



EMPIRE BUILDER ROUTE GUIDE



SEATTLE • PORTLAND • SPOKANE • ST. PAUL – MINNEAPOLIS • CHICAGO

We hope that you enjoy reading this guide and learning about points of interest along the route. It is written starting from the western termini of the train in both Seattle and Portland and proceeds to points east, ending in Chicago. If you boarded in Chicago, read the guide in reverse; just remember to look in the opposite direction shown to see the sight referenced.

AMTRAK STATIONS are shown in all capital letters, as opposed to upper and lower case for towns and geographical areas through which the train travels but does not stop. The Amtrak System Timetable or the Empire Builder panel card schedule should be consulted for actual station times; the times shown in this guide are approximate. While all service presented in this guide was accurate at the time of publication, routes and services are subject to change. Please contact Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, visit Amtrak.com, or call your travel agent for the most current information.

A few generations ago, this route was pure wilderness, roamed by Native Americans and buffalo. Following early traders and gold miners came the merchants, timber men, farmers and – dramatically – railroaders. In the northern plains, the greatest of these was James J. Hill, a freewheeling, big-dealing tycoon who linked St. Paul and Seattle with his Great Northern Railway. He acquired the land, built the tracks, and encouraged homesteading along the route. On the way, this “Empire Builder” Hill came to govern the fate and fortune of a large part of this powerfully beautiful area. Enjoy!



WELCOME ABOARD



On board, you will experience the comfort and relaxation of train travel while witnessing some spectacular scenery. From the beautiful Cascade Mountains or the spectacular Columbia River Gorge through Glacier National Park, high desert and Big Sky country, the plains of North Dakota, past the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, to North Dakota to the sights and sounds of Chicago, the *Empire Builder*® offers one of the most majestic routes in the Amtrak® system. We are happy to have you aboard today and want to ensure your trip is everything you want it to be. If there is anything that can be done to make your trip more enjoyable, please do not hesitate to ask any Amtrak employee.

THE TRAIN STAFF The staff of the *Empire Builder* is here to make your trip a special and enjoyable experience.

Conductor is responsible for the entire On-Board Services staff as well as ticket collection, the safety of passengers and the safe operation of the train.

Lead Service Attendant is responsible for the operation of the Dining car and Dining car staff.

Lounge Car Attendant is responsible for the operation of the Café/Lounge car.

Sleeping Car Attendant is responsible for providing all services for passengers ticketed in Sleeping car accommodations including room preparation, luggage service and any assistance necessary to ensure a comfortable journey. They can also assist with meal reservations or arrange for your meal to be served in the privacy and comfort of your accommodation.

Coach Attendant is responsible for providing service for passengers ticketed in coach. This includes seat assignment, luggage service, pillow service, and other assistance to ensure a comfortable journey.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Enhanced **Sleeping** accommodations provide a range of private rooms with amenities for day and night use. From roomettes to bedrooms featuring a private lavatory and shower, Sleeping car accommodations will suit any need and can be described in more detail by any member of the crew. Please ask to speak to the Conductor regarding available rooms. Sleeping Car passengers may enjoy the Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge available in Chicago and Portland.

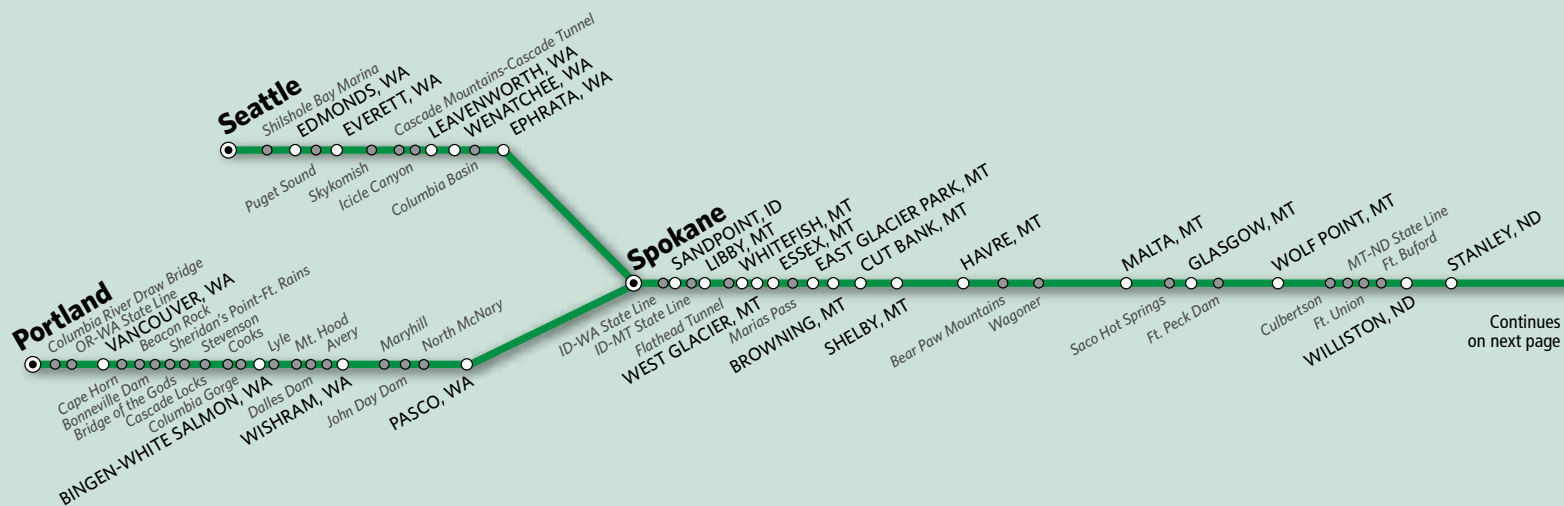
Coach seating provides a wide reclining seat with leg rest, folding tray table and overhead reading light. Free pillows and at-seat meal service are also available.

