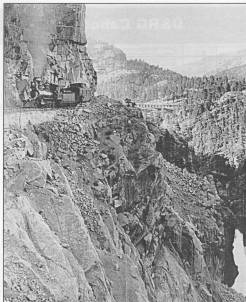


The original Denver & Rio Grande narrow gauge cabooses were small four-wheel wooden cars. No. 49 was completed in 1881, one of 88 built in the company shops between 1871 and 1885. These were 16 feet long and had a nine-foot wheelbase. There were three windows on each side, but the center side and end windows were later covered. No. 49 was renumbered 0548 in August 1887.

Over the years, the railroad modified the interiors for the comfort of crews. Stoves were installed around 1886, and in 1900 the link and pin couplers were replaced by Janney automatic couplers. By 1913, the U.S. Safety Appliances Act required ladders and grab irons to be added. It was changed to an eight-wheel car sometime after 1918. At that time, a new bolster made the car four inches higher.

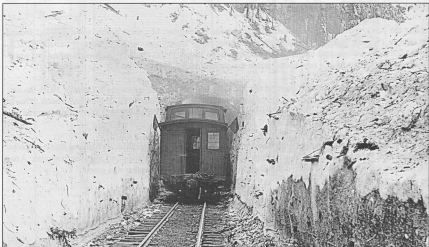
For 57 years, this small caboose traveled the Rio Grande's narrow gauge system. In October 1938, the carbody was sold at Durango to an Animas River placer mine for use as a bunkhouse. It then had a book value of \$243. In July 1984, Colorado Railroad Museum purchased the carbody. Volunteers have completely restored No. 49 to its 1881 four-wheel configuration.

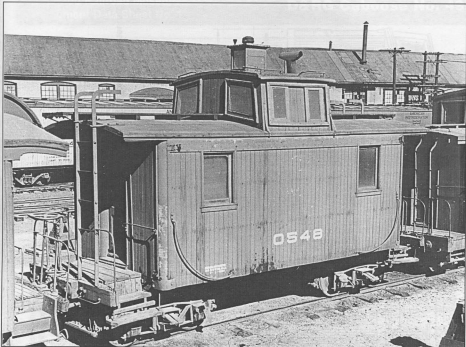
Original colors were caboose red with floors, platforms, and steps painted Prince's Mineral Brown. Interior walls were light green with a light blue ceiling. Tuscan Red was used on sashes and black on ironwork. After 1918, the cars were Boxcar Red with white or aluminum grab irons. The interior was green.



(left) William H. Jackson captured this Denver & Rio Grande engine and caboose on a glass plate negative along the Silverton branch in the 1880s. The caboose is very similar to the 49.

(below) D&RG photographer George L. Beam found 49 going through the famed tunnel in a snowslide near Elk Park, Colorado, in 1909. (all photos, Colorado Railroad Museum)

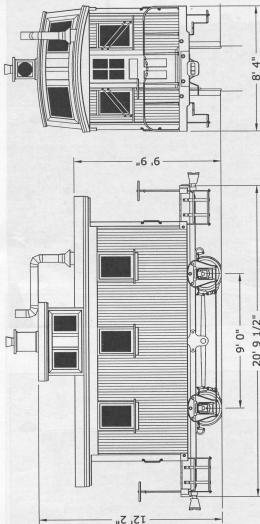




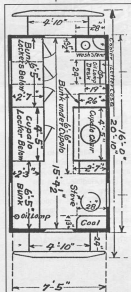
This August 1, 1938, photo at Alamosa shows No. 49 rebuilt and renumbered as an eight-wheel caboose. The lettering is barely legible, as is the Rio Grande emblem over the former location of the middle side window. (Richard B. Jackson photo, Colorado Railroad Museum)

(right) Forty-three years later, in October 1981, Gordon Chappell found 0548 in a derelict condition in Durango, Colorado.





Scale 1/4" = 1' 0"



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2005

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Grandt, Robert L. (editor), *Caboose of the D&RGW*, Narrow Gauge Pictorial Volume V, 1987.