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Bulletin

Southern California Chapter

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Southern Calif Chapter
Train Collectors Assoc

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- President's Report -

What is a Train Collector? Don't look in Webster. You won't find it there. But, what is a true Train Collector?

Wouldn't it be someone who collects all makes and gauges? Would he not have in his collection Marx, late Lionel, American Flyer S gauge, and even cheap wind-up trains?

He would be like a country doctor - a general practitioner. I think that you will admit that most of us are like the city doctor, who is a specialist. We either collect just standard gauge or only Lionel, or limit our field to two or three makes. Then there are those who collect only trains made before a certain date. For instance, collecting trains made prior to the First or the Second World War.

But when one does limit himself to certain makes, gauges, or ages he would be, it seems to me, a specialist.

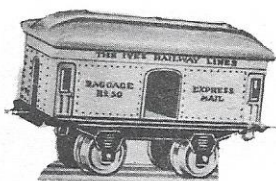
I must admit that I would be a specialist in the broadest sense, since I have never collected any of the trains made after the Second World War.

So it would seem to me that a true Train Collector would save, value, and classify any toy train regardless of make or date of manufacture.

It is with interest that I note "Pop" Middleton and Bill Harris are now collecting late model Lionel freight cars - the long type. However, it won't be long before they will be picking up the short inexpensive type.

More power to them - all makes for good Collectors!

Russ Hafdahl



- From The Mail Car -

In a recent letter to Wes Frye, John Marron of Harrison, New York, gave what we feel to be a very fine appraisal of the present price situation in our train collecting hobby. Some three or four years ago he bought quite a few Ives trains from men on the West Coast and he refers to this in the following paragraph.

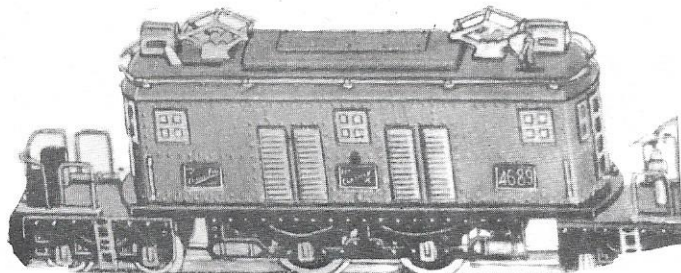
"Prices did change on the West Coast and here. I purchased my Ives from others along the West Coast about the time I was buying from you and the prices were cheaper there. Now it is different. The prices are higher there, plus the postage, which brings up the cost of the cars and the sets. The bottom dropped out last year on a lot of stuff and right now the fellows at the meetings are really discounting on the more common items. I find the mail holds the prices strong but more meetings tend to lower them. As soon as the fellows get cleaned out of their "dups", the prices will go back up. I know I am cleaned out, and I haven't put out a list in a year."

The "Bulletin" advises the newer collectors to buy those more common items before the prices do go up as they most certainly will. We base this conclusion on two factors - First, many fellows are cleaned out of their duplicates, and second, the supply from other sources is rapidly dwindling to a trickle.

ANNOUNCEMENT NATIONAL CONVENTION

Here is the announcement you have been looking forward to reading. The time and place of the 1962 National Convention for the enjoyment and fellowship of all TCA members and their friends. Dick Hopkins, secretary of the Northern California Division has officially proclaimed the Josephine Randell Jr. Museum, 16th street and Roosevelt Way in San Francisco, the place, and Friday and Saturday, June 29th and 30th as the dates.

This certainly promises to be a fine affair so make your plans now as June will arrive before you know it.

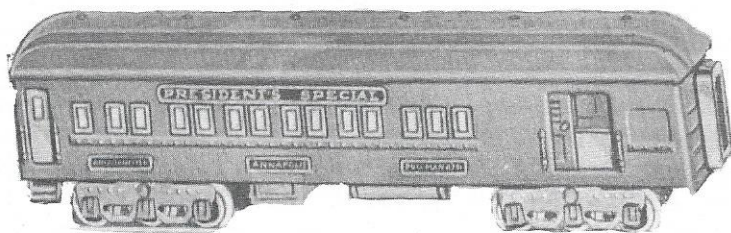


THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL

Truly, American Flyer's finest miniature railroad train of the Golden Era of Tinplate and one of the most magnificent and realistic tinplate models ever imagined, was the President's Special. Rich and beyond mere words to express its fascinating beauty, the President's Special, a four car train, stands out in bold relief, distinctive and individual against all other miniature trains. This masterpiece included all the features in demand during this great period of standard gauge train manufacture. This forty pound giant with matchless beauty and smartness of lines, radiates richness in color scheme with its array of shining brass and polished nickel trim. Those of you fortunate enough to have a catalog in which the center spread depicts this beautiful train, on a curve in mountainous country, are indeed lucky. This artistically drawn mural is thrilling in its presentation of this marvelous set.

Now lets get down to a description of this beauty, an example of fine craftsmanship and outstanding design in the realm of toy trains.

