

The Elusive Truax Ore Car Tags

by Hal Post and Steve Rush

The Truax Manufacturing Co. of Denver was a well-known supplier of ore cars and other ore handling equipment from the late 1800s into the early 20th century. Incorporated on May 15, 1892, by George E. Truax, the Truax Manufacturing Co. was the sole manufacturer of the Silver State Automatic Ore Car (the patented Truax Automatic Ore Car) from a plant building at 1717, 1719 Wazee Street.

An early 1893 ad notes that the plant at time employed 8 full time workers with O. P. Grove as company secretary and treasurer and George E. Truax, originally from Michigan, as works superintendent. The Truax Automatic Ore Car is one of the better known ore cars in the history of western mining. As stated in the 1893 ad, “this is the best car of the kind and is made of the best quality of steel and malleable iron with cast chilled wheels which give strength and durability.” Invented by George E. Truax of Denver, CO and patented (No. 466,717) on January 5, 1892, the Truax ore car solved a major problem experienced with earlier ore cars. Unlike other cars whose door may not properly open as the car is tipped resulting in a shift in the load that carried the car and load over and down the dump, the Truax car automatically opens the door as the car is tipped and then relocks the door when the car is returned to the vertical position. An 1895 patent (#545,433) was for an improvement in the door hinge and an 1898 patent (#607,785) was for an improvement in the door locking mechanism, both also awarded to George Truax.



Built by Truax Tag 1117 Wazee Address



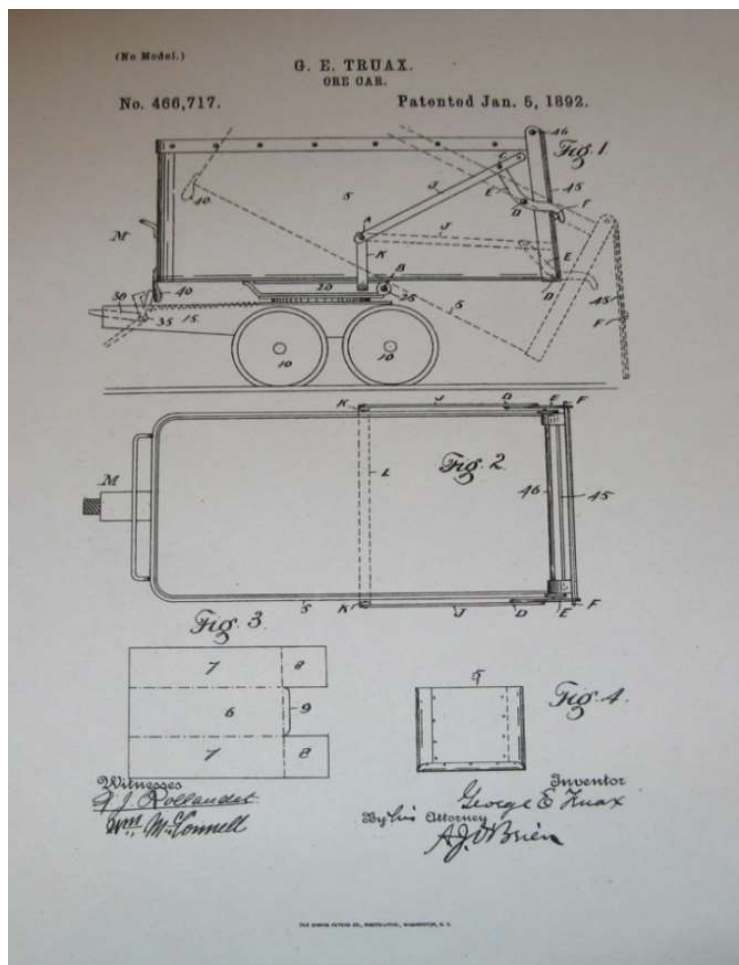
Globe Iron Works Ad from May 1902 Engineering and Mining Journal



Globe Iron Works Marking

The brass ore car tags on these cars are coveted by collectors as an easily displayed piece of vintage heavy mining equipment. At least nine Truax brass tag stampings are known, some with flat backs and some with concave shaped backs. Tags with a concave shaped back include one that is stamped by the Globe Iron Works of Stockton, CA and manufactured under rights purchased from the Truax Mfg. Co. Two other concave back tags stamped Silver State Ore Cars were marked as manufactured by Truax in Denver as well as Truax in San Francisco, an additional manufacturing location opened prior to 1900 at 69 Stevenson St. These two plus the Globe marking all incorporate stampings of the three patent dates noted above as well as a Canadian patent dated June 21, 1898. A third concave back Silver State ore car marking with only the June 21, 1898, patent stamping was made by the Vancouver Engineering Works Ltd. Vancouver, B.C. with the addition of "Sole Makers in Canada." And if these multiple manufacturing locations for Truax cars weren't confusing enough, another ad in the April 1898 issue of The Mining and Metallurgical Journal lists Chas. B. Boothe & Co. at 126-128 South Los Angeles St. in Los Angeles, CA as a manufacturer of the Truax Improved Patented Automatic Ore Car. No Tags have been identified as listing this address or manufacturer.

