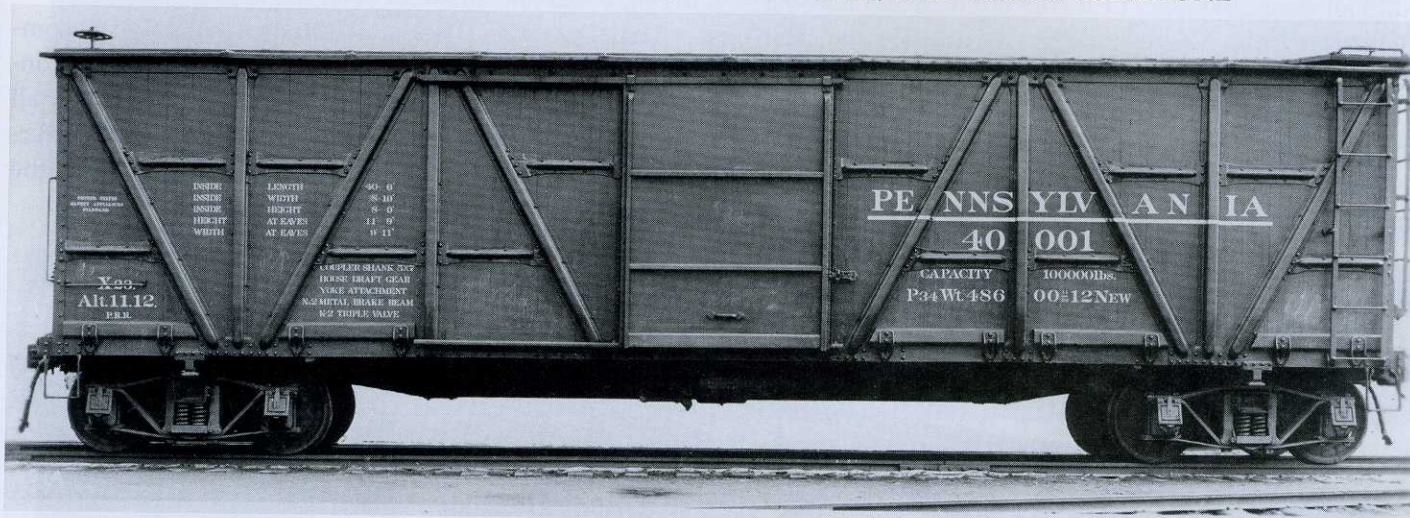


NX23 Cabin Car Restoration

BY KEN DAVIS, GARY SALZGABER, RON WIDMAN, AND CHUCK BLARDONE



X23 40001 as built by Altoona Shops, November 1912. (PRR photo; Gary C. Rauch collection)



▲ X23 Pennsylvania Lines 532996, with added tackboard, built in September 1913. (ACF photo 100029; Gary C. Rauch collection)

Just west of Columbus, Ohio, in the town of Urbana, along the former PRR Columbus/Chicago main line, stands its restored original PRR 1894 depot, at M.P. 46.8. Adjacent to it, in the Marion W. Parks Railroad Educational Center, is a restored, uncommon PRR classic cabin car with a colorful history, a 105-year-old NX23.

CABIN CAR HISTORY

PRR ordered 600 X23 boxcars from Altoona Shops in 1912; they were built the following year, during the railroad's transition from wooden to steel car construction. They were assigned throughout the system, with most going to the Western Region.

X23 562198, in service, December 1913. (Gary C. Rauch collection) ▶



During WWII there was a national shortage of cabooses; the War Production Board would not allow railroads to build all-steel cabooses. PRR converted 75 X23 MW service boxcars (from X23 revenue service in 1937) into cabins, numbered 478520–478594, starting in 1943. Prefix “N” was added to “X23” for this new designation. There are no known records of what each car’s original number was.

