



The Museums at Lisle Station Park

Transcript: Tour Tidbit – Waycar #14584

Hi everyone! My name is Concetta and I'm the Museum Manager and curator at The Museums at Lisle Station Park. I'm writing a conductor's order to take us through this Tour Tidbit. So pull up a chair, and some pictures of this mini-sode's focus, Burlington Waycar #14584.

A good place to find us is on our Clio walking tour, by going to www.theclio.com [SPELL] and typing in Lisle Illinois in the top search bar [SPELL]. You'll see all of our Clio walking tour entries pop up when you scroll down, so make sure you pick the Waycar. If you're already on a virtual field trip with us, you're a step ahead and already have the link. Hit the pause button and pull it up, I'll wait for you.

The Waycar shows how railroads used to be operated when they were first invented, and it's another good example of how changes in technology change how people live and work.

For most of its history, our local railroad was called the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy (CB&Q, Burlington, or the Q, for short). Today it's part of the BNSF Railroad, which you may have taken to and from Chicago. Lisle is one of the original stops on this railroad, with the first train coming through Lisle on May 20th 1864, so remember that next time you take Metra! The Burlington's workers called their caboose cars "Waycars". Send us an email or call us if you want to know why, because that's kind of a long story.

Our Waycar was built in Aurora at the Roundhouse in 1881 and assigned car #14584. It was used for almost a hundred years, when computer and train technology changed significantly and made caboose cars not useful anymore.

The caboose car was the train workers' staff lounge and work space. All of the train's workers used this car one way or another. The conductor had his office here too and led the train's operation from the back.



Many things were done by hand until the technology was invented to do it by machine, and every worker had a specific job. For example, the Brakeman stopped the train by pulling a brake lever on each train car – and had to jump from car to car to do it. The Flagman had colored flags with different meanings, like a code, and he stood outside of the train while it was stopped to wave them and send messages to other trains. The Engineer drove the train and had an assistant, called the Fireman who shoveled coal into the train’s furnace to heat the water that powered a steam engine to keep it running.

By the 1970s, useful electrical monitors and computers were invented and installed on trains. These new technologies did a lot of the jobs that train workers did, so trains didn’t need people to pull brakes by hand, or ask the Engineer what speed they were going, anymore.

Caboose cars were, what we call, “retired from service” during this time, which is why you don’t see a red or green and yellow car at the end of trains today. Some were sold, and many were scrapped to use their parts on other train cars. Ours was rediscovered in a parking lot in the 1990s being used as a unique office for a car dealership!

Some of the technology changes that led to caboose cars not being useful anymore, led to the technology we have today that makes it possible for me to share our town’s history with you virtually!

Take a look at our online resources for pictures and more! And field trippers – don’t forget to check your instructions page to see everything we gave you!

You can find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @LisleMuseum, or on our website by going to www.lisleparkdistrict.org and clicking on Facilities at the top. Or you can Google us, that usually works too. Thanks for listening, from Lisle, Illinois...and everywhere else, where history is being made every minute!

Our theme song was created by Big Cats.