

In 1883, Cot. William I. (Buffalo Bill) Cody, founded the beginnings of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. Pictorial poster art of the day often emblazoned the name of "Buffalo Bill," in association with the descriptive term, "And His Congress of Rough Riders." As time went on, to those troopers in the "know" or "with it and on the inside," it became universally known as "The Bill Show." Unique by its nature "The Bill Show," was widely copied by many other showmen of the era. Gordon (Pawnee Bill) Lillie was probably the major competitive thorn during Cody's formative show years. There were many others such as "Tiger Bill's Wild West," or how about "Young Buffalo Bill Wild West Show" which operated between 1911-1914. Buck Jones a Hollywood Cowboy Movie Star operated unsuccessfully a two car show in 1929 called "Buck Jones Wild West Show" and in 1903 the "Buckskin Bill Wild West Show," was renamed the "Frank James & Cole Younger Historic Wild West" while those two varmints were actually with it! J. Augustus Jones and his brother Elmer Jones operated two car versions of the "Bill Show" off and on for years. Their efforts included the titles, "Buffalo Ranch Wild West" and "Indian Bill's Wild West." The 1936 show season heralded the short beginnings and end of the "Ken Maynard Wild West Show." Maynard was under financed and couldn't even get his show out of its California winter quarters. In 1938, at the end of the Wild West era, movie star, Col. Tim McCoy added the title "Col. Tim McCoy's Real Wild West Show" to the list and there it ended!

Mixed in amongst this profusion of Wild West Show titles and for an extended period of time was the "Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West"! Formed in 1908 when Edward Arlington, circus impresario and the Millers, Oklahoma ranchers, joined forces and framed a 16 car show that grew out of a Wild West show put on by the Millers at the Jamestown Exposition the previous year. The original show of 1908 prospered and grew until 1915, when it featured the all American boxing champion, Jess Willard. The year 1916 saw the venerable but aging Buffalo Bill Cody join the Show and the title Buffalo Bill and the 101 Ranch Wild West Show was used! At the end of the season Arlington bought out the Millers and along with Jess Willard operated the 1917 edition as Buffalo Bill's Wild West & Jess Adkins Show. During the season William Cody died and Adkins bought the show and it folded before reaching winter quarters. In 1925, the Millers re-entered the show world with a new 30 car show under the 101 Ranch name. The size and pageantry of the 101 Show during its last years rivalled the enormous spectacle of its predecessors. It managed to last two years past the great crash of 1929, and in

1931 firmly in the grips of the Great Depression, it folded and became a historical memory! A very small show revived the title in 1945 and dropped it after the 1946 season.

The plan that has inspired this story, is very much like stock car number 46, which was one of the new cars ordered from the Mount Vernon Car Co. for the 1925 season. According to the builders specifications provided prior to purchase these handsome stock cars cost \$3350.00 each in lots of two or more. These cars were listed officially as thirty ton capacity, seventy foot circus stock cars and they were mounted on forty ton capacity trucks due to the weight of the bodies. These cars had an all steel center frame and sills. As seen in the plan the exterior framing to the roof line was made of steel Z bars and the roof was supported on a Z bar running the full length of the car under the roof line. This was further reinforced by 1/4" x 11 steel side plates riveted to the vertical and horizontal Z bars along the top of the car between the door posts and the ends of the car. The floors of the car were 1/4" x 5 1/4" yellow pine shiplap to A.R.A. Standards. The floor stringers located between the center and side sills were 3 1/2" x 4 3/4" yellow pine. The sides of these cars were sheathed with 1 3/4" x 5 1/4" face A.R.A. tongue & groove yellow pine to a height of 5' 5" above the top of the floor. Above this the car was slated with 1 3/16" x 5 1/4" yellow pine lumber. This was all firmly attached to the cars steel frame with 1/2" carriage bolts.

For the roof description I quote the manufacturers specifications: "Double board roof made of yellow pine, A.R.A. tongue and groove 1 3/16" x 5-1/4" face. Roof securely nailed to 2 1/16" x 5-1/4" yellow pine side plate fillers, 1-3/4" x 3" perlines and 2 1/16" x 5" ridge pole. Roof supported on 19 canlines made of 3" rolled steel Z bars weighing 6.7# per ft." The manufacturer would supply the cars with two coats of standard freight car paint, the colors and lettering to meet the requirements of the purchaser. I believe that the colors used by the 101 Ranch at that time for stock cars were: orange body, red letter boards with yellow letters shaded in white. There is a very fine picture of these cars on the back cover of the Oct/Nov 1964 issue of the Little Circus Wagon. So once again, thanks to Norman Wilder we have another great plan. I should point out that this car plan can be used to build cars for a number of circus's using the Mount Vernon Cars between 1925 and 1930. There would have been some minor differences, but the general details would have been the same.

