



U.C.R.S. BULLETIN 79-2

SOLARIUM DEBUT

Photos and Tabular Data from James A. Shields

In 1929, Canadian Pacific introduced its first steel solarium lounge cars to Canadian travellers. The latest word in spaciousness, luxury and good taste, the 15 'River' class cars typified the respectable solidity of Canadian Pacific's heavyweight steel passenger equipment that was never quite achieved in the later age of tight-lock couplings, picture windows and smooth contours.

Opulently finished in walnut, the cars afforded the traveller such amenities as individual ladies' and gentlemen's showers, leather-upholstered smoking rooms, ladies' lounge and observation parlor. At the rear, replacing the traditional observation platform -- perhaps for the same climatological reason that favoured vestibuled cabs over their open counterpart on Canadian locomotives -- was a high-windowed solarium, furnished with eight leather chairs. The gastronomical needs of the passengers were satisfied at a small but well equipped buffet. Exhaust fans sufficed for ventilation in a pre-air-conditioned era.

The shells of the 'River' cars were fabricated by National Steel Car, of Hamilton, Ont., for \$66,300 apiece. The interiors were finished by Canadian Pacific's own craftsmen, at Angus Shops.

Though their assignments were by no means continuous, the 'River' cars (and their later metamorphoses) were most extensively used on Canadian Pacific's transcontinental route, or on portions of it. Upon outshopping, 'Rivers' were assigned to the Toronto-Vancouver Dominion and the Chicago-Vancouver Mountaineer. The latter train travelled over the rails of CP-affiliate Soo Line in the United States, and to the Mountaineer's consist the Soo contributed four of its own cars -- Wisconsin River, Chippewa River, St. Croix River and Mississippi River -- which were duplicates of the CPR cars, built in 1929 by Pullman.

As the Depression settled over the country, industries everywhere sought means to reduce their costs of operation, and Canadian Pacific was no exception. Inevitably non-revenue cars were sidetracked, and a line of 'River' cars formed at Angus Shops, to remain dormant until the economy took its upward turn at the outset of World War II. A few cars remained in operation, on the Mountaineer and Soo-Dominion, and in 1936 these were given ice-activated air conditioning; the trend to 'modernization' had begun.

In 1939 another 'River' received air conditioning for a singularly honourable assignment. River Clyde was

assigned to bring up the rear of the Pilot Train for the 1939 Royal Tour.

The year 1941 saw a significant overhaul of the 'River' fleet as Canadian Pacific sought to align its equipment with the travel requirements of wartime. All ten remaining non-air-conditioned cars received the air cooling equipment. Eight of them lost their day sitting room accommodation in favour of sleeping capacity -- four double bedrooms and a single compartment; the buffet, lounge and solarium remained unscathed. With this rebuilding came a name change, to the 'Cape' series.

Two cars, River Rouge and River Dee, were altered even more, as an 18-chair dining section took the place of the former room accommodation and they became Cafe Parlor cars 6590 and 6591.

The five 'River' cars that had been air conditioned in 1936-1939 were also modified to the 'Cape' configuration in 1943-1945, and a general renaming of the 'Cape' cars took place about 1946, to give the car names a Canadian (rather than British) mien.

In the forties, the 'Capes' held forth on the Montreal-Vancouver section of the Dominion, and retained this prestigious assignment until the Canadian's stainless steel and domes displaced them in 1954. This period also saw 'Cape' cars on the Soo-Dominion, on Toronto-Montreal trains 21 and 22, and -- for a short time -- on the Montreal-St. John Atlantic Limited.

By the mid-1950's, uses for the 'Cape' cars were becoming scarce. Budd stainless steel equipment had made significant inroads on the territory that had been the sole preserve of the heavyweights.

