

FRISCO

All Aboard

FRISCO

MAY-JUNE

1993



FRISCO All Aboard FRISCO

VOLUME 8

May-June, 1993

NUMBER 3

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THE

FRISCO

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Thursday thru Saturday

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MUSEUM OFFICE

Tuesday thru Saturday

9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The *All Aboard* is published bimonthly for members of the FRISCO FOLKS organization of THE FRISCO RAILROAD MUSEUM Inc. The museum facility is located at 500 Walker St. in Ash Grove, MO. The museum offices are located at 100 E. Main St., Ash Grove, MO. All correspondence should be addressed to P.O. Box 276, Ash Grove, MO, 65604. The *ALL ABOARD* and its contents are copyrighted by The Frisco Railroad Museum Inc., and may not be reproduced or duplicated in any manner or form without the expressed written consent of the museum President. The Frisco Railroad Museum Inc. is not supported by, nor affiliated in any way with, the Burlington Northern Railroad Company, its subsidiaries or affiliates.

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A Man With Frisco Pride

By
Viola Fox Cotter

**"HE SERVED THE FRISCO
37 YEARS AS STATION AGENT
AND TELEGRAPHER."**

This pride in his profession is prominently displayed as an inscription on his tomb stone. William Ellsworth Watts was a man, small in stature, only about 5'2" tall and his place in the history of Kansas was not large, but he served his community well. He did his job faithfully in the small town of Narcissa, Indian Territory, where he spent his first years with the Frisco, and at Turck, KS, near Columbus.



Narcissa, OK, circa. 1903. Viola Cotter collection

Bill, his wife Dora, and their two children arrived in Turck in March of 1908. The children, Charles and Jessie, grew up living in the section house beside the tracks.

The years before World War I passed quickly. *Daddy Watts*, as he was called by the young folks in the community, sold tickets to places far away, as he handled the freight and shipping day by day.

Young Charles made his first venture into business by running the movie theater in the small town. Jessie, my mother, graduated from

Cherokee County High School in 1917. She became a teacher in small area schools... and time passed... The 1920's went by, and grandchildren came to visit and learn about trains and travel.

Mother Watts was involved with her clubs, home demonstration work, and church activities. The years of the Great Depression were hard for small towns. There was little work, but Turck had the Hercules Powder Mill as its main stay.

In 1938, on a dry late October day, as a mighty Frisco locomotive pulled thru the tiny

community, sparks flashed as steel wheels bit the steel tracks. Tinder dry grass was a ready kindling, and soon the flames were moving thru the open field toward the mill. Fear must have been heavy in the hearts of all those who fought so hard to extinguish the dangerous flames. Soon they realized that the task was to great. Nothing more could be done. Grandmother Dora took down her pretty things from the walls and cabinets and all made a fast escape from the area. The blasts, which rocked the community for many miles, were heard in Joplin, MO and in Oklahoma.

No lives were lost, but so came the end of another small town. No longer was there a need for the station at Turck. Grandmother & Granddaddy moved back to the small prairie town of Narcissa and spent the remainder of their years, again living near the Frisco line where they started their railroad career so many years before.

Grandmother died in 1946, and granddaddy walked each day, along the tracks, remembering with pride his years of service with the Frisco. ☐

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Turck, Station L144, and Narcissa, Station L179, were both on the Afton Sub-Division, Northern Division. Viola Fox Cotter is a member of our Frisco Folks family and proudly shares this feature as a tribute to her grandparents.*



Turck, KS, circa. 1917. Viola Cotter collection



Automobile Handling Facilities

In 1962, the Frisco's Intermodal Department was serving the following thirty-nine cities with TOFC Trailer-On-Flat-Car loading/unloading ramps.

ADA, OKLA.
 ABERDEEN, MISS.
 ALTUS, OKLA.
 BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
 BLYTHEVILLE, ARK.
 CHICKASHA, OKLA.
 CLINTON, MO.
 CLINTON, OKLA.
 CRYSTAL CITY, MO.
 DALLAS (IRVING), TEX.
 ENID, OKLA.
 FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.
 FLOYDADA, TEX.

