

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Frankfort and Cincinnati Model 55 Rail Car

other names/site number The Cardinal/ NE-411

## 2. Location

street & number 136 South Main Street N/A  not for publication

city or town New Haven N/A  vicinity

state Kentucky code Ky county Nelson code 179 zip code 40051-0240

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*David L. Morgan* David L. Morgan, SHPO and Executive Director 10-1-97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*Patrick Anderson*

10/8/98

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Contributing Noncontributing buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation-Rail Related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

Transportation-Rail Related

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls Metal-Steel

roof Metal-Steel

other Metal-Steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Checkboxes for documentation status: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Social History

Period of Significance

1927-1947

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Brill Company, Philadelphia, PA

Primary location of additional data:

- Checkboxes for location: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Kentucky Railway Museum

F & C M55  
Name of Property

Nelson, Ky  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property N/A

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jonathan V. Parrent

organization Murray State University date July 21, 1997

street & number P. O. Box 9 telephone 502-762-6586

city or town Murray state Ky zip code 42071-0009

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Kentucky Railway Museum

street & number 136 South Main Street telephone 502-549-5470

city or town New Haven state Ky zip code 40051-0240

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Frankfort and Cincinnati Model 55 Rail Car  
Nelson County, Kentucky

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## F & C M55 Descriptive Statement

Built in 1927 by the J.G. Brill Company of Philadelphia, PA, the Cardinal is a passenger and baggage car that is propelled by a gasoline-powered engine with a mechanical drive train. The car measures 43' 5" in length and is approximately 8'4" wide riding on two sets of heavy four-wheel trucks having a wheel base of 6'8". The front of the car houses the baggage section, the passenger section can be found in the car's rear.

The Cardinal was powered by a heavy four-cylinder engine with a 6' stroke and 4.75" bore. This engine created 68 horsepower and 1500 rpm which gave the Cardinal an average speed of 38 miles per hour. It drove a multiple disc clutch and a three speed transmission through the auxiliary transmission found in the forward motor truck then through propeller shafts to the gear axles. The trucks are type Brill 81 and are interchangeable, as are the wheels, bearings, tires, and brakes. The wheels, 30" in diameter, are fitted with removable tires and cast steel centers.

As many as 43 passengers could travel on the Cardinal with the utilization of 5 additional folding slat seats found in the 11' by 6' baggage section. Its name, the Cardinal, was derived from its bright red paint. The construction of the car and its particularly low weight, 29,000 lbs, allowed for inexpensive operation, only 16 cents per mile. Occasionally the Cardinal would pull another car for additional seating or

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Frankfort and Cincinnati Model 55 Rail Car  
Nelson County, Kentucky

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baggage, but primarily ran by itself.

The Cardinal currently resides on the grounds of the Kentucky Railway Museum in New Haven, Kentucky. Though the car has suffered deterioration over the years, it has the proper physical features intact that maintain eligibility for the National Register. Of the seven integrity factors, the Cardinal must possess integrity of setting, location, and association, and materials. The car's present location on track owned by the Kentucky Railway Museum provides the car with the appropriate integrity of setting through which its importance may be seen. Comparisons with other railroad cars can be made after which the Cardinal's features may be better appreciated. Related with setting, integrity of location is also attained by the Cardinal's position at the museum and the authentic train depot environment found there.

While the Cardinal has suffered deterioration, its primary components have remained intact and the car may be identified easily as a motor coach, thus maintaining its integrity of materials. The Cardinal did not originally run on the section of track owned by the Kentucky Railway Museum but the integrity factor of association allows it to maintain significance. Walking on the tracks from the restored depot on the museum's grounds to the Cardinal provides a true sense of the power and importance of rail travel. Funds have been received to begin the restoration of the Cardinal, scheduled for later in 1997. This work will consist of sandblasting the car's exterior and repainting it the familiar Cardinal red. The interior will be refinished and the woodwork

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Frankfort and Cincinnati Model 55 Rail Car  
Nelson County, Kentucky

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will be reinstalled, as will the seats. All repair work will only enhance the integrity of the car, and allow for its significance to be better communicated.

