

Wheels for Caboose 614

Last February we purchased a WP outfit car with the intention of converting it to a stock car. This car had Andrews leaf spring trucks that were needed for our WP caboose 614. Norm Holmes had a WP flat car that he acquired when he built a railroad on his property in Portola. The flat car, along with a box car, caboose and Plymouth locomotive were donated to FRRS some years ago, however movement of this equipment to the museum has been delayed due to more pressing work. Since we have several similar WP flat cars in the collection, we decided to sell the flat car for a bridge and use the trucks for the stock car. Air brake equipment and couplers would be placed under the 614.

In late September, Steve Habeck, Norm Holmes, Ken Iverson, Jim Malkson and Gordon Wollesen worked with our Little Giant crane to lift the flat car from the trucks. (Norm earlier removed the air equipment and couplers.) The trucks were loaded on a trailer, one at a time because of their weight, and brought to the museum. The next day we replaced the leaf spring trucks under the outfit car with the coil spring trucks from the flat car. Since both trucks were Andrews it was assumed that they would fit. Wrong! The center plate receiver on the bolster was ten inches in diameter while the center plate on the car is twelve inches. We set the car on the trucks anyway as we wanted the leaf spring

trucks for the caboose. The center pin would hold the trucks in place if we wanted to move the car. No one knows at this late date why there were different sizes to the center plates, however we know the flat car was converted from a 1917 box car and the outfit car and caboose were converted from 1916 box cars of different manufacturers.

On October 21, 1995, Steve Habeck, Norm Holmes, Jim Ley, Jim Malkson, Tobie Smith and Gordon Wollesen proceeded to lift the 614 caboose from its resting place along-side Rip Track One to be placed on the leaf spring trucks. Jim Ley operated our 200 ton locomotive crane and Tobie Smith used the 20 ton Little Giant crane. The caboose was lifted and swung over the track, raised, the trucks rolled under the car and placed on steel wheels for the first time in probably 30 years. Since the outfit car and the caboose were built from the same style box cars the trucks should be interchangeable, right? Wrong again. While the center plate was the same size the truck bolster allowed the caboose to sit four inches too high. At this point we need the advice of an expert carman to solve our problems. In the meantime the 614 was chained to a locomotive and placed in the shop for the winter for work on the roof, roof walk and replacement of air equipment and couplers.

Conclusion of

A Steamer for Portola By Norman W. Holmes

make it suitable for display.

The Nevada State Railroad Museum made an inquiry to Steamtown about the availability of the 737 for transfer to the State of Nevada. On February 3, 1995, a letter was received donating the locomotive to the Nevada State Railroad Museum. In March, 1995, Jack Gibson, a long time friend, a member of our Society and a very active member of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum contacted me to ascertain our interest in helping NSRM move the 737 from Scranton. NSRM did not have the funds available to move the locomotive to Carson City or Boulder City (they have two museum sites) and if we could make all the arrangements to load and transport the locomotive we could have it for display for a minimum of three years. At our April meeting, the Board of Directors decided a steam engine would be a most welcome addition to our collection, particularly this engine with its UP heritage. Steamtown wished to have the movement occur after the peak tourist season in September.

On Thursday, September 7, Doug Morgan and I boarded an America West 737 bound for Philadelphia to load the 737 for movement to Portola. We rented a van, so we could haul lumber if needed, and drove the 168 miles to Scranton. On Friday we got acquainted with the fine people of the NPS at Steamtown and did some prep work on the engine. Saturday and Sunday we worked on the flat car, an HTTX flat with chain tie-downs, removing old blocking and installing new oak "rails" and blocks to cradle the locomotive and tender wheels. Steamtown had a stock of oak lumber on hand and assisted with cutting, etc. Our attention to the work was interrupted occasionally with steam engines going back and forth on the passenger trains and an 0-6-0 switcher working the yard, but we didn't mind. We even had the Blue Mountain & Redding 4-6-2 do some switching for us. On Sunday, with our work pretty well caught up, Doug managed to get us a cab ride up the 13 mile grade to Moscow on a double header. Doug rode in the BM&R 425, I rode in CP 2317, both Pacific types. We had a 12 car train and it was a great experience blasting up the grade at 35-40 mph with cinders

flying. We rode in a private car for the return to Scranton. It was a well deserved break that we would earn during the next 3 days.

Monday morning our 90 ton crane arrived; we rigged the cables and lifted the locomotive. NPS supplied a loader to push the flat under the engine. It fit exactly into the cradle we built for the wheels. The tender was next and it too fit. We even connected up the drawbar between the engine and tender for added security. In handling the heavy cables and other work we found muscles we forgot we had. Tuesday and Wednesday were spent fastening the chain tie-downs (30 in all) and securing additional blocking. Steamtown located the original shotgun stack, train indicators, an old dynamo, the valve connecting rods and pilot. The pilot was badly damaged in an accident, but we cut it in 3 pieces and brought to along anyway. The pilot and 4 valve connecting rods were placed under the locomotive. Some parts that were not too valuable or not irreplaceable were put in the smokebox and firebox. The replica stack, shotgun stack, box headlight, lubricator and number boards were shipped separately.

We had scheduled a week to do the work and if time were left over we would visit some other railroad museums. As it turned out we were not finished with the work on Wednesday. I had a senior saver ticket that could not be changed, but Doug's could be changed so he stayed an extra day to complete the work on packaging the items to be shipped by truck.

We cannot thank the fine people at Steamtown enough for all the cooperation in giving us lumber, cutting blocks, loaning tools and furnishing a fork lift or loader as needed. They have set a good example for cooperation among preservation groups. We also owe a great deal of thanks to Mr. Drew Lewis, Chairman of the Union Pacific Corporation for arranging free transportation on UP from Kansas City to Portola.

Statistics for 737/216 - Baldwin No. 8395, built 1887. Cyls. 18 x 26, Boiler Pressure 160 psi, driver dia. 62", Tractive Force 18,478 lbs., wt. on drivers 62,000 lbs., total wt. approx 99,000 lbs. SP class E-21.