking up in the financial difficulties of the 1870's. To placate the Frisco in the 1883 exchange of the SP constructed Mojave to Needles line for Santa Fe's Mexico interest west of Deming, New Mexico, the Frisco was given the remaining California rights of the 1866 Act. With this in hand the Frisco sets out to build to it's other namesake city.

The A&P had conducted a preliminary survey to build a route via the coast of California to San Francisco. Knowing the importance of terminal grounds the Frisco acquired the South Pacific Coast Railroad (SPC) in 1884. This gave the Frisco two construction fronts for the line. The line was completed in early 1886 with the "holing out" of the tunnel north of San Luis Obispo. The SPC was standard gauged in the same time frame.

Over the subsequent years the Frisco played the Santa Fe against the SP to arrive at the Second World War with the conditions that existed for the track plan design. These conditions are:

- 1. A bypass was constructed of the Santa Cruz Mountains from Campbell to Watsonville in the 1890's.
- 2. The SPC was cut back to Los Gatos in 1906.
- 3. The SP acquired rights from Ventura north in exchange for trackage in Texas.
- 4. The Western Pacific acquired rights in 1911 in the Alameda terminal that were later included in the formation of the Alameda Belt Line.
- 5. The Alameda Electric interurban acquired track and terminal rights in 1913.
- 6. The Santa Fe acquired rights from Hollister to Alameda as part of their construction from Fresno via Hollister in 1923 in conjunction with their Los Angeles to Bakersfield project.

The track plan represents facilities that would have existed up to about 1973 when changes in the tax code resulted in the rationalization of all railroad facilities. At that time Amtrak moved all operations to Oakland and the BN converted the yard and ferry terminal into an intermodal facility.

**LAYOUT DESIGN** The layout was designed as a three level layout. Two sceniced levels and a staging level below. The layout design shows a maximum development of the space and concept. The layout could be simplified by removing items such as the Alameda Electric, the Fresno staging or by simplifying the industry or terminal layout. Wider aisles would be possible by doing selected items.

A more radical simplification could be achieved by eliminating one of the scenic levels. If done I would raise the base level of the visible portion to about 60 inches to

provide better access and storage under the layout. The lower level should <u>not</u> be lowered below the 53-inch level to insure that the car doors can be fully opened.

All sidings have been set to a 16-foot length. This could be adjusted down to make things interesting. Gilroy could be adjusted to allow Fresno trains siding access. Both Gilroy and Morgan Hill should not be shortened. Campbell's length is 28 feet if used as a lapped siding.

A diesel shop alternate is shown if the post-50's era is chosen. The turntable and three stalls would be retained.

Access to the upper level would be achieved by fold down platforms in the interior spaces and by movable ones for the car area during operation. The height would be determined by personal preference for the upper level viewing. 16 to 20 inches would still allow for headroom for most operators.

**OPERATION** The off view staging yards provide space for up to 15 trains. A lineup would look something like this:

## San Luis Obispo

Frisco <u>Gateway Limited</u> , 3 engines 10 cars, from St Louis, coach and Pullman
Frisco/CRIP Cherokee, 2 eng. 8 cars, from Memphis and Dallas, " "+mail
Frisco Pacific Mail, 2 eng. 10 cars, from St Louis, mail, REA and coach
Frisco Express, 4 eng. 20 cars, perishable plus time freight
Frisco drag freight, 3 eng. 25 cars.
Stockton/Sacramento
WP transfer freight, 2 eng. 20 cars, from Stockton via Newark only
SP Cascade, 2 eng. 10 cars, from Portland, run through
SP freight, 3 eng. 25 cars, from Roseville, ""
SP freight, 3 eng. 25 cars, from Oakland, ", Blue Streak Merchandise
ABL transfer, 2 eng. 15 cars, via Oakland only
Fresno
ATSF SF Chief, 3 eng. 10 cars, from Barstow
ATSF time freight, 3 eng. 20 cars, run through
ATSF drag freight, 3 eng. 25 cars, ", set out west, pick up east
Alameda
Frisco drag freight, 3 eng. 25 cars, made up
" ", 25 cars to be switched
Frisco 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sub. Local, 2 eng. 15 cars, made up, works Campbell to Gilroy +
Frisco Almaden turn, 10 cars, to be made up, to cement plant only
Frisco City Switch, 10 cars, to be made up, Alameda city and Newark only
Frisco yard job, all yard switching including Union Ice
Frisco Los Gatos local, 1 eng. 10 cars, made up
Bayview
ATSF Californian, 2 eng. 7 cars, to San Diego via Fresno
ABL harbor switch, works inner and outer harbor plus passenger from Alameda

## Los Gatos

Frisco commuter, 1 eng. 5 cars, push pull, works from Hollister ako Newark

AER suburban service, 2-2 car trains, meet at Bayview and Alameda

Now that I have told what to run, let's figure out how to run it and how much. Any operating session can be as long or as short as you want. Let's shoot for a four-hour weekend operation with a few friends. I count 17 trains ready to go excluding the ABL, AER and switch jobs. If each train makes a round trip that would be 34 main line trips. The commuter should go to both terminals twice during a session so that pushes trips to 40. A second round trip for the Californian would make 42. Putting the Frisco freights on a rotation will add more. Using 44 gives us 11 main line moves per hour. Fifteen minutes per move implies 3 engineers for the main line moves. Given the need for Rule G runs we better make that 4.

Each local could be worked in about 2 hours. Four locals imply 2 more for 6 engineers. The yard job and the ABL switcher, who also does the passenger service and turn moves, raises it to 8. A dispatcher and AER operator makes 10. Twenty-minute time slots for the AER could be pulled off the Extra Board if your trolley man doesn't show. The priority sequence of staffing would go something like this: 3 engineers, yard job, engineer, dispatcher, engineer, ABL, engineer, AER/engineer, hostler, conductors & switchmen. Anything past about 15 would need to be observers.

The layout is suitable for a CTC machine. The 27 control points would require a five-foot long 2-panel machine (30 slots). The best location would be under Bayview on an extendable leg, roll around carriage.

I will not go into equipment but some interesting things could happen in an early 50's or BN merger to start of Amtrak time frame. Other mergers with Midwest roads could create some interesting sights.

Now what would all those "it's San Francisco!!!" snobs do if they saw "Ship  $\underline{it}$  on the Frisco" signs everywhere.







