

Selections from *Gunderson and FMC Railcar Production through 1984*

Introduction

This book has deep roots which go back to a time when I was still building scale models in the mid 1970s, and the incentive per diem box car boom was just beginning. New, brightly painted box cars seemed to appear overnight. Many were lettered for short lines in the Northeast United States and especially New England. Decals were readily available, so I started painting Athearn “Railbox type” cars for everything I saw. About once a week, I drove by the Allentown Yard looking for more examples. I’d make hand written notes about how specific cars were lettered and then paint models to match.

FMC was a significant builder of many of these cars. Soon after Dave and I started *Freight Cars Journal* in 1983, *FMC Box Cars Since 1972* was the first book in the *Freight Cars Journal Monograph* series. It was published in 1985, and included 37 pages with 16 photos. As far as I know, this was the major work on freight cars to include a large amount of detailed data. Although I was the author, Dave handled the layout, photo selection, and publishing. At the same time, we were fortunate to acquire an official FMC production list which was published over several issues of *Freight Cars Journal*.

I began taking photographs in 1983, using an old, twin-lens square format camera. Many of the early photographs I took were of those FMC box cars which were changing hands at an increasing rate. Unfortunately, the limitations of an old camera made good photography a matter of luck. Nevertheless, I was able to capture some of the short-lived lettering arrangements. I upgraded to a 35 mm SLR camera in 1986.

A change to digital photography in 2004 greatly reduced the cost of photography and allowed me to take a picture of everything I saw, including many aging FMC box cars. These were often repainted in plain oxide red or covered with graffiti.

This book, *Gunderson and FMC Railcar Production through 1984*, has much greater photographic coverage than *FMC Box Cars Since 1972*. It covers a longer period, and includes other types of cars.

There have also been over 20 years of subsequent history. FMC provided a large number of box cars for SSI, IteL, Brae, and Rex. Due to the economic recession which began in late 1979, most these cars were soon transferred

to other railroads one or more times. By the 1990s, most had been acquired by GE. They continued to change hands nearly every time a lease expired, or they were rebuilt. The renumberings of GE owned cars are often very complex, but some of the most commonly seen reporting marks are EEC, HS, and SRN.

Thousands of the SP and SSW cars were rehabilitated by Greenbrier in the 1990s. Incidentally, Greenbrier had become the parent company of Gunderson in 1985. The rehabilitated cars were repainted blue with prominent “Golden West” lettering and usually carried GVSR or VCY reporting marks. The renumberings were complicated. Many of these cars have since returned to their original initials and numbers or gone elsewhere.

And so, I hope the reader will find *Gunderson and FMC Railcar Production through 1984* a worthy successor to *FMC Box Cars Since 1972*.

When producing a book of this size, it is difficult to keep the layout simple and intuitive. Hopefully I have accomplished this to the greatest extent possible. Although the production list is the foundation of this book, it is at the end of the book. Cars produced at Portland, OR, are listed first. Cars produced at Charleston, WV, follow. Both parts are in roughly chronological order and arranged by lot number where possible. Dispositions are included with each order and are extensive in some cases.

The photos are grouped according to design which can best be located using the table of contents starting on the second page of the book. A discussion of each design appears at the beginning of each group. The photos within each group are arranged according to lot number. The lot number allows you to easily find associated historical information in the production list. Photo captions contain a minimum of information to avoid duplication.

The book does not include an index of reporting marks. Please use the search function to find what you are looking for. The production list section has been isolated from the remainder of the book so that either part can be searched independently. You can search for reporting marks, lot numbers, and cubic capacities. For example, searching for “TOE 2” in the production list section should yield all dispositions in the TOE 2000s.

Contents

Introduction	5258, 5283 cubic feet (16' sliding doors)	2875 cubic feet
Production summary	6089 cubic feet (Dreadnaught end)	Ore gondola cars
Corporate histories	6089 cubic feet (non-terminating end)	1643 cubic feet
Credits	6189 cubic feet (non-terminating end)	Concentrate gondola cars
Box cars	Are 5,347 and 5,368 cubic foot cars really different?	1470? and 1578 cubic feet
Roof construction	52' inside length	Wood chip gondola cars
Body bolster attachment at side sill	6372? and 6468? cubic feet	6014 cubic feet
Upper body corners	5503 cubic feet	6123 cubic feet
Ends	60' inside length	7466 cubic feet
Waffles	6024 cubic feet	6048 cubic feet
Underframes	6163 cubic feet	6007 cubic feet
Variety of designs	6537? cubic feet (10' sliding door)	6444 cubic feet
Table of designs	6537? cubic feet (16' sliding doors)	6007 cubic feet
40' inside length	6554 cubic feet (16' sliding doors)	6487 cubic feet
4131 cubic feet	6174 cubic feet	6810 cubic feet
50' inside length	6307 cubic feet	6815 cubic feet
5077 cubic feet (10' sliding door)	6348 cubic feet	7452 cubic feet
5077 cubic feet (16' centered sliding doors)	6350 cubic feet	7406 cubic feet
5077 cubic feet (16' offset sliding doors)	7340 cubic feet	6550 cubic feet
5077 cubic feet (16' plug door)	6589 cubic feet	6798 cubic feet
5151 cubic feet	6535 cubic feet	Rotary coal gondola cars
5272 cubic feet (10' sliding door)	7468 cubic feet	4000 cubic feet
5277 cubic feet (10' sliding door)	7533 cubic feet	4200 cubic feet
5277 cubic feet (10' plug door)	Covered hopper cars	Coil steel cars
5277 cubic feet (16' combination doors)	2700 cubic feet	Flat cars
5347 cubic feet (10' sliding)	4526 cubic feet	47' 6" flat cars
5347 cubic feet (16' sliding doors)	5725 cubic feet	53' 6" flat cars
5317 cubic feet	4692 and 4700 cubic feet	60' 0" flat cars
5327 cubic feet	Phase 1	62' 0" flat cars
5322 cubic feet	Phase 2	Spine cars
5295 cubic feet	Phase 3	45' trailers/containers
5355 cubic feet	Phase 4	48' trailers/containers
5368 cubic feet	Gondola cars	Stack cars
6156 cubic feet	General service and mill gondola cars	Miscellaneous cars
6241 cubic feet	2410 cubic feet	Open hopper cars
5200 cubic feet	1780? cubic feet	2650 cubic feet
5230 cubic feet	2420? cubic feet	4040 cubic feet
5234 cubic feet	2440? cubic feet	Stock cars
5080 cubic feet	1995 and 1970? cubic feet	Pulpwood cars
5243 cubic feet	2494 cubic feet	Non-interchange cars
5283 cubic feet (10' sliding door)	1777 cubic feet	

Data sample from production list

Lot	Initials	Numbers	Qt'y	Cap'y	Type	Lt.wt.	Cu.ft.	I.L.	O.L.	Plant	Dates	Notes
17978	NHIR	5001-5150!	150!	154!	XM!	621!	5347!	50-6!	55-10	P	11=12-79	10'-s YSD no cushion! green (RF&P 8-79) <11064> NHIR 5001-5150 to WRWK 5001-5150 (150) in 1=4-80 then RF&P 5001-5150 (149) in 1981-82 then RF&P 5001-5150 to CSXT 142886-143031 starting in 1987 CSXT 142900 to LBR 4803

Typical photograph



Gunderson and EMC Railcar Production through 1984