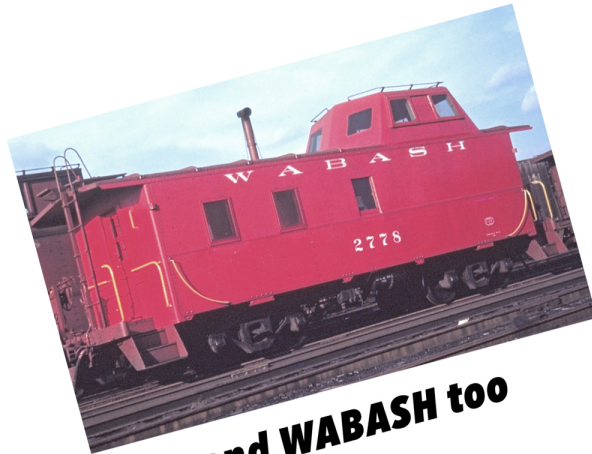


ANN ARBOR RAILROAD

Steel Caboose Paint Schemes



and WABASH too

Craig Wilson
RPM Chicagoland
October 2025

COMING FROM WALTHERS, Winter 2026



With round-window end doors, diagonal panel roof, and as-built smokejack.



With square-window end doors, diagonal panel roof, and modernized smokejack.



Twenty “streamline cupola” cabooses [WAB 2770-2789] were built at the Wabash RR Decatur Illinois shop in 1945. Between 1947 and 1955 sixty-nine more were constructed by the Wabash [2790-2849] and International Car Company [2850-2859]. Seventeen of these cabooses were built for the Ann Arbor RR [AA 2830-2839, Wabash/Decatur 1952 and AA 2840-2846, ICC 1955].

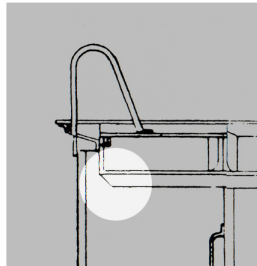
These distinctive cabooses went on to long careers on the Wabash, and Ann Arbor as well as Norfolk & Western, Detroit Toledo & Ironton and AA subsidiary road Manistique & Lake Superior.

Seventeen steel cabooses were built in two groups for the Ann Arbor Railroad following a design developed by the Wabash Railroad.

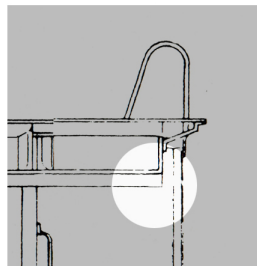
2830 - 2839 were built at the Wabash shops, Decatur Illinois in 1952.

2840 - 2846 were built by International Car Company in 1955 along with ten cabooses for the Wabash RR. These followed the same design as the 1952 Wabash-built cabooses.

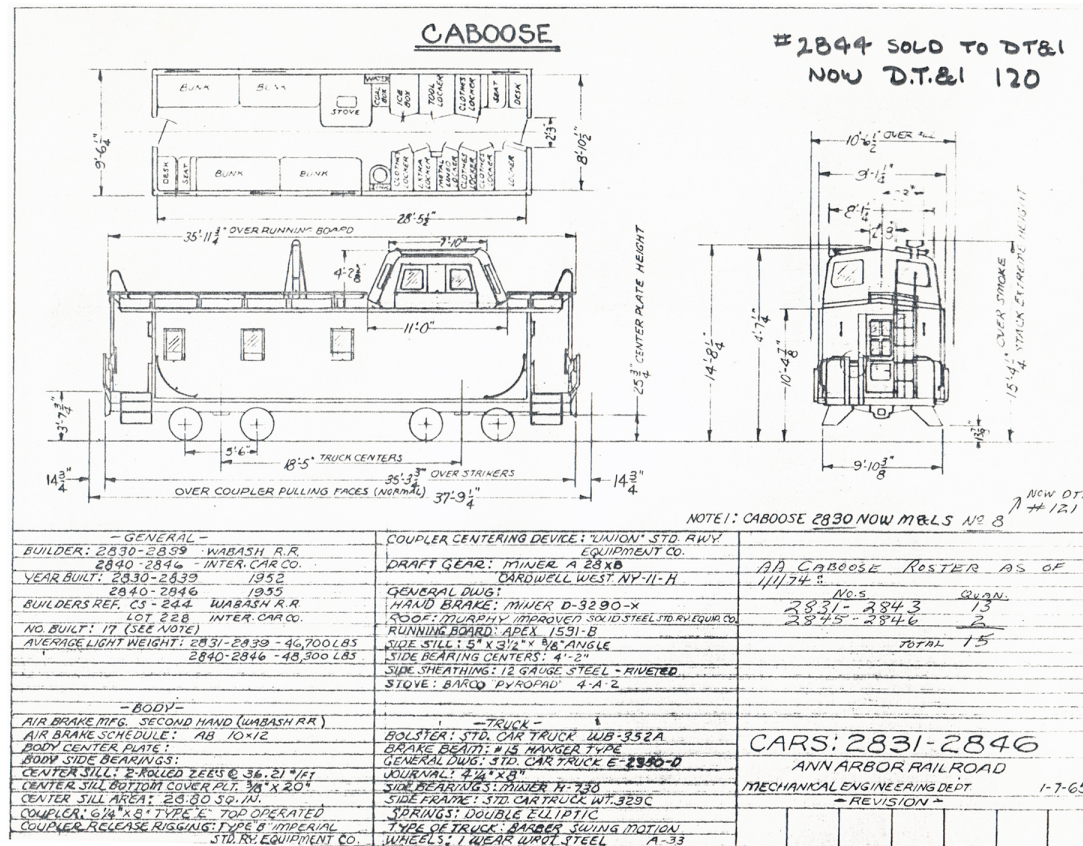
There seems to be only one small structural difference between the cabooses built by the Wabash RR and those built by International Car Company. It is the trim piece at the edge of the roof that extends over the end platforms.



**2830-2839 (Wabash built)
the trim piece is cut on a 45 degree angle**



**2840-2846 (International Car Co built)
the trim piece is squared off**



The page that was included in the Ann Arbor Equipment Books. The end doors depict what was used on the Wabash cabooses. The AA versions had a steel door with a smaller sealed window.

Roof: *Murphy Improved Solid Steel (Std Ry Equip Co)*. The earliest Wabash cabooses built to this design had a roof with all rectangular roof panels. By 1952 it was changed to the "Improved" version that utilized three diagonal panels and one rectangular panel where the smokejack was located.

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes As-built scheme (2830-2839, blt Wabash RR 1952)

Red: sides, ends, cupola and ladders

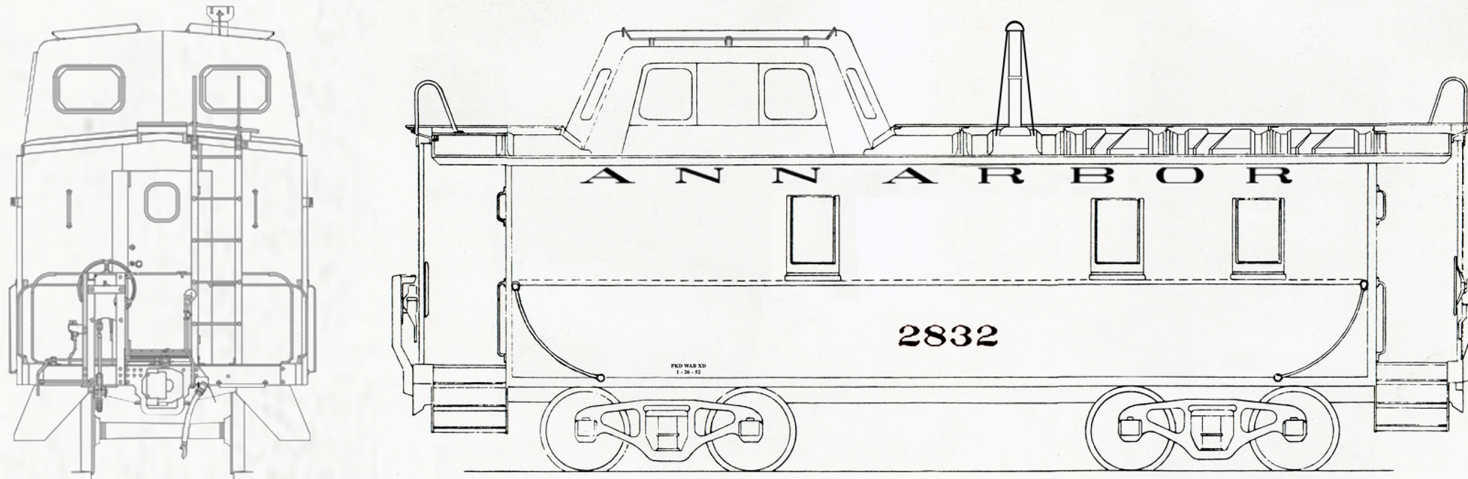
Tuscan Red: steps, end platforms truck sideframes and underbody (Wabash RR practice)

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board and window frames (note: cupola roof is red)

