

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211

Spencer, Rowan County, RW2186, Listed 4/12/2022

Nomination by Jennifer F. Martin, MdM Historical Consultants, Inc.

Photographs by Jennifer F. Martin, June 2020



Side of car



Black passenger area facing men's lounge

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
other names/site number Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1563

2. Location

street & number North Carolina Transportation Museum
1 Samuel Spencer Drive n/a not for publication
city or town Spencer n/a vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Rowan code 159 zip code 28159

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] 3/1/22
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
n/a

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Rail-related, passenger car

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument, exhibit

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Pullman Company Heavyweight Passenger Car

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation n/a
walls steel

roof steel
other Floor: concrete
Undercarriage: steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY
 ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

Period of Significance

Ca. 1939-ca.1961

Significant Dates

Ca.1939
 1953

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Pullman Company
 Southern Railway

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
 North Carolina Transportation Museum, Spencer, North Carolina

Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property n/a

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer F. Martin
organization MdM Historical Consultants Inc. date December 20, 2020
street & number Post Office Box 1399 telephone 919/368-1602
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name North Carolina Transportation Museum
street & number 411 South Salisbury Avenue telephone 704-636-2889
city or town Spencer state NC zip code 28159

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
Rowan County, North Carolina

Introduction

Southern Railway passenger car number 1211 is a long-distance heavyweight steel partitioned passenger coach located at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina. Built in 1917 by the Pullman Company as Southern Railway passenger car number 1563, the car was most likely partitioned in 1939, the same year it was air conditioned, to comply with Jim Crow car laws.¹ In 1953, during a complete overhaul which resulted in its current appearance, Southern Railway renamed it car number 1211.

Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211

The car measures sixty-nine feet long and nine feet wide. It rests on two six-wheel cast steel trucks with friction bearings, a type of bearing used on railroad cars in the 1950s. The floor is constructed of concrete poured over pressed metal. The concrete floor cut down on noise, added stability to the car, and lessened fire hazards associated with wood floors. A coupler for connecting to other railroad cars is located on each end. The car's steel-clad exterior is painted #4 Pullman green, a dark khaki green shade. "Southern Railway" is spelled out on each long side in the 3M company's Scotchcal gold thermal adhesive letters. A turtle back roof that covers the original clerestory tops the car. One long side of the car has nine aluminum Adlake-brand fixed windows with curved corners while the other long side has eight of the same windows. Each end has a closed vestibule with doors and triple platform steps on each side of the car's long side and a rubberized U-shaped vestibule diaphragm with folding platform gates at the center of the short ends. The interior consists of separate Black and White passenger seating areas partitioned by the bulkhead walls of a men's lounge in the middle of the car. A women's lounge is located on one end of the car. Both lounges are accessed by a short passage along the same long wall of the car. Smaller toilet rooms—one for each gender—flank a short passageway on the opposite end. Each seating area is defined by three windows on each side of the car.

Some uncertainty exists around which seating area on car number 1211 was assigned to White passengers as opposed to Black passengers. It is commonly assumed that the seating area next to the small toilet rooms was for Black passengers. The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture

¹ Service records for the car are scant but do indicate that it was air conditioned in 1939 at Hayne Shops in Spartanburg, South Carolina. While the available records do not mention when the car was partitioned, it likely happened at the same time as the air conditioning upgrade occurred. Southern Railway Car Number 1200 in the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, which was built in 1918, was partitioned in 1940 at the Spartanburg facility. Further, the Pullman Company, which built Car Number 1211, was constructing its new cars with partitioning in the 1940s, indicating that segregated cars had become the industry standard, at least in the South.

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interprets Southern Railway car number 1200 in this manner. In the Pullman Company-built car in its collection, the museum identifies the Black passenger area as the one having small, thus seemingly inferior toilet rooms. But Tyler Trahan, researcher at the North Carolina Transportation Museum, contends that the opposite is true and that the seating area in car number 1211 with the small toilet rooms was for White passengers. He points to plans for several Southern Railway cars built by the Pullman Company in the early 1940s that were manufactured as segregated coaches instead of being partitioned many years after their build dates like car number 1211. These 1940s plans clearly label each passenger area as “white” or “colored” and show the larger toilet facilities located in the Black seating area. The North Carolina Transportation Museum research files contain an undated illustrated booklet published by Southern Railway that includes photographs of commodious women’s and men’s lounges in the Black seating area of a passenger coach built in 1941. The bulletin explains that the “spartan accommodations” were for White passengers because they were allowed to use smoking rooms and lounge space in the cars that followed. This information suggests the White passengers sat in the section of car number 1211 with the small toilets, while the Black seating area was in the area with the larger facilities. Based on the above evidence, this nomination will assume that the section with the larger lounges was for Black passengers.

The two compartments share the same finishes and features. Ceilings are sheathed in off-white Masonite and light gray Plymetl covers the sidewalls between the sheet metal kickplate and the bottom of the molding under the luggage rack. Plymetl, the trade name for plywood bonded with rust-resistant alloy steel, provides lightweight but durable interior sheathing for the railroad and airline industries and remains in use today. Turquoise-colored Formica covers the endwalls except where sheet metal sheathes the bottom skirt. Metal baggage racks line the upper sidewalls. Metal floor heaters sit at the junction of the floor and sidewalls. The commercial vinyl tile floor is a circa 2019 addition and replaced the 1953 gray and red rubber tile. The coach’s seats were removed during a previous restoration effort. The date of that work is unknown. According to a May 5, 2020, research report prepared by the North Carolina Transportation Museum, staff of the museum have not been able to locate the seats.

The following description begins at the end of the passenger car presumed to have been assigned to Black passengers and progresses to the opposite end where White passengers likely travelled.

The Black passenger area is a little over twenty-three feet long—not including the service alcove at one end or the men’s and women’s lounges. The car’s switchboard is in an intact DC electrical cabinet in the far

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corner of the Black passenger area behind the women's lounge. The cabinet's double doors are curved with a metal flush pull on the right-side door. All equipment from the car's 1953 rehabilitation remains intact. The door to the vestibule is immediately to the left of the electrical cabinet.

The women's lounge is just in front of the vestibule and electrical cabinet. A Morton Manufacturing Company metal door with turquoise-colored Formica sheathing and an anti-pinch shield hinge displays an aluminum kickplate and crescent-shaped aluminum push plate. The word "WOMEN" adorns the door's upper section. The back of the door facing into the lounge features an aluminum crescent-shaped handle plate etched diagonally with the word "PULL." The lounge consists of the larger outer saloon and the smaller toilet room, which are separated by a door. In the corner behind the door in the saloon, a chrome-plated vanity with a dressing mirror is topped with an aluminum-framed horizontal light with ribbed cylinder glass. Just to its left is a nine-inch by nine-inch white vitreous china dental lavatory with chrome-plated fixtures and an exposed chrome-plated drain line through the floor. A small metal dental rack or shelf is mounted on the wall above the lavatory. A larger white vitreous china lavatory on a metal base cabinet occupies the corner adjacent to the toilet room door. A fixed window is just left of the lavatory. The toilet room is accessed through a twenty-one-inch-wide metal door with turquoise-colored Formica sheathing and an anti-pinch shield hinge and with a mirror mounted on its upper half and a rectangular vent and aluminum kickplate at the bottom. The toilet room is empty except for a toilet roll holder, chrome-plated window guard rods, a grab bar, coat hook, metal purse rack, and a fan and circular light in the ceiling. The toilet and chair that originally sat in front of the vanity are stored in the saloon.

