

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:
The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report
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Hello again everyone! Before getting to the news and views for February, I want to take a moment to thank all of you who wrote in about the new format for the UMTRR. I'm very encouraged by the many positive comments I received and hopefully I'll continue to tweak this "newfangled" PDF thing and incrementally improve what you're reading. To be fair, I did have some concerns raised, which I've tried to address, and there are a few people who were not quite enthused with this new approach. But I do think it's here to stay. Now, if I can only get it to be a smaller file! I think the number and size of images is a key driver in that area, and Micro-Trains sure had a lot of images last month! I believe that was a factor in a "delivery problem" with the January edition... namely, that my ISP wouldn't let me send out all the copies I needed to... but I'm working on that. We're not quite as "heavy" this time... I hope. However, what we **are** heavy on this month is travel, which is quite unusual these days and is the major root cause of this column getting to you later than I'd prefer.

But speaking of heavy, or perhaps big... it looks as though we may finally have a resolution to the wheel issue that has been rather polarizing in some parts of the N Scale world. (And that's **some** parts, not all.) Micro-Trains has announced that beginning March 2010, all N scale releases will come equipped with new Standard 33 inch Wheels. These will operate on Code 55 track. We've seen these wheels in their 36 inch version on the new Railway Post Office cars and I have not heard or read any worries about operation with them. Truck packs with these wheels will become available starting in June.

There's still plenty to cover, so let's be off...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



027 00 310, \$22.10

Reporting Marks: CP 167062.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Canadian Pacific.

Orange with aluminum roof. Black ends and side sills. Black lettering including reporting marks on left and legend "Insulated / Heated" (in all caps) on right. Red script style roadname on left. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) to early 2000's.

Morning Sun's Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Passenger and Freight Equipment (the formal name of what I call the Morning Sun Color Guide to the CP) has this exact car in a January 1968 photo taken in Toronto. It's noted that 200 of these cars were built by National Steel Car in 1966 and that the orange and black pre-dated the yellow CP Rail paint scheme. Mention is also made of those famous thermostatically controlled underslung heaters, but

that's a minor quibble compared to a big difference: the real car had a roofwalk! I suppose that we could move the start of the Approximate Time Period forward and claim that the MTL car is a modified version following the roofwalk removal and shortening of the side and end ladders. The ends and sides are a bit different between prototype and model as well.

Let's check the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1967. The series 166000 to 166199 is described as "Box, Steel, Insulated, Bulkhead, Cushion Underframe" with AAR Designation XIH. The inside length was 49 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet 9 inches, inside height 9 feet 2 inches, outside length 59 feet, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 9 feet, and capacity 3970 cubic feet with weight capacity not listed. An end note calls out three inches of insulation and the alcohol heaters.

Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site (<http://www.nakina.net>) has the service date of the series 166000 to 166199 extending out to 2007, so in theory we almost make "to present," but I wasn't so sure that it would have been with the paint scheme Micro-Trains models. Indeed, on the Canadian Freight Car Gallery site (<http://freight.railfan.ca>) there are images of cars in this group in CP Rail paint, yellow with black lettering and no multimark. And also no roofwalk, though the full side ladders remain. There's also the 166035 in CP Rail paint with the multimark, found in 2004. However, the paint shop missed at least one car through the turn of the century. CP 166028 remained in its original paint as of April 2003! You'd hardly recognize it though; the orange looks more brown than some shades of "freight car red" and the lettering is barely visible through the years of accumulated dirt and grime. As with its repainted brethren, the roofwalk is gone, but the full side ladder remains. I'll let the exception set the rule for the end of the ATP, though the early 1980's might be more appropriate in this case.



056 00 410, \$20.40

Reporting Marks: DL&W 82597.

33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Rib Sides, Flat Ends, Lackawanna Railroad (Delaware, Lackawanna and Western).

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, Lackawanna roadname across top and slogan "The Road of Anthracite" in small rectangle on right. Simulated "Blue Coal" coal load included. Approximate Time Period: early 1950's to early 1960's. New release, but paint scheme almost identical to the September 2001 release, catalog 56320, reporting marks DL&W 82209.

The prototype for this car, if you will, is actually in Scranton, as part of the collection at the Steamtown National Historical Site. There is more than a casual family connection to Scranton; some of my father's side of the family not only lived here but also worked for the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad.

There are several photos of the car on RRPictureArchives.net as well as other online locations. This leads to a little bit of confusion. The real 82597 in Steamtown is the last remaining USRA two pocket (bay) hopper according to a post on the Erie Lackawanna Mailing List by Mike Del Vecchio. This exact car was used by Accurail to create its HO Scale USRA car, by the way. But when in the Lackawanna's active roster, it would have been numbered in the 81000 series, not the 82000 series. The 82000's were built by American Car & Foundry. I suspect that MTL's car copy, namely that the car was built by Cambria Steel in 1922, refers back to the 81000s. I have 1953 as the date for the start of this paint scheme from the CDS "Railway Equipment Diagrams" publication, but I'll hedge to early 1950's for the start of the ATP.

Assuming that we're going with the 82000's, the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1950 shows the series 81800 to 83299, which of course does include some 81000 cars. The inside length was 33 feet 3 inches, inside height 9 feet 5 inches, outside length 34 feet 8 inches and extreme height 10 feet 4 inches. Capacity was 1950 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 1243 cars in the main series plus a total of 231 cars that were listed as composite construction, not all steel, with lower cubic capacities. The coal business declined precipitously starting in the 1950's and with it this group of hoppers; the ORER for January 1959 showed just 100 cars left in the series. The merger of the Erie and Lackawanna followed in 1960, and by the January 1964 Equipment Register, just three cars remained.

We'll discuss the load that Micro-Trains has provided with this car, right after this word from our sponsor. I'd like to remind you home owners that right now, when Winter is changing into Spring, is the most treacherous time of all the year. But you can protect your family's health and save valuable dollars by burning Blue Coal. It's Pennsylvania's finest anthracite. Order a trial ton from your nearest Blue Coal dealer tomorrow.

It should be obvious that your local Blue Coal dealer doesn't sponsor the UMTRR (in fact, I continue to not solicit or accept any advertising for the column), but they did sponsor the radio show "The Shadow" and on the Steam Era Freight Cars YahooGroup (of all places!) I found the advertising copy. There are several different reasons postulated as to why the Glen Alden Coal Company sprayed its coal blue: for keeping dust down or as a check on pilferage, for example, but I don't think there's any doubt that it was an attempt to differentiate their coal from all the other coal out there—in other words, an advertising gimmick. The Glen Alden Coal Company was formed in 1920 by officers of the Lackawanna's coal mining department and marketed its Blue Coal starting about 1928. Shipment and marketing was via the DL&W. What's not clear to me is how this skirted the previous divestiture orders that stripped the anthracite railroads of their coal mining interests. By 1953 the Glen Alden Company had sold all its assets to the Moffat Coal Company of Pennsylvania, including the rights to the name "Blue Coal." It looks from a Tax Court ruling (!) that Moffat stock was essentially worthless by 1960. While I did not see any recent references to Blue Coal still being marketed in the United States, I did learn that there remains a small amount of anthracite coal production in the area once served by the Road of Anthracite.



