

*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*  
**The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report**  
**Issue #161 – May, 2010**

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Hello again everyone! Well, the Merry Month of May marks a milestone here at UMTRR HQ. Both our children reach double digit ages with our daughter Thalia Elizabeth celebrating her tenth birthday mid-month. As part of her school's singing and instrumental music groups, she's playing several major venues this month as well, including our world-famous Lilac Festival. And next month she's with the chorus performing the National Anthem at a baseball game hosted by our local Triple A farm team. No autographs please! Meanwhile, our teenage (!) son Kieran is preparing for the Eighth Grade Class Trip of four days in our Nation's Capital. And yes, his parents are dealing with the typical nervousness of having a child away from home for that long.

In terms of the 1:160 world, work has finally resumed on my own model railroad, the Wilmington and New York, and I'm hoping to make some non-trivial progress on the depiction of a small town that's been a goal of mine since I was, well, Thalia Elizabeth's age! I expect to post an update on that effort in the near future on the Wilmington's web pages, part of the main site at <http://www.irwinsjournal.com/wny>.

Back to the business of the column: we have a reshuffling of Runner Pack releases to tell you about, plus a report on an error in said Runner Pack from a UMTRR Gang Member. We also have the latest bay window caboose, a Ringling Brothers car I long expected to see, Great Northern Geeps, and the return of the man on the hay bale. Off we go...

**N SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



**023 00 320, \$19.90**

**Reporting Marks: ACL 52119.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Door, Atlantic Coast Line.**

Brown (boxcar red) with white lettering including reporting marks and legend "Automobile" on left, gothic lettering herald on right, and simulated reflective strips along bottom sill, bottom of doors and bottom of ends. Approximate Time Period: late 1940's to early 1960's.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1945 shows a pretty impressive number of Automobile cars in the employ of the Atlantic Coast Line. Among them are 1123 just in the series 51000 to 52127, which I believe were the ACL's class O-21. They were AAR Classification XA and were described as "Automobile, All Steel, Staggered Doors." The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 3 inches,

outside length 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet, capacity 3823 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, and door opening 14 feet. That does mean a “door thing” since the MTL car has 16 feet worth of doors.

By the July 1950 ORER most of the ACL’s former “Automobile” fleet had been reclassified to just boxcars, with the exception of a group of just 98 cars numbered to 13200 to 13299. That set still had the loading racks that were typical of automobile cars. The series in which we’re interested was changed to “Box, All Steel, Staggered Doors” and the AAR Classification to XM, although the dimensions were all the same. The number of cars in the series had dipped to 1114. The January 1959 ORER showed 1091 cars and the January 1964 ORER had dropped down to 726. The January 1967 ORER shows a mere 101 cars remaining in the group, so not many made it into the Seaboard Coast Line merger of July 1 of that year.

What may be a more limiting factor in the Approximate Time Period is the paint scheme. According to the RPI website, the circular herald was introduced in the late 1920’s, but with a Railroad Roman typeface. (The familiar “curlicue” ACL herald was apparently not used on any freight cars.) Starting in the 1940’s—the exact date isn’t agreed upon in the sources I checked-- there was a gradual switch from Roman to Gothic for the font, including inside the circular monogram. Online information I found suggests that these cars, built in 1941 according to Micro-Trains, would have been delivered with the Roman lettering. So the Gothic lettering on the MTL model would have come later. RPI says that the change to that Gothic herald was complete by 1951. MTL notes that’s the same year in which the ACL began the use of the “Prismo” reflective paint. The MTL model simulates that use, not only on the sides but also on the ends, adding complexity (and, no doubt, price). But references in the e-zine “Seaboard-Coast Line Modeler” call this paint scheme “post-1948” so I’ll go with late 1940’s for the start of the ATP. MTL does give a service date of 1955 for this particular car which would move the strictly speaking ATP start forward. I did find the use of the word “Automobile” curious considering that the ACL stopped classifying this car series as that type by 1950, at least in Equipment Registers.