FT. SILL, OKLA.
 FT. SMITH, ARK.
 FT. WORTH, TEX.
 HENRYETTA, OKLA.
 JONESBORO, ARK.
 JOPLIN, MO.
 KANSAS CITY, MO.
 LAMAR, MO.
 LAWTON, OKLA.
 MEMPHIS, TENN.
 MOBILE, ALA.
 MONETT, MO.
 MUSKOGEE, OKLA.

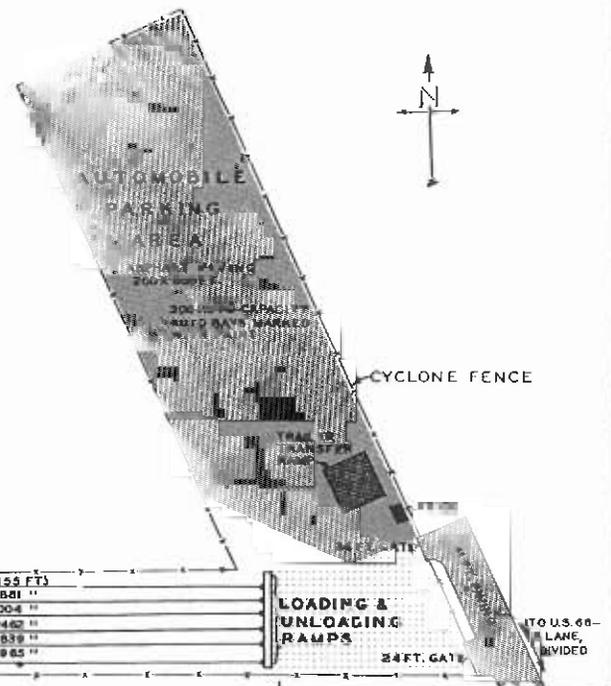
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.
 OKMULGEE, OKLA.
 PARIS, TEX.
 PENSACOLA, FLA.
 ROGERS, ARK.
 ST. LOUIS, MO.
 SHERMAN, TEX.
 SPRINGFIELD, MO.
 TULSA, OKLA.
 TUPELO, MISS.
 VINITA, OKLA.
 WEST PLAINS, MO.
 WICHITA, KAN.

In addition to the piggyback ramps, the Frisco had in service five automobile handling facilities. This is the first in a series of features that will profile the automobile facilities with layout diagrams and photos.

St. Louis, Mo

RAMP-AREA DETAILS:

- FENCED AUTO PARKING CAPACITY: 300-ON PAVING
- TRAILER TRANSFER RAMPS (48'X54') IN PAVED AREA
- TWO BUCK LOADERS FOR BI-LEVEL AND TRI-LEVEL OPERATION
- MULTI-LEVEL CAR CAPACITY: 48 UNITS PER SETUP
- FACILITY ALSO HANDLES STANDARD PIGGY-BACK LOADS
- FACILITY COMPLETELY ENCLOSED BY CYCLONE FENCE
- FACILITY FULLY LIGHTED-24-HOUR OPERATION



FRISCO
FRISCO AUTOMOBILE RAMP
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
 TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT
 ST. LOUIS-SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY CO.
 ST. LOUIS - I - MISSOURI



Frisco's automobile facility at Valley Park (St. Louis) showing loading tracks with capacity of 50 tri-level or bi-level cars and adjoining storage area. Frisco photo



View of Frisco's multi-level loading racks at Valley Park (St. Louis).

Frisco photo



Unloading ramps for automobiles arriving by highway transport for transfer to multi-level cars.

Frisco photo

FRISCO COVERED AUTO RACKS

By Rick McClellan

Today's HO modeler has an incredible selection of great running locomotives and rolling stock to select from. One of the latest additions to the fleet of freight equipment is the 89' enclosed auto carriers from Walthers. These little beauties appear to be identical to the covered auto racks in service on the Frisco and with a little attention they can proudly wear the coonskin.

