Robert Donald Weide

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The history of freight train graffiti in North America

Robert Donald Weide

Introduction

Since the collapse of the subway train era of graffiti in New York City in the 1980s, the modern freight train graffiti movement in North America has become an integral part of the overall graffiti subculture. Since the 1980s the freight train graffiti subculture within the wider graffiti subculture has been a primary medium for graffiti writers across the continent to establish subcultural identities for themselves and earn their status in the wider graffiti subculture. The freight train graffiti subculture is truly a subculture within a subculture. Not all graffiti writers participate in freight train graffiti, and many who do so only participate transiently. Conversely, many who do participate in the freight train graffiti subculture, commit themselves primarily to this particular graffiti medium and forego much of the street-level bombing and legal wall piecing, which other graffiti writers stake their subcultural reputations on. Some very few and extremely prolific graffiti writers do it all, excelling in every niche of the wider graffiti subculture.

Although freight train graffiti has become a very significant niche subculture within the overall graffiti subculture in North America, freight train graffiti has received surprisingly little attention from academic scholars of the graffiti subculture. This is due in part to the lack of access that scholars of the graffiti subculture have had to dedicated freight train writers, and partly due to the difficulty of studying a medium that is often gone and off to the next city before scholars are able to document it. This chapter reviews the existing scholarship on the freight train graffiti subculture and offers a social history of the freight train graffiti subculture, as a starting point for future scholarship on the freight train graffiti subculture.

Existing scholarship on freight train graffiti

Scholars of deviant subcultures have produced a remarkably thorough and coherent body of literature on the globalized graffiti subculture. Numerous books and academic articles have been published by scholars on the subject of the graffiti subculture from the 1970s onward, a timeframe that has coincided with an explosion in the popularity and proliferation of the graffiti subculture on a worldwide scale. Among the most notable and widely disseminated works on the graffiti subculture are books written by Abel and Buckley (1977), Castleman (1982), Ferrell (1995a,
1995b, 1996, 1998), Phillips (1999), Austin (2001), Macdonald (2001), and Snyder (2009). These and other authors, including Lachmann (1988), Conquergood (1993, 1997), Stewart (1997), Hutchison (1993), and Ferrell and Weide (2010), have also composed scholarship on the subject of graffiti. However, some of this work has been focused on gang graffiti and not on writer graffiti, which are completely separate subcultures (Hutchison 1993; Conquergood 1993, 1997; Phillips 1999). Other work has focused on the graffiti subculture in particular cities like New York City (Austin 2001; Macdonald 2001; Snyder 2009), London (Macdonald 2001), Los Angeles (Phillips 1999), and Denver (Ferrell 1996).

Despite this extensive academic literature on the graffiti subculture, only three scholars have offered any analysis of, or even mentioned, the freight train graffiti subculture (e.g. Ferrell 1998; Austin 2001; Snyder 2009). All other academic books and articles have been completely mute on this significant segment of the wider graffiti subculture. The first and most thorough of these contributions was by Ferrell (1998). Fascinated with the graffiti he saw on freight trains, Ferrell made an admirable attempt to research graffiti on freight trains through a sort of ethnography of images, by traveling from state to state, city to city, and town to town, to view and photograph freight trains with graffiti on them. Not knowing who had painted the graffiti he viewed, Ferrell was unable to interview any of the writers responsible, and was therefore unable to fully understand or comprehend the freight train movement he witnessed as an uninvolved observer. Little did he know that the graffiti he was observing was indeed the first “golden age” of the freight graffiti movement, when the painting of graffiti on freight trains became a widely practiced intercontinental phenomenon for the first time.

