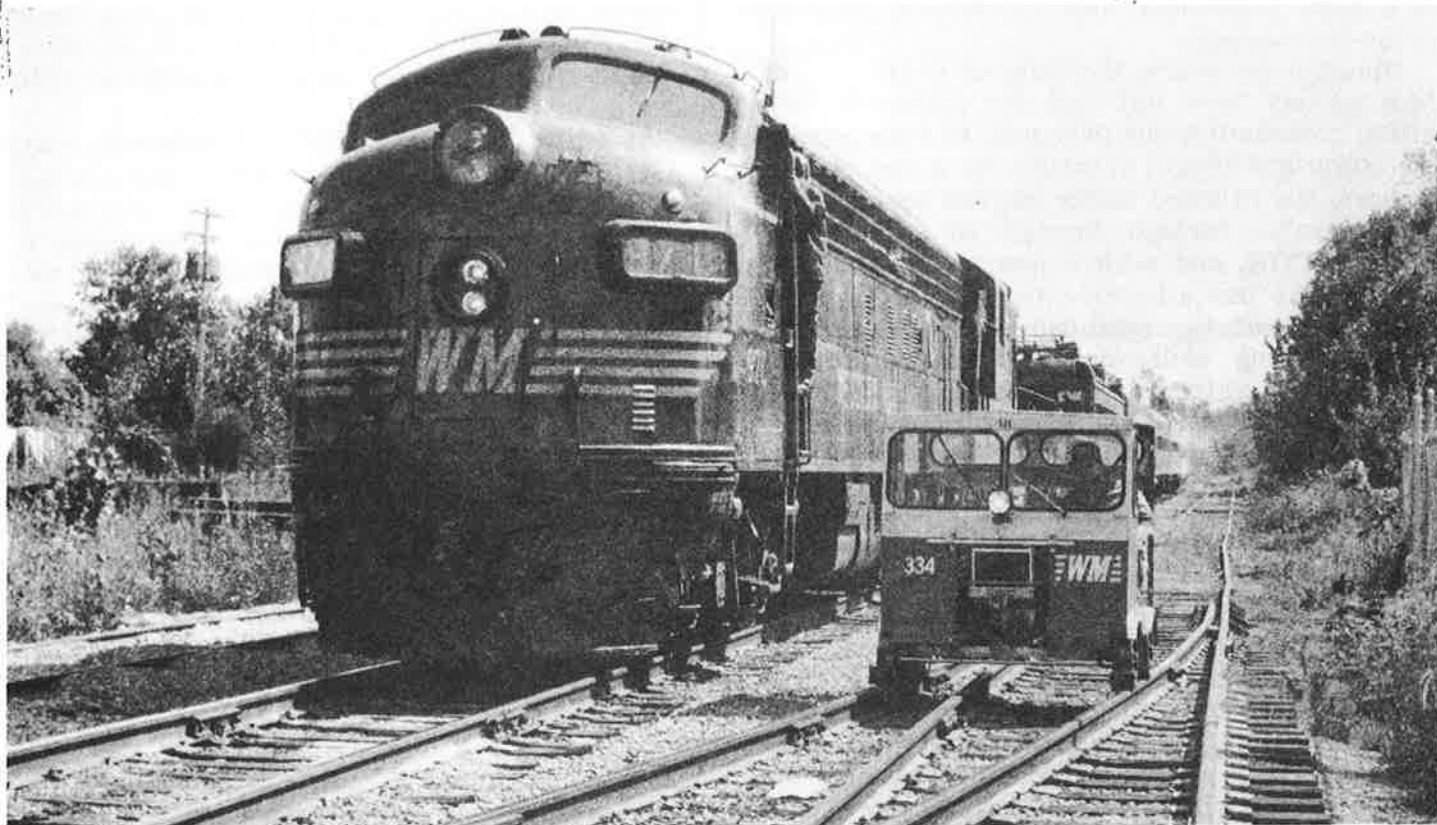
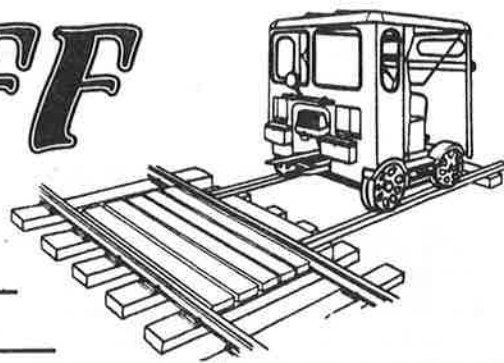


