

Lil Orphan Amtrak *(Car)*

by Tom Parker, photos by T.Parker unless otherwise noted

There's a piece of track about 800 feet west of Germantown Parkway that was left in place by the crews salvaging the Cordova Branch. An abandoned passenger sits on what was a siding, a car that no one seems to want.

Built by Pullman-Standard in 1949, it was originally numbered RF&P 812. It was part of a 25 car order placed jointly by the ACL, PRR and RF&P to replace cars that had been destroyed in wrecks. The interiors featured 54 reclining seats, a continuous center fluorescent lighting strip in the ceiling and fluorescent baggage rack lights running the length of the cars. One of the cars in the order, ACL 247, was built without the corrugated sides and was painted in IC colors for use on the City of Miami.

All except one of the cars made their way to Amtrak. RF&P 812 was

re-numbered AMTK 5542.

Eventually AMTK 5542 nee RF&P 812, with the interior stripped out, was acquired by the Memphis Transportation Museum. It was never refurbished and was used mainly for storage.

The Memphis Transportation Museum's stored their roster of some 15 passenger cars, a GP-7 locomotive, a steam locomotive and a caboose at Memphis Defense Depot. When the decision was made in 1997 to close the Depot, the MTM was forced to find alternative sites for their equipment.

Some, including the steam engine, ended up in Collierville where they remain today. Others were stored on the Columbus and Greenville at Columbus, MS and at least one (the orphan) was stored at CSXT's Leewood Yard in Memphis.

Some of the cars at Columbus were sold and others were vandalized and stripped of parts and are now subject to a lawsuit (MTM vs CAGY Industries).

Eventually the CSXT de-

ecided that they needed space at Leewood so RF&P 812 and several CSXT maintenance of way cars were moved to the siding in Cordova. When CSXT ceased operations on the line, the cars were stranded.

Due to the deteriorated condition of the track and bridges, CSXT decided to have the cars scrapped and cut up in place. The MTM agreed and gave permission to have their car cut up at the same time. Several sections were cut out of the car as can be seen from the photo at the right, but for some reason the salvage crew walked away and left the car sitting on the siding.

Today ownership of the car is uncertain. The MTM abandoned the car and gave CSXT authority to scrap the car "without recourse". It appears that the railroad just as soon forget that the car exists.