The rarest tag is a smaller oval shape with a flat back, undoubtedly the earliest of the group. It is marked The Truax Ore Car Works 1717/1719 Wazee St. Denver, Colo and likely was used prior to The Truax Manufacturing Company incorporation date in 1892. Two Truax ore cars at the Silverton Museum in Colorado both display this oval tag.



Above: Truax Ore Car at Silverton Museum, Silverton, Colorado

Left: George Truax's 1892 patent.

The next earliest tag begins the concave back circular pattern, although slightly smaller diameter than the later tags, and is marked Geo. E. Truax's Silver State Ore Car with just the 1892 patent date. The next concave back tag marking adds the 1895 patent date and includes the first marking of The Truax Mfg. Co. Two other tag configurations, both with flat backs, have ears at both the top and bottom but differ in the company address. One lists the address as 1117 Wazee while the other is marked with an address at 1723-1729 Wazee. Complicating the dating of the various tags is the changing address of the company on Wazee St. The earliest tag shows 1717/1719 Wazee St., while others show 1723-1729 Wazee St. and yet others show 1711 Wazee St. Using a variety of sources including ads, Denver Business Directories, and mining publications, some correlation of street address and dates can be established. By 1898, the company was still located at its original address at 1717/1719 Wazee St. Sometime around 1898, John T. Plummer became the manager of the Truax Manufacturing Company taking over from George Truax with J. J. Kearney as the company designer.

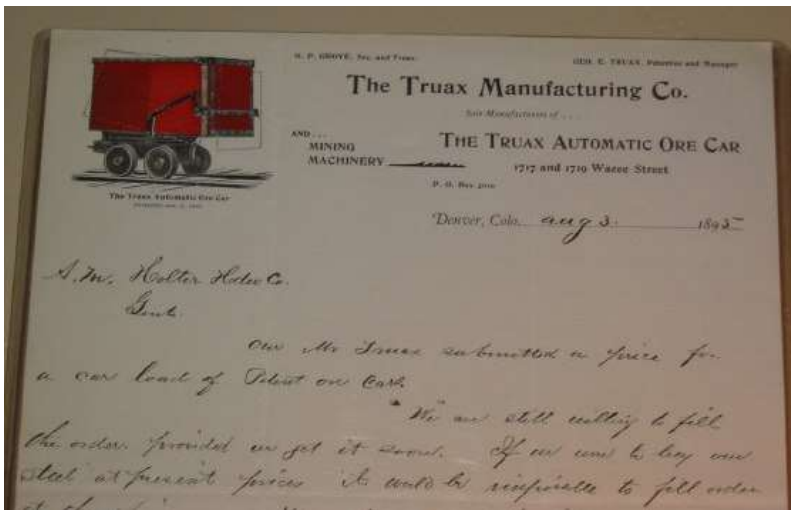


Truax Ore Car Works Tag

By 1903, the Directory of Iron and Steel Works lists the company address as 1723-1725 Wazee St and notes that the company had a capacity of 1000 to 1500 ore cars annually. The 1911 Denver Business Directory still shows the address as 1723 Wazee St. but by Sept. 1913, the company is listed at 1723-1729 Wazee. A 1915 Truax advertising brochure as well as the 1916 Mining and Engineering World lists the address as 1117 Wazee and later publications continue to list that address. Whether these address changes reflect actual moves by the company or some reassignment of street numbers by the city of Denver is unknown. Collecting these tags provides an interesting perspective as to the business of supplying the turn-of-the-century mining world. As a word of caution, reproductions of these original brass tags are known. Buyer beware! (Many thanks are given to Tony Moon for sharing his photos of the Silverton Museum.)



Truax 1 date and 2 date patent tags.



Truax Billhead, August 3, 1895



Truax Silver State Ore Car, Denver



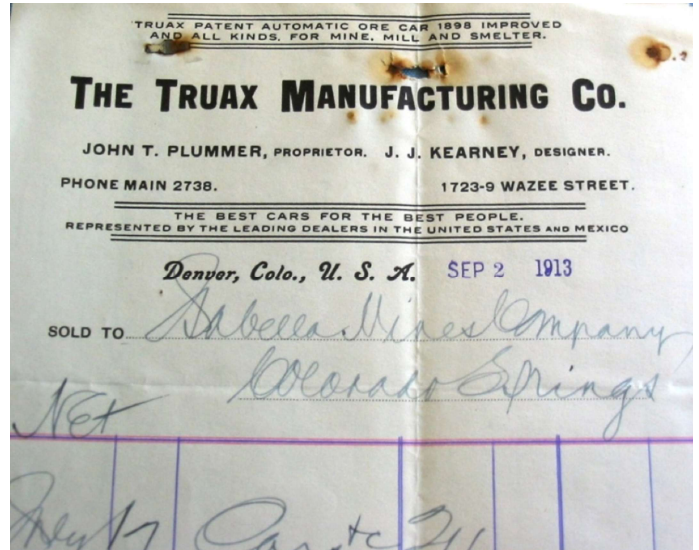
Truax Silver State Ore Car San Francisco