The Soo Line's 'River' cars became hospital cars for the U.S. Army in 1943, and the Soo-Dominion/Mountaineer thus provided secure employment for several 'Capes' from that time until 1960. For several years in the mid-fifties, four 'Capes' served Vancouver-Calgary passengers by way of the Kettle Valley/Kootenay Express, operating over CP's spectacular Crowsnest Pass route to Fort McLeod and thence to Calgary; this employment terminated when RDC's took over both the Kettle Valley and the Fort McLeod-Calgary services.

Around 1950, 'Lake' cars (one drawing room, four compartments, buffet-lounge, but no solarium) took over from the 'Capes' on the Toronto-Montreal overnight service. However, it was a relatively common sight to

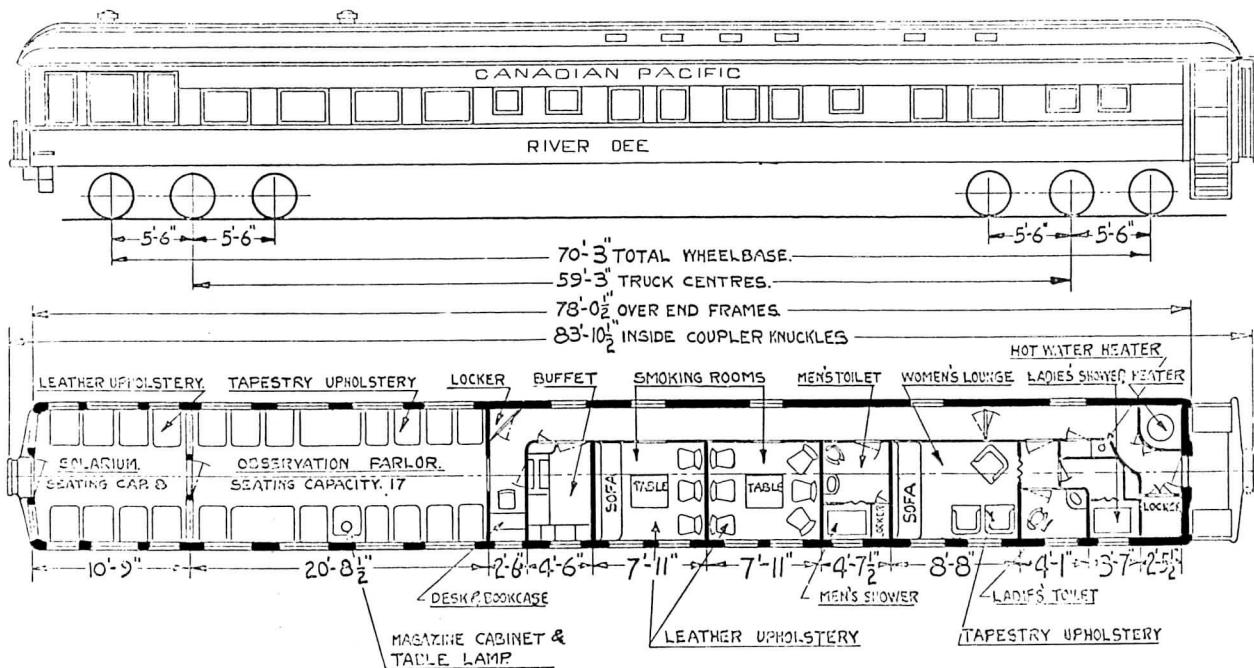
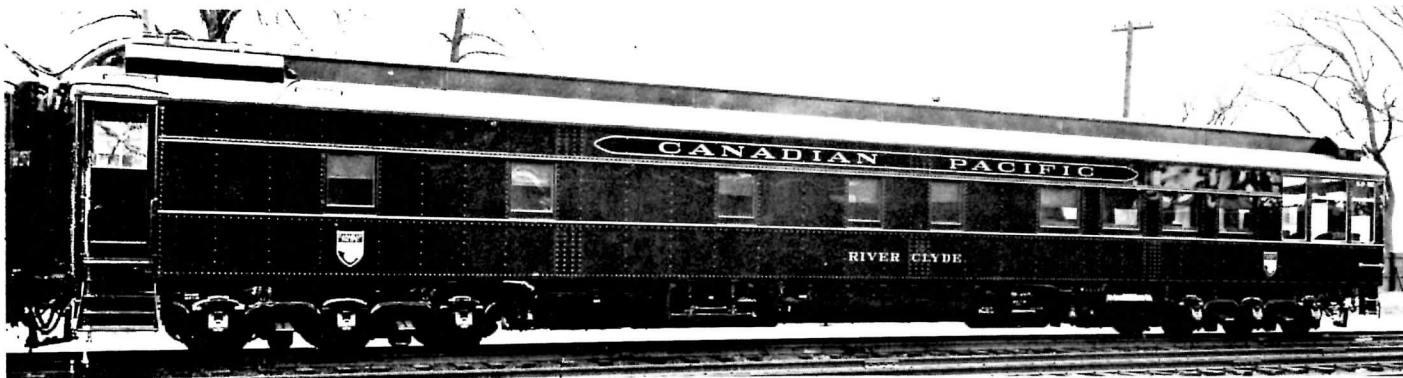
see a 'Cape' on these trains as late as the early 1960's, when equipment shortages rendered the usual 'Lake' -- or latterly the stainless steel 'View' car -- hors de combat.