In the main section of the Black passenger area, metal luggage racks are mounted into the sidewalls above the span of fixed Adlake windows with built-in pull-down blinds. The bulkhead at the end of the seating area closest to the women's lounge is the exterior wall of the women's lounge, whose location is indicated by the word "WOMEN" on the upper section of bulkhead. The service area is located at the end opposite the wall of the women's lounge. This L-shaped space contains an area for luggage storage and a water alcove.

Access to the men's lounge at the center of the car is through a door on one side of the two-and-a-half-foot-wide corridor that separates the two passenger compartments. The 1952 plan indicates a swinging door separated the corridor from the white passenger area. That door is not present. The Morton Manufacturing Company metal door with turquoise-colored Formica sheathing and an anti-pinch shield hinge displays an

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aluminum kickplate and crescent-shaped aluminum push plate. The word "MEN" adorns the door's upper section. The lounge consists of the larger outer saloon and the smaller toilet room, which are separated by a door. The saloon contains a nine-inch by nine-inch white vitreous china dental lavatory with goose neck chrome-plated supply fixtures and an exposed chrome-plated drain line through the floor. A small metal dental rack or shelf is mounted on the wall above the lavatory. A larger white vitreous china lavatory on a metal base cabinet occupies the corner adjacent to the toilet room door. A metal paper towel holder and long quarter-round light are mounted above the sink. Other amenities in the saloon include chrome satin finished coat hooks behind the main door and on the wall to the right of the main door and an outlet for an electric razor. Originally, the saloon contained three lounge chairs with rubber seats and rubber backs and satin finished aluminum frames and armrests. The toilet room is accessed through a twenty-one-inch-wide metal door with turquoise-colored Formica sheathing and an anti-pinch shield hinge and with a mirror mounted on its upper half and a rectangular vent and aluminum kickplate at the bottom. The toilet room is empty except for a toilet roll holder, coat hook, round speaker, and a round light in the ceiling. The toilet is stored in the saloon.

The White passenger area is twenty feet long and nine feet wide excluding the toilet rooms and the passageway between them. The finishes and features are identical to those in the Black passenger section. A water alcove is on the bulkhead wall that is the exterior wall of the men's lounge.

The toilet rooms are three feet, three inches deep and four feet nine inches wide. Entrance to each room is through a twenty-one-inch-wide, turquoise-colored Formica-sheathed door with lower metal vent panels and an aluminum kickplate, Plymetal walls, and Masonite ceilings. Each toilet room contains a white vitreous china corner lavatory on a metal base cabinet, chrome-plated window guard rods, coat hooks, mirrors in an aluminum frame, an aluminum shelf, and rectangular ceiling lights with opaque glass. Toilets, which occupied a corner of each room, have been removed and are stored in one of the two passenger areas.

Integrity Assessment

Car number 1211 is a mostly intact example of a Jim Crow railroad coach of the first half of the twentieth century. Although its seats no longer remain, the car's form and materials give no doubt as to its identity as a railroad passenger coach whose interior space was reordered, most likely in 1939, to comply with stringent Jim Crow car laws legislated in the American South in the late nineteenth century. Car number

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1211 effectively conveys each of the seven aspects of integrity necessary for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Setting and Location

The setting for car number 1211 is the North Carolina Transportation Museum, a former railroad repair facility for Southern Railway known as Spencer Shops that operated during the period when the coach carried Black and White train passengers in segregated cars. The car sits on standard gauge rails in one of the thirty-seven stalls in the roundhouse at the museum. Typically, museum staff keep the car in a stall on the east side of the roundhouse; sometimes other stalls are used. All of the cars in the roundhouse, including car number 1211, can be moved in and out of the roundhouse and to other tracks within the building with the assistance of the one-hundred-foot-long turntable. In addition to car number 1211, approximately forty other historic rail cars and locomotives occupy the massive roundhouse constructed in 1924 with the turntable at its center. The building underwent a restoration in 1996 and is the largest still-operating roundhouse in the United States.

In 1896, Southern Railway opened the Spencer Shops to provide a repair facility for steam locomotives and rail cars at a location between its Washington, D.C. headquarters and Atlanta, a major transportation hub in the South. The company named the shops for its first president, Samuel Spencer (1847-1906).² The advent of diesel locomotives, which required less maintenance, made Spencer Shops obsolete and the facility closed around 1960. In 1977, Southern Railway gave the property to the State of North Carolina for the creation of a transportation museum.³

When Spencer Shops was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, the nomination included fourteen historic resources built by Southern Railway in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to the 1924 roundhouse, the property includes the 1905 back shop, an immense two-story brick building with steel columns and roof trusses originally known as the locomotive erecting and machine shop.⁴ Of the fourteen resources included in the nomination, three no longer stand—the

² "President Samuel Spencer of Southern Railway, Killed in Fatal Wreck on Southern This Morning," *The Charlotte News* (Charlotte, North Carolina), November 28, 1906.

³ Walter R. Turner, "Spencer: The Naming of a North Carolina Town," NCPedia, <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/spencer>, accessed October 1, 2020; "Repair Shops to Tell the History of Transportation," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, North Carolina), August 14, 1977.

⁴ "Improvements at the Spencer Shops of the Southern Railway," *The Railroad Gazette*, November 24, 1904, 575-579.

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Blacksmith shop, boiler shop, and carpenter shop. The car repair shed is the only portion of the transfer sheds that remains. Several intact historic buildings and structures at Spencer Shops were not inventoried in the 1977 nomination including the 1914 oil house and the roundhouse office and wheel balancing shed, both from the 1940s. Despite the loss of a few buildings, Spencer Shops, now the North Carolina Transportation Museum, retains a high degree of integrity and provides a highly appropriate setting for car number 1211. In addition to the historic buildings, multiple active railroad tracks remain intact, providing additional context for the rolling stock sheltered at the museum.⁵

Design

Car number 1211's intact form, partitioned plan, distinct spaces, structure, and style contribute to its integrity of design as a 1917 railroad passenger coach overhauled in 1939 and 1953. Its exterior form is that of a heavyweight steel-sided passenger car fabricated from materials and in a distinct color associated with the Pullman Company. Its scale, fenestration, spatial organization, massing, and proportions represent the typical characteristics and qualities of a heavyweight passenger car from the period.

Materials

Car number 1211 retains its 1917 undercarriage and trucks, but most of the remainder of the car dates to 1953, when the car was renovated. Material from the latter date is intact, except for the floor, which was replaced around 2019, and seats, which were removed during an unknown period. The exterior steel remains intact, as do all wall and ceiling surfaces on the interior. The lounges and toilet rooms retain the fixtures from 1953. The materials mostly date to the overhaul that occurred in 1953, a period when the car remained a segregated coach and a date within the period of significance.

Workmanship

The special skill required to build, overhaul, and maintain a passenger coach remains in evidence on car number 1211. From the original work of the Pullman Company, which built the car, to the renovations carried out by Southern Railway at the Hayne Shops in Spartanburg, South Carolina, the workmanship of engineers, fabricators, electricians, plumbers, and mechanics endures in car number 1211.

Feeling

⁵ #248 Southern Railway Spencer Shops, The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, <https://www.asme.org/about-asmе/engineering-history/landmarks/248-southern-railway-spencer-shops>, accessed October 1, 2020.

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Car number 1211 retains the unaltered physical features and spatial arrangement necessary to convey its historic character as a partitioned railroad coach from the Jim Crow era. These features are bolstered by the car's setting in the 1924 roundhouse of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

Association

Car number 1211's integrity of association is reinforced by its intact spatial arrangement and physical features along with its history as a Jim Crow railroad coach that operated from 1917 to 1969. The car's location in a historic roundhouse surrounded by other historic railroad cars reinforces its integrity of association.