073 00 111 and 073 00 112, \$20.85 each

Reporting Marks: NP 48176 and NP 48181

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, Full Ladders, No Roofwalk, Northern Pacific.

Green including the trucks and couplers (!). White lettering including reporting marks on left. Large "NP" in white with black shadow on left. Large black, white and red monad herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1969 to early 1980's.

New release, but this car also issued with road number 48190 as part of a Special Run three pack for the N Scale Collector's Society in April 2009 (NSC 09-09, three pack NSC 09-12).

It's not easy being green... all green! Especially if you're a freight car. MTL was quite accurate in its car copy; the NP paint shop was in fact directed to paint this **entire** car green, right down to the trucks and couplers. The photo of sister car NP 48189 on Page 44 of the Morning Sun Color Guide to the NP shows this clearly. Also shown is the Burlington Northern-style dimensional data, all underneath the reporting marks on the left side of the car. There are some differences between model and prototype, the first of which I noticed was the side sill. The full ladders, lack of roofwalk and six foot door are all correct. Online, there's a bingo on George Elwood's Fallen Flags site (<http://www.rr-fallenflags.org>) which has a 1969 broadside view of the 48176; thanks to Paul Graf for pointing that out.

The car was redone in 1969 although rebuilds of the 1940's era boxcars had been going on since 1959 according to the MSCG. Even so, we'll start with the April 1970 ORER as being closest to the 1969 paint date, and that already brings us to the Burlington Northern registration. The NP series 47500 to 48999 had just 276 cars in it out of a possible 1500, described as just "Box, Steel" with AAR Designation XM. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 44 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, and capacity 3897 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. No mention of green couplers though!

The July 1974 ORER is the next stop and the car count is actually up a bit to 278 cars. This suggests to me that a few more rebuilds were done and lettered for the NP after the BN merger, or maybe the data was a little slow getting to the ORER folks! However, the series length had been cut down considerably to cover only 47500 to 48207. In April 1976 the car count slipped back to 267 cars plus one for that dreaded "tankage." But it's nearly all over for the group in April 1981 with just 35 cars remaining. That's just enough to give us an "early 1980's" end for the Approximate Time Period.



140 00 040, \$20.15

Road Number: 76 (will be "ATSF 76" in website listings)

Railway Post Office Car, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Coach Green with black roof. Delux gold lettering including Santa Fe roadname top center, and legend "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" (in all caps) with road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1927 (build date given by MTL) to 1960's.

This Railway Post Office car was one of ten numbered 70 to 79 built in 1927 by Pullman in Calumet, Illinois, as Lot 6086 using Specification 1044 and Plan 25C-1986. Documentation I found states that it was painted coach green which is lighter than Pullman green and had yellow lettering. According to a photo page on the Santa Fe's "Fast Mail Express" compiled by J. Steven Sandifer, these heavyweight cars "could be found to the end" which I take to mean the end of RPO service on the Santa Fe. This leads to a pretty long Approximate Time Period as the final RPO contracts ended by 1968. This ATP is reinforced by a photo of sister car 78 in Morning Sun's ATSF Color Guide, which was taken in 1966 while the car was near the end of its active service.

A few photos scattered around the net including one on the "Fast Mail Express" page (found at <http://www.trainweb.org/jssand/FMWar/SFcars/SFcars.htm>) are undated, but between those and the technical specs I saw, I believe that the prototype was built with a six window per side configuration. You might recall from the discussion of previous MTL releases that while the 3/3 and 4/2 window arrangements were "as built" in some cases, the Post Office didn't like them and directed that changes be made. It appears that the Santa Fe cars were built more to the Post Office's liking. So we probably have a difference between model and prototype right out of the gate. There's also a rather odd divergence on the trucks: the MTL six wheel trucks have been highly praised, but the Santa Fe cars used four wheel trucks of their own design. Now that's different! Unfortunately, that's also not easy to address.

I'm pleased to report that you can still see one of the original ten cars in the series. The San Diego Railroad Museum (<http://www.sdrm.org>) has restored sister car 74 to its full glory and even sent it on a simulated RPO run in 2002. Their efforts won the Tourist Railway Association's 2002 national award for best passenger car restoration of the year. Check the SDRM website for more information (<http://www.sdrm.org/roster/passenger/rpo74/>), or check out the SDRM itself to have a look at the car and the history that it represents.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



027 00 060, \$16.70

Reporting Marks: SOO LINE 17490 (will be "SOO 17490" in UMTRR website listings).

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Soo Line.

Boxcar red with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on right.

Approximate Time Period: 1968 (build date given by MTL) to late 1980's.

Previous Releases (as catalog 27060): Road Number 17495, May 1984; Road Number 17159, March 1988.

The ORER for April 1970 shows the Soo Line series 17100 to 17498 with just 200 cars in it, which suggests but doesn't confirm that only even numbers are in the series. The use of even numbers only for boxcars was common practice for the Soo and several other railroads at one time. In fact, many of the line items in the Soo Line registration call out "even numbers" or "odd numbers" (in the case of gondolas and hoppers among other types) and, yes, "odd and even numbers" just to make sure. The 17100 series is one line item that does not have that extra detail. On the other hand, Micro-Trains' previous two releases had odd numbers.

And those two releases would be wrong, according to the September 2002 issue of **Rail Model Journal**. The series 17100 to 17498 was indeed even numbers only. The cars were built in February and April 1968 at the Soo's own Fond du Lac shops. They had a distinctive eight panel (seven post) side, diagonal panel roof, end of car cushioning and Youngstown plug doors. There's a photo of the 17300 taken in November 1984, so we know that the paint scheme lasted that long. It's mentioned in the RMJ piece that the Spring 1999 issue of "The SOO," the journal of the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society. If you're looking online, check George Elwood's trusty "Fallen Flags" site (<http://www.rr-fallenflags.org>) for shots of the 17330 from 1979 and the 17420 from 1976. It will be noted (rather quickly by some N Scalpers!) that the MTL car has six posts or seven panels either side of the door, while the real Soo Line cars had those seven posts or eight panels. And it will probably be questioned why MTL would paint their 027 body style in this scheme when there is a more accurate model available, er, elsewhere. I would expect the boo birds to be coming out in the usual places, if they haven't already, and this time, I don't think there's much of a defense available.

Turning back to the ORERs in the Research Accumulation, there were still 196 cars in the series in January 1985. Whoops, almost forgot the vital statistics: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 57 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5000 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. The October 1986 ORER shows a drop to 139 cars, and the July 1987 Register has 117. But the July 1989 edition shows the series 17124 to 18174 including just one car, and so much for the Approximate Time Period. I can't say for sure what happened to these cars. Perhaps it was a renumbering and perhaps it was a sale, for instance to the Wisconsin Central, which had in the same July 1989 ORER a series 17110 to 18138 of 115

boxcars with the same key dimensions. Sure enough, the boxcar WC 17314 found on RRPictureArchives.net is a restenciled Soo Line plug door boxcar with seven posts and eight panels, but in the white and red scheme, not the mineral red one.



