

# THE MARKER LIGHT

NUMBER 28

THE PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2016

## THE HEAVY LOADS



**GTW Refrigerator Car #206447 ~ Project 52 Update**  
**Collector's Corner: *Railroad Caps***  
**PH&DRR Employee: *Patricia Roberts***

Creeping over the Pine River bridge, January 3, 1968 (PHOTO: Duffy Collection)

Cover: It was the heaviest, total load ever carried by rail. Weight including the specially built flat car was 1,214,000 lbs.

PG. 2: From Where I Sit; Accurail's GTW Refrigerator Car #206478

PG. 3: Project 52 News; GTW Refrigerator Car #206447

PG. 4: The Heavy Loads

PG. 5: (Cont.)

PG. 6: Collectors' Corner: *Railroad Caps*

PG. 7: (Cont.)

PG. 8: 2017 Calendar; PH&DRR Employee: *Patricia Roberts*; Join; Purpose of the Society; Board of Directors



Dear Friends of the PH&D:

Sad news to report the recent passing of **William Munce**, Superintendent of the PH&DRR. He was always interested in the Society and available to come to our events, luncheons, and picnics to share his experiences. He managed the day to day schedules of the Train and Section Crews. Hired in 1967, he orchestrated the change over from 85 pound rail to the 132 we see today, to accommodate the coal unit trains. We will all miss him.

This issue features the heavy loads carried by the PH&DRR. All would be delivered to the Detroit Edison power plants. While every load was important, it was perhaps the heaviest load that brought retired Chief Engineer, the man who built the PH&DRR, out of retirement. We find out why in this issue.

### FROM WHERE I SIT

The board of directors recently approved the acquisition of a rare Grand Trunk Western refrigerator car. The car is being donated so our costs involve arranging transportation from Holland. We expect to place the car next to caboose #52 for now. We are excited to be able to save such a rare piece of rolling stock.

Lastly, please renew, especially this year. We have these exciting arrivals coming and you won't want to miss any upcoming news as we get closer to their delivery. Saturday's at the Wye will be resuming soon so come out and visit. Your help makes our Society stronger and that's how we save local railroad history. **Sandy Duffy**



Can't wait to see the original? Buy one! Here's an HO-scale model from Accurail. It's only 30 numbers shy of our "reefer" and is a candidate for your own PH&D Railroad! It's available through the Accurail website for \$25.47 shipping included to Port Huron. <http://accurail.com/accurail/8300.htm> Other sources list similar more accurate versions, but all are out of stock:

<http://www.truelinetrains.ca/freight-cars/ho---8-hatch-reefer>

<http://www.modeltrainstuff.com/True-Line-Trains-HO-Reefer-Car-GTW-p/tilt-300483.htm>

<https://www.walthers.com/8-hatch-overhead-ice-bunker-steel-reefer-w-hinged-door-ready-to-run-grand-trunk-western-206468-as-delivered-green-leaf-logo>

## PROJECT 52 NEWS

This is our big year. We expect the arrival and placement of two pieces of rolling stock: our ALCO engine #52 and a rare Grand Trunk Western refrigerator car. Both require money to make it happen.

Although we are still deciding how the engine will arrive, by rail or truck, we need to raise approximately \$15,000 to move it from Tennessee. Then we need an additional \$20,000 for the cranes to lift and place upon our display track. This will be historic. Returning one of two original diesel engines back to its origin road is very rare. What makes this more rare is reuniting it with its originally-assigned caboose! This will certainly garner state and national attention.

If you wish to help us, we have set up a savings account named "Project 52", dedicated for these two projects. Just note which you wish to support. We do have heroes who have been loyal supporters from our beginning in 2008 who continue to help. But now we need you to help us bring these two acquisitions home. Our address is PH&DRHS, Box 217, Marysville, MI 48040.

Board member **Chad Thompson** is spearheading the effort to bring the Grand Trunk "reefer" to us. Thanks to him, and **Aaron Farmer**, **Tom Gaffney**, and **Jo Burgette**, a fund-raising drive has raised the money necessary to transport the car to Port Huron, and place it next to the caboose. The next phase is to prime and paint the car to its original livery, and finally, placing it on its own storage track on the north side of the office. In the spring Marker Light, we'll have more updates on both projects!



PHOTO of GTW #206424: Castle Graphics ca. 1968

### GTW REFRIGERATOR CAR #206447 by Chad Thompson

Back in about 2008, while rambling around Holland, MI, I noticed this reefer sitting next to what appeared to be a strip mall. I checked it out and took a few pictures. Later, I informed **T.J. Gaffney**, who, at the time, was the Executive Director at the Steam Railroading Institute. We then started a dialogue with the owner of the reefer. Unfortunately, the dialogue ceased, as things changed at SRI and they prepared to ramp up for Trainfestival 2009.