Black: smoke jack

Note: delivered without pennant heralds - added by the railroad after delivery



Reference: Allen Blacklock photo of AA 2832, 2837, 2838 at Boat Landing 1952



2832, 2837, 2838

Boat Landing, 1952

Allen Blacklock photo from the collection of Arnt Gerritsen

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD cabooses paint schemes

1950's to early 1960's Wabash-era

Red: sides, ends, cupola and ladders

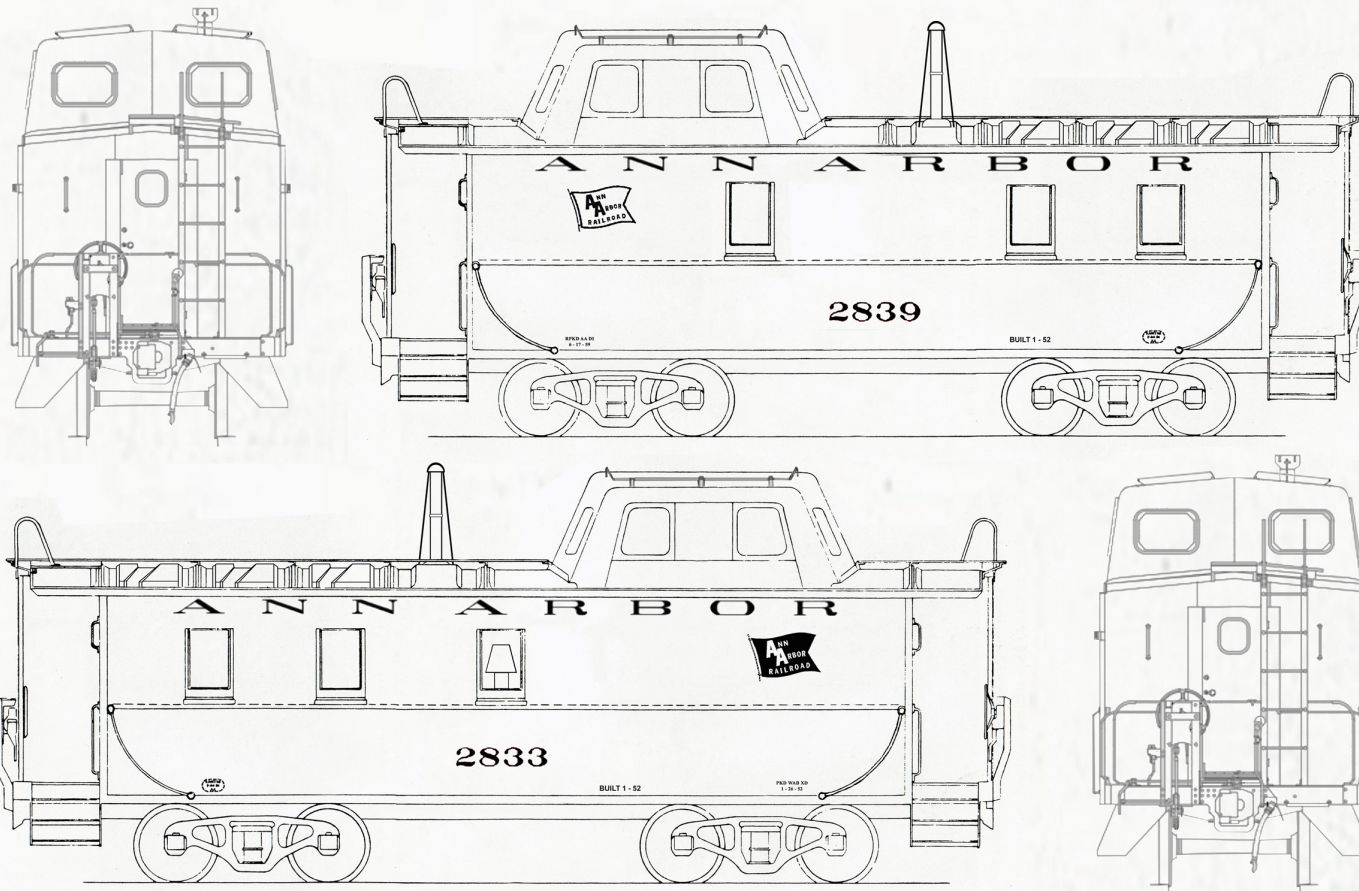
Tuscan Red: steps, end platforms truck sideframes and underbody (Wabash RR practice)

note: steps and end platforms red body color when cabooses were repainted

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings (ladder tops on some)

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

Pennant heralds applied after delivery - outline pennants first - solid pennants used later



Jerry Pinkepank photo of AA 2839 dated 1961 / undated photo of AA of AA 2833
John Ingles photo at Owosso dated May 1959 shows 10 cabooses, all with outline pennants



Ottawa Yard, 1961
2845, solid pennant
2842, outline pennant
J D Ingles photo
Lake States Railway
Historical Archive collection

2833
solid pennant Herald
May 1964

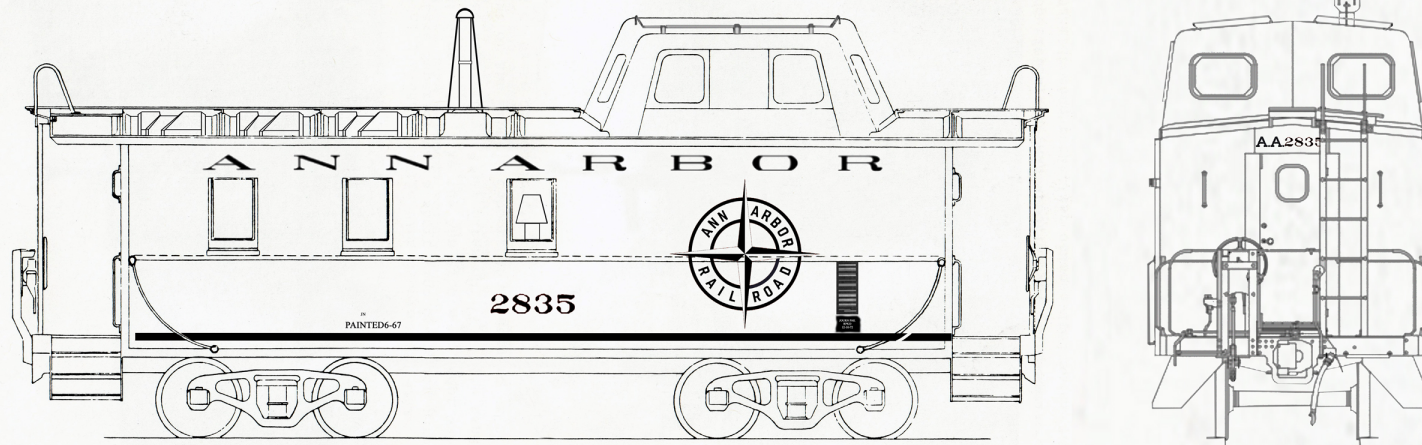
note: on this repaint, the steps are
the same red as the body color and
both the tops of the ladders and the
ladder rungs are yellow



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes One-of-a-kind DT&I-era scheme

AA 2835 was the only caboose to have this scheme. It is stenciled 'PAINTED6-67" and "JN" (for the DT&I shop at Jackson Ohio). A photo dated May 1966 taken at the Owosso Yard shows two AA cabooses in the scheme with yellow ends, the smaller compass herald and no white stripe so this is not the first DT&I-era scheme. In 1974 this caboose was repainted into the then-standard scheme of red body with yellow ends, no herald and gothic-type number.

Red: body, ends, steps and cupola
Yellow: grab irons, side and end railings
Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)
48-inch diameter compass herald
3-inch white stripe



Dennis Schmidt photo dated November 9, 1973



2835
Owosso Shop, November 1973
Dennis Schmidt photo

2835
Ottawa Yard
Toledo Ohio, 1973
Brian Everett collection



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

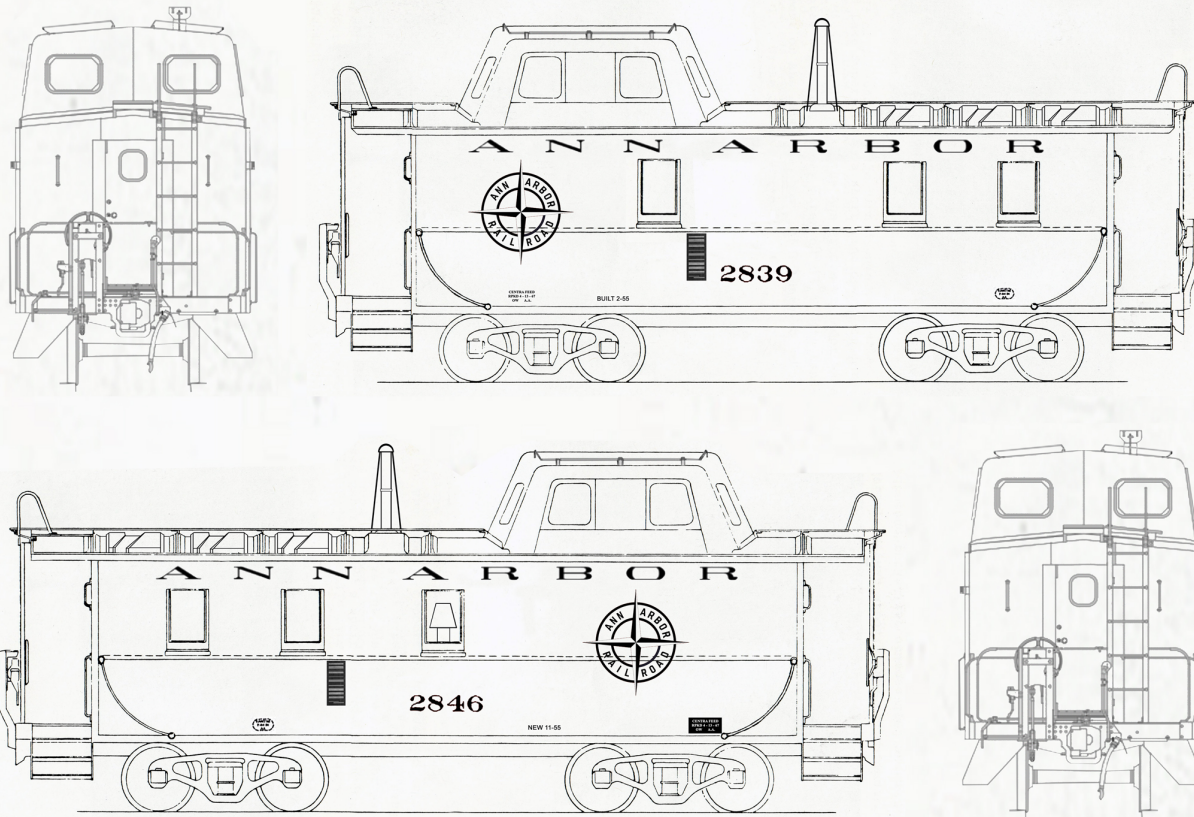
Standard DT&I-era scheme

Red: body (including corner posts) and cupola

Yellow: ends, steps, platforms, end ladders (including top grabs), side railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

36 - inch diameter compass herald



Undated photo of AA 2839 / Dennis Schmidt photo of AA 2846 dated July 1973

Note: 2839 stencilled with incorrect 1955 Blt date per prototype photo



2838
Alma Michigan, July 1968
Dennis Schmidt photo

2846
Owosso Yard, July 1973
Dennis Schmidt photo





2838

Owosso Yard, February 17, 1968

Dennis Schmidt photo

During the Viet Nam war someone showed their support for the US Army Rangers on caboose 2838