094 00 210, \$26.85

Reporting Marks: SNFX 4606

Three Bay ACF Center Flow® Covered Hopper with Long (Trough) Hatches, Shell Oil Company.

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Multicolor Shell "scallop" logo on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960's (1965 build date given by MTL) or early 1970's (1971 service date given by MTL) to early 1980's as painted, see text.

Previous Release: Road Number 4610, May 2002.

My first question: SNFX? What's a "SNFX"? And why wouldn't an Oil Company have just tank cars, especially if it also had a Chemical Company subsidiary? Fortunately, the ORER for April 1970 sets me straight: There are "SNFX" reporting marks under the listing for Shell Oil Company. And there are 25 cars with description "Covered Hopper, Interior Lined, Center Flow, Gravity Unloading Outlets" numbered 4600 to 4624. These are 4,650 cubic foot cars, which should align them reasonably well with the CF4650 that MTL models as its 94000 series. (There are always those possible nit-picky variations.) The inside length is 49 feet 9 inches and the outside length 55 feet 6 inches, and capacity is 195,000 pounds. Now, if the ORER would only tell us how they were painted! The April 1976 and April 1981 ORER entries effectively duplicate the one from '70.

Then... a hard right turn! The Shell Oil Company listing for January 1985 no longer has the SNFX cars, or for that matter the SNFX reporting marks. But the cars are in fact still around! They've been transferred to a firm called IND/AG Chemicals, Inc. with headquarters in Walnut Creek, California. The description of the cars and the quantity is exactly the same. And except for subsets based on capacity, the listing remains at 25 cars in the SNFX series 4600 to 4624 all the way into the January 2000 Register, except that the HQ of IND/AG has moved to Alpaugh, California. (That's in Tulare County, about halfway between Visalia and Bakersfield... I checked.) An Internet search turned up an almost complete goose egg on this company; the only thing I found out is that they paid \$1,416 for lobbying in the State of California in 1996. Not exactly useful information for the accumulator.

So what does all this mean? Well, if you're modeling the 1970's, you're good with this relatively rare prototype car. Based on the number of home points Shell had, could have traveled all over the country. If you're past 1985, though, and want to run this car, you're probably going to have to paint out that Shell logo, which is no doubt one of the more expensive attributes of this release! By the way, even if the SNFX fleet had stayed with Shell, that logo was transitioned to the one without the word "Shell" starting in the mid-1970s, so that trademark may have to have been removed anyway.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:

The following item was announced as an “off-cycle” release via the Micro-Trains website on January 18 and also via the MTL “E-Line” broadcast e-mail.



030 44 050, \$21.85

Reporting Marks: SP 2459xx (last two digits of road number obscured).

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Double Door, Southern Pacific.

Paint: Brown with white and yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname on right. Oxide red doors. Weathering: Oxide red patch panels along bottom of sides (same color as the doors), white, black and gray streaks and patches. Approximate Time Period: late 1970's (1979 build date given by MTL) to present.

Previous Releases: A six pack of road numbers 245990, 245998, 246003, 246479, 246587 and 246612 (catalog for pack 30052), January 1984; Road Number 246535, September 1990 (catalog 30050); Road Number 246016, January 2005 (catalog 030 00 050).

Well, that's what happens when you rush... in my very brief and very hurried UMTRR News Flash of January 19, I mentioned that the last release for this car was in September 1990. Not true! Several readers caught the Oops of my omission of the January 2005 reprint. Which is really embarrassing since I have a copy of that release in my own accumulation!

I also mentioned in the News Flash that this car requires a bit of a traditional review. This is the first time that Micro-Trains hasn't simply pulled a recent release and weathered it. I don't think they had lots of copies of the January 2005 release laying around, and besides, the first three digits of the road number don't match (246 versus 245). So what we might have here is the first ever “direct to weathered” MTL car. I suspect that there will be more.

There were certainly enough of the prototype cars to pick from: the ORER for April 1981 shows the group SP 245990 to 246514, of all 525 possible cars. They're described as “Box, Freightmaster EOC Cushioning, Nailable Steel Floor, Single Sheath, 50K.” Key stats: inside length 52 feet 8 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 59 feet 1 inch, extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, door opening 16 feet, capacity 5503 cubic feet or 153,000 pounds. In the July 1992 Register there were 377 cars in the main series plus subsets of just “Box, Steel” for another 119 cars. But in October 1996 all the cars were back together again under the longer “cushion car” description and there were 467 cars remaining.

Under the Union Pacific registration in January 2002 there were 380 cars left out of the original 525, and in October 2007 there were 302 cars left. I would have expected that at least some of them would have gone over to the Golden West Service sale and leaseback program during the Espee's lean years. And it's also very possible that the paint scheme on these cars would have been updated to the plain brown with small UP herald and SP reporting marks.

However, there is a circa August 2004 picture of sister car SP 246017 in the original paint scheme, on the Fallen Flags site. I wasn't surprised to see some, ah, embellishing: graffiti.

We also note a bit of a “door thing” with this car. What we used to call the 30000 body style is based on an FMC prototype but the model has staggered doors while the prototype has centered doors. There are more specifics—and more deltas to the model-- on Page 33 of the October 2000 issue of Rail Model Journal: “In 1979 SP ordered 525 double sliding door cars from FMC for lumber service, but these were longer 52 foot cars with seven panels to either side of the doors, a peaked X-panel roof, and EOC cushioning.” Author Jim Eager’s 1981 photo of the SP 246149 accompanies the article.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #36, Four Western Pacific 40 foot single door boxcars, has been released (image at right). UMTRR coverage of Runner Pack #36 was in the subscriber edition (only) of the August 2009 issue.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is August 2010. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close February 26.



Scheduled August 2010 Release:

Runner Pack #42: 993 00 042, \$79.95

Reporting Marks: D&RGW 56376, 56385, 56414, 56422

Quantity four of Rio Grande (D&RGW) 50 foot gondolas, fishbelly sides, drop ends.

Orange with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and “Rio Grande - The Action Road” speed lettering roadname and slogan on right. Simulated scrap loads for each car included.

Approximate Time Period: 1977 (build date) to mid-2000s.

Previous Releases: Road Number 56107, March 1977 (as catalog 46040); a three pack of road numbers 56379, 56387 and 56423, September 1999 (as catalog number 46042).

The website of the Rio Grande Modeling and Historical Society (www.drgw.org) has the Rio Grande series 56375 to 56424 shown as general service gondolas built in 1977 by Thrall and carrying the “stacked” Rio Grande herald. It’s noted that the cars had black ends; the three-pack reprint of these cars that Micro-Trains did in 1999 had black ends, while the

photographic conception of this runner pack shows orange ends to match the body. Since MTL is not yet in production on these cars, that can be fixed.

