

Wagon History

Several months have gone into the material presented in this article and we would like to thank CMB members Charles Spencer of Michigan and Hugh Burleigh of Pa. for their combined efforts to bring you this fine set of construction plans. Thanks and appreciation go to Chappie Fox and the Circus World Museum for allowing us to gather the material given herein.

This giant of a wagon was built in 1903 for the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show, by Sebastian Wagon Works of New York. It is also called "Columbus-John Smith" Wagon because of a scene on one side of the wagon which depicts Columbus discovering America; the other side shows Pocohontas saving the life of John Smith. Sometimes referred to as "the wagon with a haircut." Figure of Indian scout had long, flowing hair and a large mustache originally. Later owner had the long hair and mustache carvings chiseled off. On the present wagon they have been restored.

It is very rare to have different sides of a parade wagon.

This is one of the most massive wagons ever built. The figures on it are life size. At the top of each corner of the wagon are large buffalo heads, painted brown and gray, with an abbreviated red, white and blue American shield below.

The skyboards are 32" high. One skyboard has a head, figure of an Indian chief in many colors. The other skyboard has a head and figure of an Indian Scout.

The rear doors have larger than life-size bas-relief figures. The wagon is elaborately colored with gold figures and varicolored trimming.

The cost of the wagon when it was built was \$4,000.

It is 21' long, 9'8" high and weighs 6 tons.



Left side of the Pawnee Bill Bandwagon as restored at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, WI in 1996. [M. Dreiling photo]

This wagon was on the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show through 1908, went to the Mighty Haag Circus from 1909-24. It was stored at the Haag Circus Quarters at Shreveport, La. from 1915-24. The Miller Bros. 101 ranch Real Wild West Show, used the wagon from 1925-31. The wagon was sold to Carnival owner, Bill Hames of Fort Worth, Texas in 1938. It was donated to The Circus World Museum by the Bill Hames family in 1962. The measurements were taken from the wagon on August 14, 1963, by Charles Spencer and Joedy Loshiavo. The history of the wagon was obtained from "The Circus World Museum", in Baraboo, Wisc.

