

Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad Car #31

Builder: Standard Steel Car Company, Hammond, Indiana

Date: January 1929

Lot #: H326

Group #: 8

Type: Coach with Hale & Kilburn #99 Bucket Seats and Box Smoker

Interior Modifications: None

Exterior Modifications: Roof Reconfigured 19 April 1947

Condition: Stripped Car with fire damage

Out-of-Service: 1974 (Heater Fire)

Provenance: Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad

Purchased: 3 November 1981

Price: \$125

Removal: From Chicago, South Shore and South Bend: 5 December 1981

First Removed to Indiana Transportation Museum, Noblesville; then to Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad; then to Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, North Judson

Status: On Hand

Intended Use: Restore as Car #31, circa March 1931. Car #31 is to be used in the “special” parlor/dining car fleet interpreting segregated train service and racial divisions in Indiana. See cars #351 and 706.

Justification: Car #31 is needed to interpret the “Northern Jim Crow” segregated train service operated by the South Shore Line through the use of “special” parlor and dining car service. To interpret a “special” parlor car train will require two coaches showing the differences in car accommodations that were “whites only” and those cars where all races would be accommodated. These coaches should be box

smokers of the type exemplified by car #31 as a typical parlor car train was made up of a parlor car and two box smokers.

Cars in group #8 with bucket seats and box smokers were the most common passenger accommodations on the South Shore Line. While this arrangement was not common on the interurban railroads generally, there were other interurbans in the Insull Group that operated cars with box smokers including the Interstate Public Service Company and the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad.

Car #31 is one of only two cars from group #8 that was unmodified when the last of the short cars were removed from service on 31 December 1982. The other unmodified car in group #8 was car #33. The current owner of car #33 has modified it to suit his needs. Because car #31 is the only unmodified car remaining from group #8, despite its poor condition, car #31 should be restored to its condition circa March 1931.

Conclusion

The interpretation of the history of the South Shore Line is incomplete without a discussion of the systemic racism in the north, how Jim Crow worked when there were no signs that said “Whites Only,” and how Jim Crow played out on the South Shore Line. The preservation of car #31, in its role in the interpretation of “special” train service on the South Shore Line, is a critical tool for interpreting the history of racial divisions in Indiana.



Car #31 at Gary, Indiana, 31 August 1948.



Car #27 at Standard Steel Car Co., Hammond, Indiana, January 1929. This was the most common car type on the South Shore Line, a box smoker with bucket seats – 38 of the 68 steel cars were so equipped, including car #31.



Car #31 circa 1953. The South Shore Line kept the interiors of their cars clean into the early 1970s. Prior to the petition for the discontinuance of service, car cleanliness standards fell.



Preservation started here. Car #31 was the first passenger car to leave the South Shore Line for preservation by any entity.



All the cars that preceded car #31 off of the South Shore Line left for other railroad service or as scrap loads. All 53 cars that left the Shops after car #31 went out for their respective roles in preservation efforts. Bob Harris and Chuck Tauscher are guiding driver Jim Kopke into position to haul car #31 to the Indiana Transportation Museum at Noblesville. Michigan City, Indiana, 5 December 1982.



Peru, Indiana, 6 December 1982.