It was in 1957 that the herald was changed again, to a small “Atlantic” and a large “Coast Line” which was the final version of the circle before the ACL went into the Seaboard Coast Line. I will speculate that a few of the cars weren’t changed to this scheme until the mid-1960’s which is where I’ll end the ATP. There’s at least one ACL boxcar that did survive at least until 1964 though it’s not from this prototype series: it’s ACL 46683, a fifty foot car I found on Ken Harstine’s “Boxcars and Freight Cars of North America” (<http://www.boxcars.us>). Two other boxcars in this scheme are in the book “Classic Freight Cars Volume 7” in photos both from 1960. One of these is a “watermelon” ventilated boxcar, and yes, it does have those Prismo reflective stripes.



**059 00 150, \$20.70**

**Reporting Marks: SRLX 15647.**

**40 Foot Steel Ice Refrigerator Car, Swift Refrigerator Company.**

Aluminum with black lettering including "Swift Refrigerator Line," reporting marks and General American device on left. Red and white "Swift's Premium" trademark on right, Approximate Time Period: 1959 to early 1970's. New release, but a similar car was originally done for the N Scale Collector (NSC ID 98-58) with road number 1020 as part of the NSC's Meat Packing Set #1 in 1998 (NSC ID 98-61).

I thought for sure that I'd get a bingo—that is, an exact match to the car Micro-Trains depicts—in the Morning Sun "Refrigerator Car Color Guide" by Gene Green. No bingo, but plenty of photos of other cars in the same prototype series, in no less than three paint schemes which co-existed during the 1960's. The red with white lettering including large "Swift" was the as-delivered scheme when these all steel cars were built by General American in 1954. No later than 1959, the silver, black and red scheme that MTL selected appeared. There's a variation on this which exchanges the "Swift's Premium" trademark for just the word "Swift" in white inside a red rectangle. Perhaps we'll see that version down the line from the folks from Talent.

The relationship between General American Transportation Corporation and Swift goes back to 1930 when Swift sold off and leased back its refrigerator car fleet from GATC. At that time, the cars were wood sided and were consistently maintained and rebuilt through about 1950. In 1954 and 1956 General American built the series SRLX 15000 through 17399 for Swift including the car Micro-Trains depicts. The January 1955 ORER shows 773 cars in the group, versus a possible total of 2400 road numbers, so it looks like not every number was used. The vital statistics: inside length 29 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet, inside height just 6 feet 10 inches, outside length 39 feet, extreme height 13 feet 10 inches, door opening 4 feet wide by 6 feet 5 inches high. The crushed ice capacity was 7900 pounds and an end note advised that the cars were not to use chunk ice. The car capacity was 1633 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds. In January 1964 there were still 679 cars in the group and in January 1967 there were 613 but compressed into a shorter series, 14980 to 15799. At that point this group accounted for almost one-third of the total fleet of General American refrigerator cars, not just those leased to Swift. By the April 1970 book the series was down to 403 cars. In the July 1974 Register the only cars left with SRLX reporting marks was a small group of mechanical refrigerator cars, and thus endeth the ATP.

The bad news: Looking at the photos in the "Refrigerator Car Color Guide", there really isn't anything quite accurate to the real Swift steel refrigerator cars available in N Scale, and that includes the MTL 059 body style. The real Swift cars had four panel sides and a horizontal row of rivets across the center of the side where the top and bottom panels were joined. The hinged door was quite a bit smaller than the one on the Micro-Trains car: it's less tall and not

as wide, either. There were brine tank drains which could be seen above each truck. But the good news: at least this road number was a steel refrigerator car! The NSC Special Run road number, 1020, was a wood refrigerator car in real life, and a 36 foot car at that. (And I do get a bingo on that car: a photo of the 1020 is in "Classic Freight Cars Volume 3." That photo was used in the advertising for the NSC Special Run back in 1998.)

The Illinois Railway Museum in Union has in its collection several Swift Refrigerator Line cars including the SRLX 15030 and 15833 from the same series. Photos of the cars are on the IRM's website ( <http://www.irm.org> ), look for their freight equipment roster page.



**065 00 681 and 065 00 682, \$19.80 each**  
**Reporting Marks:**  
**TCX 8246 and TCX 8268**  
**39 Foot Single Dome Tank Cars, Texaco**  
**(The Texas Company).**

Black with white lettering including company name and reporting marks on left and "TEXACO" brand name on right. Approximate Time Period: 1929 (build date on car) to as late as the 1950's.

We have another "copy and paste" opportunity here. These two road numbers are the same as two of the four road numbers in the forthcoming Z Scale Runner Pack #20 which was announced in March for September delivery. I'll reprint myself from the March 2010 UMTRR and note that nothing incremental has come across my desk since then.