WAGON MEASUREMENTS AND COLOR SCHEME

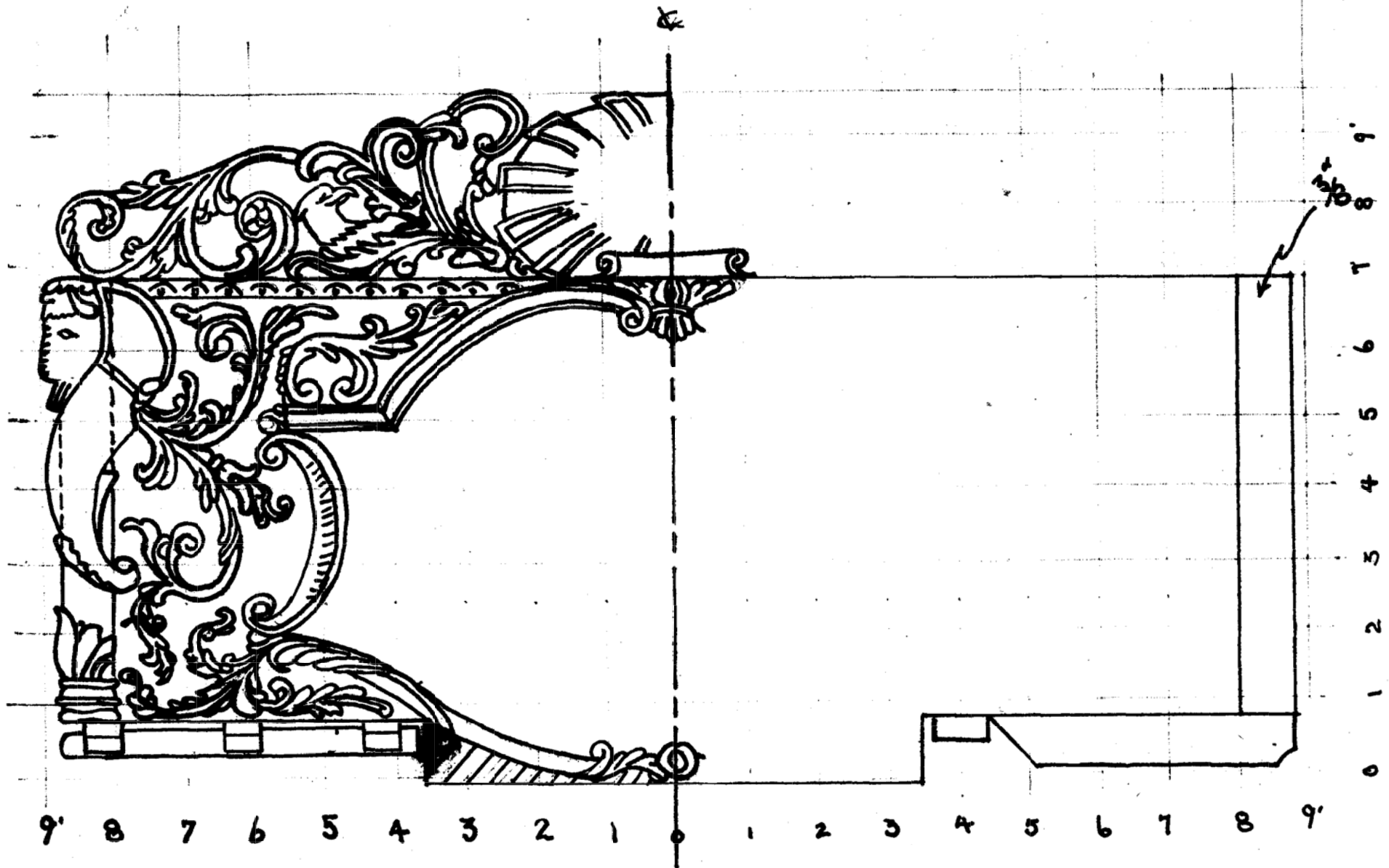
Wheels - Front and Rear 36" - 16 spoke, Sunburst
Springs - Front and rear
Skyboards - 32" at center
Body - 21" long
Height - 9' 8" top of skyboard
Width - 6' 9" to middle of end carvings
4 Seat boards on top for band
Brake Wheel - approximately 15" in from left side. Brake wheel, rod, goes through body.
Rear Wheels - 28" from end (rear) to center of axle.
Pole Racks - Under body.

COLORS

Body - Red
Scrolling - Silver
Scrolling Around Figures - Gold
Figures - Gold
Buffalo Brown and Gray
Skyboard Backs - Red
Skyboard Fronts - Orange shade,
Scrolling - Silver, Indian and Indian Scout - Gold
Undergear - white
Front nameplate - green
Lettering and Numbers - white with gold outline
Sunburst Scroll on Skyboards - Shades of Red, Yellow and Orange
Letters on Back - White and black outline
Door Background - Red
Background on Bas-Relief, Indian Figures - White
Door Frames - Gold
Corner Scrolls on doors - Silver
Indians on doors - Skin - Reddish Brown.
Feathers - White
Hair on Both - Black
Beads on Woman - White
Clothes on both - Buckskin

Pawnee Bill Bandwagon

DATE: 1908	SCALE: 1/2" = 1'	SCANNED & REVISED: 02/28/2006	Pg 1 of 7
Circus Model Builders			
Drawn By Hugh Burleigh/Charles Spencer			DRAWING NUMBER #0181