Dick Ray

THE SETOFF

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN
RAILCAR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (NARCOA)

Spring, 1987



INTRODUCING THE SETOFF

With this first issue of THE SETOFF, the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) begins a new venture...a newsletter dedicated to the safe operation of railroad motor cars, plus fellowship and interaction between motor car owners.

Through the years, the railroad motor car and their owners have not had the respect of the railfan community, due primarily to some unsafe, and downright illegal practices by a few people. In short, the railroad motor car has been given a "bad name". Perhaps through an organization like NARCOA, and with a newsletter like THE SETOFF, we can all strive together to promote motor car safety, establish friendly relations with operating railroads, help reestablish the rightful high status of motor car ownership, and encourage interaction among motor car owners.

I'm sure that many of you are wondering why we decided to call the name of our newsletter THE SETOFF. If you think about it awhile, it becomes quite obvious. For the railroad track inspector or signal maintainer, the lineup from the dispatcher is the most critical aspect of operating his motor car. In addition, the experienced motor car operator knows his "territory" like the back of his hand, including all of the motor car setoffs along the line. When operating on a "live" railroad, the setoffs become the "escape" if you will, from a potential "meet" with trains and other railroad equipment. For the motor car enthusiast, THE SETOFF newsletter is kind of an "armchair escape" between motor car runs.

COVER PHOTOS

Top - Joel Williams' Fairmont M-19, Western Maryland No. 334 takes the siding on the Maryland Midland Railroad, as MMID's restored "Western Maryland" ex Milwaukee F-7 rolls by.

Lower - Motor cars owned by Joel Williams, Dick Ray, and Walt Antonik negotiate the grade over Sparta Mountain on the New York Susquehanna & Western Railroad, while on a brush cutting job in 1984.

We hope that THE SETOFF will become a newsletter that will be informative, and interesting, and that through its pages, motor car owners will learn more about motor car restoration, operational improvements, maintenance, and SAFE operation. One thing THE SETOFF will NOT promote is blatant trespassing and operation of motor cars on abandoned rail lines.

As editor of THE SETOFF, I welcome your inputs to the newsletter with enthusiasm. Several other motor car owners have expressed their opinions as to what they would like to see in future issues, including a "classified" section, for the sale or trade of motor car parts, personal profiles of NARCOA members and their cars, restoration articles, maintenance tips, and a "new members" roster. We like all of these suggestions, and we plan to incorporate them into future issues.

To keep THE SETOFF interesting and informative, we need your participation! Let's all do what we can to promote the growth, interest, and safety in this very interesting branch of the railroad hobby.

Doug L.

THE SETOFF

Volume 1

Number 1

Editor

Doug Leffler

Associate Editor

Dick Ray

NARCOA Roster Coordinator

Joel Williams

THE SETOFF is published quarterly by the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA), to promote safe operation of railroad motor cars, and to encourage fellowship and interaction among motor car enthusiasts.

Additional information about NARCOA can be obtained from Joel Williams, Box 82, Greendell, New Jersey 07839. Subscriptions to THE SETOFF are \$10.00 per year, and are available from Doug Leffler, 622 Pawnee, Jackson, Michigan 49203

THE STORY OF THE NARCOA ROSTER

By Joel Williams
 (Western Maryland M-19, No. 334)



Back in 1970, a friend and myself began running track cars in Northeastern New Jersey. At the time, we never thought that anyone else was into that sort of thing, but by 1979, we started to meet other enthusiasts on the rails.

