



Retainers from our collection.

- photos by Kerry Cochran



What the heck is a RETAINER?

- WP Operating Department Training Manual - 1974

RELEASE CONTROL RETAINERS: In normal operation, release of brakes occurs at the same time as recharging, consequently the brake pipe cannot be recharged without releasing the brakes. Under certain conditions, such as long heavy grades when dynamic brake is not available, this is undesirable. To provide a means of keeping brakes applied while recharging, freight cars are equipped with release control retainers. Although, in the interest of simplification, our text and diagrams so far have shown brake cylinder air exhausting directly to atmosphere, on freight cars it is exhausted through a retainer. This retainer can be set to exhaust directly to atmosphere or set to retain a given amount of brake cylinder pressure. These retainers must be set manually in accordance with timetable instructions.



*Humaconna's
Binnacle*

*- photo by
Kenneth Finnegan*

Things around the museum – Binnacle from WP Tug HUMACONNA

In early 1987, former Western Pacific President Myron Christy knew of some important artifacts our museum would like for our collection. He contacted Mrs. Walter Brumberg and arranged for the donation of the binnacle from WP's tugboat HUMACONNA. The binnacle housed the magnetic compass for the boat. The correcting spheres on each side were used to correct the compass errors introduced by the metal of tugboat. It is on permanent display in our Collections Room at the museum.

The Humaconna's official number was 218071. She was built in Superior, Wisconsin, in 1919; tonnage 418 gross; 190 net; steel hull, length 142 feet, beam 27.5 feet; draft 14.6 feet; engine 1250 h.p.; two Scotch marine boilers, reciprocating engines.

In 1949 she was working 24 hours daily between Oakland and San Francisco except between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, with steel barge No.3 in tow. Approximately 300 rail cars were handled daily on barges, operated under the jurisdiction of the yardmaster at Oakland.