

A PUBLICATION OF THE IVES TRAIN SOCIETY

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IVES TRACKS

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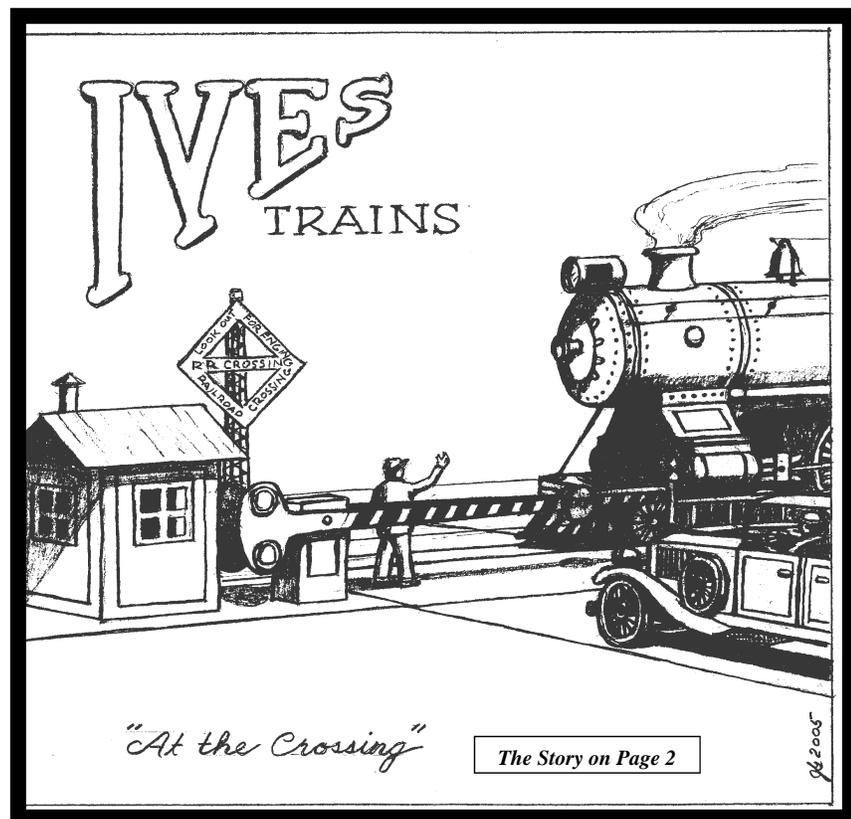
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Special Analysis of FIXEN Trains - Story starts on page 3



AT THE CROSSING (See front cover illustration)
By John Gray I-6662

The subject and history of railroad crossing gates is an interesting facet of American railroads. I am presenting the subject, accompanied by a brief cover story incorporating some of IVES' contribution in this area. Because the history of the nation's railroads and the IVES Company are interwoven in the past, I have attempted to combine briefly, some elements of railroad history and IVES to augment interest in the IVES Company and its products.

Starting in the mid 1800s, public safety became an increasing concern for the American railroads. Part of this concern involved public roads where they intersected established railroad tracks, and as passing trains became more frequent, vehicular traffic and pedestrians were exposed to ever higher risks at these crossing points.

Solving this problem involved establishing a system of crossing gates, warning signs and signals where necessary, especially at busier public crossings.

These gates could be raised or lowered whenever a train approached; the earlier gates were mechanical and had to be hand cranked up and down by a crossing attendant. A small shanty or shack was usually located nearby to shelter the attendant during cold or inclement weather. A series of weights were mounted on one end of the gate to counter-balance the other end that was raised or lowered, making it easier for the attendant to crank the handle.

Later technological developments allowed sensing devices to be installed along railroad tracks that would signal the gates to raise or lower automatically, thus eliminating the need for gate attendants.