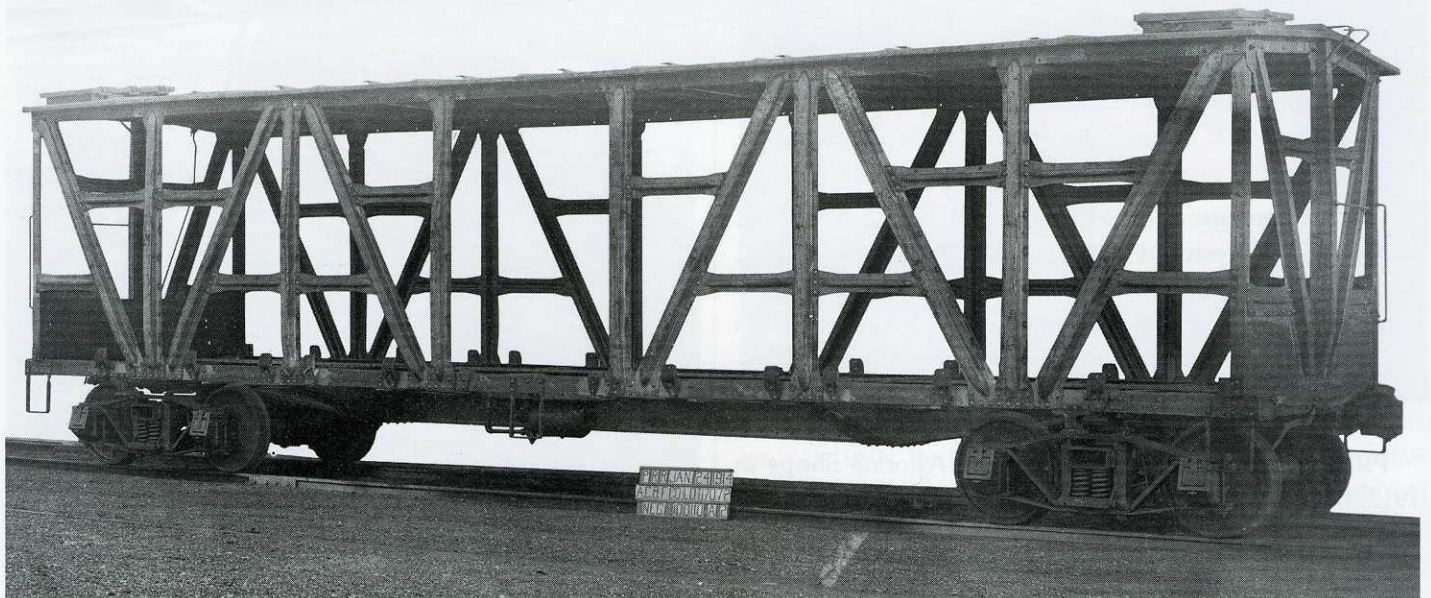
The remodeling included two bay windows, and ten

“porthole” windows, one on each end and four on each side. Also, added were a cooking/heating stove, a bunk, a booth, a coal bin, and a set of three lockers.

