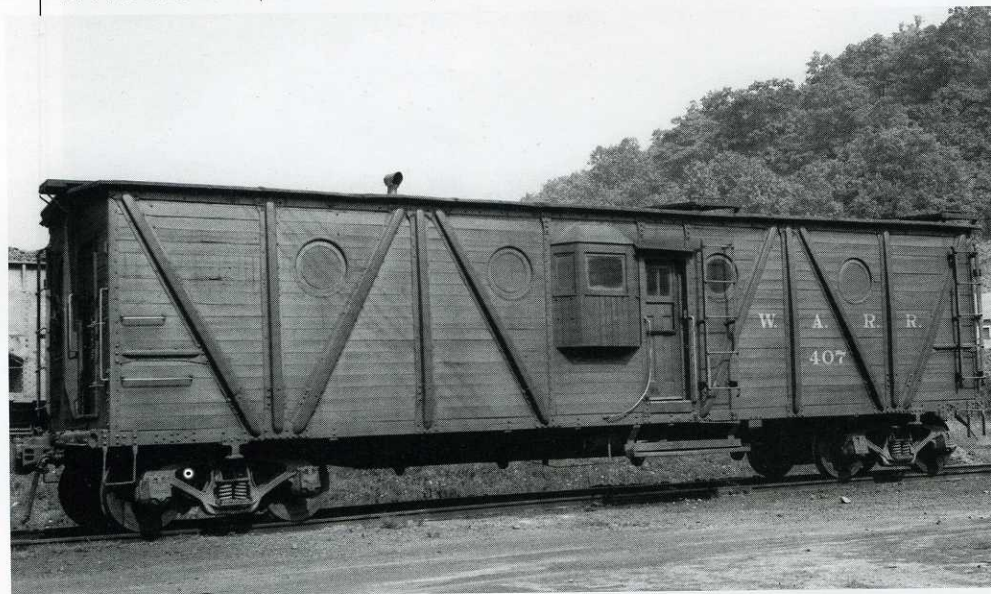


WARR NX23 407. (J.C.LaRue collection)



RESTORATION

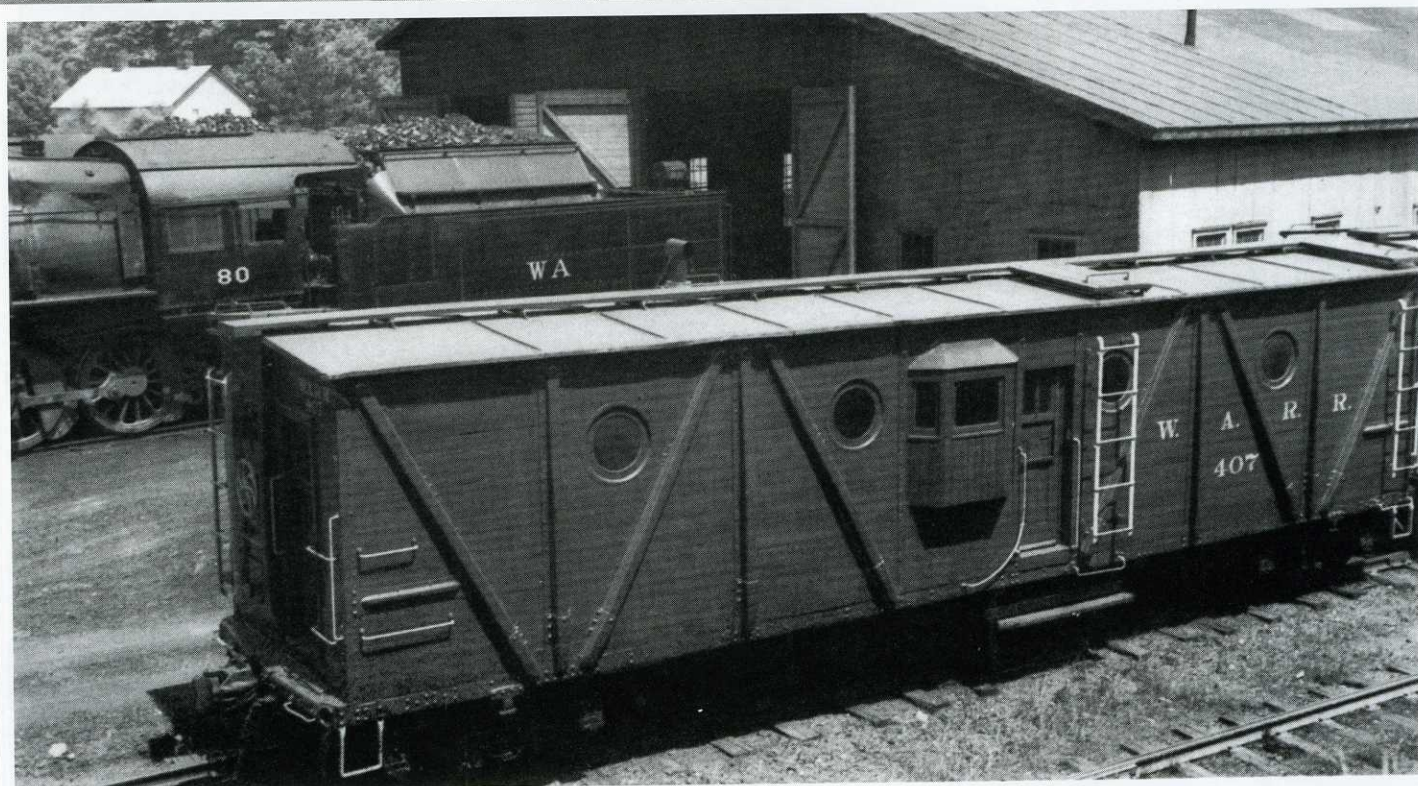
During the 1960s PRR sold two MW cars, without trucks, to Marion W. Parks, a local Urbana building supply dealer and coal yard. They were used as an office and for storage. In 1999 the Parks family donated the cars to the Champaign County Preservation Alliance. One was moved in 2000, to be restored for then North Lewisburg's in-progress bike trail on abandoned Erie-Lackawanna Railroad roadbed, called the Simon Kenton Trail. (The second car was too far gone to restore, and was scrapped.) The restoration has been co-sponsored by the Simon Kenton Corridor, the Simon Kenton Pathfinders, and the Champaign County Historical Society.