Ferrell (1996) situated his analysis theoretically in the postmodern and anarchist level of analysis that characterized his work at the time. Freight train graffiti was, as he perceived it, another example of subcultural usurpation of dominant authority and commercial paradigms of meaning, where graffiti writers had symbolically hijacked what were intended as vessels of intercontinental commercial transport, and reshaped them (aesthetically and symbolically, if not physically) into canvases of subculturally significant meaning, artistic prowess, and subcultural devotion. Through these rolling canvases, Ferrell suggested, writers deconstructed the everyday mundane meanings of physical representations of the capitalist system of commerce, and in the process, created new identities and demonstrations of subcultural status for themselves and their peers from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Shells of rolling steel hulks became the medium through which a certain segment of the wider graffiti subculture expressed the subcultural identities they had created for themselves.
Austin (2001: pp. 247–249), in his analysis of the graffiti subculture in New York City, dedicated only two paragraphs to freight train graffiti. Although this may not necessarily be due to oversight on Austin’s part, but more likely on the small number of subjects he interviewed who had extensive involvement with the freight train graffiti movement. However, even in this short space, Austin made some particularly insightful points. Painting freight trains as opposed to subway trains, according to Austin, had a number of advantages. For one, freight yards are not fenced off the way subway yards are, or patrolled by security or police, protecting them against trespassers – making them easy targets for graffiti writers who don’t want to go through the hassle of sneaking into a subway yard to paint clean trains. This is because due to their poor aesthetic exterior conditions, from weather, rust, and chemical stains, commercial freight companies are not particularly motivated to protect the aesthetic appearance of freight cars.

Furthermore, freight trains generally provide flat surfaces, which make a particularly convenient medium for graffiti writers to paint on. Although freight trains are not typically viewable by city residents who have no reason to go into freight yards to see them, freights do travel across the continent to other cities and states, where audiences unknown to the writers who painted them may view them. Austin points out that this phenomenon has led to widespread interest in freight train graffiti, even in rural areas where young people might not have any other opportunity to view graffiti painted by renowned writers from major urban areas, but have easy and unrestricted access to freight yards, where they can take the time to paint their own graffiti on freight trains, inspired by graffiti from writers in other parts of the continent they have seen on freight trains. According to Austin, freight train graffiti has thus contributed to the widespread proliferation of the graffiti subculture both to distant urban and rural areas across North America. Austin also included as an illustration, a black and white photograph of a closed top common hopper car (a common type of freight car used to carry grain products) painted by HUSH, provided by the artist.

Snyder (2009: pp. 31–32) also made passing reference to freight train graffiti, as one of a number of mediums certain graffiti writers have used to achieve citywide, national, and even international notoriety. As an example, Snyder included as an illustration a black and white photograph of a CSX boxcar with a piece by COLT .45, provided by the artist. The picture was reprinted in color and inserted in the middle of the book as well.

The pioneers of freight train graffiti

The emergence of the freight train graffiti movement began in earnest as a result of the end of the subway graffiti era in New York City in 1986, thanks to the implementation of a new kind of subway car in New York, which could easily be cleaned of any trace of exterior graffiti paint with a quick chemical wash. Another factor that resulted in the collapse of the subway train era was the implementation of drastically increased security measures at subway rail yards in New York City and zealous pursuit of graffiti writers who continued to paint the “clean trains” after they had replaced the old style subway cars. The golden age of subway graffiti had ended, but new subcultural niches blossomed in the graffiti subculture in North America as a result. Graffiti writers went from targeting transit trains to “bombing” streets and “piecing” yards, as well as painting on freight trains.

The first writers to paint freight trains did so in the early to mid-1970s, including but not limited to TRACY 168 and PNUT in New York, and SUROC and BRAZE in Philadelphia (Gastman et al. 2006). However, the practice of painting freight trains did not take off on a national scale until the mid-1980s when the subway graffiti subculture was laid to rest in New York City with the implementation of a new kind of subway car that could be easily wiped.
clean of external graffiti. New York writers, whose graffiti would no longer run on subway trains, eventually turned to what some of them saw as the next best thing, freight trains, which were trains after all, and were easily accessible and poorly guarded. While they did not at that time fully realize that the freight trains they painted would be seen by a national audience, since once the cars were pulled from the yard they never saw them again, some New York writers, including but not limited to, CAVS, KEY, SENTO, SANE (RIP), and SMITH, made a concentrated effort to paint freight trains in the 1980s. Fortunately many of these early freight train graffiti pieces were photographed, preserving them for posterity.