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National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

The Cardinal

Nelson County, Kentucky

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### Statement of Significance

The Frankfort and Cincinnati's M55, "The Cardinal" meets national Register Criterion A and is eligible under the historic context, "Rail Travel vs. Automobile Travel in Kentucky, 1929-1947."

#### **Rail Travel vs. Automobile Travel in Kentucky, 1929-1947**

Travel by rail between cities or for longer trips became more important for Kentuckians, as for all Americans, after the Civil War. While foot, horse, and bicycle were the main modes of transportation within most communities, the railroad made longer travel accessible and the interurban lines moved people quickly and efficiently between medium and large cities. This was part of a national phenomenon. While statistics for Kentucky are not available, in 1890 nationally railroads carried 492,431,000 passengers. Passenger traffic rose steadily until 1920 when it peaked at 1,269,913,000.<sup>1</sup> During the 1920s the automobile became widely available and affordable for the first time due to Henry Ford's innovations in production and pricing. The earliest impact of the automobile was on short range travel because of the primitive condition of the nation's roads. Rail travel fell quickly to 707,987,000 passengers in 1930 and continued to decline sharply to 488,019,000 in 1950.<sup>2</sup> Once the post-war adjustments in the economy were completed the decline accelerated reaching 289,469,000 passengers in 1970.<sup>3</sup> The decline of the railroads following World War II was hastened by their loss of intercity freight at the same time they were losing passengers. In 1940 railroads carried 63.2 percent of such freight compared with 9.5 percent carried by truck, by 1970 rail carried 39.8 percent and truck 21.3.<sup>4</sup>

As many students of American life in the first half of the twentieth century have shown the automobile provided Americans with great flexibility in traveling, whether it was for work, vacations, shopping, or some other purpose. This flexibility freed them from dependence on the railroads and interurbans with their rigid routes and schedules and reshaped both American life and the

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States; Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 1975) pp. 728-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 707.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

The Cardinal

Nelson County, Kentucky

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American landscape.<sup>5</sup> In 1920 there were 8,131,522 motor vehicles registered in the United States an increase of 1700 percent from only 458,377 in 1910. Despite the depression of the 1930s by 1940 more than 27 million motor vehicles were registered in the United States. The increase continued with more than 40 million registered vehicles by 1950. Trucks increased a pace from just over 1 million in 1920 to 3.764 million in 1930, 4.886 million in 1940 and 8.604 million in 1950.<sup>6</sup> Road mileage classified as part of the "Federal system" increased from 169,007 in 1922 to 235,482 in 1940 and to 643,939 by 1950. Federal highway spending increased from \$80 million in 1920 to \$100 million in 1930 and \$150 million in 1940 and then to \$390 million in 1950.<sup>7</sup>

The steady decline in rail passengers and freight, and the concomitant contraction of revenue hit American railroads hard. Railroads across the country were forced to think of new ways to compete for passengers and freight with the automobile and truck. One of the innovations that resulted was a new type of railroad car designed to operate at low cost on branch and short lines. These new cars would allow frequent service on low volume lines because of their lower operating costs and, it was hoped, win back passengers and freight.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Cardinal**

The Cardinal was one of these new type cars which were self-propelled by gasoline engines. These cars were developed around 1910 and were produced by several companies including the McKean Motor Car Company, the Hall-Scott Motor Car Company, the J. G. Brill Company, and the General Electric Company. Nearly three hundred gas-powered motor cars were in service

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<sup>5</sup> Sam B. Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), James J. Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1975), Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile, 1895-1910* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), and John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States; Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 1960), p. 462.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>8</sup> William D. Middleton, *The Interurban Era* (Milwaukee: Kalmbach Publishing, 1965), pp. 252-253.

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The Cardinal

Nelson County, Kentucky

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nationally between 1910 and 1965 when the railroads were competing most directly against the automobile and truck.<sup>9</sup>

The Cardinal was built by the J. G. Brill Company of Philadelphia in 1927.<sup>10</sup> It was called the Cardinal because of its bright red color. The car served the "Whiskey Route" of the Frankfort and Cincinnati Railroad that covered the forty miles between Frankfort and Paris, through Georgetown in the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky. It replaced a pair of self-powered passenger and freight cars.<sup>11</sup> The name "Whiskey Route" derived from the many distilleries along the route served by the railroad.