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

DT&I-era variations 1

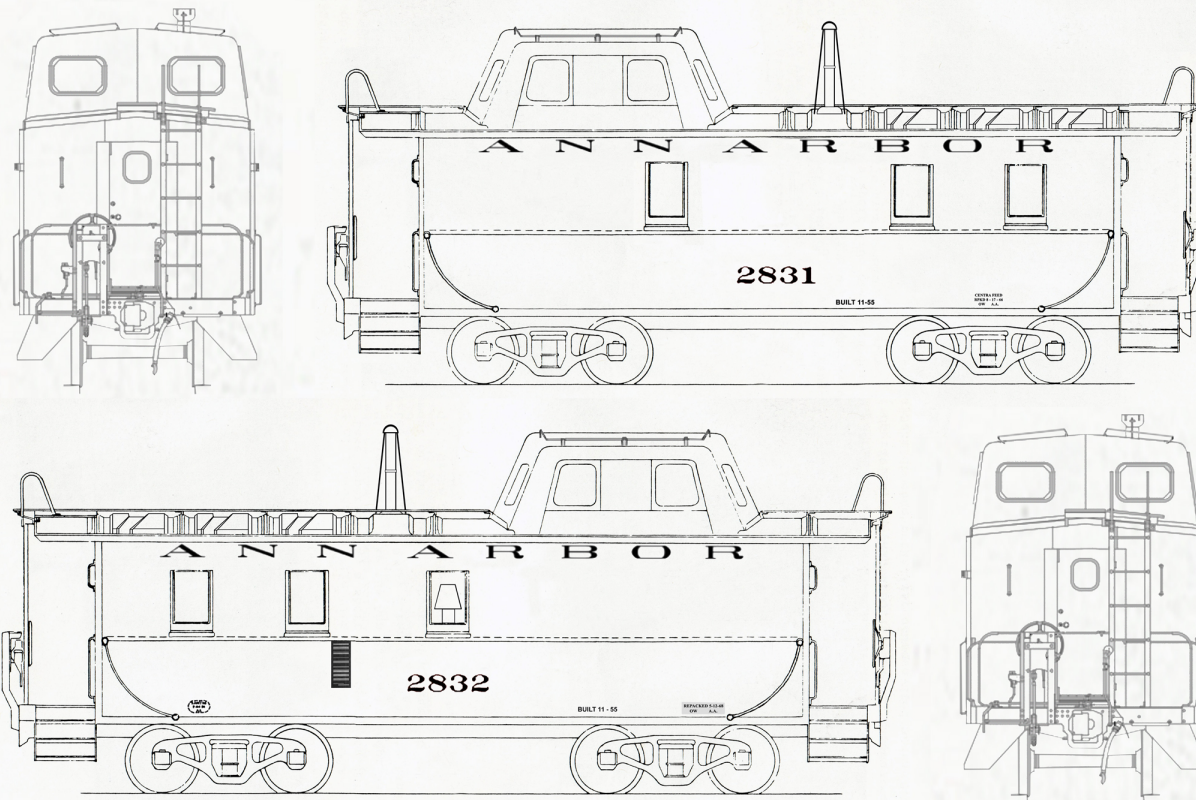
In the late 1960's cabooses began to be repainted without any heralds - at first using RR Roman-style number

Red: body (including corner posts) and cupola

Yellow: ends, steps, platforms, end ladders (including top grabs), side railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

No herald - RR Roman style number



Dennis Schmidt photo of AA 2831 at Owosso dated March 1968 / Undated photo of AA 2832 at Owosso

Note: both cabooses stencilled with incorrect 1955 Blt date per prototype photos

AA 2832 was never repainted orange but kept this paint scheme until the end



2831
Owosso Yard, March 1968
Dennis Schmidt photo



2832
Ferry Yard, Ann Arbor
October 1980
Jim Sinclair photo

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

DT&I-era variations 2

Caboose repainted without any heralds and number in a Gothic-style font

Red: body (including corner posts) and cupola

Yellow: ends, steps, platforms, end ladders (including top grabs), side railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

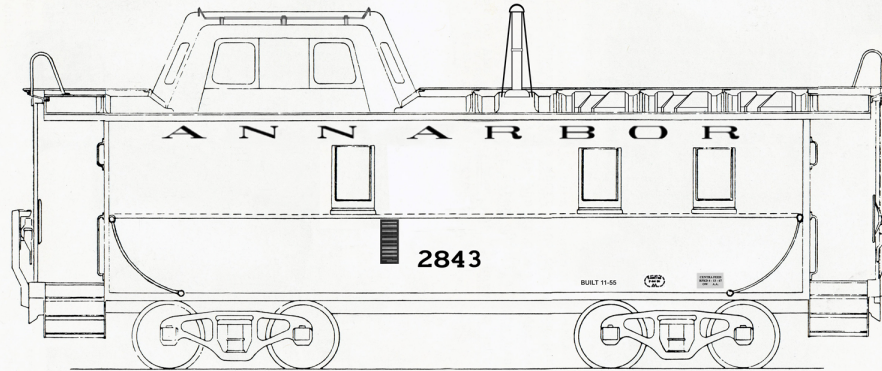
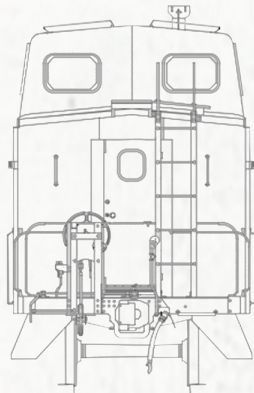


Photo of AA 2843 at Ferry Yard dated February 1977 - no COTS - repack stencil

<p>COTS</p> <p>ABD - STD DTI - JN 1-12-73</p> <p>LUB DTI-JN 2-7-73</p> <p>IDT DTI-JN 2-7-73</p>

"Clean Oil Test & Stencil"
 First adopted in 1972
 Single panel at first,
 later changed to 2, 3,
 and 4 panel.

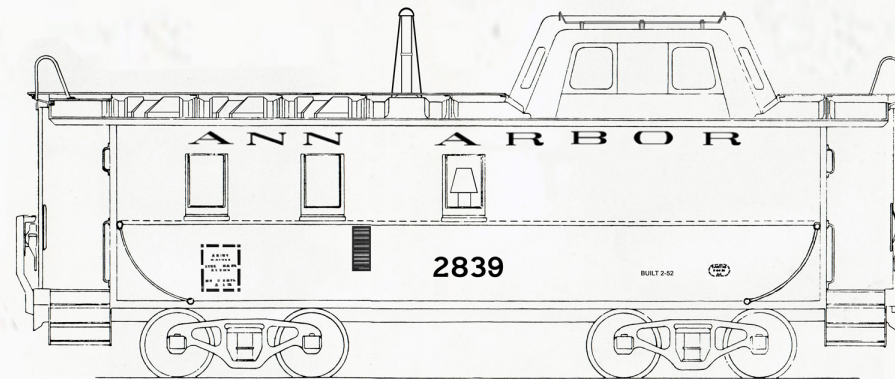


Photo of AA 2839 at Owosso dated October 1975
 single panel COTS painted in white on red carbody
 Note: the "ANN ARBOR" name is narrower than usual

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

DT&I-era variations 3

Caboose repainted without any heralds and number in a Gothic-style font

Red: body (including corner posts) and cupola

Yellow: ends, steps, platforms, end ladders (including top grabs), side railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

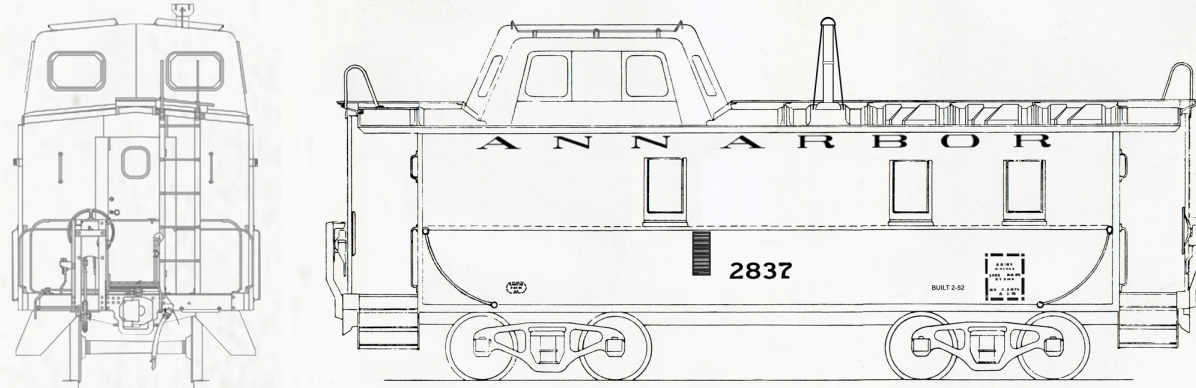


Photo of AA 2837 at Selma Yard dated August 1974 - single panel COTS painted in yellow on red carbody

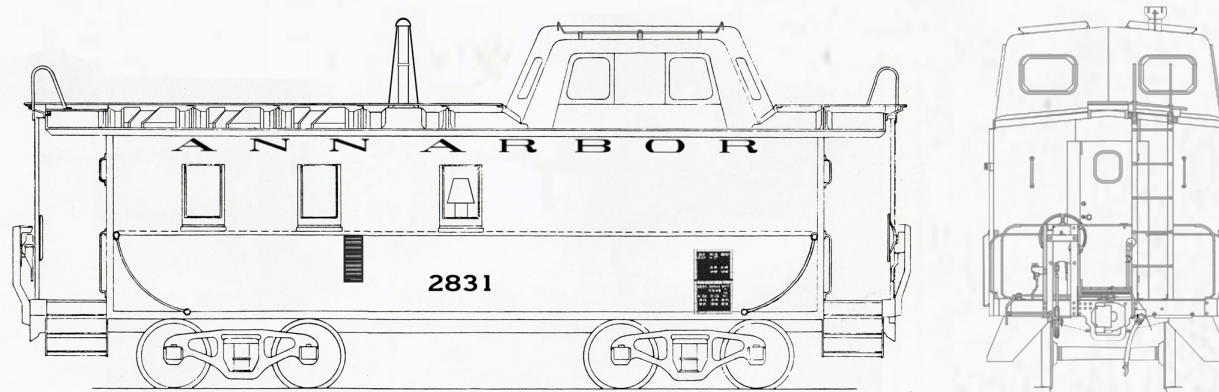


Photo of AA 2831 at Owosso dated April 1976 - two panel COTS - white on black



2841
Owosso Yard, August 1972
Dennis Schmidt photo

2835
Ottawa Yard, Toledo Ohio
June 1974
Doug Leffler photo

A Dennis Schmidt photo dated November 1973 shows this caboose in the paint scheme with the large compass herald. Seven months later it has been repainted with no herald. This is proof that 2835 never had the common DT&I-era paint scheme with the 36-inch compass herald.