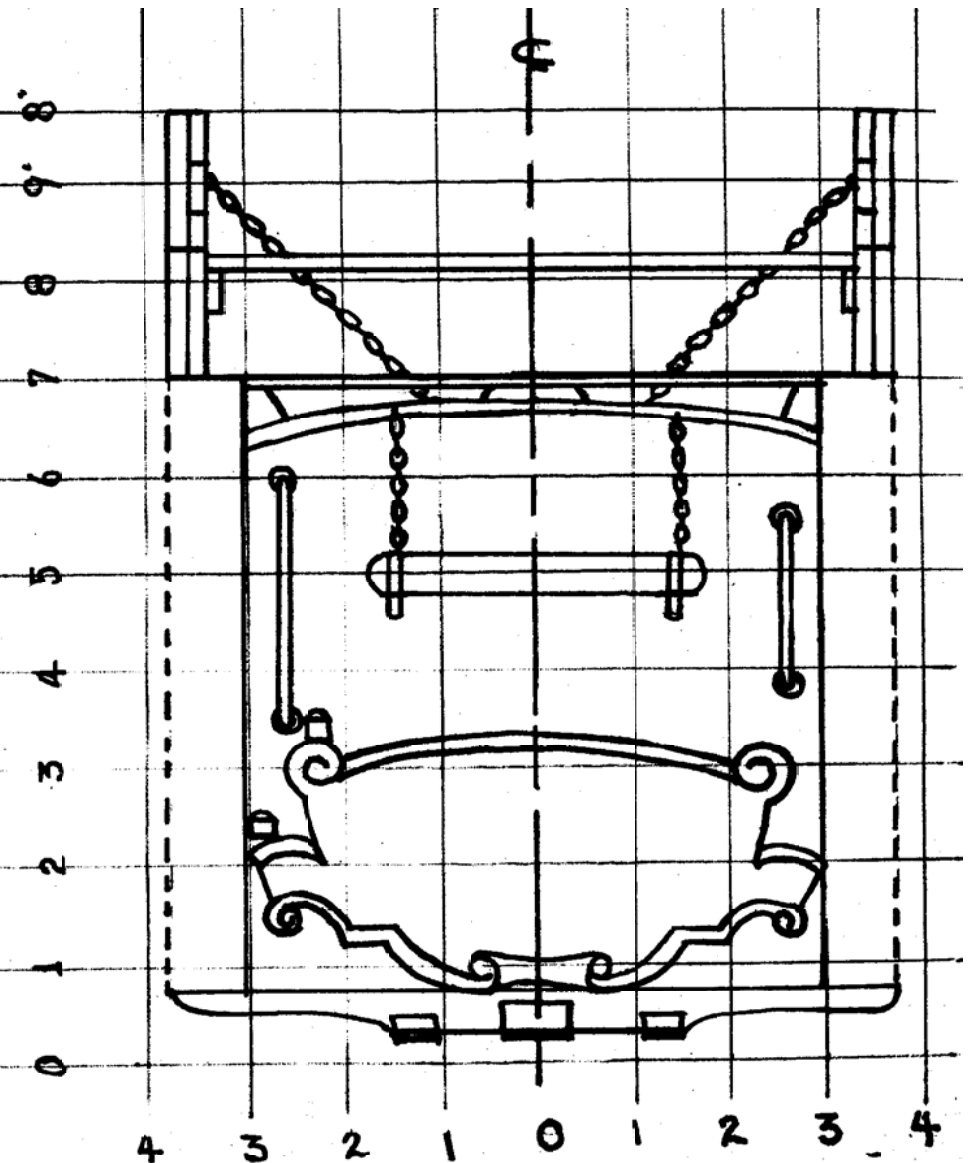