The groups obtained a pair of trucks from a PRR flat car used as an area bridge re-build. It was found in Wooster, Ohio, and transported to Urbana.



WARR NX23 407, Kaylor, Pa., August 1952. (J.C.LaRue collection)

WARR NX23 407, Kaylor, Pa., July 14, 1954. (J.W. Brauner photo) ▼





▲ LIRR NX23A 48 at the third overpass east of the Woodside, Long Island station (65th Place), c.1948.

(Chuck Blardone collection)

▶ LIRR NX23A 49, Hollis, N.Y., September 5, 1948, is ex-PRR 492754. Note the replacement narrow width horizontal siding.

(George E. Votave photo)

LIRR NX23A 49, Arch Street Yard, Long Island City, 1949.

(George Arnoux photo; Chuck Blardone collection)



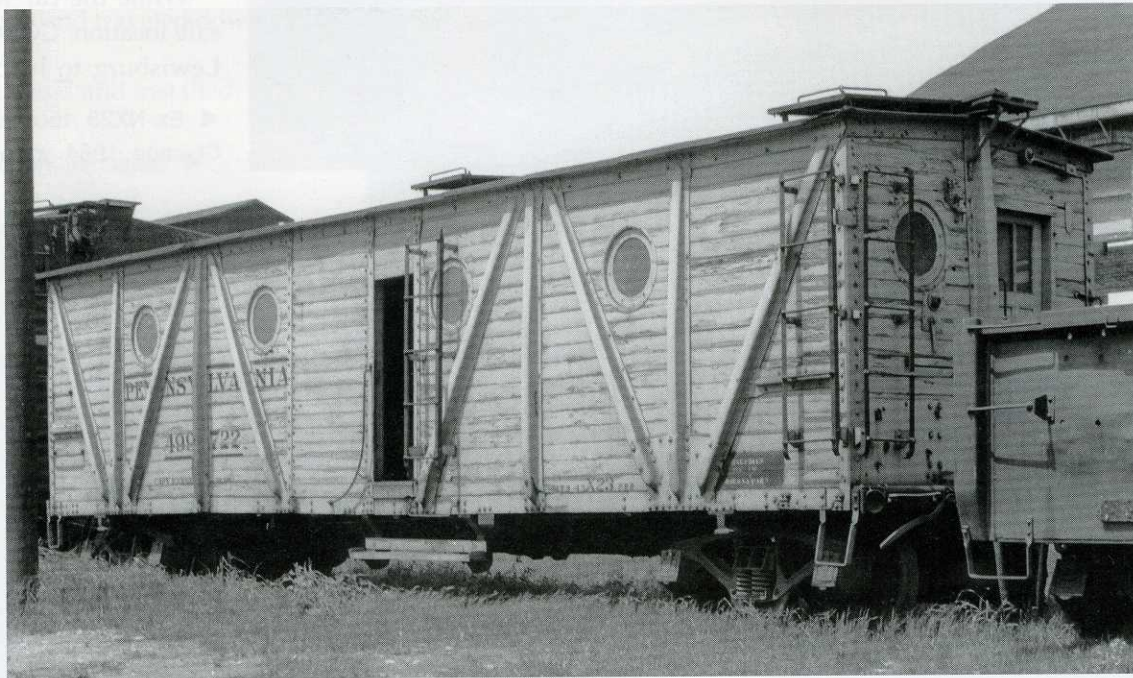
▼



The first major job undertaken was attaching the ceiling. The original metal roof trusses had wood attached to them at the ceiling level. These had deteriorated, so the ceiling was sagging in the middle, where the ceiling boards overlapped. When this car was on West Court St. It sat on railroad ties, enabling termites to get into the floor, and repairs were necessary. There were two original door latches, one brass and one cast iron. We hope to locate two additional latches and install them on all doors.

Was there a built-in toilet? Several drawings of the NX23 show toilets in one of the lockers, but our drawing did not have one.

Hi-Point Career Educational students have restored three doors, built another, bead blasted the window rings, and cut out identification stencils for painting the exterior. Volunteers placed primer paint on the exterior and the car was spray painted with a final coat. The Urbana High School FFA spent two days after school painting all of the



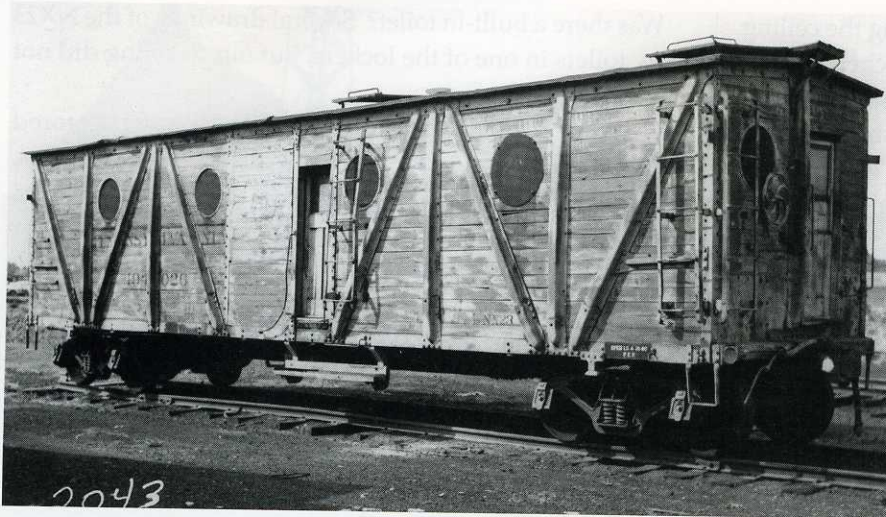
►
Ex-NX23 MW tool car
499722, Ford City, Pa.,
May 1964.

(J.C.LaRue collection)

Ex-NX23 MW tool car
491026, Chicago,
c.1964. (Oleander photo;

J.C.LaRue collection)



