

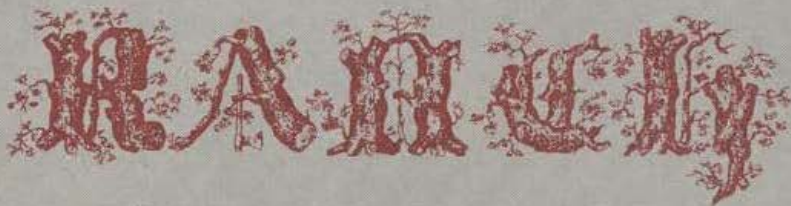
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AMERICAN CAR AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

JULY-
AUGUST
1951



Home on the



By Vincent J. Biunno

GLIDING over western rails is one of the most unique lounge cars ever to operate on American railroads. It is a passenger car in exterior resemblance only, with its rare interior affording something rail travelers have never before experienced. Functioning as a coffee shop and lounge unit, with both snack and regular meal service, the car is decorated to the finest detail to resemble a typically western ranch house.

Newly built for the Great Northern Railway by ACF St. Charles,

"The Ranch," as the car is called, operates daily between Chicago and the West Coast as a part of the re-equipped *Empire Builder*. Each of the five identical streamliners which make up the *Empire Builder* has a "Ranch" car as part of its equipment, with a sixth one in service on its companion train, the *Western Star*.

Coach and sleeping car passengers on the new, dazzling *Empire Builder* will be fascinated by the spirit and color of the Old West, which is re-

flected even in the smallest decorative details of "The Ranch." The car walls are finished in grooved oak boards; they were sand-blasted and stained gray to heighten the rustic effect of having been weathered. Vertical and horizontal peeled cedar logs, which have been polished and stained a dark red to simulate a coral gate or fence, separate the coffee shop, dining and lounge sections.

Silhouetted signs of hand-forged Swedish iron, which in cattlemen's parlance would denote a ranch called "G-Bar-N," symbolize the car name. Incidentally, the Great Northern has registered the "G-Bar-N" brand.

Fluorescent lighting is all indirect and concealed in oak beams, in the coffee shop section, to avoid conflict with the rustic effect of the car. And

in the low ceiling section of the lounge, light is provided by two half-lanterns, on which the Indian symbol of friendship, two crossed arrows, is set in the metal frame. The historic country of great Indian tribes, powerful trading companies, fearless trappers and explorers is a part of the train's route.

Patrons of the snack bar, in the coffee shop section of "The Ranch," are confronted with a huge mural mounted above the lunch counter. The sixteen-foot decorative piece brings back Old West memories in the form of a Montana roundup scene of the late eighties. Even the coffee urn setting before the mural is western; it is fashioned in the shape of a chuck wagon coffee pot, complete with spout and handle.

Enjoying a snack at the counter in coffee shop section of "The Ranch," this traveler sits before the huge 16-foot mural, central decorative piece in this part of the car.





"Pretty as a picture" aptly describes the interior of this observation-lounge car now in service on the "Empire Builder." Lounge section of the car is separated from observation room by wing partition of carved glass and red birch Formica. Five of these observation-lounge cars were built for the re-equipped "Empire Builder," and an extra one for the "Western Star."

To enhance the cattle country theme of the car, famous old Montana brands have been used profusely. Fastened to vertical posts on either side of the coffee shop partition are two crossed branding irons, hand forged from Swedish iron. Even the ash stands are hand forged from iron, copper and bronze.

As a relief from the ranch and cattle theme, a touch of Indian motif is added. The floor pattern is a Black-foot Indian design; drapes and curtains with stripes of brown, green and beige are reminiscent of Indian colors.

The ceiling, instead of curving at the sides, as in most cars, is shaped like a ranch house roof and painted bright yellow to give a warm, cheerful effect.

Matching the side walls, the oak furniture is finished in the same weathered gray. The remaining chairs, banquette seats and coffee shop stools are upholstered in either dark red leather or pinto pony colors.

