

Fort Erie Railway Museum

# Canadian National 6218

## What's a 4-8-4 Northern?

Steam locomotive No. 6218, one of the 6200 series, was considered one of the finest locomotives in North America.

The name 4-8-4 comes from the engine's wheel arrangement. This engine has four leading wheels, eight driving wheels, and a four-wheel trailing truck beneath the firebox at the rear of the engine. The engine design provided great versatility, as it was powerful enough to provide fast freight, and heavy passenger service.

Why is it a Northern? The 4-8-4 wheel arrangement was first introduced by Northern Pacific, in 1926.

## Working with Steam

The 6218 was built by the Montreal Locomotive Works, as part of their 6200 - 6234 series.

The 6218 spent its 18-year working career in a variety of roles, right across the country. In the east, it serviced the Montreal - Halifax run (a trip of 840 miles). In the central zone, it performed international service between Montreal and White River Jct., Vermont. In the west, the 6218 crossed the prairies as far as Saskatoon. By the time of its retirement in 1959, the 6218 had developed a loyal following, admired by those who had worked on it, and those who had ridden behind it.

The 6218 has been just as busy in its "retirement". After a brief "down-time" from 1959 until 1964, including a stint with the Stratford Motive Power Shop for repairs, the 6218 was ready again to meet the public. From 1964 until 1971, the 6218 ran fan excursions. In six and a half years, she made 91 trips, and accommodated over 50,000 rail fans.

Today, the 6218 still thrills thousands of fans each year, as they sit in the fireman's seat... even if the scenery now passes in their memories.

## Fast Facts

- 1942 - 6218 delivered by the Montreal Locomotive Works.
- 1959 - 6218 retired.
- 1963 - 6218 recalled, and sent to Stratford Motive Power Shop for repairs.
- 1964 - 6218 begins fan tour excursions.
- 1971 - 6218 retired.
- 1974 - 6218 donated and moved to the Fort Erie Railroad Museum.

## Other Engine Facts...

- Height - 15' 5"
- Width - 10' 10"
- Weight - 399,600 lbs.
- Drive wheel diameter - 6' 1"
- Fuel used - 3 to 4 tons of coal/ hour
- Length of engine with tender - 94' 9"
- Weight of tender - 227,300 lbs.
- Coal capacity of tender - 18 tons
- Water capacity of tender - 11,600 imperial gallons

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# CN 79138 Caboose



## Fast Facts

- 1851 - First known caboose in use.
- 1863 - First time a cupola was used on a caboose.
- 1944 - the CN 79138 was built. Originally red, its bright orange make-over allowed it to be more visible in rail yards.
- \$80,000 - Cost of building a caboose today
- \$400,000 - Cost of repair and maintenance per year.
- \$4 million - Cost saved by replacing the caboose with a monitor box hung on a train's last car.

## The Original "Mobile Home"

Serving as a temporary home and office, the caboose is an efficiency marvel! This rolling room provided a kitchen, living room, washroom, office and bedroom for the freight conductor, brakeman, and other railroaders.

When it was time to prepare meals, all the basic amenities were at hand. Each caboose had a wood or fuel fired stove (which also provided heat), a sink with a tank of water, and a fold-up table. A pot of soup or stew was usually kept on the stove, so the men could eat as time allowed.

If a place to relax was needed, the workers had two choices: benches on the main level (which doubled as storage), or seats in the cupola, where during working hours they would inspect the track. They could also enjoy the view of the passing country-side from any direction (the cupola has windows on all four sides, and seat backs which swivel, to allow viewing forwards and backwards).

When nature called, the workers used a commode which emptied directly onto the track.

If space was needed for completing paperwork, a desk and lamp were provided.

And when working long-distance trips, and sleep was needed, beds folded down from the walls. No one had their "own" bed. Often, just as one worker was rolling off the mattress, another was rolling on.

Caboose designers looked to ship galleys for the efficiency model, and it is fair to say that while rolling over track, the caboose made life more comfortable for hard working railroaders.

## A Name is just a name...

The word 'caboose' instantly brings a picture to mind: a brightly painted rail car at the end of a train.

How about 'crummy'? Or 'hack'? Or perhaps 'buggie', 'brain box', or 'van'? These are all slang expressions for that same brightly painted car we all know as a caboose. More than any other piece of railroad equipment, the caboose has inspired many colourful nicknames. Even the cupola has its own nickname — the dog house. Before the creation of the cupola, trainmen would stand on crates and stick their head and shoulders out a hole cut in the roof!