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

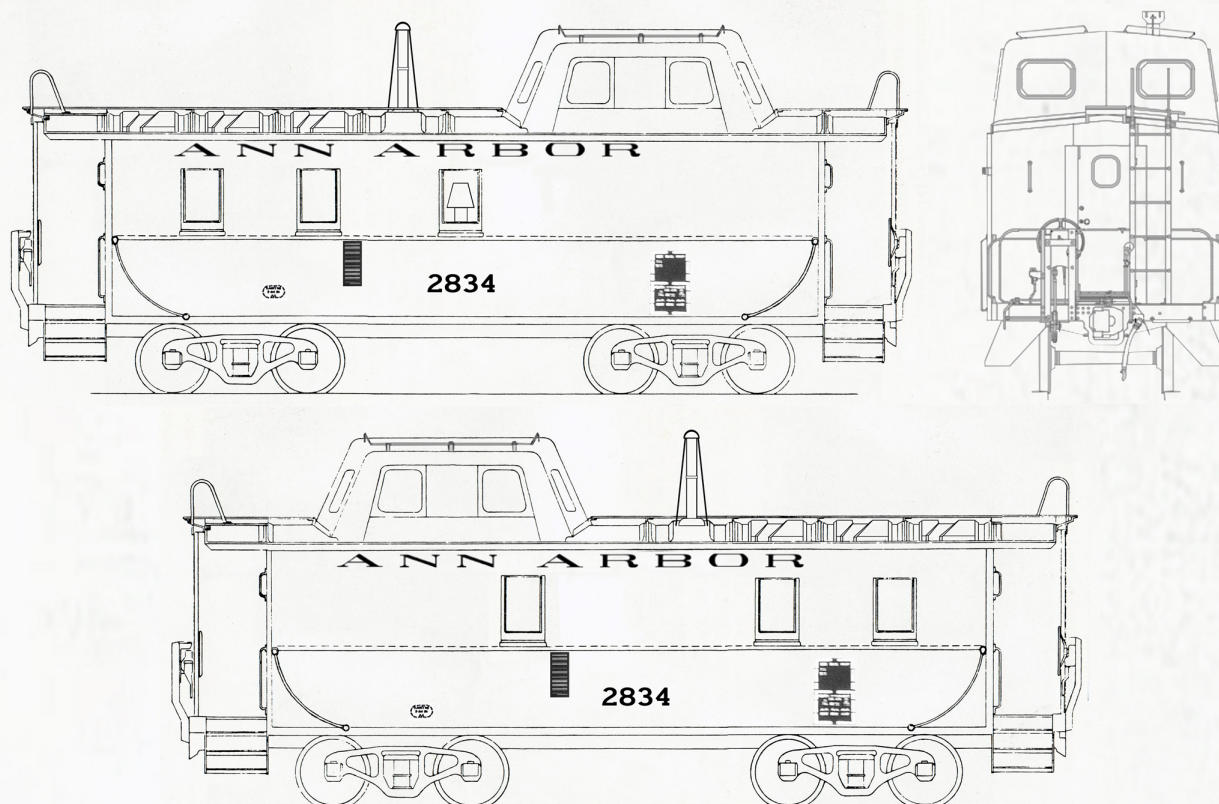
Variation 4

The last red / yellow end repaint - AA 2834 only

Red: body (including corner posts) and cupola

Yellow: ends, steps, platforms, end ladders (including top grabs), side railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)



Note the close spacing of the "ANN ARBOR" name

Gothic-style number font - two panel COTS - white on black

Photo of AA 2834 at Boon dated October 1977 and Mesick dated December 1977



2834
Boon, October 1977

It still has a screen door!

2834
Manistee River bridge
Mesick, December 1977



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

Michigan Interstate “ann arbor railroad system”

Orange: body, ends, steps, platforms and cupola

Note: railings and grab irons are not a contrasting color

All cabooses except 2832 were repainted in some variation of this scheme

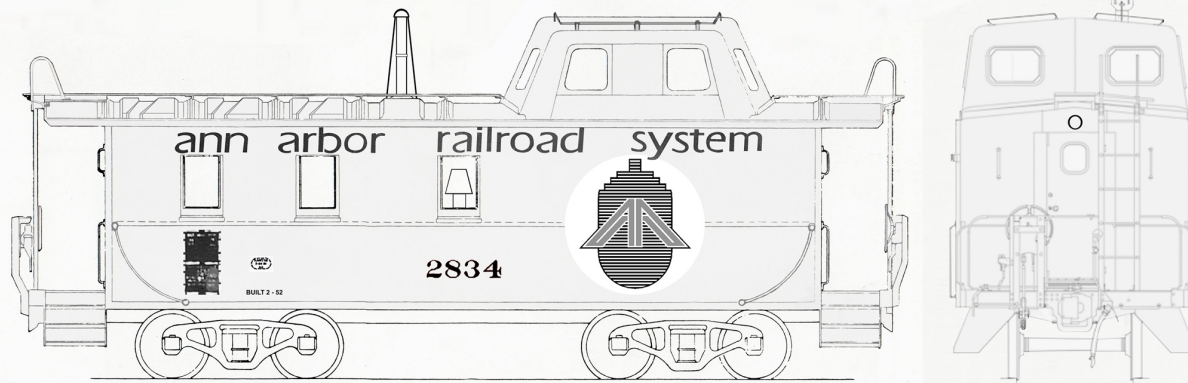


Photo of AA 2834 dated May 1986 - most cabooses in this scheme used the RR Roman font number
Early repaints had “ann arbor railroad system” lettering evenly spaced

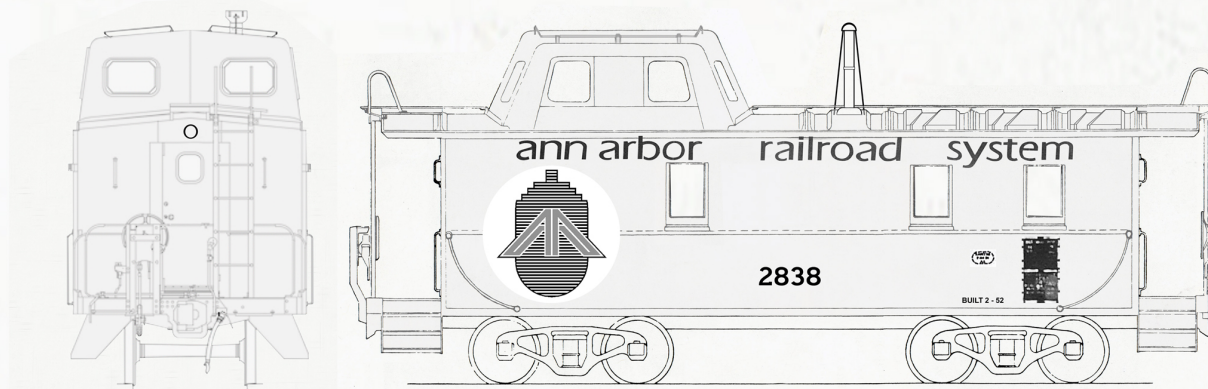


Photo of AA 2838 at Owosso Shop dated July 1979 - only caboose known to use the Gothic font number
Later repaints (most cabooses) had “ann arbor” spaced closely together



2841
Boat Landing

2837
Ottawa Yard, Toledo Ohio
August 1983





2831, 2838
Owosso Shop, July 1979

note different number fonts

RS-2 301
2845, 2839, 2835
Owosso Yard



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes DT&I ownership 1

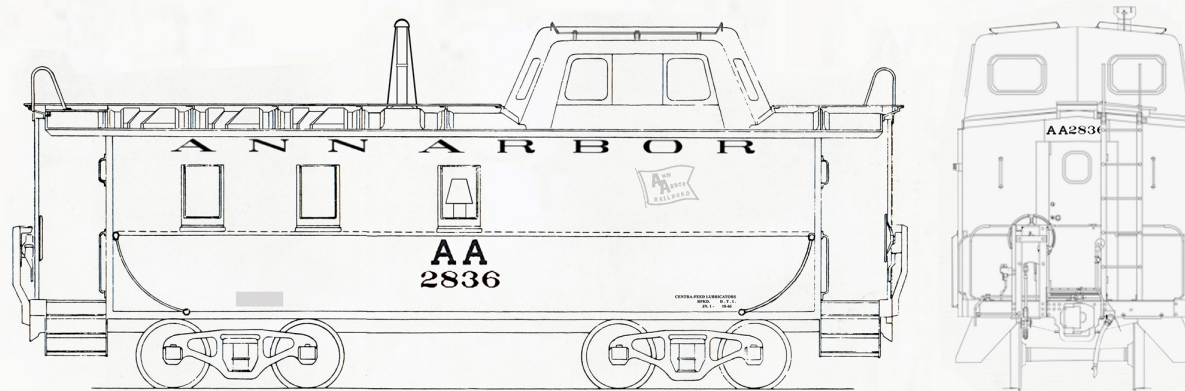
Circa 1968 six AA cabooses were transferred to DT&I ownership

M&LS 8 (AA 2830) became DTI 121 AA 2840 became DTI 123

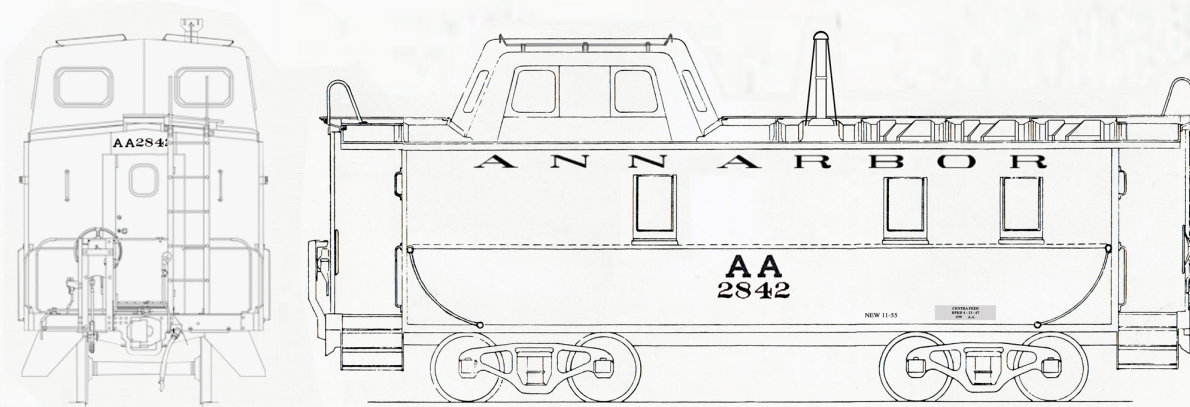
AA 2833 became DTI 125 AA 2842 became DTI 124

AA 2836 became DTI 122 AA 2844 became DTI 120

At first, they operated in their AA paint schemes. Pennant heralds were "scrubbed off"
"AA" added above the number on the side / "AA" and the number added above the end doors



L.G.Isaac collection photo of AA 2836 on DT&I at Springfield Ohio



L.G.Isaac collection photo of AA 2842 on DT&I at Springfield Ohio dated Sept. 1968



2836
Springfield Ohio
L G Isaac collection



2842
Springfield Ohio
L G Isaac collection

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes DT&I ownership 2

DTI 120 (built International Car Co 1955 as AA 2844)

As far as is known, this was the only DTI caboose to have this scheme that included the “*CONNECTIONS*” slogan. This might be because AA 2844 was damaged in a derailment at Farwell* and had to be repaired when transferred to the DT&I.

