

TWO "NEW" CABOOSES

- David Epling and Eugene John Vicknair

This past February saw the addition of two more cabooses to our collection at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. These crummies have joined us thanks to the generosity of former owner Mike Mangini. Displayed for many years as part of the Golden Gate Railroad Museum's collection at Hunter's Point, San Francisco, they were rendered homeless by the closing of the museum. Donated to the FRRS, they became part of the massive equipment move overseen by our road-qualified volunteers.

First up, we have bay window caboose Sacramento Northern 1642. The 1642 started life in 1916 as a Pullman built wood boxcar for the Western Pacific. She was number 15922 until the WP began converted the old boxes for new uses. One of 25 boxcars converted in 1943 to the WP's standard outside braced bay window design and assigned number 648. She served across the WP system until 1963, when the cab was transferred to the Sacramento Northern, replacing older cupola styles being retired by the SN. In 1972, the SN acquired two GP7 locomotives from the WP and repainted 3 of their cabooses, including the 1642 (and cupola caboose 1632, which left our collection last year and now resides at the Western Railway Museum), into a new green scheme to match the new Geeps. One of those engines, SN 712, is also preserved in Portola.

The 1642 served until 1977, becoming one of the last wood cabooses in regular service on the WP system. She was retired and sold to a private individual who converted the car into a dentist's office. The caboose was later acquired by Mr.

Mangini and brought to GGRM where it was repainted and used as a gift shop. Although her appearance has been altered somewhat by the addition of a large trapezoid window and a rooftop air conditioning box, the FRRS is proud to have this caboose in our collection and to have reunited her with SN 712. Plans for her use at the museum are pending.



-photo by David Epling

The second caboose is Western Pacific 646. The 646 comes from the same class as SN 1642 and was also rebuilt from a Pullman boxcar in 1943. She appears to have been retired from service in the late 1960's and was reportedly also used as an office in San Francisco. Few additional details are known until she arrived at GGRM. Her condition is poor and the car does not have trucks. The 646 currently sits on one of our flatcars and long-term plans call for her to be placed in the parking lot and used as a temporary Ticket Booth for Train Operations.

The FRRS also owns Western Pacific bay window caboose 645, currently stored on Norm Holmes' property and the subject of a recent repainting by Norm. His article on the caboose appeared in the last issue of The Train Sheet.