The cover illustration "At the Crossing" depicts an early railroad crossing that includes a gate attendant and shanty. The Lionel-Ives No. 334(c) crossing gate shown, while electrically operated or "automatic", is more representative of the earlier prototype that required an attendant and shanty. The Ives crossing sign also warns against the fast approaching IVES No. 40 steam locomotive

from 1914, while the driver in the early touring sedan patiently waits for the train to pass.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN – Don Lewis

Dear Fellow Society Member:

Except for John Gray's article, we have devoted this entire issue of TRACKS to a small non-descript company name Fixen. The company is definitely IVES related as their motor cars and trailers were made from IVES passenger cars. As you will see this expose was the result of one email sent to me by my friend Chuck Yanna in Colorado.

I know as you're reading this issue you will have mixed emotions about the time of year that it is. You will have realized that the summer has passed but on the other hand the time left to the October York is now shorter. Remember what I said in the last issue, we measure our time from York to York. Isn't it great?

Our annual publication TIES will contain a very lengthy interview with Ed Prendeville of Train Collectors warehouse. Wonderful interview as conducted by our own Paul Stimmler.

The October meeting will maintain the same show and tell format. We hear nothing but positive comments about our meeting so we are going to just continue along this path. As we well know, IVES provides plenty of material for show and tell.

The Board of Directors has authorized a maximum donation of \$600 by The IVES Train Society to the TCA to cover the costs of the LED lighting for the IVES display at the museum. We saw the donation as our way to support the mission of the TCA Museum.

I look forward to seeing you at the October York meet. As always, we will meet at 12 PM in meeting rooms A & B in the Orange Hall.

Collecting IVES trains is fun.
Don

Editor's Note: This is a story of an obscure company from the late 20's and early 30's that took IVES Standard Gauge car bodies and roofs, welded them together, then added a modified Lionel "O" gauge motor, and produced a product that was on the order of a subway car which it called "FIXEN". These FIXEN trains ran on Standard Gauge track. What started out as a simple email has grown to an interesting article about the FIXEN product, and because the IVES TRAIN SOCIETY is a learning organization, I found it fitting to be included in our publication.

This story starts out with an email from Don Lewis. Don writes: My friend in Colorado obtained these three FIXEN units recently. He traded a red IVES 3241 set, in the box, and an IVES New Yorker set for them. The FIXEN unit numbers are #30, #34 and #41. The colors appear different than those on the IVES CD.

*(SEE IVES CD PHOTO FRONT PAGE)
BELOW COLORADO (3) CAR SET*



FIXEN #41 #34 #30

John DeSantis, in a separate email ads to the dialogue. John writes: The three FIXEN units in Colorado are more-than-a-little odd in several significant ways. I have two FIXEN two-car sets, which are identical in every way except their serial numbers. They are motor unit #33 and #35, as hammerer-stamped into the thin wood cover that surrounds the reversing switch on the underside of each motor unit. By coincidence, these numbers place them right in the middle of the #30, #34 and #41 numbers quoted in Colorado. My two un-powered trailer cars do not bear serial numbers. I have examined one or two other sets, and I think that these are a normal for FIXEN production. I found several differences between my sets and the three car set from Colorado. To my knowledge, FIXEN sold two car sets – a power unit with trailer. Power units were numbered, trailers were not (at least I can't find any on mine). Colorado has one power unit and two trailers. The Colorado power car is missing its reversing switch and the wooden enclosure that surrounds it in the center of the car's belly. The two holes that mount the switch

and the two holes that mount the wooden enclosure are both present, but empty. In addition, it is missing the wooden cover where the serial number would be embossed. All of which raises the question: where are numbers 30, 34, and 41 on these cars? (SEE BELOW & PAGE 7)



COLORADO FIXEN #41 POWER UNIT SHOWING THE LOCATION OF ITS HANDSTAMPED SERIAL NUMBERS



Only the power car should be numbered, and it doesn't have the wood piece on which the number would appear. The two Colorado trailers correctly do not have the wooden cover, or the holes to mount such a cover, or any apparent numbers from the photos. The Colorado cars appear to have repainted sides and roofs, although the colors are a very good match to the original. The undersides are original paint, with original yellow rubber stamped FIXEN info and correct rotary switches for the interior lighting.



**COLORADO CAR BOTTOMS – OFFSET MOTOR
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.....**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The word FIXEN about ¾ of an inch tall should be yellow rubber stamped in the center of each car side, below the windows.