Although it's usually the tank cars in silver with large black "TEXACO" that get all the attention, the Texas Company's use of black with white lettering was more prevalent. One posting on the Steam Era Freight Cars YahooGroup points to at least two silver and black cars being extant into the 1950's. But it was back in the 1930's that the silver and black was officially discontinued. Further, that scheme was used for gasoline only, not the other of the company's products. So, black and white it is for this quartet.

There is a photo of TCX 2307, not from the same series as the road numbers in the Runner Pack, in the November 2005 issue of Rail Model Journal. The paint scheme is quite similar to that on the forthcoming MTL cars, the main exception being the lack of the words "Petroleum Products" on the prototype. So we know we're in the ballpark.

There are 300 cars in the series TCX 8000 to 8299 shown in the July 1935 ORER. All we can learn from the typically sparse entry is that they were MCB Designated "TM", described as "Tank, Oil" and rated at 10,000 gallons capacity. The July 1935 Register was the latest I had with the Texas Company owning its own fleet; in 1935 that company sold off its tank cars to General American, which assigned them, at least initially I believe, to the Pennsylvania-Conley Tank Line, where we find them in the January 1940 ORER. The relatively small

group of cars in the 8000's has been aggregated into the much larger number group 4900 to 8299, which had... oh, wait, no quantity shown. Great. By the January 1945 ORER, the TCX reporting marks were under the main General American registration. The series 4900 to 8299 had 1193 cars in the main series with 10,000 gallons capacity and another 155 cars with 80,000 gallons capacity. Do you think I would be curious enough (or perhaps obsessive enough) to check for the individual numbers in the Runner Pack in that list of exceptions? Why, of course I would be... and no, it looks like the Runner Pack road numbers are in the 10,000 gallon group, as they should be.

Noted by Al Brown also on the Steam Era Freight Cars group was that the TCX group was eventually renumbered to GATX 55000 to 59599. Al related that as of the January 1953 ORER the TCX series had 574 cars and the GATX series 2964 – which probably included cars other than from the Texaco fleet. By January 1964, there were just 162 cars left with reporting marks TCX, and I stopped looking through the ORERs. I suspect that once GATX got hold of these tank cars, any reference to Texaco was eliminated and only the TCX reporting marks were kept, similar to the N Scale Micro-Trains release from back in May 1990 (catalog 65250). But remember that silver and black car photographed in the 1950's, and never say never, which is why I left the ATP out to "as late as the 1950's."



**130 00 070, \$28.85**

**Reporting Marks: SP 4782.**

**Bay Window Caboose, Windowless Sides, without Battery Box, Southern Pacific Railroad Police.**

White with black frame. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks and roadname on left and "Railroad Police" on right. Multicolor police shield at bottom of bay window. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1990's at least.

There's a full webpage devoted to the Southern Pacific Railroad Police bay window cabooses on Richard Percy's "My Espee Modelers Archive" site ( <http://espee.railfan.net/espee> for the main page, [http://espee.railfan.net/sp\\_rr-police-caboose.html](http://espee.railfan.net/sp_rr-police-caboose.html) directly). There are photos of the 4762 from 1990 and 1996 on that page along with some information that aligns with MTL's car copy. The 4762 came from the 1980 build of the C-50-9 class of cars by International Car Company. I'm guessing a little on the ATP but I think the decade of the nineties works... "at least". There's a shot of SP 4709 with the SP roadname painted out and the "railroad police" badge replaced with the Union Pacific shield, but it's not dated.

David Carnell checked in to confirm that MTL's description of the use of the Railroad Police cars is accurate. He noted that there were some details that can be added to the car for more fidelity: spot lights on each upper corner of the bay window, and two Carrier style Air Conditioning Units (similar to what is offered as a detail part by BLMA) mounted on either



side of the roof above the Railroad Police lettering. There is some sheet metal in a Z shape attached to the A/C units facing the wagon wheel radio antenna, frog eye marker lights and the smoke jack. "The white paint would help reflect the desert sun and heat as these cars traveled across southern California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas."