Dining service offers full hot meals featuring regional cuisine prepared by Amtrak chefs with specialties unique to the *Empire Builder*. The Dining car provides the perfect venue to meet your fellow passengers and enjoy a delicious meal while the scenery glides by your window. Sleeping car accommodation charges include meals in the Dining car while passengers ticketed in Coach may purchase Dining car meals at reasonable prices. Spectacular scenery and a great staff make dining on the *Empire Builder* a memorable experience. Complete meals are not available between Spokane and Portland. Sleeping car passengers will receive complimentary cold meal service. Combined Diner/Lounge service provides food and beverage service between Seattle and Spokane.

Sightseer Lounge/Café is the perfect location for scenic viewing and lighter fare. Large panoramic windows provide the perfect vantage point for sightseeing and making new friends. The Café is located on the lower level of this car offering sandwiches, snacks and beverages. Volunteer National Park Service rangers provide narrative along parts of the route during the spring and summer.

HOST RAILROADS are the freight and commuter railroads that Amtrak contracts with to operate Amtrak passenger trains. The *Empire Builder* travels Seattle/Portland-St Paul/Minneapolis-Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF); St. Paul/Minneapolis/Glenview – Canadian Pacific (CP); Glenview-Chicago – METRA.

Information contained in this route guide as well as described amenities and other on-board features are subject to changes without notice. While gratuities are not required for services provided, it is an appreciated way to convey to an employee that he or she has made your trip more enjoyable.



Seattle Route

SEATTLE was named in honor of Chief Noah Sealth, head of one of the two tribes living in the area in 1851 when Arthur Denny and his settlers landed on Alki Point. Today, Seattle is the “Emerald City” for its famed access to pristine mountain wilderness and the Puget Sound. Once a small sawmill town, Seattle is now home to Microsoft and the tallest building on the West Coast. As you emerge from the mile-long tunnel, look to your left to see the Seattle waterfront where the famous Alaska gold rush began, a popular tourist attraction featuring seafood restaurants, harbor tours and the Victoria Clipper – a high-speed catamaran to Victoria, B.C. On your right is the 605-ft.-tall Space Needle, symbol of the 1962 World’s Fair.

Shilshole Bay/Ballard (founded 1853); the bridge crosses the Salmon Bay Inlet. To your right are the Hiram Chittenden locks (Ballard Locks) and fish ladder (see Bonneville Dam), completed in 1916, the busiest locks in the U.S. On the left is Shilshole Bay Marina, home to over 1,700 pleasure craft. The name derives from the Duwamish Indian word meaning “threading a needle,” no doubt referring to the narrow opening through which Salmon Bay empties into Shilshole Bay. It is estimated that there is one boat for every three people inside the Seattle city limits. Note also the statue of Leif Ericson, tribute to the Scandinavian heritage of this Ballard neighborhood.

Puget Sound shore is skirted by the train for approximately 30 miles. Its water temperature varies only between 51 and 53 degrees annually, contributing to the region’s mild moist marine climate. Captain George Vancouver first wrote about these waters in 1792. The name was given by Vancouver to honor Lieutenant Peter Puget, who explored its southern end in that year; Vancouver claimed it for Great Britain on June 4. It later became part of the Oregon Country, becoming a U.S. territory when the 1846 Oregon Treaty was signed. Olympic National Park, Bainbridge Island and Whidbey Island can be seen to the left; all are connected by the Washington State Ferry System, largest in the U.S., with ten routes, 20 terminals and 28 vessels.

EDMONDS Edmonds Marina and Kingston Ferry dock are to the left. Edmonds’ suburban depot continues to grow as a transportation hub now serving six long-distance and six Sounder commuter trains daily.