FROM IVES CD SHOWING FIXEN STAMPING

All the window frames (including those in the doors) should be painted yellow, as should the headlight hoods and marker-light rims set into the roofs. All doors should be outlined in black, black transoms on all windows, and black painted vestibules.

(VIEW IVES CD FIXEN PHOTO - FRONT PAGE)

While it's possible that these cars' sides and roofs were painted and then never detailed at time of manufacture, it's highly unlikely given the production proximity of my detailed #33 and #35 to these not-detailed #30, #34, and #41. The correct original rubberstamping on the undersides of these cars is the same yellow paint that would have been on the car sides – a process likely done in one operation. The motor in the Colorado power car has axle extensions to one side of the frame (offset); mine both have the frame centered with extensions on either side. As a result, the Colorado motor is off-center in its opening – likely requiring a modified mounting within the truck and up inside the car. Colorado has no center rail pick-ups on the underside of the motor; mine have two pickups as a normal O-gauge motor frame would.



FROM IVES CD SHOWING FIXEN OFFSET MOTOR

My motors have a black fiberboard insulating panel from pickup to pickup which separates the motor from the metal strap (painted black) that spans the truck frame. Colorado has no insulating panel and an unpainted metal strap. Might the Colorado motor be a later replacement effort using an O-gauge motor to which someone added axle extensions? And what about the center rail pickups for the motor? Venturing a guess, maybe FIXEN has some left over pieces that someone picked up along the line, and turned into this set. These units aren't rare, but are certainly scarce – finding a second trailer car should be a needle in the haystack. The paint on the bottoms of all three cars looks unquestionably original. The serial numbers on all three cars are also interesting.

Dave McEntarfer, in a separate email ads to the dialogue. Dave writes: According to Lou Hertz (Collecting Model Trains, page 41) "Each body has a number in the metal at the corner of one of the top cross-braces, and the same number was rubber-stamped inside the roof after painting. Motor units also carry the serial number embossed in a special wooden underbelly shield that surrounds the reverse switch".

(SEE PAGE 7 FIGURES 3 – 8)

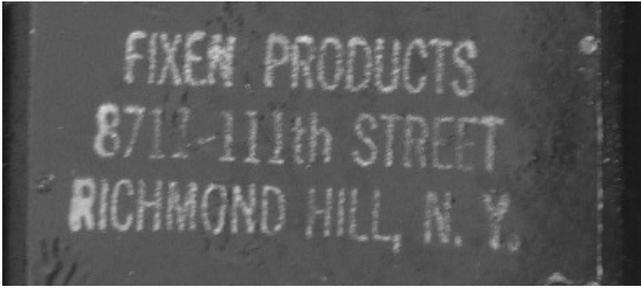
Also according to Lou they only made 50 cars or 25 sets, although it wouldn't be the first time that Lou had been wrong about numbers. I swear I've seen over a dozen of these cars over the years. Didn't the trailer have an observation deck? The cars I saw not only had FIXEN in big yellow letters on the side, they had a lot of black detail (window shades, doors and vestibules) One of the cars I have a picture of has just a primer coat on the bottom. The other has one like John's and the Colorado cars. The motor from the IVES CD (as pictured at left) is also offset but different, although it doesn't have a pickup either.

Lynn Smith, in a separate email asks a question. Lynn writes: Did any one have an answer as to who Mr. Fixen was or what else FIXEN manufactured?

Dave McEntarfer, in a separate email responds. Dave writes: I don't think anyone has an answer to that question. I tried to figure it out myself a

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

couple years back. According to the 1920 Census records there were only 8 people in the US named FIXEN and they all lived in Oklahoma.



FIXEN INFO ON CAR BOTTOMS

I did a business search on the address, 8711, 111th Street, Richmond Hill, NY and found a business listed at that address called "Lewis of Woodhaven". It was a family owned Department Store that had been in business for 70+ years before it closed in 2004. That would almost place it around the time the FIXEN cars were made. My guess has always been they bought old IVES parts, post 1930, after Lionel moved the factory, but that's just a guess. The store "Lewis of Woodhaven" had two locations and I could never find out if this was the original location or not. The address is really in what most New Yorkers call Queens these days and would have been about a 30 minute drive from Lou Hertz's house and about an hour drive to the IVES factory. The last of the "Lewis of Woodhaven" family is an architectural historian named Barry Lewis (maybe Don's related); I emailed him but got no reply.

