

Historic narrow gauge railcar returns home Como to get a new railcar

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Colorado & Southern boxcar 8027 in Kansas, ready for shipment to Como, Colo., June 6, 2019. (Photo courtesy of South Park Rail Society)

In the early days of 1899, Colorado & Southern narrow gauge boxcar number 8027 was shipped from the American Car & Foundry plant in St. Louis, Mo., to the newly-formed Colorado & Southern Railroad in Denver, a brand-new freight car for a brand new railroad.

Now, 120 years later, 8027, a restored freight car for a restored railroad, will be making the journey again as it returns from restoration in northeast Kansas to

the former Colorado & Southern railroad town of Como.

The only known survivor of its type, C&S 8027 is now owned by the South Park Rail Society and will become part of the Society's collection displayed at the historic stone roundhouse in Como.

The cost of shipping No. 8027 to Como was covered by a grant from the BNSF Railway Foundation, while over 50

individual donors contributed towards the cost of readying the car for display. BNSF's contribution is especially fitting as the railroad is the successor to the Colorado & Southern.

Volunteers built track for No. 8027 in Como on Saturday June 1, and the car was scheduled to arrive in Como June 10.

About C&S 8027

Colorado & Southern 8027 is the sole known survivor of a group of 40 such cars built in December of 1898 by the St. Charles Car Company of Missouri.

Ordered by C&S predecessor Union Pacific Denver & Gulf, the cars were built the month the C&S was formed and were delivered lettered for the new Colorado & Southern and numbered 8025 to 8064. The "St. Charles" boxcars were wood framed, 30 feet long and rode on standard arch bar trucks.

The cars survived long enough to receive major overhauls at the C&S's Denver shops around 1930, and a few survived to the end of most C&S narrow gauge operations in 1941. C&S records indicate that 8027 was dismantled in Denver in January of 1939. Stripped of its metal parts, the carbody was sold to a farmer east of Boulder where it was used as a calving shed and general storage until early 2005.

Acquired by a private owner in 2005, the car was slowly restored over the next several years. In 2011, No. 8027 was moved to Kansas, along with its then owner. No. 8027 was donated to the South Park Rail Society in December 2018.

About Como and the Como Project

From 1879 to 1938, Como was a railroad town, a division point on the narrow gauge Denver, South Park & Pacific/Colorado & Southern route from Denver to Leadville and Gunnison. The fall of 1938 saw the last C&S train leave Como, pulling up the rails as it went.

Nearly 80 years later, in August of 2017, the whistle of a steam locomotive was once again heard in Como as the South Park Rail Society's 1912 Baldwin locomotive, "Klondike Kate," made her first test runs on the newly-rebuilt track.

These first test runs marked a major milestone in the Como Project, a joint effort of the South Park Rail Society and the Denver, South Park & Pacific Historical Society, to restore and rebuild the Como railroad facilities as an operating railroad museum.

About the South Park Rail Society

The South Park Rail Society is a nonprofit corporation formed in 2016 for the purpose of preserving the former Denver, South Park & Pacific /Colorado & Southern narrow gauge railroad division point in Como as an operating railroad museum.