

In The Catbird Seat



In mid-April our railfan hotline informed us that a special was heading north on the Erie, consisting of three low hoods, a PRR Clearance Car No. 497125 complete with a railroader enjoying his ride, and a caboose. Snapped out of our editorial window. Then,



about a week later we heard the high pitched "toot" which could only be our twice a year Sperry Rail Detector, back for a visit. Two defects were found in the rails imbedded in our Main Street.



NALX-115

BALLAST DUMPING CAR.

EXHIBITED BY THE ROGERS BALLAST CAR CO., CHICAGO.

Fig. 1

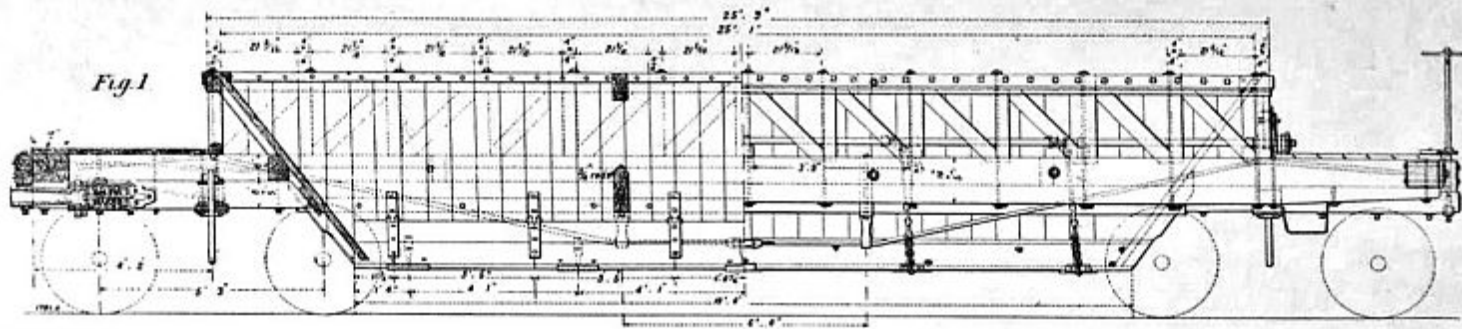


Fig. 2

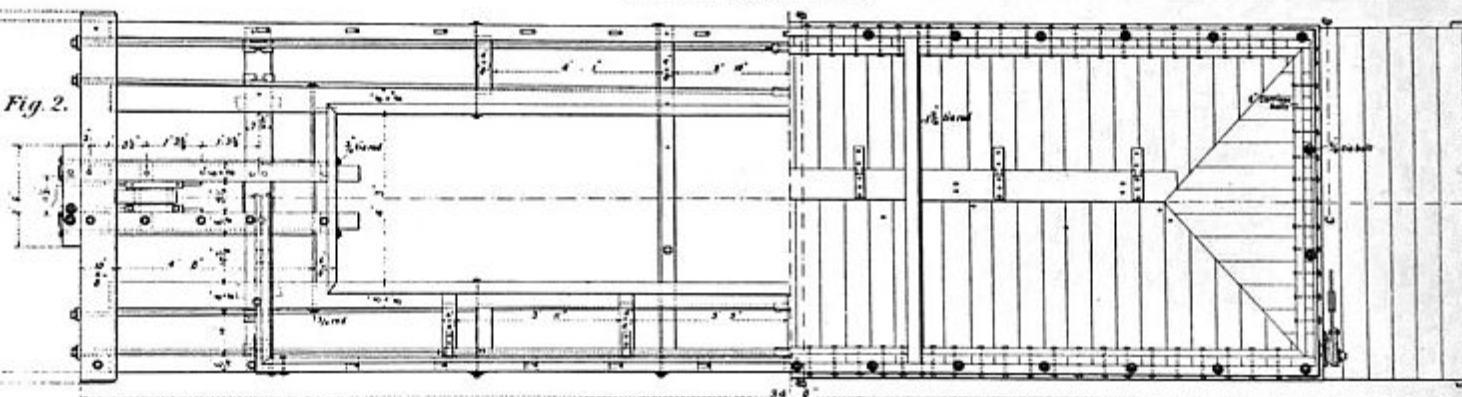


Fig. 3. End Elevation. Section C. C.

