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ETA: February 2012

HO SCALE

# Bay Window Caboose



12 April 1980 Bealville, CA Ron Hawkins Photo

In 1961 Southern Pacific adopted the steel bay window caboose as the system standard and purchased 200 bay window cabooses. From then on, with the exception of one order of Cotton Belt wide vision cabooses, all SP and Cotton Belt cabooses, just over 800 in number, were bay window cabooses. The first eight orders (one for Cotton Belt) were delivered between 1961 and 1967. They used 40-ton trucks and were designated as various C-40 classes. SP classed cabooses with the first letter as a "C" (for cabooses), the capacity of the trucks in tons, and a sequential number. In this case, the cabooses were classes C-40-4 through C-40-7. In 1968 Cotton Belt received twenty bay window cabooses from International Car Company. These were the first SP cabooses to use 50-ton trucks, starting the C-50 series of cabooses as class C-50-2. SP received 75 cabooses of class C-50-3 from International Car Company in 1970.

In 1972 SP ordered 55 cabooses from International Car Company, numbered 1875 though 1929 and classed as C-50-4. Two years later, International Car Company delivered 51 cabooses to SP as numbers 1930 through 1980 and sixteen cabooses to Cotton Belt as numbers 78 through 93. All 67 cabooses in this order were classed as C-50-5, marking the first time SP and Cotton Belt cabooses were given the same class designation. These were the last new SP cabooses for four years and the last new cabooses for Cotton Belt.

The 1973 oil embargo and recession caused the C-50-6 cabooses to be cancelled before they were built. Instead the former PFE car shop at Roseville, California began to rebuild the older steel bay window cabooses. The rebuilding program brought the older cabooses up to the standards of the C-50-4 and C-50-5 classes in safety aspects, crew comfort, and modernized equipment. This included things like sealed windows except for the side windows in the bay. Almost all of the cabooses in the rebuild program were from the C-40 classes of cabooses. The oldest of these cabooses were twelve years old when the program started and the newest were six years old. However, equipment standards and technology had changed dramatically in those years. The 123 rebuilt C-40-4 cabooses were given 4000 series numbers, the 44 C-40-5 cabooses 4200 series numbers, while the 23 C-40-6 cabooses got 4300 numbers and the seven C-40-7 cabooses were rebuilt as 4350 though 4356. In addition, four C-50-3 cabooses (only five years old) were included in the rebuilding program and got 4400 series numbers. A total of 207 cabooses were rebuilt before the recession ended the program in 1975. Afterwards, SP cabooses would still be rebuilt and modernized at the Roseville shop, but on an individual basis, instead of a systematic program. Although, the cabooses of the C-40 classes and C-50-3 class that were not rebuilt remained in mainline service, the preference was for the rebuilt cabooses and the cabooses of the C-50-4 and C-50-5 classes.

During the four years since the delivery of the C-50-5 class, Pacific Car and Foundry had changed its name to PACCAR and had also purchased International Car Company. Although the next orders of SP cabooses were built at the same International Car Company plant in Kenton, Ohio, they are usually referred to as PACCAR cabooses. Fifty cabooses were delivered from PACCAR in 1978, numbered 4600 though 4649 and given class C-50-7. These cabooses were almost identical to the C-50-5 class delivered four years earlier. The biggest difference was that the C-50-7 cabooses had only a small cutout for the truck-mounted generator in the side sills while the C-50-5 cabooses had cutout side sills from close to the truck bolsters to the bay window. Like the earlier C-50-5 cabooses, the C-50-7 cabooses came with double roof mounted marker lights, often called "frog-eyes" by modelers and railfans. But these were changed to a single marker light about six months after delivery. The C-50-4 and C-50-5 cabooses would have their "frog-eye" markers replaced with single lights starting about October 1979.

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