

A&O Cabeese Build



David

Oct 2019

Oct '19

I decided that it was finally time to get the A&O cabooses fleet ready for use now that operations were underway. I had collected three cab different styles over the last 30 years.

Oct 2019

When Atlas decided to get into the O scale market, they produced an early Wide Vision cab in the 80's. I came into possession of a dozen of these as a gift at a swap meet. Four current high quality production Atlas modern Wide Vision cabs were a later purchase, dating back to the last days of A&O 1.0.

To add a sense of A&O purchase history, I also obtained 3 of the Atlas Standard Cabs.

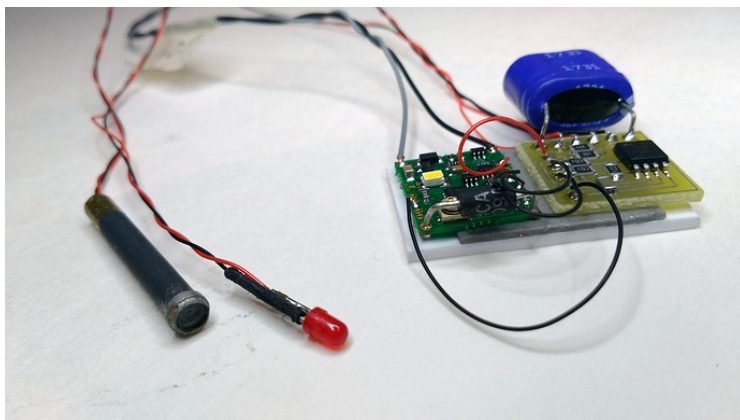
The modern Atlas WV cabs were undec., everything else had to be paint-stripped before decorating in A&O livery.

While the more recent Atlas offerings come with nice detail, interiors, standoff grabs, decent roof-walks (standard cab), the older, 80's version Atlas WV's were all molded-on and needed to be carved-off to meet A&O cab specs. Also the end platforms were molded lumps of plastic vs. the actual see-through. And the roofwalks and their handrails were crude and needed to be replaced. And finally, the trucks needed to be replaced with current Atlas cab trucks with electrical wipers. Only a dozen of them. I did say they were a "gift". Deep breath. The years of procrastination was about to be over.

Jan 2

To match the progression of A&O color schemes (early red/gray, mid "Black Diamond", and late-60's modern) I chose three caboose paint schemes to match the progression as seen in the motive power roster.

The paint striping and repainting of the current production Atlas models was straight forward. I added cab shades on the early cabs, new windows and interior shades, cut levers and air hoses. Bob provided Alps-decals per my artwork. And I tossed out the Atlas lights and blinker electronics. These were replaced with NCE Light-Its wedded to a specialty circuit Bob graciously produced for the project. (see "Caboose Flasher" post)



There is an adjustable LED on the Light-It board itself. So I roof-mounted the CBs so that the light could shine down on the conductor's desk for night ops. Being able to turn on/off the EOT flashers, change ends of the flasher as appropriate, and give the onboard crew some light adds to the operator experience, slows things down a bit, and says "we're actually taking this train movement seriously" (sort of).



The 80's Atlas cabs was where time slowed way down. Only...a dozen of them.

In summary-

1. Carved off....most everything. Sanded, filled, sanded, filled, finally replaced with wire grabs.
2. Redid the roof. Filed and filled, sanded where the plugs for the plastic roofwalks had been attached. Replaced with fitted Des Plaines Hobbies etched brass roofwalks.
3. Added smoke jack support wires.
4. Spray painted the plastic end platforms black. Then cut/filed thin etched brass metal grid as an overlay. The brass was painted Pacemaker Red and when in place gives the illusion of a see-through platform.
5. Attached roofwalk handrails from wire.
6. Drilled ends for insertion of brass tube to hold flasher LED.
7. Made brass tubes with bezel, painted silver, and added a lens using Kristal Klear.
8. Reworked the cab floor to accept new Atlas trucks.
9. Painted, masked, added decals etc.
10. Installed electronics, cut levers, air hose windows, shades, weathering, etc.

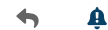
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Jan 2



Placed them on the railroad for a group photo!



