



Extra 10583
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INSIDE THE OC&E

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Happy Birthday, C&S 10583

Article by Bill Kepner

The bright red caboose we have in the museum, Colorado and Southern #10583, was built 100 years ago, in July 1919. This railroad was never very profitable, so it chose to build as much of its equipment as it could in its own Rice Yard coach shop, the 10583 being one of 10 in that series. The C&S standard gauge main line ran from Wendover, Wyoming, south to Texline, Texas, with only a few short branches in between. So it is likely it spent the majority of its life in Colorado, running along the Front Range.

Back then cabooses were assigned to a specific crew, or more correctly a specific conductor. That meant they would be assigned on a train for a crew district which was usually about 100 miles long. When the crew arrived at their destination, so did their caboose, and it would spend more time waiting for its next run than it did actually on a train.

We can only assume C&S 10583 avoided any severe accidents or other issues that might cut short its service life. Photographic evidence shows it assigned to branch lines in the Fort Collins-Loveland area; it is very likely it visited Greeley and passed by the museum frequently in the '50s and '60s. It is also known to have spent time on the isolated Climax branch out of Leadville in the early '60s. Steam lasted on that line until 1962, and several photos have been published of 10583 by photographers visiting the line to catch the last of standard gauge steam and rotary snowplows in the Rockies.

While the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad owned a good part of the C&S, it had to allow the C&S to operate independently and maintain its own equipment. CB&Q and C&S cabooses may have looked the same, but they wouldn't be treated the same. Even after the railroad was able to abandon its perennial money-losing narrow gauge system, there was still little money available to retire the older wood cabooses.



Colorado and Southern Caboose #10582 on the rear end of an Arkins Branch local, west of Loveland, Colorado Photo by Bill Graves, Rick Inglis collection.

With the Burlington Northern merger in 1970, and the economic slowdown caused by the gas crisis soon after, time finally caught up with 10583 and its surviving wood-bodied mates. It was the only one of the 10 built in 1919 that remained. Sources list 10583 as being retired in September 1973, which is remarkable; given that it served as it was intended, basically unmodified for 64 years. Not bad when you consider that many railroads had converted

entirely to steel equipment shortly after 10583 was built.

Return to Loveland

At this time, a northern Colorado railfan, Al Jackson, decided he wanted a caboose of his own. He had heard that the Colorado and Southern Railway was selling some of their retired cabooses. The city of Denver wanted to redevelop the area where they were stored, and it was feared the railroad would soon burn them to recover the scrap metal that was left.

Al arranged to visit C&S's Rice Yard in Denver to pick out a caboose for purchase, and ended up paying \$500 for 10583. However, he had to hire cranes to load it on a flatbed truck for transport. Originally Al wanted to move it to property in Pingree Park, 50 miles west of Fort Collins; but his truck driver wasn't keen on that, so the car ended up at Al's residence in north Loveland. He kept it in his backyard off 57th street for over 25 years. The property was later sold, and the new owner then sold the caboose to our museum, back when it was still the Greeley Freight Station Museum.

When Al and his wife, Phyllis, first started cleaning it out, they found several feet of debris and trash that had to be shoveled and swept out of the car. There were signs of transient campfires. Al's son, Sean, recalls that it was nasty. But one of the prizes found in that junk was an old-time brake club, used by the train's brakeman to help set brakes on a train's cars. Sean, who became a career railroader, still has that. They spent about a year scraping the old paint, and then applied 10 gallons of bright red paint on the exterior, and another 9 gallons of white paint on the inside. Broken windows were rebuilt, and electricity was installed. A pot-belly stove would provide heat. Over the years, Sean, his sister, Melissa, and his brother, Corey, all helped with various caboose projects.

That original shade of red quickly faded to what Sean called a "nasty shade of pink." So Al, with help from his wife, decided to go with the Tudor type brown to better match the house and also not look so garish for the neighbors. The brown weathered nicely too.



Right: In May 1974, the caboose is being loaded on a flatbed trailer to be transported to Al Jackson's property in Loveland. The crane operator isn't using spreader bars, and there was some minor damage to the siding and eyebrow boards as a result. **Below:** The caboose is on a train at South Denver in 1958. *Both photos, Al Jackson collection.*





Above: In the dead line at Denver's Rice Yard in 1972. Most of these cabooses will not survive. It would be interesting to know what was under the tarp on the right. **Below:** In Al's backyard in 1984. The track came from a small elevator at Marion, about a mile west from the Jackson family's house. The phone box to the right of the caboose also came from Rice Yard.