At the same time, from the mid to late 1980s, graffiti writers in Los Angeles and the Bay Area independently got the same idea, and began painting freight trains as well. These early west coast freight writers included RISKY, DREAM, POWER, FRAME and CHARLIE/PORN/OCHO in Los Angeles, and CRAYONE, VOGUE, DREAM (RIP) and PICASSO in the Bay Area. At that time, there were no websites or nationally distributed magazines through which writers in different cities could communicate, and unlike today, few writers were able to connect on an inter-city basis to know who had seen the trains they painted in other cities around the country. Some exceptions to this were RISKY, POWER, FRAME and CHARLIE/PORN/OCHO who traveled to New York City and discovered that New York writers they met there like CAVS and SMITH had seen their freights just as they had seen NYC writers’ freights in LA (Gastman et al. 2006). That realization was an epiphany that ignited the proliferation of the freight train graffiti movement on both coasts. Friends told friends and in traveling to other cities writers began to realize that the freight trains they painted were being spotted across the continent and the movement spread across the continent like wildfire during a dry California summer.

However, it is worth noting that these early freight pioneers did not concentrate exclusively on painting freight trains as many of the big name freight writers of the last decade have. Freights were just another medium, another target, in their individual and collective mission to traverse the urban landscape and conquer every aspect of it by painting their assumed identities on anything and everything they possibly could. It was not until the early to mid-1990s that the freight train graffiti movement graduated into what could be truly considered the first golden age of freight train graffiti.

The first golden age of freight train graffiti

With the gradual accumulation of graffiti pieces on freight trains in North America, an increasing number of writers from all corners of the continent realized the potential fame that could be garnered by painting freight trains in a deliberate and concentrated manner. Although it seemed to many early writers of this period that once they painted a freight and the car got pulled from the yard, that it might never be seen again, many of them knew that other writers around the country would eventually see them and therefore committed themselves to painting as many freights with as high quality pieces as they could, thereby increasing the probability that other writers in different parts of the continent would see them. By the early to mid-1990s certain writers from every corner of the continent were fully committed to and involved in the systematic painting of graffiti on freight trains. This was truly the first golden age of the freight train graffiti movement, and many of today’s most renowned writers, some of whom participated in this first golden age of freight train graffiti, found their inspiration in trains they saw that were painted during this time.

I myself painted my first freight train in 1994, at the age of sixteen. Driving my first car, a 1983 Oldsmobile Brougham, I was invited by some older writers I knew from AWR/MSK to
go with them to the famed Woodman yard in the San Fernando Valley section of Los Angeles. It hadn’t occurred to me at that age and at that point in my subcultural career that I was taking part in graffiti history, and consequently I didn’t even think to take a picture of what I or anyone else that night had painted, but it is a memory I will always carry with me for the rest of my life. Many more hundreds and thousands of nights painting freights have long since been forgotten in a toxic fume of aerosol paint, marijuana smoke, and malt liquor, but that night will always stay with me.