EVERETT A popular port since its beginning, known for its fishing fleet, lumber, and hosting of the U.S. Navy. Even before the Great Northern Railway linked these forests with the eastern states, Washington sawmills were already shipping boatloads of lumber to China. The Boeing 747/767/777/787 assembly plant is located here, boasting the

largest building by volume in the world. Notables hailing from Everett include singer/songwriter Kenny Loggins and actor Patrick Duffy.

Skykomish As the train follows the Skykomish River, you can see Washington’s famous pine and fir forests. In this area are the prospector’s Money Creek, Indian Falls, chute-shaped Sunset Falls, Table Rock and spectacular Mount Index (right). Skykomish was founded as a railroad town and serves as a stopping point for recreational access to the surrounding mountains including skiing at Stevens Pass.

Cascade Mountains For the 65 miles east of Everett, the tracks have climbed more than 2,800 ft. The best way to get through this spectacular mountain range is to go under it – which you can, thanks to the 7.8 mile Cascade Tunnel bored under Stevens Pass, 500 ft. overhead and 4,061 ft. above sea level. Longest in the U.S., it was completed in 1929.

Icicle Canyon If you look closely you might see goats on the hillsides, elk, beaver and deer in the marshes.

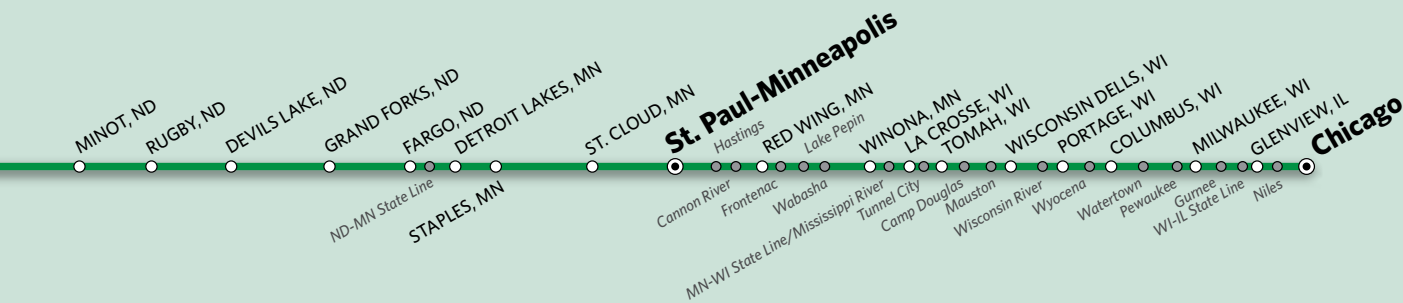
The train is now descending more than 100 ft. for every mile of forward progress.

LEAVENWORTH This quaint Bavarian themed village just outside of Tumwater Canyon has become the first major tourist stop on the eastern side of the mountains. German-style restaurants abound, and the area is a popular outdoor recreation spot for whitewater rafting and mountain biking. Its annual Oktoberfest celebration is one of the world’s most attended outside of Munich, Germany.

WENATCHEE is home of the Apple Blossom festival and renowned as the “Apple Capital of the World.” The region grows more than 15 percent of the nation’s apple crop. The city takes its name from an Indian word meaning “robe of the rainbow.”

Columbia Basin Some 10 million years ago, lava oozed out of the earth’s crust here and covered the surrounding ancient mountains. In some places over one mile thick, it eventually cooled and became the largest such basin in the country. Today, it is a rich and fertile farmland due to modern irrigation. The states, Indian tribes, and the federal government are all engaged in efforts to improve the water, land and air quality of the basin and are working to restore the critical ecosystem of the area.

Ephrata is headquarters for the Columbia River Basin irrigation project and gateway city to the Grand Coulee Dam. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe is buried on the Colville Reservation just to the north. The name was given them by the French for the nose pendants they wore (see Bear’s Paw Mountains).



Portland Route

PORTLAND The Chinook Indians were the first to use the site of Portland as a port. It is said that homesick New England settlers flipped a coin to choose between Portland (as in Maine) and Boston (as in Massachusetts) for the name of their new city. Today, Portland calls itself the "City of Roses; the cleanest, most beautiful city in America." In the heart of the Columbia River basin, Portland was the largest city in the Pacific Northwest when it incorporated in 1851. With the completion of the railroad 30 years later, it became a supply center for the Klondike Gold Rush in 1896. Portland is known for its strong land-use planning and investment in public transit.

Columbia River Draw Bridge Leaving Portland, the train crosses the Willamette River, then a 1,516-ft. bridge over the Oregon Slough (a second channel of the Columbia River) to reach Hayden Island. From there, the train crosses over this 2,806-ft. structure to enter Washington.