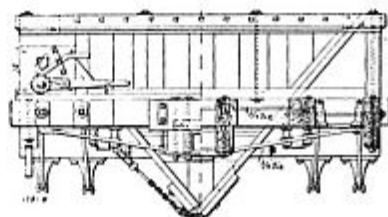
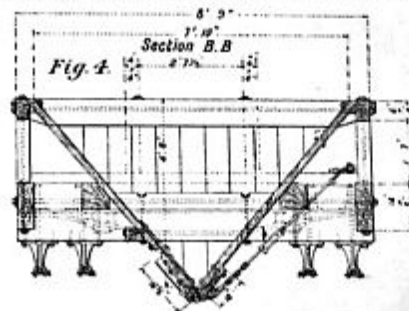


Fig. 4. Section B. B.

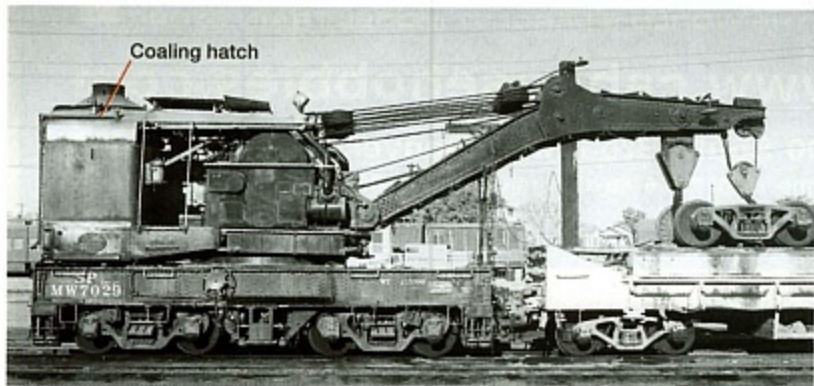




SPINNING LOCO WHEELS MELTED THE RAIL



The lead engine stopped with brakes engaged and the remaining engine had to overcome not only the braked loco but trying to pull the entire load on its own. Once a slight railhead groove got established, the engine just spun in place and melted through the rail. The time to repair? Two hours tops: MOW employees cut out the rail with a chop saw and welded in some new rail. ■



Steam wrecking cranes came in many sizes, but they all share a similar internal cab layout for operation with a two-man crew. Don Sims photo

I've just finished building a Tichy 120-ton wrecking crane kit and a boom car. Since it's a steam crane, I'd like to know where the coal and water were stored to keep it running? I've seen photos of these cranes at wreck sites, but seldom see a coal tender.

Ralph Symington, Groveland, Mass.

I found the answer to this question in an old Industrial Brownhoist steam crane catalog in our David P. Morgan Memorial Library.

Industrial-Brownhoist built its 120-ton crane with a squat, vertical boiler centered at the rear of the cab. The heavy hoist machinery was placed over the center pivot to help balance the machine.

If you consider the boom as the front, the left rear corner of the cab was occupied by a 500-gallon water tank, and the right rear corner had a coal bunker that held about a ton of coal. A roof hatch allowed the crane to be filled at a

locomotive coaling tipple. Depending upon how much work the crane was actually doing, this water and coal supply could last for quite some time.

Steam cranes normally required a two-man crew: one man operated the hoist following hand signals from the wreckmaster on the ground, while a second man tended the boiler as a fireman. Two or three additional helpers worked on the ground to adjust the outriggers and prepare for lifts.

Most steam wreckers had a small tender nearby for supplies. If needed, refueling was handled by a bucket brigade that passed buckets of coal up to the roof hatch. — *Jim Hediger, senior editor*

Send your questions about prototype railroading to Information Desk, *Model Railroader* magazine, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187, or e-mail proto@mrmag.com. We regret we can't answer all the questions we receive.