

**WHEN THINGS WERE MADE ©**  
**IVES 17-INCH PASSENGER CARS**  
**SERIES 187, 188, 189 AND 180, 181, 182**

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**REVISION 7**

This article is a continuation of the “When Things Were Made” series and will focus on the long 17-inch passenger cars that were produced by IVES from 1921 until their takeover by Lionel and American Flyer in late 1928. The large 17-inch passenger cars started with catalog numbers 187(-1) Buffet, 188(-1) Parlor, and 189(-1) Observation. They were carryovers of the one gauge version introduced by IVES in 1912. The (-1) next to the number is used to designate the car’s illumination properties. This identifier is changed in 1923 to a (-3) and remains that way until 1925. The major differences between the one gauge and wide gauge versions is with truck design, window configuration, and body length, with the one gauge cars being two inches shorter. The stamped metal bodies for both gauges were similar.

From 1921 through 1924 these cars were cataloged as a high price, three car set, using either a 3242 or 3243 locomotive. The lower priced sets consisted of the smaller 14-inch 184, 185, and 186 passenger cars, using a 3241 or 3242 locomotive. As an exception, IVES for three years cataloged a 3242 set with only two 17-inch 187 series cars (#702). It was listed in the catalog and price sheets for the first two years, and actually shown in the catalog for its last year, 1923.

In 1924 the window configuration is revised and the transoms are changed

from round moon shape to flat top, see figure 1. In addition, IVES reconfigures the windows on the 187 Buffet to (4) large windows from (5) medium size; the 188 parlor car to (6) large windows from (7) medium size, and the 189 observation car to (6) large windows from (7) medium size, see figure 2. Logically less windows means less detail work and cheaper manufacturing costs.

Early IVES production (1921-1924) lacked the glitter of the later produced versions, which consisted of brass nameplates and journals boxes on elaborate trucks. Lionel was always a step ahead of them in the pizzazz department, and backward in the technical area as evidenced by their E unit design for locomotives; or the fact that IVES integrated car lighting two years sooner than Lionel. In 1923 Lionel already had in production brass trim cars and locomotives with double motors. The Lionel 402 locomotive was introduced to replace their plain trim, double motor model 42. IVES did not introduce brass nameplates on their locomotives until 1925. In 1924 Lionel already had journal boxes on their trucks, and it is not until 1925 that IVES follows and adds brass journal boxes to their passenger cars. Keeping with tradition of always being a step behind, IVES in 1926 upgrades their passenger cars to brass nameplates from rubber stampings, and they never seem to desire, or have the money to

invest, to produce a dual motor locomotive.

During these early years the colors of the 187 (figure 3) series are **dark green, yellowish orange, orange, white, red** and **Wanamaker maroon**. The earliest cars have blackened wheels and one-gauge couplers similar to the early 14-inch cars. The **Wanamaker maroon** (figure 4) cars are very rare. Next in order would be the **white cars** (figure 5) that make up the white IVES set, and lastly the yellowish orange cars are hard, but available. The dark green cars of 1921 with one-gauge couplers and octagon headlights soldered in the cars are very scarce, but no one is really aware of the lack of availability for these cars. The remaining colors are quite common.

We start getting into scarcer models as we progress into the 1926 plated era. Many collectors find the early production from 1921 through 1924 much more appealing for its realism, but for rarity, most collectors will find the later produced versions being the hardest to find.

In 1925 a new (6) wheel truck is introduced with elaborate brass journals and a decorative single brass spring over the center journal, see figure 6. The marketing numbers on the cars are changed to 180 Buffet, 181 Parlor, and 182 Observation to identify this fact. At the same time IVES replaces their plain (4) wheel truck with an elaborate (4) version for their 187, 188 and 189 cars, see figure 7. Both types of cars in addition to the new trucks have rubber stamped lettering, and the same basic trim. It will remain that way until 1926 when brass plates replace the rubber stampings. It is important to note that

during 1927 the (6) wheel truck on the 180, 181 and 182 cars is modified to a (4) wheel version. IVES removed the center set of wheels (figure 8), either as a cost cutting measure, or they liked the look of the (6) journal truck with only (4) wheels.