First, a little history. The transporting of automobiles by rail on the Frisco dates back to 1910, when the first 300 automobile

cars arrived on company property, series 145000-145299. In the early 1960's, the Frisco pioneered the auto rack concept with its 3000-3130 series of Pullman built 85' tri-level units. By 1970, the fleet of auto racks numbered 665 with 129 Frisco-owned units and 536 racks on leased equipment from the Trailer Train Co., series reporting marks **RTTX** (flat cars, equipped with fixed tri-level auto racks furnished by participant railroads) and **BTTX** (flat cars, equipped with bi-level auto racks furnished by participant

railroads). **EDITOR'S NOTE:** A more detailed history of Frisco auto carrier equipment appears in the February, 1989, *All Aboard*, pp. 3-4.

In the early 1970's, increased theft and vandalism forced the railroads to develop an enclosed car that would effectively protect the load of automobiles. The end result of their efforts was the covered auto rack, applied to Trailer Train 89' flat cars, and designated **ETTX** (flat cars, equipped with fully enclosed tri-level auto racks



Frisco Covered Auto Rack ETTX 908635, Portec Inc., Grand River, MI, October, 1976. Lens-Art photo

furnished by participant railroads). One of the first Frisco units in this series was No. 908635, built in October, 1976.

The coonskin was displayed on a 36" x 67" steel panel located second panel down from the top and second panel in from the car end. Although some photos suggest that the cars may have been painted box car red, Frisco Research Service records, photos, and physical evidence (*the museum has the logo panels from car No. 852266*) indicates that they carried the Frisco mandarin orange livery.

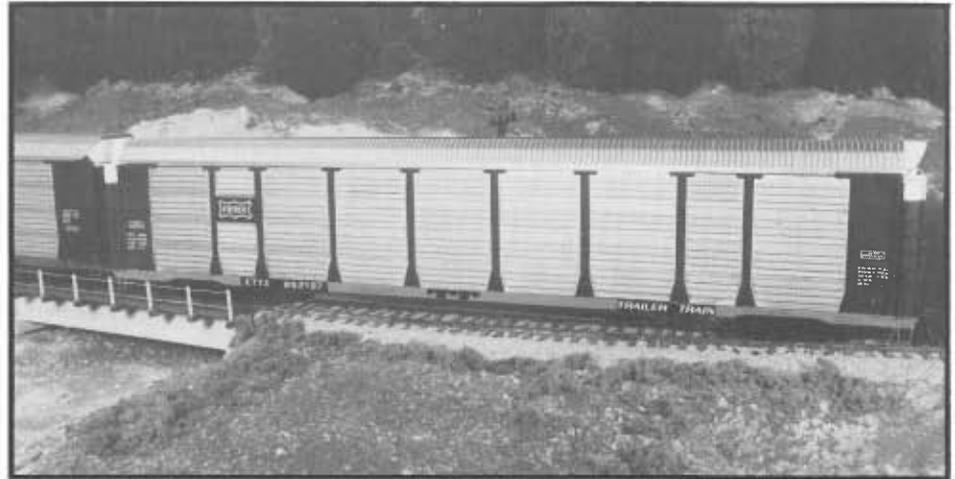
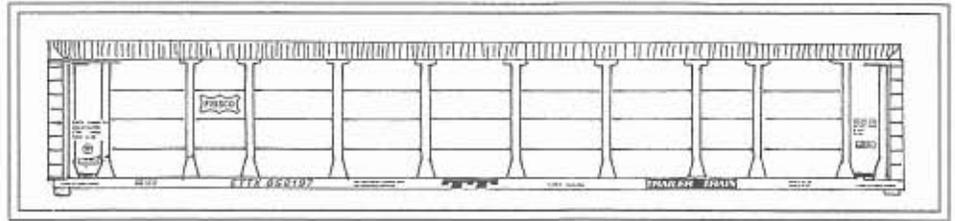
I decided to begin my fleet of covered auto racks with car ETTX 852317 and I began with a Walthers Conrail car #932-4803. While I had to piece-meal the decals for my car, I understand that Oddballs Custom Decals has come out with a set, #48, that includes all Frisco and Trailer Train logos & reporting marks, with number variations for ETTX 852197, 852322, or 852147.

The flat car is painted yellow, the frame & end doors orange, and the top & side panels silver. Note in the photo on page 6 that the top of the end doors and the end of the roof are white.

