

WHEN THINGS WERE MADE THE IVES 184, 185, 186 AND 171, 173 AND 170,171,172 SERIES PASSENGER CARS

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Revision 16.0 2/25/11

IVES in 1921, as an attempt to stay competitive with Lionel, introduced wide (standard) gauge to their product line. When looking back some 70 years it is hard to imagine the extensive changes that IVES made for just (10) short years of production; (7½) of those years were pure IVES production and (2½) were a mixture of the efforts of Lionel and American Flyer. We're fortunate that IVES made all of these production modifications for it greatly helps us in determining the premise of this article, "when things were made".

For the purpose of this piece I have chosen the small 14-inch (13 ¾ actual) passengers cars labeled 184, 185 and 186, and the companion 170 series passenger cars. These cars have great variations, from rubber stamped lettering, brass plates, brass journals on trucks, observation railings, roof hinges and snake track pull couplers just to name a few.

The research that follows supports the premise of which production cars are scarce and what makes them that way. The brass plated **Dark Olive** cars (1 year) is the scarcest. These dark olive cars in 1927 came with an 1134 cast iron locomotive for a set called the Capitol Limited. You will rarely see these cars. On occasion you might find a

stand alone, cast iron dark olive 1134, but never the set. One might assume that IVES needed to raise money in 1927 to stay afloat, and in fact sometime during that year they did re-capitalize the company. It might be possible that the money received was spent on the production of sets that generated the greatest margins. This would be true of the larger, higher priced sets, which possibly eclipsed smaller set production. Another possibility is the Capitol Limited set, as stated in the 1927 catalog, had red cars, and possibly realizing that this was a very ugly set, IVES changed the paint scheme of the cars to the same color as the engine. This resulted in a very small production run of these dark olive cars. This is only conjecture and more information about the dark olive Capitol Limited set would be very much appreciated.

Next in line, also from the cataloged Capitol Limited set, is the 1927 **Red** 185 parlor car. The common version of this car is the 184 club car, and the 186 observation car that made up the Red Arrow set of 1927. The 185 parlor car was only used with the Capitol Limited. Now to add to the confusion, in 1928 the Red Arrow set is comprised of a red 185 parlor car and a red 186 observation car. The difference between the "rare" 1927 version of the 185 parlor car

WHEN THINGS WERE MADE-THE IVES 184, 185, 186 PASSENGER CARS

and the “scarce” 1928 version is the use of snake track pull couplers in 1928. Very few three car 1134 red sets were sold, and like the dark olive cars from this set, the red 185 parlor car without snake pull couplers is very rare.

The third car in rarity is the **Brown** 185 parlor car that was not catalogued with any set. It belongs to the same series of cars (184, 186) that made up the brown Fifth Avenue Special. Since this car had to come from a special order it is also is very rare.

The next rarity that follows is the brass plated, all **Orange** cars with black inserted 3/8”diaphragms (1/2 year), and the brass plated all **Orange** cars with black embossed diaphragms (1/2 year). These cars were made for very short time in limited sets. All the Orange cars in 1928 came with a matching 3242 engine called the Night Hawk set, and all the cars contain snake track pull couplers.

In 1930 Ives produced the Skyliner set in cadet blue with 184,185 and 186 cars. This set replaced the New Yorker set. This is the only time a 184 **Cadet Blue** combine was produced, and was manufactured by painting over previously painted orange combines in cadet blue to complete the (3) car set. Therefore this three-car set is next in rarity.

The 1927 **Light Apple Green** (1 year) cars with embossed same paint color diaphragms, and the 1926 **Grey** cars from the 1926 New Yorker (Grey Ghost) set are next in rarity. The remaining passenger cars in this series are fairly common and easy to find, with the exception of some plate variations. The most notable of which is the **Southern**

Pacific sets. These sets came in two color variations. **Light Apple Green** and **Red**.

In the pre 1925 cars, I would consider the 1924 **Wanamaker Maroon** (1 year) cars to be top in rarity. They were sold in many cataloged sets but its distribution channel was limited to a single department store.

The next interesting example is the **Medium Green** 185 parlor car that belongs to the #701 set catalogued in 1923. The catalog shows a (3) car set consisting of a 3241 locomotive with 184, 185, and 186 passenger cars. The set is pictured in medium green, and the catalog states that it is available in green or red. For some reason we almost always find the (3) car # 701 set in red and not medium green. The common medium green set that we find so often is the medium green number #700 set, with a 3241 locomotive and 184 and 186 cars. Therefore a medium green 185 parlor car from 1923 can be considered scarce.