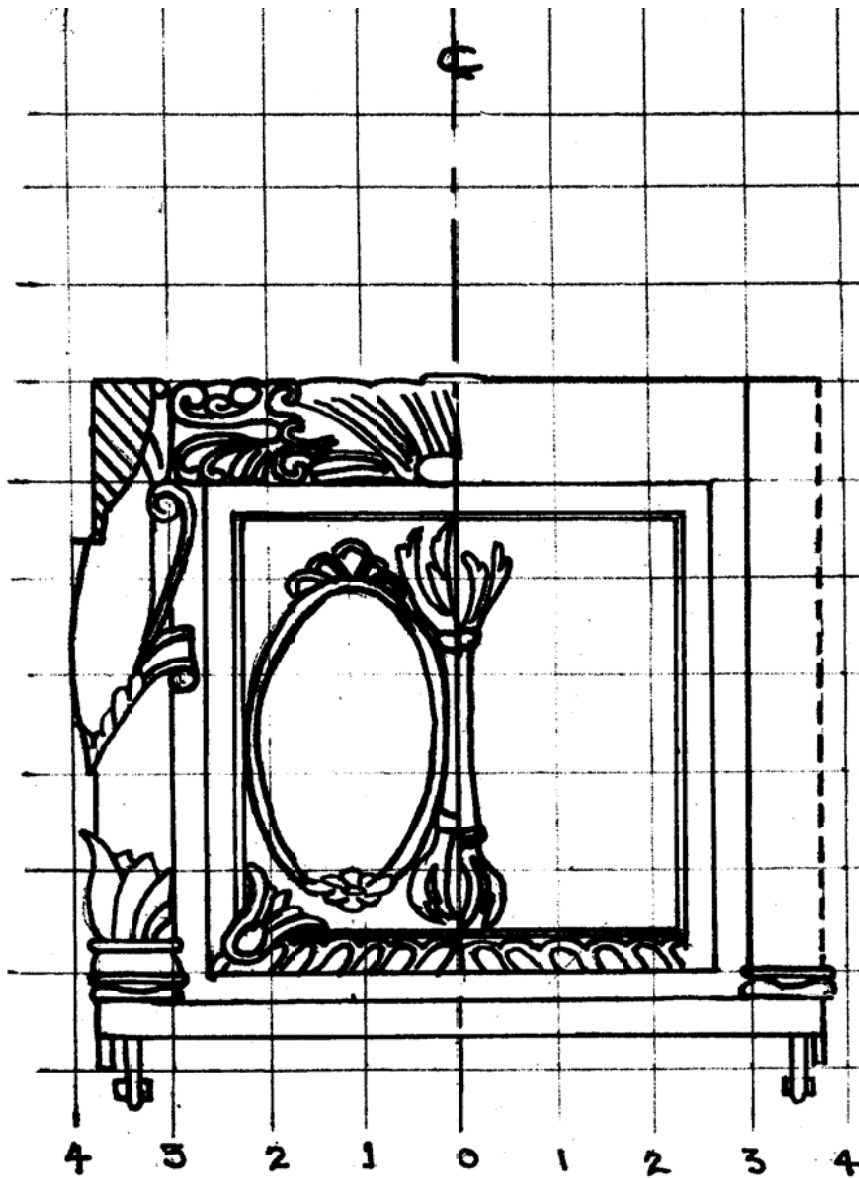
**Pawnee Bill
Bandwagon**