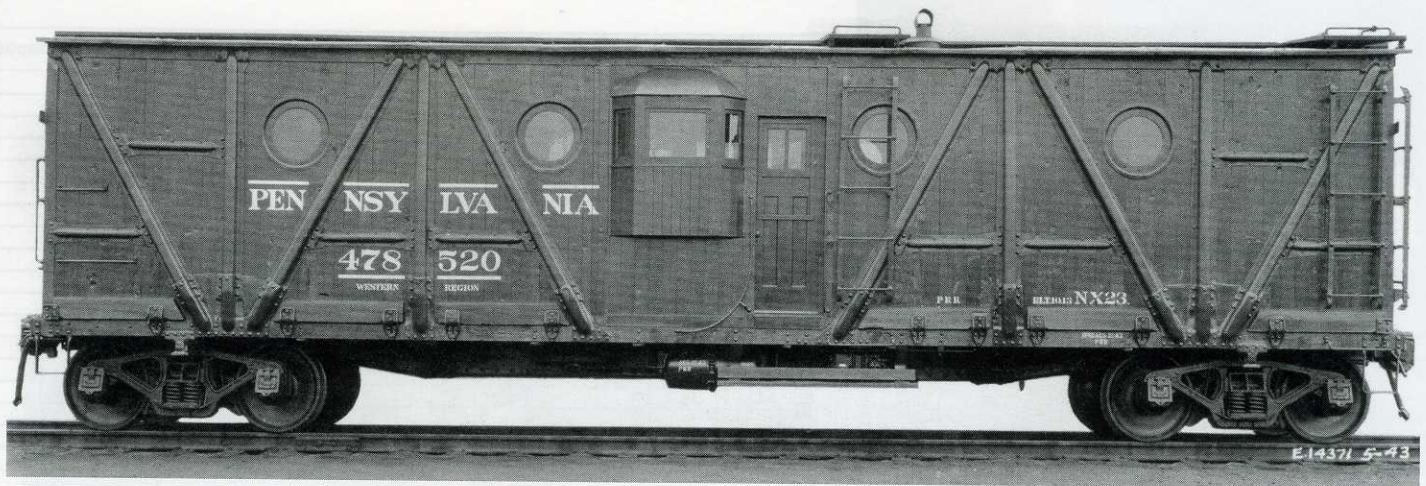
The NX23 were created at Altoona, with 478520 completed on May 24, 1943 with subsequent conversions, consecutively numbered, ending on January 29, 1944. They all rode on 2D-F8 trucks. There were three structurally different versions. The first car used vertical sheathing on the



X23 562630, c.1928. (PRR photo E8477; Gary C. Rauch collection)



▲ Photos showing the vertical and horizontal steel framing for the R7 refrigerator car, sister of the X23 boxcar. The end view was taken on December 12, 1913 and the side view on January 24, 1914. (ACF photos 100110B and 100110A2; Gary C. Rauch collection) ►



NX23 478520 side view, May 1943. (PRR photo E14371; Gary C. Rauch collection)

side and, as with all subsequent cars, horizontal sheathing on the end. A full X23 ladder was mounted to the right of the side door. Some cars received partial (three-rung) ladders plus two drop grabirons. A variation used cars rebuilt with horizontal side sheathing, with the horizontal side braces removed. All versions were painted freight car color on all external surfaces. It is believed all were assigned to the Western Region.

In 1947 at least 38 NX23 lost their window bays and reverted to work equipment, most in series 494011-494043. They were painted gray with black roof, underbody, end

sills and metal appliances. Cars repainted after 1954 were painted yellow instead of gray, with the same black details. Later re-paintings deleted painting the appliances and end sills black. Nearly all cars were equipped with benches inside and were used as riding cars on work trains.

Two horizontal-sheathed NX23 (492754 and ?) were transferred to the Long Island Rail Road in 1947, which set back both car ends and added end platforms, reclassifying them NX23a, #48 and 49. PRR cast steel cabin car steps were mounted under the corners of the side sills. Both cars