Red: body (including corner posts) and cupola

Yellow: ends of body, end ladders (including top grabs), curved side railings

Black: steps, end platforms, all end railings and grab irons, ladder rungs and trim strip at the top of the body (including below the cupola and over end platforms)

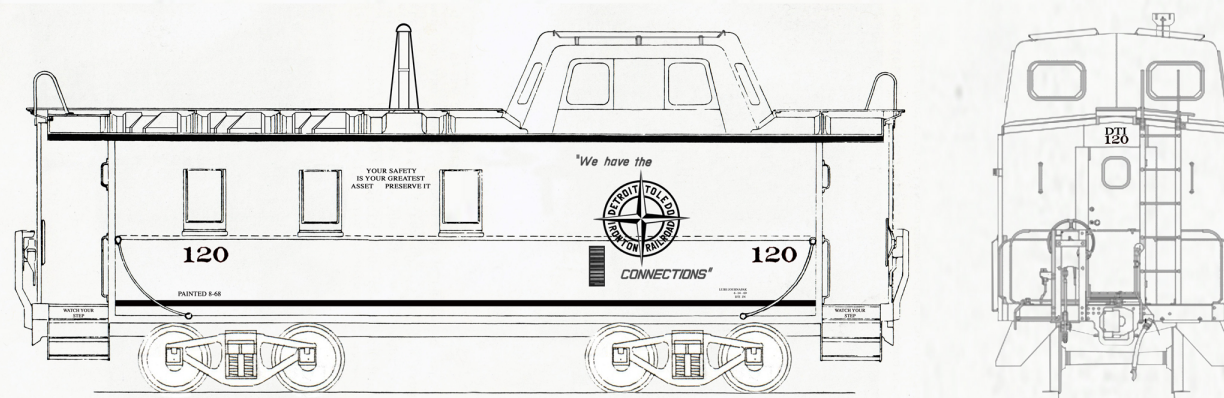
Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

36 - inch diameter compass herald with “*We have the CONNECTIONS*” slogan

3 - inch white stripe

Safety slogan in yellow with no box around it

“DTI 120” in black over end doors



John Nixon photo of DTI 120 at Adrian, Michigan dated Sept. 1970

*Following its derailment AA 2844 was placed on 50-ton freight trucks. When it first became DTI 120 it retained these trucks. Photos show that the trucks on DTI 120 were replaced with Barber-Bettendorf Swing Motion caboose trucks later on.



both photos
DTI 120 (ex AA 2844)
Adrian Michigan, September 1970
John Nixon photos

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

DT&I ownership 3

The most common DT&I paint scheme

Red: sides of body and cupola

Yellow: ends of body, end ladders (including top grabs), curved side railings

Black: roof, steps, end platforms, all end railings and grab irons, ladder (note: cupola roof is red)

36 - inch diameter compass herald

3 - inch white stripe

Safety slogan in yellow (there were variations in size of box and placement of lettering)

"DTI" and number in black over end doors

The DT&I began to modify the cabooses. One window was plated over on each side. A vent was added to the right side where the window had been. The end doors were replaced with ones that had a 2-pane rectangular window. A water fill was added to the front (A-end) of the body. A "firecracker type radio antenna was added to the cupola roof on most of these cabooses.

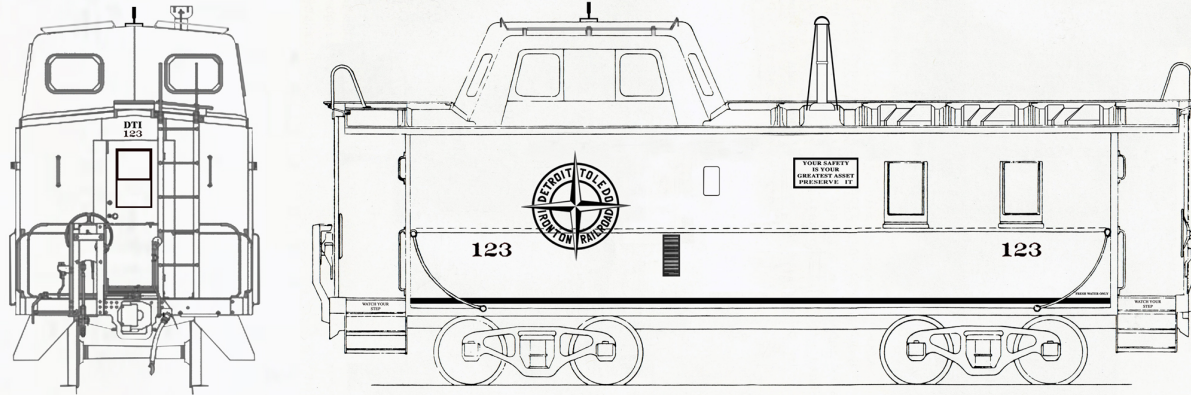


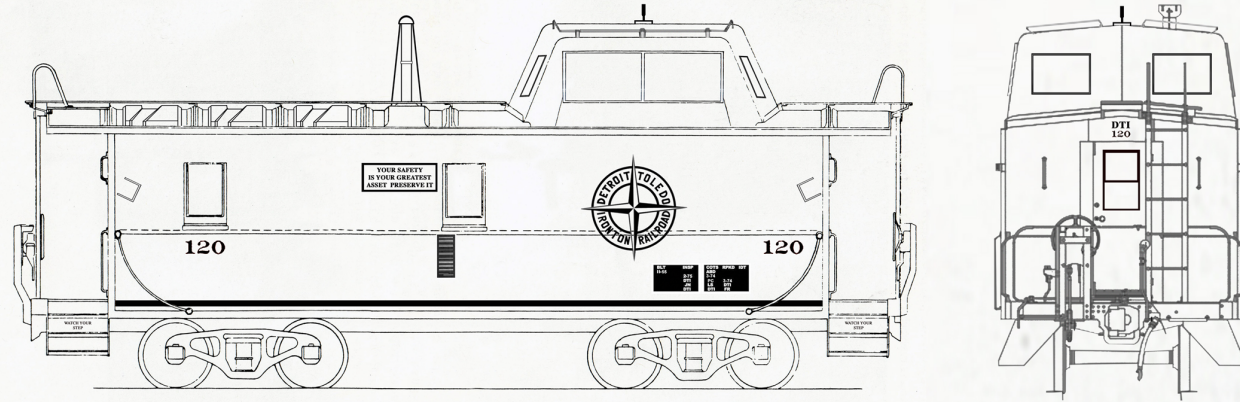
Photo of DTI 123 at Flat Rock dated March 1973

The side windows have been plated over and the end doors replaced.

Note that the corner posts where the sides meet the ends are painted red like the body.

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes DT&I ownership 3

The most common DT&I paint scheme



A later photo of DTI 120 at Flat Rock*

The original cupola windows were prone to leaking so at some point the side and end cupola windows were replaced as shown here. All of the ex-AA cabooses (except DTI 125) eventually had all the cupola windows replaced

Also the cabooses were equipped with metal paddle-type makers and brackets added to the sides for storing them when not in use. Note that the corner posts where the sides meet the ends are now painted yellow like the ends. While the end ladders are still yellow, it was common for the ladder rungs to be painted black. Some of the cabooses eventually had the roof running boards removed and the uppermost two ladder rungs removed.

At least two of the cabooses (120, 123) had the upper section of the smokejack replaced at some point.

*By this time DTI 120 had its freight trucks replaced with standard Barber Swing Motion caboose trucks.



**DTI 120
(ex AA 2844)**

**original cupola
windows**

**DTI 123
(ex AA 2840)**

**cupola windows
replaced
roof running boards
removed
smokejack replaced**





DTI 121
(ex M&LS 8 nee AA 2830)
Diann Tower
February 1973
Jim Sinclair photo

DTI 121
stored on GTW at
Port Huron

Note the window under the
cupola has been plated over



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes DT&I ownership 4

The DT&I adopted the "star herald" in the late 1970's which began to replace compass heralds on equipment

The paint scheme remained the same as cabooses having the compass heralds except the corner posts were painted yellow like the ends instead of red

Star herald: larger version applied to DTI 121 in 1979 - smaller one applied to DTI 125 in 1980

