

Memorial Boxcar

Located just south of City Hall, the boxcar was fabricated sometime between 1872 and 1885. The 12 ton, 29 ft. long and 9 ft. wide 4-wheeled carriages were first used for general-purpose freight hauling, and then later converted to troop and animal transports for wartime service.

The boxcar was part of a train that was an expression of thanks from the Citizens of France to the people of America for aid rendered during and after World War II. In 1947 the American Friendship Train carried

some \$40,000,000 in relief supplies to France and Italy. The American Friendship Train inspired a rail worker and war veteran named Andre Picard to suggest France reciprocate.

A veteran's organization adopted the proposal and a small committee was established to collect gifts. As press and radio spread the story the project gained national momentum. The superannuated boxcars as merci carriers were a thoughtfully appropriate choice. Superseding the local committee, the National Headquarters of the French War Veterans Association took control and decided to fill 49 cars with gifts. One would go to each of the 48 states, and the 49th would be shared by the District of Columbia and the Territory of Hawaii.