At the time, I thought that it would be neat to keep in touch with other track car owners, by logging their names and addresses. At first this was done on handy scraps of paper, but soon I started carrying a notebook with me on the track car. Some friends indicated that they would like to have copies of my list, so track car buff John Welsh volunteered to put the list into his computer at work.

John came up with the name of North Eastern Railcar Operators Association, or "NERCOA" for short. As time went on, and more entries for the roster began to filter in from other parts of the country, it was decided to rename the roster to North American Railcar Operators Association, thus, NARCOA was formed. The roster has been periodically updated and distributed to anyone who wanted one.

I often receive letters or phone calls from individuals requesting information on motor cars, local railroads, or the NARCOA roster. One such individual was Doug Leffler of Jackson, Michigan, who had heard of the NARCOA group, requesting motor car information and a current roster. Doug was added to the roster, and a current copy of the roster was sent to him.

By late 1984, it was apparent that the roster was growing by "leaps and bounds". Doug and I had corresponded for about a year, and we had both indicated that we were meeting new track car owners at an ever increasing rate. In January 1985, Doug approached the board of directors of the Southern Michigan Railroad Society, Inc. (SMRS) of Clinton, Michigan, about the possibility of hosting the first ever national motor car convention on its 13.5 mile, ex New York Central railroad line.

SMRS General Manager Jeff Dobek and Doug determined that the NARCOA roster would make a good base to work from for sending invitations, and it was decided to call the convention the "First Annual NARCOA Motor Car Convention". It was decided to have the convention over Memorial Day weekend, giving the conventioners a long weekend to participate in their

activities. The SMRS would host this first convention, and perhaps other shortline railroads could follow suit in subsequent years (the SMRS also successfully hosted the second national convention, and is gearing up for the third).

Thus the original NARCOA roster has grown from the original four-page "NERCOA" roster to over fifteen pages in a little over six years! The roster now has over 250 entries from 22 states and Canada, and is stored on my home computer (the floppy disc has room for at least 900 more entries!).

A supply of rosters and official information forms is available by writing me at: Box 82, Greendell, New Jersey 07839 Also, please feel free to submit new names and corrections to me as needed...and remember, SAFETY FIRST when riding the rails.

FILE: NARCOA OFFICIAL N A R C O A INFORMATION FORM
 USE THIS FORM TO MAKE ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE NARCOA ROSTER

PLEASE CHECK: NEW ADDITION ___ SEND LATEST ROSTER ___
 CORRECTION ___ NEED MORE FORMS ___

OWNER(S) NAME ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

CAR INFORMATION: (USE ONE FORM FOR EACH CAR LISTED)

CAR NUMBER/NAME _____ YEAR BUILT _____

MAKE _____

MODEL NO _____

ENGINE TYPE _____ ORIGINAL OWNER (RR) _____

OTHER INTERESTING INFORMATION _____

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR LISTING YOUR CAR ON THE NARCOA ROSTER IT EXISTS TO ENABLE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN CAR OWNERS AN UPDATED ROSTER WILL BE SENT TO ALL REPLIES

SEND TO: JOEL WILLIAMS PHONE, HOME: 201-852-6294
 BOX 82 WORK: 201-859-4050
 GREENDELL, NJ 07839 (BAH-430PH)

©NORTH AMERICAN RAIL CAR OWNERS ASSOCIATION

**HOW TO INSTALL A TURNING JACK
ON YOUR FAIRMONT M-19**

By Joel Williams

(Western Maryland M-19, No. 334)

Problem: How do you turn your Fairmont M-19, when you reach the end of the line? While my M-19 runs equally well in either direction, I have been on several railroads where grade crossings in which to turn the car around are not available for several miles. The inconvenience of having to run in reverse for several miles can be a real nuisance (plus, it isn't a recommended practice for the air-cooled condenser/water hopper cooling system).

My first attempt to solve this problem was to use a jack stand, similar to the ones that are found in auto parts stores. I installed a pin on the stand, which slipped into a socket on the car frame. To use the stand, the car was lifted to the height of the stand, the pin was inserted into the frame, the car was balanced, and then turned on the stand. The thing worked, but not too well. If the car wasn't balanced just right, the stand would try to jackknife under the car.

