

**COLE BROS. CIRCUS
SEAT DEPT. CHAIR WAGON NO. 98
CIRCA 1936-7**

There was a time in America, when children of all ages, stood in profound awe of illustrious art works proclaiming the arrival in their town soon of COLE BROS. "AMERICA'S FAVORITE CIRCUS"! Indeed, if you were lucky enough to be around at the time and make it down to the switching yards to see the show arrive in town, you would have seen at one point in time, that very same title boldly painted on every rail car as it rumbled past you! Over the years there were other titles such as, COLE BROS. WORLD TOURED CIRCUS or COLE BROS. world toured CIRCUS with CLYDE BEATTY and at other times just plain COLE BROS. CIRCUS. However described in the advertising or the show art used on the equipment, one fact still remains true to this day, for a time, in the minds of many an American family, Cole Bros. was one of America's favorite Circus's! The Cole Circus title was one of the few rail show titles to remain independent for most of its years on the road. During the late 1920's and then the 1930's the Ringlings and the American Circus Corporation, with ownership of such great titles as JOHN ROBINSON, AL. G. BARNES, SELLS FLOTO and HAGENBECK WALLACE seemed to reign supreme! Yet during that time, under the stewardship of Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell COLE BROS. CIRCUS presenting a crisp, well executed Circus in all its details, carved its own unique niche in North American Circus history!

Then it seems only natural that chair wagon 98, should also be of a clean, crisp design, well executed in all its details and fully representative of the robust business philosophy of its owners! Let's have a closer look at No. 98 and its construction details and later some additional information on the entire seating dept. of the Cole Circus! This wagon's dimensions were, length 16'-0", width 7'-10" and height at 6'-7". Wagon No. 98 had a solid roof which was confirmed for me by a list of wagon details made by C.H. Elwell and Bob Danner in 1938! This list was supplied to me by Roger Bernier. Cole Bros. had purchased the Robbins Circus and many of the wagons of the defunct Christy Bros. Circus along with various properties of other shows over the years, however they also built many of their own wagons. The Billboard Magazine of January 8, 1938, stated clearly that Charlie Luckey, master mechanic, intended to build 14 new wagons for the Cole and newly formed Robbins Bros. Circus. When I compare the construction details of No. 98 to the many other Cole wagons in use at the time, my feeling is that it was originally built at the Cole winter quarters! No. 98 was built in the carnival style, big and boxy with small wheels, a heavy, large capacity wagon that was otherwise built with a finesse and attention to detail common to the needs of the Circus! The undergear and brakes were of a strong design common to Cole wagons, the floor frame was made of channel iron and so was the top frame member running the length of the wagon under the roof, otherwise, except for the normal iron reinforcements found on all wagons of the day the balance of No. 98 was made of wood. In 1938 No. 98 was painted red with wheels and undergear white with red and blue striping. Titling and numbering was in silver. Incidentally the Cole train for that year was painted, flats silver with lettering in red and green shade, stocks silver with gold letters on red letter boards and the coaches were red with the lettering in gold. It must have been a pretty sight in the cool morning mists on Circus day!

In 1936 the seating dept. of Cole Bros. Circus contained the following wagons: No. 103 planks and bible backs, No. 96 chairs, No. 98 chairs, No. 101 planks and bible backs, No. 93 jacks, No. 97 chairs, No. 106 stringers, No. 102 blue planks and No. 104 blue planks. The 1937 wagon list shows the following wagons used for that year: No. 93 jacks, No. 96 chairs, No. 97 chairs, No. 98 chairs, No's 101 through 105 planks, No. 107 stringers and No. 109 stringers. Note the addition of No. 105 plank wagon and No. 109 stringer wagon for the 1937 season! Joseph T. Bradbury lists the seat dept. of the Cole Bros. Circus for 1938 to be as follows: No. 96 chair wagon, No. 98 chair wagon, No. 97 chair wagon, No. 102 seat plank wagon, No. 101 seat plank wagon, No. 103

