

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: October 2017
ITEM: Old Business 1 – Collections Committee Report
FROM: Chris Allan / Eugene Vicknair

At the September 2017 Board Meeting, information was received that there were purchasers interested in two of our WP MOW flatcars and our WP Oroville Turntable. In accordance with policy, the Board asked that historic information be sent to the Collections Committee for determination of relevance to the WPRM collection of the noted pieces.

Historical Information:

WP MW0318

Western Pacific MW 0318 is a 40' composite flatcar rebuilt by the Western Pacific from a 1916 built Pullman boxcar. The rebuild date is estimated as 1947. It appears to have been one of three flat car rebuilds done that year for MW service: 0317-0319. The FRRS added seats and railings and used it as a vista flat in the early years of the museum.

The FRRS previously owned a similar car, MW 0319, but it was sold to another organization many years ago.

WP MW8514

Western Pacific MW 8514 is a 40' composite flat car also rebuilt from a 1916 Pullman boxcar. WP rebuilt a set of 16 of these cars for MW service, of which 8514 was the first in the class. Rebuild appears to have been done around 1950. As with the 0318, the FRRS added seats and railings for vista flat use.

The FRRS previously had a similar Pullman rebuilt flat (WP MW8522), which was traded to the Western Railway Museum. I have documented only 1 other possible Pullman rebuild flat that may still exist. It is owned by PLA, however the history on that car is uncertain.

General Info

These rebuilt flatcars were used extensively in company material and MW service. Some later received wheel chocks for carrying spare axles. A few were in service right to the merger or just before.

These two cars are examples of freight car conversions the WP made for MW and company service. The Pullman boxcars seem to have been particular favorites for WP conversions as the railroad also reconstructed these cars into bunk cars, cabooses, gondolas and other specialty uses.

It should be noted that several similar half flat / half gondola type cars are known to still exist. These appear to have been rebuilt from stock cars and include Western Pacific MW 8545 in our collection. At least 5 other split gon / flat cars are known to exist, with 3 at

Railtown 1897 and 2 at PLA, but no other straight flat cars aside from our 2, the 1 at PLA, the 1 at BAERA and the 0319 car we sold.

Deacquisition of these two cars would leave no examples of WP rebuilt flat cars in the WPRM collection.

WP Oroville Turntable

The Oroville Turntable was one of 3 110' tables used by the WP. The other two were located at Portola and Oakland.

It appears that WP's original turntables were all 80' in length. In 1925, the turntables at Portola and Oroville were replaced with 110' long tables. By 1939, Wendover and Elko had received 120' tables, while Keddie was built with a 120' for the opening of the Northern California Extension. Oakland received a 110' table about 1942.

Today, only 4 WP turntables are known to still exist: our Oroville table, the 80' turntable still in place in Stockton and 2 that were extensively reworked and reused as bridge segments on the Tidewater Southern trestle over the Stanislaus River.

The Oroville Turntable was adopted into the Master Plan to be paired with a replica roundhouse. Both will be located in the non-contaminated area of the balloon loop interior. The area chosen would require backfilling, but no excavation. Its length would allow an A-B set of F-units or 2 GP units to be turned at the same time.

The only major parts missing from the Oroville Turntable are the power arch and the control doghouse. We have the control doghouse from the Portola Turntable to replace that component.

Collections Committee Submittal

October 14, 2017

The Collections Committee was asked to evaluate the following and ascertain relevance as it pertains to inclusion in the permanent collection:

WP MW0318 & WP MW8514: Consensus (unanimous) – disposal of both
WP Oroville Turntable: Consensus (3 to 1) – disposal

The committee would humbly ask that the board consider placing the funds acquired from the sale of these objects into a restricted fund slated for restoration of other WP artifacts.

Respectfully submitted,
J. Chris Allan
Chair, FRRS Collections Committee