UTLX 6500 Gallon Class X-3 Tank Cars

By Steve Hile



Standard Steel Car Company Builders Photo, Keith Retterer Collection

When the MCB/ARA Class III tank car specifications were implemented in May 1917, the Union Tank Car Company was prepared with a new design that met those specifications. As an active participant in the process of developing the specs, UTLX was ready to introduce its X-3 design.

Building upon the success of it Class X center anchor, it was relatively easy to create end sills and side sills that allowed running boards to match the height specified for flat cars. New body bolsters were designed with the early version being a rather complex casting. A fabricated saddle held the wood slabs that cushioned the tank. Four bands encircled the tank, two in line with the bolsters and two on either side of the dome. The end sill raked backwards, slightly, from the draft gear and the entire end platform was filled with wood decking back to the bolster.

These cars had a single safety valve, as required, and a screw type dome hatch cover. In later years the screw type was often replaced with the bolted safety type hatch cover. There was a single ladder and dome platform step on the left side of the car as viewed from the brake wheel end.

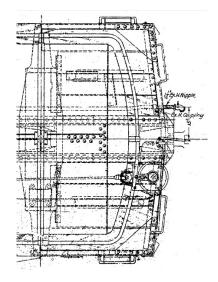
2250 cars were built in 1917 and 1918 numbered as follows:

- 24000-24999 built by American Car and Foundry
- 20350-20849 built by Pressed Steel Car Company
- 18850-19349 built by Standard Steel Car Company
- 18500-18649 built by UTLX at it Lima, Ohio shops

Two slightly different cast bolsters were used by the four builders. The key tip for the cast bolsters is a pattern of four rivets on the side sill where the sill attaches to the bolster. The SSC and PSC version, shown in the photo above, have the

rivets spread apart. In the other version, used by ACF, the 4 rivets are in a tighter cluster, indicating a more tapered bolster end. The ACF bolster pattern is shown below. The pattern used by the UTLX built cars is unknown.





Through the years, many of the ACF cars were repurposed by adding insulating jackets for asphalt service or, in some cases by expanding the tank to carry 8000 gallons.

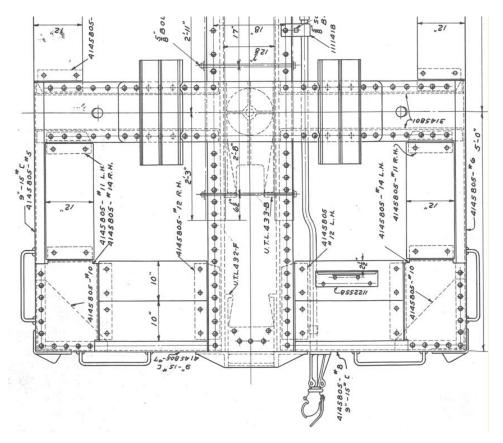
Nevertheless, these cars provided many years of solid service.

By the mid 1930's, an additional batch of 6500 gallon cars was required. ACF built 2000 additional sixty five hundred gallon cars in 1937 numbered 7500-9499. The tanks were virtually identical to the 1917 tanks, except for bolted safety type dome covers.

The underframe of the 1937 cars followed the standard of all the X-3 cars built from 1920 onward. The end sill was straight across, rather than raked. The body bolster was built up and riveted together. There were six rivets showing on the side sill where the bolster connects. See the below photo.



Schedule AB brakes were applied to the 1937 cars and the end platforms had more traditional type running boards along the side sills (one plank) and across the end (two planks.) Ladders and dome platforms were provided on both sides of the tank.



One of the 1917 cars remains at the Museum in Duluth, Minnesota, having last served as an MOW car for the Northern Pacific.







Several of the 1937 cars have been preserved as well, including this one at the Arizona Railway Museum.



For much more information see

 $\ensuremath{\textit{UTLX Steam Era Tank Cars}}$ by Stephen Hile from Speedwitch Media