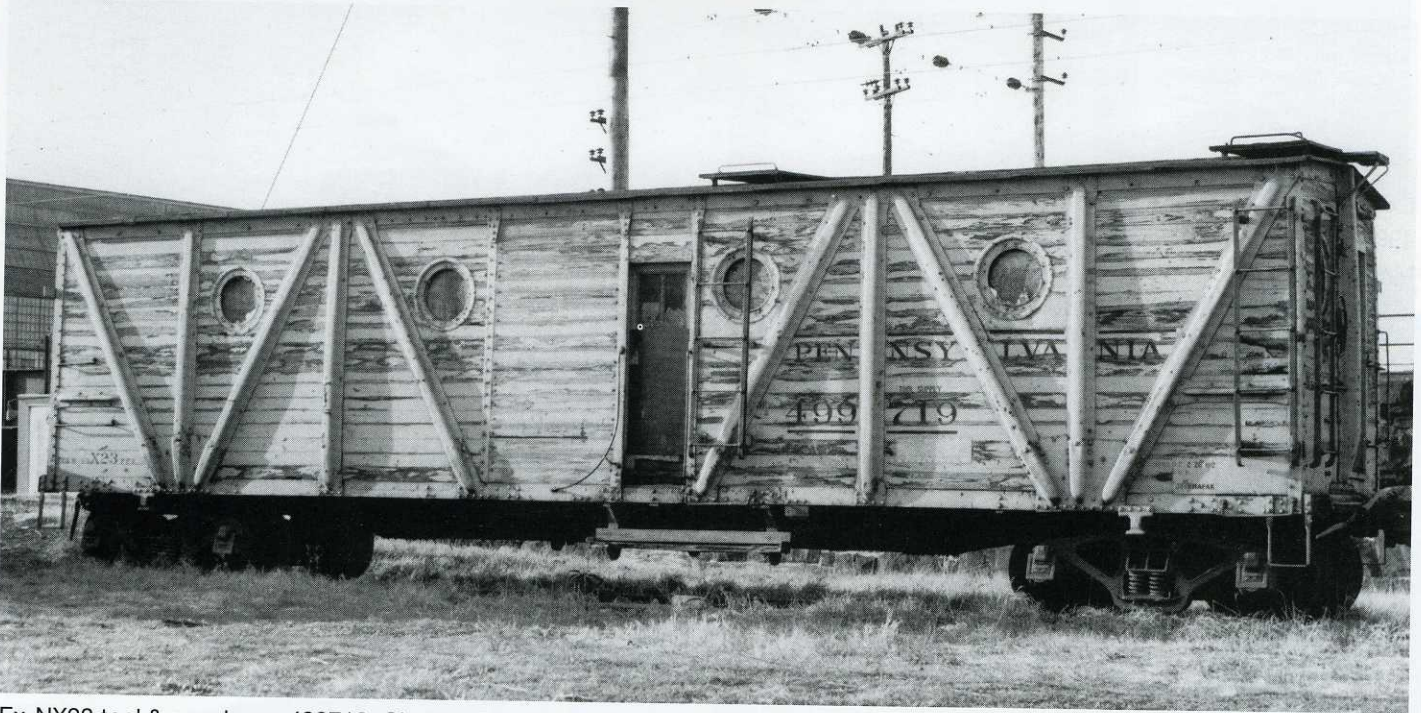


identification letters and numbers.

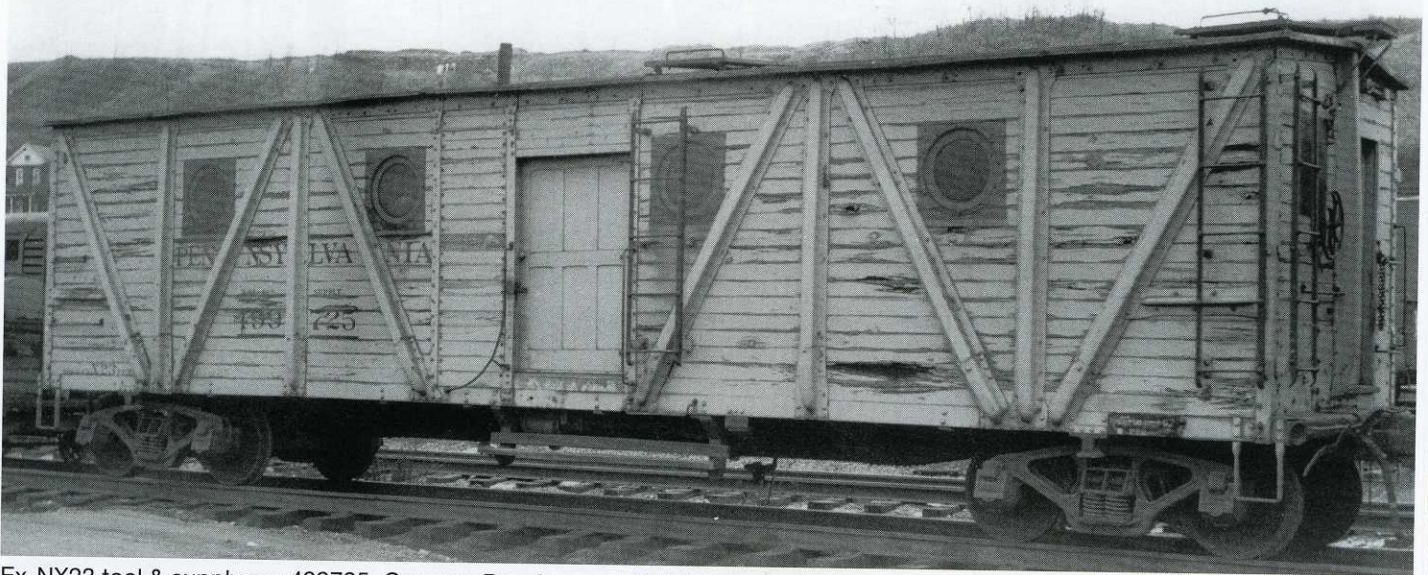
The original round windows consisted of two layers of bonded glass. A local glass dealer provided 1/4" thick Lexan for each of the 24-inch diameter windows. Also, he provided single pane Lexan for each of the doors. Volunteers rethreaded the beaded cast metal frames to hold the three round frames together for each window.