The Cardinal spent most of its active life on this route. Its design allowed it to carry passengers, baggage, freight, and the mail. It all fit snugly in the small car's interior. Where three specialized cars and an engine had previously been used, one self-propelled car sufficed. The Cardinal's design drew heavily from streetcars and trolleys, but it was an interurban rail car. Its gasoline engine and ability to perform a number of rail functions made the Cardinal surprisingly economical for the railroad to operate. The Cardinal operated for many years, providing its passengers with an efficient and safe mode of transportation. It was not, however, able to stop the shift of passengers to the automobile. In 1952 the Frankfort and Cincinnati terminated its passenger service and the Cardinal was retired.

Despite the multi-purpose design and efficiency of the Cardinal and vehicles like it, the automobile and truck continued to gain market share and volume. The building of the interstate highway system -- the culmination of decades of state and federal commitments to a national highway system built with taxes or user fees (fuel taxes and tolls) -- put the nation's railroads in an increasingly difficult position. The new highways reflected contemporary population patterns while the rail infrastructure had been built to serve an earlier economy and population pattern. Declining revenues made it difficult for the railroads to maintain existing track and equipment and left little funding for expansion. Government policy clearly and decisively favored highway construction over railroad expansion. Passenger service was slowly

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<sup>9</sup> R. V. Simmons, ed., *Car Builder's Encyclopedia* (New York: Simmons-Boardman Publishing, 1928), personal communication, Karl Lusk, Jr., Director, Kentucky Railway Museum.

<sup>10</sup> Roy Wright, *Locomotive Cyclopedia 1919* (New York: Simmons-Boardman Publishing, 1930), Elmer Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Kentucky* (Indianapolis: Jones Company, 1968), p. 249.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 228.

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The Cardinal

Nelson County, Kentucky

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phased out nationally following the end of World war II in response to sharply declining traffic.

The Cardinal quickly went from active service to museum piece when it was acquired by the Kentucky Railway Museum in 1960. It is one of less than six extant known gas-powered motor rail cars in the nation and the only one in the southeast region.<sup>12</sup> The Cardinal reflects the efforts railroads made to adopt new service strategies to meet the competition from automobiles and trucks. This effort, which ended nationally in the 1960s was the last, large-scale private sector effort to maintain an integrated national passenger and freight rail system. As a key element in this effort the Cardinal reflects the end of the era during which the railroad industry was the backbone of the United States economy.

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<sup>12</sup> Personal communication from Karl Lusk, Jr., Director, Kentucky Railway Museum.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9, 10 Page 1 Frankfort and Cincinnati Model 55 Rail Car  
Nelson County, Kentucky

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Frankfort and Cincinnati Model 55 Rail Car 'The Cardinal' Bibliography

Bryan, Frank. Kentucky Railway Museum Car Host Notebook (1995)

Knoeller, Tish. Personal Interview, February 1997.

Lusk, Karl. Personal Interview, March 1997.

Middleton, William D. The Interurban Era. (Milwaukee: Kalmbach Publishing, 1965)

Sulzer, Elmer. Ghost Railroads of Kentucky. (Indianapolis: Jones Company, 1968)

Wright, R.V. ed. Car Builder's Cyclopedia. (New York: Simmons-Boardman Publishing, 1928)

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated area is the former Louisville and Nashville Railroad tracks in New Haven, Kentucky, which are the property of the Kentucky Railway Museum.

## VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary selected consists of the rail line on which the car is placed. It is an appropriate boundary, as the nominated resource is best understood in that context, its historic means of movement.

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Section number            Photograph            Page           

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1. Frankfort and Cincinnati M55 'Cardinal'
2. New Haven, Kentucky
3. Dr. Bill Mulligan
4. July 1997
5. Forrest Pogue Oral History Institute, Murray, Ky.
6.
  1. Car exterior, facing South
  2. Car exterior, facing Southeast
  3. Car exterior, facing Southwest
7. N/A