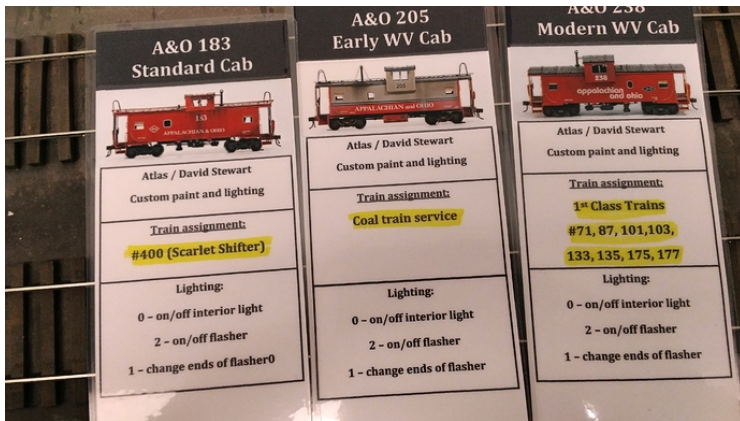


Oppps!

To add a little history, I selected cab #190 for a fouling-point accident and quick repair by the A&O car shop. It will get more attention when the car shop gets to it (not). The roofwalk was removed per recent OSHA, AAR, FRA, FBI, CIA, NSA, NASA, LOL and UN requirements, and the end ladder is now gone, and structure replaced with approved, (see above) framework. #190 is used only on local, short-distance Turns out of Millport where the crew spends most of their time on the ground.



Now that there are sufficient cabeese on the railroad, a look at their individual car cards reveals that the cabs are both train-class, train-type, and train-crew assigned. This makes the yard crew think twice about just grabbing any cab for the next outbound train. More fun to the game.



And oh yes, as the groupie photo shows, some scenery has sprung up along the tracks as well. But that's another story.

David

😊 It's been a while since we've seen jaybarnaby — their last post was 1 year ago.

[jaybarnaby](#)

Oct '19

Wow, those are great. That's a lot of work. How many more do you have? I have 12 to do as well.

David

Oct '19

There are 19 A&O cabs in all. NO more to go...at least for now.



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jaybarnaby

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Oct '19

Something tells me 19 isn't enough...

Oct 2019

I recounted mine. I have 13, but 2 are A&D and one has been diverted to something else, Both A&D are Bay Window as is the diversion. The A&O are 5 standard, 2 early WV and 2 late WV. Had 2 of each and then a few weeks ago found an eBay a deal for of the standard. Just need to paint em all...

jaybarnaby

Oct '19



are the standard cabs a different red?

David

Jan 2

Oct '19

The cabs are all painted using Scalecoat gloss Pacemaker Red from Minuteman Models.

To simulate paint fade of the older standard cabs, I brushed them with titanium white oil paint and then rubbed them in/c  c  ened the red and gave it a faded look. Thus the appearance of a slightly different shade. It takes a couple days for this to dry before respraying gloss for decals.

David

antlor

Dec '19

Are those the Atlas trucks with rolling bearing caps? If so how freely do they roll? I am converting 2 cabooses from 3Rail and I purchased the metal caboose trucks but they dont roll very well. Any suggestions for making them roll a little better?

Anthony

David

Dec '19

Hi Anthony,

The Atlas cab trucks feature phosphor bronze pickup wipers for lighting effects. The wipers make the trucks not at all free rolling, to say the least. Out of the package they act like an anchor, dragging at the rear of the train. So much for downhill slack action.

To help with this, I loosen the tension by tweaking the pressure the wipers exert on the back of the wheels. A gentle bend with needle nose pliers does the trick. If carefully done, they'll still pickup power, but greatly improve the rolling characteristics. Additionally, Atlas makes a conductive oil for "greasing" the back of the wheels. I put a little of this on as well, though I'm sure other products would work similarly.

I've noticed that over time the bronze tends to "retighten", requiring another adjustment. Part of A&O maintenance.

Hope this helps.

David

antlor



Dec '19

Thank you for the help David, I will give this a try.

Oct 2019

Anthony

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Jan 2

David, I couldn't tell from the photos but do any of the cabooses have a wheel generator? If so what did you use, if not do you know if anyone makes a kit or part for this?

Anthony

Jan 2



David

Jan 2

Hi Anthony,

The Atlas caboose trucks do not come with that detail, which would be nice if they did.

I don't know who might make such a detail, but I'd imagine it's a 3D printing waiting to happen!

David