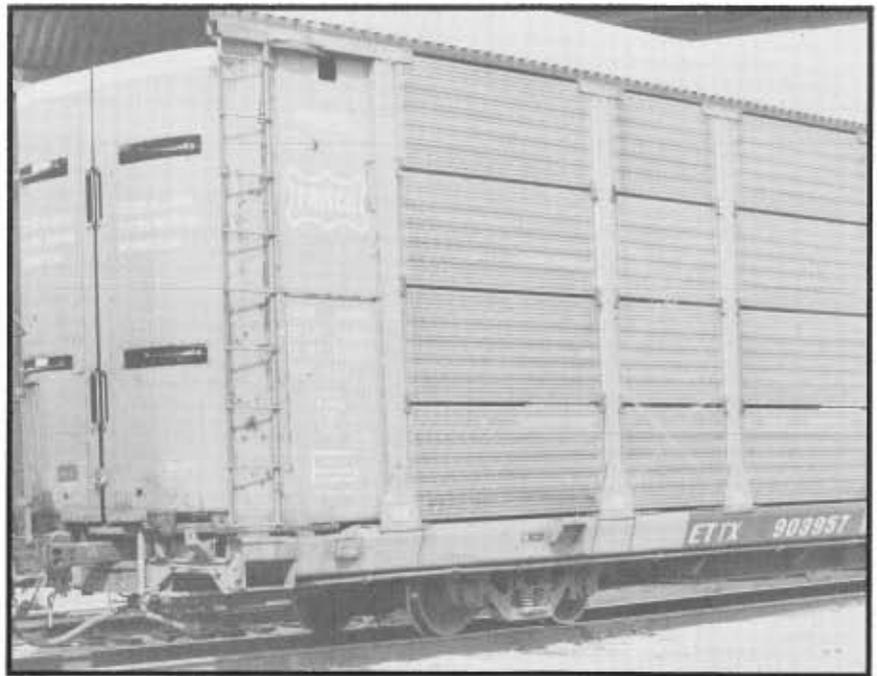
Two informational notes bear mention. First, the Frisco actually operated two variations of the covered auto racks. One, with the coonskin on a side panel and one with a smaller logo located on the upper side of the end frame. Oddballs also has a decal set available for the latter variation, set #40.

Second, these cars are very long and need wide curves. I tried to body mount Kadee #5 couplers and found that the cars would derail on my 34" radius curves. They have since been fitted with the special swinging coupler boxes supplied in the kits and I have not had any derail problems.

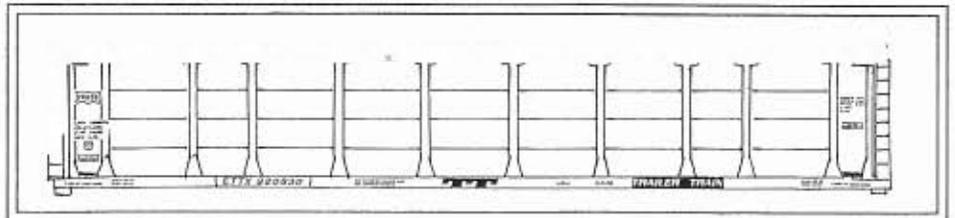
Several of the cars are now in service on my Springfield Terminal Division including some from other roads. If you model the Frisco in the 1970's, consider adding the Walthers 89' enclosed auto carrier to your roster of SLSF



*Frisco Covered Auto Rack ETTX 852197, in service on Rick's Springfield Terminal Division HO layout.
Rick McClellan photo*



*Frisco Covered Auto Rack ETTX 903957, Kansas City, MO, circa. 1978.
R.E. Napper photo*



Both Frisco Covered Auto Rack diagrams, from Oddballs Decal Catalog

equipment so your automobile manufacturers can **Ship It On The Frisco!** 





Frisco "Trapshooter Special," Neodesha, KS, circa. 1917 Frisco photo

LOOKING BACKWARD is a regular feature of the **ALL ABOARD** that takes a look back through our files at the people, equipment, facilities, operations, and events that were a part of the Frisco 25, 50, and 75 years ago.