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Summary

Southern Railway passenger car number 1211, built by the Pullman Company in 1917 and fully remodeled in 1953 by Southern Railway, is an all-steel, heavyweight passenger coach partitioned to comply with Jim Crow car laws that went into effect throughout the South in the late nineteenth century. Built without partitions, Southern Railway likely divided car number 1211 to seat Black and White passengers in separate areas in 1939, the same year it was air conditioned and around the time other passenger coaches on the Southern Railway line were partitioned. Car number 1211, currently stored at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina, is significant under Criterion A in the areas of social history and Black ethnic heritage as an intact example of a partitioned railroad passenger coach associated with the Jim Crow era of rail travel in the southern United States. Although built in 1917, car number 1211 underwent remodeling in 1939 and 1953 and therefore more accurately reflects the form and materials of a partitioned passenger coach from those times. After it retired car number 1211 in 1969, Southern Railway gave the coach to the National Railway Historical Society's Atlanta chapter. In 1980, the North Carolina Railroad purchased it and donated it to the North Carolina Transportation Museum. The period of significance for this artifact of Jim Crow segregation begins circa 1939, the year it was most likely partitioned, and extends to circa 1961, the year Southern Railway likely ceased segregating passengers. The period of significance depicts the transition from a standard Pullman Company railroad car to one altered to comply with laws in place in the geographic area where it operated.

History of Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211

The Pullman Company built Car number 1211 in 1917 to operate on Southern Railway. Incorporated in 1894, Southern Railway consolidated approximately 125 railroads, including several North Carolina-based companies such as the Carolina and Northwestern Railway, the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad, and the Atlanta and Charlotte Airline Railway. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., Southern Railway operated in thirteen southern states and across 8,000 miles by 1916.⁶

The Pullman Company was the leading manufacturer of railroad cars in the late nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century. George M. Pullman incorporated the Pullman's Palace Car Company in

⁶ Walter L. Bingham, "Southern Railway System," from *The Encyclopedia of North Carolina* edited by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) on NCPedia, <https://www.ncpedia.org/southern-railway-system>, accessed October 1, 2020.

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1867. By the 1870s, the company built train cars, operated sleeper cars on a contract basis for the nation's railroads, and set up smaller firms to operate trains in Europe. Pullman later moved the company from Detroit to Illinois and established a company town a short distance south of Chicago. From 1907 to 1931, the Pullman Company, as it was known, became highly profitable from the manufacturing of steel-bodied, heavyweight cars that replaced wooden cars. The heavyweight car produced less noise for passengers and increased the safety and stability of trains. During the Great Depression, business declined but the company continued to innovate by adding air conditioning and remodeling existing cars. In the twentieth century, the Pullman Company went through many transitions involving unions and the separation of its manufacturing arm and sleeping car operations. After World War II, a decline in business led to layoffs and the shuttering of many of its facilities. The Pullman Company ceased operations in 1968.⁷

Car number 1211 followed Pullman Passenger Car Plan 2938 and was originally labelled by Southern Railway as Car number 1563. As the passenger car was one of many operated by the railroad, information about the specific car remains largely unknown. In its original configuration (see enclosed plan), the car was not segregated and included a men's smoking lounge with leather seats. Steam from the locomotive provided heat, but like passenger train cars of the period, it lacked air conditioning. The original windows could be opened to provide fresh air to riders.⁸

Records in the possession of the North Carolina Transportation Museum where the car is housed indicate that sometime before 1952 Southern Railway installed air conditioning and had the car partitioned to accommodate Black and White passengers in separate spaces. It is likely these changes occurred in 1939 when the Hayne Shops, a Southern Railways repair and maintenance facility located in Spartanburg, South Carolina, added air conditioning to many of its passenger coaches. In anticipation of the work, Hayne Shops planned to double its workforce of 200 to complete the modifications.⁹ When Hayne Shops modernized the car in 1952-1953, their paperwork identified it as an "all-steel air-conditioned straight back seat partitioned coach," confirming that the two major changes of adding air conditioning and partitions occurred before 1952.

⁷ Martha T. Briggs and Cynthia H. Peters, "Guide to the Pullman Company Archives," The Newberry Library, 1995, <https://www.newberry.org/sites/default/files/researchguide-attachments/PullmanGuide.pdf>, accessed September 30, 2020.

⁸ Floor plan, 69-foot steel passenger car, Southern Railway, traced from Pullman Company's print dated February 17, 1917, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum, Spencer, North Carolina.

⁹ "Work Picks Up at Hayne Shops," *The Greenville (South Carolina) News*, March 14, 1939.

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The major overhaul in 1952-1953 occurred the same year Southern Railway fully transitioned from steam locomotives to diesel locomotives. At the same time, Southern Railway renumbered the car from 1563 to 1211.¹⁰ In a letter to Southern Railway supervisor Hill C. Trexler of Salisbury, North Carolina, an unidentified employee located at the company headquarters in Washington D.C. related that at Hayne Shops the car would receive “flat sides, Adlake windows and follow the previous plan for fully modernizing throughout.”¹¹ During the overhaul, almost all of its components were replaced including the siding, seats, flooring, vestibule doors, end doors, and windows. All the fixtures in the lavatories were replaced. Two water coolers and Dixie Cup cone cup dispensers were installed. Luggage racks, one pair measuring twenty feet and the other pair measuring sixteen feet, were added. New lighting fixtures were placed throughout. Asbestos insulation manufactured by the Johns Manville company was installed which helped to cut down on noise from outside the car. The renovation left the car with its original undercarriage but replaced its sides and interior. When Hayne Shops completed work on Car number 1211 and another car identified as number 1210 on December 18, 1953, a Southern Railway manager at Hayne Shops reported in a letter to Max R. Brockman, chief engineer at Southern Railway’s Washington D.C. headquarters, that they had “been converted into modernized coaches and were released.”¹² From Hayne Shops Car number 1211 then went to Southern Railway’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. where railroad president Bill Brosnan and chief engineer Max R. Brockman inspected it.¹³

During its 1952-1953 overhaul, car number 1211’s interior was updated to the Ketcham color scheme, which included gray and coral upholstery fabric for the seats and armrests. The design was named for New York industrial designer and color engineer Howard Ketcham, whose eponymous company provided color consultations to corporations, including Southern Railway. Ketcham, who theorized color influenced consumer behavior, advised companies on color choices for everything from product packaging to store and office interiors and serving dishes at restaurants.¹⁴ An advertisement for the grand opening of a Kroger

¹⁰ Letter to Max R. Brockman from unidentified Hayne Shop manager, dated December 28, 1953, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum, Spencer, North Carolina.

¹¹ Letter from M. R. B. (unidentified Southern Railway employee) to Hill C. Trexler, dated August 26, 1952, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum, Spencer, North Carolina.

¹² Letter from Hayne Shops manager to M. R. Brockman dated December 28, 1953, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

¹³ Letter from A. M. Cary to C. J. Broom, dated December 23, 1953, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

¹⁴ “Howard Ketcham, Authority on Color Use to Corporations,” *The New York Times*, May 7, 1982.