In 1921 IVES modified some early **Maroon** cars with one-gauge trucks and blackened wheels. The intent was to keep the one gauge customer satisfied while changing IVES production from one gauge to wide gauge. Also during this transition period you might see blackened wheels on a 1922 specimen of these cars for both wide and one gauge trucks, and you might find some 184 series cars with one-gauge trucks spread farther apart so they could be used on wide gauge track. The objective was to use up old inventory to satisfy current production requirements. These cars with one gauge trucks fitted for one-gauge or standard gauge are scarce.

WHEN THINGS WERE MADE-THE IVES 184, 185, 186 PASSENGER CARS

170 Series: We have included the 170 series of cars in our charts because of the similarity of body styles with their counterpart, the 180 series. These cars have brass journal boxes as seen on those made in 1925 and no brass journals for those manufactured in 1924. Therefore, the 170 series also have the same dating characteristics as the 180 series cars. The 170 series of cars were only made from 1924 through 1926. They were always rubber stamped and never manufactured with brass plates. 1924 is the first year of this series as a cataloged set. It consisted of an IVES 3235 engine with a 171 buffet car and a 173 observation car, as set #690. It was painted medium green with, rainbow color transoms. It was also available as a Wanamaker set in maroon, and considered very rare. This initial set is non-lighted, and has "O" gauge wheels with standard gauge trucks to match the height level of the 3235 engine. In the same year as set #691, IVES adds a dash (-3) to the car's number to indicate cars that contain lights. Using up some old 171 and 173 inventory you will find some lighted cars without the (-3) with a plated 3235 engine in early 1925.

After 1924 this entire series of cars is uncataloged, and remains that way through 1926, the last year of their availability. Why did IVES do this? I recently purchased a 1926 set that might lead to some conclusions. The set consists of a light olive 3236 engine (not cataloged in this color), a 170, light olive buffet car (with a 1925 body and no cutout for plates), a 171 parlor car (with a 1926 body and cutout for plates, rubber stamped 171), and a 172 observation car (with a 1925 body, no cutout for plates, and an extra gold stripe on the platform railing). The original box says #692s with

the "s" being hand written. Let's remember that set #692 in 1926 is the "Night Hawk" set consisting of a 3236 buff/tan engine, with 184,185 and 186 cars.

This uncataloged set also has its original shipping carton. The carton has a shipping label that says "Charles Williams Stores", Brooklyn, NY. This store was similar to Sears Roebuck and Company as evidenced by their distribution of an extensive 500-page catalog of various household items for sale. When you examine the 1926 Charles William catalog for toy trains, you come across only two pages of trains, and all are manufactured by American Flyer. Therefore, if they normally did not sell IVES, where did they get this set for sale, and why didn't IVES take the easy way out by supplying this department store with a manufactured catalog set at a discounted price? My guess is they couldn't or wouldn't sell a catalog set at a cheaper price to a department store then they would to a small mom-and-pop shop. These uncataloged sets were assembled to create needed cash. It appears, as in this case with Charles Williams, some of these sets were targeted for those establishments that were not normally customers of IVES. I'm sure this was offered to their customers as well, but consider the confusion of having a cataloged set next to an uncataloged set, having the same compliment of cars, the same engine, using a different color and a different price. I feel an IVES salesman went around to these "non-customer" department store buyers stating, "do I have a deal for you". Again, this is only an assumption.

WHEN THINGS WERE MADE-THE IVES 184, 185, 186 PASSENGER CARS

Getting back to this light olive 3236 set it is interesting the way they put it together in 1926. First they took some overproduction 1925, 170 and 172 cars and combined it with a newly manufactured 171 parlor car (indented body for plates). Then they painted a 3236 engine in the same color, and added the fancy painted gold trim on the frame, which was only done in early 1926. The 170, 172 cars are lacquered; the 3236 engine and the 171 parlor car is not, except where they rubber-stamped the number 171, they lacquered that area.

We have discussed this particular 1926 set in detail, but remember IVES produced these uncataloged sets in greater quantity in 1925. In 1925 they offered (3) uncataloged sets. The first is a 3235 light olive engine, with the aforementioned 170, 171 cars. The second is a 3236 buff/tan engine, with 170, 171 and 172 cars in matching colors. The third and rarest of these three sets is an 1132 buff/tan, steam engine, with 170, 171 and 172 cars in matching colors. Some of these buff/tan 1132's are seen in 1926 with the more conventional 184, 185 and 186 cars.

In helping to determine the charts that follow I have used various reference sources, samples from my own collection, and knowledgeable collectors who are familiar with IVES wide gauge.

As an example, in 1928 the 184, 185, 186 cars went through major variation changes. To show these variations we have split the production between 1928 early and 1928 late. Also note some of the inconsistencies between what was catalogued that year and what was actually produced. As an example

the catalogue shows air tanks on the 184, 185, and 186 cars, when none were made.