Here's something else that can be fixed: the ends. Specifically, they **were** fixed ends, not drop ends. A 1982 photo of the DRGW 56387 from the Morning Sun Color Guide to the Rio Grande clearly shows this attribute, and that they are black. The 105 body style—a 14 panel gondola with fixed ends and fishbelly sides-- had already been introduced by Micro-Trains in 1997, so it could have been used in 1999 for these cars instead of the 046 body style (14 panel gondola with drop ends). The 105 certainly should be considered for this Runner Pack.

The ORER for April 1981 shows two groups, 56375 to 56424 and 56425 to 56474, both described as "Gondola, Truck Centers 43 feet 5 inches" with AAR Designation GB. All dimensions are the same. The inside length was 52 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet 6 inches, outside length 57 feet 2 inches, extreme height 8 feet 1 inch, and capacity 2244 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. The order from Thrall was for 100 cars so it makes sense that we have apparently identical groups. I'll never figure out all the nuances of ORER listings, that's for sure. Anyway, in October 1991 all fifty cars in the 56375 to 56424 group were still around, though one, the 56380, had been fitted with cradles for coil steel; the second number group was also intact.

Under the Union Pacific registration in the January 2001 ORER, there are still a total of 85 cars of the original 100 in the Rio Grande series, scattered among various subgroups by capacity. And there are still 33 cars in service with DRGW reporting marks as of the October 2007 ORER, the latest I have, however all but three are in the 56425 to 56474 group. "To Present" is probably a bit of a stretch for the Approximate Time Period. However, on the Fallen Flags site there is a 2008 photo of a very tired looking DRGW 56358, with restenciled reporting marks atop the original paint and lettering, which is difficult to discern under more than three decades of weathering.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



051 00 190, \$34.85

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Caboose, Offset Straight Side Cupola, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus

Reporting Marks: None (reference in UMTRR website will be "RBB&B Caboose").

Brown with red and yellow lettering at bottom of side ("mirror image" with lettering facing end of car without cupola on each side). Multi-color representation of a tiger below cupola. "Greatest Show on Earth" logo on top of cupola. Includes simulated window inserts.

I guess I can take a little bit of a breather on the Ringling Brothers series this month, between the locomotive release which I already covered in September and this caboose. The tiger

looks like one that's featured on one of the RBB&B posters more commonly found on the 'net. It's nice enough, but the attribute that caught my eye was the lettering on **top** of the cupola. Yes, MTL has lettered a roof before, most notably the trailer in the 2002 "Holiday Transportation Company" release. Certainly an interesting place to put the "Greatest Show on Earth" trademark!



074 00 118, \$23.95

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #18: Zachary Taylor (12th President).

Cream sides and ends with green roof and black lettering. Multicolor rendition of the Seal of the President of the United States and dates in office on left. Name of Vice President, home state of president and party affiliation at bottom left. Multicolor portrait of president in front of red, white and blue rendition of American flag in service during presidency on right. Birth date in small lettering at bottom right of side.

If things had gone differently over at the Micro-Trains factory, we would have been talking about our twelfth president last August. Instead, with the random release schedule commencing after the tenth president, we're here in February. And if Zachary Taylor had remained president instead of suddenly taking ill and passing away just 16 months into his first term, the Civil War might have begun in 1850 instead of 1861. Or maybe not at all.

Born in November 1784, Zachary Taylor would have been given a place in history on his military achievements alone. He joined the United States Army in 1808 and served in the War of 1812. He led the First Infantry Regiment in the Black Hawk War and personally accepted the surrender of Chief Black Hawk. He next led the defeat of the Seminoles on Christmas Day 1837 and was made commander of the Southern Division of the Army in 1841. As noted in the Micro-Trains trivia question, he was a key leader in the Mexican War, winning the Battle of Buena Vista though significantly outnumbered. This put "Old Rough and Ready" in a popular press spotlight similar to that previously accorded to George Washington and Andrew Jackson. A movement to nominate Taylor for President began even though no one was really sure what his political beliefs were. He received the nomination of the Whig Party for the election of 1848, and defeated Democrat Lewis Cass and Free Soil candidate Martin Van Buren to become the country's twelfth president.

As President, Taylor didn't seem to be beholden to anyone. He owned slaves, but didn't believe that slavery should be extended to the Western States. He encouraged New Mexico and California to go directly to statehood, skipping the territorial stage and enabling them to decide for themselves the slavery question. While elected as a Whig, Taylor did not support tariffs for protection, only for revenue production. Overall, he tended to run the White House in a very informal, rule-of-thumb manner, which did not exactly endear him to the organized political parties.

But one thing on which he stood absolutely firm was the sanctity of the united nation. Southerners were outraged by his stand on slavery in the West and by the start of 1850 had threatened to secede. The official White House website picks up the story: "In February 1850 President Taylor had held a stormy conference with southern leaders who threatened secession. He told them that if necessary to enforce the laws, he personally would lead the Army. Persons 'taken in rebellion against the Union, he would hang ... with less reluctance than he had hanged deserters and spies in Mexico.' He never wavered."

On July 4, 1850, a very hot Independence Day in Washington, Taylor sampled several dishes from citizens and also drank milk and ate cherries during the day. He fell ill with what is technically called gastroenteritis, or what we commonly call "the stomach flu." The treatments of the time were, let us say, not as enlightened as now, and were said to include opium, quinine, bleeding, and blistering. On July 9, Taylor passed away and was succeeded by Vice President Millard Fillmore. Even now, the circumstances of his death remain controversial. In 1991 his body was exhumed (!) and checked for evidence of arsenic poisoning (allegedly through one of the lunch items offered to him by a citizen). Though no evidence of foul play was found, some people remain convinced that Taylor's death was by homicide.

The Miller Center at the University of Virginia (<http://millercenter.org>), as part of its scholarly review of the 12th Chief Executive, concludes that Taylor is not remembered as a great President: "Most historians believe that he was too nonpolitical in a day when politics, parties, and presidential leadership demanded close ties with political operatives." But they also speculate on what might have happened had he lived. Perhaps the Civil War might not have occurred at all. "Because the South was still too disunited in 1850 to form a viable secession movement, Taylor's unflinching support (had he lived) for the immediate statehood of the western territories might have changed the course of history. He had surprised many when he stamped out Santa Anna at the Battle of Buena Vista. The question remains: If Taylor had survived, would he have been able to stamp out the most burning issue that faced the nation in 1850 -- the expansion of slavery westward?"

Although not at all a burning question, the next one for readers is what the next month's honored President will be. I neglected to provide my Little Hint last month which would have led you to Zachary Taylor; with my apologies, let's consider this month's challenge. Micro-Trains says: "Which President worked at an ice-cream store as a teenager, graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School, and won a Grammy award for an audio version of one of his books?" Well, an easy narrow down is the fact that the Grammys have only been around since 1958. My first thought was John F. Kennedy, and although "spoken word recordings" **about** him took home the award, he didn't personally win one. No, you actually need, well let's say the Approximate Time Period of "The Present," to get this one right. And although it appears to be accurate that this President did work at an ice cream parlor in Honolulu, I did not see any legitimate confirmation that there was a flavor created for him called "Barack Road."