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supermarket in Chicago in 1952 touted Ketcham's contribution to the store's aesthetic: "This master designer has made airliner and railway coaches blossom out with color and light."¹⁵

In February 1955, just two years after the new seats were installed, the integrity of the Ketcham color scheme fabric became an issue for Southern Railway officials. On February 9, 1955, Hill C. Trexler wrote a letter to Hayne Shops supervisor A. M. Cary to report that the "comparatively new upholstery" had failed and the car was being sent back to Spartanburg so that the fabric could be repaired. In a letter dated February 24, 1955 to Mr. Trexler, company master mechanic R.L. Turner reported that all the upholstery would be replaced with an identical-colored fabric at Hayne Shops because the original fabric had been discontinued.¹⁶ In 1957, the upholstery was once again replaced with similar gray and coral fabric.¹⁷

Little is known of the particular routes car number 1211 traveled in the Southern Railway system. The car was undistinguished and among numerous passenger cars that made its way along the tracks of the vast Southern Railway network. The only specific mention of routes is found in maintenance records dated February 1955, which indicate the car had been operating as a day coach on the Augusta Special, trains 31 and 32 in the Southern Railway system. The Augusta Special began operating in 1915 and initially offered service between Augusta, Georgia and Washington, D.C. The route was later extended to New York City. Before its inaugural trip in 1915, a South Carolina newspaper called the Augusta Special, "a high-class train in every respect."¹⁸ Although specific information about the car's location throughout its history remains mostly unknown, it served on Southern Railway's routes for the entirety of its productive life.

Car number 1211 served passengers on the Southern Railway throughout the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s when national attention focused on racist tactics that separated Blacks from Whites in public facilities. In 1955, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), the federal agency charged with regulating railroads and other common carriers such as bus lines, ordered an end to segregation on trains and in train stations effective January 10, 1956. Throughout the South, railroad and bus companies, with the support of local police, regularly ignored the law and retained separate spaces for Black and White

¹⁵ Advertisement for Kroger Store Opening, *Chicago Tribune*, December 7, 1952.

¹⁶ Letter from R. L. Turner to Hill C. Trexler, dated February 24, 1955, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

¹⁷ Work order dated August 1, 1957, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

¹⁸ "Augusta Special": Will Put on Through Train from New York to Augusta," *Edgefield (South Carolina) Advertiser*, September 29, 1915.

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travelers. In 1961, largely due to the Freedom Riders and the attention garnered by the violence inflicted upon them by hostile southerners, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy requested the ICC enforce the 1955 law.¹⁹ Car number 1211 was not altered to comply with the ICC law or its enforcement but remained a two-compartment car. After it retired Car number 1211 in 1969, Southern Railway donated the coach to the National Railway Historical Society's Atlanta chapter. In 1980, the North Carolina Railroad purchased it and donated it to the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

Historic Context for Social History and Black Ethnic Heritage: Jim Crow Car Laws and their Impact on Black Railroad Travelers

The earliest known instance of the term "Jim Crow" applied to the segregation of Blacks in the nation's railcars came in 1838 when the *Salem Gazette*, a newspaper in Massachusetts, relayed the story of an intoxicated White passenger on the state's Eastern Rail Road forced by the crew to ride in the "Jim Crow" car located at the rear of the train. According to historian Steve Luxenberg, the newspaper's mention of the term without explaining its meaning indicates it had already gained a pejorative association and signified a less than desirable location on the train.²⁰

The dark racial implications of the term developed several years prior during the early period of minstrel shows, a unique form of entertainment replete with horrendous stereotypes of Black Americans. Wildly popular minstrel performer and playwright Thomas Dartmouth Rice, who often performed in Blackface, developed the character "Jim Crow" in 1828 and debuted him at a theater in New York City in 1832. In his touring minstrel shows, Rice took on the persona of Crow, a Black man with worn clothing and a crooked posture who danced and spoke and sang in a Black vernacular dialect. Rice's shows took place mainly in the northern United States and in Europe where rowdy White audiences eagerly cheered for and encouraged Rice's racist satirized depiction of Black culture.²¹

¹⁹ "Social Protests," Constitutional Rights Foundation, <https://www.crf-usa.org/Black-history-month/social-protests>, accessed October 2, 2020.

²⁰ Steve Luxenberg, "The Jim Crow Car: The North, the South and the Forgotten Origins of Racial Separation," *The Washington Post Magazine*, February 20, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2019/02/20/feature/the-forgotten-northern-pre-civil-war-origins-of-jim-crow/>, accessed October 2, 2020.

²¹ "The History of Minstrelcy: From Jump Jim Crow to the Jazz Singer," University of South Florida Special and Digital Collections Exhibit, <http://exhibits.lib.usf.edu/exhibits/show/minstrelsy/jimcrow-to-jolson/jump-jim-crow/>, accessed October 13, 2020.

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As a result of Rice's widely known song and dance numbers, the term Jim Crow made its way into American culture and nomenclature as a negative nickname for Black Americans. So pervasive was the term, that railroads, like the Eastern Rail Road of Massachusetts, took up the moniker to refer to the train car for Black passengers and to anyone railroad personnel deemed undesirable. Eastern Rail Road was not the only line in New England to enforce segregation on its passengers. Almost all railroads in New England in the early 1840s employed Jim Crow cars. New England abolitionists and prominent Black activists like Frederick Douglass resisted the practice of separate cars for Whites and Blacks. In his seminal 1855 work, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass wrote about his experience of being moved by physical force into Jim Crow cars by railroad personnel in Massachusetts. Douglass recounted a trip on Eastern Rail Road in 1841 when he was "dragged out of my seat, beaten, and severely bruised, by conductors and brakemen" for sitting in the White car.²² Railroad workers removed Douglass and his companion, abolitionist James N. Buffum, from the train at Lynn, Massachusetts. The incident led to protests by abolitionist against Eastern Rail Road and other New England lines engaged in discriminatory practices against Black travelers. In February 1843, the Massachusetts House of Representatives took up the segregation issue even though there was a general desire among its body not to get involved in the charters of state corporations. The railroad companies, recognizing that the legislature would likely not find in their favor, voluntarily discontinued the practice of segregating rail cars before lawmakers voted.²³

In 1865 as the Civil War was coming to a close, the United States Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery. Northern States quickly ratified the amendment and southern states, except Mississippi, followed suit after the end of the war.²⁴ After it took effect in December 1865, the amendment kicked off a period of great progress for civil rights, known as Reconstruction. Under Reconstruction, southern states were required to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, which provided equal protection for former slaves under the Constitution. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed a male person's right to vote, regardless of color or previous servitude. Under federal government oversight, Blacks in the South had access to schools, became landowners, started churches and civic organizations and won election to state offices and to the United States Congress. Racial discrimination on public

²² Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1855), 392-406.

²³ Steve Luxenberg, "The Jim Crow Car: The North, the South and the Forgotten Origins of Racial Separation," *The Washington Post Magazine*, February 20, 2019; Douglass, 392-406; Steve Luxenberg, *Separate: The Story of Plessy V. Ferguson, And America's Journey from Slavery to Segregation* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2019), 22.

²⁴ Douglass S. Massey, The Past and Future of American Civil Rights, *Daedalus: the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 140, No. 2, Race, Inequality and Culture, Spring 2011, 40.