While the car was being restored in a safe location, CCPA partnered with North Lewisburg to help with their bike path.

◀ Ex-NX23 tool and supply car 494026, Chicago, 1964. (Oleander photo; J.C.LaRue collection)



Ex-NX23 tool & supply car 499719, Chester, Pa., November 21, 1970. (J.C.LaRue collection)



Ex-NX23 tool & supply car 499725, Conway, Pa., January 12, 1964. (L.D. Champion photo; J.C.LaRue collection)

The original rail bed had missing bridges, so Terry Jones of North Lewisburg and a CCPA volunteer traveled to Wooster to visit a rail salvage yard. An entire flatcar was purchased. CCPA split the cost with North Lewisburg; CCPA got the trucks and North Lewisburg got the bed, cut off the sides for scrap, and was going to use the frame to replace the missing bridges.

In June of 2006 the NX23 was moved again. Weighing in at 51,850 pounds (including the wheels), it was loaded on a low boy and traveled down North Russell Street.

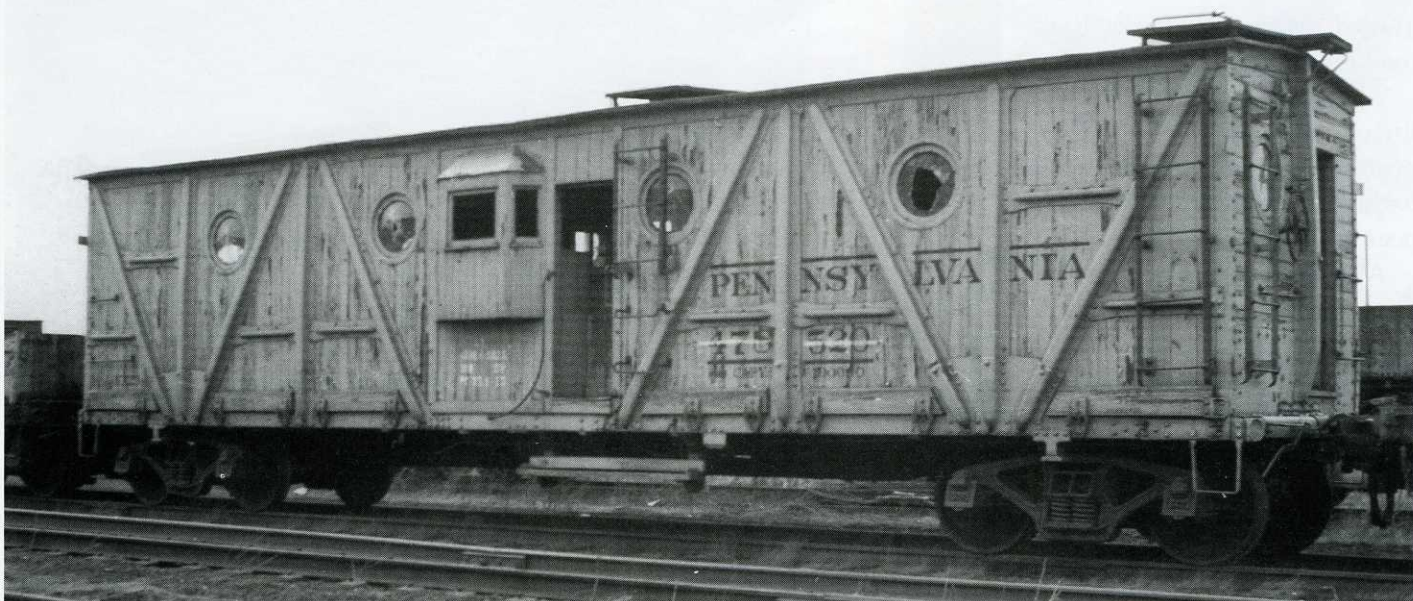
A NYC stove was donated and installed.

