

400 Series Superintendent's Car

Compiled by Steve Sandifer

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Updated 6-23-08



The ATSF had a fleet of 18 specially built business cars for their Division Superintendents. They were heavyweight all steel cars built in the late 20s. By standardizing the parts with their other passenger cars maintenance was simplified. A total of 18 cars were purchased: 400-409, 422-429. All were built by Pullman between 5/24 and 11/29 and were 52' long with 4-wheel trucks.

The best discussion will be found in *Passenger Train Equipment of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe, Volume 2, Business and Special Purpose Cars*, 1975, by Frank M. Ellington and Joseph W. Shine.

The cars were numbers

422-425, PS 1924, Lot 4747
426-429, PS 1925, Lot 4800
400-403, PS 1925, Lot 4884
404-407, PS 1926-7, Lot 4977
408-409, PS 1929, Lot 6350

These cars were rebuilt several times, so photos are needed to model a specific car. Air conditioning was inconsistent on these cars as can be seen on the assignment lists below. Also, they wore a variety of paint schemes, including the shadow-line scheme.

Cars 400-403 and 422-425 were 60'4" over buffers. 404-409 and 426-429 were 61.6." Cars 400, 403-406, 422, 425-429 received package type air conditioning between 1953 and 1958. Cars 400, 422, 425, 427, 429 were retired from the passenger roster in 1960. All were originally painted standard green with black roofs but in later years their roofs were painted aluminum to reflect the heat. The only one to receive roller bearing trucks, solid observation platform railing, and shadow-lined sides was 406 (by Joe Shine). Robert Darwin reports that 7 of the cars received shadow-lining and five were ultimately converted to Foreman cars for MOW service and numbered 194008-194012 with solid silver paint.

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Car assignments, compiled by Frank Ellington, can be found on this website and in the Business & Special Purpose Cars book, p. 130.

401, owned by ZDT's Amusement Center in Seguin, Tx. The car is going to be turned into a snack bar called the Santa Fe Cafe.

402, last documented in Gilmer, Texas.

403, at the Train Museum in Galveston, TX.

404, at the Texas Transportation Museum in San Antonio, TX

405, at the Arizona State Railroad Museum, shadow-lined, under restoration.

407, at the Midland Railroad, Baldwin City, KS, but donated to the Railroad Heritage Inc., for display at the Great Overland Station in Topeka, KS.

408, At the Lehnis Railroad Museum, Brownwood, TX

409, at the Fillmore & Western RR, Santa Clarita, CA, and available for movies.

428, at Boulder Scientific, Meade, CO. It is owned by Jim Birmingham.

Several of the above are shown in more detail below.



At the rear of the car was an Observation Platform 3'6 in depth.



Next was the Observation room which was 10' long with two large windows on each side and two windows plus a door to the Observation Platform. On the rear wall was a Boyer speed recorder and a Westinghouse air gauge. Four wicker chairs with removable cushions provided moveable seating while a high back sofa in the rear of the room also doubled as an upper berth if needed.

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Behind the Observation Room was Stateroom B, a 6'4" cubical to sleep 2. Behind it was a toilet and shower in 3'6", followed by State Room A, which was a spacious 7'2". In Normal inspection use, Stateroom A would be for the Division Superintendent while Stateroom B was for his secretary. For obvious reason, male secretaries were the norm for Division Superintendents.



The next room was the Dining room, 12' in length, with seating at the table for 6. A sideboard of Mexican Mahogany kept the silverware and china. A desk in the corner served the secretary, and a sofa on one wall could fold to reveal an upper berth.

A 4'4" bedroom served the porter who was also the cook in the 8' kitchen next to the vestibule.

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The cars were rebuilt several times during their lives. These cars were not air conditioned as constructed but depended on clerestory roof windows for air. Various air conditioning systems were added to different cars at different times.

As built, they had two vestibule doors. Very early in their lives the door on the kitchen side was closed and a storage closet created on that side of the vestibule. As cars were modernized electric generation was added where the vestibule storage was located, and a large flare vent was added to the roof. The other vestibule door was also closed in on some to create a new storage room and a new side door created over the center of the rear truck resulting in the loss of one vestibule side window.

While on the road, a generator hung on the rear truck provided the power for the car.