This set was finished in a rich two-tone Rolls-Royce blue, the roofs of the engine and cars being a darker shade than the sides. This well chosen color combination was set off beautifully by the sixty red wheels on which the train rolled. Red pilots and red sand domes colored the front and rear of the loco. The "President's Special" trim, the doors, window frames, louvers, railings, steps, tanks, name plates, ladders, journals, and chains were shining brass, while the truck side frames, head lite covers and couplers were of nickel plate. The entire train fairly glistened with its solid brass and nickel trim. The most distinctive feature of this gorgeous set was the big American Eagle with spread wings mounted on a gold pedestal gracing the forward platform of the New York Central type locomotive. Really words just are not adequate to do justice to this finest of



the big American Flyer wide gauge trains.

The first unit to be described is the #4689 loco, a magnificent twelve wheeler 4-4-4 electric type engine, 20 inches long, with the patented ringing bell and automatic reverse. What a regal looking engine this is. The most elaborate version had eight brass louvers inset in depressions, four on each side. It had brass name plates, three on a side. The center plate had the inscription "The Commander" while the others bore the number "4689" and "Built by American Flyer Lines" respectively on each side.

Once seen, no one could forget the beautiful passenger coaches with all their elegance and massive size. Here was created the only type of car which when they came in a set of four, were four distinctive Pullman type cars. Yes, these cars also came with sets in other finishes but not as a complete set as an advertised off the shelf, center page attraction. The only exception was when these same cars came with the #4694 loco and were advertised as the "Minute Man"

Coupled next to the engine was the multi-windowed "Combo" which some prefer to call a "Half Baggage". This #4390 Club car had twenty eight rather narrow windows, two baggage and two passenger entry doors. The baggage doors in the forward portion of the car were set off like all the passenger car doors by brass hand rails on either side. The brass steps for passenger boarding were of course only at the passenger doors. The car was garnished by eight brass name plates - each side had four, the ones near either end reading "American Flyer" and "Club 4390" with the center plates giving the name of the car, which in this case was 'West Point'. The fourth plate on each side was over the windows and proudly displayed the words "President's Special".

Following this "Combo" was the #4393 Diner, 'Annapolis' Here we had a definite change in window design. Just under the long "President's Special" plate on each side of the car we find eight rather long and distinctive windows which were divided into a very small upper section and a large

clear span lower section. Between the passenger doors and the first large window were the narrow high ones same as found on the first car. The plates on this most unusual car read "American Flyer", "Annapolis", and "Diner 4393".

Following the "Diner" was the 4391 Pullman coach "Academy" which was nearly joined to the diner by the beautiful door hitch of brass, a feature of note on this aristocratic set. This car had the narrow windows but as no baggage doors were present, the number was increased to a whopping 36. The brass steps, tanks, and brass battery box under the car beautifully contrast the nickel truck side plates and the crimson wheels. These big six wheel trucks were of the high speed type and were designed and proportioned to enhance the beauty of these cars.

Now, the feature car which was shown in living color in several yearly catalogs, the fabulous observation car "Army-Navy". This was the car most unique in that it incorporates most every feature of the other three cars, (except the baggage doors), plus several peculiar only to itself. The unobstructed, beautifully styled rear observation platform with its white canopy and colored marker lights, its clever placement of bulbs illuminating the platform as well as the "President's Special" marker on the rear railing was realism personified. The lighting was accomplished by means of a bulb on the platform floor shielded by a cover similar to the headlite hoods, one bulb in the ceiling under the canopy and two bulbs in the interior of the car. Four lights in all on a single passenger car. The windows were of both of the types which were incorporated in the other three cars. The forward 18, 9 on each side, were the narrow single lite type while the rear 8, 4 on each side, were the wide two lite design of brass framed opening. This car was alive with color and glitter. The brass and nickel were beautifully harmonized by the white, red and two toned blue colors. A fine three fourths rear view picture of this car standing alone was one of the most detailed and colorful single car illustrations of standard gauge elegance.



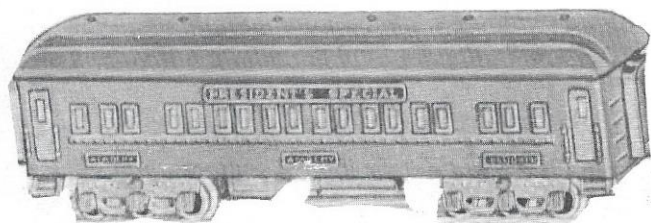
This set of four superlative cars and engine which has just been described was the set generally known as the true "President's Special". It was first pictured and featured in the 1928 catalog and was captioned as the "Advanced President's Special". This set was produced thru 1934.

But this was not the first of the American Flyer wide gauge "President's Special". On the contrary, it was the third train to bear this magic name. Magic in that no other train name in tin plate history was or is as well known.

