

PH0507423

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 18 1977  
RECEIVED AUG 24 1977  
DATE ENTERED MAY 22 1978SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15 (2nd Caboose No. 15)

AND/OR COMMON

Caboose No. 15

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

(Not applicable)

CITY, TOWN

El Portal

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

CODE

06

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fifteenth

COUNTY

Mariposa

CODE

043

**2 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☒ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service - Western Regional Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Administration Building (Park Headquarters)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Yosemite Village

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

STATE

California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED

☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☒ MOVED DATE 1946

Returned 1961

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15 is an excellent example of a wooden, short-line railroad freight caboose. It is 28 feet and two inches long, not counting coupling gear, nine feet and three inches wide in body, and stands 15 feet, four inches tall to the top of its cupola roof, or 11 feet and four inches tall to the top of its main roof. The caboose has two windows in each side of the body, each comprising a single pane of glass or lite. The cupola has two sliding windows on each of its four sides, each window containing four panes or lites. Both the main roof and the cupola roof are gently rounded like passenger car roofs, rather than angular as is more common in caboose roofs and typical of nearly all freight car roofs. Each end of the caboose has a centered door opening onto end platforms; each door has a two-lite window near its top. The end platforms have railings of metal bars, typical of caboose construction, and metal ladders leading to the roof. There are metal bar grab-irons on the roof of the cupola. There is a manual brake wheel mounted on each of the two end platforms. The caboose has marker-light brackets on all four corners of the body below the roof.

The interior of the caboose is furnished with two long benches usable also as bunks, one along each side wall. There is also a desk, and a stove, whose metal stovepipe pierces the roof ahead of the cupola (the caboose usually being run with the cupola-end to the rear). The cupola has four double seats, two on each side, one on each side headed forward and one to the rear. Beneath them, on either side of the center aisle, are storage cabinets.

The caboose is basically a wooden car, with wooden floor and roof and vertical wooden plank siding. Window frames and doors are of wood. The trucks on which the caboose sits are steel arch-bar trucks containing wooden bolsters. The trucks were apparently built for the Colorado Midland Railway in 1901 or earlier. (It was not unusual for second hand components of one railroad to turn up later on another, especially when the former was scrapped at a comparatively early date as was the Colorado Midland.) The trucks have apparently had some parts replaced, such as wheels marked "ARA 1938 Griffin Los Angeles", and other components marked "ARA 122 Pat'd Oct. 27, 1896." The trucks also carry the initials "CM" which suggest Colorado Midland origin. The wooden bolsters in the trucks are characteristic of trucks manufactured during the late 19th Century. The caboose has knuckle couplers.

Compared with a large number of similar cabooses, the Yosemite Valley Caboose No. 15 was aesthetically especially well-proportioned and very well built. It was somewhat similar but not identical to Yosemite Valley Caboose No. 16, now owned by the Stockton, Terminal & Eastern Railroad. Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15 is basically unaltered from its original appearance and from its later use on the Yosemite Valley Railroad, except for the replacement of wheels and possibly other truck components already mentioned.

Historically this caboose was operated on the railroad between El Portal and Merced. Its present location is within the site of the historic Yosemite Valley Railroad "yard" at its El Portal terminus; however, as an object the significance of the caboose is no longer site related, although El Portal is probably the most appropriate site for its exhibit.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      c. 1922 - 1945      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      (Builder's plate is missing)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15 is an object of local historical significance in the category of transportation as one of the last two surviving cabooses of the historic Yosemite Valley Railroad, incorporated in 1902, constructed in 1905, 1906 and 1907, and abandoned and scrapped in 1945 and 1946. As a type specimen, this caboose is further significant as a particularly fine example of a short-line railroad caboose.

The origin and history of this caboose is obscure; the presence of the letters "CM" cast in metal components of its trucks led its Santa Barbara owner, and later the author of the two principal publications on the history of the railroad, to state that it was built for the Colorado Midland Railway, which ran from Colorado Springs, Colorado, through Leadville and Glenwood Springs to Grand Junction. However, despite Colorado Midland initials on truck components, Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15 is six feet shorter than any of the three series of Colorado Midland cabooses, does not have the sliding side doors characteristic of Colorado Midland cabooses, and in general appearance, location of windows, shape of cupola, etc., does not match the Colorado Midland cabooses. There was an earlier Yosemite Valley Railroad caboose numbered 15, however, which did have some of the characteristics of a Colorado Midland caboose, but its history and disposition are unknown.