John DeSantis, in a separate email continues the dialogue. John writes: I've never heard of the observation body on a FIXEN - would love to see one. As for other FIXEN products, Randy Berger should weigh in with his sighting of a cast FIXEN item at Hershey many moons ago. Several years back at York, Rich DeDufour had a box of two-rail Standard Gauge track with aluminum rail and wooden ties. These were the same rail used in two-rail "General Trains" track, sold to hobbyists as unassembled stock in the mid '30's by Western Coil & Electric. There was enough sectional track to form an oval, and all of it had an attached outside powered third rail off to the side and about half an inch above the railhead. The track has every appearance of being manufactured rather than homemade. In

the box was a matching assembled turnout switch and one extra cast aluminum turnout frame that bore the name "FIXEN" boldly embossed on the underside of its casting. It was only after I got the box home that I realized that the box itself is faintly rubberstamped in black ink with the same FIXEN name and address that appears on the underside of the FIXEN - using the same rubber stamp! It's of plain brown cardboard, about 12 x 24 x 15 inches tall and I believe is the setbox for a pair of FIXEN units and their track (and maybe a transformer). It's only as I'm writing this that a light bulb just went on: Is it possible that the two FIXEN power units with the "off-center" motors and no center rail pickups have an outside third rail pickup on the side of their frames?!!! If so, what I have is an oval of their track, along with one-and-a-half switches. Maybe FIXEN made two versions - my two power cars are of the powered center rail type, and the one in Colorado and the one in on the IVES CD are for an outside third rail. Can we get close-ups of the sideframes on the Colorado powered unit, looking for a side-mounted pickup shoe? As for the survivability, I agree with Dave's observation, but, we have no reason to doubt Louie's figures - all eight of the units being discussed bear serial numbers that are consistent with his statement. When you factor in the "cottage industry" nature of the FIXEN operation, the somewhat frail and awkward looking spliced-together car bodies and roofs, and that the pieces have never really been on the radar for collectors... it's a wonder that we've seen more than one or two sets. Were it not for those two paragraphs by Hertz, we would all likely view these as homemade aberrations instead of production by the tiniest of all prewar Standard Gauge manufacturers.

Dave McEntarfer, in a separate email adds to the dialogue. Dave Writes: attached is a picture a trail car with an observation deck. I examined these cars and they looked 100% original.

(SEE PAGE 7 FIGURES 1 & 2)

The two paragraph mention in Collecting Model Trains is the only reference I know of for these trains. There are no articles, I don't know what else FIXEN Products ever made, when they were in business or who was Mr. FIXEN. It would appear we know of about 12 train cars.

-5- CONTINUED ON PAGE 6.....

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Randy Berger responds in a separate email to continue the dialogue. Randy writes: As an answer to John's question about what other items FIXEN might have produced, I saw a FIXEN cast trolley at a train meet. Memory says the roof was cast separate and had a headlight streamlined into the body on one end. The trolley body and roof seemed to be cast aluminum. There were no trucks on this body. Bear in mind this was in an Eastern Division meet held in the Hershey Community Center, so it was over forty years ago. My memory going back that far (or further) is rather good. Things I did five minutes ago or yesterday may not be recalled with as much clarity. I also think I may have that trolley on an 8mm movie that I took back then.