Recognizing the need for storage and a controlled and secure shop area for continuing restoration work on the Port Huron & Detroit Railroad offices at 2100 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, it was decided by the board to resume negotiations. Dialogue was reestablished with the owner. When we learned that he had a scrapper lined up to send this forlorn and forgotten reefer to the furnaces, a deal was struck that the owner would donate the reefer to the Society, if we agreed to remove it.

In early December of 2016, a Booster fundraiser campaign was started, called "The GTW206447 Reefer Project", and in four weeks, the goal of \$4,000 was met, with T-shirt and hoodie sales, as well as private donations.

This car is a unique piece which deserves proper preservation. It belonged to the Grand Trunk Western Railroad Company and was part of an order of 100 reefers, built to a highly efficient Canadian design with overhead ice brine and charcoal system. Built sometime in July and August of 1955, our reefer was constructed in batch method at Pacific Car & Foundry of Renton, WA. Reefer GTW206447 was specifically designed to transport beef, and was capable of moving cold goods 3,500 miles with only a one degree variance. The only downside with this design was that recharging the cooling system required a 30% salt, 70% crushed ice mix, which took considerably more time to process than the more common block ice and small salt mix which end-cap ice reefers required. GTW 206447 was likely immediately pressed into service upon release and served in the revenue fleet of North America until approximately 1973, where upon it was placed out of service. GTW206447 did not meet the fate of the other 99 ice reefers. This one was sold to a chicken processor where it stayed until now.

Stay tuned: this analog climate controlled reefer has a new lease on life thanks to your Society!

**HEAVY LOADS OF THE PH&D**

Throughout its 65 year history, the PH&DRR has hauled its share of different loads: from the World War II landing boats from Chris Craft, the large cruisers from Gar Wood Industries, to the heavy unit coal trains of the mid 1960s, lumber, salt, automobile parts. In the mid-1960s, unit coal trains required substantial and costly upgrades to the rail and roadbed, forcing the replacement of 85 pound rail to a larger 132.

Occasionally, the line would ship the heavier loads, all into Detroit Edison power plants. We have some visual records of these loads coming on line. Most of these loads were easily handled by our crews on special assignments, requiring nothing more than our venerable ALCOs. Indeed, we even see ALCO #52 heading south with one of these “specials”, complete with Grand Trunk Western coaches.

All of these heavy loads were transported without incident. One, however, required the skills of someone who came out of retirement to confirm the safety of transporting the heaviest total load ever hauled by common carrier. Someone who could tell officials from the railroad, the Detroit Edison, and the Michigan Public Safety Commission, that it could cross a bridge built nearly 42 years earlier.

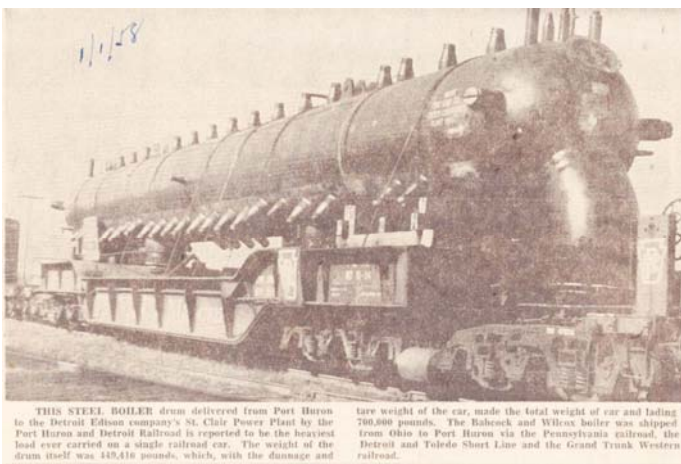
So here are the pictures showing these unique shipments.



*This generator was heading south, carried by a dropped center flat car with 16 axles and a capacity of 336,000 pounds. Wonder if this flat was ever produced in HO?*



*Vice-President George Duffy confers with Detroit Edison executive Gabe O'Connor shortly before a move south.*



THIS STEEL BOILER drum delivered from Port Huron to the Detroit Edison company's St. Clair Power Plant by the Port Huron and Detroit Railroad is reported to be the heaviest load ever carried on a single railroad car. The weight of the drum itself was 48,416 pounds, which, with the damage and

tare weight of the car, made the total weight of car and load 760,800 pounds. The Babcock and Wilcox boiler was shipped from Ohio to Port Huron via the Pennsylvania railroad, the Detroit and Toledo Short Line and the Grand Trunk Western railroad.