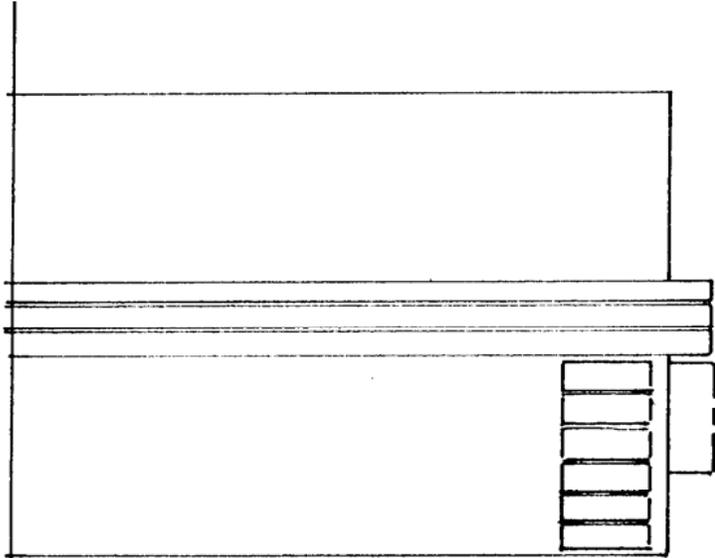
Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West 70' Mount Vernon Stock Car

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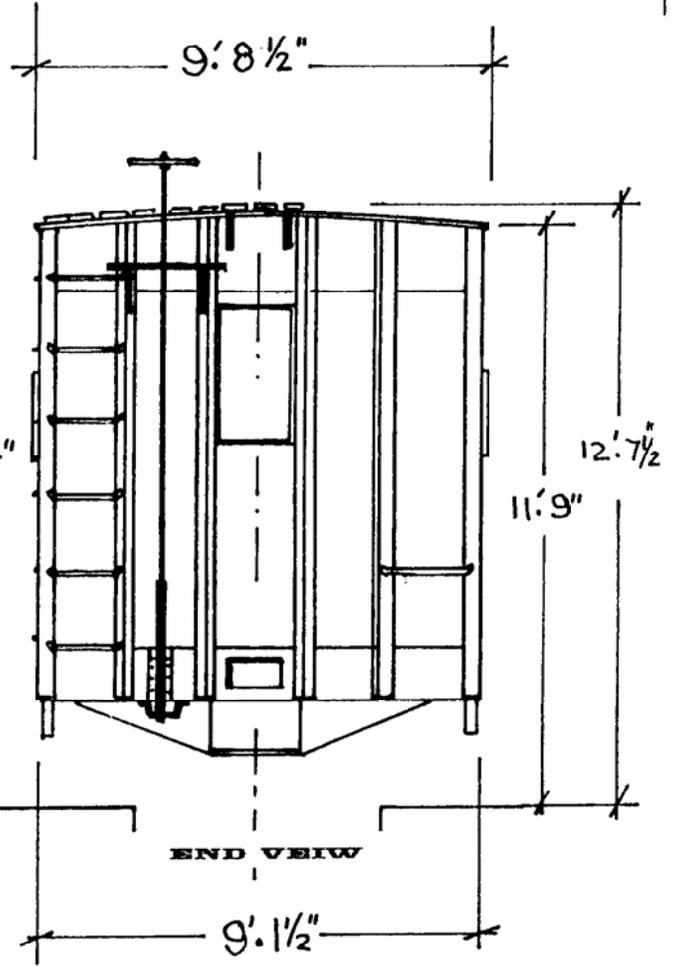
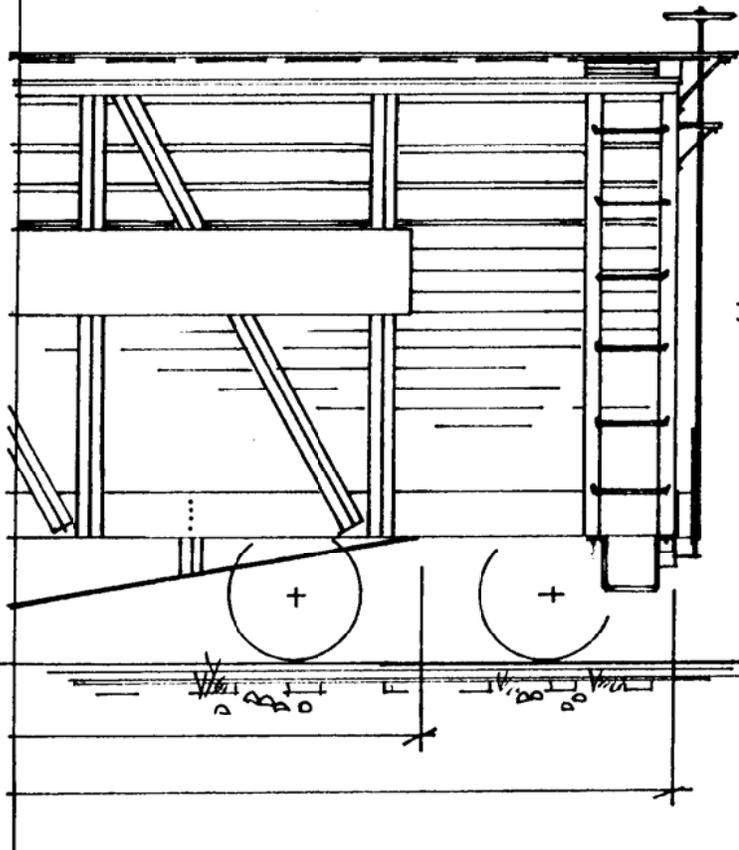
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

SCANNED & REVISED:
02/10/03

DRAWING NUMBER
#0385



LOCATOR LINE



**Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West
70' Mount Vernon Stock Car**