Sean recalls he spent a lot of time in that caboose, including doing homework. It was a nice getaway from the rest of the family. The Jacksons also built a large scale outdoor railroad next to the caboose, complete with a little gas-powered switcher.

They found that the trucks that had been under the caboose when it was retired were actually arch bar trucks from an Ignosby type dump car. The wheelsets had 1880 patent dates cast into the metal. Arch Bar trucks would have been outlawed 40 years prior for any equipment in interchange service. They are different from those on most C&S cabooses, and they figured the car probably rode really well.

Having a railroad caboose in one's backyard is sure to generate some attention, and Al mentioned that drivers would give him a "thumbs up" in approval as they passed by. Sometimes there would be other gestures. There were neighbors that were less than thrilled about it and did some stupid things. Over the years, the local newspapers featured the caboose in published articles several times.

Al was a Learning Products Engineer at Hewlett-Packard Company in Fort Collins, where the author would sometimes chat with him. He also was a vital contributor to the restoration of Birney Car 25, soon to be completed by the Fort Collins Municipal Railway Society. Sadly, Al passed away in 2018, but his contributions to the railfan hobby will live on.

Apprenticeship

I wonder if the caboose is still painted white and red and black inside. That was my pre-senior high school year summer project. -Sean Jackson, Car Shop Foreman, Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.



Above: A couple years later the interior had been cleaned up and Al's son Sean, who now works for the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, is in the cupola. **Below:** This is probably the last photo Al took before he sold it; he had the caboose in his back yard, along with his operating railroad. Both photos, Al Jackson collection.



Arriving at the Museum

Shortly after construction started on the museum building, Dave Trussell acquired 10583. It was moved to the museum on February 11, 2004.



Leaning Caboose

I had carefully measured the large door opening in the back of the museum so that it would receive a caboose, or a freight car or two of narrow gauge proportions. The building's big back door was subsequently built according to those measurements.

What I didn't take into consideration was the condition of the 10583 when we initially attempted to roll it through this back door. The caboose was suffering from a decided list to starboard and the roof edge wound up leaning a couple of inches too far to the west to clear the side wall of the doorway. The solution was to temporarily wedge a spike under a bolster in order to have the unit clear the entrance. It'd be interesting to see whether or not that spike is still in place.

-David Trussell

Below: She definitely has a list to the right. A strategically-placed spike between the bolster and truck helped keep her straight enough to clear the door. *Photo by Bob Sobol*



The Museum Dedication

A senior, retired pastor at my church back when we received the caboose was Jack Gilbert, a very good friend. "PJ", as we called him, wanted to physically see the caboose delivered and rolled into the museum. That, in and of itself, wasn't much of a deal, except PJ was terminally ill, losing a painful battle with cancer. Some friends, along with his wife, Sandy, loaded him into a car and drove him down to the museum when they were unloading the caboose.

They propped him up against the side of a car with a friend on each side as he watched the procedure. Shortly afterward he read a short dedication of the museum that is printed and mounted on the outside wall of the gift shop. It was the last official duty Jack Gilbert had as a minister in this life and that's always been special to me. And, it always will be. Jack Gilbert was 64 at the time and an inspiration to all who were fortunate enough to cross his earthly path.

-David Trussell



Above: Dave Trussell, and his wife Micke, celebrate the museum's first major acquisition and its safe relocation. **Below:** The track for the caboose was roughed-in before the layout construction had begun.



Getting Washed: On July 29, 2006, museum volunteers rolled C&S 10583 outside for a power wash in preparation for painting. The exterior shade of “Chinese red” was taken, and revised somewhat, from paint chips. The reason for the revision was that we learned that red was a color that faded rather rapidly back in the day. Our goal was to get as close as possible to what was applied originally and not to a faded state some years down the road.



