

# Ventilated Boxcars talking points - 202403 RPM Valley Forge presentation

Slide 1 - Intro and note the iconic ACL ventilated boxcar.

Slide 2 - The big question.

Slide 3 - A proper definition. Does anyone see the word Watermelon in this definition? No. Fruit was the focus.

Slide 4 - Early cars were listed in ORERs as Fruit, Vegetable, Produce, and Vents. L&N listed 1784 of these cars in the 1897 ORER, all had an IL 30 - 40-ft.

Slide 5 - Cars were not confined to eastern roads, although they did dominate. 350 cars with IL 30 - 40-ft. were listed under SP in the 1897 ORER. Does not include cars for Cal P and ML&T.

Slide 6 - Official designations that appear in ORERs from Ian Cranstone's website.

Slide 7 - These changed over time, as noted in the right column.

Slide 8 - Here's the rise and fall of the ventilated boxcar fleet. As comparison, the entire 1926 Milwaukee Road freight car fleet was 63,726 cars. That was the twelfth largest North American railroad car fleet. There were 3,000 fewer ventilated box cars at that time.

Slide 9 - Still marked as Fruit. (Note the vent locations and types) M&O listed 821 cars with IL of 30 - 35.5-ft. They had another 198 cars with IL between 35.5 - 40-ft for a total of 1019 cars.

Slide 10 - Do we include this type of car? (point out vents and lack of bunkers) (Compare and contrast with M&O Car). The LV listed 867 cars in the 1905 ORER. 791 had IL between 30 - 35.5-ft. The rest were all shorter than 30-feet.

Slide 11 – on slide

Slide 12 - Ownership in 1905. Subsidiary and sister companies have been combined in this data.

Slide 13 - A range of companies add these cars to their fleets and we see variations on the theme. N&S is the predecessor to NS. A corporate name change would occur in a few years. They listed 1024 ventilated cars in the 1910 ORER. 992 had IL between 35.5 - 40-ft, the remaining 32 were under 30-feet.

Slide 14 - Changes in doors, end vents, and side vents. All 21,882 of the ACL cars had IL between 35.5 - 40-ft in the 1910 listings.

Slide 15 - Double-sheathed cars are standard. W-SS listings debut with the Feb 1911 ORER. The 1000-1099 series of cars are listed as boxcars initially and later carry the SM designation in early 1912 ORERs.

Slide 16 – on slide

Slide 17 - Fewer owners in 1910 data (70 to 57). Subsidiary and sister companies have been

combined. We can see the regional owners leading. This is the peak of the fleet.

Slide 18 – on slide

Slide 19 - Steel ends come into use, although this is a 30-ton capacity car. 500 were built in 1914, joining another 500 V-8 cars built in 1913. SAL had 8,292 cars listed in the 1917 ORER. 2,417 of these were older, shorter cars.

Slide 20 - Southern clings to the wood roof on new 30-ton capacity cars. One of 3,242 cars in the 120000-123249 series. Southern lists 11,007 cars in the 1917 ORER, not including subsidiary lines.

Slide 21 - Still some changes, although this door latching hardware looks like an older design. FEC bought 500 of these from Mt Vernon. The 1917 ORER lists 1,031 ventilated cars in their fleet.

Slide 22 - Newer cars moving towards 40-ton capacity to expand usage for back hauls. Central of Georgia listed 2,583 cars in the 1919 ORER.

Slide 23 – I recently accessed a 1917 ORER. These are the top 21 car owners. ACL listed 16,437 cars while Erie & N&W listed 500 each. Notice how the Southern fleet has declined to 900 cars. They listed 15,000 in 1910. The total of ventilated box cars was 63,942 in 1917.

Slide 24 – The Florida East Coast was allowed a variance on their USRA box car assignment. They received 40-foot ventilated box cars based upon the USRA double sheathed box car design.

Slide 25 – Atlantic Coast Line received their second batch of 40-foot ventilated box cars in 1921. Only 950 cars in their large fleet were 40-foot before these cars were built.