If the "Railroad Police" wording looks a little awkward compared to the roadname, than you're perceiving it correctly. Since some of the letters in "Railroad Police" aren't in "Southern Pacific." I'll speculate that they needed to be created ad hoc for the lettering on this car. So, particularly with the "D", the paint shop did the best they could with what they had.

For what must be a rare photo of the interior of one of these cars, check out the website called "The Railroad Police" (<http://www.therailroadpolice.com> ). Besides the photos (go to "Photos" and then "Railroad Police Cars" for the caboose and some motor vehicles), there is a history of Railroad Policing going back to the 1840's (!) and other features.

#### **N SCALE REPRINTS:**



**045 00 210, \$17.65**

**Reporting Marks: D&H 16501.**

**50 Foot Flat Car, Fishbelly Sides, Delaware & Hudson.**

Red with yellow lettering including reporting marks left of center and roadname right of center. Simulated covered turbine load included. Approximate Time Period: 1977 to early 1990's. Previous Release (as catalog 45210): Road Number 16509, February 2000.

First, we need to declare a "not a reprint" – the original run back in 2000 was painted freight car red (brown) with yellow lettering, whereas this one is red.

Morning Sun's Color Guide to the D&H, the latest addition to the UMTRR Research Accumulation, describes that the road's series of flat cars numbered 16501 to 16552 came from the Reading Railroad's group 9300 to 9356 which were built in 1954. As part of the expansion of the D&H's service area which occurred with the formation of Conrail, these flat cars were conveyed over to the D&H.

D&H 16509, which was the previous release, is shown on Page 108 of the Color Guide. It's noted that the car "emerged from [the Oneonta shops] in the basic red carbody with yellow lettering." The lettering is roughly in alignment between prototype and model. The photo is dated August 1984 so we're good at least to there for the Approximate Time Period. The load atop the 16509 as pictured appears to be the inspiration for what Micro-Trains includes with this release. I didn't get a good look at the brake wheel, but when the cars were the Reading's, it appears that this series of cars had an end mounted version as opposed to the side mounted style that's part of the MTL body style.

But what's this? Just above the photo of D&H 16509 in the Morning Sun Color Guide is a June 1993 shot of the 16501 that is the road number of this reprint. But it has a spartan paint scheme, merely the reporting marks with no roadname. And the color is described as "faded freight car red, almost orange." Kind of a contrast to the caption on the 16509 there. It's further noted that the car series "spent much of their service lives in and around Bethlehem, Pennsylvania" – although the photo of the 16509 was taken near Mechanicville, New York.

The ORER for April 1976 is understandably just a bit too early to show the transfer of these flat cars from the Reading to the Delaware & Hudson; in fact, it shows the cars as the Reading series under the Conrail registration with 52 cars. The next Equipment Register in the UMTRR Accumulation is from April 1981, where we do find the 52 cars under the D&H listing. The key dimensions: inside length 53 feet 6 inches, outside length 56 feet 9 inches, extreme height 5 feet 4 inches, capacity 154,000 pounds. Skipping some ORERs to July 1992, we find just nine cars left from the original 52. That's down to three in October 1996 which is where I stopped looking, taking into consideration the spartan paint job found on the 16501 in the Morning Sun Color Guide.



**046 00 300, \$18.95**

**Reporting Marks: PGE 9041.**

**50 Foot Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Pacific Great Eastern.**

Brown (freight car red) with white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname in center and "caribou" herald on right. Simulated crushed stone load included. Approximate Time Period: late 1950's to late 1960's. Previous Release (as catalog 46300): Road Number 9401, November 1986.

Much of MTL's car copy for this reprint appears to come from a source that's familiar to UMTRR Gang members: Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site (<http://www.nakina.net>). There is one clarification that should be made: when the Pacific Great Eastern became the British Columbia Railway in 1972 with reporting marks BCOL and BCIT, some cars marked PGE still remained on the roster. That's past tense, as it's also true that the PGE reporting marks were gone by January 2008. And by that time, the British Columbia Railway's operations had been leased to the Canadian National, making the line somewhat of a fallen flag. But I digress, as usual...