Safety slogan: black for DTI 121 and yellow for DTI 125

Ends had "DTI" and number along with "A-END" or "B-END" in black above door

Yellow "Wheel Inspection Dot" at lower right corner of body

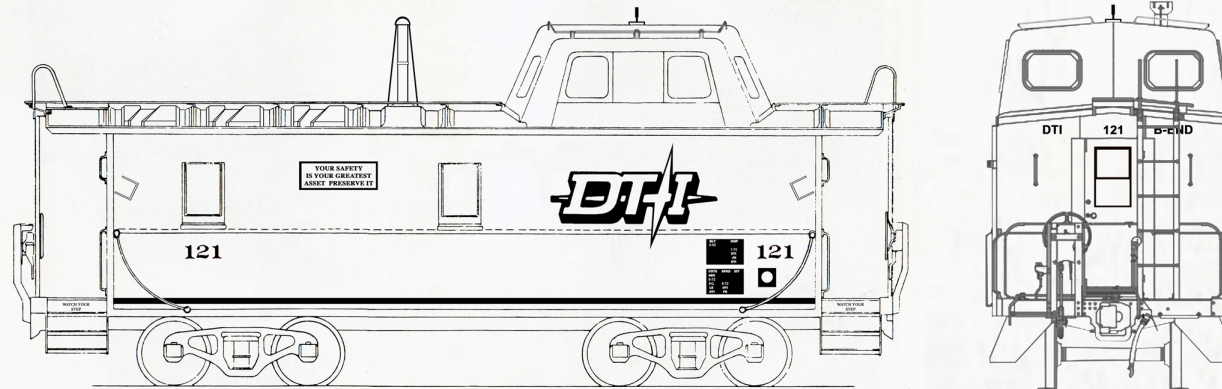


Photo of AA DTI 121 at Diann circa 1980

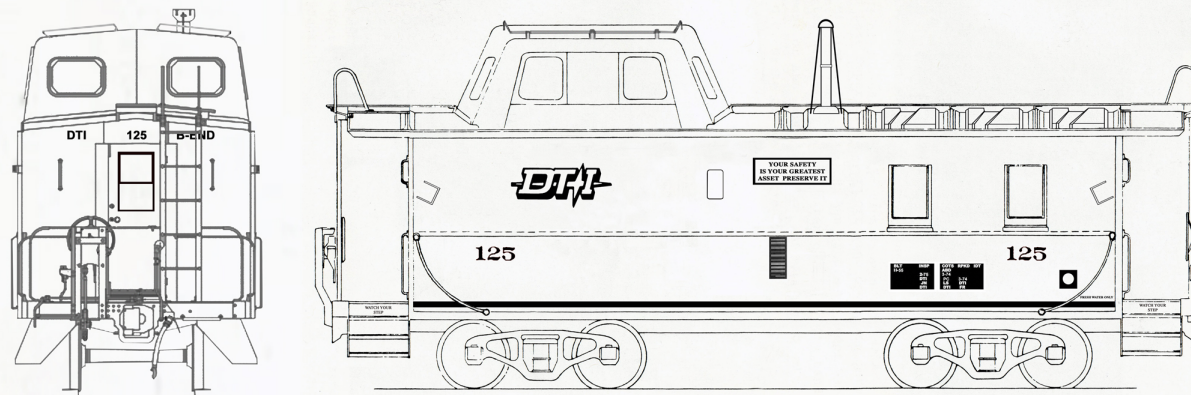


Photo of DTI 125 at Maybee Michigan dated August 1984



DTI 121
(ex M&LS 8 nee AA 2830)
Diann Michigan, circa 1980



DTI 125
(ex AA 2833)
Maybee Michigan,
August 1984

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes DT&I ownership 5

After Grand Trunk Western took over control of the DT&I, caboose DTI 122 was repainted into this version of the GTW orange scheme in 1981

Orange: body, cupola, ends, steps and end platforms

Black: roof (note: cupola roof is orange)

White: all lettering, all grab irons and outer portion of end platform railings, ladder rungs

Safety slogan: white

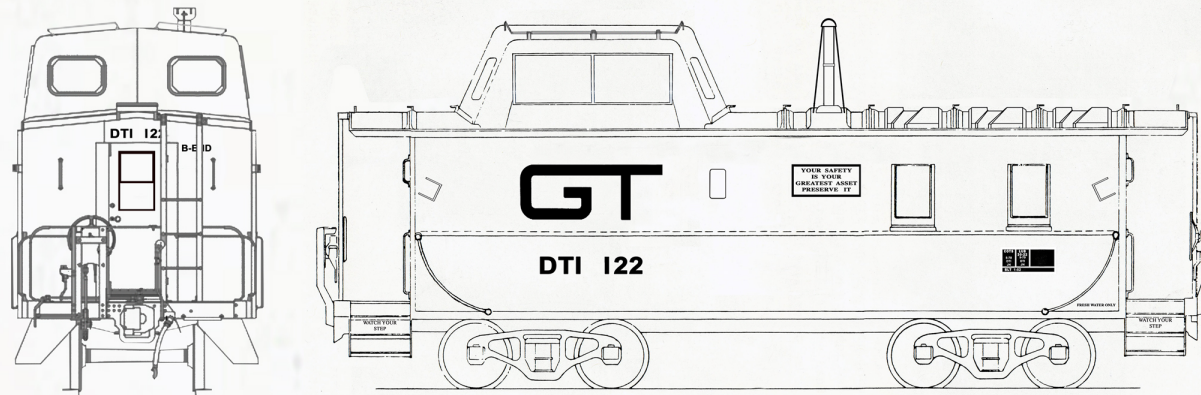


Photo of DTI 122 at Port Huron dated April 1989



DTI 122
(ex AA 2836)

Port Huron Michigan
April 1989

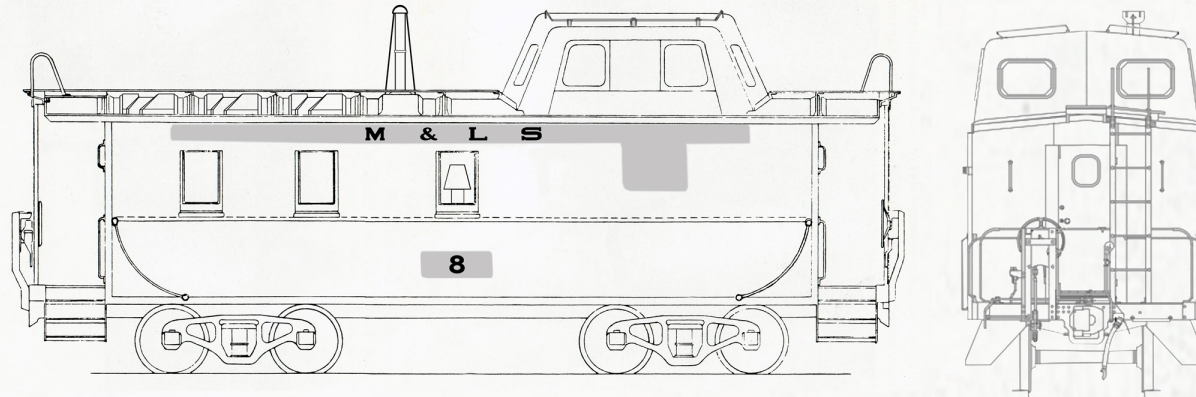


MANISTIQUE & LAKE SUPERIOR 8

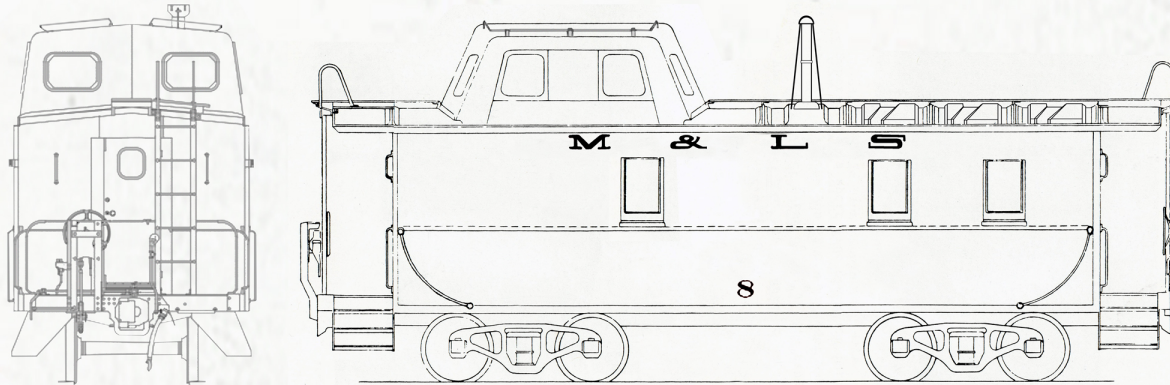
Built Wabash RR as AA 2830 in 1952
transferred to M&LS 1959

Red: sides, ends, end platform and steps, ladders and cupola
Yellow: side and end grab irons, outer portion of end railings
Silver (aluminum): roof, running board (note: cupola roof is red)

AA lettering and pennant herald painted over then M&LS lettering added



Jim Parker photo of M&LS 8 at Owosso dated September 1959



M&LS 8 completely repainted at Manistique - Note: different lettering font
Eddie Gross collection photo at Manistique dated September 1965



M&LS 8 (AA 2830)
Owosso Yard, September 1959
Jim Parker photo

M&LS 8
Manistique Michigan, September 1965
Eddie Gross collection



ANN ARBOR RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

Michigan Artrain Cab 5

(built International Car Co 1955 as AA 2843)

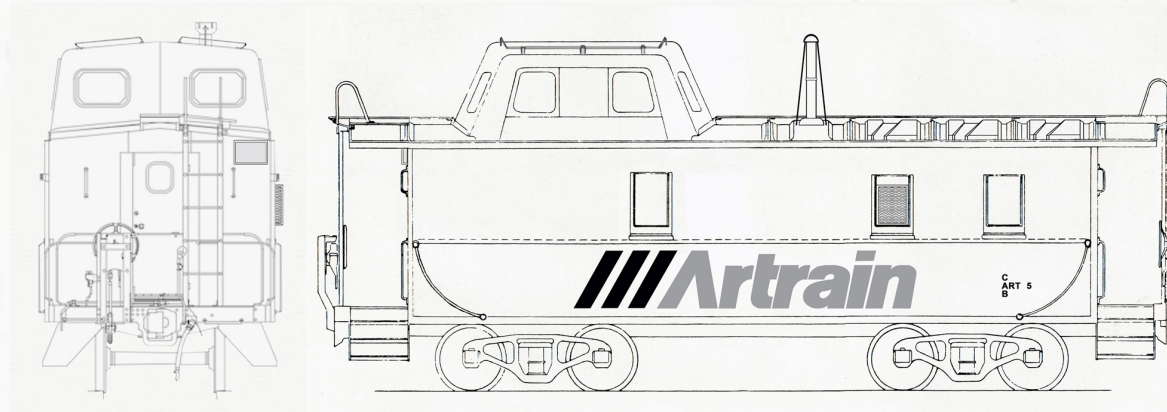
Circa 1980, AA 2843 was donated to the Michigan Artrain to replace a former New York Central (Big Four) wood caboose that had been used since the Artrain was formed in 1971. As Art Cab 5 it served through the 1980's until it was finally retired and replaced by ex-DTI 141. The Artrain cars were periodically repainted to reflect the theme of the traveling art exhibit. This was the most common paint scheme worn by the ex-AA caboose.

Red: body, ends and cupola

Black: steps, end platforms, all side and end railings and grab irons

The three bars on the sides: black

'ARTRAIN' and Art Cab 5 lettering: white



Con Sweet photo of Art Cab 5 at Austin Texas, 1986

The caboose was not part of the art exhibits but provided accommodations for the crew that traveled with the Artrain. Note the window air conditioner installed on the right side and the left side had two small louvered vents installed in the side.