During this time there were too many yards being painted, and too many writers and crews active across the country to name them all. However, I will make a modest attempt to name writers and crews from different parts of the country who I personally saw were active during that time. In Los Angeles, the most active writers not mentioned before whom I saw running on freight trains included, but were not limited to: SK8 CBS (RIP), MEK CBS, STRIP CBS, KRISES AWR/FK, LOOK FK, PHABLE AWR, BLES AWR, KEPT AWR, HAZE AWR, FATE AWR/MSK, SABER AWR/MSK, GKAE AWR/MSK, PUSH MSK, CHUNK MSK, BUS MSK, HAVOK MSK, BABA, JERO ICR, BLITS ICR, KOOLS ICR, KEYN AWR/ICR, PURE ICR (RIP), KICK TCS, BUDS, CHIL USC, BIG5 FU, SAHL COI, 125 CULT, UNIT, FEAR DCV, DOVE DCV, CHICO and BRUIN. From other areas of the west coast and the southwest, including the Bay Area, San Diego, and New Mexico, the most active writers not mentioned before whom I saw running on freight trains included, but were not limited to: JASE BA, KRASH TDK, POEM TDK, KING157, RASTA HS, HASH HS/TLT/RTM, FATE RTM, ZEN RTM, HIGH BA, FELON BA, NEON BA, ATOM BA, RENOS HTK, JALER TVC, ONOROK NG/LIES, 21 RAK NG, KAPER NG and SUG NG.3

Figure 3.1 Jase BA, Golden West flat boxcar, later re-stamped Southern Pacific, Oakland, CA circa late 1990s © the author
From the New York to Philadelphia eastern seaboard, the most active writers not mentioned before whom I saw running on freight trains included, but were not limited to: SIEN5 BFK, MONE BFK, PAVS, JENT, VISM BFK, CAMP, MILK TFP, STAK TFP, ZEPHYR, WANE, HUSH, IZ THE WIZ (RIP), FREE5, MUZE, PINK, TECK BS, NACE DF MAYHEM (RIP), NEWA MAYHEM, RIME KCW, SETUP KCW, CHIP 7 KCW/MAYHEM, CYCLE, KET MTK, DG NWC, KAWS, PRE/CRISPO, SACH and SOON. From Miami and Atlanta, the most active writers whom I saw running on freight trains included, but were not limited to: FAVES WH/FS/NETWORK, BASER FS/NETWORK, HARSH FS, DAKS FS/NETWORK, SB NETWORK, GSOUTH WH/FS/NETWORK, CHISME WH/FS/NETWORK, SMASH FS/NETWORK and CHROME MSG. Finally from Canada, the most active writers whom I saw running on freight trains included, but were not limited to: VIRUS AA, COSOE, SNEKE EDK, HEWS EDK, and WENT EDK. There are more writers from smaller cities or rural areas of North America whom I did not mention, but this list covers the majority of the active writers from that generation.4

Writers from that era painted at a number of locally and nationally known freight yards, including but not limited to: the Ghost Yard in Queens NY, the Sunset Park Ditch in Brooklyn NY, various layups in Bushwick Brooklyn NY, The Bronx Yard in the South Bronx NY, the GM Plant Yard in Elizabeth NJ, the Oakland Yards in the Bay Area, the Berkeley Layups in the Bay Area, the Budweiser Yard in LA, the Woodman Yard in LA, the LA River Yard in East LA, the Bandini Yard in LA, the Oxnard Yard north of LA, the Pomona Yard East of LA, and the Santa Fe Springs Yard in LA.5 There are many more yards of course, but many of them are still active locations for graffiti painting, and I don’t want to “burn” any of the few remaining spots left to those who still paint freights.

The first golden era in the freight train graffiti movement ended in the late 1990s, when railroad companies got fed up with writers painting in yards in broad daylight, leaving trash

Figure 3.2 Vism BFK, shortline boxcar, Bronx, NY circa late 1990s © the author
and empty paint cans in the yards, and acting recklessly, threatening the safety of both writers and train workers. One such event led to the death of LA graffiti icon SK8 CBS LOD (RIP), who at that time was the most renowned graffiti writer in Los Angeles. After painting freights in broad daylight at the Woodman yard in LA, he stepped back into the path of an active track to take pictures, and was clipped and dragged under a passing train, which shredded his body in the most gruesome manner possible. This occurred in the presence of his longtime girlfriend, BLOSM MTA, and a number of their friends who were also present. One can only imagine what impact this event had on their mental well-being.

