

# A HISTORY OF *DOVER HARBOR*

[www.doverharbor.com](http://www.doverharbor.com)

## A Classic Pullman Railroad Car

Owned and Operated by the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Inc.

AMTRAK # 800073

AAR # NRHX 001

*Dover Harbor* was constructed by the Pullman Company of Chicago in July, 1923 (lot 4698, Plan 2951) as a combine, baggage-library car originally named the *Maple Shade*. The 81 foot, 80 ton car had a 4-section, 12 seat lounge, a barber shop, and a 28 foot baggage area. Painted in the Pennsylvania Railroad's standard Tuscan red colors, it operated in service on that railroad's name trains including the *Broadway Limited* and the *Spirit of St. Louis* for eleven years.



*Dover Harbor Photo by David Scavone*

The *Maple Shade* was built during the 'Standard' or 'Conventional' era of passenger car building which began in 1910 with an order of cars by the Pennsylvania Railroad for cars of all steel construction. Prior to this time, railroad passenger cars had been built largely of wood. Today, cars from the era are commonly known as 'heavyweights' due to the high weight of the steel sided and concrete floor construction of the cars. The heavyweight era came to a close with the beginning of construction of stainless steel sided or 'Streamlined' era cars in the 1940s.

In March, 1934, the *Maple Shade* was recalled into the Pullman Company shops. The car was rebuilt into a six double bedroom/buffet/lounge floor plan, and renamed *Dover Harbor*. *Dover Harbor*, along with eight other cars were built with the same configuration according plan 4015 and were designated the Dover series cars (see below). Air conditioning, which was new to railroad cars at this time, was installed. With this rebuilding, the car weighed 87 tons, and was repainted to the standard era Pullman green and gold livery which it wears today.



The Pullman Company, founded by George M. Pullman, built, operated, and maintained a fleet of cars in first class passenger rail service by contract on most railroads across the United States. George Pullman is credited with the creation of the first modern, comfortable sleeping car for railroad travel in 1858. From a small beginning, Mr. Pullman created an empire, which during its peak in the 1930s was responsible for a fleet of over eight thousand sleeper, parlor, club and cafe cars. Pullman was renowned world-wide for the excellent quality of service passengers received from the porters and stewards. At that time, a person would purchase their rail ticket for carriage over a railroad, and also purchase a separate Pullman accommodations ticket to upgrade to first class sleeping car space. The range, size and types of sleeping car accommodations in the 1930's included the most basic-- the open section (upper or lower berth enclosed by curtains), to the bedroom (as on *Dover Harbor*), the compartment, and the drawing room. Indeed, the Pullman Company was said to have operated the largest hotel in the world, with upwards of 100,000 beds occupied on a given night.

After the renovation of *Dover Harbor* was completed in May, 1934, the Pullman Company assigned the car to service on the Michigan Central Railroad, a subsidiary of the New York Central Railroad (NYC). In 1939, *Dover Harbor* operated with sister cars *Dover Plains* and *Dover Bay* on the westbound *Lake Shore Limited* and the eastbound *Commodore Vanderbilt* between New York and Chicago. Later, *Dover Harbor* saw assignments to the *Cleveland Limited* in 1944 and the *Knickerbocker* in 1945-- both New York Central trains operating between New York and Cleveland.

The Pullman Company owned and operated the car until December 31, 1948, at which time, Pullman transferred ownership of its cars to the railroads on which they operated, and arranged a lease-back contact with the railroads by which Pullman would operate and maintain the cars. This transfer was the result of a federal government anti-trust action, which mandated that Pullman separate its car manufacturing from its car operations, and that its fleet of cars be sold.

In July, 1953, *Dover Harbor* was repainted into the New York Central grey livery.

On April 24, 1954, *Dover Harbor* along with *Dover Cliff* was assigned to operate between Washington and Montreal on the *Montrealer* and *Washingtonian*. These trains were an interline train pair operated by the Pennsylvania, the New York, New Haven and Hartford, the Boston & Maine, the Central Vermont and the Canadian National Railroads. *Dover Harbor's* lounge provided meal service on these trains between New York and Montreal, serving an average of fourteen persons for supper and eighteen persons for breakfast. A Pennsylvania Railroad dining

car was added to these trains between Washington and New York for those wishing full meals. In 1955, streamlined lightweight cars *Pine Tree State* and *Nutmeg State* replaced the *Dover* series cars on these trains; *Dover Harbor* continued frequently as a substitute car on these trains.