987 01 631, \$119.95

Powered FT-A Diesel Locomotive, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus

Reporting Marks: None (reference in UMTRR website will be "RBB&B Loco").

Brown with red and yellow lettering "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey" along side.

Coverage of this item was in the September 2009 UMTRR (subscriber version only) when pre-orders were open.

*The following items are in pre-order at present and are **not** currently available. Scheduled delivery is shown below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close February 26.*

993 21 100, \$179.95 – *Coming June 2010*

D-Day Commemorative Car Set. Consists of five modified Railway Post Office heavyweight cars, each with a photographic representation of one of the five beaches on which the D-Day invasion took place: Omaha, Gold, Juno, Sword and Utah.

993 21 101, \$169.95 – *Coming July 2010*

D-Day Commemorative Locomotive and Caboose Set. Consists of the following items: (1) A powered FT locomotive in military green and tan with green lettering "D-Day – June 6, 1944" on side. (2) A steel end cupola caboose in military green and tan with white star in circle below cupola, and green lettering with quote "We will accept nothing less than full victory." Set also includes commemorative lapel pin.

There have been books written about it, and movies made about it, so it would be difficult to do justice to the D-Day invasion in just a paragraph or two.

But I think the United States Army has a nice summary: "June 6, 1944, 160,000 Allied troops landed along a 50-mile stretch of heavily-fortified French coastline to fight Nazi Germany on the beaches of Normandy, France. General Dwight D. Eisenhower called the operation a crusade in which 'we will accept nothing less than full victory.' More than 5,000 Ships and 13,000 aircraft supported the D-Day invasion, and by day's end on June 6, the Allies gained a foot- hold in Normandy. The D-Day cost was high -more than 9,000 Allied Soldiers were killed or wounded -- but more than 100,000 Soldiers began the march across Europe to defeat Hitler." The Army has a section of their website (www.army.mil/D-day/) devoted to the event, with photos, news, a video featuring first-hand accounts, and even audio of General Eisenhower's message to the troops, which includes the quote that Micro-Trains will have on the caboose: "We will accept nothing less than full victory." In addition to the Army site, there is also a PBS "American Experience" website (with much material, but not the actual film), an Encyclopedia Britannica site, and the site of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation. And that's just within the first page of web citations.

As with the Battle of Midway set from last year, Micro-Trains has ambitious plans for this commemorative. The photographic reproductions across the full sides of the modified RPO cars are probably another first in N Scale; certainly I can't think of anything prior that comes close. When the car set is released in June, it will be sixty-six years from D-Day, which would mean those who were there and still here to tell about it will be in their eighties or older. There were many events including a return to Normandy last year for the 65th Anniversary of D-Day; however, every June 6 will be an important anniversary now and for all time. As written on the PBS Website: "It should never be forgotten that, of all events of our tumultuous 20th century, perhaps the most important was the defeat of the Nazi empire; and for a long and very dark time, for nearly five years, that outcome was by no means certain. D-Day was the turning point. It was day one of the final drive to complete Allied victory."

Nn3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



507 00 531 and 507 00 532, \$28.70 each
Reporting Marks: UP 492876 and UP 492915.
50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Plug Door, Union Pacific.

Yellow with aluminum ends and roof. Aluminum trucks with brown wheels and couplers. Black reporting marks (on left) and dimensional data (left and right). Red, white and blue shield herald on left. Large slogan "We Can Handle It" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1976 (service date given by MTL) or early 1980's to early decade of the 2000's.

Although I can generally quote myself from the review of the N Scale reprint of this car from September 2009, I have to begin with a key difference in the 1:220 model: it has a roofwalk. While it's arguably easier to take a running board off than put one on, I'd still rather see MTL come out with a Z Scale 50 foot plug door boxcar without one to begin with, just as the 038 body style exists in N Scale. OK, I'll step back off the soapbox... and commence with the selected Cut and Paste.

Before "We Will Deliver," but after the request that shippers "Be Specific, Ship Union Pacific," was "We Can Handle It." Sometimes, as in this case, followed by the phrase "...the Union Pacific railroad people," the slogan was adapted in the 1970's and displayed in large bold lettering on car sides. The slogan also appears in white on a box car red background. Like many other plug door boxcars, it's actually classified as a refrigerator car in the Association of American Railroads code. It's an RBL, to be specific (no pun intended), according to Micro-Trains built in 1964. The series is described in the January 1967 ORER as

"Union Pacific Refrigerator Plug Door Cushion Underframe" back in its original series of 499900 to 499999, with 98 cars in the group at that time. Micro-Trains reports that the cars were serviced in May 1976 and renumbered into the 492801 to 492970 series, however the ORERs I own don't exactly concur with that information.

The first Equipment Register in which I pick up this exact road number is April 1984. There is a small group 492875 to 492890 of 16 cars described as "Refrigerator, Steel, Cushion Underframe, Load Dividers, Single Plug Doors, Special Interior Lining, 50K" with these dimensions: inside length 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 9 feet 11 inches, outside length 58 feet, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, capacity 4668 cubic feet or 135,000 pounds. The original release's road number 492915 is part of the next series 492891 to 492970, of 79 cars, described the same way with the addition "Considered Part of Car: Shipper Owned Pallets" and with the same dimensions except for a door opening of 10 feet even.

By July 1989 the 492876 was the first road number in the even smaller group 492876 to 492888 which was down to eight cars, and the series with MTL's first release number had slipped to 48 cars. Two years later the groups were down to seven and 36 cars respectively. Take that down to five and twenty cars in the October 1996 ORER, three and nine cars in the July 1998 Register, and three and six cars in the January 2000 book. It looks like the cars were in service for a couple more years, but in 2004 the forty year rule would have kicked in (cars older than that, unless rebuilt, are no longer supposed to be in interchange service).

My next question, which I hedged on back when the first N Scale number was released in 1998, was how long we could expect to see the "We Can Handle It" slogan on these cars. I had submitted a guess of an Approximate Time Period to at least the end of the 1980's, but knowing what I know now, I am thinking that the paint scheme MTL depicts was the final one for these cars until they were retired sometime in the decade of the 2000's. The Fallen Flags site has a photo of very similar car UP 492872, a class BI-70-7, as of 1989, so I believe it's safe to assume that the "We Can Handle It" got that far. I also note differences between prototype and model, the most prominent of which is the presence of diagonal seams either side of the plug door-- which is also wider on the real car than the model. There is also UP 492773 shot in 2007 and with the slogan almost completely worn away, and UP 493328 as of 2006 in only slightly better condition, both on RailcarPhotos.com.



515 00 170, \$19.20

Road Number: 96451 (will be preceded with "PRR" in UMTRR website listings).

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Boxcar, Pennsylvania Railroad "Star Union Line".

Brown with white lettering including roadname and road number on left. Red star on white circle on left with white legend "Union Line." Approximate Time Period: 1907 (build date given by MTL) to early 1910's.