The fancy (4) wheel truck on the 187, 188 and 189 cars also went through changes but not until 1928, the last year of production. In this instance IVES introduces a new truck consisting of (6) smaller journal boxes, see figure 9. This truck can accommodate (3) axles and (6) wheels, but to remain consistent with previously manufactured 187, 188 and 189 cars they use only 2 axles and 4 wheels. IVES decided to market the (6) wheel cars with the larger 3243 locomotive and the (4) wheel cars with the 3242 locomotive.

The Lionel Corporation being IVES largest competitor realized the market for this type of pizzazz years earlier. They understood when you are selling a toy to children it is the parents who decide what esthetics are desirable and what is not. If I had to guess the purchasing decisions of a simple household in 1924/1925, I can see the father wanting the dual motors, and the wife wanting the brass plated cars. The child was just happy to have any train that ran around a track with a headlight on the engine. Most distribution of trains during these times was from small mom-and-pop operations that handled trains along with other non-related items. Many hardware stores, appliance stores, and general stores like 5 and 10's sold trains, mostly during the Christmas season. These sales accounted for an important

augmentation to their overall revenue during this short seasonal period. Because of the importance of this income, these little operations purchased trains for resale that had a proven sales record with a strong demand from their customer base. What was true of the small operation was also true in the world of the large department store. The conclusion is simple; one of the oldest toy and train manufacturers in the country was getting into trouble. Lionel and another competitor American Flyer were thriving, and IVES was floundering. We can conclude that IVES lack of speed to understand the market when producing a toy for children helped place them on their path to bankruptcy. This is not the only cause for their woes but it sure was a contributing factor. IVES on the technical level was superior in many ways, but when it came to selling a product, especially one to children, pizzazz always outsells substance.

It appears that slow sales produced cataloged sets that had short production runs. This created some very rare items for the present day collector. In 1926 IVES introduces the Transcontinental Limited set, consisting of a **dark olive** 3237 single motor engine and (3) matching **dark olive** 187, 188 and 189 plated passenger cars, see figure 10.

In 1924 IVES did not produce a cataloged two car 187/189 series set. In 1925 after a one-year hiatus, they introduced set number 706(R) that is essentially a "Bankers Special" with no set name attached to it. In 1926 they produce an official "Bankers Special" two-car set. It is comprised of

plated, orange 187 and 189 cars being pulled by a 3243 locomotive. This set is again manufactured in 1927 and in early 1928 the same two car set is manufactured in the rare **dark olive green** color. I will assume they had some leftover dark olive cars in 1927 and painted some 3243's to unload the remaining inventory. Even though it was cataloged for two years the plated orange 187, 189 cars, without windowpanes are scarce (figure 11). We have a documented, but not seen maroon 3243 with matching plated 180 cars. This is very rare, and possibly a unique set.

In 1927 the Transcontinental Limited came in both **cadet blue** (figure 12) and the same **dark olive green** from the previous year. The cadet blue cars are scarce and the dark olive cars, even though they were produced for almost three years, are rare. Also in 1927 IVES catalogs the 187, 188, 188, 189 (figure 13) cars as a four car set being pulled by the new green cast iron 1134 steam engine. It was called the "Capitol City Special", set # 707. It is a unique color green made essentially for this set. We have seen only one specimen of the Capitol City Special. One can assume IVES did not have the money to produce the set without a sufficient number of advance orders as evidenced by the lack of collector product today.

The set with 17 inch cars that did sell well during this 1926 and 1927 period was called "The Deluxe Special" It consisted of the **light apple green** 180, 181, 182 cars (figure 14) with a light apple green 3243 locomotive. This high end set comes up for sale most often today. We do have a report

of the sighting of two sets of grey, 1928 187,188,189 cars. Two grey engines are reported to have been made during this era; one was a short cab 3245 Olympian, and the second was a 3237 Transcontinental locomotive. Hal Ashley reported on the Grey Olympian in a TCA article (Vol. 11, #3 - July 1965). It is possible, but no one has any verifiable knowledge that either engine was used with these grey cars. We would like additional information on the use of these two engines. Also in 1928, as shown in the price lists archived from Lou Hertz's estate, and not shown in the catalog, is a 3237, with 187, 188, 189 cars. It comes in a different green than the 1926/27 versions. It is the same color as the green used (figure 15) in the Interstate Limited set, and the 197 lumber cars.