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NX23 478520 end view, May 1943. (PRR photo E14373; Gary C. Rauch collection)

NX23 Roster

No.	Subsidiary	Renumbered Assigned M/W	1957 Assignment	Disposition
478520			PGH Pitcairn Work Train	
478521		494035 (1)		
478522	PCC&StL	494020 (1)		
478523		494022 (1)		
478524		494019 (1)		
478525		494037 (1)		
478526		494018 (1)		
478527	PCC&StL	494032 (1)		
478528		494013 (1)		
478529	PfW&C		PGH Branch Riding Car, Cresson	
478530	C&P	494030 (1)		
478531		494017 (1)		
478532	C&P	494023 (1)		
478533		494024 (1)		
478534	C&P	494027 (1)		
478535		494014 (1)		
478536		494036 (1)		
478537				
478538		494012 (1)		
478539				See (2)
478540		494029 (1)		
478541		494025 (1)		
478542		494021 (1)		
478543		494034 (1)		
478544		494038 (1)		
478545		492006, 11/50		
478546		494028 (1)		
478547				
478548		494011 (1)		
478549		494031 (1)		
478550		(7)	PGH Work Cabin, JD Summerhill & South	
478551				
478552				
478553				
478554				
478555			NOR Enola - Hudson	
478556	LM			
478557	PfW&C		NY Morrisville - Greenville	
478558				
478559				
478560			PGH New Brighton, Pa.	
478561				
478562			PGH East Liberty Work Train	
478564			CHES Colgate Creek, Baltimore	
478565				
478566				
478567				
478568				
478569		494015 (1)		
478570			PGH	
478571			PGH, W. Brownsville	
478572	PfW&C		NY, Reading to Shippensburg	
478573				
478574		494033 (1)		
478575			PGH	
478576		494016 (1)		
478577				
478578				
478579		494026 (1) tool car		
478580				
478581				
478582				
478583		499720, 1/52		
478584				
478585		499724, 2/52		
478586				
478587				
478588				
478589		499721, 1/52, tool & supply		
478590				
478591				
478592			Note 3	
478593				
478594				