It's not the "Union Line" but actually the "Star Union Line" which was an early fast freight forwarder. And this is an interesting piece of history that I didn't know anything about. At the time—which was the middle part of the 1800's—standard gauge had not yet been adopted, and break bulk handling of freight at the ends of railroad lines were common, versus straight interchange of cars. This could make seeking redress for damaged goods difficult—the shipper didn't know who to blame. Forwarding firms were founded to act as agents for shippers and ensure that things got from source to destination on time and without worries. That helped, but many railroads still refused to interchange cars. The solution was for the firms to become "fast freight forwarders" and own their own cars, which, believe it or not, could be made suitable for different track widths through adjustable trucks or wide wheels.

The book "Railroad Traffic and Rates" published back in 1924 (!) includes a couple of pages on the "Star Union Line." It was founded in 1854 by the Western Insurance and Transportation Company, later the Union Insurance and Transportation Company. It purchased 55 cars from the Little Miami Railroad and handled its first freight in 1864. "Not only did it provide a through route between the East and middle West, but it insured the time of goods in transit. An additional twenty-five cents per 100 pounds on dry goods, for instance, was charged between Chicago and New York to insure five days' transit." The company also once operated car floats between Jersey City and Manhattan. The Pennsylvania Railroad was a key link in the Star Union Line's chain, and as it took over more of the routes over which the Star Union Line operated, it was logical for it to also absorb the Star Union Line as well, which it did via a stock swap in 1873. The Pennsylvania Company continued use of the name and the star in circle trademark, which is how the car Micro-Trains depicts came to be decorated. By 1875 most of the fast freight forwarders had ceased to be independent companies; it's noted in "Railroad Traffic and Rates" that many were controlled by officials of the companies on which they operated anyway, creating a conflict of interest. After its purchase, the Star Union Line became "practically an accounting bureau for the through freight over the Pennsylvania system... it has however not lost its functions as a freight line. It has agents located at different points to solicit traffic... through the Star Union Line... for it represents to the shipper a definite through route." It's not completely clear to me when the use of the Star Union Line service ended, and perhaps there is no specific date; but one thumbnail account I found indicated that they were succeeded by the express companies and then the Railway Express Agency roughly around World War I. Certainly the concept of "fast freight" didn't go away then, though.

Could be that the car was gone by the 1910's however. The ORER for October 1919 shows a huge Pennsylvania Railroad number series from 95001 to 100323 of "Box, Steel Underframe" cars of 30 foot interior length, but there are only 11 cars in the group. Whether that really aligns to the 1907 build date given for the car by Micro-Trains is a bit of a question in my mind. Meanwhile, the June 1905 ORER shows a massive renumbering program being undertaken by the Pennsy, with that same group having over 5200 cars. However, the "Union Line" cars are shown as being in different groups, 85001 to 87000 with 2000 cars for example. The Westerfield catalog online gives "00's 10's" as the era for other Star Union Line cars, and I'll rely on Al Westerfield's expertise as a final data point here.



540 00 091 and 540 00 092, \$32.35 each
Reporting Marks: KCS 9001 and KCS 9005.
Gunderson Husky-Stack® Well Cars,
Kansas City Southern.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and herald on right. The 091 release includes two 20 foot containers (Evergreen and Uniglory) and the 092 release includes one 40 foot container (Sea Land). Approximate Time Period: 1996 to present (for the cars and the Evergreen and Uniglory containers).

The Kansas City Southern series of double stack cars numbered 9001 to 9100 was built by Gunderson in May 1996. They are three unit multi-purpose Maxi-Stack cars, so you'll need to use your imagination—or some drawbars—to link these single cars together. There are plenty of photos of this group of 100 on RRPictureArchives.net and a few more on RailcarPhotos.com. Note that the paint scheme on each of the three units may be different from each other... so I guess more than imagination or drawbars might be needed to model the prototype more accurately. I'll also point out that the KCS has apparently switched from brown to red as the base color for these cars; I see an April 2008 image of one unit of KCS 9006 on RailcarPhotos.com in that scheme, complete with conspicuity stripes just above the angle of the car side. That particular unit was also carrying two short trailers at the time, not containers, illustrating the "all-purpose" service of these particular cars.

Taking on the incremental task of relating something about the containers, I'll note that Evergreen Marine Corporation is a Taiwanese shipping line that calls on over two hundred ports in 80 countries, and that Uniglory is a subsidiary of Evergreen. How convenient for me! The much more interesting container—to this byte-slinger, anyway—is the one lettered for SeaLand. Container service began with the vision of Malcolm McLean, who already owned the trucking line that bears his name. He purchased a steamship line and, in 1956, transported trailers door to door by land and then water, from Port Newark, New Jersey, to Houston, Texas. The idea was to save all break-bulk and transloading costs by loading and sealing a trailer at the shipper, trucking it to a seaport, sailing it to a port near the destination, and then trucking it there. The company became Sea-Land in 1962 and before long thousands of trailers and containers bore the familiar trademark. The Micro-Trains container has a later version of the paint scheme. Sea-Land was purchased by R.J. Reynolds (yes, the tobacco company) in 1969, was spun off in 1984, and was purchased by CSX in 1986. The international portion of the company was sold to Maersk in 1999, forming Maersk Sealand; the Sealand name was dropped in 2006. The domestic portion of Sea-Land now operates as Horizon Lines, with a logo that looks quite similar to that of its predecessor. I suppose that there's a bit of an anachronism here with respect to the Approximate Time Period, since the common years for the double stack cars and the Sealand container would only be 1996 to 1999 or thereabouts. So I've put a caveat on the ATP for this release.



970 01 071 and 970 01 072, \$185.95 each
 Road Numbers: 6382 and 6434
 (preceded by "CR" in website listings).
 SD40-2 Diesels, Conrail.

Conrail Blue with black frame and white sill. White lettering including "wheel on rail" herald and roadname on long hood, road number on cab and roadname on nose and back end. Approximate Time Period: late 1970's to late 1990's.

The final roster for Conrail, as posted on the "Illustrated Conrail Locomotive Roster" web page (<http://fp.users.fast.net/jprock/crroster.html>) shows 165 SD40-2 locomotives built between 1977 and 1979 and numbered from 6358 to 6524. "These 3000 horsepower six axle locomotives formed the backbone of heavy road freight fleet in the years Conrail struggled to profitability," notes webpage author John Prock. When Conrail was split up, the 6434 became Norfolk Southern 3373 and is presently painted in the black and white of NS according to the table on Chris Toth's "NSDash9" site (<http://www.nsdash9.com/>). But the 6382 went to CSX and became road number 8808, part of its 8800 to 8886 number series. The final count at the split was 87 SD40-2's to CSX and 119 to Norfolk Southern; none stayed in the Conrail "Shared Assets" region.