25 YEARS - 1968

Pursuant to authorization of the Interstate Commerce Commission in Finance Docket No. 25070, service date July 19, 1968, the St. Louis - San Francisco Railway Company acquired the physical properties, assets and franchises and assumed all liabilities of the

Birmingham Belt Railroad Company, effective with the close of business on September 30, 1968. The Birmingham Belt Railroad was a switching line in Birmingham, AL, incorporated on September 9, 1899.

50 YEARS - 1943

In 1943, Centralized Traffic Control was completed and placed in service between Dillon and Swedeborg, MO, a distance of 46.5 miles. In connection with the new CTC, a new brick building at Newburg was constructed and

passing tracks were extended at Rolla, Sills, Franks, Dixon, and Jury, MO.

75 YEARS - 1918

In 1918, the Frisco operated a *Trapshooter Special* oil train that departed Neodesha, KS, daily, for "somewhere in the east." 🚂

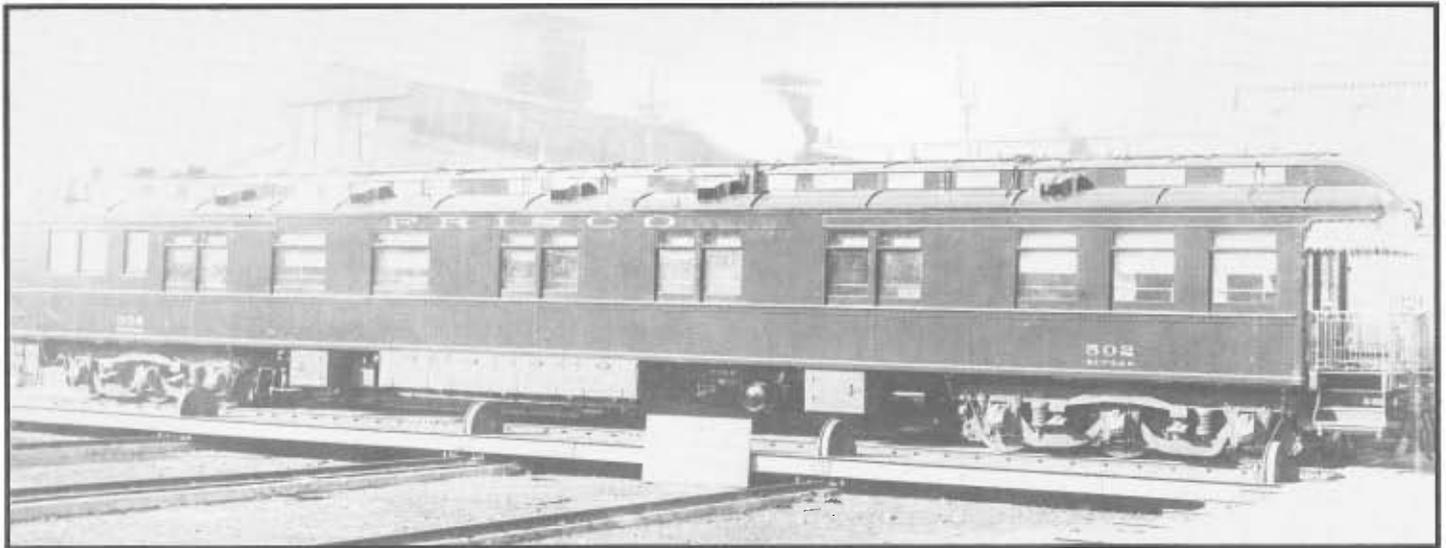


Classic Frisco



It was a St. Louis area bill board announcing the "New Frisco Meteor" diesel powered, streamlined service, May 17, 1948, and its Classic Frisco! Frisco photo

FRISCO'S EXECUTIVE FLEET



Kansas City, Ft. Scott, & Memphis "Official Car" No. 502, American Car & Foundry, St. Charles, MO plant, November, 24, 1911. Kevin Johnson collection

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third in our series on the *Friscos Executive Fleet of Business Cars*.

San Francisco

The *San Francisco* began its tenure of service as "Official Car" No. 502, a 74' steel unit, completed in November, 1911, for service on the Frisco controlled Kansas City, Ft. Scott, & Memphis Railroad. Chances are, it was first assigned to B.L. Winchell, then president of the company.