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**Pawnee Bill
Bandwagon**

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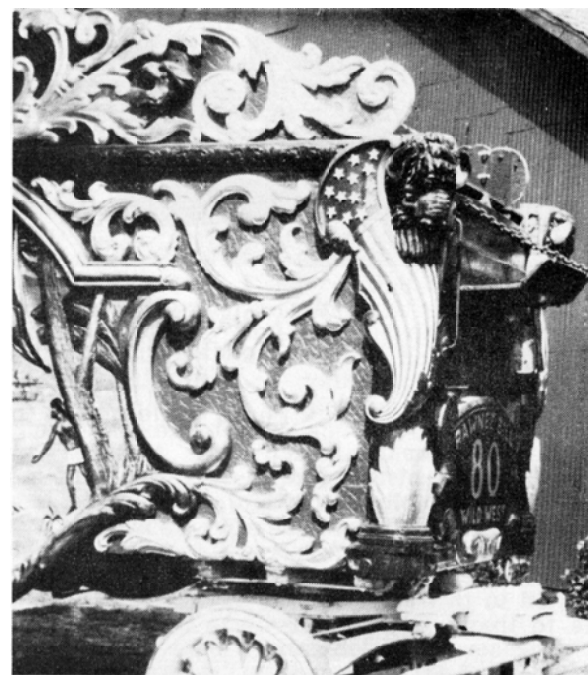
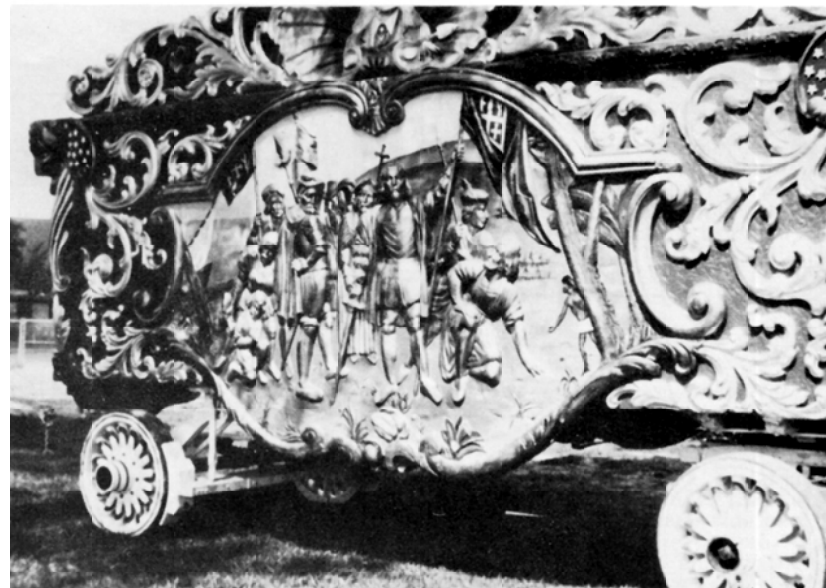
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Above and below: Views showing right side of wagon, (Pocohontas saving the life of John Smith) in the opposite side of the page 2 drawing.



Above and left: Views showing the left side of wagon, (Columbus discovering America scene) as would be on the side drawing, page 2.