Ex-NX23 #494038, Muskegon, Michigan. ▶

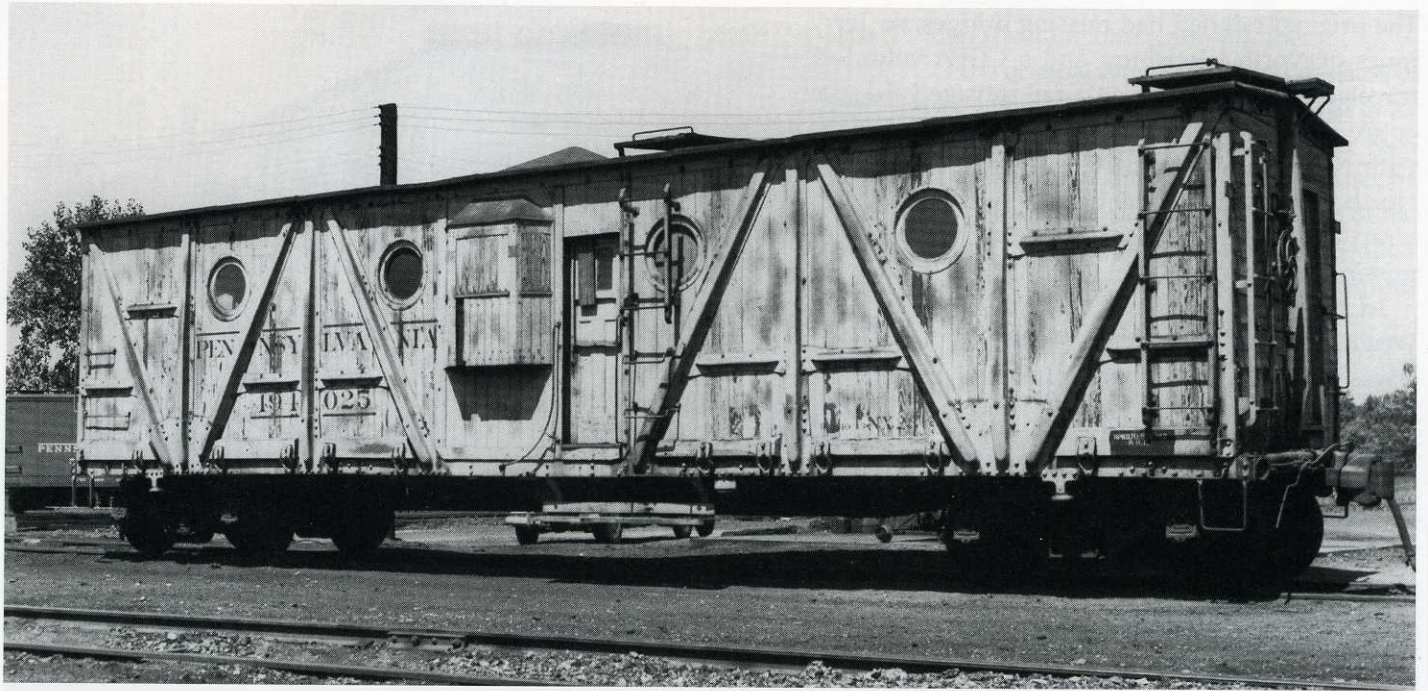
(I.B. Bluehamp collection)



Ex-NX23 tool & supply car 499721, Renovo, September 1, 1966. (Gary C. Rauch photo)



NX23 478520 whitelined at Millwood, Pa., April 8, 1965. (E. Roy Ward photo; courtesy of Robert L. Johnson)



NX23 494025 in gray paint. (Pennsylvania Photos collection; Hoffman collection; PRRT&HS collection)

We installed three lockers, one booth, one bed, two bays, and a sink. We also installed five original Johnson Mfg. caboose lamps, produced across the street from the NX23 and PRR depot.

When it came to landscaping this area, we noticed how many visitors wanted their pictures taken on the southeast side, so we left the side towards the bike path open. We found a nice four-ton rock flat on one side with three surfaces and had it engraved "Marion W. Parks, Railroad Education Center."

A PRR first-aid kit and the three metal etchings on the opposite wall were a gift from Bill Sacher, Chief Clerk for the Engineer of the PRR in Columbus.

Also in the car were a set of flags and lanterns to communicate with the engineman.

Behind the door next to the coal bin is an air gauge that displayed the train brake air-pressure.

Not knowing the NX23's number, an arbitrary one, 478591, was assigned and painted. Vol-

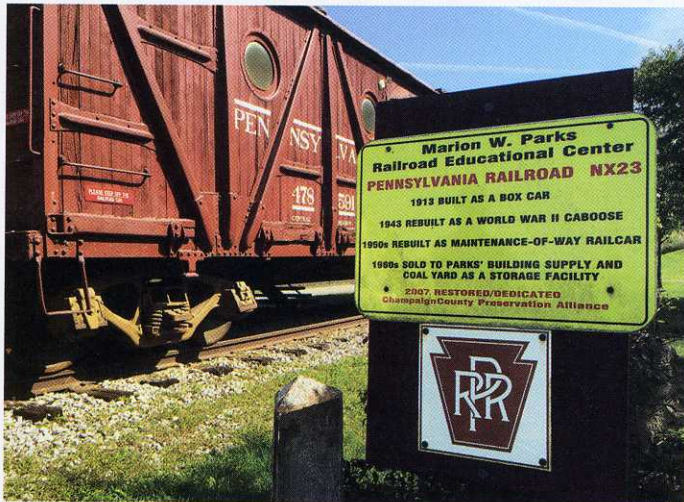


Derelict Urbana NX23, August 31, 1999. (Rich Burg photos) ▲ ▼





Students lettering the NX23. (Ken Davis collection)



▲ ▼ Completed restoration, August 23, 2016. The city of Urbana and many individuals played a huge part in restoring the NX23. (Ron Widman photos)

◀ Part of the Railroad Park, mile marker, sign and stone. April 12, 2017.