January 1, 1958



**HEAVIEST LOAD EVER MOVED BY RAIL ARRIVES HERE**

THE BIG ELECTRIC GENERATOR STATOR on this huge car, believed to be the heaviest load ever moved by rail, arrived at the Port Huron & Detroit Railroad terminal Saturday morning. The stator, weighing 313,750 pounds, and the car, which weighs 348,000 pounds, make a combined weight of nearly 660 tons. The stator, to become a part of the Detroit Edison company's St. Clair Power Plant, was shipped from Schenectady, N.Y., where it was built by the General Electric company. It was carried by the New York Central railroad to Toledo from where the Chesapeake & Ohio railroad brought it to Port Huron. The car, a flat car with a lowered middle section, was specially built for the job by the Pennsylvania railroad. It is 92 feet long and has 24 wheels. (Times Herald Staff Photo).

June 29, 1958

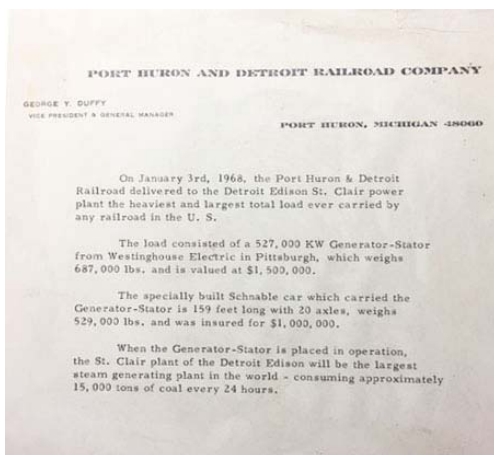


*Ca. 1960. Each of these pictures tells a story. (Left) PH&DRR ALCO #52 pulls this DTE Special complete with two CN “noodle stripe” cars and a custom series of flat cars and pushers. (Center) Noteworthy is the second CN car: it’s an open end observation car. It must have been a balmy day for these lower level management guys, hanging out on that flatcar. Both the “pusher” flat and the load cars attest to the importance of this generator. The load flat has 20 axles. (Right) MILW 601052 was specially constructed to handle the heaviest of loads required. Here it’s crossing Busha Highway en route to the Belle River Power Plant.*



*And here it is. They had to call in an old timer for this one. Prior to delivery, Superintendent Bill Munce had to make sure the line could handle a load weighing nearly 1,250,000 pounds. The biggest question was whether the old Pine River bridge, down in St. Clair, could withstand the weight. They called the one man who knew: the man who built the bridge back in 1926, retired Chief Engineer Bill Boyd. Here he was, a Snover farm boy, amidst top executives from the Detroit Edison, assuring them it could be done. “Old school” mathematics.*

*“When I was 77 years of age, 12 years after I had retired, I was called into a consultation as to whether or not a R.R. bridge I had built in 1926 would carry a million and a quarter pound load to the D.E. plant.”  
Everyone held their breath as the Times Herald captured the moment it slowly crossed Bill Boyd’s bridge.*



*This appears to be a Press Release describing the details of this “heaviest and largest total load”.*



*This Generator-Stator required a custom flat from Westinghouse with 20 axles, 10 on each end.*

### COLLECTORS' CORNER: *Railroad Caps*

No rail museum would be complete without some railroad caps. Usually these were worn by those assigned to passenger trains. Michigan passenger trains serving the thumb include the Grand Trunk Western, Pere Marquette, Chesapeake & Ohio, and New York Central. Then we have the two smaller lines, the Detroit, Bay City, & Western, and the Pontiac, Oxford, and Northern. Our current collection is missing examples from these last two lines. We hope to add them someday!

Prices vary from \$75 to \$150, or higher, on Ebay. It depends upon rarity, road, and condition. Many caps were manufactured by Chicago-based suppliers. Pullman hats came from either Marshall Fields or Ruby. Most will feature an embossed badge denoting the employee's position. Most caps from the 1930s and later were of a pillbox design with a shiny leather brim, and a gros-grain band surround which allowed air circulation. A fancy cord fastened with embossed buttons finished the design. Collectible caps should be clean, with a bright leather brim, inside leather band intact, with no fading on top.

The following examples are currently in our collection.



*This is a brilliant, older example of a Pullman cap. It features the Pullman name embroidered on the black gros-grain with metal letters. The cap is supplied by Ruby's Uniforms and Caps, size 7. The white chord is fastened with two white gold buttons embossed with "Pullman". \$125.*



*Hers is a near mint example of a Pullman Conductor's cap. The badge is shiny and immaculate. The double gold braid is fastened with two gold buttons, embossed with "NYC". In excellent condition, it was worn by a mainline New York Central passenger train conductor.*



*This is a Pullman cap from Marshall Field & Company, Chicago. It's in good shape, with slight fraying to the double gold braid fastened with two gold "Pullman" embossed buttons. The badge retains the black paint with letters stamped instead of raised, as in the previous example.*



*This is a NYC cap, size 7 3/8, supplied by Weber's Uniforms Inc., from Buffalo, New York. It features an impressive NYC Conductor's badge with raised lettering and the road's logo against a blue background. This cap shows wear; the brim is crinkled and the interior leather band is separating.*



