

MILW #01738



Type: Transfer Caboose

Built - 1956

(Built on older locomotive tender frame)

Height - 14' 0"



During the mid-1900s, almost every railroad attached a brightly-colored caboose to the end of their freight-carrying trains. The caboose was a spot for the conductor and brakeman to sit, spot dangers, and keep watch over their train. On long-distance express trains and on overnight trains, cabooses were often very spacious and comfortable, sometimes having beds, toilets, and cushioned chairs, depending on how generous the particular company was.

However, a large expensive caboose was not necessary on short runs between different classification yards and businesses in urban areas. In cities like Chicago and New York, many different railroad companies each had multiple



classification yards, and interchanging cars between them was a huge problem. During the 1950s, Chicago had over 50 different railroad companies which handled freight, and a large, complex maze of trackage weaved about the city and its suburbs.

Several railroads, including the Milwaukee Road, Rock Island, and Chicago and North Western Railroads began building "transfer cabooses" (also known as "terminal cabooses") out of old railcars for use in railcar interchange. The Milwaukee Road built several dozen transfer cabooses using the tenders from the old F class 4-6-4 and the L class Mikado 2-8-2 steam locomotives. These cars had sturdy frames and large open ends for the conductors and brakemen to easily oversee switching maneuvers and potential dangers. The interior is very basic, only meant to be used to shield personnel from the weather.

By the 1980s, American railroads had retired most of their cabooses due to new electronic devices. The Milwaukee Road retired its transfer cabooses during the 1980s, and number 01738 was received by the East Troy Railroad Museum in 1985. Today, the car is the sole restored

Milwaukee Road transfer caboose, albeit with the roof walkway handles removed due to complications with overhead wires. The car is still used during ETRM's annual Christmas Parade Train.