The following paragraph is from Dave McEntarfar on his recollection of the reasoning for the production of Southern Pacific cars: "In 1927 there were some corporate changes at Ives. Harry Ives was kicked upstairs and became the chairman of the board and, Charles R Johnson became President of the company. 1927 was also the first year that IVES listed a "Permanent Showroom" in San Francisco California. As the story goes, the Southern Pacific Trains were displayed and sold in the San Francisco showroom, located at 165 Jessie Street. The Southern Pacific Railroad had offices in San Francisco at the intersection of Palm and Filmore Streets. There's also the Hale Brothers Department Store theory (which may have been the major retail outlet for the West Coast Showroom) - Hale Brothers was the largest Department store in San

Francisco in 1927, maybe the West Coast. When Lionel took over IVES they made several specials just for Hale Brothers (HB Special No. 2). It appears the San Francisco showroom was closed after the takeover since the 1928 catalog depicts only a single showroom in York City. My best guess is that the Southern Pacific Trains were sold on the West Coast and displayed at the San Francisco Showroom, which as far as I can tell only existed in 1927".

When you determine rarity of these cars it is simple to state that all 187, 188 and 189 cars made in 1928 with snake track pull couplers and windowpanes are rare. The early 1928 cars (figure 16) with IVES steps, scalloped observation awnings and a pure IVES observation railing are very rare, as compared to an IVES observation with a Lionel railing, see figure 17. All 187 Series cars in **grey**, **lumber car green**, **Capitol City green**, **Wanamaker maroon** and any color car with a **Southern Pacific logo** are very rare. In rank order, the 1928 **orange**, the 1928 **cadet blue** cars with windowpanes, the plated **dark olive cars** from 1926-1928 and the **White IVES set** cars are rare. The **cadet blue** cars from 1927 and the 1926/27 plated orange cars are scarce. The **light apple green** cars from 1926/27 are common.

As with the past articles we have included a "detailed dating table" to help you determine when one of these cars were made by looking at all of its characteristics. I have also included a "simplified table" that allows you to quickly determine the date of manufacture by looking at the some unique characteristics for that year.



<b>IVES 187, 188, 189(-1)(-3) 17" CARS IVES 180, 181, 182 17" CARS DATING CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1922</b>	<b>1923</b>	<b>1924</b>	<b>1925</b>	<b>1926</b>	<b>1927</b>	<b>1928 Early</b>	<b>1928 Late</b>
<b><i>OBSERVATION PLATFORMS</i></b>									
Railing Painted Black	x	x	x	x	x				
Railing Painted to Match Car Body					x	x	x		
Railing Painted Gold							x		
IVES Brass Railing w/Drumhead								x	
Lionel Brass Railing									x
<b><i>CENTER CONSTRUCTION</i></b>									
Black Truss Rods	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Flyer Brass Air Tanks								x	x
<b><i>COLORS</i></b>									
Red - Rubberstamped Lettering	x	x	x	x					
Red - Rubberstamp, B.J., 187 series					x				
Orange - Rubberstamped 187 series		x	x	x					
Orange-R.S, Brass Journals, 180 series					x				
Orange - Brass Nameplates 187 series						x	x	x	x
Dark Green - no (-1)		x	x						
Dark Green -with (-1)	x								
Yellowish Orange		x	x						
White		x	x	x					
Wanamaker Maroon (Wine)				x					
Maroon (1926 documented not seen)					x	x			
Dark Olive Green - 187 series						x	x	x	
Transcontinental Dark Olive Green									
Lumber Car Green								x	x
Capitol City Green							x		
Light Apple Green - 180 series						x	x		
Cadet Blue							x		
Cadet Blue - Brass Windows Inserts, Snake Pull Couplers								x	x
Grey								x	x
<b><i>WHEELS</i></b>									
Non-Blackened Wide Gauge Truck		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Black Painted Wide Gauge Truck	x	x							