The first casualties of the fleet occurred in 1960, when the two Cafe Parlor cars were converted to boarding cars -- the only 'Rivers' to meet this fate. From 1962 on, eight cars were converted for official service, requiring little alteration from their 'Cape' configuration; in most cases, this consisted simply of creating a master from two of the original bedrooms, establishing a dining room (or merely dining area) in the lounge, and installing a small stove in the lounge area to supplement the output of the Baker Heater when operating in freight service.

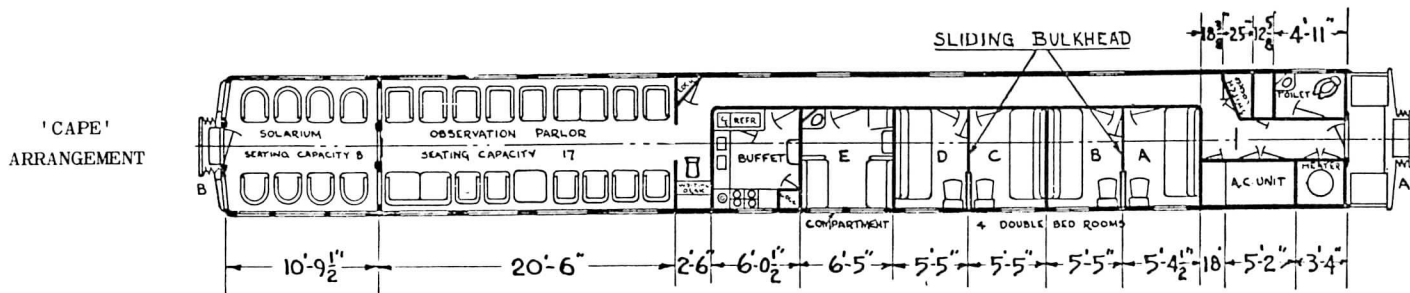
Five of the cars have been scrapped outright, or are awaiting dismantling. Thus, while ten members of the class are still extant, none of them can be considered to be in revenue service.



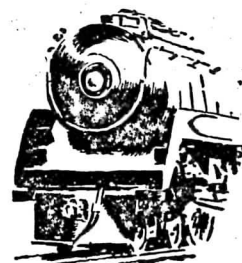
Cape George (above) is typical of these cars as they appeared from the mid-forties on. Newly air conditioned, and finished in the Tuscan Red, striping and crests introduced on the lightweight equipment of the day (below), River Clyde stands ready for duty with the Royal Tour of 1939.