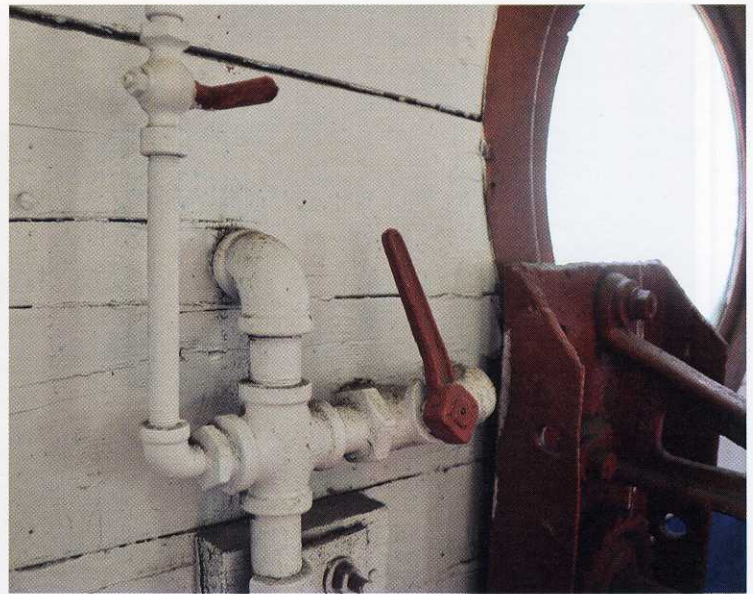


unteers placed WWII posters (Rosie the Riveter and Uncle Sam. "We need you") on the walls, a fire extinguisher, clothes hooks, and Johnson RR equipment in the lockers, a poster showing the lantern signals used for conductors, and a red flag used to communicate with the engineman, and copies of 1940s magazines on the table, and a brass air pressure gauge.

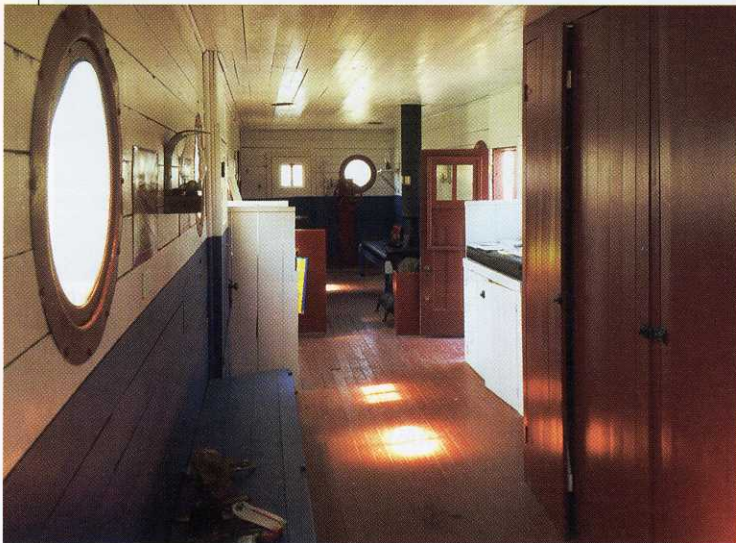
The benches along the interior sides were installed in the 1950s when the car was used for maintenance-of-way. The four vents, we believe, were installed about the same time.

The Urbana NX23 is just West of downtown Urbana, along U.S. Rt. 36. The Urbana 1894 PRR Depot, now The Depot Coffee House, provides lunch, drinks and a comfortable spot to rest while visiting the area. Just across the street is the former building of the Johnson Mfg. Co., makers of railroad tin ware, caboose lanterns and more

NX23 Organizers & Urbana natives Ken Davis and PRRT&HS member Gary Salzgeber give tours through the cabin car.



Brake valves are located beside the two interior brake wheels. April 12, 2017. (Ron Widman photo)



Interior, April 12, 2017. In one view, Ken Davis and Gary Salzgeber look over a steam locomotive calendar photo. (Ron Widman photos)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Moving and restoration of the NX23 could not have been accomplished without the broad support of the City of Urbana's administration, Fire, Police, Engineering, Street & Water Departments, City Development, and the Champaign County Sheriff's Department.