Thus Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15 is the second caboose to bear that number on this railroad. The best available evidence indicates that it was added to the Yosemite Valley equipment roster about 1922, although the caboose itself may be much older. From whom the railroad purchased it, and whether new or second-hand, is unknown, but it is presumed to have been obtained second-hand by the Yosemite Valley Railroad. If research should eventually uncover its origin, it may possess a quality of additional historical significance deriving from earlier association with some other railroad.

The caboose thus derives associative historical significance in the history of transportation from its service on freight trains on the Yosemite Valley Railroad between Merced and El Portal from 1922 until the end of operation in 1945. Its function was to carry the train crew of freight trains, consisting of a conductor and freight brakeman (or brakemen), and to serve as an office car in which the freight conductor might work on his waybills, switch lists, and other such railroad paperwork. It was generally coupled to the rear of freight trains. The cupola provided a "lookout" from which the conductor or brakeman could spot trouble such as a derailed car ahead in the train, a "hotbox" or hot axle journal needing oiling, or other trouble.

In 1946 the caboose was sold to Leon Bartholomew and moved to 216 West Cañon Perdido Street in Santa Barbara, California, where for some years it accommodated meetings of the

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Johnston, Hank, Railroads of the Yosemite Valley. (Corona del Mar; Trans-Anglo Books, 1975). Pp. 100-101, 192-193.

Johnston, Hank, Short Line to Paradise; The Story of the Yosemite Valley Railroad. (Yosemite: Flying Spur Press, 1962). p. 85.

Burgess, Jack, letter, June 12, 1977, 36129 Sandalwood Street, Newark, Calif., 94560, to author of this nomination form, filed in NPS Western Regional Office.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Not applicable *less than 1 acre*

UTM REFERENCES

A 11 12 54 87 5 41 73 20 0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                           

B                             
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D                           

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

As an object, this caboose has significance independent of site; the above UTM reference identifies the present location of this object, but its significance is not dependent upon this location and it may be moved without affecting its significance or National Register listing, although if moved a correction of location in the form of a new UTM reference must be filed with the National Register.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gordon Chappell - Regional Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Western Regional Office

DATE

June 21, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

TELEPHONE

(415) 556-4165

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

SEP 22 1977

YES ☒

NO ☐

NONE ☐

W. M. Egan  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ☐ National ☒ State ☐ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE D. Hall

TITLE

Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE NOV 10 1977

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

W. M. Egan  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

5-22-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5-12-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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DATE ENTERED MAY 22 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Channel Railroad Club, until club membership dropped off. In 1961 it was purchased by the National Park Service, and moved to El Portal for inclusion in a Yosemite National Park transportation history exhibit. Its present location is believed to be within the boundaries of the site of the Yosemite Valley Railroad's track yard at El Portal where historically it was used. As an historic object, however, its significance is not dependent upon its location, although El Portal is a very appropriate location for its exhibit.

Resource management

The significance of the caboose applies to its exterior, its interior, all furnishings, tools, artifacts, and parts, and requires a historically accurate color and lettering scheme.

YOSEMITE VALLEY  
15



Mariposa County

Yosemite Valley Railroad  
(Second) Caboose No. 15

El Portal, California

June 1977

National Park Service  
Pilot BY Jack Gyer

View From Southeast

1 of 3

V.V.  
15





Yosemite Valley RAILROAD  
(SECOND) CABOOSE No. 15  
EL PORTAL, CALIFORNIA  
JUNE 1977  
MARIPOSA County  
PHOTO BY JACK GYER

2 of 3  
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILROAD

(SECOND) CABOOSE NO. 15

EL PORTAL, CALIFORNIA

JUNE 1977

PHOTO BY JACK GER

3 of 3  
VIEW FROM NORTHEAST

Mariposa County