A quick look through online photos showed no large discrepancies between model and prototype. As usual, you might want to pick out paint details on the stair edges and ends of the handrails, this time in white. The 6434 did get a "Conrail Quality" paint scheme—not sure when-- and was conveyed to CSX in that decoration, so the Approximate Time Period will be shorter than for the 6382 which was still in its original paint as late as 1999.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: Announced on January 18 via the website and January 20 via the "E-Line" broadcast e-mail were a series of weathered versions of previously issued Z Scale locomotives, listed below. In parenthesis is the issue date of the unweathered version of the locomotive; please reference the appropriate UMTRR for more information. Images of the weathered locomotives are in the "2010 Month by Month" page of the UMTRR website, in the January table.

981 44 111, \$175.95 - Penn Central GP-35, Road Number 2289 (January 2008)
 981 44 112, \$175.95 - Penn Central GP-35, Road Number 2310 (January 2008)
 981 44 121, \$185.95 - Missouri Pacific GP-35, Road Number 622 (June 2008)
 981 44 122, \$185.95 - Missouri Pacific GP-35, Road Number 660 (June 2008)
 981 44 131, \$195.95 - Illinois Central Gulf GP-35, Road Number 2501 (September 2008)
 981 44 132, \$195.95 - Illinois Central Gulf GP-35, Road Number 2505 (September 2008)
 982 44 021, \$195.95 - Canadian National GP-9, Road Number 4597 (August 2007)

982 44 022, \$195.95 - Canadian National GP-9, Road Number 4598 (August 2007)
 982 44 051, \$195.95 - Rio Grande (D&RGW) GP-9, Road Number 5904 (February 2008)
 982 44 051, \$195.95 - Rio Grande (D&RGW) GP-9, Road Number 5911 (February 2008)
 982 44 112, \$205.95 - Baltimore & Ohio GP-9, Road Number 6607 (October 2008)
 982 44 120, \$205.95 - Southern Pacific GP-9, Road Number 5669 (December 2008)
 982 44 130, \$205.95 - Cotton Belt (SSW) GP-9, Road Number 3644 (December 2008)

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #14, Four Chessie System PS-2 Covered Hoppers, has been released (image at right). UMTRR coverage was in the subscriber edition (only) of the August 2009 issue.

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is September 2010. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close February 26.



Scheduled September 2010 Release:

Runner Pack #20: 994 00 020, \$69.95

Reporting Marks: NYC 715105, 715152, 715208, 715233

Quantity four New York Central 50 foot gondolas, fishbelly sides, drop ends.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and oval "New York Central System" herald on right. Simulated scrap metal loads included for each car.

Approximate Time Period: 1951 (build date) through mid-1970's.

Previous Releases: None.

Although we can't vouch for what these cars looked like, it's a fact that 111 cars in the original New York Central series 715100 to 715899 actually made it all the way to the first registration for Conrail, in the April 1976 ORER! But let's go back to the April 1952 Equipment Register which is the closest I have to the build date for these cars. There are two consecutive groups of cars which are nearly identical, numbered 715100 to 715599 and 715600 to 716599, both described as "Gondola, Steel, Drop Ends, Steel Floor" with AAR Designation GB. The cars had an inside length of 52 feet 6 inches, inside width of 9 feet 6 inches, inside height of 3 feet 9 inches, outside length of 55 feet 1 inch, and capacity of 1896 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. These two groups totaled 1098 cars. If you're curious, the only differing dimension was the height from rail at the extreme width, which was 7 feet 1 inch in the first group and 7 feet 4 inches in the second group.

The paint scheme MTL depicts on these cars aligns with the early 1950's practice of the New York Central, with freight car red sides, white lettering, and the NYC oval without a black background. The lettering matches that shown in the CDS Equipment Diagrams book. In the 1960's the Central went to black gondolas, with some Century Green mixed in, but I'm quite confident that the freight car red cars co-existed with the black and green gondolas.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



502 00 520, \$22.95

Reporting Marks: HI 1959.

40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, Hawaii State Car.

Aluminum sides, black roof, ends, sills and door hardware; blue and black primary lettering including reporting marks, state name and

outline map on left. Four color process graphics including state flag, state flower (Hibiscus) and state bird (Nene) on right. Twentieth release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

[The following is largely reprinted from the March 2006 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release of this car.]

The "modern history" of our fiftieth state does not stretch back nearly as far as it does for the other forty-nine. It was well into the A.D. calendar when Polynesians traveled from Tahiti to these islands in outrigger canoes. But think about how perilous that journey must have been, over two thousand nautical miles more than one thousand years ago. Tahiti is about as far below the Equator as Hawaii is above it.

At any rate, the Polynesians made it, and from sometime before 750 A.D. to 1778 lived by themselves. Which is not surprising: the islands are 2,390 miles from California, 3,850 miles from Japan, 4,900 miles from China, and 5,280 miles from the Philippines. In other words, the most isolated population center on earth.

Captain James Cook was called the first to "discover" the territory, and gave it the name "Sandwich Islands" after the Earl of Sandwich. (Who already had, well, the sandwich named after him.) But Spaniards had visited before that and witnessed a volcano eruption. The islands were placed under a British protectorate in 1794. Other Western countries tried to gain control as well; missionaries did convert most natives to Christianity.

The Hawaiian civilization was united under King Kamehameha in 1810, starting a dynasty that lasted into the 1890's when it was replaced by a republic. In 1840 a constitution was added to the monarchy, in 1848 the concept of "fee simple" land ownership was granted to commoners, and in 1882 the only royal palace in the now-USA was built on Oahu.

Key crops of the islands are not as old as I thought. Pineapple came from Spain (!) in 1813, coffee was first planted in 1817 and those wonderful (if highly fattening) macadamia nuts were not cultivated until 1892. Sugar plantations were begun in 1835, and the first train

operated in 1879 on Maui to haul that sugar cane. This was the year **after** the first telephone was installed in Hawaii! But at least I have something to say about trains.

In 1898 the islands were annexed to the United States and the Stars and Stripes replaced the Hawaii flag. The City of Honolulu began streetcar service in 1901. Two years later a Joint Tourism Committee was formed and one of the key industries of the territory began in earnest. But that was without outdoor billboards starting in 1927 when they were banned! In 1935, the first scheduled flights from San Francisco began, and took 21 1/2 hours using the famous "China Clipper."

If there is any one Hawaiian historical event with which most people are familiar, it is the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which brought the United States into World War II. After the war's end, the tourism business took off; over 40,000 people visited in 1948, when it was still a long journey from the mainland. With jet service available now, the numbers currently stand in the millions. The fiftieth state entered the Union on August 21, 1959.

While most people think of the weather in the Aloha State as always perfect, the 1946 "Great Tsunami" did significant damage to the island of Hilo, Hurricane Iwa struck in 1982, and Hurricane Iniki caused \$2 billion in damage in 1992. And then there is the ever-present danger of volcanoes, from which the islands rose millions of years ago. It's a balance between beauty and danger, to be sure, but today more than one million people call the islands their home.