Slide 26 – By 1926, overall numbers have started to slip but ownership remains constant. N&W, C&O, and WP are new to this service.

Slide 27 - Some individual car quantities by owner. The top five owners have been holding these positions since 1905.

Slide 28 - After USRA relinquished control, fleets were in bad shape. Many ventilated cars were old in the tooth. The next few years would see the last of new ventilated cars enter the fleet. This L&N car is one of 2,000 added in 1924. C&O and N&W would also add cars in the early 1920s.

Slide 29 - Seaboard renumbered their fleet in the early 1920s so it's difficult to determine how many V-4 cars were in use. The 1926 ORER lists 898 cars in the 83025-83949 series, formerly 24000-24999. Much of the SAL fleet was older cars and there were additional renumberings that make it difficult to track the fleet.

Slide 30 - Ventilating boxcars were built for double-duty service. Back hauls were important revenue generators, and these cars often carried other loads.

Slide 31 – The Depression took a toll on the ventilated boxcar fleet. The Southern fleet went from 9208 to 4473 cars in eight years. The Southern was also one of the owners of the Fruit Growers Express. They may have moved to using FGE reefers due to their well-worn and aging fleet of ventilated box cars.

Slide 32 – The Southern wasn't the only company with a shrinking ventilated box car fleet.

Slide 33 – Surprisingly, the B&O modified a handful of M-26 box cars for ventilated service. These ten cars were reclassified as M-26f and may have been the last new ventilated cars built.

Slide 34 – on slide

Slide 35 - Newer boxcar designs had greater capacity and were preferred by many roads as fleets were upgraded. These 1943 ORER totals illustrate the decline without a need for a graph. UIC is the Utah-Idaho Central.

Slide 36 - Many ventilated boxcars soldiered on in the post-World War Two years. The 1951 data shows a drop of 5200 cars.

Slide 37 - Cars could show up in many places, like Toronto. These are Seaboard V-9 class cars.

Slide 38 – Much of the aging fleet was a victim of the January 1, 1954, K brake ban. Many older cars had been retired and the hard deadline accelerated the process. Another 2300 ventilated cars are gone from the 1953 data.

Slide 39 - The newest Central of Georgia ventilated cars built in the early 1920s were showing their age by 1955.

Slide 40 - By 1959, another 3500 cars had been retired. Surprisingly, the 40-foot car quantity tapered off quickly, as did the Central of Georgia fleet.

Slide 41 - By 1962, only three railroads listed these cars in-service and the L&N cars would be gone soon.

Slide 42 - The distinctive ACL cars lasted the longest.

Slide 43 - What is available to model these prototypes? Sadly, very little. The FEC and ACL cars are possible as they are based on the USRA DS design.

Slide 44 - Paul Bizier has built a few HO scale ventilated boxcars. These two Seaboard cars are WrightTrak kits that were reissued by Southbound Model Works. They have a similar appearance except for the car ends.

Slide 45 - Paul did a great job on this Central of Georgia ventilated boxcar that was once available from the CG historical society.

Slide 46 - Keith Retterer posted his HO scale scratchbuilt cars on the Hindsight Flickr site.

Slide 47 - The screen material is a brass, 80 mesh product from Clover House. #3786

Slide 48 - Keith modeled an open end vent on this N&W car.

Slide 49 - Keith used 60 mesh nylon screen material from Clover House on this ACL car. #3887

In HO scale, consider modifying Accurail 36-foot boxcar bodies to add a ventilated car. You could scratchbuild a body around the Accurail underframe. Using the underframe cuts down the work and offers an option to build a fish belly or straight steel centersill, or a truss rod car.

Westerfield decals can be used or look to other decal options for short runs.

Slide 50 – In early April, this builder image was posted on a Facebook discussion group. It caught a few people off guard.

Slide 51 - Many of us could use a few ventilated boxcars in our model fleets. The numbers consistently point to the ACL, Seaboard, and Central of Georgia as the main targets. Earlier years offer more possibilities. Building a couple at a time can ease the work to add cars to your fleet.