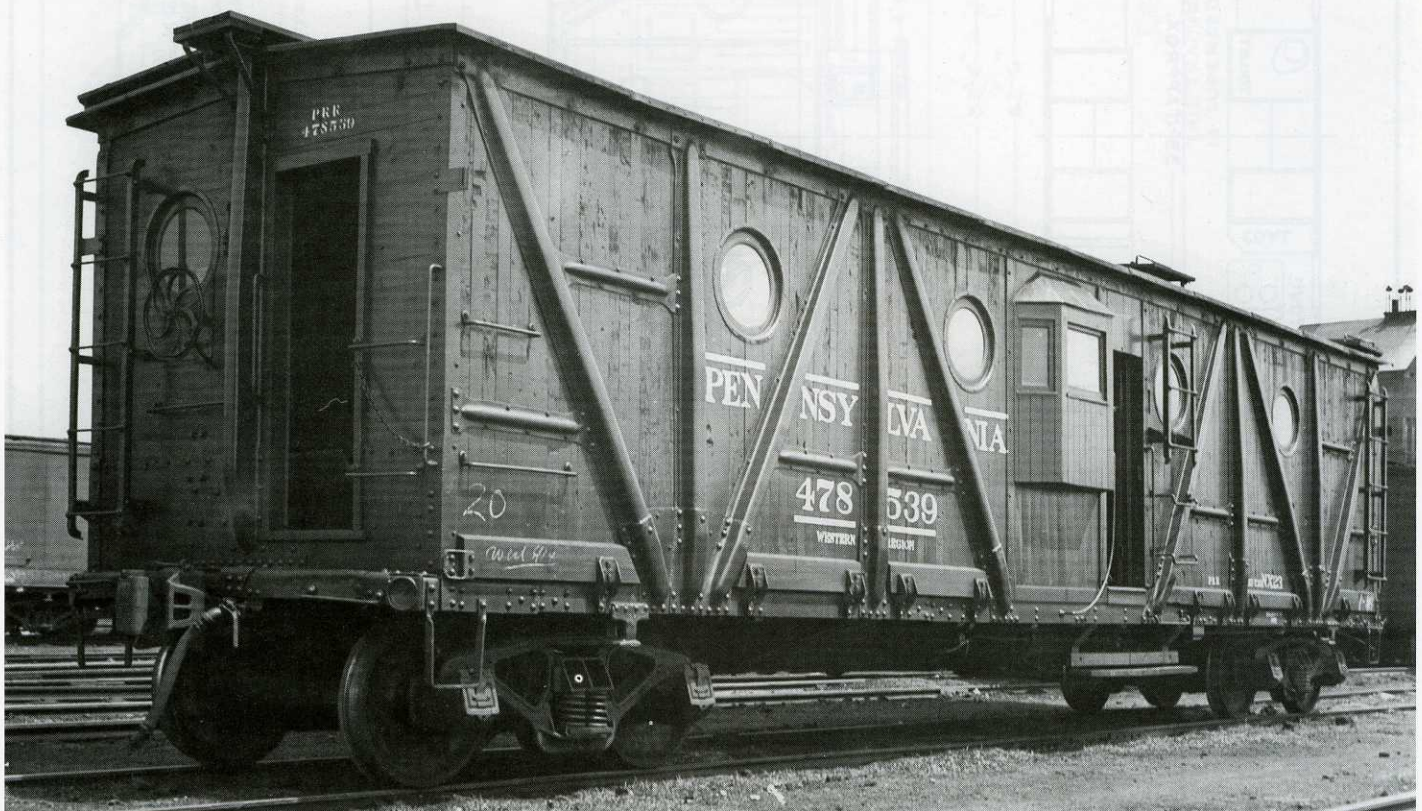
Notes:

