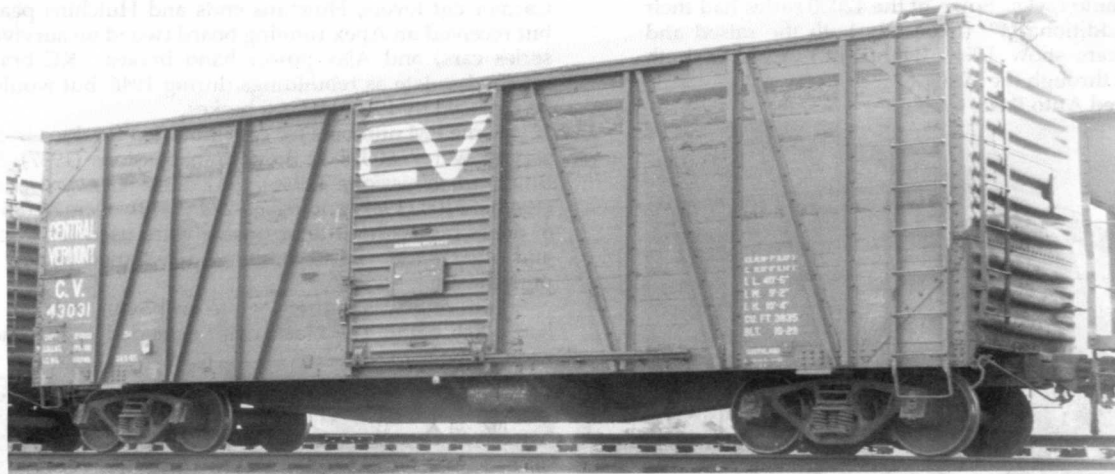




Autocars to Boxcars



The size of the automobile changed during its first 50 years and auto cars built for one era rapidly became obsolete in the next. This necessitated converting the automobile car to general service use. This reconstruction of autocars created myriad unique boxcars. These cars of older design were taller than their contemporaries and often had asymmetrical bracing.

The conversions fell into two major categories. Former autocars, with 10, 12 or 14 foot door openings were desired by certain shippers because their broad door openings made loading with fork lifts easier. The simple expedient of removing auto racks, for instance, made these cars with large openings available to requesting shippers.

A second expedient was to seal the auxiliary door, converting the autocar into a boxcar with a 6 foot door opening. When these downgraded cars were shopped, frequently the auxiliary door was removed and the car siding extended over the opening, especially if they were cars with wood siding.

SSW

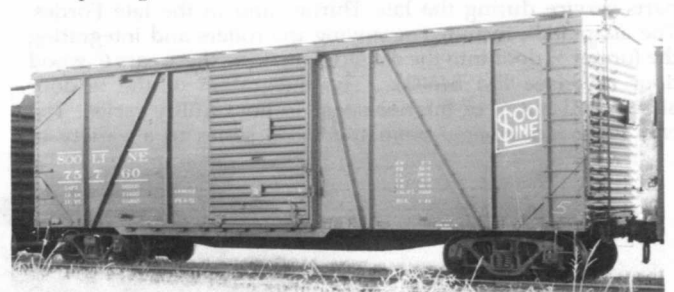
The SSW received 500 double sheathed boxcars with 10' IH and 12' double doors for auto service in the mid-Twenties. They were numbered 45000-499. These had 5/5/6 Murphy ends, a Hutchins roof and Andrews trucks. During the Thirties, approximately half were equipped with auto racks, XAR, and another half were auto-furniture, XAF. During World War II, the racks were removed and the cars converted to boxcars by sealing the left hand door. As this occurred, the series number was changed to 38500-38999. The left door was stenciled "THIS DOOR IS STATIONARY".



SOO

In the mid-Twenties the Soo Line purchase 200 outside braced auto cars with 10' door and a half openings. They had a 10' IH. These cars had a metal sheathed roof, 5/5/5 Murphy

ends and fishbelly underframe. They rode on Andrews trucks. In 1938, 138 were auto cars without racks, XA, and 50 had 12' door openings and Evans auto racks, XAR.



As was common during World War II, the racks were removed from auto cars and they were reclassified as XA. In 1948, there were 175 10' door cars and 19 14' door cars. Beginning in 1950, the Soo modified these cars for other services. Seven foot doors were progressively applied to some cars. The first installation used 7' Youngstown pre-war doors. The space where the left auxiliary door had been was given horizontal sheathing but no diagonal. The door opened to the left. Succeeding modifications used a 7' lightweight door with opening to the right and a diagonal. In 1956, there were 162 cars with 7' door opening, classified as XM and 11 cars with 10' door opening.

Central of Vermont 42000 and 43000 Series

The Central of Vermont also adapted former 12' door outside braced auto cars to create 6' door boxcars, becoming the 43000 series. Since these outside braced cars lasted into the 1970s, they became favorites of railroad photographers.

