

Preservation and Donations Helium Car

Helium Transport Car MHAX 1242

The first rolling stock donated to the ARM was helium transport car MHAX 1242 from the U.S. Bureau of Mines when they closed operations in the 1990s. The car was donated in 2001, and after a



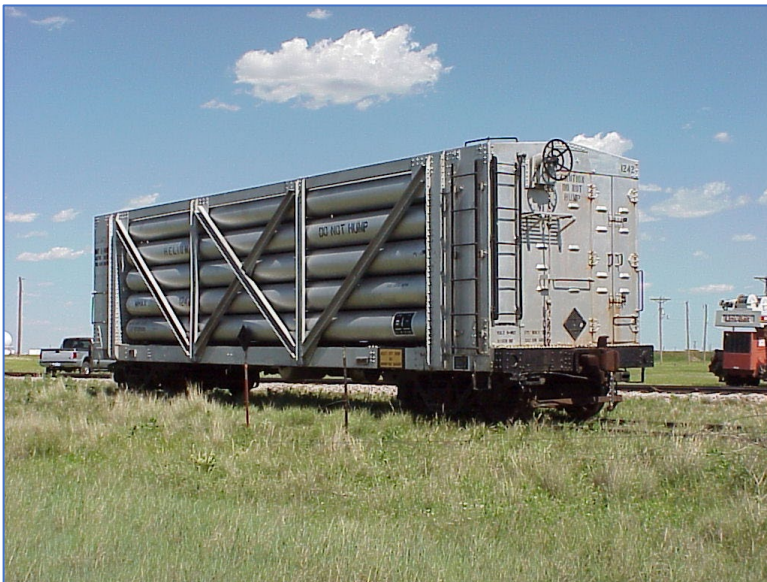
frantic effort to coordinate the donation with the ARM, BNSF, and a local pallet company neighbor, 48forty Solutions, the car was delivered by a BNSF local to the spur track of the pallet company. The lack of a turnout to our tracks was the reason the car remained on the pallet company spur for a few years. By a stroke of good fortune, we were able to work with Messer Construction of Hereford, TX, to have the car moved by their cranes to our property.

According to Jay Miller, the car is a 4.5 generation 30-tube car built by Darby Corporation in September 1958. All cars in the group were originally lettered ATMX and numbered 1020-1025. Our car is ex-ATMX 1021. At some time in the past, the car was re-lettered MHAX and the number, 1242, was tacked on to the end of the number series of the eighth (and last)- generation 30-tube cars built by the Magor Car Corporation in May 1962. These cars were numbered 1197-1221 and painted in aluminum. Visit our website to see Jay Miller's thorough article on the history of the entire fleet of helium transport cars.





Once the car's brake rigging was detached from the trucks, a yellow Pettibone and two white and red Link-Belt cranes were used to pick the car up off the trucks. The trucks were lifted off the pallet company spur and placed on one of our tracks. Finally, the car body was slowly and carefully moved over the trucks and lowered into place. Considering that the car weighs 100 tons, the was not an easy task!



Out of the weeds, and in place on our property, the car looks great.



Their job complete, the Messer Corporation Link-Belt cranes are ready to hear home. The Messer Corporation was working on a job at Progress Rail Services, a few miles south of our museum, and graciously donated their time and equipment for the move.



Preservation wasn't to be the fate of most helium transport cars. At the siding of the retired Amarillo U.S. Bureau of Mines plant three helium cars are in various stages of scrapping.



Cutting torch in hand, a worker goes to work on MHAX 1162.