Society for the Preservation of Carter Railroad Resources (SPCRR) The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood

Restoration Report West Side Lumber flat cars 205, 222, 308

TITLE BLOCK

Cars covered: 24', 15 ton capacity West Side Lumber flatcars 205, 222, 308 Draft Report Date: January 1, 2018 Author: Bruce MacGregor Status: **DRAFT, Rev 1.0**



West Side Lumber flat car 222, The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood, Summer, 2017



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Part I: Background

1. Restoration Report Goals:

*To create (in photographs and text) a historical narrative for three flat cars in the Museum's collection (West Side Lumber 222, 205 and 308).

*To argue for the historical significance of the cars to the Museum's collection, to its interpretive program and its long-term preservation goals.

*To suggest alternative restoration targets (distinguished by date or era) for the cars and recommend a preferred restoration target.

*To suggest appropriate uses for the cars within the context of the Museum's Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) and to recommend the best and highest use.

Scope: the initial draft of this report is intended as historical background on the cars named and in addition, an informed recommendation about goals for future use of the cars. As this restoration work is undertaken, findings from that work (for example details of the car's structure or hardware now hidden from view) will be included in future drafts of this report.

2. Historical Significance of the Cars in this Report

All three flat cars, WSL 222, 205 and 308, were once part of large fleet of over 300 narrow gauge flat cars that hauled logs for West Side Lumber Company in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains, in the period 1900 to 1960. The first cars in this series were manufactured in 1899 by Carter Brothers, the primary focus of the Museum's collection and interpretation. These first flat cars included many features common to most Carter freight cars, including wooden sills and a wood-framed truck that included swing motion. Because of these design features, both the initial order of cars and the many home-built cars that followed (including 222, 205 and 308) are associated with Carter Brothers and with the tradition of western U.S. 19th century wooden car building.

For forty years after the arrival of the first Carter flat cars, West Side Lumber built "derivative cars," similar to the original Carter flat cars but with revised features that better fit the lumber company's budget, performance and manufacturing capabilities. Since the Museum owns one of the earliest Carter cars ever built (in 1874 for the Monterey & Salinas Valley), including examples of West Side Lumber flat cars (including derivative cars) in its collection provides interpretive examples of some of the many evolutionary stages of Carter products. The three flat cars featured in this report are derivative cars. They were not part of the original West Side Lumber order from Carter Brothers, but their design and construction follows many features of the original Carter cars. Featuring derivative cars helps give the Museum a broad time line to interpret the impact of Carter Brothers. With these cars, the Museum's collection spans the period 1874-1960, a scope of eighty-six years in the history of wooden railroad car technology and the West Coast railroads that technology supported.

It is important to say again that the three West Side Lumber (abbreviated WSL) flat cars featured in this report are not among the original flat cars that Carter manufactured for WSL in 1899. Carter records in the period 1898-1901 (including shop labor reports and cash transaction books) argue that a small number of flat cars (along with 40 pair of disconnect logging trucks) were ordered by WSL in March or April, 1899. All three cars covered in this report, WSL 222, 205 and 308, were built by WSL much later, in the period 1928-1940. The general outward appearance of the three cars conforms to the 24' long, 15 ton capacity specification of the original Carter order, while details like the specific design of frames, metal hardware and trucks, show evolution and adaptation over a 30-40 year period.

However, the Museum is in a unique position to tell the entire story of WSL flat cars. A fourth flat car in the Museum's collection, Diamond & Caldor 64, appears to be a duplicate of the original Carter WSL design. While coming from a different lumber company and built at a later time (probably 1907) than the earliest WSL flat cars, both overall dimensions and the design of specific parts on D&C 64 match the original 1899 Carter design used on WSL. For example, the same castings, showing the same casting numbers, were found on D&C 64 as well as in early photographs of original Carter cars on West Side.





Above: restored Diamond & Caldor flatcar 64 at Ardenwood; below, an original Carter Brothers flat car in WSL yards in Tuolumne. California. A Carter stencil appears on the side sill, just above the center of the left-hand truck. This is the earliest authenticated photo of a Carter flat car on WSL.

Detailed Discussion: "A" style cars.

"A" style cars are the WSL flat cars built by Carter Brothers in Newark, in 1899, with additional cars built, probably to the same plan, by John Hammond, of San Francisco.

Extant Carter records account for just 6 of the 20 "A" style cars believed to have been on the WSL roster by June 1, 1900.

Over the active lifespan of Carter Brothers, from 1872 to 1902, only two sets of factory production records have been found: (1) monthly statements of labor (1898-1900) and (2) an account book (1901). We know that Carter Brothers ceased active production in 1901 or 1902, and we believe that these two collections of records represent the last business transactions of the company before it ceased to exist.

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Left: sample page from Carter Brothers labor record of April, 1899, showing WSL work in two columns: "6-15 T. Flats" and "40 pr L. Trucks".

West Side Lumber Company orders (incorporated as West Side Flume & Lumber Company in March, 1899) appear in both the Carter labor, and accounts record books. As early as March, 1899, the labor record mentions "6-15 ton flats" and "40 pair of Log trucks" in the list of active projects going on in the Newark shops. The term "Log trucks" refers to disconnects, also called "bobbies", loose trucks with no frame, used in pairs to haul logs of variable length. While the 24' flat cars limited cut logs to 16' length, the disconnects provided a means for WSL to harvest and haul longer logs.

This labor record mentions the number of workers assigned to the order. In May, 1899, nine workmen are engaged on the flat car and disconnect orders. Ten workmen are engaged in June, then labor is cut in half in July, and declines steadily with only one or two laborers assigned