I concluded that a jack mounted solidly under the frame would be the best approach. A search in the local junk yard turned up just the right style jack...a sissors jack from a Toyota.

The base of the jack is in the form of a shallow "U". I removed the base by drilling out the rivets, taking a short piece of alluminum angle, and bolting it to the center cross member of the car frame (see drawing), forming an inverted "U", similar to the original base. Holes were drilled in the angles to match the original jack base, and bolts were used to mount the whole assembly to the car frame.

The top of the jack had a special piece riveted to it that must have fit the Toyota frame. The rivet was drilled out, and a flat plate was bolted to it with a countersunk screw.

A jack handle was then made. I used a trunk lid torsion spring, which is a straight rod 1/4 inch in diameter, made of spring steel. The rod was then heated and bent to form a crank handle.

The whole project takes only a few hours, and requires no special tools. The jack tucks up under the frame very nicely, and doesn't present a clearance problem. Since this jack doesn't extend far enough down to reach the ties, I found that an ammunition box (which doubles nicely as a small-sized tool box and tucks handily under the seat) works very well. An 8x8 wood block would also work in place of the ammunition box.

To turn my car, I find a level tie, put the tool box on it, move the car in place, and jack up the car so the rear wheels are about 3 inches above the rails, turn, and lower the car for the trip in the opposite direction. Turning the car is easy, and it takes less than two minutes. Sorry, but it won't work on an M-9...the cross member is too close to the engine flywheels.

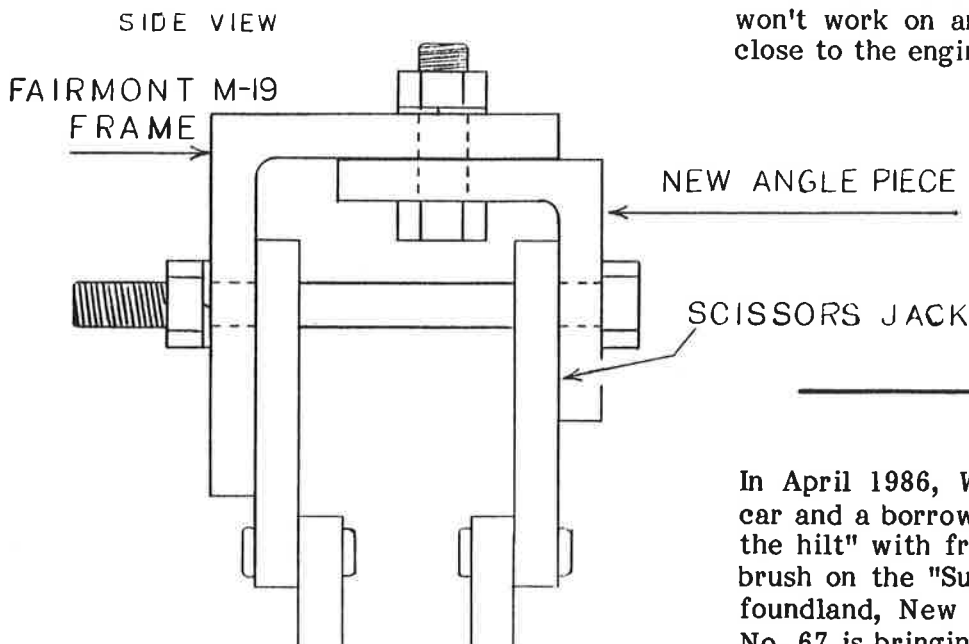


Diagram of Joel Williams' modified Toyota automobile jack for Fairmont M-19 application

In April 1986, Walt Antonik's home made track car and a borrowed NYSW flat car are loaded "to the hilt" with freshly cut "timber", while cutting brush on the "Susie-Q" between Butler and Newfoundland, New Jersey. Dick Ray's ex WM M-9 No. 67 is bringing up the rear of the "work extra" to help shove the load up a two-mile grade to the unloading site.