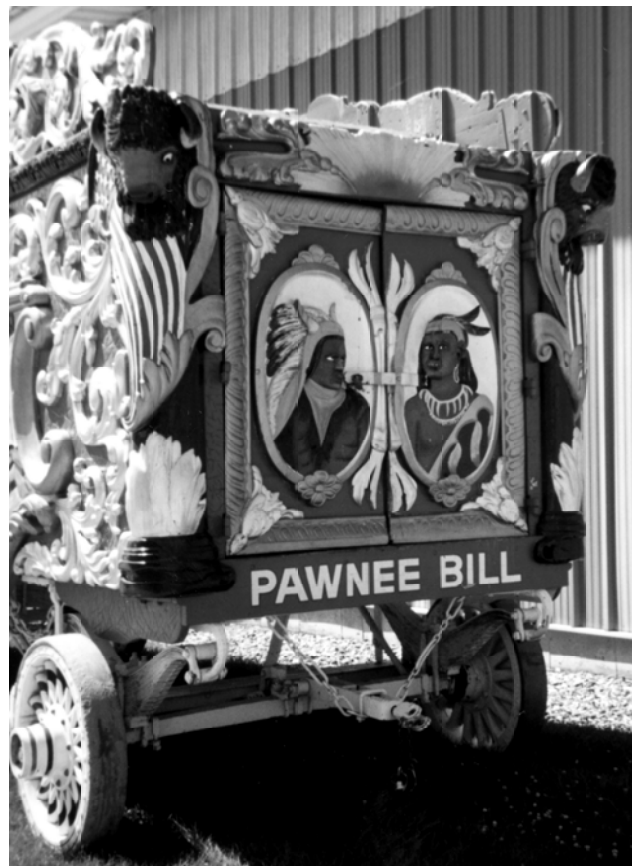
Pawnee Bill Bandwagon

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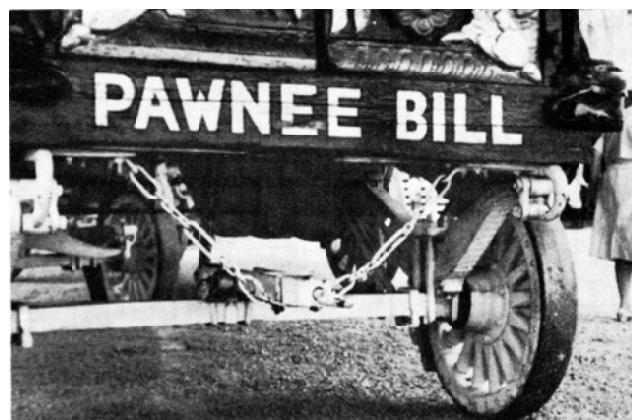
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Left and above: Photos showing the rear of the wagon including the rear axle assembly. See drawing on page 3.