John DeSantis, in a separate email continues the dialogue. John writes about some additional FIXEN characteristics from the two sets he owns. I was only able to remove the roof on one of my trailer cars. The other trailer and both power units have roofs that are not going to budge. Unlike IVES cars which have two metal roof tabs along only one side of the roof, FIXEN roofs have four metal tabs, 2 each side down, into four corresponding slots in the top edge of the car body wall. *SEE PAGE 7 Figure 7*

As a result, it's not quite so simple to pop open one side of the roof and hinge it upwards. The system obviously worked: on 3 of my 4 pieces the roof is so solidly locked they might as well be soldered shut. The trailer car that accompanies the #33 power unit has a number 5 rubber-stamped (same yellow as used on the car exterior detailing) on the metal truss that spans the top center of the car body walls. The same number 5 is rubberstamped on the inside of the roof. There is no embossed number anywhere on the interior. Dave's photo (*SEE PAGE 7 Figure 9*) shows a hand lettered "13" that appears to overlap an embossed "13" on the interior shoulder of the car body. After Dave's email about the trailer car numbering, I was expecting the serial numbers of power units and trailers to match - as they do on the 2, 3 and 4 unit "General Trains" aluminum standard gauge streamliners from 1934. Obviously they don't - which is perhaps an indicator that Hertz's "25 sets, 50 units" may be

accurate—with #41 being the highest number among the pieces we're considering. So yet more questions arise: unit #5 interior serial number is rubberstamped, yet unit #13 is hand lettered and embossed. I would expect the "less formal" procedure of hand lettering to be on comparatively earlier production rather than later. The underside of unit #13 (*SEE PAGE 7 FIGURE 9*) is painted in the same silver "primer" as the interior of the roofs and the top interior surface of the open car bodies, rather than the body color that appears on all of the other cars discussed. Again, unit #13 has a "less formal" aspect than the earlier production, such as the # 5 unit in my collection.. The power car and two trailers in Colorado are numbered 30, 34, and 41 - apparently indicating that the numbers were not assigned in series to one type of car or the other. We know that 13, 33, 35 are power units, as is one of the three numbers in Colorado. Number 5 is a trailer as are two of the Colorado pieces. The "off-center" motor without center rail pickups in #13 (*SEE PAGE 7 FIGURE 9*) seems to match the power unit in Colorado. Other power units (33 and 35) are centered with pickups. Again - no discernable pattern of production shifting from "less formal" to "more formal". Of course much of this assumes that the numbers were used in some chronological order that matches when the unit was completed.

Editor's note: *A little clarification on the #41 motor car from Colorado. When the set was purchased it contained a Marx motor. The new owner replaced it with a correct Lionel "O" gauge motor, and modified it for standard gauge use. No side pickup was present when purchased.*

I did not consider writing about FIXEN when this issue was conceived, but in reviewing the amount of knowledge presented in these emails I felt compelled to take advantage of the interest shown about the subject. If others in the IVES Train Society have additional information about FIXEN, especially if you are the owner of that elusive trolley that Randy Berger wrote about, please email me at fasttrack@erols.com,

Or call me at 516-627-8804..... Marty Fasack

BRING YOUR FIXEN PIECES TO YORK

John DeSantis will be bringing for Show-&-Tell his two sets, the box, and the track/switches. We invite you to bring anything that you might have, ESPECIALLY any Fixen paper-ads, folders, instructions, pictures, etc.

RARE FIXEN OBSERVATION CAR FROM THE IVES CD - POSSIBLY MADE FOR 3 CAR SETS
Figure 1 & 2
FROM THE IVES CD #13 MOTOR CAR
Figure 13