Many donated hours/materials and purchased materials/services have restored this car. The sponsoring organizations would like to thank all of the people who helped on the train trips to raise money for the restoration and a big thank you to all who supported this project over the years. Students at our local vocational school built one door and restored three doors on the NX23. Students did all the lettering on the outside of the car.

Thanks to assistance from Gary Salzgaber, Gary Rauch, John M. Prophet, III and Rich Burg in writing this article.

SUGGESTED READING

A brief history on the origin of the NX23 is found in a ten-page account in a 1970 issue of *The Keystone* that states, "It was the first PRR standard 40-foot boxcar. It was also the first PRR boxcar to make extensive use of steel for the superstructure. The sides carried much of the load, so that the heavy side sills of previous steel underframe cars were

not required... The initial order of 1000 X23 cars was placed with the railroad's (PRR) Altoona Car Shops in the fall of 1912... more than 6,900 X23 cars were built in all..." *Keystone* September 1970, Vol. 3, No. 3. Article: "X23, R7, X24, K7 and Related Car Classes," by Gary C. Rauch and John M. Prophet, III.

To help restore the railcar, our contractor used the article written by Chuck Blardone, titled "NX23—The Good Soldier," as found in *The High Line*, Summer 1985, Philadelphia Chapter, PRRT&HS.

Additional related history articles focused on the X23 box car and photos are found in other issues of *The Keystone*:

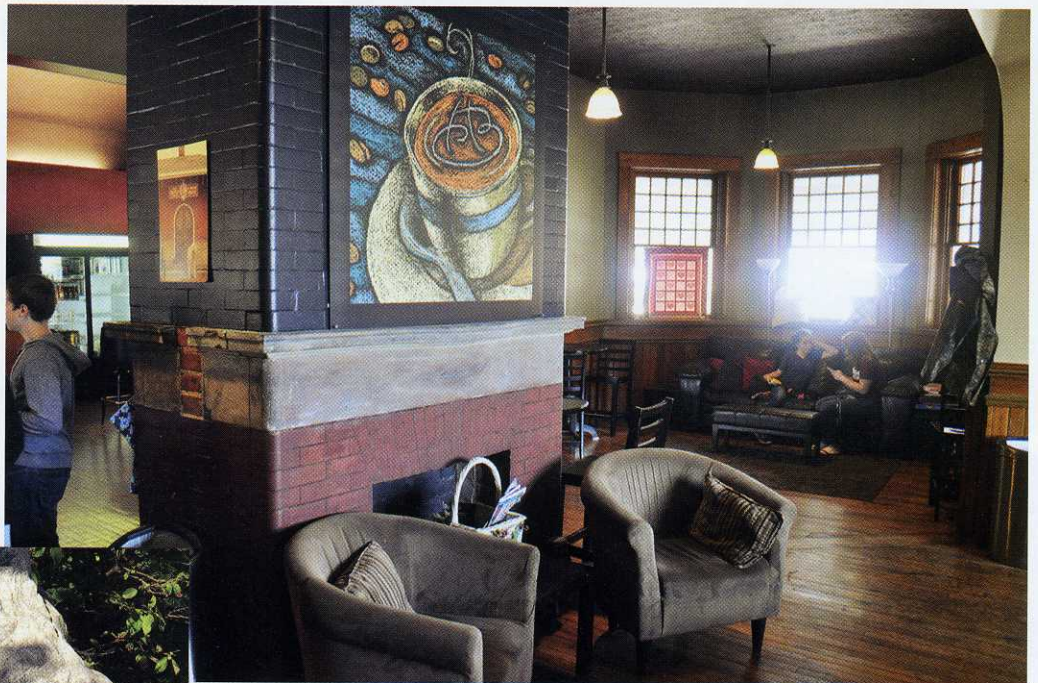
"MW Service X23 at Eastern Shore Railway Museum" by Kennard Wing, Summer 2016

"MW X23 Moved to Martinsburg Roundhouse," by Chuck Blardone, Autumn 2016 *Keystone*.

"The Cars of The Pennsylvania Railroad," Wayner Publications, New York. Photo on page 58. And in "Pennsy Power III" photo found on p. 417.

For a past history of all five Champaign County railroads and the three crossing near this railcar, see the *History of Champaign Railroads, 1805-2005*, printed by the Champaign County Preservation Alliance.

▶
The inside of The Depot Coffee House offers a pleasant atmosphere. The original fireplace is in the center of the building. April 12, 2017. (Ron Widman photo)



◀
This rock was chosen for engraving the Railroad Educational Center name. The Urbana Johnson Mfg. Co steam loco oil can was also engraved. August 23, 2016. (Ron Widman photo)