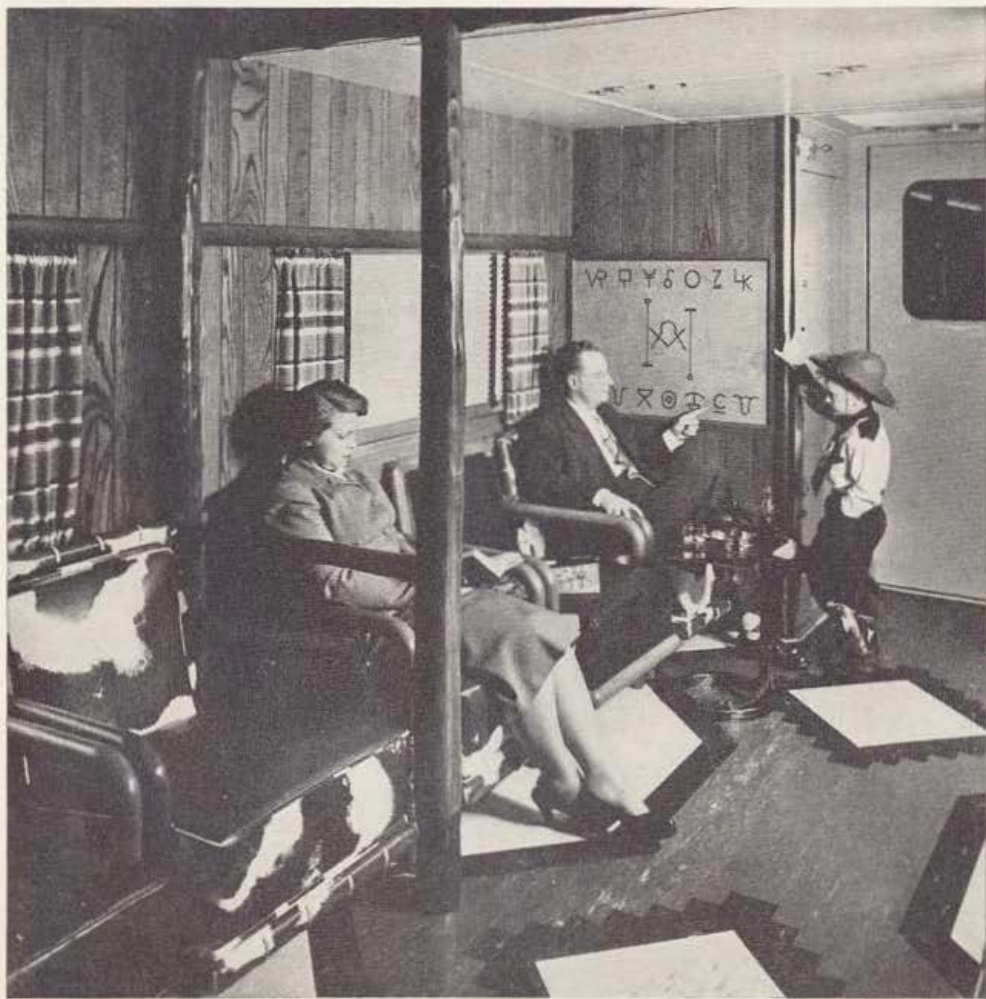
Aside from the western-type cars, the all-new *Empire Builder* is made up of a galaxy of luxurious cars also built by ACF at its St. Charles, Mo., plant. Six dining cars, six coaches, six dormitory-baggage, and six observation-lounge cars were delivered. Five of each of these new cars have gone into the *Empire Builder*, with one of each in service on its companion train, the *Western Star*.

As rich agricultural, mining, cattle and lumber empires pass in intimate view, Great Northern passengers are afforded a spacious glimpse of the

passing scenery through the view-filled windows of the dining car. Accommodating thirty-six persons for meals, the car also has a kitchen separated by a foyer, and at the steward's end of the car there are lockers and a desk provided with both loudspeaker and microphone.

From comfortable seats in the finest modern coaches, *Empire Builder* passengers ride over the glistening rails of Great Northern's main line through three time zones, over two major mountain ranges, along the border of the nation's third largest national park, and through the long-

"Now this brand means" . . . A youthful traveler on the "Empire Builder" learns about livestock brands in the western motif of "The Ranch" — the coffee shop-lounge car, built by ACF. The car's lounge section seats 18; the coffee shop accommodates 12 at the tables and 14 at the counter.



est railway tunnel in the Western Hemisphere. Beauty is a keynote within the car, too, especially with the attractive bulkheads of etched stainless steel panels. Between the main compartment and the men's lounge there is a small area for the conductor, provided with a desk and swivel chair — a novel twist in coach construction.