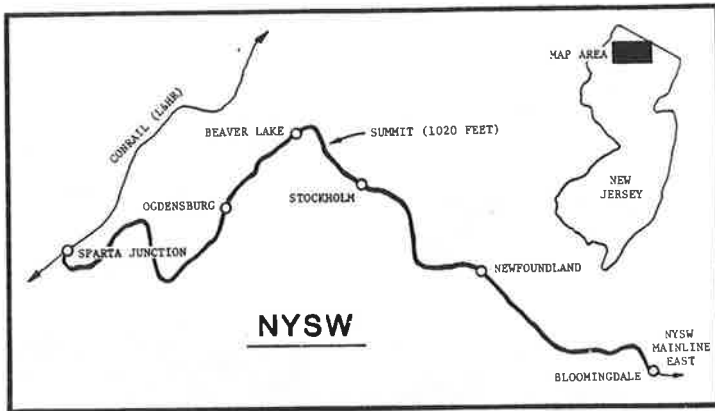
Photo By Walt Antonik

OBTAINING MOTOR CAR OPERATING RIGHTS

**By Dick Ray
(Western Maryland M-9, No. 67)**

Securing permission to operate motor cars on a variety of rail lines is sometimes the most difficult task that the motor car enthusiast must deal with. Several of us in New Jersey, however, have found an approach that has worked very successfully with at least one fairly well known railroad...the New York Susquehanna & Western (NYSW).

About four years ago, Joel Williams and I had heard rumors about the possibility of the NYSW reopening their disconnected 24 miles of track- age over Sparta Mountain, up in northwestern New Jersey. This portion of track had been out of service for many years and was overgrown with heavy brush and trees. Joel and I made a trip up to the area to investigate the line and we found it to be in worse shape than we had suspected. Several survey markers were spotted, however, confirming the rumors of the planned reopening of the line.



Dick Ray's ex WM M-9 No. 67 rumbles across a wood pile trestle on the NYSW at Stockholm, New Jersey, in April 1984.

Photo By Dick Ray

We decided to approach the NYSW management, at their Cooperstown, New York headquarters, about the possibility of clearing brush and trees from their right-of-way over Sparta Mountain, in exchange for the firewood.

An agreement was drawn up emphasizing the removal of "brush", rather than "trees", (to downplay not only the increased risks in cutting full-sized trees, but to minimize the actual value of the wood) and we also did not mention operating motor cars on their track. This issue, of course, was brought up later, when they asked us how we intended on removing the wood. We indicated that the wood would be removed by motor car and trailer and a Hi-Rail truck. They were satisfied by our straightforward answer. Of course the agreement contains a standard liability waiver.

Joel and I were able to operate our cars on the "Susie-Q" for three years (and obtain a lot of firewood in the process), before the much publicized rebuilding program was started. The line is now open, and the route we once plied now sees double stack container trains and SD-45's.

Our experience has shown that shortline railroads and tourist operations welcome an offer of long-term volunteer help. In the case of the NYSW, the railroad was pleased with our work, and we got the chance to operate regularly (visitors were also accomodated within the spirit of the agreement, by helping out along the way). This type of arrangement is far more preferable than signing waivers at the office on a daily basis. We try to fulfill the terms of the agreement, and we operate safely.

Since our first agreement with the NYSW, we have negotiated a similar offer with a major tourist line operating in our area. A future article will deal with the important differences when dealing with an operating railroad.



WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET THIS NARCOA MEMBER...

Ken Kurdt
 Caroline Drive
 Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Ken Kurdt has been interested in motor cars for a number of years, beginning about 1960, with an interest in purchasing an old Model T inspection car from a short line in southern New Jersey. "They wanted about \$100.00 for the old jalopy, and in those days...Holy cow, that was all the money in the world!" "Well, I passed it up, and I run my head in the wall every time I think of that car!"

After that episode, and about twenty years later, Ken was inspired to get into the hobby after talking with good friend Lloyd James (also a NARCOA member) and seeing his "new" Fairmont M-19 inspection car. After contacting his cousin in Maine about a car that the cousin had seen in a yard near the plant where he worked (it was a "totaled" Fairbanks-Morse 40B), Ken was "off and running", and into the motor car restoration business.

