



ARA 1923 10' IH Auto/Furniture to Boxcars



From the inception of automobiles, the railroads sought the profitable business of moving assembled automobiles throughout the country and fabricated parts from the factory to assembly plants. The size of the automobile changed during its first 50 years, however, 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.

CNJ 19000-199 Series Steel Cars

As was common for roads in the Northeast, during the Twenties the Central of New Jersey began buying all steel cars. One block, the 19000-199 series, followed the ARA 1923 design but with a 10' IH and 1 1/2 Creco doors with 10' opening for auto loading. The Creco doors were replaced with Youngstown doors and the wood running boards gave way to Morton steel boards along the way. The cars used Dalman two level trucks. The cars were painted boxcar red with white lettering and the CNJ logo on the right side.

Through the Thirties and into the Forties, the 19000 series cars were classified XA for auto cars without racks. By 1948, they were obsolete and had been reclassified as XM, but retained their 10' door opening. There were still 2 cars in service in 1965.

High Point, Thomasville and Denton 400-424 Series

The HPT&D was a 34 mile shortline that served the furniture industry in North Carolina. It connected with the Southern RR at both High Point and Thomasville. It acquired 25 of a 6' door version of the 1923 ARA standard steel boxcar in 1929. The cars had a 10' IH, making them exceptional for the era and design, taller than the PRR X-28 and N&W BPA auto cars. The new cars used an early version of the Duryea underframe and wood running board. Original doors were a Creco design, but Youngstown doors replaced many of these and AB brakes with Ajax hand brake were applied.

The cars arrived with boxcar red paint and white lettering. Some cars were given bright red paint with a silver band, seemingly at the discretion of the shop. Lettering was silver on red and black (or red in at least one case) on a silver band. Another car was painted silver with a black band and another with a red band.

The HPT&D had 24 of the 400 series cars in 1948, but began to dispose of them thereafter, preferring to use off-line cars. Ten cars went to the West India Fruit & Steamship Co.

West India Fruit & Steamship 100 Series

The WIF acquired 10 of the HPT&D 400 series cars in early 1949, placing them in the 100-199 series. The cars purchased had the Creco doors still applied. They retained their Duryea underframe, Ajax power hand brake and wood running board.

The railroad was a ferry service between the Port of Palm Beach, Florida and Havana, Cuba. The road's cars were maintained by the Florida East Coast, the predecessor in the Cuban ferry service.

The 100 series were painted boxcar red with an orange circle logo with black lettering and border on the right side. (This gave way to a ship logo on the other newly purchased cars.) "West India Fruit & Steamship Co." in white was applied to the left side.

There were 10 of the former HPT&D cars in 1956.