The memoirs of Harry J. Briscoe are recorded in "Watching the Trains Go By..." published by the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society. Briscoe introduced the 400 series cars by saying: "In those days every Division Superintendent was provided with a business, or office, car. Santa Fe's were the 400 series, having a master bedroom and a secretary's room. Here was the real reason for the widespread use of male secretaries. The Superintendent visited all parts of his territory by placing his business car on the rear of the train, either passenger, local, or short through freight. While seated at his desk in the small living room at the rear, he could look through the rear window and observe every portion of his division. He could have other division officers accompany him and discuss track conditions, bridges, drainage, weeds, fences, etc. When meeting trains or passing through yards he could observe the compliance with the various operating rules on the part of train service or station employees. The crew consisted of a cook who was also the porter and housekeeper. The Superintendent and his secretary slept on the car in small staterooms, as did the cook-porter in his own quarters. A mail bag was sent from headquarters on another train which would be picked up by the secretary and the mail would be worked during the evening hours. Then the secretary would take the bag to the depot to be returned to the office on the next available train. The dining room area in the middle of the car had a small desk that held a fold-down typewriter well. Any dictated correspondence would be typed by the secretary either while the car was stationary or moving. Should it be necessary to send a telegram, all secretaries took pride in their ability to roll the telegram in a tight funnel shape, weight the pointed end with a paper clip, and throw it off the rear platform of the fast-moving train, landing it at the foot of the operator, who was required to be on the platform inspecting the train as it passed."

He also reports that when the car was used in emergencies or on bridge inspections, other members of the Superintendent's staff could be housed and fed on the car using the extra berths in the observation and dining rooms. The cars were also used to take local dignitaries to special events.

Briscoe was Eastern Division Superintendent in Emporia from 1962-69. He reports that when he was transferred from Wellington to Emporia, he lived on the 404 while his family remained in Wellington until school was out. His porter-chef, Arthur, lived in Topeka and would drive down twice a week to clean and stock the car or to go with him if the car was going out on the line.

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He also stated, "Periodically it was my custom to put business car 404 on the rear of our local passenger train No. 4, and go to Kansas City Union Station via the Second District, taking along the Division Engineer, now Al Ewert... We would check the riding qualities of the track, inspect the right of way, and observe freight train traffic. It occurred to me that Mr. (William L.) White might enjoy such a trip, so I invited him. He readily accepted. No. 4 was scheduled to leave Emporia just before noon, so we had opportunity for a nice lunch before we were placed on the rear of the train... We were to return the same afternoon on the rear of No. 11, which used the First District through Lawrence and Topeka, so this trip allows us a fast look at all of our main line operations. I had no idea Mr. White would write about the trip, but he did a series of six articles on the editorial page. By great coincidence, this was the last trip of the business car. Shortly thereafter (1968) the Superintendents' business cars were discontinued and were replaced by a High Rail automobile, equipped to run on the railroad track. Mr. White closed his series with this report: 'The dance is over. The curtain has come down. Poor Harry Briscoe has been whittled down to size. The Santa Fe has sent orders thundering out of Chicago that, as an economy measure, its division superintendents must give up their private cars. And what will happen now that Al Ewert can no longer take his notes? Let them worry about that in Chicago.'"

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Superintendent Car 402

Updated 4-5-2014



402 was purchased by John W. Worsham, Jr., Ph.D. in December 1968, from ATSF and had it moved to Lubbock. The car was moved to San Antonio in 1973 and stored at the then Lone Star Brewery. Worsham as a member of AAPRCO named the car Fugue 402.

It was sold to Vernie Barber in 1988 and moved to Fort Worth. Barber sold it in 2001 where it was at the 8th Street Yard of the Taranatula RR. It was decorated as *Stardust* and lettered Frisco 502.

It was reported being dropped off by UP in Gilmer, TX on April 19, 2001 and was still there in October 2008 when the photos below were taken. It was located on spur track which goes into a former salvage yard on S. Montgomery St. just south of town, still as 502, FRISCO *STARDUST*. The trucks were lubed in 1989 by the Texas State Railroad and the brakes were serviced in 1991 by the Fort Worth and Western. In the summer of 2013, it was gone from Gilmer - destination unknown.

(Photo and information provided by John W. Worsham, Jr., Greg Slaton, Greg Nevels, and Steve Sandifer.)

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Superintendent Car 403



The 403 was built by Pullman in 1925, Lot 4884. In 1969 it was sold to The Texas Transportation Museum who then sold it to the Galveston Railroad Museum where it currently resides. It received several feet of salt water during Hurricane Ike in September 2008, and its state is unknown. This car was used by Santa Fe division superintendents in Texas and New Mexico as they traveled on railroad business. It was on the roster of the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad.

