

Q's & A's Jim Weatherford, Classic Toy Trains Magazine (unknown month and year)

Problems with your Lionel no. 164 lumber loader? Weatherford has the solution.

(reader question) Living with logs

I recently bought a Lionel no. 164 lumber loader that has a strange problem; the log dump mechanism doesn't work when it's installed. I took the mechanism out and tested it by itself; it worked fine. I checked the controller and it also works as it should. The dump mechanism has one wire that connects to the terminal strip on the base.

Any ideas? - M. L.

(Jim's reply) The 164 lumber loader was made before and after World War II. The two major differences between the two sheds are where the terminal posts are located on the base and the dump mechanism. The postwar loaders' two transformer terminal posts are on top of the base; the prewar loader posts are located on the side. The prewar dump mechanism has only one wire (yours) and the postwar units have two. (Obviously there are internal wiring differences.) The postwar dump mechanism has one wire connected to the ground terminal post and the other wire to the controller. *The pre-war unit is grounded internally to the mechanism frame, and the single wire connects to the controller.*

With all this background, there are two reasons why your dump mechanism doesn't work when it's installed. First, the ground jumper on the prewar loader has been removed or disconnected. The dump assembly has to receive the return ground through the support frame, so there must be a jumper ground wire from the common terminal post to a terminal lug that goes to the metal frame. Ground is then transferred via the frame to the dump mechanism. Second, someone may have installed a prewar dump unit in a postwar loader. If that's the case, you must also install a ground jumper wire from the common terminal post to one of the screws that connect the base to the support structure. Either way the problem has been fixed since ground will be established to the dump mechanism.