- (1) Renumbered to MW service at Logansport, 2/47
- (2) Dismantled at Conway, 9/50
- (3) Sold to Central Indiana Ry., 5/49
- (4) M/W 499722 was a converted X23/NX23, original number unknown.
- (5) Western Allegheny RR (WA) had two NX23, #407 and 408. PRR numbers unknown.
- (6) LIRR had two NX23, #48 and 49. LIRR rebuilt and reclassified them NX23a.
- (7) To MW service c. 1950. Retained number and bay window.

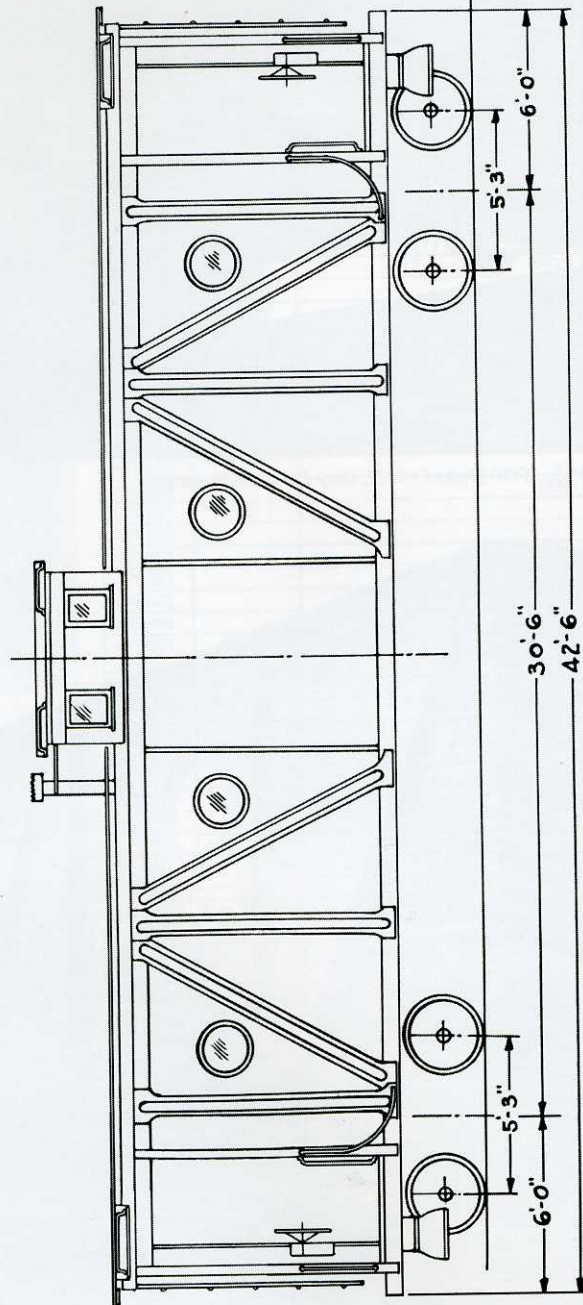
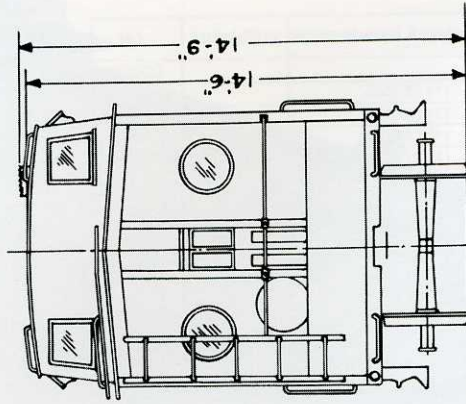
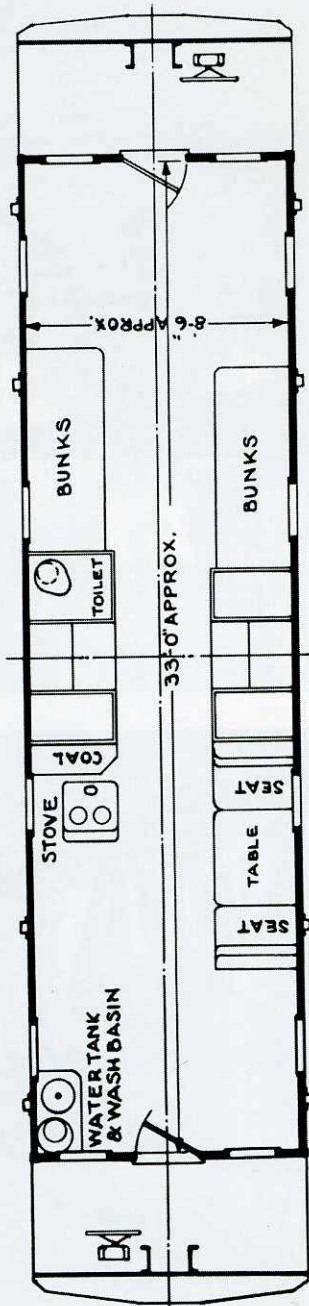
NX23 478520 interior views, May 1943.
(PRR photos E14374, 5 and 6; Robert L. Johnson collection)