Oregon/Washington State Line

VANCOUVER was named for Captain George Vancouver, shipmate of Captain Cook and commander of the British expedition to chart the Northwest. Joint occupation of the area with the British ended with the signing of the Oregon Treaty in 1846 giving the U.S. full control. Prune orchards and prune dryers are on both sides of the tracks. To the north is Mt. St. Helens, nearly, 10,000 ft. high, inactive until the eruption of May 18, 1980. Willie Nelson began his career in Vancouver in 1956 with the recording "Lumberjack."

Cape Horn The train passes through the western-most rampart of the Cascade Range through a 2,369-ft. long tunnel.

Columbia Gorge We will travel through this magnificent area for approximately 55 miles. It was formed by the awesome force of the Columbia River as it cut through ancient volcanic lava rock. Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery reached the river in October of 1805, named after Captain Robert Grey's ship which first plied its mouth in that year. Pioneers flooding in from the east using the Oregon Trail attempted to navigate down the extremely dangerous untamed river. The gorge today holds federally protected status as a National Scenic Area and is a popular recreational area.

Beacon Rock On the left, named by explorers Lewis and Clark, the 840-ft., 1,700-acre basaltic formation is said to be the third largest single rock on the planet. A three-quarter mile trail to the top, completed in 1918, leads to views in all directions. Popular with recreational climbers today, the rock has been used as a guide by river voyagers for

centuries. To the right on the Oregon side, several waterfalls are visible. The highest, Multnomah Falls, cascades 620 feet into the Columbia River.

Bonneville Dam First dam on the river and more than half a mile from end to end, it is one of the government's greatest power and navigation projects. Its primary functions are those of electrical power generation and river navigation. It was built by and is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In order to give salmon access to their breeding grounds, engineers had to build "fish ladders" (terraced pools) between the river level and the top of the dam. Salmon leap up the "ladder" to return to the upper Columbia River where they were born. As the train passes the dam, look across to the beauty of Oregon. The mountains here range from 2,000 to 5,000 ft. high.

Sheridan's Point/Ft. Rains An old U.S. Army block house stands on a point of land that juts out near the upper Cascades (Point Sheridan). In 1855, settlers and soldiers defended this trading area from Indian attacks under the command of Lt. Phillip Sheridan, who later became a famous Civil War general, forcing Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox that ended the war.

Bridge of the Gods replaced a natural rock bridge which the Indians said was destroyed by their deity in anger when his two sons argued over a young maiden. The two sons became Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams; the maiden became Mt. St. Helens. The bridge was created 300 years ago by the so-called Bonneville Slide, a landslide across the Columbia River that simultaneously resulted in a dam 200 ft. high.

Stevenson Much of this area is national forests on both sides of the river, across from which is **Cascade Locks**.

Cooks In mere minutes, we travel between rain forest and desert. The train skirts the base of the 2,500-ft. high cone-shaped Wind Mountain.

BINGEN-WHITE SALMON These two adjacent towns were named by immigrants after Bingen (a beautiful town along the Rhine in Germany) and the White Salmon River. This is the center of extensive fruit orchards. Across the water is the city of Hood River, Oregon.

Lyle A short distance west of Lyle are four tunnels. Opposite the first is Memaloose Island, an ancient Indian burial ground. Here we cross the Klickitat River.

Mt. Hood The highest mountain in Oregon at 11,235 ft. is one of many peaks with perpetual glaciers and snow fields which mark the Cascade Range across Oregon and Washington. The mountain boasts six ski areas, with Timberline offering the only year-round lift-served skiing in North America.

Dalles Dam Dalles is the French word for “trough,” and this area was so named because of the narrow and dangerous channel. The 8,700-ft. dam, which the *Empire Builder* follows for the next few minutes, created Horsethief Lake, used for recreation and fishing. The dam provides the area with irrigation water, hydroelectric power and a reservoir for water sports.

Avery We travel now on the water level route through the Columbia River Gorge, one of several points on the route where you can see Mt. Hood to the south.

WISHRAM Lewis and Clark visited this area, named for an ancient village where Indians gathered to trade for salmon.

Maryhill A three-story rectangular mansion seen up on the hill to your left now stands as the Maryhill Museum. Sam Hill, a wealthy Northern Pacific Railway attorney, built the home for his wife, daughter of James J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railway. Sam’s wife refused to live there and it was dedicated as a museum in honor of Queen Marie of Romania. There you will find the largest collection of Rodin sculptures outside of Paris, France. On the hill east of the museum you will see Sam Hill’s replica of England’s Stonehenge. It is a memorial to the dead of World War I from Washington State.

John Jay Dam Constructed between 1958 and 1961 at a cost of \$511 million, the dam is 5,900 ft. in length and has 16 turbine generator units. This hydroelectric dam boasts the highest single lift lock in the world, raising ship traffic approximately 110 ft.

North McNary This town was named after Charles L. McNary, a U.S. Senator from Oregon for more than 25 years.