Fig. 1

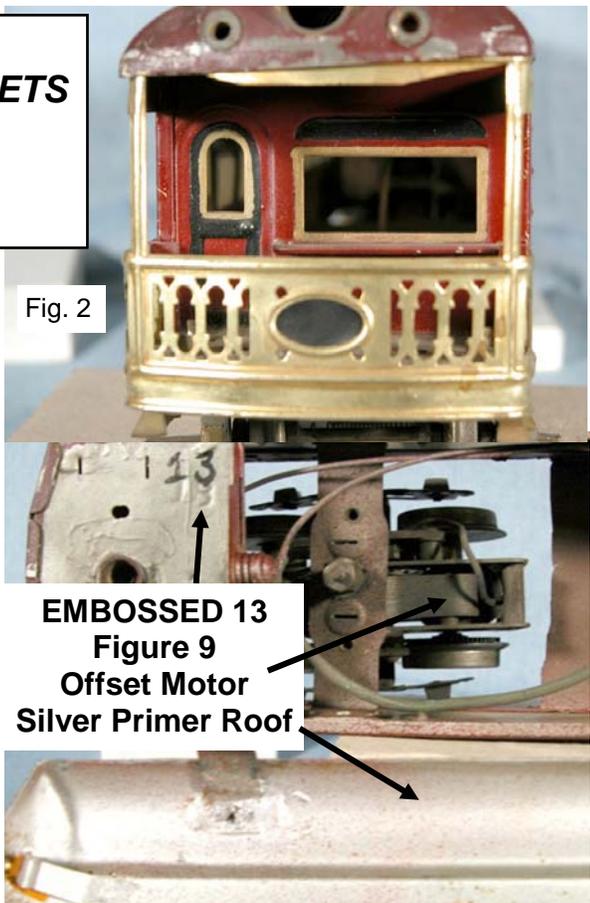


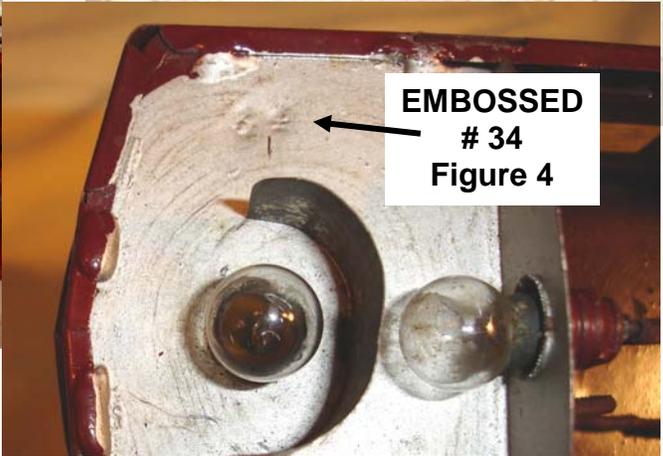
Fig. 2

EMBOSSSED 13
Figure 9
Offset Motor
Silver Primer Roof

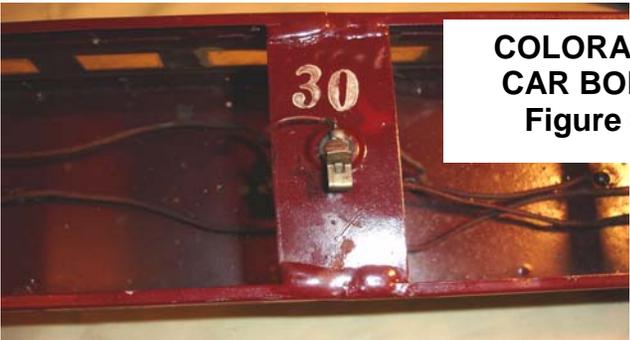
COLORADO TRAILERS #30 and #34 CAR WITH NUMBERING AS DESCRIBED BY LOU HERTZ IN HIS BOOK CMT Figures 3 — 8



COLORADO CAR BODY
Figure 3



EMBOSSSED # 34
Figure 4



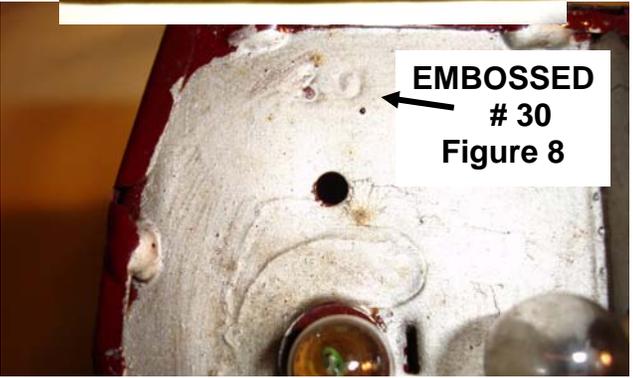
COLORADO CAR BODY
Figure 6



ROOF
Figure 5



ROOF figure 7
NOTE: 2 OF 4 TABS



EMBOSSSED # 30
Figure 8

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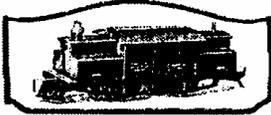
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