



NEW YORK CENTRAL Steel Bay Window Caboose



This kit is a high-quality replica of the famous New York Central Bay Window Caboose first delivered in 1948 for use on the Central's mainline trains. They were initially three prototypes for the 33' bay window (b-w) caboose that were built by Dispatch Shops in 1948 as Lot 778, road #20200-20202. Presumably, the NYC evaluated them in service for some months before fine-tuning the final design for the 300 production cars that followed. The original three cars have the following external details that differ noticeably from the later production cars: a small window in the toilet area (absent in the production cars); a cylindrical "Globe" type of roof vent above the toilet space (also absent in the production cars); a fixed window in the bunk area, at least on the toilet-side (if not both sides) of the car (changed to a larger sliding window in the production cars); no car-routing board (present in the production cars as discussed below).

The production cars were built in two lots: Lot 782, Dispatch Shops, 1949, road #NYC 20203-20297 and B&A 1300-1304 (later NYC 20498-20502), 100 cars total; and Lot 827, St. Louis Car, 1952, road #20298-20497, 200 cars total.

All cars had coal/wood stoves with a typical covered smokejack on the car roof (this was located toward what was designated the 'B' end of the car). Interior illumination was by kerosene or oil lamps. The cars were painted freight car red/brown and had the white NYC oval (no black background) on each side. The white initials (B&A or NYC) and road number on each side beneath the cupola were in the sans-serif style. Some later in-service photos show subtle lettering variations, most commonly a capital 'C' or 'W' (in white Roman lettering of all things) below the road #.

The cars in the two lots were taken to be identified by the NYC and many modelers have long accepted along this. However, a close examination of 18 B&W photos (8-Lot 782 and 10-Lot 827) will show some subtle variations: the later Lot 827 cars had smokejacks that were noticeably taller than the earlier Lot 782 cars. Both lots have wood car-routing boards located on the bottom edge of the frame on each left side, just above the truck centerline. However, the later Lot 827 cars have an additional routing board located on the side just below and to the prominent drip strip over the b-w and down each side. This detail is missing entirely on the earlier Lot 782 cars as built although at least one car had a similar (but not identical) drip strip installed later.

REBUILT CARS

Apparently the 33' b-w cabooses (including all three Lot 778 prototypes) underwent a significant reworking during the early 1960's, possibly starting as early as 1963. This took place at the time many cabooses on the central were assigned to pool service instead of "belonging to a particular conductor." Lettering on the rebuilt cars indicates that this work was done under "Program (or Project) 343"

The following changes were made that are noticeable on the cars' exteriors based on examination of 28 photos in my possession: oil heat was added. The fuel-oil tank fill and vent(?) pipes are very noticeable, located just below and to the right of the b-w (i.e. toward the 'A' end) on the "stove" side of the car (in an area formerly occupied by bunks). Contrary to what I thought retained in all cases although

some of the earlier Lot 782 cars may have received taller smokejacks as replacements for damaged originals.

Electric lighting was added which resulted in an underbody battery box located on side opposite the smokejack/fuel pipes, just to the left of the b-w (toward the 'A' end). A body mounted, belt driven generator was used in all but one case. Battery charging receptacles were added to the underbody on each side toward the 'A' end of the car. The earlier Lot 782 cars and even the Lot 778 prototype received the drip strips above and around the b-w. The fixed windows on the slanted side of each b-w received windshield wipers (presumably driven by electric motors). Three Globe roof vents were installed on the side opposite the smokejack/fuel pipes. One was located over the same location as the original brackets used for kerosene markers. An external water fill was added which suggests that an internal water tank was added for drinking water if not a flush toilet. This filler appears as a downward-pointing trumpet on the outer edge of the underbody on each side toward the 'B' end of the car. Most cars received a radio and a roof-mounted, firecracker-style antenna which was located on the smokejack/fuel-fill side just above the left edge of the b-w.

It appears the later Lot 827 cars lost the extra car-routing board on the side. Conversely, the lot 778 prototypes gained the routing board on the frame side. The cars were renumbered into the 21500-21798 series in no apparent order so that all three lots were commingled. The cars were painted in Century ("jade") green which (almost?) everyone agrees bore no resemblance to either Pullman or Pacemaker Greens.