PASCO Here Englishman David Thompson claimed the western lands for Great Britain with a simple message tied to a pole. Britain’s claim did not hold, and the U.S. finally took over the disputed territory in 1846. It was named by Virgil Bough, a construction engineer for the Northern Pacific Railway, after Cerro de Pasco, a city in the Peruvian Andes where he had helped build a railroad. In its early years it was a small railroad town, but the completion of the Grand Coulee Dam in 1941 brought irrigation and agriculture to the area. The nuclear power plant at Hanford is nearby. It is the farthest point up the Columbia River that can be reached by seagoing ships. In terms of net percentage, Pasco has been the fastest-growing city in the State of Washington for several years.

SPOKANE is the largest city in the Inland Northwest, the trade and medical center for a 36-county region covering eastern Washington, north Idaho, western Montana, and parts of Oregon, British Columbia and Alberta. It boasts an active and vibrant downtown, which has been enhanced with the addition of a new pedestrian mall and old-fashioned streetcars. The area enjoys a four-season climate with an average rainfall of 16.7 in. as opposed to Western Washington’s average of 40. Its official nickname is the “Lilac City” and it boasts among its notable natives actor and singer Bing Crosby. Railroading was responsible for much of the city’s early growth. Here the *Empire Builder* route (the Great Northern route from Seattle) is joined by the Portland route.

Washington/Idaho State Line

During the night, the train stops at **Sandpoint** and **Libby**.

NOTE: We now cross Pacific and Mountain time zones. If you are traveling east, set your watch forward one hour; if west, back one hour.

Idaho/Montana State Line

Flathead Tunnel is 7 mi. long and 42 mi. west of Whitefish, the third longest in the Western Hemisphere.

WHITEFISH Originally nicknamed “Stumptown” from its logger heritage, this Alpine-style station matches the beauty of its natural setting. Built in the late 1940s, Whitefish Mountain resort is on the left, one of the

nation’s finest and best-kept northwest secrets. Skiers enjoy high-speed quad chairs to the summit in seven minutes that also provide sightseers with breathtaking views in the summer. On the border is Whitefish Lake; Kalispell and Flathead Lake are just 17 miles south.

BELTON-WEST GLACIER is the western entrance to Glacier Park, set aside as a national park in 1910. Note the original Belton Chalet on your right, first lodge built by the Great Northern Railway for the park. The lodge is now restored and open to guests year round. Snowfall here averages 100-200 inches per year.

ESSEX This secret hideaway village features the Izaak Walton Inn, a converted railroad bunkhouse. There are no phones or televisions in these rooms for those who really want to get away from distractions. The Inn is popular with international travelers, cross-country skiers and train historians. Guests enjoy home cooked meals in an original historic railroad setting. The train platform is owned by the Inn and is the only “flag stop” on the route, meaning that the train stops only on a signal to the conductor. We cross the Flathead River atop a high trestle. Looking across the canyon, you may see wild mountain goats perched on the canyon wall.

Marias Pass The train route through Glacier Park follows the “Mystery Pass” through the Rockies sought by Lewis and Clark and finally established by John Stevens. Stevens, with assistance from a Blackfeet Indian guide, found the route on a mission for the Great Northern Railway in 1889, and is remembered by a statue on the left. We cross the Continental Divide at 5,216 ft. above sea level, the lowest pass between New Mexico and Canada. On the right at the summit, look for the obelisk monument to President Theodore Roosevelt.

GLACIER PARK STATION Built in 1913, the station is near 50 “living” glaciers and 9,000-10,466 ft. mountains. The impressive, timbered lodge on the left, partially constructed from trees estimated to be 600 years old, was built by the Great Northern Railway to promote rail travel and to attract tourists to this beautiful area. The park, with over 700 mi. of trails, is a hiker’s paradise. We cross the Two Medicine River atop a high trestle.

BROWNING is the headquarters of the Blackfeet Indian Nation and language learning center. It hosts the largest Native American pow-wow in North America each July. The Museum of the Plains Indians is here as well.

CUT BANK 25 minutes west of here, a monument to early explorer Meriwether Lewis memorializes his search for a pass through the Rockies. The city was began as a Great Northern Railway camp to build a trestle over Cut Bank Creek. The area is noted for the coldest mid-winter temperatures in the country. Just west, you get your first (or last) view of the Rockies. Sweetgrass Hills and the Canadian border, 25 miles to the north, can be seen on the left.

SHELBY was named after Peter Shelby, General Manager of the Montana Central Railroad. Thousands of spectators hired trains to get to Shelby’s gala world Heavyweight Championship fight between Jack Dempsey and Tom Gibbons on July 4, 1923. Just days before the event, Dempsey’s manager, Doc Kearns, canceled the match, and spectators canceled their plans. But at the last minute, Kearns approved the fight. Dempsey won – in front of just 7,000 paying fans and many gate crashers – and Kearns slipped out of town with \$300,000 cash. As a result, no prize money was awarded and four Montana banks failed. The town is one of only three locations in the U.S. which have an antipode (land directly opposite them on the other side of the planet). Traveling from Shelby through the center of the earth, one would arrive in the Kerguelen Islands, a scientific outpost.