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transportation and in accommodations was illegal. Reconstruction measures culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which guaranteed Blacks equal treatment in public transportation and public accommodations and the right to serve on juries. Urging passage of the act, Howard University President John M. Langston wrote, “when we pay for a berth in a Pullman sleeping car we do not want to be shoved into a Jim Crow car.”²⁵

Throughout Reconstruction, railroad, streetcar and steamboat companies, without the legislative authority to do so, imposed their own rules that either denied service to Blacks or separated Blacks and Whites. State and local courts sometimes supported these practices. In 1867, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court heard the case of *West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad v. Miles*, the appeal of a lawsuit that had been brought by Black passenger Mary E. Miles. After boarding a train in Philadelphia, Miles took a seat near the middle of the car. The conductor, citing railroad rules, told her to move to an empty seat at the back end of the car reserved for Blacks. She refused and the conductor removed her from the train.²⁶ Miles won her case in a Philadelphia court, but on appeal the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the railroad had the right to impose a regulation separating the races as a way to promote personal comfort and convenience.²⁷

To the extent that they could and that the law allowed, southerners resisted the freedoms given to Blacks by federal intervention after the Civil War. Newly established rights for Blacks led to the formation of white supremacist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, which formed in 1865 and spread to every southern state by 1870. The Klan sought to terrorize and sometimes inflict bodily harm on Blacks in order to reestablish White control in the South. In October 1870, *the Weekly Standard*, a newspaper in Raleigh, North Carolina, reported on a series of recent violent acts by the Klan against Black citizens including the January or February 1869 murder of Daniel Blue’s five children and pregnant wife in Moore County, North Carolina. In three separate incidents in Chatham County, North Carolina, the Klan hanged, whipped, and beat Black citizens. During this same period in Orange County, North Carolina, the Ku Klux Klan took a boy from his home and hanged him after accusing him of making “improper and foolish” remarks about White women. After Governor William W. Holden appointed Wyatt Outlaw, a former slave, to serve as

²⁵ Melvin I. Urofsky, “Civil Rights Act of 1875,” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Civil-Rights-Act-United-States-1875>, August 21, 2020, accessed September 24, 2020; *Wilmington Journal*, July 17, 1874.

²⁶ *West Chester & Philadelphia Railroad v. Miles*, 55 Pa. 209, Pa. Supreme Court (1867), Ravel, <https://www.ravellaw.com/opinions/bb045e3bc88d4da20bdac0efe6b3a5ab>, accessed September 24, 2020.

²⁷ Gilbert Thomas Stephenson, “The Separation of the Races in Public Conveyances,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (May 1909), 187.

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justice of the peace for Alamance County, the Klan hanged him near the courthouse in Graham in February 1870. No one ever faced charges for his death. The Klan targeted White sympathizers as well including Vermont native Rev. Alonzo Corliss, who taught at a Black school at Company Shops in Alamance County, North Carolina. In 1869, the group took him from his home, whipped him, shaved his head, and painted half of his face Black after he suggested churches in the county integrate.²⁸ In a June 1870 reference to the Ku Klux Klan, Governor Holden condemned “all organizations of men who ride or walk at night in disguise, with arms in their hands.” Holden offered a reward for the perpetrators of violence and those who destroyed the property of their victims.²⁹

As Reconstruction ended, much of the federal regulation crafted to provide Blacks with civil rights began to unravel in the courts and in state legislatures. In 1877, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Hall v. DeCuir* that states could not ban segregation on carriers such as railroads, streetcars, or riverboats. That same year, federal troops who had been occupying the South after war, retreated and Congress prohibited the federal military oversight of southern elections. As a result, according to historian Douglass S. Massey, “the South set about creating new institutions of racial hierarchy to replace those associated with chattel slavery.”³⁰

As federal oversight of the South ebbed and the nation’s highest court undid much of the legislation meant to give Blacks more rights, southern states instituted a strict social and economic separation of the races where Whites subjugated Blacks in much the same way as they had during slavery. This arrangement, known as Jim Crow, came in the form of laws, intimidation, violence, and a general lack of humanity shown toward Black citizens.

Racial discrimination became institutionalized starting from the highest levels of the judiciary and trickling down to state legislatures. In a set of five legal cases heard in 1883, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional and that the Fourteenth Amendment applied to states only, not to individuals or groups. Around the same time as the Supreme Court cases, the segregation of

²⁸ “Outrages Committed in North Carolina During the Last Eighteen Months by the KuKlux,” *The Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, North Carolina), October 5, 1870; Walter E. Whitaker in collaboration with Staley A. Cook and A. Howard White, *Centennial History of Alamance County, 1849-1949* (Burlington, North Carolina: Alamance County Historical Association), 127.

²⁹ “A Proclamation By His Excellency, the Governor of North Carolina,” *The Daily Standard* (Raleigh, North Carolina), June 27, 1870.

³⁰ Massey, 40.

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transportation modes including trains, buses, and streetcars became a primary weapon of southern state legislatures against Blacks. In 1881, Tennessee became the first state to adopt a comprehensive law to separate the races on railroad cars. Beginning in 1887, the other southern states passed Jim Crow laws to segregate railroad cars. With each state passing their own law, the restrictions proved uneven across the South. Before North Carolina passed its own Jim Crow law, the November 2, 1897 edition of the *Asheville Citizen-Times* informed readers, “people who go from here to Tennessee may notice that at Paint Rock the colored people leave the first class car. That’s because the law of Tennessee provides the ‘Jim Crow’ car which must be occupied when the State line is reached.” While the laws varied in their restrictions from state to state, every one of these laws required that accommodations be equal. The manner in which the separation could occur was either through dividing cars by a partition or furnishing an entire car or cars to each race. Not only were Whites and Blacks separated while traveling, most railroad companies provided separate waiting rooms for Whites and Blacks in their stations.³¹

The landmark 1896 United States Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* further eroded the gains Blacks had made during Reconstruction and made Jim Crow legal across the country. *Plessy* centered around a Black Louisiana train passenger, Homer Plessy, who was jailed for taking a seat in a White coach. In its majority opinion, the court, among other provisions, directed that all railway companies carrying passengers had to provide equal but separate accommodations for Whites and Blacks by providing two or more passenger coaches for each train or by dividing passenger coaches by a partition.³² The separate but equal doctrine remained law until a series of judgements and legislation including *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

One of the most noteworthy tests to *Plessy* came in Kentucky just two years after the Supreme Court made their ruling. In July 1898, a court in Louisville, Kentucky found in favor of Fannie Oldham Lander against the Ohio Valley Railway Company. In July 1895, railroad personnel forced Mrs. Lander, who was Black, to move from the Whites only first-class car, where her husband had purchased her a seat, to a Jim Crow car referred to as the smoker car because it also accommodated White passengers using tobacco. The judge in the case declared the law unconstitutional even though Kentucky lawmakers had passed a Jim Crow

³¹ “A Brief History of Jim Crow,” Constitutional Rights Foundation, crf-usa.org, accessed September 23, 2020; Gilbert Thomas Stephenson, “The Separation of the Races in Public Conveyances,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (May 1909), 191.

³² “*Plessy v. Ferguson*,” Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/163/537, accessed September 24, 2020.

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railroad law in 1892. A state court of appeals judge who heard the case stated “a railroad may lawfully adopt a rule of conduct for its passengers in terms of the separate coach law” and ruled against Fannie Lander.³³

Meanwhile in the late nineteenth century in North Carolina, White supremacists waged a war of intimidation and violence on Blacks across the state. In preceding years, Blacks and populist Whites had formed a political alliance that supported candidates concerned with the state’s working class. Elites, threatened by policies that shifted taxes from citizens to corporations, warned White working class citizens of the dangers of associating with Blacks. Some state newspapers printed scurrilous stories of Black crime.

North Carolina’s Jim Crow car law originated from the state’s White supremacy campaign of 1898. The most significant event of this period was the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898, which was fomented by White newspapers and politicians creating a false narrative that Blacks, especially those holding office or positions of influence, posed an imminent danger to Whites. On November 10, 1898, violent White throngs, many fueled by alcohol, attacked and intimidated Blacks who they saw as a threat to their place at the top of the social and political hierarchy. With threats, physical violence, and property destruction, Whites successfully overthrew the legitimately elected municipal government.³⁴

A major component of the 1898 campaign was the wrangling to create and craft a Jim Crow law, which played out across the state with White newspapers offering their nearly unanimous support of such a regulation. *The Statesville Record and Landmark* reported in November 1898 that a Jim Crow car law was imminent and would be decided either by the state railroad commission or the legislature.³⁵

As anticipation in North Carolina of a Jim Crow law for railroads grew, railroad officials, journalists, and others speculated as to how the races would be separated on cars. In November 1898, Oscar William Blacknall, a farmer and writer from Kittrell, North Carolina, penned an editorial in the *Kinston Free Press*

³³ “Declared Unconstitutional,” *County Union* (Dunn, North Carolina), July 1, 1896; *Statesville Record and Landmark*, October 14, 1898; “Before Rosa Parks there was Fannie Lander: Hopkinsville Woman Put Railroad Injustice to Test,” *Kentucky New Era*, March 16, 2016; *Ohio Valley Railway’s Receiver v. Lander*, 104 Ky. 431 (1898), October 7, 1898, Kentucky Court of Appeals, Caselaw Access Project, <https://cite.case.law/ky/104/431/>, accessed October 2, 2020.