Above: John Keyser ties a chain around an axle. He will pull it out of the museum building with his Bobcat. This will simplify both the pulling and regulating its roll downhill as the hand brakes are not connected. The left wheel is badly worn out. **Below:** John's Bobcat comes in and the blade meets the caboose coupler, and with the chain connected, he will gently pull it out of the building. The droop of the coupler and end platform really stands out. *Both photos by Bob Sobol*







Above left: The running boards are all rotted out. The roof appears to be a very dull red faded tar paper over tongue and groove wood, supported by curved carlins. The Colorado weather is hard on cars of wood construction, so inside storage is essential for 10583's long term health..



Above right: This wheel reveals some unusual symmetrical round welds and a number of marks that were hidden under decades of journal grease. We found wheels of two different diameters and three different designs. The flanges were very worn and probably would not pass another FRA inspection.



Left: Rick Bacon III uses a degreasing solution to remove the caked on grease that had been on the trucks. The journal boxes at the ends of each axle are filled with oil to lubricate the bearing surfaces. There is a seal on the rear of the box that always leaked, allowing the oil to mix with dirt and dust and coating everything underneath the car.

Three photos by Bob Sobol



Above: John Keyser scrapes the remaining grease off of each wheel. Railway Preservationists often debate whether displayed equipment should be restored to a “new” condition, or maybe a “typical use” condition. Since our museum visitors are normally not “railfans”, we didn’t want to explain why the car looked dirty and dingy. **Below:** The caboose is pushed back into the museum building. *Both Photos by Bob Sobol*



During Museum Construction

While the OC&E layout was being built, volunteers would often work long days and bed down in the caboose for a good night's sleep, especially if they didn't live in Greeley. Dave Trussell, (presumably with wife Micke's help) outfitted the caboose with mattresses and comfy sheets for anyone with a key who wanted to spend the night.



Not Your typical Holiday Inn

I spent many nights in 10583. I do some of my best model rail-roading work late at night when nobody is around. After hitting the sack at bedtime, several times a window would suddenly slam shut followed by absolute silence.

There aren't many windows in the museum that will let moon-light in. The grab irons painted white always helped to get on board safely. I always would open the caboose windows because it would get stuffy in there. The one outside window in the Crew Lounge would let enough of the early morning sunrise in and I would be able to get to work on time in Fort Collins at the U.S. Park Service on time.

-Rick Inglis, Long time museum volunteer, shown below demonstrating the use of a "Brake Club."



The Perfect Museum Artifact

To those who have been around railroads for a long time, we remember when every train had a caboose on the rear. Often you could watch the train go by, and watch for the conductor in the cupola. Usually, he'd wave, which made waiting for the end all worth while.

But why does the museum have a caboose inside the museum and not some other type of car, especially when many museum visitors can't remember when cabooses were regularly in service?

Maybe it's the human connection. The caboose was a unique type of railroad car, almost always exclusively on a freight train. The train's conductor, who is in charge of the train, usually rode in the caboose. Maybe that gave railroaders a sense of importance. It gave everyone else an acknowledgment that it took several crew members to run the train.

True, passenger cars carry people. But, depending on where you are, passenger trains aren't all that common. Before the 1980s every freight train had a caboose. You could count on it.

That the caboose was replaced by a box of electronics and a flashing red light, is just another example of how technology has changed the world. You might say, it's dehumanized something that could always be counted on.

Can you imagine Santa Claus waving from a hopper or flat car?



Above: The model commissioned by the museum, that once was for sale in the gift shop. A new shipment should arrive soon. **Below:** The caboose in the museum.



Inside the OC&E

Inside the OC&E is the official Colorado Model Railroad Museum newsletter. Its purpose is to communicate news and information to museum volunteers and others interested in the museum.



Left: C&S 10606 is on display at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden. This caboose is a World War II baby, being built in 1944, but to the same basic plan as 10583. Note the differences with the trucks, but otherwise it is pretty much identical to 10583. This caboose has been out in the weather all of its life and while the excellent staff at CRRM does their best to keep it looking good, wood cars outside will always need extra care.

Below: A southbound Union Pacific freight train passes the museum site, as C&S 10583 is being prepared for painting on July 29, 2006. *Photo by Bob Sobol.*





100th *Birthday* **Celebration**

Honoring

1919 C&S Caboose 10583

CAKE

Saturday, July 20th

CRAFTS

10:00am - 4:00pm

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