HAVRE This is a service stop, so you may have time to catch some fresh Montana air. An impressive and well-preserved Great Northern S-2 steam locomotive is on display. This is the county seat of Hill

County, named for the founder of the Great Northern Railway. Small grids of purple squares are seen within the sidewalks downtown on the north side; they are skylights for an underground "mall" built at least 100 years ago. It has, at various times, hosted a brothel, a Chinese Laundromat, a saloon, a drugstore, at least three opium dens, and rooms used for smuggling alcohol during Prohibition. It is now designated as "Havre Beneath the Streets" and operates as a small tourist attraction. We now follow the Milk River to Glasgow.

Bear's Paw Mountains In 1877, after a 1,700-mile retreat, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians (see **Ephrata**), recognizing the hopelessness of his position, surrendered to the U.S. Army in the Bear's Paw Mountains, on the right. Said Chief Joseph, "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever." Ft. Belknap Indian Reservation and Little Rocky Mountains are to your right.

Wagner On July 3, 1901, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid's "Wild Bunch" pulled off one last great train robbery – a hold up of the Great Northern Flyer near Wagner. After dividing the estimated take of \$65,000, they split up forever. Butch and Sundance realized the outlaw way was dying, and the pair headed for Argentina, taking the spirit of the untamed West with them.

MALTA was the inspiration for famous western artist Charles Russell. Its name is said to have been determined by a spin of the globe by a Great Northern official, whose finger came to rest on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean. Today, ranching remains a thriving business. Watch for the *Empire Builder* heading in the opposite direction.

Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs Just outside of town, Nelson Reservoir is on the left; Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge appears on the right. The white boxes in the fields are for non-stinging leafcutter bees, bred to double alfalfa seed production.

GLASGOW The large "G" on the hillside stands for "Glasgow," the center of an area rich in dinosaur bones. The Ft. Peck Museum displays various fossils found in the region. Notable natives from the town include Steve Reeves, bodybuilder and actor in "strongman" movies from the 1950s and 1960s.

Ft. Peck Dam Marked by high-tension lines across the valley, this earth-filled dam is 250 ft. high and stretches four miles across the Missouri River. It is the largest hydraulically filled dam in the U.S. Built in 1940, it creates a 383 square mi. lake within the Great Plains. We now enter **Ft. Peck Indian Reservation**.

WOLF POINT The wolf sculpture on the right memorializes this town's major frontier-era role in wolf trapping and trading. The largest community on the Ft. Peck Indian Reservation, it is also the official site of the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame. It is the home of the granddaddy of Montana rodeos, the Wild Horse Stampede. The railroad crosses the Poplar River in twenty minutes.

Montana/North Dakota State Line

Culbertson Five minutes west of Culbertson, across Big Muddy Creek, is the eastern border of the Ft. Peck Indian Reservation. Chief Sitting Bull lived here after surrendering (see Ft. Buford).

Ft. Union Built in 1828, John Jacob Astor's American Fur Trading Co. fort traded with the Indians and shipped buffalo and beaver pelts worldwide. The fort is near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, which Lewis and Clark documented April 26, 1805. An interpretive center commemorates the discovery.

NOTE: We now cross Mountain and Central time zones. If you are traveling east, set your watch forward one hour; if west, set it back one hour.

Ft. Buford Here Chief Sitting Bull surrendered after the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1881 (see Culbertson).

WILLISTON At the hub of the Williston Oil Basin on Lake Sakakawea's west end is in North Dakota's rich oil country, its discovery having been made in the 1950s. There are many wells along the Empire Builder's route. Four-time world champion boxer Virgil Hill graduated from high school in Williston.

MINOT West of Minot, the train crosses the Gassman Coulee on a high-level steel trestle. A service stop for the *Empire Builder*, Minot is known as the "Magic City" because it grew overnight, like magic, the moment Great Northern announced its route. A trading center today, Minot was known as "Little Chicago" during Prohibition, as it was a central hub for Al Capone's liquor smuggling.

RUGBY The geographical center of the North American continent, Rugby has a stone monument and tower to mark the precise spot and a museum nearby.

DEVILS LAKE The Indians called this remnant of a glacial sea the "Evil Spirit Lake" because they believed its shattered walls and loose rocks were the result of a mammoth struggle between thunderbirds and water monsters.

GRAND FORKS The University of North Dakota campus is here, where the Red Lake River and Red River of the North meet. Prior to settlement, it had been an important meeting and trading point for Native Americans.