Rosemary and I visited as-- what else?-- part of our honeymoon in August 1991, our only appearance there to date. It was just a stop on the way to the main event (Australia), but it was certainly a fun couple of days. We took in some of the usual tourist destinations but also took the rental car-- a convertible Mustang, which I still remember fondly-- to the back side of Oahu, where tourist traffic is much lighter, and I enjoyed what is still one of the all time great hamburgers I've ever eaten. (They cooked it with vermouth, which burns off but leaves a great taste.) We also splurged on a helicopter ride over Oahu, and the video is in the archives someplace. And I can't leave out the fact that I drove on Hawaii's interstate highways, which of course leads to the imponderable question, how can Hawaii have interstate highways? Our daughter Thalia Elizabeth would certainly like us to return someday, with her of course (and maybe her brother!). Any time I buy a lottery ticket, she asks, "If you win, can we go to Hawaii?"

Famous Hawaiians include entertainer Don Ho, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye who was also Hawaii's first congressman, political leader Sanford Dole who was the Republic's first governor, astronaut Ellison Sizuka, actress and recent "Dancing with the Stars" contestant Tia Carrere, actress and singer Bette Midler (born in Honolulu), baseball pitcher Sid Fernandez, and beauty contest winners Carolyn Sapp (Hawaii's first Miss America, 1991), Brooke Mahealani Lee (Hawaii's first Miss USA and Miss Universe) and Angela Perez Baraquio and Leslie Lam (Miss America and Mrs. America both in 2001).



535 00 280, \$28.90

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Reporting Marks: None (reference in UMTRR website will be "RBB&B Caboose").

Brown with red and yellow lettering at bottom of side split by multi-color representation of a tiger below cupola. "Greatest Show on Earth" logo on top of cupola.

I don't know why this hasn't occurred to me before, but the entire train of Ringling Brothers "circus posters" billboard cars, plus the locomotive and caboose, is completely different in body styles from N Scale to Z Scale. This release is no exception, being that it's the only caboose in 1:220 available from Micro-Trains. (At least for now, I suppose.) The lettering is the same but different between N and Z on this car as well, in order to get it all to fit. I guess that's one of the Useless Trivia Points for this month.



982 01 039, \$175.95

GP-9 Diesel Locomotive, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Reporting Marks: None (reference in UMTRR website will be "RBB&B Loco").

Brown with red and yellow lettering "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey" on long hood.

Coverage of this item was in the September 2009 UMTRR (subscriber version only) when pre-orders were open.

HOn3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE):



New Release: 850 00 070, \$42.45

Reporting Marks: C&S 511.

30 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Cars, Colorado and Southern.

Orange sides, freight car red ends, roof, trucks and bottom door sill. Black lettering Freight car red with black lettering on sides including large "C. & S." initials and small roadname on left, and "Refrigerator" (in all caps) and road number on right. White lettering on ends (reporting marks). Approximate Time Period: 1911 and 1912.

Another one? Uncle! Uncle! Good grief, how many times are we going to see Colorado and Southern narrow gauge cars...

Wait! I really mean, this is quite an amazing run of different paint schemes for one railroad and such a short overall Approximate Time Period. This variation has perhaps the shortest one yet for this group of cars, based on the MTL car copy: built February 1909 and numbered in the 500s series, repainted with the orange sides seen here in 1911, repainted and renumbered into the 1100's series in 1912. The lettering is the same as that on the yellow sided cars that MTL did as their catalog number 850 00 04x in October 2006. So if you're faithfully modeling either 1911 or 1912, well, you're in luck! If not... well, perhaps Micro-Trains didn't paint up too many copies of this particular variation.

We already know from the previous iterations of this car that these were the C&S "Type III" refrigerators which were of steel frame construction, quite unusual for narrow gauge operations. No truss rods here. Since I have no ORERs for either 1911 or 1912 (!), I will need to reprint my quote of the dimensions for the series from the Equipment Register for October 1919. It's after the repaint date but still works: The information is basically the same, which should not be a surprise: inside length 23 feet, inside height was 6 feet and one-half inch, inside width 6 feet 7 inches, outside length 30 feet even, outside width was 7 feet 11 1/2 inches and the extreme height was 12 feet. Capacity was a mere 914 cubic feet or 50,000 pounds.

So... are there any other paint schemes in which this short series of cars was painted? (Maybe: The CDS Equipment Diagrams book notes that "sometimes" the word "Refrigerator" was painted to the right of the door.) If so... I guess we will be seeing them executed in 1:87 proportion sooner or later. And my money is on "sooner."

HOn3 SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: No releases since last issue.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Railway Post Office car is now available undecorated (catalog number 140 00 000, MSRP \$17.85). In a departure from the usual "any" color, MTL has painted these cars in Pullman Green with black roof, as a head start for most railroads. I'd like to see this idea extended to other body styles where it's logical to begin with a common color.

New laser kits with the military theme have been released. In Z Scale, it's a repair shop, office and gate (799 90 925, \$49.95)—the latter perhaps being better described as a security office and gate. These would of course be useful at sites other than military ones, for example, large industrial plants. In my past life as a logistics specialist, I certainly signed in at many of these offices. The "military base chapel" moves up to N Scale (499 90 906, \$49.95) and this also has uses outside the confines of Fort You-Name-It.

The simulated wood veneer loads featured in the doorless N Scale Northern Pacific round roof boxcar have been released as a separate item. Catalog number 499 43 956 contains three loads for \$12.55 MSRP. In Z Scale, scrap iron loads have been released; catalog 799 43 926 has two for \$8.95.

Four Z Scale train sets containing SD40-2 locomotives have debuted. Road names for the diesels include Burlington Northern, Kansas City Southern, Canadian Pacific and CP Rail. Each set has a retail price of \$289.95 and includes four cars, a caboose and a loop of Micro-Track.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: A short list to cover this month. There are just two items on the bye-board in N Scale. In a big surprise, to me anyway, the Universal Cement boxcar from last month (120 00 520) is outta here; in much less of a surprise, the Union Pacific / Western Pacific bay window caboose from December 2009 (130 00 060) is also gone. Turning to Z Scale, we have three pairs of releases gone: the New Haven 50 foot boxcars (507 00 24x, March 2009), the Northwestern Oklahoma Husky-Stack cars (540 00 08x, also March 2009) and the Canadian National GP-9 locomotives (982 01 02x, August 2007). And finally, two Z Scale single cars have left the building: the Ringling Brothers Billboard Car #2 (515 00 602, September 2009) and the Rio Grande 50 foot boxcar in gold and aluminum (507 00 392, April 2008, first number also gone), which my records show as already discontinued.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Charlie Vlk checked in with this on the two aluminum Pacific Fruit Express cars from last month (059 00 516 and 526): "I think the sides are tabbed on the R-40-14s; they are just painted black as others on PFE cars often were. I haven't found any photos other than the one posted on the Atlas Forum; but if you look very closely you can just make out the tab above the truck and you can see highlights where the rivets are at the crossbearer locations. So the MTL car is probably pretty close (I haven't tried to compare the roof, ends, number of side panels, etc.) except the tabs should be painted black." Thanks, Charlie!

And that's all for this month. Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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