NX23 478520 angle view, May 1943. (PRR photo E14372; Gary C. Rauch collection)



NX23 478539 fresh from Altoona Shops, Chicago, 1943. Siding is likely original. Note the siding bracing just above the frame and the atypical "half ladder" just to the right of the center door. (Photographer unknown; PRRT&HS collection)



X23 CONVERTED TO CABIN CAR

**THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD
FREIGHT CARS**

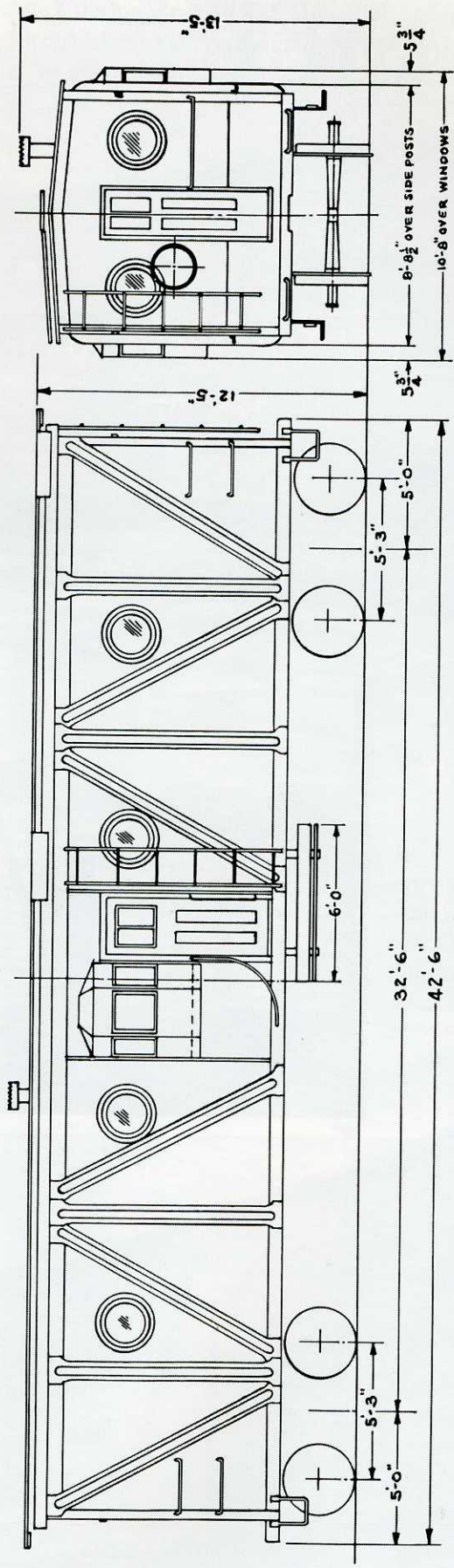
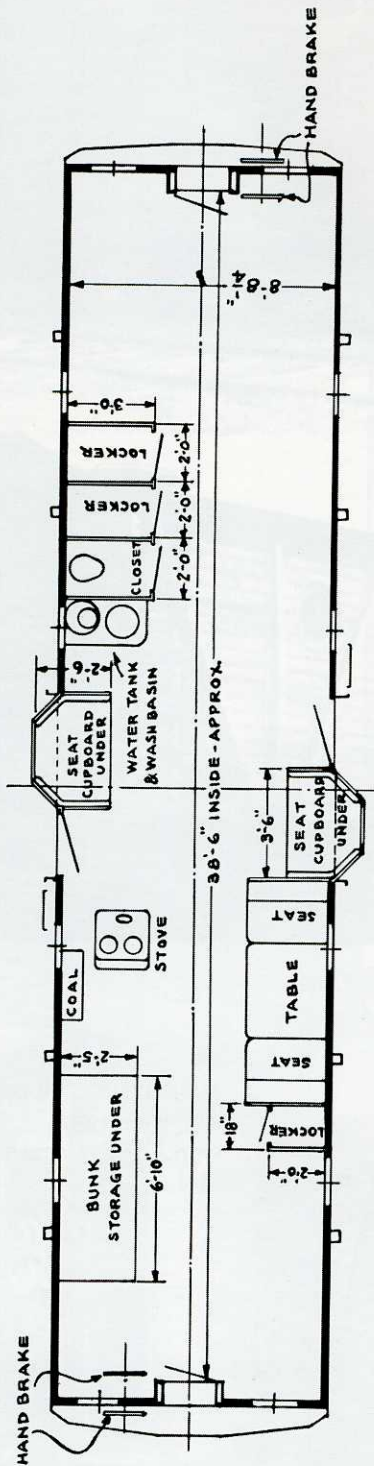
PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT

PHILADELPHIA FEB. 27, 1943

E
CHIEF OF MOTIVE POWER 428211
J.H.M. SMSA
MECHANICAL ENGINEER

THIS TRACING HAS BEEN MADE OBSOLETE ON
ACCOUNT OF NOT BEING USED. 4-20-43

Proposed and rejected cabin car design with a squat top center cupola. (PRR drawing E428211A; Chuck Blardone collection)



ISSUED - - 1943-A

X23 CONVERTED TO CABIN CAR

THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD
 FREIGHT CARS
 PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT
 PHILADELPHIA APRIL 2, 1943

