



This undated photo of the 593, taken sometime in the mid-to-late 1960s, shows that the DSS&A logo was painted out and Soo Line logo added. At one time, these cabooses had a third window located approximately where the Soo Line logo is—*SLHTS Archives collection*.

provided \$50,077 in a one-year period, and we felt we could count on most of them again. Fortunately, we were right.

To begin, we created a “Caboose Benefactor’s Fund.” All folks donating \$100 or more would become “Linemen” and be honored on a plaque in the caboos. Several other categories were created and a special mailing was done to all previous donors. Donations began to come in, and within six weeks, we had raised \$15,600! Now we knew we needed to be sure we had really secured a caboos for purchase, as we had our down payment in hand.

Before we committed to either of the two cabooses we had located, we decided to go on the Wisconsin Historical Society web site and ask one question: Does any museum out there have a wooden railroad caboos they may be planning to de-accession soon? Within one day, we received this reply from a museum that had read our question: “We don’t have a wooden caboos, but we believe the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay has one they plan to de-accession.”

This was exactly the reply we had hoped for, so we contacted the Green Bay museum and were told yes, they had one, a Pittsburgh, Shawmut and Northern Railway caboos, not strictly a Soo Line caboos, *but* it had ended its career as a Soo Line caboos, and they would send us photos of it. This caboos had been reduced recently from \$20,000 to \$15,000, so we now had three fine candidates.

It was now March 2009, and we knew that we had to have our caboos in

Stone Lake by early June or we would lose the craftsmen to restore it, as they were only available from June to September. We had optimistically planned a Grand Opening for October 3rd, during our Cranberry Festival, which brings over 30,000 people to our small community for one weekend. So, how do we begin negotiations on buying a caboos?

Fortunately, other Stone Lake Area Historical Society members had now visited all of these cabooses, and all were in agreement that any of the three would be suitable. So, price then became the key issue.

We called the owner of the caboos on the western side of the state and were told that the price had to remain firm. Before we had time to call the second, located in the center of the state, the Green Bay museum contacted us. They were having a board meeting the following week, and wondered if we would like to make an offer on their caboos.

Since there was no way we could call a meeting with our board, many of them now gone for the winter months, we simply said “we only have the authority to offer \$5,000, but we will submit that as an offer.” They thanked us, and said they would take that to their board.

The following week we were notified that our offer had been accepted and that their board of directors felt the caboos would have a good home in our Stone Lake museum. How exciting! Now the fund-raising must begin in earnest!

Raffle tickets were ordered, with cash prizes totaling \$2,000. Tickets were \$25 each, and only 400 would be offered. A Spaghetti Dinner was planned for late April, where ticket sales would begin, our Caboos Benefactor’s Fund would be offered to everyone attending, and a model of our depot/museum with the caboos on a section of track in front would be displayed. This event happened as scheduled, creating excitement in our community and the funds continued to roll in.

In the meantime, a local man who had worked for the railroad for many years began working on a 60-foot section of track in front of our depot/museum. We had already secured 40 hand-hewn railroad ties, which were sitting there, but we had no idea how they would be made into a section of track. It is impossible to describe how we felt in mid-May when we first saw the perfect section of track sitting exactly where we had planned, ready to accept our new caboos. Every bit of his time was donated, as his gift to the project.

After talking with many trucking and crane companies, we contracted with Brian Huiting of AZCO Crane of West Bend, and Brian made arrangements with everyone on our behalf—the State of Wisconsin for the permits, the trucking company and the cranes that would be needed on each end.

We decided on June 2nd as the date for the move, and went to Green Bay ourselves the day before. The morning of the move was a perfect sunny day, and the trucks and crane were all in