³⁴ Alana Semuels, “Segregation Had to Be Invented,” *The Atlantic*, February 17, 2017, accessed September 28, 2020.

³⁵ “For Separate Railroad Cars,” *Statesville Record and Landmark*, November 22, 1898; “Jim Crow Cars: Railway Commission Declines to Act Immediately,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, November 22, 1898.

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entitled, “The People Demand It.” Blacknall advocated for separate rail cars for Whites and Blacks and that space in the second class railcar be cordoned off for Black first class passengers. He argued “not only that White supremacy shall be established but that every tendency to social equality shall be scotched.”³⁶ *The Concord Times* newspaper quoted “a young lawyer who ought to know,” who offered that legislators were formulating the Jim Crow law and that “there will be two cars—one for the second class and one for the first class people. In the cars will be a partition between the White people and the negroes. This is going to be a law.”³⁷

In the end, North Carolina lawmakers created the state’s Jim Crow car law after the railroad commission failed to take action. In December 1898, as the North Carolina legislature prepared to enact Jim Crow laws on railroad cars, *the North Carolinian* newspaper in Raleigh reported that railroads did not want the law, mainly, the paper claimed, because it meant the railroads would need to add additional cars, an expense they did not want to bear. The paper quoted T.A. Emerson, traffic manager for the Atlantic Coast Line: “the best way in the world to keep the races separate is to keep the two fares—first and second class—that we now have. If you require us to have separate cars for White people and negroes it will just simply double the number of cars we’ll have to run.”³⁸ *The Henderson Gold Leaf* newspaper chastised the railroads for their opposition, saying, “such a law would be better for both whites and Blacks.”³⁹

On March 4, 1899, the North Carolina legislature ratified the Jim Crow Car Law, which included several provisions as to the instances and manner in which railroad cars were segregated. First, all railroads and steamboat companies other than street railways had to provide separate but equal accommodations for White and Blacks on all passenger trains and steamboats carrying passengers. Accommodations could be furnished by railway companies either by separate passenger cars or by compartments within passenger cars. The regulations did not apply to through express trains, Pullman or sleeping cars, in case of accidents, to servants who accompanied his or her employer in the Whites only car, officers or guards transporting prisoners or the prisoners themselves. The second provision stated that railroad commissioners could exempt branch lines and narrow-gauge railways because of the low number of Black passengers who traveled those routes. Thirdly, if a coach or compartment was full, the conductor of the train could place passengers of one race in a portion of a car meant for the other race. Fourth, all railway companies had to

³⁶ “The People Demand It,” *The Daily Free Press* (Kinston, North Carolina), November 30, 1898.

³⁷ “The Jim Crow Car Law,” *The Concord Times*, December 22, 1898.

³⁸ “Jim Crow Car Law,” *The Weekly Star* (Wilmington, North Carolina), May 12, 1899.

³⁹ Column from the *Henderson Golden Leaf* featured in the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 6, 1898.

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furnish first and second class passenger accommodations on all trains.⁴⁰ The Jim Crow car law went into effect on June 1, 1899 and allowed railroads to divide a single car in two parts by a partition in the middle.⁴¹

Soon after the legislation went into effect, Southern Railway came under criticism for the manner in which its cars were segregated. According to the July 29, 1899 *Wilmington Morning Star*, Southern Railway divided all its cars with a space for Whites and one for Blacks instead of putting all Black passengers together in one car. The newspaper commented that the North Carolina Corporation Commission, which met in late July 1899, would order Southern Railway “to conform to the excellent ‘Jim Crow’ car system in vogue on the Seaboard Air Line and Atlantic Coast Line.” On those trains, both first and second class Black passengers occupied one car near the engine, the next car held all second class White passengers, and first class White passengers used the third car.

When traveling from their homes in the northern United States to the South, Black passengers discovered an uneven patchwork of Jim Crow laws that varied from state to state. In the summer of 1901, *The New York Times* reported that as his train crossed over into Virginia, Thomas Grades, a Black man from New York City, claimed to not know about the state law. When told by the conductor “that he must go forward into the little pen set apart for negroes,” he declined. After authorities in Alexandria arrested him, he paid the fine and continued on his journey “seating himself in the compartment for colored persons.”⁴² In January 1908, a Black man described by local press as “large and sporty,” refused to move from a Pullman car seat on train number 11 as it traveled between Salisbury and Statesville. The man boarded the train in Pittsburg with Asheville as his final destination. The newspaper remarked “the people of the south do not take kindly to this sort of thing and there was demand the negro be removed from the car.” The incident ended without violence and apparently the man never vacated his seat.⁴³

In the early decades of the twentieth century Black travelers spoke out against not only separate accommodations, but also the conditions of the cars in which they were forced to ride. In March 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt met with a delegation of prominent Black southerners who expressed their

⁴⁰ “The Jim Crow Car Law,” *The Smithfield Herald*, March 17, 1899; Chapter 384: “An Act to Promote the Comfort of [Travellers] on Railroad Trains, and For Other Purposes,” *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1899*, 539-540.

⁴¹ “The Railroads Don’t Want It,” *The North Carolinian* (Raleigh, North Carolina), December 1, 1898.

⁴² “New York Negro Suffers,” *The New York Times*, July 19, 1904.

⁴³ “Negro in Pullman Car,” *The Semi-Weekly Messenger* (Wilmington, North Carolina), January 7, 1908.

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dissatisfaction with the unequal accommodations given Blacks under Jim Crow laws in the South. According to the *Greensboro Daily News*, the delegation reminded the president of the ICC decision that “negro passengers were entitled, if separated, to the same accommodations as other passengers.”⁴⁴ On April 2, 1908, Roosevelt wrote a letter to the attorney general directing him to enforce *Plessy* and state laws that required equal railcar facilities for Black passengers paying the same fare as Whites. Roosevelt informed the attorney general that “from time to time various complaints have been made to me by reputable colored people to the effect that the accommodations furnished the colored persons on certain railways are filthy and inadequate compared to the same accommodations furnished White passengers paying the same fare.”⁴⁵

In 1914, Booker T. Washington declared June 7 and 8 national railroad days. In a letter to the influential leading Black newspaper, *The New York Age*, Washington urged two to three members of churches, secret societies, business groups, and women’s clubs “to go directly to the railroad authorities and put before them the difficulties under which we labor in cases where there is in existence unjust treatment.” Washington specifically asked the groups to address accommodations for Blacks in railroad-controlled restaurants, depot waiting rooms, and on trains, streetcars, and steamboats.⁴⁶ Southern Whites assailed Washington with one Mississippi newspapers declaring that “Booker T. Washington will better serve the best interests of the negro by going on with his program of teaching the ‘brother in Black’ how to till the soil and progress in the mechanics.”⁴⁷

In 1938, the ICC dismissed a complaint from Arthur W. Mitchell, a Black congressman from Illinois, against the Rock Island Railroad. In April 1937, a conductor on the route from Chicago to Hot Springs, Arkansas forced Mitchell to move from a Pullman coach to an inferior car once the train crossed into Arkansas. The railroad asserted that within its state borders the Arkansas Jim Crow law required Mitchell to occupy the car for Blacks. Although Mitchell contended the car for Black passengers was inferior, a spokesperson for the ICC stated the opposite and that “the discrimination and prejudice is plainly not unjust or undue.”⁴⁸ In 1941, Mitchell took his case to the United States Supreme Court which ruled that Blacks

⁴⁴ “Complain to President about Jim Crow Cars,” *Greensboro Daily News*, March 24, 1908.