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ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) **TOOLS:** Assembly is typical of today's better rolling stock kits. You will need the following tools: CA cement tweezers, a .015-inch drill bit with either a pin vise or motor tool, small screw driver, and a hobby knife fit with a #11 blade. It is also recommended that an adhesive such as Cyanopoxy be used to secure the roofwalk, ladders and all delrin parts.
- 2) Begin by removing the flash from the window openings in the body. A #11 blade in your hobby knife will work well.
- 3) Remove flash from the outer perimeter of the bays and test fit into the openings in the body sides. Secure using CA cement carefully applied from the inside of the body. Once the bays are secured, trim the flash from the window openings.
- 4) Note that there were two basic combinations of roof fixtures on these NYC cabooses. Generally, during the "brown era" there was only the smokejack. In the "green years" there were also three vents on the opposite side of the roof. Decide which version you plan to model, then using the locator dimples on the underside of the roof, drill holes through from the underside for the smoke jack and any vents to be installed.
- 5) After the smokejack and vent holes have been drilled, fit the roof and cement in place. **DO NOT** cement the floor in place. You will need access to the inside of the body as assembly progresses.
- 6) Remove the roofwalk platform support pieces from the detail sets. Cement them in place at the roof ends. Position the roofwalk. There are two brackets beneath the roofwalk at each end. They will hit against the end sills of the roof. Mark with a pencil and drill holes for the tables at the bottom end of each of these brackets. Installation of the roofwalk is straight forward. If you are using cyanopoxy, use despruing nippers, clip off the mounting tabs from the bottom of the roofwalk. Using the 3-step process as described by the Cyanopoxy instructions, apply a dab of adhesive on each roofwalk support brace along the center of the roof. Carefully position the roofwalk so that the end is the same. Spray on the Cyanopoxy fixer and the roofwalk will be secured for life. If you are not using Cyanopoxy you will have to drill mounting holes for each mount tab of the underside of the roofwalk. Use contact cement to secure the roofwalk. Once the roofwalk is in position, fit the mounting tabs at the end of each roofwalk support into the holes you drilled for them. Use a dab of Cyanopoxy to secure them in position.
- 7) Trim the window frames and cement them into the pockets on the inside of the body. Cut the steps from the sets of end details and trim the flash from the steps. Cement in place. Cut the end support piece from the detail sets and trim each prior to fitting in place. These one-piece items consist of the two corner posts, a top connection section that fits up under the roof end, and a bottom section that has the brake wheel support post attached. Before installing, be sure to install the two included brake wheels. A mounting hole will have to be drilled for each brake wheel. With the flash removed, fit each into place and cement using CA. Holed must be drilled for attaching the end grabs and railings.
- 8) Railing and grabs are formed from .012-inch brass rod (supplied with this kit). Use CA or Cyanopoxy to secure each in place. Dab the ends in a small puddle of cement, then press into position using tweezers. Work quickly because once the cement hardens, the grab or railing will not be able to be adjusted.
- 9) The ladders have to be cut to fit. Once cut to size, drill holes for the ladder mounting tabs to fit into, then press-fit the ladders and secure with Cyanopoxy. An aftermarket train line air hose can also be added.
- 10) The next step is to add weight to the topside of the floor. A very inexpensive way of adding weight is to cement pennies in place. Three layers of five pennies secured with contact cement works out very close to NMRA weight standards for car of this size.
- 11) Install the couplers. The kit is designed to accept Kadee #58 near-scale couplers or Kadee #5 couplers. The assembled coupler fits right over the positioning pin under the end platforms. Cyanopoxy will permanently secure the couplers in place.
- 12) With the body details in place, it is time to paint the model. Painting is left to you other than to say that it is

recommended that the model be gently washed with warm water and dish soap and thoroughly dried before applying paint. Both acrylic and solvent paints will adhere to this resin model. Apply decals after the paint has dried.

- 13) Install the window glass. Clear plastic of most any kind will work. It is recommended that Testers Clear Parts Cement or a similar product be used to secure the windows.
- 14) The last major step is to detail the bottom of the floor section. As you can see, the well detailed framework is cast to the floor bottom. Brake equipment is included. Cement the air reservoir, triple valve, and other components in place. A batter box is included for "green era" cabooses and late brown-era cabooses as well. Additional brake rigging can be added at the model builder's discretion.
- 15) Cement the floor in place. It is recommended that only a small drop of CA cement be used in 4 to 6 places so that should the need arise, the floor can be "broken" free for access to the inside of the model.

NOTE: WrightTRAK would like to extend a very special thanks to Bernie Halloran for writing the prototype overview of the popular New York Central b-w caboose. Thanks Bernie!

Photo Etchings for New York Central Caboose

- A. Coupler Pocket Covers (bend at lines)
- B. Brake Wheel Chains
- C. End Ladders
- D. End Railings (bend sides inward)
- E. Top of Ladder Looped grabs
- F. Retainer Valves
- G. Running Board
- H. Side Wall Window Frames
- I. Running Board Ladder Platform supports
- J. Side of end railing grabs
- K. End Wall Window Frames
- L. Brake Rigging (bend at lines and install on underframe after drilling though pre-drilled holes with #79 drill bit.
- M. Hand Brake Chain Guide
- N. Running Board end Supports
- O. Ladder Platform