Above and below: The front of the wagon showing the front and back of the front running gear. See drawing on page 3.



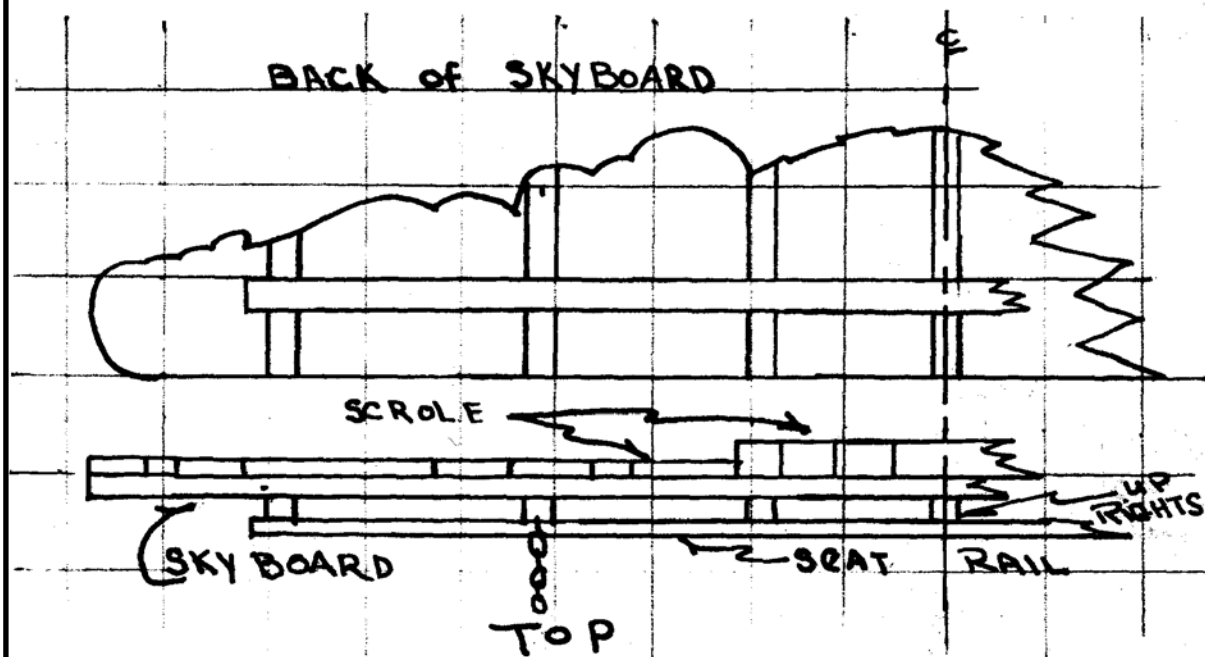
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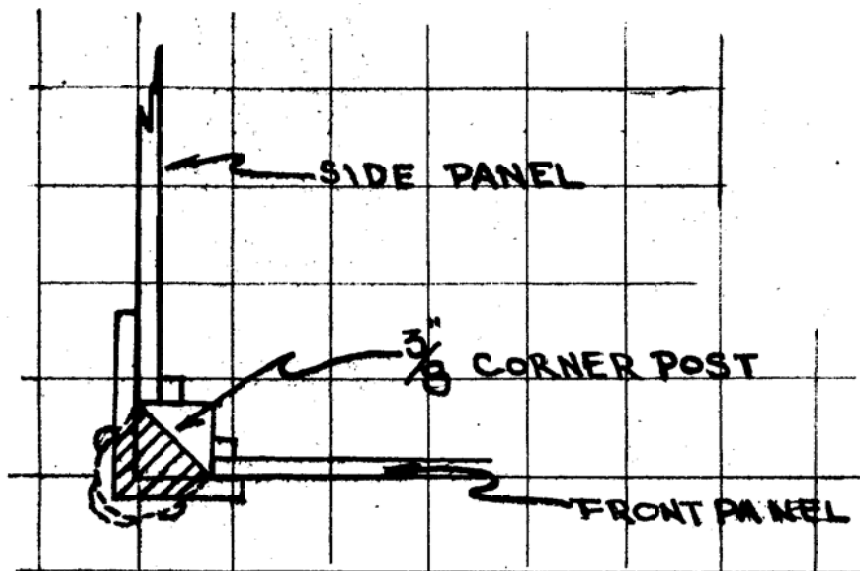
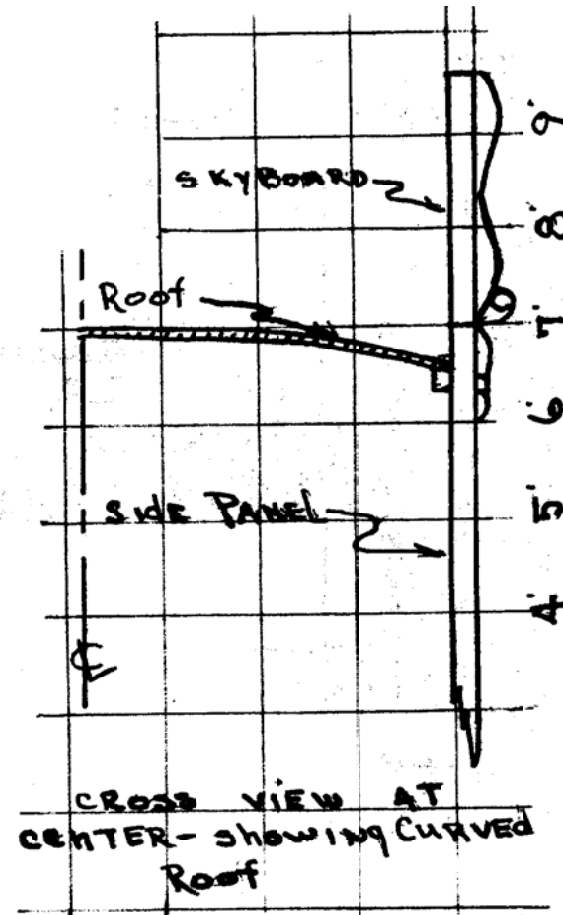
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Right skyboard showing the carving of Indian Head in the center scroll.