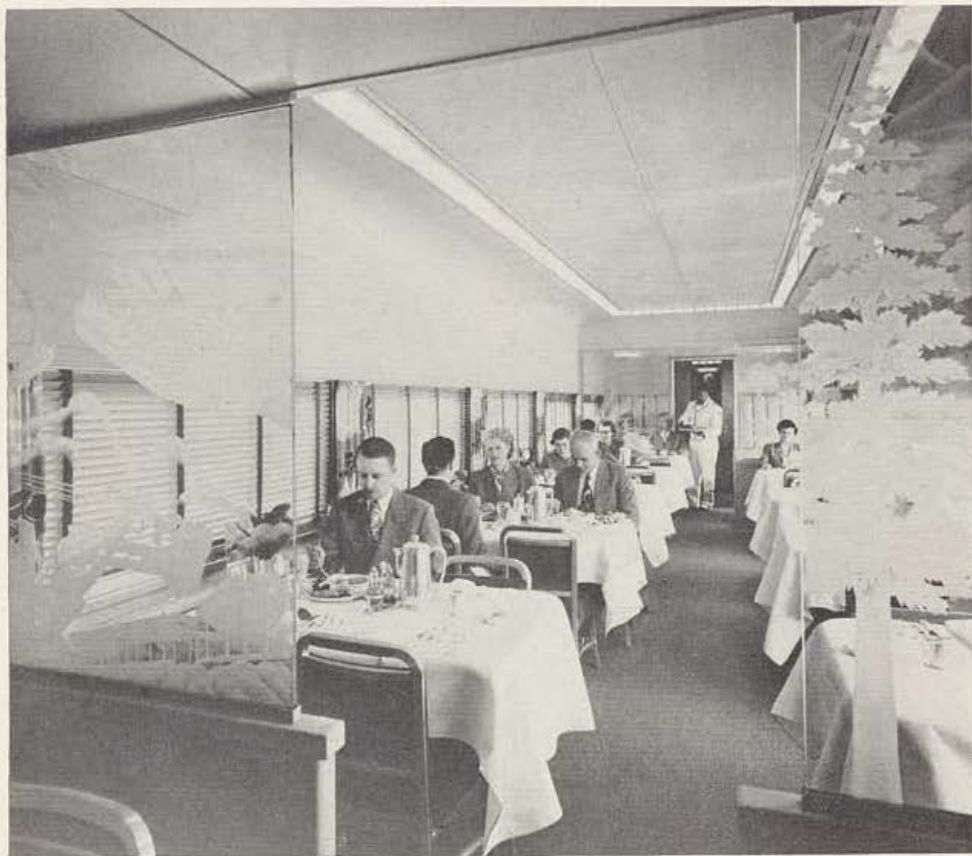
The traveler embarking at Chicago finds comfort and relaxation amid the luxury of the observation lounge. This car is divided into three principal sections — an observation and lounge unit, bar and utility area, and a sleeping section of three roomettes. The plentiful window space provides ample viewing for all of the

eighteen people which the observation room can accommodate. There is a comfortable upholstered settee at the semi-elliptical end of the car and a variety of other chairs ranging from banquette seats to double settees. Separating the observation room from the lounge is a wing partition. A well-equipped service bar and card tables are additional aids for the western traveler's pleasure in this car.

Pleasant crew quarters aboard the dormitory-baggage cars are also worthy of note. Aside from a thirty-foot baggage compartment at one end of the car, there is a crew section which accommodates twenty-one men in the main dormitory. This consists

Each of the six coaches built for the Great Northern Railway's streamliner, "Empire Builder," by ACF can accommodate sixty persons. Ample leg space is provided with adjustable foot rests and reclining seats, insuring greater comfort to the coach passengers.





Great Northern patrons riding the re-equipped streamliner "Empire Builder" will find dining a pleasure amid the cheery atmosphere of this tastefully decorated dining car. Six of these cars were built by ACF for the Great Northern.

of seven sections of three-tier bunks. In the steward's bedroom, in the same end of the car, are lockers, a wardrobe, and a folding washstand. The car even includes a shower bath, enclosed by a curtain.

At 8:00 a.m. of the third day — 45 hours and 2,211 miles out of Chicago — the *Empire Builder* rolls into its western terminal of Seattle. Largest seaport on Puget Sound, Queen City of the Pacific Northwest, gateway to Alaska and the Orient, Seattle is a

metropolis of over 500,000 persons.

Although Seattle marks the end of the memorable journey for travelers on the *Empire Builder*, for the train itself it means just enough breathing time for a check, clean-up, and change of crew. For at 3:00 p.m. this same day, fresh again and sparkling clean, the streamliner is all poised for the return trip across the continent to Chicago, bringing comfort and pleasant traveling to the western rail patron.