Since that purchase in about 1982, Ken has restored a number of other cars including Fairmont M-19's, 9's, ST-2's, a Fairbanks-Morse M-101, two velocipedes, four push cars, a Fairmont W-64 derrick car, a Central Vermont crew car, and a Delaware & Hudson caboose! All of this equipment is on about 350 feet of track in his back yard!

In addition to his motor car hobby, Ken is interested in other aspects of railroading, including collecting railroadiana and restoring railroad equipment such as signs, lanterns, cabooses, etc. Ken is a shareholder in the Catskill Mountain Railroad (which is restoring the old Ulster & Delaware line in upper New York state) and he is a member of the Mohawk-Hudson Chapter of the NRHS, Empire State Railway Museum and the Key, Lock & Lantern.

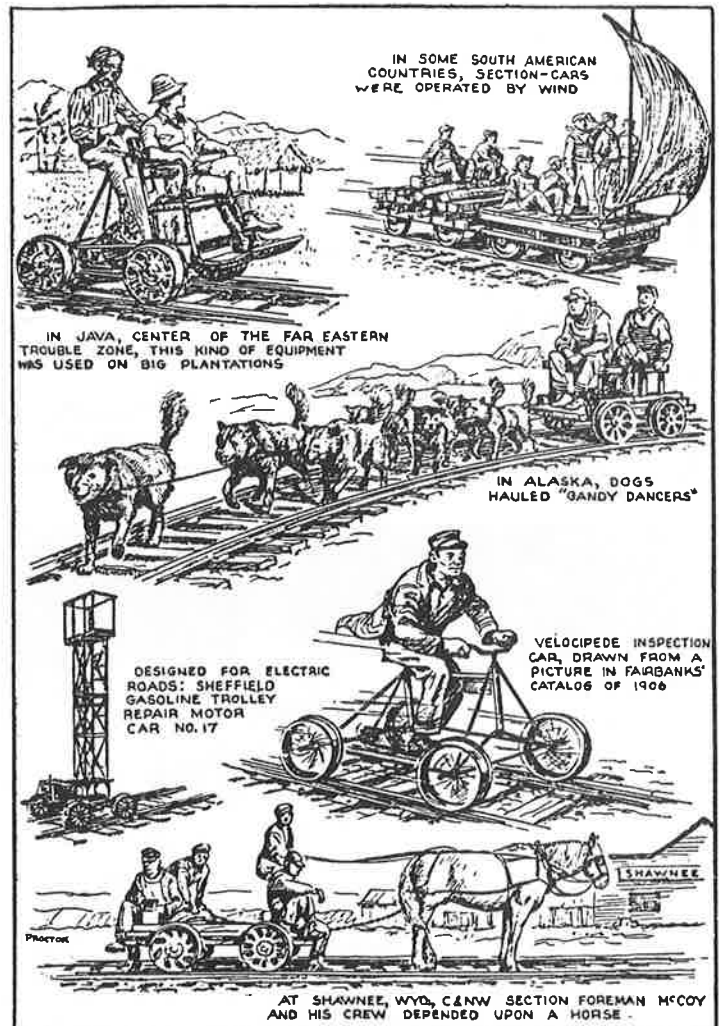
When he is not involved with his rail hobby, Ken and his father run a road materials business. He is also married, and has two daughters.

Ken is also into the Civil War North South Skirmish Association, spending occasional summer weekends at the "cannon shoots"... "That's a bigger and more horrible story" says Ken.