Left skyboard showing the carving of Captain John Smith. Not that other than the center portion the skyboards are identical.

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TOM MIX RING PAWNEE BILL WAGON Construction Hints

By Hugh K. Burleigh

The Pawnee Bill Wagon is the Tom Mix ring wagon. I have just finished constructing this wagon for my show. In my opinion this wagon is one of the most colorful wagons you can add to your parade regardless of scale. I will admit the fact that the best scale to build in is half inch or larger, but I only build in quarter inch. This description will deal with this scale.

Regardless of plans, your first step is to get the best pictures of the wagon that you are able to find. In short one picture is worth a thousand words. Splendid pictures can be had from Bob Good, Charles J. Spencer, who is responsible for the history and the dimension of the wagon. You should have pictures in black and white and color. Black and white are the best to work from but color are necessary if you are to get a good reproduction when you paint your finished masterpiece.

The first step I took was to make the corner posts. For these I used 3/16" square posts. To these I added a piece of 1/2" bass wood 1/2" wide and the height of the wagon, which is the length of the corner posts. From this piece of bass wood I shaped the flags and scroll which is on each corner of the wagon, therefor, you will need four of these, (leave the buffalo heads go till later). Now, using the plans, cut two pieces from 1/16" bass wood for the front and back of the wagon. Both ends are the same shape curved on the top for the roof. (The scroll panel across the back is made separate and put on later.) After you finish these pieces glue a corner post to each side of the front and back sections.

Now cut the sides and we are ready to

put on the frame that goes around the center panels. To make these I used 1/8" bass wood, trace this frame from your plans. You only trace half of the frame which is all that is in the drawing, making four of these pieces. Cut two at a time, this will give you a right and left hand side, which will be the same size and shape if they are cut at the same time. I draw the piece to be cut out on one piece of wood, then nail it to the board. The other piece is to cut from (use small wire brads). Holding this piece in your vice, cut to shape with a jeweler's saw. After it is cut to shape, glue it to the sides of your wagon, then we shape it with a knife. I use a No. 11 EXACTO for all my carving.

When these frames are finished, start the rest of the scroll for the sides. These pieces are all made from 1/16" plywood. This plywood is sold in most hobby shops (AIRCRAFT SIC. trademark). Use the same procedure for this scroll as you did for the center frame, cutting two pieces at a time, one for front and one for rear half of one side. I request that the plans be printed in 1/2" and 1/4" scale, that way you can trace all the scroll from the plans direct to your wood and it will be the correct size to fit on your wagon and will be to scale. Glue these pieces in place as you cut them out. After they are dry it is time to put the detail into the scroll with your knife. When you finish both sides this far it is time to think about the hard part or the main part of the sides. Now for the relief scenes on both sides. Right side shows the "LANDING OF COLUMBUS." Left side "POCAHONTAS SAVING JOHN SMITH." I did not include these on the plans because all the drawings in the world are not going to help you with this part of your project. In other words, either you can make this part or you can not.

Let us start with what to make it from.

There are several products on the market, but I can not go into this because I have not used them. However, I did use "MODEL LIGHT" clay. This clay is sold at all art stores. This clay is kept pliable with water and hardens without firing and takes on a stone-like hardness when it is allowed to dry. To work it I keep it soft by painting it with water as I work it. I take a pane of glass and lay a piece of wax paper on the glass. Then I roll a small ball of clay on the wax paper to the desired thickness, in this case to about 3/32". Next take the wagon side and press it into the rolled out clay, this will give you the desired shape to fit inside to the center frame. Remove this filled-in section by going around the edges of it with your knife. Leave center panel lay and remove excess clay from around edges. I removed all clay above the sky line. Then I worked in the figures with my knife and a round tooth pick, keeping clay wet at all times. The sky is painted on the fiat of the wagon side while your clay panel is drying.

When you finish the clay panel remove it from the frame and set it aside to dry, leaving the wax paper on the back until you are ready to cement it to the wagon.

While you are working with the clay, it is a good time to make the four figures, two for the skyboards and two Indians for the back of the wagon. They are made in the same manner as the larger panels, only start with a small fiat square to the exact size of the finished bust.

You are now ready to put the sides and ends together, making sure they are square so you are able to fit the bottom in, it is made of a piece of 1/8" wood. I then put the roof on, using 1/32" bass

wood so it would be easier to curve.

The frame around the back door was made from 1/8" quarter round. The design was cut in before being fitted to the back. The molding along the top edge of the wagon was made the same way using 1/8" half round, the corner scroll pieces for the doors was made from the plywood and they were fitted into place after the frame was put into place.

Then the skyboards were made, using 1/8" bass wood for the center piece and 1/16" plywood for the rest of the scroll. The figure head put in place and the whole thing was painted before being put in place on top of the wagon. The upright supports were added after this because the roof is recessed below the top of the side panels. See drawing.

All that is left to do now is the running gear, foot board, brake wheel and any other detail you wish to add.

All I can say now is good luck and happy model building.

Pawnee Bill Bandwagon

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