

**CN Caboose
Built
By
Doug Shunk**



History of Canadian Cabooses

By Doug Shunk

Part 1

Canadian Railways began to use rear-end crew cars by the late 1860's usually little four wheel bobbars with the more common style appearing regularly by the 1880's.

Though the term "caboose" was considered standard, eastern railroaders have preferred to call their cars "vans".

From the Bytowns Railway Society's "Canadian Trackside Guide" one learns the following statistics near the end of the Canadian caboose era. In 1988 there were still some 1710 cabooses listed on the rosters of Canadian Railways.

Canadian National led with 904 of these, including 656 mainline, steel models, 208 transfer and switching units, 16 wooden vans and 18 on the now defunct Newfoundland narrow gauge. Canadian Pacific was second with 674 cabooses (down from 816 just ten years earlier), including 559 steel centre cupola type, 68 end cupola and 49 wooden models. In 1988 approximately 225 cabooses were preserved. Not included are ones without wheels, as cottages, or sheds. 101 of these are CNR, 85 are CPR and 69 are from other railroads.

The overall number should increase with the retirement and disposal of the remaining cabooses from Canadian Railways.

Only five pre 1900 cabooses are known to exist, four in Ontario and one in BC.

CNR rebuilt its inherited fleet of cabooses from the Canadian Northern Railway design and continued the design until 1957.

Window spacing was 6'0" to 9'0" and some had three windows instead of the common two window design. There were tall, short and even no cupola cabooses.

The Canadian Government Railway built 179 cabooses in 1882. Some in 1916 were built by Preston Car and Coach Co. for Canadian Northern Railway. Others were built by Grand Trunk Port Huron's Shops between 1883 to 1908. Still others were built by Canada Car for Grand Trunk Pacific in 1907 and in 1894. Point St. Charles Shops in 1900 to the mid 1980's built cabooses for Grand Trunk and Canadian National Railways and 30 of the older style had centre cupolas.

Still, 5 were built for Duluth Winnipeg and Pacific from box cars in 1957 by the Fort Rouge Shops, Transcona Shops built 25 cabooses in 1927 and London Shops converted 40 ton box cars into cabooses from 1918 Canadian Car Foundry which had been made for the Canadian Government Railways.

Over the years CNR owned near 2920 wooden cabooses, excluding those of subsidiaries, Grand Trunk Western, Central Vermont, and Grand Trunk New England lines.

Cabooses without cupolas were called transfer or switching and came into being in the early 1950's. CNR had many paint designs. For the most part the under body, tool boxes, steps and trucks were mineral brown. The ends, sides, roof and cupolas in early years started out mineral brown, then went to morency orange with a mineral brown roof. Then they painted the roof morency orange. Cabooses used on international runs had a yellow cupola and the (Great Slave Lake Railway) had an all yellow body. Always, handrails were white.

Later on when cabooses were rebuilt in the 1960's to 1970's they used CNR Orange # 11 which is more of a red-orange.

Now we come to the lettering, some call them monograms, or crests, as opposed to heralds, symbols or logos. CNR called them monograms.

They started out with a white maple leaf, CNR in the top part of the leaf and a square box in the centre of the leaf with the words “Serves All Canada”

In 1943 they tilted the box with the wording and in November 1955 the paint scheme with the horizontal green leaf was first applied. At first, the road name was applied on the body side under the cupola in white in an arch with the unit number in the middle centre of the arch or written straight, Canadian above, and National below with a line above Canadian and a line below National with the unit number below. All this was, on usually a mineral brown paint job.

On morency orange paint jobs the words Canadian National and unit numbers were white and below the two side windows. The unit number was in white on both ends under the roof on the top right side and all other words, eg: brakes AB were painted white.

The last monograms were put on with CN#11 paint which was the CNR’s paint, “wet noodle” or Wiggly worm” was introduced in the late 1960’s.

There were three types of cupolas I know of. The high, short and gull wing offset design. I found lots of pictures of CNR cabooses. Three of my reference books or sets of books are:

1– Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and passenger equipment by John Riddell Vol 2

2– Canadian Railway Scenes # 4 by Adolf Aungry Wolf

3– CN Lines Sigs. (magazines) Photos appear on all back pages called “Markers”

I have even seen a CNR body type with a CPR type cupola on a mineral brown paint job. After all this I decided to build my own caboose because no one makes them in “G” scale. So.....on to part 2.....

My obsession with cabooses

I am quite proud to say that the caboose I built came in 2nd place in the 2003 Railroad magazine (Finescale Railroader). I have since built 2 more, but without interiors .

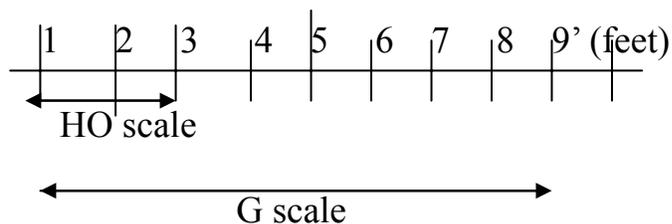
If you wish to build a caboose, first, you must find something you really want or need. Maybe something not in production like a CNR caboose.

I researched until I found plans that a friend had which I promptly borrowed. Plans came from Model Railroader Feb 1963 by Marcel Sierolaski

Other plans are available from Scale Model drawings plate # 7 by Les Torrens 1958. These may be available by contacting CN Railways.

The third option is plans by Douglas Leffler from Feb 1972 Model Railroader Craftsman magazine.

The plans I borrowed from my friend were just what I wanted but it was in HO Scale 1:87, no problem to make it “G”scale I just multiplied everything by 3 to get 1:29 scale or Aristo-Craft size. Eg: 3 feet on an HO scale ruler became 9 feet.



Before I began I changed all the dimensions on the drawing. Next, I went to the hobby shop to get my supplies. I got “Evergreen” plastics of all thicknesses needed for base, roof, trims, steps, etc..... I bought caboose stack and brake wheels from part suppliers such as “Ozark Mountains” Trucks were bought from LGB or Bachmann and couplers from LGB or Bachmann.

I followed the instructions on how to built it by the letter and used “Flash” Super glue to put it together. Paints were by Tamiya and were acrylic spray. Dry transfers were by CDS or Track One.

It's not hard to do but remember, it doesn't have to be perfect. Real railway equip-

ment is broken, beaten, damaged, and needs paint most of the time.

It's yours, and please use the 10' rule, stand back ten feet and it will look great!
Trust me.

Your friend in railroading,
Doug Shunk

COMING SOON

Please note: ACTrains (Burlington Ontario) [see link on this web site](#)
will be carrying (**exclusively**) a limited number of custom made CNR ca-
booses see photo below