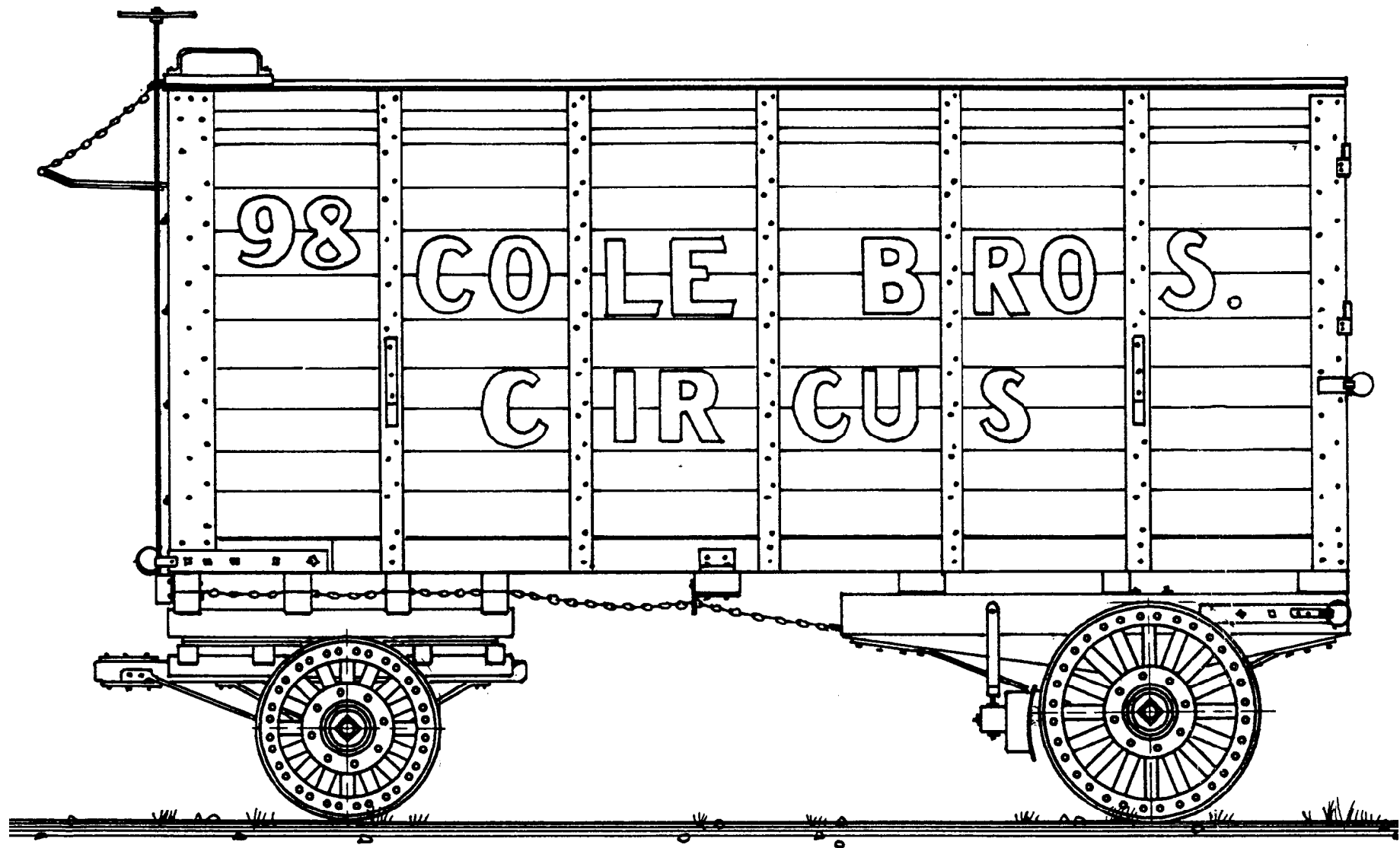
seat plank wagon, No. 104 seat plank wagon, No. 109 stringer wagon and No. 76 seat jack wagon. As you can see equipment requirements were not always the same from season to season. In 1938 the size of the Cole Bros. Circus was reduced to accommodate the introduction of the Robbins Bros. Circus as a "Sister Show" and this accounts for the reduced seating capacity on the Cole Circus for that year.

So put No. 98 on your model circus soon, it is a wagon that deserves a shaded spot on any circus lot! By the way, why not show this wagon as it's owners pictured it in the worst of circumstances and that would be buried up to its axles in mud on a rainy day with many teams and maybe an elephant trying to coax it on to the big top where it belonged! It's just an idea, but it could be fun, have fun and we will see you down the road!