In response to the safety concerns presented by graffiti writers painting trains in freight yards, the rail companies instituted a number of enforcement measures to prevent graffiti writers from freely painting graffiti in freight yards. The most significant practice was the use of law enforcement officers employed by the rail companies, commonly called “rail cops” or simply “The Bull,” to patrol freight train yards in order to catch graffiti writers in the act of painting graffiti. Many rail companies including Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern employ both uniformed law enforcement officers, as well as investigative officers, to track, catch, and arrest freight train graffiti writers. Another measure that was taken to protect freight train yards from graffiti writers was the construction of fencing and barbed wire barriers in order to prevent writers from entering freight train yards. Rail companies also made a concerted effort to remove brush and trash from adjacent properties, so as to reduce the available areas that graffiti writers could hide in to avoid detection by rail cops.

The second golden age of the freight train graffiti movement

After the initial crackdown on freight train graffiti by the railroad companies and local law enforcement agencies in the mid to late 1990s, a number of writers gave up painting freight trains, either because they had been arrested for doing so, or friends of theirs had. The sudden threat of arrest for painting freight trains was a paradigmatic shift that produced such a degree of cognitive dissonance that many writers could not psychologically overcome it. Previously, they had perceived freights as a risk-free medium for painting graffiti, with the added bonus that someone in another part of the country might actually see what they had painted. When the threat of arrest came crashing down on yards across the country, many writers gave up painting freight trains altogether and declared to other writers that “freights are dead.”

Although some writers continued to paint trains through the late 1990s and at the turn of the millennium, the second golden age of freight train graffiti did not fully develop until a few years after the turn of the millennium. Two particular circumstances, contributed to the emergence of a second golden age of freight train graffiti. First, after police and railroad authorities began arresting writers at many of the popular yards that were painted in the 1980s and 1990s, writers stopped going to them. This resulted in a period of a number of years, depending on the yard, during which no one, or very few writers, dared to paint in those yards.

With the abandonment of yards by writers, rail cops eventually had no one left to arrest, and over the years more or less stopped checking yards for graffiti writers. Some very few clever writers realized this dynamic and took advantage of it to paint large quantities of freight trains in yards that were considered “burned” by most other writers. Without the competition and foot traffic that had previously burned yards, these writers were able to produce a massive quantity of graffiti in a relatively short period of time. When other writers saw these trains, and realized that people were painting freight trains in earnest again, the freight train graffiti movement took off all over again. However, this new generation of freight train writers, some of whom were pioneers of the freight train graffiti movement or had participated in the first golden age, modified...
their motivations and methods to match an elevated state of surveillance from railroad authorities and law enforcement agencies.

The second circumstance was the exponential increase in communication between writers in different parts of the country, facilitated in large part by the proliferation of graffiti websites like www.12ozProphet.com, which enabled writers across the continent and the world to contact and communicate with each other for the first time. Indeed, no single circumstance has contributed to the globalization of the graffiti subculture more than the advent of the internet (Austin 2001; Snyder 2009). For the first time, writers from all over the country were contacting each other, communicating and traveling to paint with each other across the continent; writers could see for themselves on the internet, or hear from friends and acquaintances on the phone, where and when freight trains they had painted had been spotted by other writers across the continent. Threads on certain websites like the Metal Heads blog on www.12ozProphet.com were dedicated solely to freight train graffiti, enabling writers to post pictures of their freights and those they had photographed in their yards on the internet for other writers the world over to view.

