

SHORT TRACK *GAZETTE*



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Reported by Fred McDowell

I love the “Antique Road Show”. That’s the show on PBS that travels around the U.S. that allows people to bring in various items for appraisal on television. I find it wonderful to see the reactions when some “expert” determines that the old painting of Uncle Ernie (formerly gracing some dusty attic) is actually worth \$10,000!

I’m not alone in my like for that show; it’s very popular. I think it’s probably because America is full of “experts”. We love experts in this country and they come in a wide variety. We have experts on all sorts of things, such as cars, stamps, coins, firearms, china, sewing machines, and yes...even tractors. In fact we even have experts on things that you would never even think are worth, well...any sort of expertise. That’s because when you when you take any subject, (or hobby) and really get down to the “nitty-gritty”, there are often lots and lots of things to learn.

Take trains for example.

Sure, we run all sorts of trains in our custom-built, highly-detailed miniature world. In fact, if our layouts could be compared to a theatrical stage, then the “stars” of our show would certainly be the steam and diesel locomotives that pull our trains.

But, no “play” would be complete with just two or three “stars”. It needs supporting actors and characters too. And really, a “train” isn’t much of a train if the engine just goes around pulling a caboose, is it? So, this edition of our newsletter will be devoted to one of those often un-sung, yet fundamental components of the train. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the humble *boxcar*.

The author must pause at this point to thank and acknowledge you, for if you’re reading this, it means you haven’t turned the page to read the vintage 1927 “John Deer” ad on the next page. So, please bear with me; I’ll try and make it worth your while.

The boxcar is one of the earliest samples of railroad “rolling stock”. Although credit must go to the Europeans for inventing the first locomotive, we Americans certainly get credit for improving and perfecting railroads.