***SIMPLIFIED METHOD OF DATING YOUR 180,181,182 AND 187,188,189 CARS***

<b><i>DATE</i></b>	<b><i>CARS</i></b>	<b><i>DATING CHARACTERISTICS</i></b>
<b>1921-22</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 (-1)</i></b>	<b><i>Round Transoms, Blackened Wheels</i></b>
<b>1922</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 (-1)</i></b>	<b><i>Round Transoms, Non-Blackened Wheels</i></b>
<b>1923</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 (-3)</i></b>	<b><i>Round Transoms, Non-Blackened Wheels</i></b> <b><i>3242 - No Paint on Steps,</i></b> <b><i>Wide Nickel Pickup</i></b> <b><i>3243 - Type 2 Motor</i></b> <b><i>(Tubular Bushes Secured by Wire)</i></b>
<b>1924</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 (-3)</i></b>	<b><i>Flat Rainbow Transoms, Plain Trucks</i></b>
<b>1925</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 or</i></b> <b><i>180, 181, 182</i></b>	<b><i>Brass Journal Trucks ,</i></b> <b><i>Rubber Stamped Lettering</i></b>
<b>1926</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 or</i></b> <b><i>180, 181, 182</i></b>	<b><i>All Cars Have Brass Nameplates,</i></b> <b><i>Same Color Observation Railings</i></b>
<b>1927</b>	<b><i>187,188,189 or</i></b> <b><i>180, 181, 182</i></b>	<b><i>All Cars Have Brass Nameplates,</i></b> <b><i>Observation Railings <u>painted gold</u></i></b> <b><i>Exception: Capitol City Observation</i></b>
<b>1928 Early</b> <b><i>Figure 16</i></b>	<b><i>187,188,189</i></b>	<b><i>Use 189 Observation Car</i></b> <b><i>2 Pane Brass Windows, snake track pulls</i></b> <b><i>and IVES observation railing, AF air tanks</i></b>
<b>1928 Late</b> <b><i>Figure 17</i></b>	<b><i>187,188,189</i></b>	<b><i>Use 189 Observation Car</i></b> <b><i>2 Pane Brass Windows, snake track pulls</i></b> <b><i>and Lionel observation railing, AF air tanks</i></b>

***The McEntarfer Chart of 180/187 Series Sets:***

<b>Catalog Number</b>	<b>Catalog Name</b>	<b>Years Cataloged</b>	<b>Locomotive</b>	<b>Cars</b>
702		1921-1923	3242	187,189 red, dark green (1922-23)
704		1921-1924	3243	187,188,189
703		1921-1925	3242	187,188,189
703R		1924-1925	3242R	187,188,189
706		1925	3243	180,182
706R		1925	3243R	180,182
704	DELUXE SPECIAL	1925-1927	3243	180,181,182
706	BANKERS SPECIAL	1926-1927	3243	187,189
703R	TRANSCONTINENTAL LIMITED	1926-1927	3237R	187,188,189
706R	BANKERS SPECIAL	1926-1927	3243R	187,189
703	TRANSCONTINENTAL LIMITED	1926-1927	3237	187,188,189
707	CAPITOL CITY SPECIAL	1927	1134	187188,188,189
707R	CAPITOL CITY SPECIAL	1927	1134R	187,188,188,189
1036R	TRANSCONTINENTAL LIMITED	1928	3237R	187,188,189 (green, blue, orange)
1040	(Black 3237?)	1928	3237	187,188,189 (orange/black loco)
1040R	(Black 3237R?)	1928	3237R	187,188,189 (orange/black loco)
1044	DELUXE SPECIAL	1928	3243	180,181,182 (orange/black loco)
1044R	DELUXE SPECIAL	1928	3243R	180,181,182 (orange/black loco)
1046	DELUXE SPECIAL	1928	3243	187,188,189 (cadet blue)
1036	TRANSCONTINENTAL LIMITED	1928	3237	187,188,189 (green, blue, orange)
1046	DELUXE SPECIAL	1928	3243R	180,181,182 (orange/black loco)