FARGO Named for Wells Fargo Express Company founder (and former resident) William Fargo, North Dakota's largest town is in the heart of the fertile and famous Red River Valley. Bonanzaville, USA, a pioneer village reconstructed from original buildings, is at West Fargo. The area east of Fargo is a major livestock center where the *Empire Builder* crosses the Red River. During the night the train stops at Detroit Lakes and Staples. The Big Bopper, Ritchie Valens, and Buddy Holly died in a plane crash while bound for Fargo in 1959. Known as "The Day the Music Died," the crash was made famous in the song "American Pie" by Don McLean. *Fargo* is an Academy Award winning 1996 film starring William H. Macy; the town is also the birthplace of 1960s pop singer Bobby Vee.

North Dakota/Minnesota State Line

ST. CLOUD In 1868, the area's colored granite deposits were quarried for the first time to build the wall that surrounds the St. Cloud Reformatory, on the left. Completed in 1889, it was the first institution of its kind in the state. The wall surrounding the facility was built by inmates and is the longest granite wall in the world. In 1917, Samuel C. Pandolfo started the Pan Motor Company here. Claiming that the town would become the "new Detroit" for all the cars he would produce, he was later convicted and imprisoned for attempting to defraud investors.

ST. PAUL-MINNEAPOLIS Midway Station, serving the Twin Cities, is a service point for fuel and water for the train and therefore a good place to stretch legs, make a call, or buy a paper. This spot is not only midway between the two cities but also midway between the Equator and North Pole. Father Louis Hennepin arrived here in 1683 and claimed the territory for France. French rule was relinquished to the U.S. in 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase. Originally, St. Paul was known by the nickname of its first settler, trader Pierre Parrant, or "Pig's Eye." Blind in one eye, he opened a tavern on the river flats that grew into a trading outpost. Minnesota's state capital, it was also the boyhood home of writer F. Scott Fitzgerald and the home of *Empire Builder* founder James J. Hill. The J.J. Hill Library here contains a meticulous record of his many dealings with business, political and religious leaders including over four hundred seventy linear feet of correspondence and documents –



roughly the size of a filing drawer one hundred fifty yards long. Taken together – letterpress books, correspondence, financial records – the papers are among the most complete business and private papers of any major American economic leader of the period. The fairy tale castle on the right is the former Schmidt’s Brewery. St. Paul Cathedral is on the left, modeled after St. Peter’s in Rome. On the right, picturesque riverboats take tourists from Harriet Island to Ft. Snelling.

Minneapolis is the larger and younger of the Twin Cities and was named using an Indian word “Minnie” meaning “water” and the Greek word “Polis,” meaning city, because of the 22 natural lakes within the city limits. A suburb boasts the largest shopping mall in the U.S., the “Mall of America.” A city of trade and industry, it is also known as the “Flour City” due to the great number of mills on the Mississippi. It is second only to New York in live theater per capita and boasts the best park system in the U.S. A statue of Mary Tyler Moore in the downtown Nicollet Mall commemorates the 1970s television sitcom of the same name based in the city.

Mississippi River For 140 miles, you see fertile farmland, riverbank towns, barges and restored paddlewheel boats – scenes that have inspired visitors for decades. You also see a system of federally-funded dams and locks that tame the waterway for current needs. The river is the second longest in the U.S., with a length of 2,340 miles from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico.

Hastings The train crosses the Mississippi entering Hastings; five minutes later it crosses the Vermillion River.

RED WING At the Saint James Hotel on the right, each room is named for a riverboat. The Minnesota State Training School, on the right, was modeled after a German castle. The town of Red Wing was named after a Dakota Chief who had adopted the custom of wearing a swan’s wing dyed scarlet. Red Wing Shoes are manufactured here.

Frontenac This pretty town traces its roots back to an original French fort built here in 1723. Today it has its own ski area on the right.

Lake Pepin As the Chippewa River meets the Mississippi on the Wisconsin side, the resulting backwaters – like an invisible dam – form beautiful Lake Pepin. In the winter, the lake is a home for eagles. It is also the birthplace of water skiing, invented by Ralph Samuelson in 1922 at the age of 18.

Wabasha The Anderson House Hotel, Minnesota’s oldest operating hotel since 1856, provides complimentary shoe shines, hot bricks to warm your feet, and house cats to keep you company. The town was also the setting for the popular *Grumpy Old Men* movies.

WINONA Sugar Loaf Mountain on the right was a ceremonial meeting place of the Sioux, who named this town “firstborn daughter.” Winona is also the stained glass capital of the U.S., and headquarters of the Watkins Corporation, featured in the TNT movie *Door to Door* starring William H. Macy.