*Pullman Porter caps fetch premium prices these days. This one features silver "Pullman" embossed buttons with a silver braid. The label reads "Ruby's Uniform Caps" which was the supplier to Pullman. The badge is fastened with nuts and screws but has lost its black lettering.*



*This is without doubt the most rare of railroad caps. It is in excellent shape which indicates its owner cared enough to maintain it. Both braids are fastened in place with "Pullman" embossed silver buttons. On major Limiteds, Pullman designated one man to this position.*



*Here's a Chesapeake & Ohio Railway conductor's cap that's in very good condition. The brim is bright and smooth and the stitching is tight. The badge is relatively untarnished and retains its black lettering. The grosgrain is like new.  
From the Tom Gaffney Collection.*



*It's tough to find caps from the Pere Marquette. Here's a brakeman's cap that is in good condition. The rather ornate cap badge still has the blue enameled "Pere Marquette" logo while the brim is in decent condition. The braid has seen better days. Cap from the Gaffney Collection.*



*Here's the first of two from the Grand Trunk. It's a very nice cap with a gold badge and banding, signifying the higher employment status of the conductor. This was manufactured by the Ed. V. Price & Company from Chicago. It has had better days but is still in decent condition.*



*The badge is identical to the Conductor's but in silver. Two silver bands frame the embossed recessed lettering. The brim is shiny and mint. The top half features a black open webbed surround. Although the top of this cap is a bit faded, showing daily use, it's a great example to have in our collection.*

**2016 EVENTS CALENDAR**

Feb 11 Board Meeting            32nd St. Wye    9:00AM  
 Mar 11 Board Meeting            32nd St. Wye    9:00AM

Board Meetings are 2nd Saturdays of each month.  
 Members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Saturdays at the Wye** resumes in April. Check the Website or contact us for events and announcements.

**Website:** [www.phdrailroad.com](http://www.phdrailroad.com)

**Email:** [info@phdrailroad.com](mailto:info@phdrailroad.com)

All members in good standing are issued membership cards which allow unlimited access to the Society-owned west half of the "wye" property marked by a yellow stripe.

**Please stay off CSX property to the east of us especially the Roundhouse.**

<b>PH</b>	PORT HURON and DETROIT RAILROAD CO. - St. Clair Blue Water Route -
<b>D</b>	PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
<b>MEMBERSHIP CARD</b>	
NAME: _____	
JOINED: ____ / ____ MO/YEAR	

**Regulations covering access to U.S. rail yards are in effect, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and enforced by local enforcement agencies.**

**Accordingly, PH&DRRHS members must, if requested, present their membership cards to authorized personnel from either CN, CSX, or St. Clair County Sheriff's officers. When visiting, please stay on the west side of the yellow line (PH&DRRHS property).**

**The purpose of**

***The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society is:***

*To collect, archive, preserve, and present, all for the education of the community, historical documents, photographs, drawings, artifacts and equipment relating to The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Company and its predecessors, The Detroit Bay City & Western Railroad, and The Port Huron Southern Railway as well as the Grand Trunk Western/Canadian National, and the Pere Marquette/Chesapeake and Ohio railroads;*

*To obtain, restore and maintain the roundhouse at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street for museum use, as well as other structures, artifacts, and rolling stock, as they may become available;*

*To accumulate, conserve, and index all data relating to the above-named railroads for the use of scholars, rail fans and scale modelers.*

**Special Thanks to Kurt Stetzer  
for his contribution to the GTW  
boxcar project!**

**Special Thanks to Hugh Hales  
for another year of The Marker Light  
& to the Signals project!**

**Special Thanks to my mom,  
Kay Houghton for helping to edit  
The Marker Light all these years!**

**PH&DRR  
EMPLOYEES  
Patricia Roberts**

Pat was hired in June of 1964 as executive secretary to both Jim and George Duffy. She handled all contracts with leasing companies, managed the day to day tasks of scheduling, letter writing, accounting, and even assumed the job of Auditor at one point. Near the close, she provided all documents, annual reports, inventory, and accounting for the sellers and CSX. She did manage to take her desk before the takeover!

**JOIN NOW AND GET ONBOARD!**

The *Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society* needs your talent! We have the ALCO engine and the reefer car coming and need you to join with us.

Membership, publicity, web design, resource development, lawn mowing, and acquisitions, are just a few of the areas that you can help out with.

For only \$30 a year, you'll receive 4 classy newsletters, a chance to help create the area's first railroad transportation museum complex, and have exclusive Member-only access to the 32nd Street "Wye" and a Class I rail yard.

To join or renew, please mail to:  
 PH&DRRHS, P.O. Box 217, Marysville, MI 48040.

**BOARD of DIRECTORS  
2017**

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