In February, 1958, the car was painted in the two tone grey Pullman pool service color scheme. On April 7, 1958, the Pullman Company negotiated with the various railroads to trade a series of *Clover* cars (8-section, 5-double bedroom) for the *Dover* series cars. Thus, the *Dover* series cars were transferred back to Pullman Company ownership. *Dover Harbor* was finally retired to storage on October 18, 1965 at Pullman's Calumet Shops near Chicago, Illinois.



*Dover Harbor at San Bernardino, CA October 28, 1960 in pool service. Image courtesy David Shaw*

In April, 1967, the Pullman Company sold *Dover Harbor* to a private individual. The Pullman Company itself ceased operating sleeping cars on December 31, 1968. Pullman, Incorporated, its successor, continued to construct freight and passenger cars until it was sold to Bombardier Corp. of Canada in the 1970s.

After a series of private owners, the Washington D.C. Chapter, National Railway Historical Society (DCNRHS) purchased *Dover Harbor* on November 30, 1979. Emphasis has been placed on retaining as much of the car's 1934 appearance as possible. The exterior of *Dover Harbor* has been repainted in the 1930s Pullman green complete with authentic lettering. The beautiful interior of the car appears much as it did in the 1930s, refurbished with period painting, carpet, and furnishings. Much of the furniture, wood, and brass work is refinished. While maintaining its period appearance, the Chapter instituted mechanical improvements which enable the car to meet current standards. The car made its first revenue trip in June, 1982 on the Southern Steam Special and became Amtrak certified on May 21, 1986. *Dover Harbor* is now the only heavyweight Pullman revenue service car still in its original configuration fully operational for private use on Amtrak passenger trains.

Visitors to *Dover Harbor* can see the results of ongoing efforts of the dedicated people who comprise the Washington, D.C. Chapter NRHS. Our goal can only be achieved through your support as friends and patrons of *Dover Harbor*. Your tax deductible donations are greatly appreciated. With premier class accommodations, *Dover Harbor* is at home on any Amtrak passenger train across the United States. Parties with inquiries regarding mobile or stationary charters should contact:



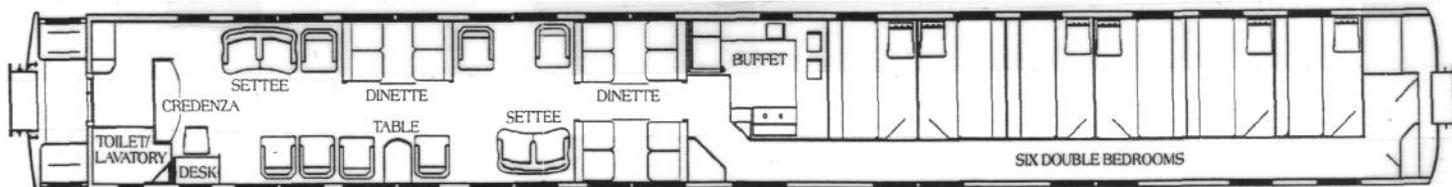
Kevin Tankersley, Charter Agent  
 Washington, D.C. Chapter NRHS  
 1325 G. St., NW, Suite 500  
 Washington, DC 20005-3146  
 Phone: 202-627-6978  
 e-mail charter@doverharbor.com

For more information, and pictures of the interior of *Dover Harbor* visit our internet web site at: [www.doverharbor.com](http://www.doverharbor.com)

### List of *Dover* Series Cars (Plan #4015)

<u>Dover Name</u>	<u>Former Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Owner</u>
<i>Dover Bay</i> *	<i>Adrian</i>	Baraboo, WI	Circus World Museum
<i>Dover Castle</i>	<i>Delta</i>	Scrapped 3/59	n/a
<i>Dover Cliff</i>	<i>Goshen</i>	South Plainfield, NJ	Jack Bennett
<i>Dover Fort</i>	<i>Ligonier</i>	Nelsonville, OH	Hocking Valley Scenic Railway
<i>Dover Harbor</i> *	<i>Maple Shade</i>	Washington, DC	Washington, D.C. Chapter NRHS
<i>Dover Hill</i> *	<i>Spruce Creek</i>	Scrapped 5/61	n/a
<i>Dover Patrol</i>	<i>Ripley</i>	Jamestown, CA	Railtown 1897 State Historic Park
<i>Dover Plains</i> *	<i>Toms River</i>	Broadhead, WI	The Escamba and Lake Superior Railroad
<i>Dover Strait</i>	<i>Stryker</i>	Union, IL	Illinois Railroad Museum

\*Cars constructed together in Lot 4698



Vestibule

### Floor Plan of *Dover Harbor*

History revised August, 2021 by James Lilly and Kevin J. Tankersley; Revised January, 1997 by Kevin J. Tankersley; Revised January 1, 1992; Originally written and researched by Stanley Gimbert and William Hamlin.