

NEGOTIATING SELDOM USED GRADE CROSSINGS

By Dick Ray
(Western Maryland M-9, No. 67)

One of the greatest tests of a motor car operator's skill is that of negotiating a seldom used grade crossing. These types of crossings are typically on shortline spurs, or museum trackage that sees infrequent rail usage. Here are some tips to help you cross these seldom used crossings safely, and with less difficulty.

1) With two-cycle engines, make sure that the engine timing is retarded. This avoids accidentally reversing the engine in the middle of the crossing and having to push the car across.

2) When travelling with several other cars, the lead car should wait for the last cars to pull up on the near side of the crossing before starting the crossing process. Lookouts and flagmen can then be posted for the entire group crossing.

3) Before crossing, wait for the car ahead to get completely across, and make sure there is room for your car on the other side of the crossing. It is very embarrassing and dangerous to be "hung up" in the middle of the highway, if the car ahead stalls.

4) On belt-driven cars, don't latch up the belt lever in the control plate, while negotiating the crossing. This helps to prevent accidental engine reversing, and allows the car to roll slowly onto the rails again at the far side of the crossing. Most derailments, due to dirt and debris in crossing flangeways, occur on the far side of the crossing; this can be prevented with extra care.

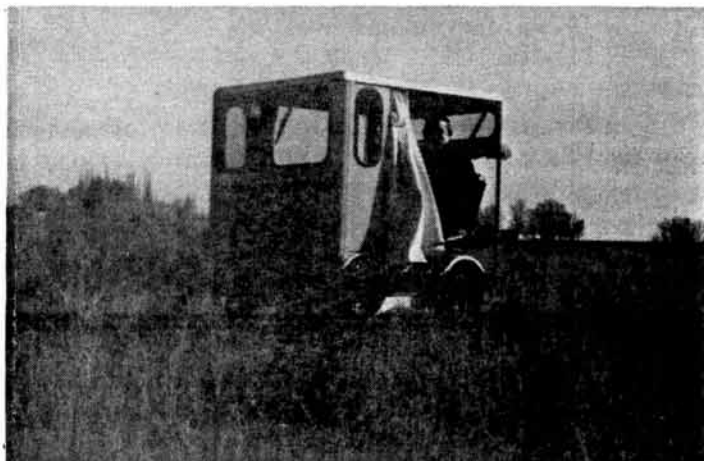
5) *Never* attempt to roll across a crossing that is paved over, or totally covered with dirt. This is not only dangerous to the riders, but very hard on the car. This situation calls for unloading the passengers, and shoving the car across empty.

6) When pushing is necessary, be sure to shove only on the push handles. Pushing on the cab is not recommended by Fairmont (and probably all other car builders), and it may cause the car to "skew" sideways, out of alignment with the rails.

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NARCOA member Garrett Vandermeer's ex N&W M-19 pauses beside a couple of ex METRO cars, in of all places Ashley Hudson, Indiana, on the Hillsdale County Railroad! The cars were purchased from the transit authority by a local railfan. Garrett lives in Battle Creek, Michigan, and is a retired engineer from the Grand Trunk Western Railroad. Photo By Garrett Vandermeer

TRACK CAR PHOTO LINEUP PHOTOS OF MEMBER'S CARS



NARCOA member Cliff Judson has permission to operate his Fairmont MT-19 (above) on a rather scenic portion of track (below), near his home in Longmont, Colorado. Cliff is an ex Burlington employee. Photos By Cliff Judson