The first "President's Special" appeared in 1926, the second year of wide gauge production for American flyer. This was a light brown train which consisted of a 0-4-0 #4039 loco and three cars. The cars were lithographed and were the #4080 mail and baggage combination, the #4081 coach, and the #4082 observation. The #4080 had two interior lights, the #4081, three, and the #4082, four, so even at its inception the "President's Special" lighting was unusual. Interestingly enough this same set was cataloged the next year, 1927, as "The Chief" but the loco was changed to the #4677 which had a slightly longer frame but the same cab.

1927 was the twentieth anniversary of the American Flyer company and they went all out to improve their variety of trains. They made a special point of rich coloring, in fact, they dubbed their line "The Rainbow Line" because its colors were "rivalled only by the rainbow".

In keeping with this, the second train of the series was introduced as the "Improved President's Special". This version had the three dark blue lithographed cars with orange window frames and white lettering. The lettering spelled out "West Point" on the observation,



Annapolis on the coach, and U.S. Mail on the four door full baggage. The dark blue engine cab had only four plates and was numbered 4687. It had nickel head light hoods, railings, pantographs, and plates. Its frame, truck, sand domes, pilot castings, and wheels were black. No American Eagle graced its leading truck and no where did the magic name appear on the train itself. The louvers on the engine cab were stamped and cut directly in the sides of the loco and were sometimes painted gold. Also below the center window on the cab sides there sometimes appeared a hole for lubrication purposes.

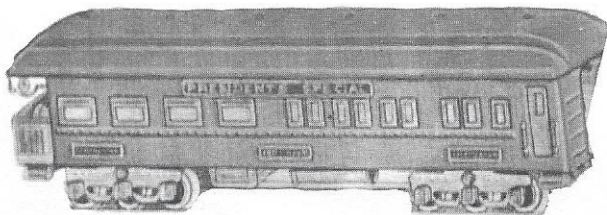
These were the American Flyer "President's Specials" but American Flyer either recognized a fine design or the public made them realize it as they used its components in other sets such as the "Mayflower" and the "Flying Colonel".

This article is intended to give you the highlites and some of the details of these famous "President's Special" trains. The other sets in this family were mentioned for the sake of continuity and interest. We hope that if you do not now cherish one of these beautiful examples of the Golden Era of Tinsplate as your own, that soon this dream will come true.

Harrison Bemis

- February Social Meeting -

The February social meeting will be held at the home of Dick Thompson, 2901 E. 4th St, Long Beach, Calif on Friday evening Feb. 9th at 7:30 pm. Bring your auction items.



- Who am I ? -

I was born January 4, 1924 in Coolidge, Texas, a small cotton town near Waco. As a young lad I spent much of my time during the summers watching the T&BV boys load cotton into box cars. When I was in the first grade, I acquired my first train by trading some marbles and tops to a classmate for an Ives #40. My interest in tinplate was renewed while on an accounting assignment in Europe in 1949. A KBN set was purchased in a small antique shop in Amsterdam, Holland. Upon returning home I bought a Lionel #2023 yellow pass set and thru contacts with John Resch, I learned of the TCA. John sponsored my membership and I was off to the races, lists from Piper, Wes Frye, Springman, Morley, and many others provided items for my growing collection. Who am I? * See bottom of page 10.

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In the April issue, Bill Lowndes will tell us who was the first manufacturer of HO gauge trains.

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We understand Evan Middleton is offering \$100 for a 1954 Lionel #6464 -328 Blatz Beer refer. No repaints please.

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-January Business Meeting-

Our first business meeting of 1962 was held Friday nite, January 12th, at the home of Jim and Zereta Kurten. Twenty four members and two guests were present. A new member, Virg Critton was welcomed into our chapter.

Jim's very fine Lionel standard gauge collection was tastefully displayed in naturally finished cedar cabinets with sliding glass doors.

A lively auction was presided over by Russ Hafdahl and Bill Harris and Stan Anderson set up and operated a new German triple O set for our enjoyment.

Refreshments were served and this put an end to a very enjoyable evening.

— Trading Post —

Gordon Nesbitt wants AF and Lionel catalogs of the early thirties.

If you have any of the #6464 series Lionel box or refer cars for sale, get in touch with Bill Harris.

Don Robbins would like to buy a real good Lionel #402 and a two tone green #9E.

The following AF S gauge items are wanted by Wes Frye - standard Pullmans, circus locos and cars, aluminum, not plastic, streamline pass cars.

Dick Hopkins would like to get some AF and Ives catalogs of the years before 1931 ; also he would like to pick up a couple of Lionel #29 Day Coaches.

Harrison Bemis has the following items for sale - Lionel #260 and #263 locos and tenders, #112 station, and some of the odd color variations in Lionel 200 series freights.

Art Varney needs a door to a "President's Special" pass car. He has for sale- a 1116 Ives CI loco and 4 cars,- a #14 AF loco and 3 cars, - an AF CI electric loco and a Hafner CI loco.

Sometime in the near future a limited number of reproductions of the #40 Ives tenders, less trucks, will be available for trade from Ralph Pauly.