Minnesota/Wisconsin State Line

LA CROSSE At this point, the river is wide, quiet and immensely scenic. Soft tree-covered mountains to the east will sharpen to rugged limestone bluffs and a few miles south, the train enters Wisconsin as it crosses the great river for the last time. French trappers used to watch Indians playing a game on the fields here and dubbed the game “la crosse.” The town is located at the confluence of the Black, La Crosse and Mississippi rivers. We follow the La Crosse River for 25 miles.

Tunnel City The sudden steep hills here are punctuated by a single-track trip through a 1,350-ft. tunnel. Tomah Lake is on the right.

TOMAH Gasoline Alley creator Frank King grew up here. Two of the comic strip's characters hold up the Chamber of Commerce sign. The Chamber itself, on the right, is headquartered in a railroad car.

Camp Douglas On both sides of the train, you see Camp Douglas's beautiful sandstone rock formations carved by the flow of the Wisconsin River. Mill Bluff State Park is on the right.

Mauston St. Patrick's Church is on the left. Lake Decorah, formed by a dam across the Lemonweir River, is also on the left. Wisconsin River Meats headquartered here is famous for its Landjaegers, a dry snack sausage from Switzerland.

WISCONSIN DELLS The red sandstone canyon is as glorious to play in as it is to look at. Boating and rafting attract tourists from all over. With 18 indoor and three outdoor waterparks, it proclaims itself the waterpark capitol of the world.

Wisconsin River The river has left miles of striated rock formations along this part of the route.

PORTAGE Portage was once a regular stopover for traders and settlers who had to "portage" (carry) their gear between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers on their trips between the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan.

Wyocena is the home of the Grande Cheese Factory – Wisconsin produces more than 20 percent of the nation's cheese. The dam on Duck Creek forms Wyocena Lake. Smelts and lake herring are caught commercially as the fish spawn in the spring, but sport fishing for such game fish as bass, pickerel, pike, sturgeon and trout is popular in Wisconsin's many lakes.

COLUMBUS Mounted in the steeple of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church on the right is a bell case from pieces of French cannon acquired in the Franco-Prussian War. The bell was a gift from the Emperor of Germany. Columbus is notable for large number of antique shops. We cross the Crawfish River.

Watertown The steeple of St. Bernard's Church and Maranatha College are both on the left. The city is home to the first kindergarten in the U.S., started by German immigrants. We cross the Rock River three times.

Pewaukee Suburban communities give way to lakes and sprawling farmlands. Pine Lake and Okauchee Lake are on the left. Pewaukee and Ocono-mowoc ("home of the beaver") Lakes are on the right. The city is home to the famous *Clark Bar* candy and to racing sailboat gear from Harken.

MILWAUKEE Although French trappers and traders were the first immigrants, beer made Milwaukee famous and German immigrants brought the beer. They also transplanted beer gardens, theater and opera. On the right you see the home of the Brewers at Milwaukee County Stadium. On the left is the home of another favorite, the Miller Brewery. The glass domes on the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory duplicate climate and plant life found throughout the world. We cross the Menomonee River after stopping at the station. The Allen Bradley Clock on the right is a Milwaukee landmark. Polish immigrants built Milwaukee's St. Josaphat's Basilica, the first Polish basilica in North America, with its distinctive dome modeled after St. Peter's in Rome. Milwaukee is the only major city in the U.S. to have elected three socialist mayors. A glimpse of Lake Michigan can be seen as the train passes south of the station.

Franksville Old World traditions live on at the Frank Pure Food Company on the right, the company that gave the town its name. The kraut capitol of the world, the town hosts a kraut festival each July.

Gurnee is home to Six Flags' Great America Amusement Park, where you can enjoy the sensation of falling on the "Giant Drop," among others.

GLENVIEW Modern, suburban, affluent Glenview is punctuated by older farms and industrial complexes.

Niles Here in the heartland, Niles' replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa is on the right. It is seen in the opening montage of the film *Wayne's World*. Niles was one of the first communities in the U.S. to establish free ambulance service in 1946.

CHICAGO The railroad route between Chicago and St. Paul – once known as the Milwaukee Road – began as a plank road for horses and wagons. Vibrant and energetic, Chicago is the industrial core of the Midwest and a major transportation hub. In the heart of America's agriculture belt, it is a leading distributor of farm products. Its many regional food specialties reflect the city's ethnic and working class roots. Chicago's spirit is also exemplified in its unique architecture; it is here that the word "skyscraper" originated with the first one built in 1885. The arts and sciences are alive with an abundance of world-renowned theaters and museums. The city boasts Wrigley Field, one of baseball's oldest parks, and the Sears Tower, tallest building in the U.S. The Merchandise Mart, on the left, is the world's largest commercial office building and rests on the banks of the Chicago River. The river became an engineering marvel in 1900 when engineers reversed its flow into the Mississippi River drainage. Most Amtrak long-distance trains either originate or terminate in Chicago, connecting to other service.

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