

Missouri Pacific Railroad 13878

Bay Window Road Caboose

This short bodied caboose and her sister cars were the result of extensive research and development by the Missouri Pacific Railroad starting in the late 1970s. The use model for cabooses had been changing and the MP wanted to modernize their fleet. The final design dispensed with traditional caboose furnishings like beds, allowing a shorter body. The MP built 350 of these cabooses in their own shops until 1981, the last such cars acquired by the railroad. Other companies copied aspects of the design in their own late model cabooses. The crews who worked them nicknamed these cars “doghouses”.

The 13878 served on the Missouri Pacific for a little over two years before the “MoP” was purchased by the Union Pacific Railroad in the same merger which brought the Western Pacific into the UP. The 13878 was retired on January 25, 1990, still wearing MP colors.

A prominent feature of this design is the bay windows on the body. Bay window cars differ from a “traditional” cupola caboose by having large bays on either side of the body’s center which have seats. Instead of riding on top of the car in a cupola, crew members sat in the extended bays and watch the train for defects and problems.

At one time, the caboose was the conductor’s and trainman's home away from home, where they slept and cooked meals until called for the return trip. In the 1960s, the railroads started running cabooses through terminals and the train crews were put up in motels and hotels. The need for sleeping bunks and food prep areas was eliminated and cabooses began to lose some of their purpose. This also led to more spartan designs such as this one. By the 1980s, technology allowed remote sensing of many aspects of the train, ending the last duties of the rear end crew. The entire train crew began riding in locomotive cabs and the cabooses, with only a few exceptions, were retired.

builder

Missouri Pacific Railroad
at their Sedalia and
DeSoto, MO shops

built

December, 1980

type

short body road caboose

length

39’ 1” overall

operating weight

51,900 lbs

acquisition

donated by Union Pacific