**Artrain Art 5
(AA 2843)
Austin Texas, 1986
Con Sweet photo**

**Artrain Art 5
(AA 2843)
Coopersville Michigan, 1993**



WABASH RAILROAD cabooses paint schemes

2770-2849 (built in Wabash shops, 1945-) / 2850-2859 (built International Car Co. 1955)

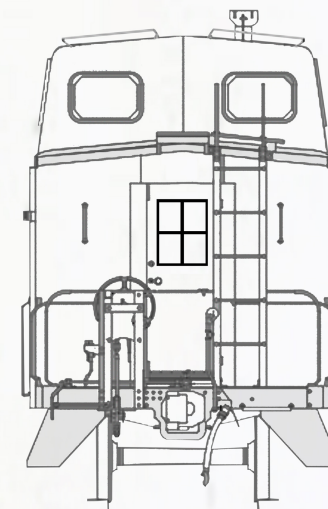
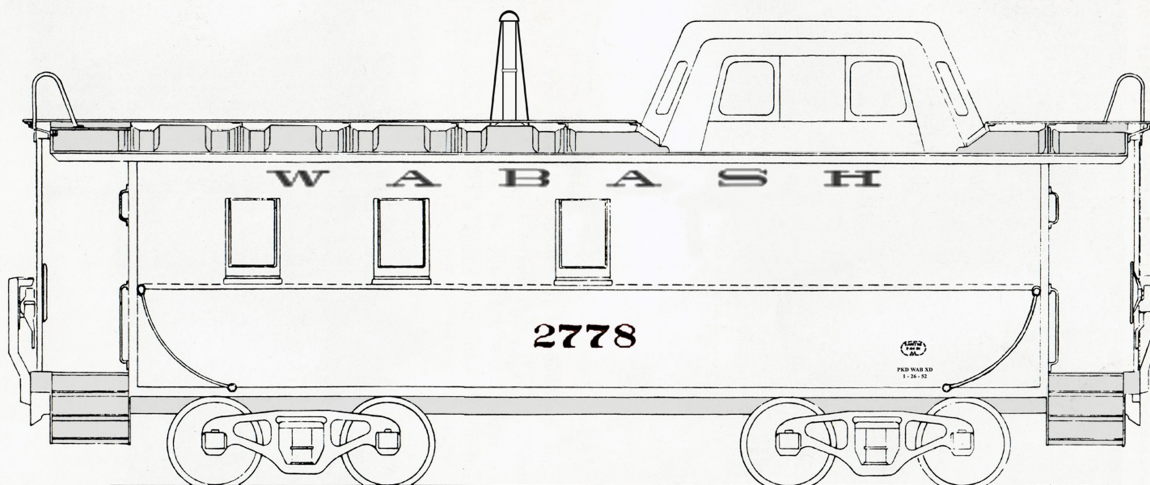
Red: sides, ends, cupola and ladders

Tuscan Red: steps, end platforms truck sideframes and underbody*

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board and window frames (note: cupola roof is red)

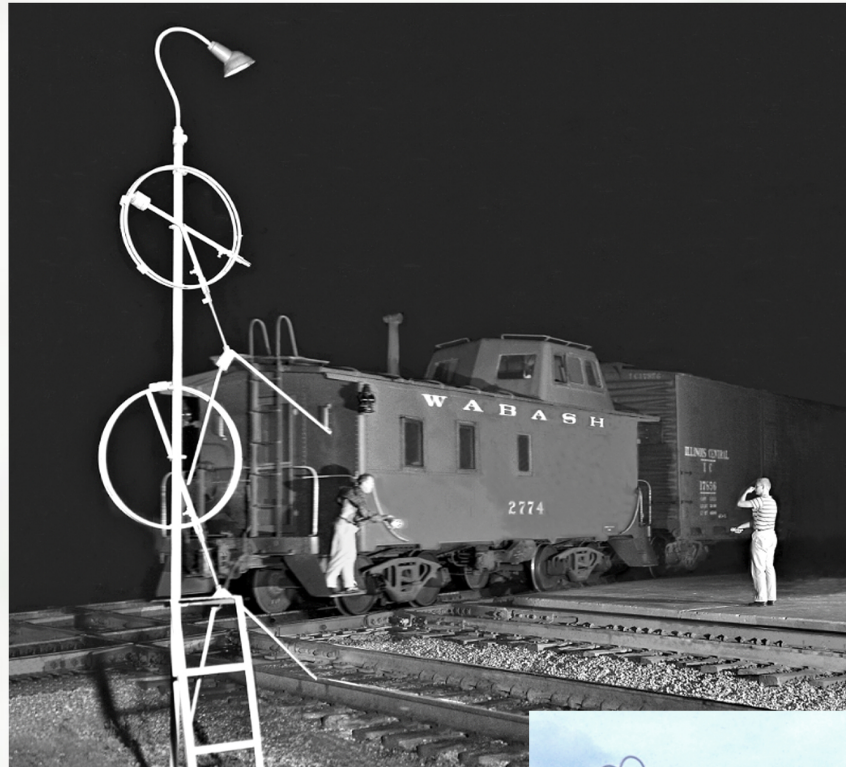
Black: smoke jack



Wabash RR-built cabooses had rectangular-panel roof / ICC-built cabooses had diagonal panel roof

*Photos show most cabooses with silver roof / others with tuscan red roof

No Wabash flag herald on cabooses in this scheme



WAB 2774
Tolono, Illinois 1959
J. Parker Lamb photo

WAB 2778
1949



WABASH RAILROAD caboose paint schemes Red-White repaints circa 1960

Red: lower portion of sides and ends, cupola and ladders

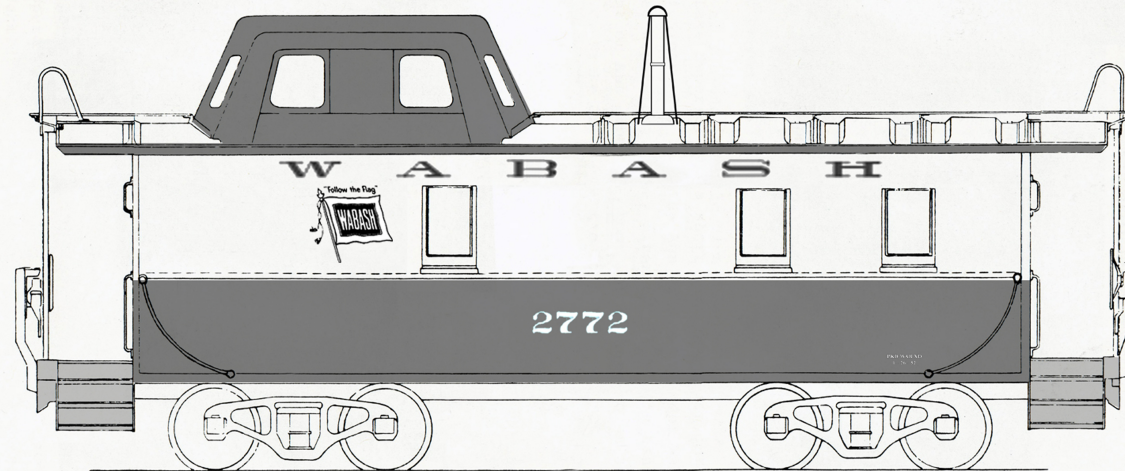
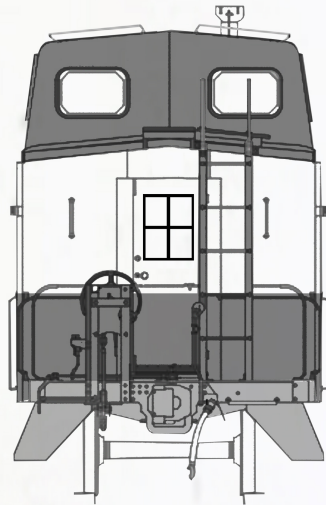
White: upper portion of sides and ends

Tuscan Red: steps, end platforms truck sideframes and underbody

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings

Silver (aluminum): roof, running board and window frames (note: cupola roof is red)

Lettering: white on red portion of body / blue on white portion of body (including flag herald)





Left: WAB 2811
February 1965

Below: WAB 2772
Landers Yard, Chicago
April 1965



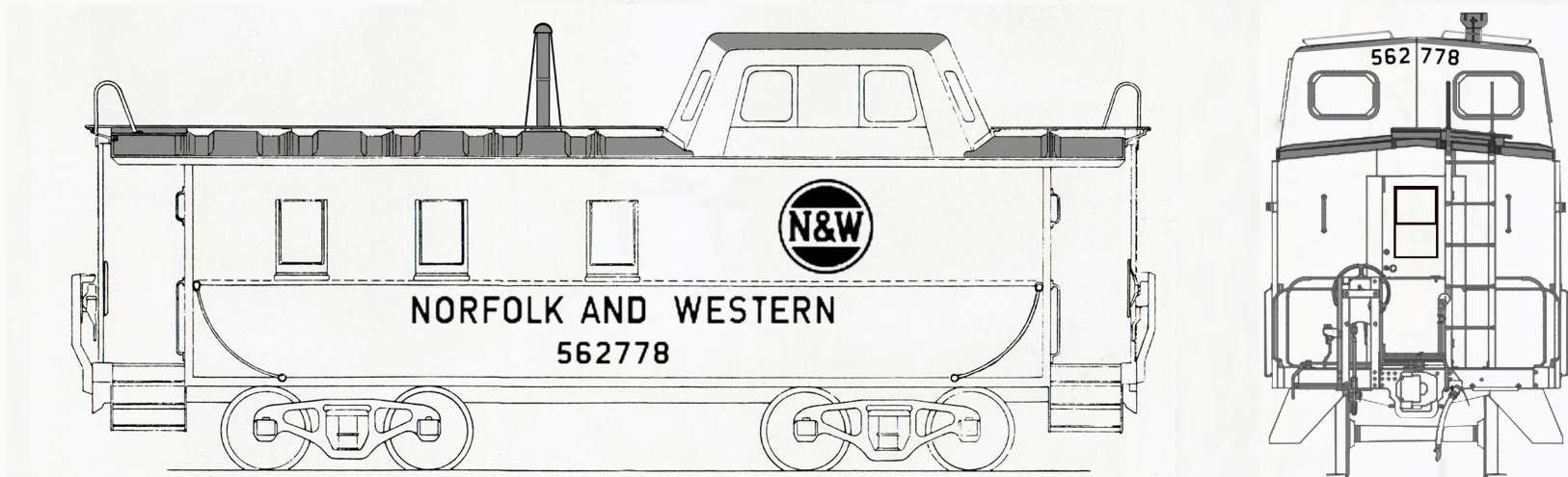
WABASH RAILROAD caboose paint schemes N&W standard scheme / post merger

Red: sides, ends (including steps/platforms), cupola and ladders

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings

Black: roof and running board (note: cupola roof is black)

