

geeps actually roamed much of the SN and even back onto the WP, just as their predecessor F-units had done. By the late 1970's, WP power was common on the steel train and the 711 and 712 spent much of their time working the SN lines north out of Marysville, including the *Chico Local*. With the coming of the merger with UP, the SN GPs hung around a little while with a few WP stragglers, then were set aside. While SN 711 was scrapped in 1984 (after being repainted in UP colors and suffering a major mechanical failure shortly thereafter), SN 712 was donated to the BAERA in 1985. When the Association decided to return their focus to electric railroading, the 712 was deemed surplus and became part of the trade with the FRRS.

With the 712 heading to Portola, the FRRS now owns 4 Western Pacific GP7 locomotives and its first SN road unit. The 712 will remain in its SN Perlman Green paint as part of the FRRS collection.

Reference:

Garth G. Groff, "US Steel and the SN Detour" and "All-Time Diesel Roster", *Sacramento Northern On-Line*  
Joseph Strapac, *Western Pacific's Diesel Years*

## Sacramento Northern 2129/2346



40ft wood boxcar

By Eugene Vicknair

In early 2004, the FRRS completed a trade with the Santa Maria Valley Railroad Historical Society that brings Sacramento Northern wood boxcar 2129/2346 into the Portola collection. These cars had a long history on the SN and the WP and the 2149/2346 fills a major gap in our preservation of WP subsidiary equipment.

In 1918, the Sacramento Northern Railroad was formed from the reorganization of the Northern Electric Railway. Owned by the Western Pacific, the new SNRR was severely lacking in viable freight equipment, being equipped with a small fleet of obsolete, truss-rod equipped 36' boxcars. The next year, the road purchased 25 steel underframe wood boxcars from Mt. Vernon Car Manufacturing Company. These 40 ft cars were nearly identical to a design Mt. Vernon built for WP starting in 1917. These cars featured an 8 ft interior height and a capacity of 2723 cubic feet. They rode on arch bar trucks and were equipped with K-brakes and Murphy galvanized metal roofs. Numbered as SN 2129-2153, they became the only SN freight equipment (along with steel underframe auto boxcar 2100) allowed in interchange service after wooden underframe cars were banned in 1928.

Both the SN and WP fleets would prove to be incredibly long-lived, although WP began tinkering with their own Mt. Vernon cars (WP 16001-18300 and 30001-30200) by the late 1920's. The most prominent change WP made was rebuilding its own cars with steel ends. SN's original cars retained their wooden ends throughout their service lives. Starting in the 1930's, the WP cars began receiving Andrews trucks, although some kept their archbars into the late 1950's. Some in the WP fleet survived in revenue service into the 1960's and many continued in MOW service even longer.

The SN's own fleet had a few more twists and turns in its history. These cars were not included in the conversion to Andrews trucks and were restricted to on-line service after the 1941 archbar ban went into effect. As such, they could only be used on the WP system, which of course included the SN and Tidewater Southern. They were often used in Less than CarLoad (LCL) service on the SN. In 1947, SN received 28 of the WP's rebuilt Mt. Vernon cars, featuring Andrews trucks, AB brakes and steel ends. These cars were numbered 2301-2328 and eventually received the same arched roadname paint scheme as the SN 2129 series.

The 22 surviving original cars were retired from service and an Authorization for Expenditure (AFE) issued in 1947 reports them retired and scrapped. However, they were actually just stored for a year. In 1948, they were unretired and shopped, receiving AB brakes, and renumbered (out of sequence) as SN 2329-2350. Some also received Andrews trucks, although a handful continued to ride on archbars into the 1970's.

As WP's fleet of wood cars dwindled, the SN fleet continued in a variety of services. In 1954, several were transferred to MOW service. By the beginning of the 1960's, many were sold for scrap and most others were transferred to company service. Amazingly, three, SN 2326, 2337 and 2350 were still listed in revenue service in 1969. The last Mt. Vernon car, SN MW02335, was sold in January 1976, having served the SN for 57 years.

SN 2349 became a workshop in Santa Maria, California, minus its trucks and brake gear. In the late 1990's, she was acquired by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad Historical Society with the intent to restore the car to operation. Kept in a sheltered location, the car survived in very good condition, still featuring its original SN paint scheme and a beautiful, varnished wood interior. Car loader marks are still evident chalked in the interior, along with notations of cargos from days gone by. In 2002, a proposal was made to trade one of our Southern Pacific sugar beet gons to SMVRHS in exchange for the 2346. An inspection of the car revealed its original number: SN 2129, the first car of the series.

Spring 2004 is the planned target to transport the SMVRHS' beet gon to its new home in Santa Maria (near the site of the Betteravia Sugar Beet Mill where the car saw service) and bring SN 2129/2346 back to WP rails. A restoration will occur in the future than will reequip the car with appropriate trucks and brakes and return her to service, joining our own WP Mt. Vernon car and looking right at home behind WP 0-6-0 165 or one of our early WP diesels.

Reference:

Garth G. Groff, "40' Wooden Boxcars on the SN", *Sacramento Northern On-Line*