Truax Silver State Ore Car Vancouver



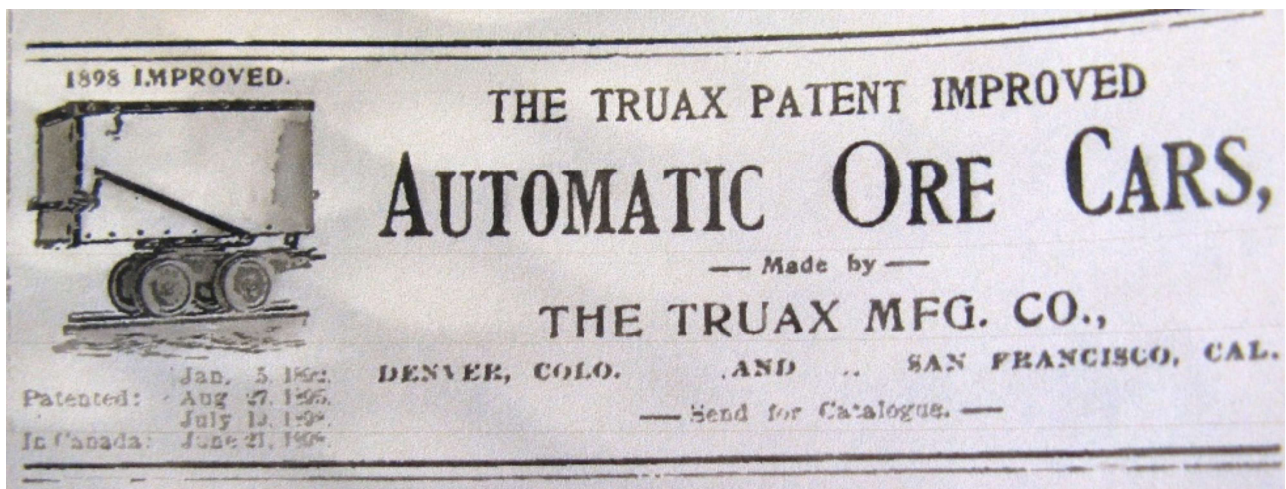
Built By Truax Tag 1723-1729 Wazee Address



Sept 2, 1913 Truax Billhead

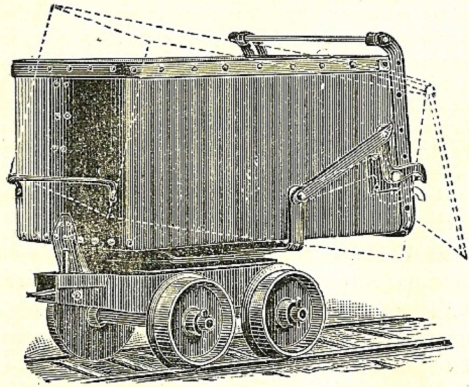


July 1900 Mining and Engineering Press Ad for Truax San Francisco



Jan 1899 Mining and Engineering Press Ad Listing Both Denver and San Francisco Locations

THE TRUAX AUTOMATIC ORE CAR, 1717, 1719 Wazee Street.—The Truax Manufacturing Company was incorporated May 15, 1892, and from its inception has been characterized by a rapid growth. In its present status, the business occupies a large structure at 1717, 1719 Wazee Street. The company are sole manufacturers



PATENTED JANUARY 5, 1892.

of the Silver State Automatic Ore Car (the Truax Automatic Ore Car). Patent rail catch and specialties in machinery. This is the best car of the kind, and was patented 5th January, 1892, by Mr. Geo. E. Truax, of Denver. The Truax Automatic Ore Cars are made of the best quality of steel and malleable iron, with cast chilled wheels, which give strength and durability. Our readers should not fail to write for the pamphlet, with explanation of its special features. Eight hands are constantly employed at the factory. The officers of the company are: O. P. Grove, secretary and treasurer, 205 Boston Building; G. E. Truax, superintendent of works, 1515 Eighteenth Street. Mr. Truax, the superintendent, a native of Michigan, calls for special attention, owing to his inventive genius. Besides the above-mentioned, he has gotten out many useful patents, conspicuous among which is the Truax Automatic Boiler Scraper. This is the only Boiler Scraper that will not push the mud to the back head. This Scraper is closed when being pushed in the boiler, and will open automatically when pulled out. This Scraper leaves no mud in the boiler to burn the boiler like the old ones do. You can clean a boiler in one-half the time, and better. This Scraper reaches up about eight inches on each side, thus making it about sixteen inches long when open. They are made of malleable iron, and have steel blades to fit the diameter of the boiler. Price, \$3.00.