When the United State government assumed control of the nation's railroads in January, 1918, No. 502 was placed in government service as No. 33, for use by the U.S.

Railroad Administration. In 1920, No. 33 was changed to No. 405, stationed on the Missouri, Kansas, & Texas Railroad, and listed in Equipment Registers as an "MKT" car. In 1921, No. 405 was released from government service, returned to the Frisco, remodeled, and re-numbered No. 1920 at the request of newly elected president J.M. Kurn. Mr. Kurn wanted his business car to symbolize 1920 as being both a new beginning for the Frisco and the beginning of his presidency.

In 1947, when the executive fleet experienced its first major re-numbering program, the No. 1920 car became the No. 1 business car. (see cover photo) In January, 1952, car No. 1 entered the Springfield Coach Shops and emerged in April

of that year as a newly remodeled business car, the *San Francisco*.

The car was 83' long, weighed 228,900 lbs., and was equipped with a full service kitchen & crew quarters, dining room, three state rooms with individual baths, and an observation room on the platform end.

The interior was finished in mahogany paneling and trim, and the exterior was olive green with black roof and gold lettering & trim. The *San Francisco* was, without doubt, the most ornate and luxurious of the entire executive fleet.

In 1956, the car again entered the Springfield coach shops and was released back into service in December, 1956, with a new



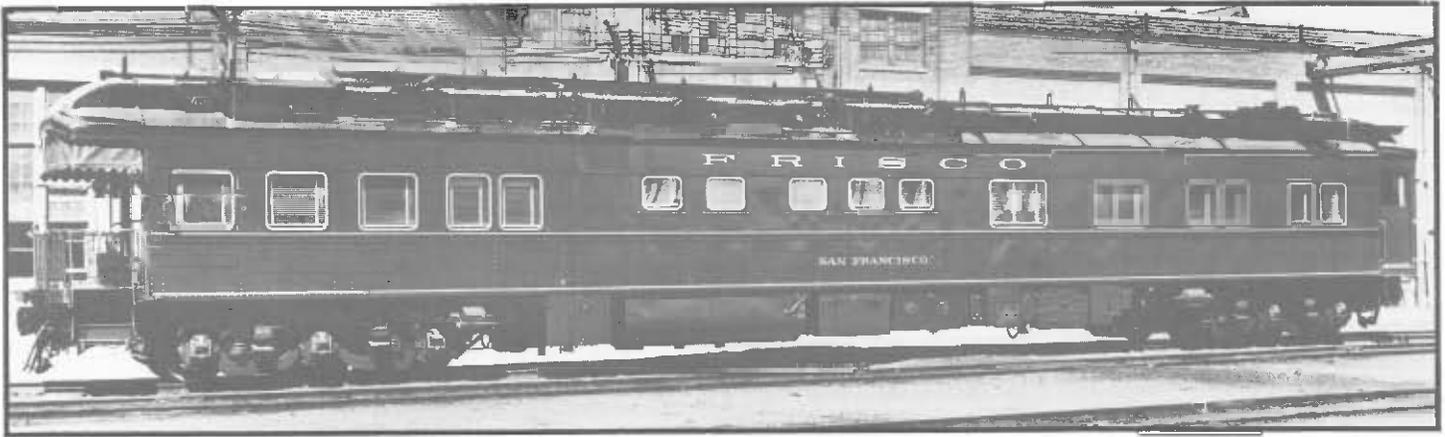
Left side view, Frisco Business Car #1920, West Springfield Coach Shops, September 1, 1944.