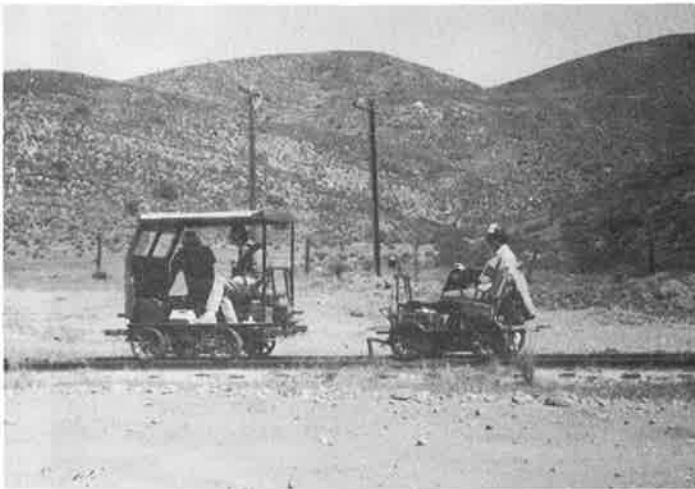
Ken Kurdt is wearing his "north woods disguise" while operating his ex CNW M-19 on the Adirondack Railway near Sabbatts, New York, in the fall of 1986.

Photo By Dick Ray



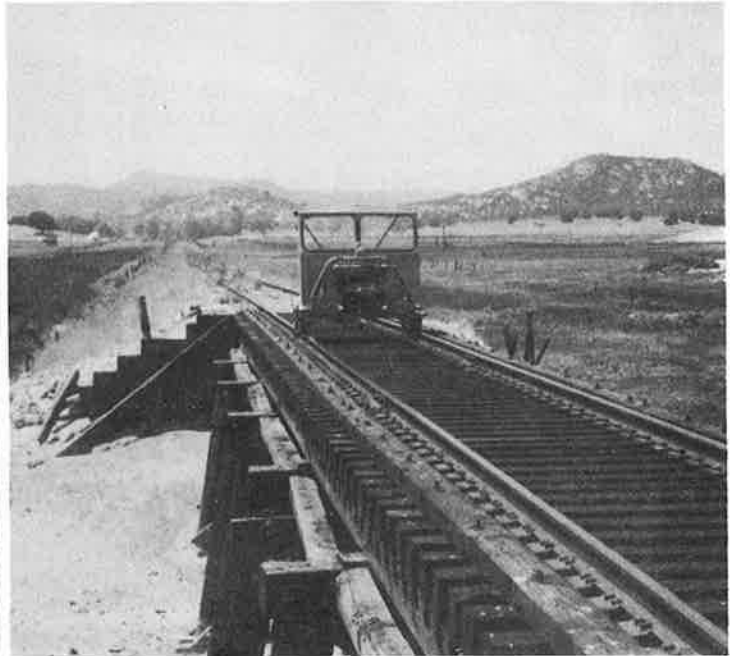
TRACK CAR PHOTO LINEUP

PHOTOS OF MEMBERS CARS



Brett Tallman's ex Santa Fe Fairmont M-19 and Lee Adams' ex Santa Fe Fairmont S-2 navigate the rails of the Tijuana & Tecate line of the Sonora-Baja Railway in northern Mexico in March 1987.

Photo By Brett Tallman



Brett Tallman photographed one of Terry Durkin's Fairmont M-19's on the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association's line near Campo, California, in late 1986. The PSRMA is one of the fastest growing railroad historical groups in the southwest.



Bob Bixler's ex C&O Fairmont M-9 pauses briefly in Angola, Indiana, during a trip on the Hillsdale County Railway in September, 1983.

Photo By Doug Leffler



Motor cars are still in use by some railroads today. The accompanying photos show a few examples of cars in the Great Lakes region.

Top- On a warm July day in 1983, an N&W track inspector cranks his M-19 at Hamilton, Ohio, prior to an inspection run over the old Wabash line from Montpelier, Ohio to Topeka, Indiana.

Middle- Canadian National Railways track inspectors shove their one-year-old M-19 onto the setoff at Windsor, Ontario, after an inspection of the Detroit River tunnel, in April 1987.

Bottom- A clean N&W M-19 slumbers away in the summer sun at Adrian, Michigan in June 1984.

Photos By Doug Leffler



THE SETOFF

622 Pawnee

Jackson, Michigan 49203

POSTMASTER: IF UNDELIVERABLE, PLEASE RETURN TO SENDER.