'RIVER' ARRANGEMENT

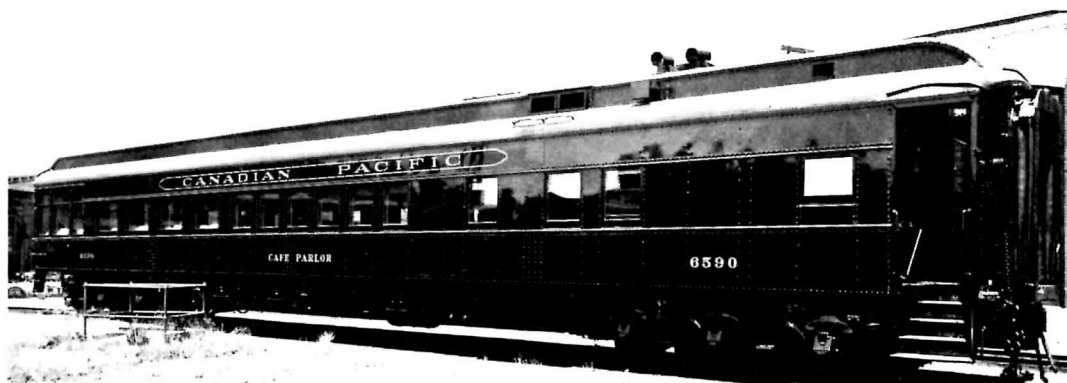


'CAPE' ARRANGEMENT



Diaphragms were omitted from the rear end of the 'River' cars in their early days; River Forth (above) sported a rudimentary railing instead.

Significant changes in window arrangement characterized the two Cafe Parlor cars, 6590 (right) and 6591.



ORIGINAL NAME (1929)	FIRST REBUILD	SECOND REBUILD	RENAMED	DISPOSITION
RIVER FRASER	air conditioned (1936)	CAPE GEORGE (1945)	- -	Conv. to Bus. Car 6 (1962)
RIVER ROUGE	Cafe Parlor 6591 air cond. (1941)	- -	- -	Conv. to Brdg. Car 411294 (1960)
RIVER AVONMORE	air conditioned (1936)	CAPE AVONMORE (1943)	CAPE MUDGE (1945)	Conv. to Bus. Car 37 (1966)
RIVER TYNE	CAPE TYNE air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE BEALE (1946)	Awaiting Destroyal (4-1969)
RIVER MADAWASKA	CAPE ROUGE air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE CAUTION (1946)	Scrapped, Angus
RIVER LIARD	CAPE LIARD air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE RACE (1947)	Conv. to Bus. Car 13 (1963) Sold to UCRS; 3-25-69
RIVER OTONABEE	CAPE DEE air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE BRETON (1946)	Scrapped, Farnham (1968)
RIVER THAMES	CAPE THAMES air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE COOK (1945)	Conv. to Bus. Car 15 (1963)
RIVER DEE	Cafe Parlor 6590 air cond. (1941)	- -	- -	Conv. to Brdg. Car 411658 (1960)
RIVER CLYDE	air conditioned (1939)	CAPE CHURCHILL (1945)	- -	Conv. to Bus. Car 36 (1966)
RIVER CLARE	air conditioned (1936)	CAPE CLARE (1943)	CAPE HURD (1946)	Conv. to Bus. Car 14 (1963)
RIVER MOIRA	CAPE MOIRA air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE BAULD (1946)	Awaiting Destroyal (4-1969)
RIVER SEVERN	CAPE SEVERN air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE SCOTT (1946)	Scrapped, Farnham (1968)
RIVER HUMBER	CAPE HUMBER air cond. (1941)	- -	CAPE RAY (1946)	Conv. to Bus. Car 4 (1963)
RIVER FORTH	air conditioned (1936)	CAPE KNOX (1944)	- -	Conv. to Bus. Car 21 (1964)

One 'River' car now enjoys the distinction of being privately owned. Car 13, ex Cape Race, Cape Liard and River Liard, came to the Upper Canada Railway Society in April at the conclusion of a 40-year career with Canadian Pacific that took it over Company lines from coast to coast.