THIS TRACING HAS BEEN MADE OBSOLETE AND IS SUPERSEDED BY TRACING A 428487, APRIL 20, 1943

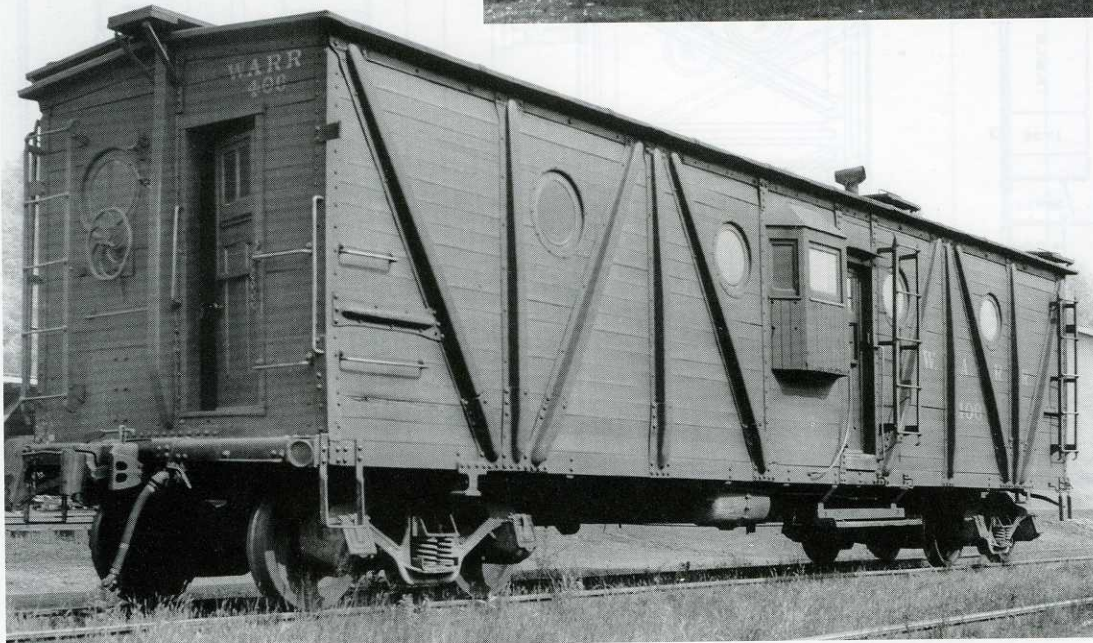
CHIEF OF MOTIVE POWER
 J.H.M. S.M.G. **E 428391**
 MECHANICAL ENGINEER

Approved NX23 design. (PRR drawing E428391A and A428487D; Chuck Blardone collection)



▲ PRR NX23 478577, Westline, Pa., April 13, 1947. (J.W. Brauner photo; Paul B. Dunn collection; PRRT&HS collection)

▶ 499722 was still in MW service when this photo was taken in May 1964. New horizontal siding had been applied and lower side supports removed concurrent with the bay window being removed. (John C. LaRue collection) Paul B. Dunn collection; PRRT&HS collection)



◀ WARR NX23 406, Kaylor, Pa., April 1957. (P. Dunn photo; J.C.LaRue collection)

were likely dropped from the roster in the early 1950s.

At least two horizontal-sheathed cars were transferred to Pennsy subsidiary Western Allegheny, #406 and 407.

"The NX23 was a good low-cost solution to PRR's cabin car shortage. They probably were not used extensively in main line service due to their lack of good riding qualities and amenities. It is believed that the majority, if not all of the NX23 spent the war years in service west of Crestline, Ohio. PRR's cars were originally painted oxide red, with

white lettering. In the 1950s at least one car (478550) was painted M/W yellow, with black lettering...At the end of World War II, the NX23s were withdrawn from freight service duty and most were converted to maintenance-of-way service. The conversion included removal of interior furnishings and removal of the bay window. Porthole windows were retained, although they were blanked out on some cars. Although there was no apparent difference, some M/W cars remained lettered class NX23, and others reverted to X23. Many such M/W cars lasted as long as the PRR itself." (Blardone)

After WWII our restored cabin car was given a third number. During 1950s and 1960s it was used in maintenance-of-way service on the route from Columbus to Bradford, Ohio. The MW NX23 cars lasted until 1969.

Cars on the PRR Roster:

<u>9/1/46</u>	<u>12/1/46</u>	<u>3/1/47</u>	<u>5/1/49</u>	<u>11/1/51</u>	<u>5/1/53</u>	<u>12/1/57</u>	<u>2/1/66</u>	<u>11/1/69</u>	<u>12/1/69</u>
75	73	40	35	30	15	12	4	2	0

▶
WARR NX23 406, Kaylor Pa., June 1963.

(L.D. Champion photo; J.C.LaRue collection)

WARR NX23 406, Kaylor, Pa., August 17, 1973.

(D.H. Hanley photo; J.C.LaRue collection)
▼