INDICATED PLAN DETAILS:

- A. chain rings for rear drop door
- B. mud rings
- C. 36" dia. 16 spoke rear wheel
- D. 30" dia. 16 spoke front wheel
- E. brake beam, hangers and shoes
- F. laminated axle bolster
- G. operating chain for brakes
- H. brake chain support sleeve
- J. 5" channel iron floor fram
- K. hook to hang double trees on
- L. angle iron support bolting mid frame bolster beam to the wagon floor (this helped transfer the strength of the sides to the floor, a small detail instrumental in reducing the overall weight of the wagon)
- M. hooks for storing lead poles, etc.
- N. angle iron top frame member
- P. 2" X 8" front corner post
- Q. 2" X 6" rear corner post
- R. 2" X 4" side supports
- S. 1" X 6" side boards
- T. 1" X 3" side board evener or spacer board

Cole Bros. Circus			
Reserved Seat Wagon No. 98			
DATE: 1936	SCALE: 1/2" = 1'	SCANNED & REVISED: 05/07/03	Pg 1 of 4
Circus Model Builders			
Drawn By Mike Hartigan			DRAWING NUMBER #0380



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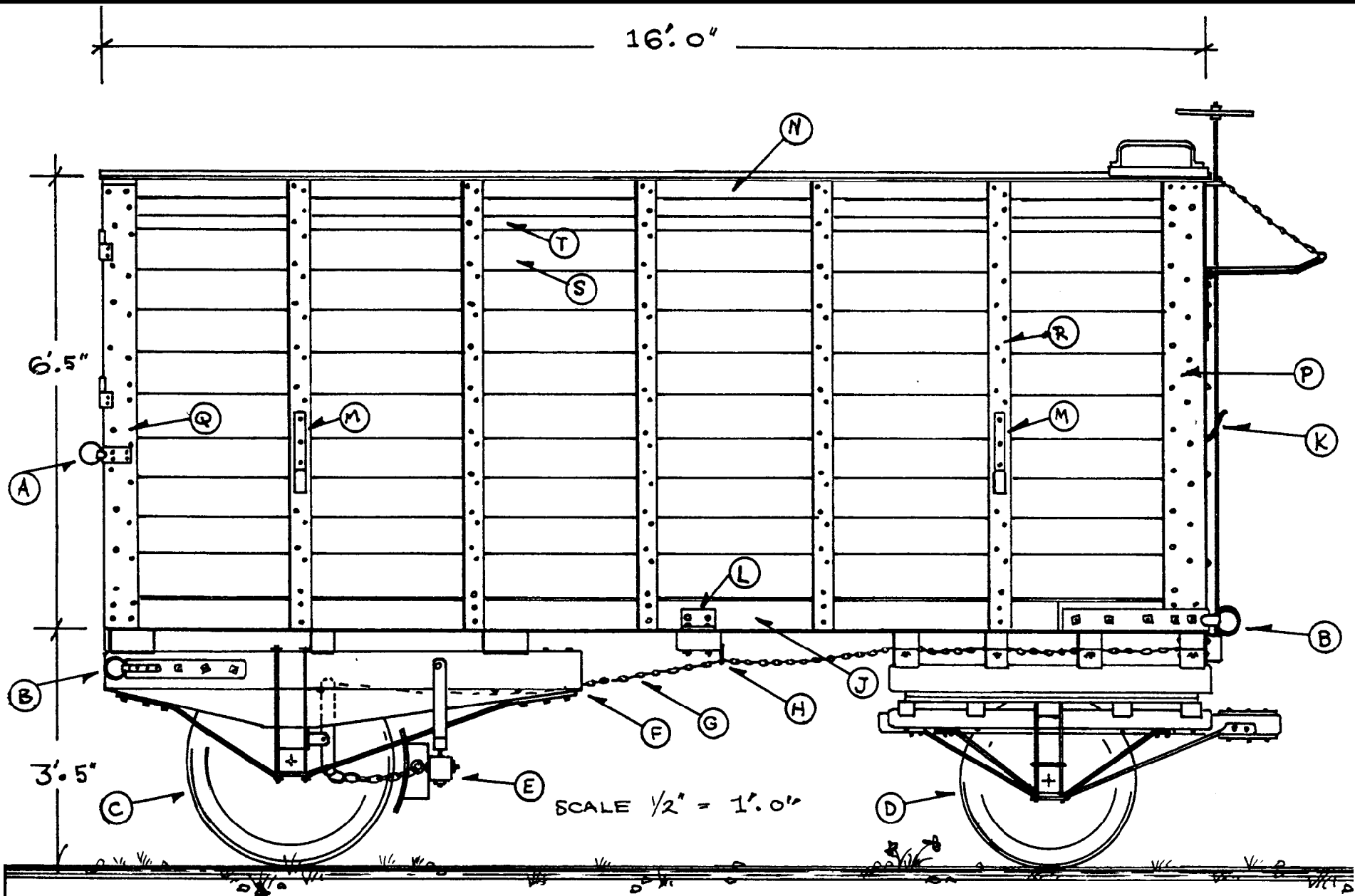
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SCALE: 1/2" = 1'