⁴⁵ “Railroads Must Comply with Order,” *Harrisburg Daily Independent* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), April 8, 1908.

⁴⁶ “June 7 and 8 as Railroad Days,” *The New York Age*, April 16, 1914.

⁴⁷ “Booker T. and Railroads,” *Jackson Daily News* (Jackson, Mississippi), April 26, 1914.

⁴⁸ “ICC Dismisses Negro’s Complaint Against Railroad,” *Wausau Daily Herald* (Wausau, Wisconsin), November 25, 1938.

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were entitled to accommodations and first class services equal to those provided White passengers. As a result, the ICC reopened the case in order to make a ruling in line with the supreme court's decision.⁴⁹

In July 1948, Thomas T. Patterson, an official with the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters union, received an out-of-court settlement from Southern Railway after its personnel forced him into a Blacks-only car. In March 1945, while traveling through Virginia on his way to Atlanta, railroad agents demanded he move to a Jim Crow car. Although Patterson asserted to the railroad officials that Virginia's law did not apply to interstate trains, he was arrested and jailed in Charlottesville. He received \$2,000 from Southern Railway.⁵⁰

Likely in response to the Thomas Patterson case, an internal bulletin circulated among Southern Railway employees in July 1948 that cautioned them to provide equal accommodations to Black passengers. In the bulletin, trainmaster I.Y. Cox reported on a complaint against a conductor who moved a Black passenger from an air conditioned to a non-air-conditioned car because of overcrowding on the train. Cox writes, "we are required to furnish equal accommodations for both races and passengers should not be moved, either White or colored, unless equal accommodations can be given them."⁵¹

In December 1951, a federal district court jury in Richmond, Virginia, awarded schoolteacher William C. Chance of Parmele, North Carolina fifty-five dollars in damages from the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Chance was arrested after refusing to move to a Jim Crow car in Virginia in 1948.⁵² In November 1952, the United States Supreme Court ruled against Atlantic Coast Line railroad in a case involving a Black passenger forced to leave a White coach while on a trip between Philadelphia and Rocky Mount, North Carolina.⁵³

On November 25, 1955, the ICC ordered an end to racial segregation on interstate trains and buses and in public waiting rooms and restrooms serving interstate travelers. The ICC made the ruling in response to the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, which found racial segregation in public schools

⁴⁹ "I.C.C. Reopens Case of 'Jim Crow' Cars," *The New York Times*, August 5, 1941.

⁵⁰ "Negro Gets \$2,000 for Jim Crow Arrest; Southern Railway Settles Out of Court," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1948.

⁵¹ Bulletin No TM-105 from I. Y. Cox to All Concerned, dated July 13, 1948, in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

⁵² "Gets \$55 in Bias Case," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1951.

⁵³ "Study Decision," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, North Carolina), November 13, 1952.

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unconstitutional, and two cases brought before the commission. In one case, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People initiated a complaint against thirteen railroads operating primarily in the South. The other involved New York City beautician Sarah Keys, who was refused transportation by the Carolina Coach Company of Raleigh after she refused to move to the back of a bus in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina in 1952. The ban was to take effect on January 10, 1956. At the time, thirteen southern states had laws requiring railroads to provide separate or divided coaches and separate rest rooms and waiting rooms.⁵⁴ The attorneys general of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina almost immediately signaled their states would resist the order.⁵⁵ Throughout the South, railroads and bus companies ignored the law and maintained separate facilities on their coaches and facilities.

In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized the freedom rides in the South to demand equal treatment of the races in trains, buses, and terminals. The national media publicized violent episodes of southerners injuring and killing freedom riders. As a result, Attorney General Robert Kennedy petitioned the ICC to enforce its 1955 law. In his petition to the ICC, Kennedy noted, "The time has come for this commission, in administering that act, to declare unequivocally by regulation that a Negro passenger is free to travel the length and breadth of this country in the same manner as any other passenger."⁵⁶ Finally, on November 1, 1961, the ICC ordered states to enforce desegregation in transportation.

Surviving Jim Crow Cars

The number of surviving partitioned railroad passenger cars or cars formerly designated for Black passengers remains unknown. Only in the recent past have these relics of Jim Crow come to light and those known to exist are held by railroad or history museums.

Southern Railway passenger car number 1212 is one of several cars formerly in the Southern Railway system that has been identified as a Jim Crow car. When Southern Railway renovated car number 1211 at Hayne Shops in 1953, car number 1212, nearly identical to car number 1211, and four other coaches were

⁵⁴ "Desegregation Order Poses Difficult Task for Rail Industry," *The York Dispatch* (York, Pennsylvania), November 26, 1955.

⁵⁵ "Segregation on Buses, Trains Ordered Ended," *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, November 25, 1955; "Best to Accept Ruling of the ICC," *The News Leader* (Staunton, Virginia), November 27, 1955.

⁵⁶ "Atty. Gen. Asks Prompt Move to End Segregation on Buses," *The High Point Enterprise*, May 30, 1961.

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Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
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modernized as a group with identical finishes and equipment.⁵⁷ The location of the four additional cars is unknown. Car number 1212 is located at the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, Georgia. Like car number 1211, car number 1212 has not been renovated and appears much as it did in 1953. Unlike car number 1211, the partitioned coach retains its coral-colored upholstered seats and the floor tile installed in 1953. Car number 1212 is currently not open to public viewing.⁵⁸

The country's most prominent Jim Crow railroad coach, Pullman Company-built Southern Railway passenger car number 1200, resides at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Like car number 1211, the 1922 passenger coach ran on the Southern Railway and was segregated at Hayne Shops years after its initial construction. Also, like car number 1211, car number 1200 underwent a major overhaul in the early 1950s, but the partition was maintained. Before its restoration to reflect the period from the late 1940s and early 1950s, car number 1200 was stored at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga.⁵⁹

The Pullman Company built car number 906 for the Central of Georgia Railroad in 1924. The passenger coach resides at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The railroad had the car modernized in 1937, likely the year it was divided to accommodate separate areas for Black and White passengers. The car contains modern seats, but mostly reflects the 1937 renovation. A turtle shell roof tops the car and the fixed windows have rounded corners like car number 1211.⁶⁰

The Seaboard Air Line Railroad combination passenger and baggage coach Number 259 is located at the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in Miami, Florida. The car is known as a combine because it carried passengers and luggage. The Number 259 contains eighteen seats in its front section and twenty-four seats in the rear. The railroad donated the car to the museum in 1958. This Jim Crow car, which has been restored, retains its clerestory roof.

⁵⁷ "Specification for Modernizing Partitioned Coaches," document in the collection of the North Carolina Transportation Museum, n.d.

⁵⁸ Lloyd Neal, Assistant Librarian, Southern Railway Museum, email correspondence with Jennifer Martin, August 13, 2020.

⁵⁹ Alex Palmer, "This Segregated Railway Car Offers a Visceral Reminder of the Jim Crow Era," *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 13, 2016, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/segregated-railway-car-offers-visceral-reminder-jim-crow-era-180959383/>, accessed October 10, 2020.

⁶⁰ Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum website, <https://www.tvrail.com/about-us/equipment>, accessed October 2, 2020.