As a result of this increased communication and contact between writers from different parts of North America, for the first time writers started joining crews from other parts of the country in large numbers. Whereas members of graffiti crews during the 1980s and 1990s were typically all from the same city or area, in recent years, many crews have been made up of writers from multiple cities and regions across the country. Some of these crews are among the most prolific crews of the modern freight train graffiti movement, including but not limited to: A2M, FGS, FU, KYT/DTC, MAYHEM, NSF, TKO, WH, FS, NETWORK and DOS. The names of some of these crews reflect their dedication to primarily painting freight trains, including: Addicted

![Figure 3.3 Chisme WH/FS/Network, UPFE refrigerated car, Miami, FL circa early 2000s © the author](image-url)
2 Metal, Freight GangsterS, Freight Unit, and Freight Stars. The crew NETWORK took as their symbol a capitol N with a circle around it, which is a common marking on the wheel casing of freight trains. Although these nationwide crews were originally located in certain states or cities – A2M in Texas, KYT/DTC in the Bay Area, FGS and TKO in LA, WH and FS in Miami, and NETWORK in Atlanta – their members have moved throughout the country and new members from different parts of the country have been recruited. Furthermore, some of these crews have traded members, resulting in writers who are members of multiple crews from different parts of the country. The Weed Heads crew, originally from Miami is a prime example, including the following prolific freight train writers from the first and second golden ages of the freight train graffiti movement: GHOULS WH/A2M, WYSE WH/A2M, GSOUTH WH/TKO/FS/NETWORK, CHISME WH/FS/NETWORK, FAVES WH/FS/NETWORK, COLT .45 WH/TKO, MAD WH/NSF/ESC, AEST WH/DOS and LYES WH/DOS.

This second golden age of freight train graffiti has expanded the painting of freight trains exponentially from the last golden age, and there are far too many writers and crews to name who have made significant contributions to the freight train graffiti movement since the turn of the millennium. However, I will attempt to name as many of these writers who have not already been mentioned, as memory permits, for the purpose of this chapter, including but not limited to, and in no particular order: SIGH DOS, WORMS A2M, ERUPTO A2M, NEKST A2M, LEWIS A2M, CRAE A2M, VIZIE A2M, LEAD A2M, DEBT A2M, GLUE, UTAH, ZINE, PEPE, DECO TMB, CS TFK, KUMA, MOOSE, KERO, KWEST, EYE MAYHEM, NAVY8 MAYHEM, MET MAYHEM, MAD ESC, GESER 3A, KEM 3A, HENCE, SEAZ, KEMOS, DASAR MSP, CENSE MSP, PHONE WH/MC, VOICE WH, DIME WH, MECA WH, GUER WH/LD/TKO, OBCES LD/TKO, HOACS LD, GATES, SWEK, REGAL, SMASH FS/NETWORK, OILS WH/FS (RIP), DZ WH/KBT, SICKS WH/KBT, ZINK WH/TKO, ISTO, MENES, JEKA TM, ARYS TBK, MBER FS/HM, MUCH HM, SPEL HM, YEN HM, MONK SCA, JABER KYT, EATFUK KYT/DTC, VEKS KYT, KIRO DTC, DIAR DTC, SMOG KYT/DTC, ESKIMO KYT, BITER TBK, PIER TBK, TROUBLE TBK, CAMEO WCB, KAPUT WCB, NECS NSF, AREK NSF, REKE NSF, CON NSF, DRUGS TVC, FOKIS TVC/LTS, GESO IBD, BEGER FGS, APART FGS, ADGE FGS, PRAE FGS, KEB5 FGS, HATE FGS, PLEK FGS/WAI, KE42 FGS/TKO/WH, BUKET TKO/R.10, RICKS TKO/SAC, SCAN 54 MDS, APES FCR, AROE, CLOWN TITS, MEWZ TITS, NECRO TITS, COUPE, CROW, SE ONE TA, MPower, DIET END, SICK156, SIZE 21, SINEK WA/FACT/WH, TOKEN WA/FACT/WH, TAKE5, AWE TCI, HEAT TCI, HYBRID TCI, MYTH WCB/TCI, SAMO WCB, EROS TCI, ICHABOD, JURNE YME, LEARN YME, and REMIO VTS. There are many more writers who have at some time painted freight trains, but these writers who have been mentioned are those who have made a significant commitment to systematically painting freight trains in as much quantity as possible.