Car 13 replaces the all-wood Nova Scotia which was no longer operable without extensive repairs. Nova Scotia has been moved to London, Ontario, where the London & Middlesex Historical Society plans to place it on permanent display together with a number of other railroad artifacts -- a fitting retirement for a fine car!

For the UCRS purpose -- a meeting place, a lounge car for excursions, and a car capable of being handled without restriction on regular trains -- Car 13 is ideal: Its lounge/solarium occupies nearly half of the car's length, enabling groups of up to 30 to ride together or meet for informal gatherings; its rooms provide 'homes' on excursions for such necessary functions as the publications sales desk and the public address system; the glassed-in solarium affords fine all-weather views without the ever-present falling-overboard danger inherent in crowded open platforms; air conditioning gives welcome relief on long, hot journeys; and its all-steel, relatively modern construction will relieve the Car Committee of many of the headaches experienced in keeping the all-wood Nova Scotia on the road.

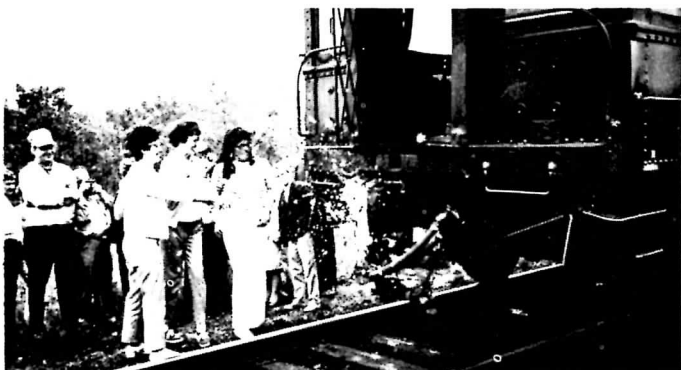
A thorough documentation of the car's assignments since 1929 is not available; possibly some readers of this brief account may be able to contribute additional information. It is known that from the builder's River Liard (as Car 13 was then known) operated in the transcontinental pool until Depression austerity forced its temporary storage. In 1941, with many of its kin, it acquired air conditioning, new accommodations and a new name, and went back to work on the transcontinental Dominion. Cape Liard -- and from 1947 on, Cape Race -- operated for a short time on the Montreal-St. John over-night, and was one of the regular cars operating between Vancouver and Calgary via the Kettle Valley route. In 1963, following its conversion to Business Car 13, it was assigned to the Company's superintendent at Kenora, Ont., where it remained until about 1967, when it was recalled to Montreal for general pool use, and later stored.



Freshly interchanged from the Canadian Pacific, Car 13 poses in front of the downtown Toronto skyline on April 12th.

-- J.A. Brown

Car 13 arrived in Toronto on April 12th, 1969, and was moved immediately to CN's Spadina Coach Yard, where Canadian National contracted to perform the few mechanical inspections that were needed to make it roadworthy. Stalwarts of the UCRS Car Committee initiated the exterior restoration by finishing the car with a new coat of Tuscan Red and appropriate Railroad Roman lettering. And on the July 5th excursion, a simple ceremony near Washago inaugurated officially the Upper Canada Railway Society associations of the gleaming car.



The first operation of Car 13 in its UCRS livery took place on July 5th. The inauguration of the car was made official at Washago, as a bottle of bubbly was broken against the rear coupler knuckle (above) by three distaff members of the Car Committee, Ann Brown, Carol West and Noreen McNairn.

With its sunroom-like lounge, Car 13, seen here at Washago (above right) and Beaverton (right), was predictably one of the train's most popular attractions.

-- photo above; Brian West others; J.A. Brown









UPPER CANADA RAILWAY SOCIETY

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