1893 Truax Ad



1915 Truax Advertising Brochure Showing Range of Equipment Manufactured by Truax

**THE TRUAX PATENT IMPROVED
AUTOMATIC ORE CARS**

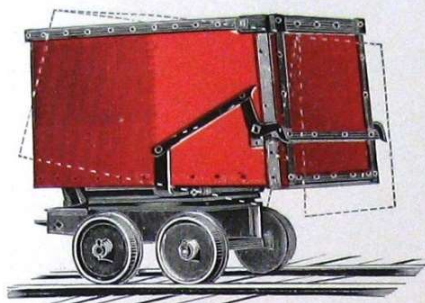
Manufactured by
CHAS. B. BOOTHE & Co.
126-128
SOUTH LOS ANGELES ST.
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

Pat. Jan. 2, 1892, Pat. Aug. 27, 1895.

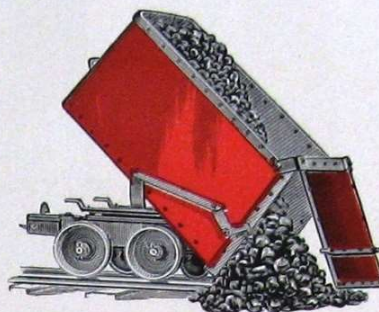
Send for our Catalogue and Prices

April 1898 Truax Ad Listing Chas. B. Boothe & Co. as Manufacturer in Los Angeles (Has Anyone Seen One of these Tags?)

TRUAX IMPROVED AUTOMATIC ORE CARS



Pat. Jan. 5th, 1892, and Aug. 27th, 1895.



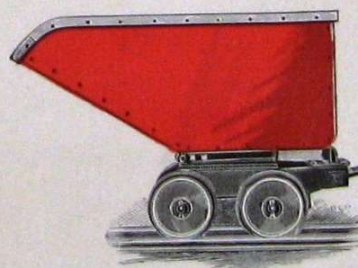
Pat. Jan. 5th, 1892, and Aug. 27th, 1895.

PRICE LIST AND DIMENSIONS.

No.	Width of body inches	Length of body inches	Height of body inches	Capacity cubic ft	Shipping weight lbs.	Diam. of wheels inches	Gauge of track inches	Thickness of steel sides	Thickness of steel bottoms	Price
No. 14 A	24	44	21	13	430	10	18	No. 12	No. 8	\$35 00
" 14 B	24	44	21	13	450	10	18	12	$\frac{3}{16}$	36 50
" 14 C	24	44	21	13	490	10	18	10	$\frac{1}{4}$	39 00
" 14 D	24	44	21	13	522	10	18	$\frac{3}{8}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	41 00
" 17 A	24	48	24	16	495	10	18	12	$\frac{3}{16}$	40 00
" 17 B	24	48	24	16	555	10	18	10	$\frac{1}{4}$	48 00
" 17 C	24	48	24	16	650	10	18	$\frac{3}{16}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	50 00
" 20 A	24	44	24	$14\frac{1}{2}$	500	10	18	10	$\frac{3}{16}$	45 00
" 20 B	24	44	24	$14\frac{1}{2}$	525	10	18	10	$\frac{1}{4}$	47 00
" 20 C	24	44	24	$14\frac{1}{2}$	565	10	18	$\frac{3}{16}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	50 00
" 20 D	24	44	24	$14\frac{1}{2}$	637	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	58 00
" 19 A	30	54	24	$22\frac{1}{2}$	630	heavy 12	18	10	$\frac{3}{16}$	55 00
" 19 B	30	54	24	$22\frac{1}{2}$	685	12	18	10	$\frac{1}{4}$	58 00
" 19 C	30	54	24	$22\frac{1}{2}$	765	12	18	$\frac{3}{16}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	60 00
" 19 D	30	54	24	$22\frac{1}{2}$	835	12	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	66 00
" 21 A	30	54	30	27	745	12	18	10	$\frac{1}{4}$	60 00
" 21 B	30	54	30	27	825	12	18	$\frac{3}{16}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	66 00

SCOOP CARS.

	Scoop 23
Width of body	24 inches
Length of body	48 inches
Height of body	21 inches
Shipping weight	360 lbs.
Price	\$35 00 each



NOTE—In ordering cars for cages it would be well to give us exact measures of the length and width of the cage. We usually place the step under the body of the car.