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The Rockdale, Sandow, & Southern Railroad #3 at the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum in Campo, California is a wooden combine built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1886. Little is known of the car's early history, but in May 1916, the Dardanelle & Russellville Railroad, a five-mile Arkansas short line, bought it and divided it to comply with the Arkansas Jim Crow car law. On March 5, 1924, a fire destroyed the siding, windows, curtains, and upholstery. On October 31, 1936, the six-mile Rockdale, Sandow & Southern Railroad in Texas bought it and added a new partition that created an eight-seat section for Blacks and twenty-two-seat White section. In 1945, Twentieth Century Fox purchased the car to use in films. In 1972, it became part of a tourist railway. The Pacific Railway Museum, which acquired it in 1983, restored the coach to the appearance it had from 1936 to 1945 when it operated as a Jim Crow car.⁶¹

⁶¹ Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association website, <https://www.psrn.org/trains/passenger/rss-3/>, accessed October 2, 2020.

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Rowan County, North Carolina

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Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
Rowan County, North Carolina

Geographical Data

Longitude/Latitude Coordinates

- Latitude: 35.685995
Longitude: -80.435891

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211 is the railroad passenger coach which measures sixty-nine feet long and nine feet wide. The limit of the nominated property is the car itself, which is generally located within the 1924 roundhouse at the North Carolina Transportation Museum, which was built in 1924.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211 encompasses only the structure of the car because it is a structure designed to be moved. The latitude/longitude is centered on the roundhouse, where the car is located.

Photos

All photos by Jennifer Martin, MdM Historical Consultants Inc. P.O. Box 1399, Durham, NC, in June 2020 unless otherwise indicated. Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.

- Side of car
- Black passenger area facing men's lounge
- Women's saloon in lounge
- Side of car
- End of car
- Men's lounge saloon
- Men's small toilet room
- White passenger area

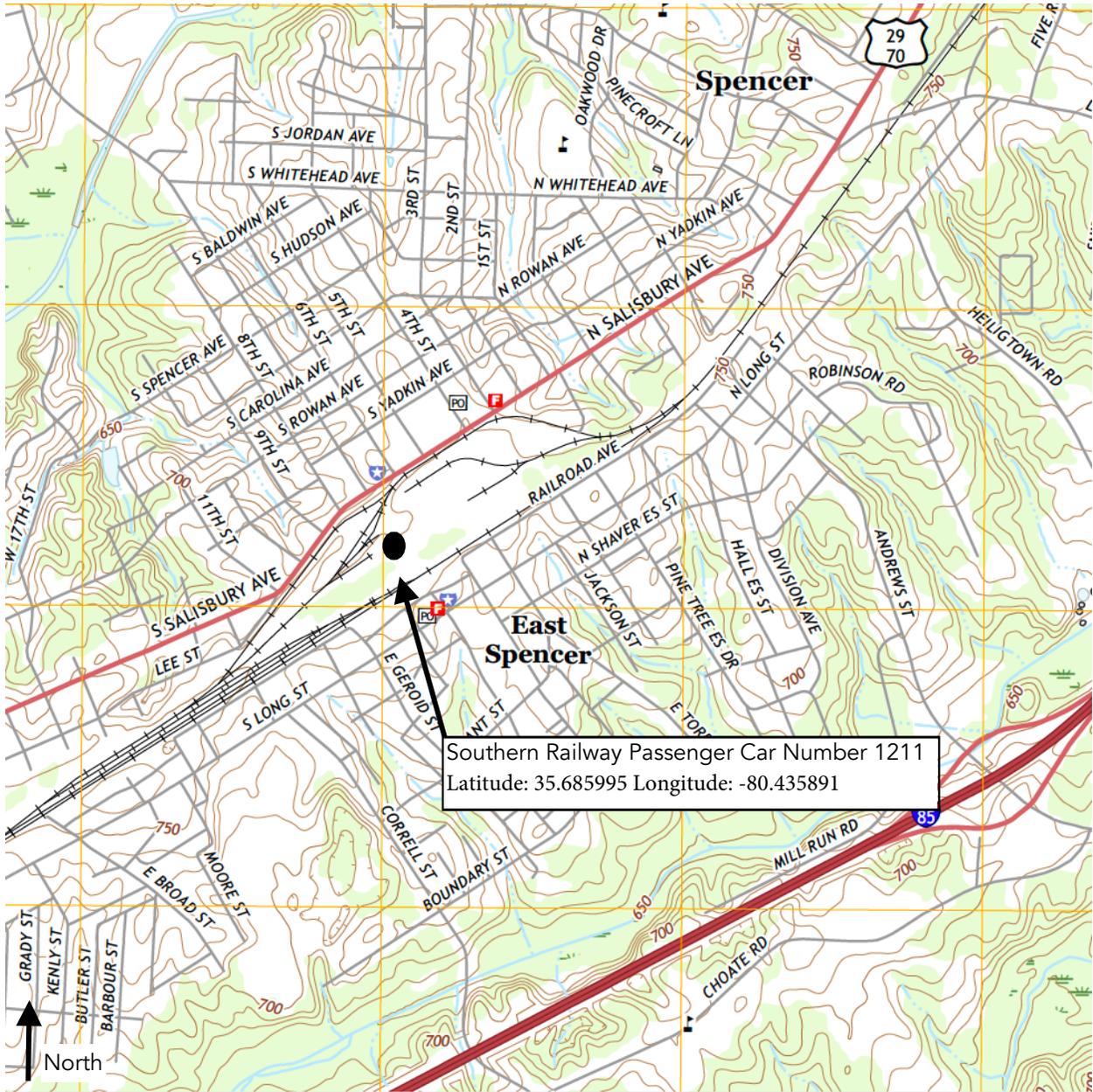
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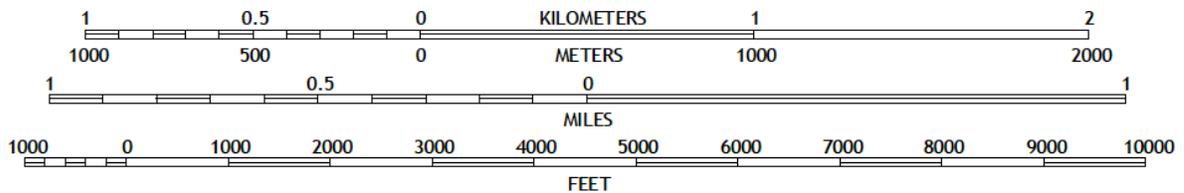
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Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
Rowan County, North Carolina

9. White passenger area facing partition and door between Black and White passenger areas
10. Looking into Black passenger area with women's lounge to the right
11. Water alcove in Black passenger area
12. Car number 1211 in the roundhouse, photographer facing S
13. Car number 1211 in the roundhouse, photographer facing E
14. Roundhouse, photographer facing E



SCALE 1:24 000



Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
Located at the North Carolina Transportation Museum
1 Samuel Spencer Drive
Spencer, Rowan County, NC 28159
US Geological Survey Map, Salisbury Quadrangle, 2016

National Register of Historic Places Location Map
created by Jennifer Martin, October 2020



Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
latitude 35.685995
longitude -80.435891

Roundhouse (1924)

tracks of the former Southern Railway

*National Register of Historic Places Site Map
Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
located at the North Carolina Transportation Museum
1 Samuel Spencer Drive
Spencer, Rowan County, North Carolina 281159*

*Created by Jennifer F. Martin, MdM Historical Consultants
December 2021*

*Created from
HPOWEB, NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources GIS*



National Register of Historic Places Photo Key
 Southern Railway Passenger Car Number 1211
 Spencer, Rowan County, NC