Frisco photo

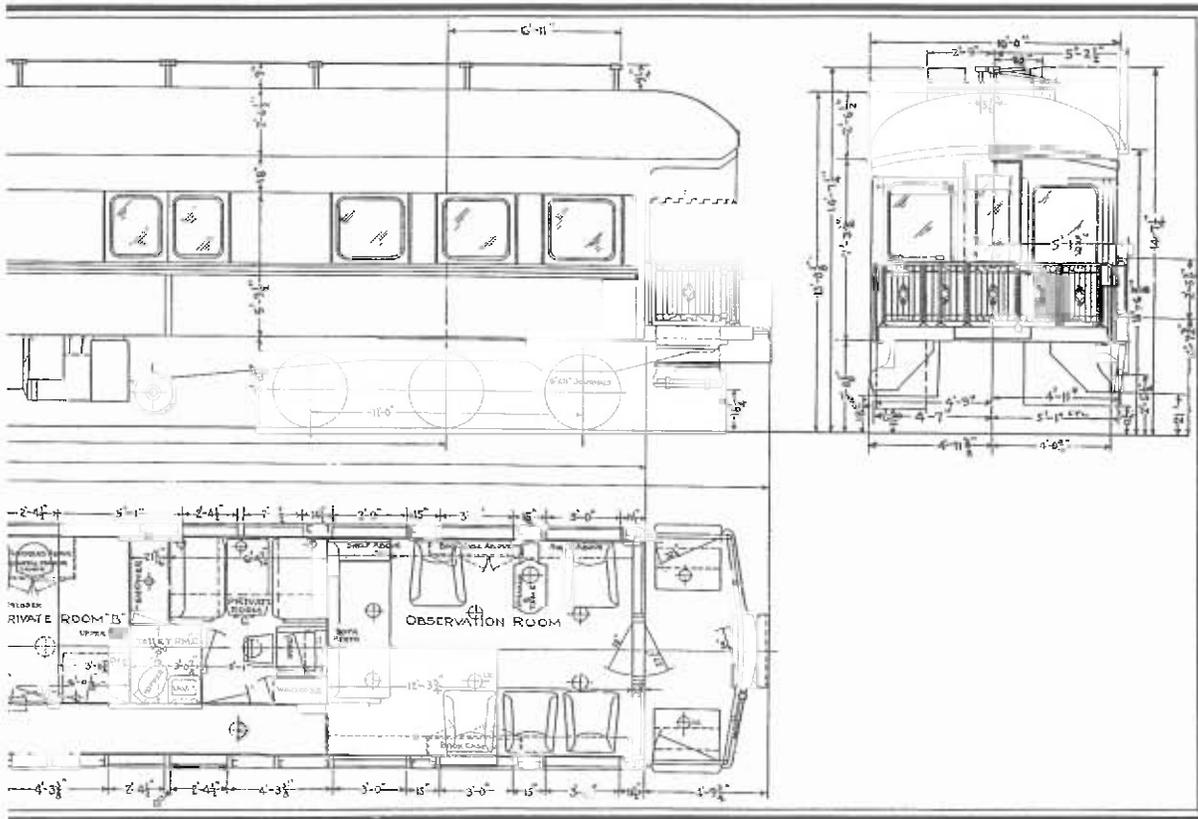


Right side view, Frisco Business Car #1920, West Springfield Coach Shops, September 1, 1944.

Frisco photo



Right side view, Frisco Business Car San Francisco, with monitor roof design, West Springfield Coach Shops, April 17, 1952 Frisco photo



Right side view, Frisco Business Car San Francisco, with turtleback roof design West Springfield Coach Shops, December 21, 1956 Frisco photo

air conditioning system and an arched or turtleback roof design, replacing the original equipment monitor style.

Six years later, while once again in the Springfield Coach Shop for interior remodeling, the *San*

Francisco caught fire and was destroyed beyond repair on December 24, 1962.

While existing records are incomplete, it appears that the *San Francisco* may have been used by, or assigned to, the following

company officials: 1911-1913, B.L. Winchell; 1914-1917, W.C. Nixon; 1918-1920, U.S. Railroad Administration, 1921-1945, J.M. Kurn; 1946-1947, F.A. Thompson; 1948-1955, Clark Hungerford; 1956-1961, R.J. Stone. ☐



San Francisco Business Car, Dining Room, looking toward front of car, Springfield, MO, April 16, 1952.

Frisco photo

San Francisco Business Car, Observation Room, looking toward front of car, Springfield, MO, April 16, 1952.

Frisco photo



San Francisco Business Car, Observation Room, looking toward rear of car, Springfield, MO, April 16, 1952.

Frisco photo