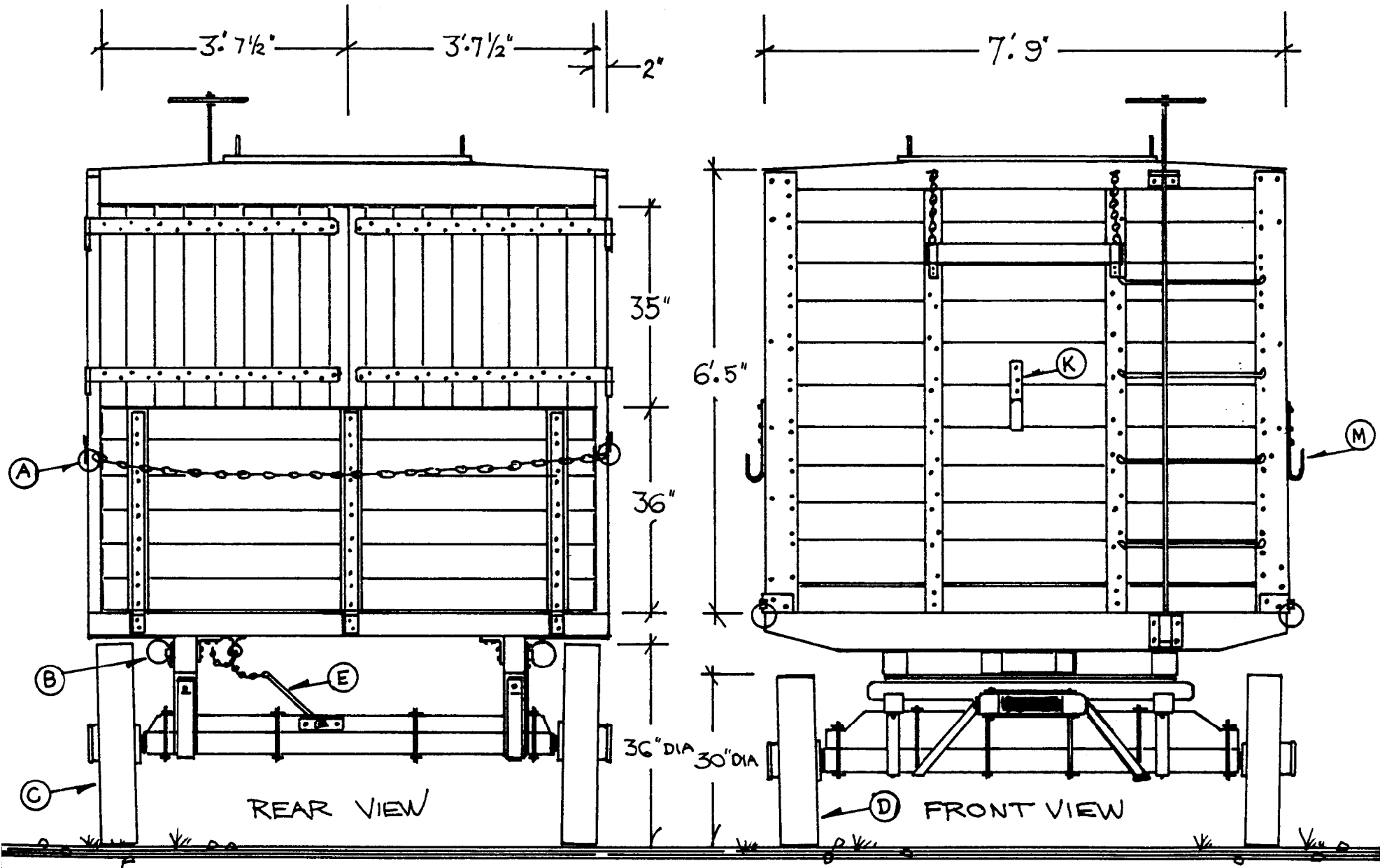
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Pg 4 of 4

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