The second golden age of the freight train graffiti movement has been on the decline for the past few years for a number of reasons. Principally among these is that it is a victim of its own success. As more and more inexperienced “toy” writers around the country have been inspired by the work of the writers mentioned above, more and more toys have infiltrated freight train yards and “burned” them by painting over train markings, leaving trash and empty cans in the yard, day painting, threatening or assaulting train workers, writing on surrounding walls and areas around train yards, stealing from boxcars, crossing out or going over other writers’ pieces, and other practices that are frowned upon by experienced freight train writers.

A second reason for the current decline is that as the popularity of the freight train graffiti movement increases, more writers want to paint trains. Therefore more writers are going to
train yards and “burning” them so no one can paint there. Consequently, security has again been increased by railroad companies, including regular patrols by rail cops; the installation of bright floodlights in most yards, which light up freight yards at night; and local law enforcement has once again become attentive to the painting of graffiti on freight trains in many jurisdictions. Many train yards that for a time were being painted regularly by experienced and prolific writers, are again the target of regular law enforcement sweeps, making them enticing locations for only the most novice of “toy” freight writers. Thus, the ebb and flow of vandalism, enforcement, vandalism and enforcement, continues.

A third reason for the decline of the second golden age of the freight train graffiti movement has been the proliferation of beefs between different crews of train writers. Whereas pieces and throw-ups on city walls that are dissed or gone over can be fixed, on freight trains, once a piece is dissed, the victim may never have the opportunity to fix his defaced piece. The problem has been exacerbated by novice “toy” writers who do not respect established writers and diss or go over their pieces in an attempt to get “cheap fame” by having beef with a known and respected writer. The result is a mess of dissed pieces, and poorly executed pieces done by novice writers on most freight trains today.

**Conclusion**

With this historical narrative, I have laid out the history of the freight train graffiti movement within the wider graffiti subculture. It is important to first consider the history of social phenomena before engaging in fieldwork to examine the various facets of those phenomena in order to best situate the data collected in fieldwork in its proper historical context. Without knowledge

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**Figure 3.4** Sigh DOS, Canadian Northern boxcar, artist from Richmond, VA, car painted in Los Angeles, CA circa mid 2000s © the author
of the historical foundations of a subculture, examination and description of that subculture would be lacking. Therefore I offer this rather brief analysis of the history of the freight train graffiti subculture as a starting point for future research, and also to give credit where credit is due, to the writers who spent a considerable portion of their lives establishing and maintaining this particular niche within the wider graffiti subculture. Future research will expand on this foundation to examine and offer an in-depth examination of the various aspects of the freight train graffiti subculture, just as scholars like Castleman (1982), Ferrell (1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1998), Austin (2001), Macdonald (2001), Snyder (2009), and Ferrell and Weide (2010) have examined the graffiti subculture on subway trains and on the streets of our nation’s cities.

Notes
1 Special thanks to FAVES WH/FS/NETWORK and GSOUTH WH/FS/NETWORK for their help in recalling the names of writers, magazines and videos in composing this chapter.
2 There were two different writers who wrote the name DREAM in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, respectively.
3 Some of these writers relocated to Northern California from places like the Washington DC/Baltimore area.
4 I apologize to anyone who I missed at any point in this chapter. Unlike other publications on the subject, the absence of anyone’s name in particular is due to nothing other than my own lack of recollection. As proof, for anyone who knows my subcultural identity, I have included multiple names of writers with whom I have engaged in beefs with over the years. The absence of anyone’s name in this or any other list in this chapter should not detract from the contributions they and others know they have made during their graffiti careers. Also, writers’ crew affiliations in this section and throughout the chapter reflect their crew affiliations during the period being discussed. Many writers mentioned are no longer affiliated with crews they were with at one time.
5 Some of these yards do not exist as active rail yards anymore, the rest are usually very difficult to paint due to increased security since that time.
6 I recall being told this by CHUNK MSK and FATE AWR/MSK in the late 1990s, who had taken part in the first golden age of freight train graffiti.

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