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Two views of the Observation Room



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Stateroom B and the Toilet



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Stateroom A



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Dining Room, above

Porter, left

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Superintendent's Car 404



The 404 was built by Pullman in December 1926, in a lot that included 404-407. It spent virtually all its time assigned to the Eastern Division, and as such was based at Emporia, KS, the Eastern Division Headquarters. In 1969 it was sold to Portland Cement Company in Temple, Texas, and subsequently became the property of the Texas Transportation Museum in San Antonio where it resides today.



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This car remained in coach green with black roof and no air conditioning at least through 1955 per a Don Ball photo in Lloyd E. Stagner's *ATSF Color Guide*. After that time the roof was painted silver to reflect the heat and 8 window style air conditioners were added, 4 on each side, extending from the clerestory.

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Superintendent's Car 405



The 405 was built by Pullman in December 1926, in a lot that included 404-407. Much of its time was spent on the Western and Colorado Division with it being stationed at La Junta, CO, for many years. In 1968 it was sold to the Texas Tank Works and then came into private hands in Temple, TX. It now is at the Arizona State Railroad Museum for restoration.

Kenny Rhoads has been following this car and sends the following report:

June 10, 2008:

Most of the work to the 405, since the last report, is the continuation of cleaning the interior of the car from the fire. Most of the rooms, other than the bedroom A, have been cleaned of the smoke damage and the all the furniture throughout the car has been cleaned and is in very good shape. The dining room buffet has been cleaned and repaired with new glass. Even the fan works. There was damage to the dining room table, and it has been repaired and cleaned. The hallway is being cleaned with special attention to the area near bed room A which has heat damage. Jane Barton has spent many hours restoring the kitchen and has it ready for meal preparations.

Water is being restored to the car, however as one leak is repaired, we find a new one. This will continue until all leaks are accounted for.

We have a passenger car electrical expert from SoCal (Rudy Morgenfruh) arriving at the end of June for a few days. He will be looking at the AC in one of our diners and the 405. He will also advise us on the fire damaged wiring in the 405.

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Some decisions regarding the painting and glass replacement of the car has been made although not set in stone. After sand blasting, the exterior will most likely be Santa Fe green with Solex green double pane glass. The roof will be silver. These options are due mostly from the Arizona temperatures which are now in the 100s by noon.

We are continuing to attain as much data, specs, and car information from as many sources as we can. All help along these lines will be greatly appreciated.

We are also trying to locate a few items that have been removed from the car or have been damaged beyond repair such as the nice little (pop out) light fixtures, lamp glass shades and a replacement dresser for bed room A which is well beyond repair due to the fire.

June 16, 2008:

As we have been trying to locate and track down as much history of the 405 that we can, some news regarding the fire came to us by way of ARM volunteer and good friend Dave Greenberg of Phoenix.

The fire was reported to have occurred on Feb 15th of 2000 at 11:18 AM. There were three teens seen leaving the area shortly after the fire began and were questioned by authorities. These same three had been questioned a month earlier for trespassing aboard the car by Temple Police. There were three back packs found aboard the car but with no ID. No charges were filed due to lack of evidence.

Mary Irving replied: Just so you have the museum input, which is not as official as what you already got, Lewis Perry still owned the car and was plagued with break-ins. They also continued non-stop after the car was donated to the museum. We replaced locks, hinges, wood on windows, etc. over and over. He intentionally kept the exterior looking badly so people were less likely to break in to steal stuff. Didn't work obviously.

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Photos taken in Temple after a fire.



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Kenny Rhodes' photos in transit to the Arizona State Railroad Museum.



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Kenny Rhodes' photos at the Arizona State Railroad Museum.



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Kenny Rhodes' photos of the restoration.



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Superintendent's Car 407



The

407 was built by Pullman in December 1926, in a lot that included 404-407. It spent time assigned to the Rio Grande Division. In 1969 it was sold to Steve Sash & Door in San Antonio. It now belongs to the Midland Railroad in Baldwin City, KS.

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The 408 was built by Pullman in 1929, Lot 6350. It spent time assigned to the New Mexico Division. In 1968 it was sold to Barton Salt, Hutchison, KS. It then became the property of railway collector Martin Lehnis who died in 2005. He left his collection to the City of Brownwood, Tx, where it is part of a new museum complex near the restored Harvey House and Depot.

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Superintendent's Car 428

The 428 was built by Pullman in April 1925, in a lot that included 426-429. It was in the Los Angeles Division in 1927 and the Northern Division in 1966. In 1969 it was sold to the Portland Cement Co., Temple, TX. In 2008 it was owned by Jim Birmingham of Boulder Scientific, Mead, CO.



Photos taken in by Steve Sandifer in San Antonio where it was being restored, circa 1985.



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In 2008 it resides in Mead, Colorado.