In some cases it is very difficult to determine the exact date a variation went into production. You will see some variations with overlapping dates because we have specimens that show both variations in the same year. What you will be able to do with the "detailed dating tables" is to determine when one of these cars was made by looking at all the cars characteristics. I have also included a "simplified table" that allows you to quickly determine when one of these cars was made by looking at the unique characteristics for that year of production. In some cases we have to examine the set's engine or just the baggage car to differentiate one year from another.

If you know of variations that are not listed or something that is incorrect please email me at **fasttrack@erols.com** so we can update these charts. Consider this a work in progress and let us complete it while individuals are still around that know and understand this genre.

Important Note:

This revision 16.0 article outdates all previous articles on this subject. All changes from revision 15.0 to this revision are shown in red. Any questions please email me at www.fasttrack@erols.com

WHEN THINGS WERE MADE-THE IVES 184, 185, 186 PASSENGER CARS

IVES 184, 185, 186 (14" CARS) DATING CHARACTERISTICS	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928 Early	1928 Late	1929	1930
<i>COLORS</i>											
Maroon	x	x	x								
Wanamaker Maroon				x							
Red Rubber Stamped	x	x	x	x	x						
Red Plate Indents/Rubber Stamped						x					
Red Plated (184, 186)							x	x	x		
Red Plated (185) (<i>rare 1927</i>)							x				
Red Plated (185)								x	x		
Medium Green/maroon windows		x	x	x							
Light Olive Green/tan windows					x	x					
Brown (184, 186)					x	x					
Brown (185) (<i>rare 1926</i>)						x					
Dark Olive Green							x				
Grey					x	x					
Buff/Tan						x	x				
Light Apple Green							x				
Orange/Black 3/8" Diaphragms								x			
Orange/Black Embossed Diaphragms									x		
Red/Black Roof								x	x	x	x
Orange/Black Roof										x	x
<i>Some Black roofs painted in non-gloss</i>										x	
Cadet Blue Body										x	x
<i>LIGHTS</i>											
No Interior Lights	x	x	x								
Interior Lights				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>WHEELS</i>	x	x									
Black Painted One Gauge Truck	x	x									
Black Painted Wide Gauge Truck	x	x									
Non-Blackened Wide Gauge Truck		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
IVES 170, 171, 172, 173 (14" CAR) CHARACTERISTICS	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928 Early	1928 Late	1929	1930
<i>Cataloged Sets</i>											
<i>171, 173 SERIES 690 Set w/ 3235</i>				x							
<i>"O" Gauge Wheels, no lights, Medium Green-rainbow window</i>											
<i>171-3, 173-3 691(-R) Set w/3235</i>				x							
<i>"O" gauge wheels, lights, Medium Green-rainbow window</i>											
<i>171, 173 691(-R) Set, Plated 3235 Medium Green-rainbow window, lighted cars</i>					x						

WHEN THINGS WERE MADE-THE IVES 184, 185, 186 PASSENGER CARS

IVES 170, 171, 172, 173 (14" CAR) CHARACTERISTICS	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928 Early	1928 Late	1929	1930
<i>Uncataloged Sets</i>											
<i>170, 172 691(-R) Set w/ 3235 Light Olive Green-tan window trim and shades</i>					x						
<i>170, 171, 172 692(-R) Set w/3236 Buff/Tan-red window trim, these cars also come with a matching 1132 Steam Engine (scarce)</i>					x						
<i>170, 171, 172 692(-R) Set w/3236 Light Olive Green-tan window trim and shades (rare)</i>						x					

SIMPLIFIED METHOD OF DATING YOUR 184 AND 170 SERIES SETS

DATE	DATING KEY	CHARACTERISTIC
1921	No Observation	Blackened Wheels - No Observation Car
1922	Observation	Baggage Handle - Observation Car
	Baggage	Round Rainbow Transoms
1923	Baggage	No Baggage Handle
		Round Rainbow Transoms - No lights
1924	Any Car	Flat Rainbow Transoms, No Brass Journals, Likely to Have Lights
1925	Any Car	Brass Journals
		Rubber Stamp Lettering
1926	Engine	Brass Plates on Cars, or Indents for Plates
	(3242), R	Cast Iron Frame
1927	Engine	Brass Plates on Cars
	(3242), R	Sheet Metal Frame with Solid Cast Pilots
	(3236), R	Sheet Metal Frame
	(3236), R	On Sheet Metal 3237 Frame, Solid Cast Pilots
1928 (Early)	(3236), R	4 Pane Brass Windows, 2 Headlights
	(3242), R	Sheet Metal Frame, Sheet Metal Spoked Pilots
1928	Engine	Snake Couplers on Cars
1929	(3242), R	Sheet Metal Frame, Spoked Cast Pilots
1930	(3242), R	Brass End Doors