

Back for another round

Old flat cars with new racks?



PW 100131 at South Bethlehem, PA on July 22, 2008, Eric A. Neubauer



WARNING: *These cars are not what I expected, and may boggle your mind!* The new Providence and Worcester autoracks have captured a lot of attention recently. Although the racks are new (TrinityRail job 3245 in at least 12-08 and 3-09), the flat cars themselves are about 30 years old according to the consolidated stencils.

The obvious question is, where did the flat cars come from? Providence & Worcester once had a large fleet of 89' flat cars, but that was back in around 1980. The cars have widely scattered numbers suggesting these are derived at least in part from the old numbers. The ones I've seen are marked PS or BETH with dates in the late 1970s. Upon checking my builder's lists, Trailer Train and Southern Pacific were the best matches, but those leads turned out to be a complete waste of time.

The first real break came when Carl Shaver mentioned the cars in the PW 104200s and 104300s were ex FEC 4200s and 4300s. He also had discovered PW 100001+ were ex GADX 1+, but didn't know their previous history. The FEC and GADX cars both had standard deck heights, suggesting that it wasn't only the added racks that were different about the PW cars. A closer look showed a new deck which was lower than the top of the side sill. Other changes were also evident.

A quick visit to the Surface Transportation Board website helped me to reconstruct the history of PW 100131. Here it is: nee WP 8969, built by P-S at Bessemer in 1980, lot 1144 (TOFC); to D&RGW 8969 (TOFC); then KCS 8969 (TOFC); then NJRC 8969 in about 2004 (garbage containers); then GADX 131; and finally PW 100131 in 2008 or 2009 (new automobiles).

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