Lettering: white



Original wood end doors replaced with steel doors with two pane window

Some cabooses had one or more side windows plated over



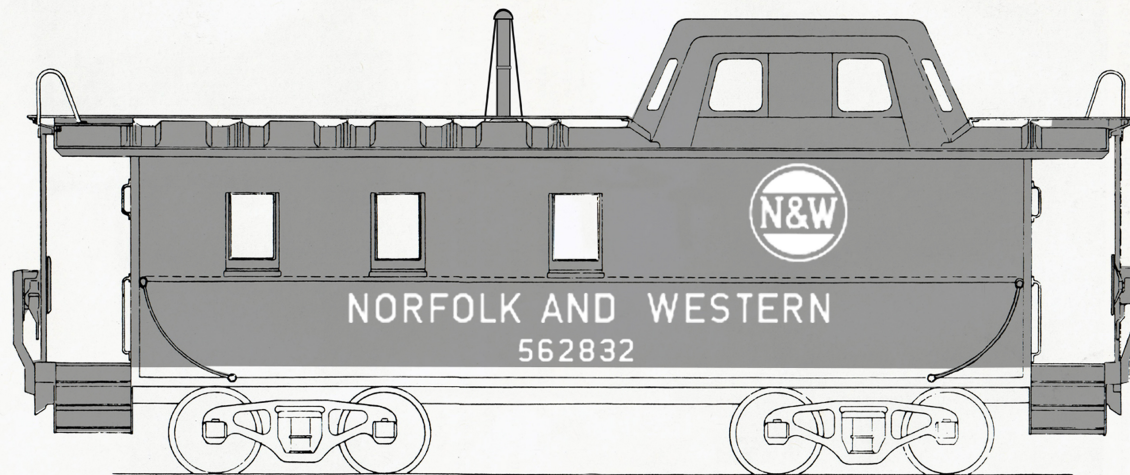
N&W 562819 / N&W 562814
June 1967
Richard Ward photo

WABASH RAILROAD caboose paint schemes N&W blue scheme / post merger

Blue: sides, ends (including steps/platforms), roof, cupola and ladders

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings, stripe along bottom of body sides

Lettering: yellow



Different window pattern for end doors

Yellow end panel with red V-stripes

H-shaped replacement smoke jack



N&W 562832

WABASH RAILROAD caboose paint schemes

NW late red scheme / post merger

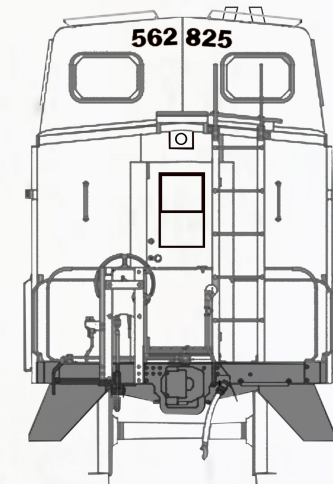
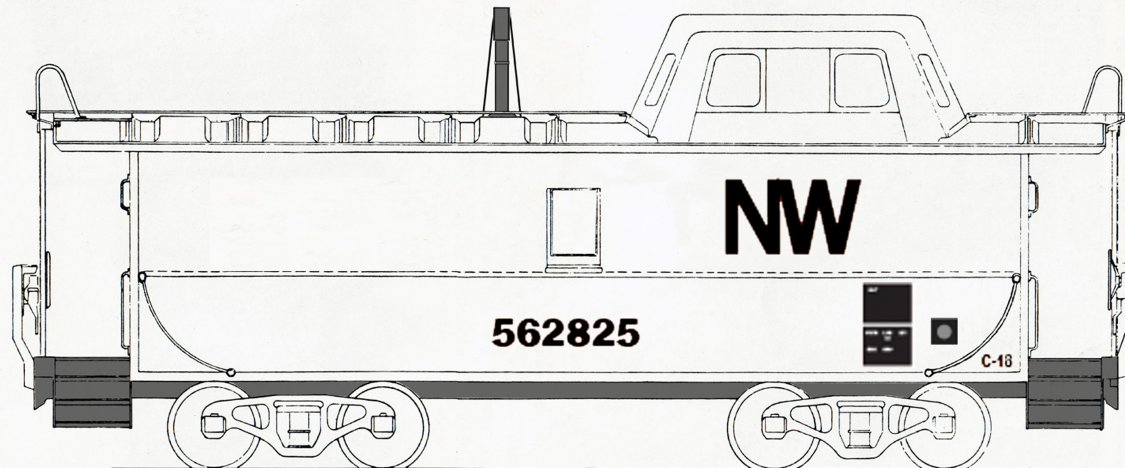
Red: sides, ends, roof, cupola and ladders

Yellow: side and end railings, grab irons, outer portion of end platform railings

Silver (aluminum): end door window frame, cupola window frames

Black: End beams, steps and platforms

Lettering: white



Side windows plated over

H-shaped replacement smoke jack

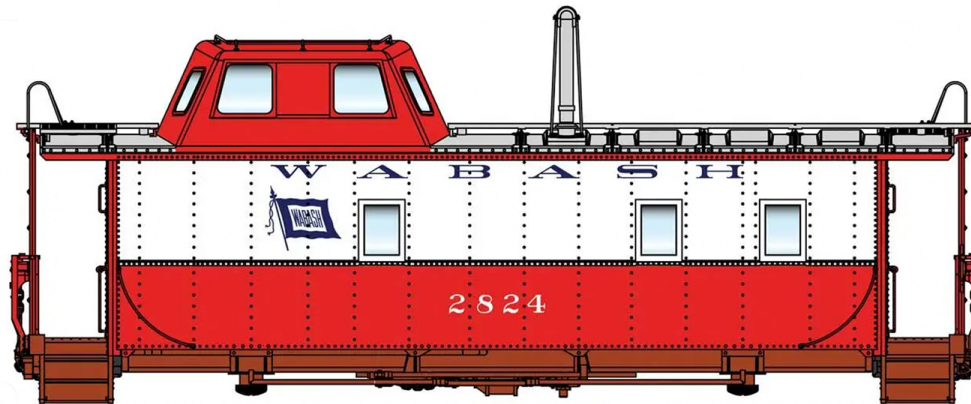
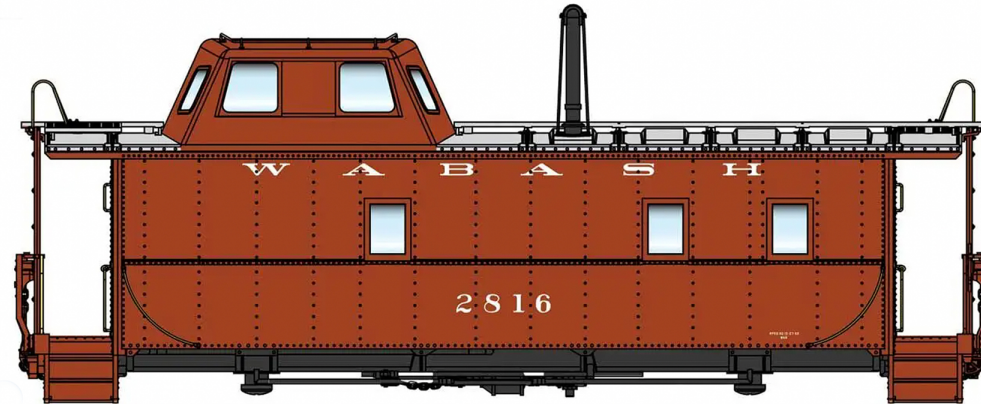


N&W 562795
June 1983
Robert Gibson Jr photo

N&W 562839



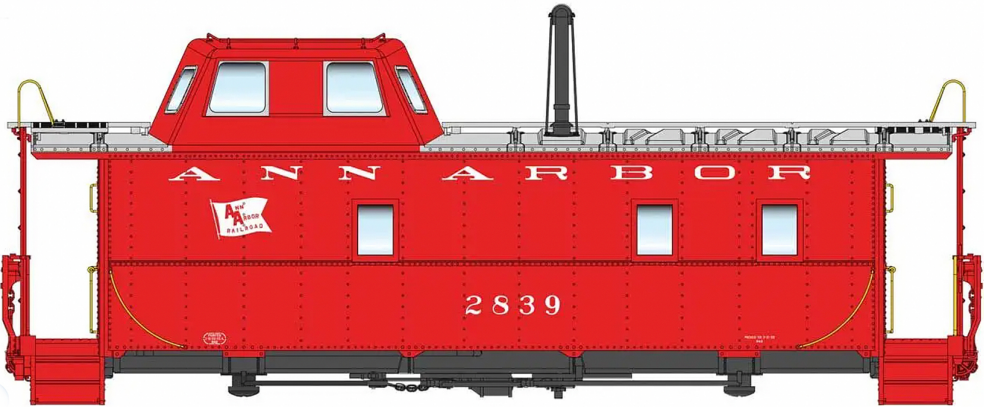
COMING FROM WALTHERS, Winter 2026



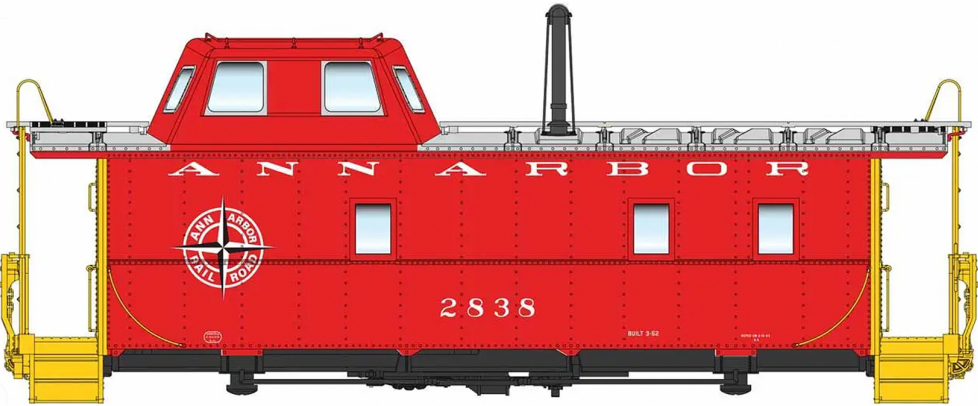
COMING FROM WALTHERS, Winter 2026



COMING FROM WALTHERS, Winter 2026



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Steam Railroading Institute
Owosso, Michigan

COMING FROM WALTHERS, Winter 2026



Detroit Toledo Ironton Railroad



A PDF version of this presentation can be found on the RPM website or as an e-mail attachment by contacting:

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