This series of gondolas was built by National Steel Car Company in 1954 but they are not present in the January 1955 ORER, and so much for prompt updating. Ian Cranstone has these originally numbered from 948 to 972 before going to the series 9002 to 9072. There is an overlap between these two groups in the January 1959 ORER however the dimensions of both groups are the same... well, they had better be! They were described as "Gondola, Solid Bottom" with AAR Mechanical Designation GB. The inside length of these cars was 52 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, outside length 55 feet, extreme height 7 feet 2 inches, and

capacity 1746 cubic feet or 158,000 pounds. The January 1964 ORER shows all gondolas in the series 9019 to 9175 which, following the information in "Canadian Freight Cars" incorporates several different groups of 52 foot 6 inch solid bottom gondolas, for a total of 135 cars.

According to the CDS "Railway Equipment Diagrams" book, by 1965 the caribou herald was replaced with large "P.G.E." initials, and in 1970, the "map" herald incorporating the PGE initials and an outline of British Columbia replaced the initials. CDS offered dry transfers for all three of these schemes. I assumed that the three lettering schemes co-existed for a time and then continued through the ORERs. But I didn't get very far: in the January 1967 Equipment Register, the 9041 is out of the range of a shortened group of cars numbered 9059 to 9225 and there's a new series 9401 to 9425 of drop end cars with otherwise the same dimensions. Aha, you might be saying, that means there could be an issue with the Micro-Trains model. You could be right about that; I can't tell for sure whether the 9041 had fixed or drop ends. (Photo evidence would be most appreciated.) I note that the first run road number 9401 positively aligns with a prototype drop bottom gondola.

Meanwhile, I came across a nice site devoted to the PGE, including a history and some vintage photographs, at <http://www.cayoosh.net/pge.html>. It's noted that the PGE was an attempt to unify British Columbia in the same way that the transcontinental railroad unified Canada.

#### N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:

The following item was announced as an "off-cycle" release via the Micro-Trains website on April 16 and also via the MTL "E-Line" broadcast e-mail on April 16.



**026 44 030, \$26.45**

**Reporting Marks: CN 553211.**

**40 Foot Exterior Boxcar, Plug and Sliding Door, Canadian National.**

Paint: Brown with aluminum roof. White lettering including reporting marks on left and large "wet noodle" herald on right. Weathering: White, brown and black streaks and simulated dirt along bottom of car. Heavy weathering on roof. Multicolor graffiti on one side of car. Approximate Time Period: 1985 to present. Previous Releases in unweathered form: (as Catalog 26030) Road Number 553290, February 1988; (as Catalog 026 00 030) Road Number 553201, February 2005.

Do we have a pattern here? And I don't mean in terms of the graffiti. It appears that MTL has settled into a "direct to weathering" protocol at this point. While not as ancient as March's Lehigh Valley boxcar reprint, this latest offering does have a never before used road number. Fortunately, the previous run of this car isn't quite so ancient that I can't "reprint"



myself. So let's check the UMTRR archives for February 2005 and the last time this car was issued.

The Fallen Flags website ( <http://www.rr-fallenflags.org> ) includes a nice large photo of that previously issued car, CN 553201, as lensed in Nashville in June 2003 by Michael Greer. As on the model, there is no roadname, so there is no bilingual "Canadian/Canadien" requirement as on other CN cars. We get a clue as to the origin of this car in the form of photos of sister cars which are also there, and captioned "ex-ABOX." In fact, they are still in Railbox paint with just a quick restencil. This includes the number MTL chose for the current run, CNA 553211.

Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" website confirms that CNA 553000 to 553772 were indeed from the former ABOX series 50400 to 52449 series. They were built by FMC in 1978 and 1979 and are the 5277 models, based on cubic foot capacity. The MTL body style is a model of the FMC 5077 version, so we're close there; I will leave detail comparisons to others. Ian has these cars coming over to the CN in January 1985 and still in service at this writing. The ORER for January 2002 has this information: AAR Classification XP, description "Box, Steel, Nailable Steel Floor, Lading Strap Anchors," Plate C dimensions, inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 55 feet 9 inches (with exceptions at 55 4), extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, door opening 16 feet, capacity 5277 cubic feet and gross rail weight 220,000 pounds. You might recall that "CNA" reporting marks reference cars that were built in the United States, and a notation reads "Cars were purchased in the United States and under U.S. Custom Regulations may be used in the same manner as cars carrying marks of U.S. owned railways in the handling of both International and U.S. domestic traffic."

The photos on Fallen Flags and also on RailcarPhotos.com show plenty of examples of cars that were still in Railbox paint with CNA restencils long after the time of transfer to the CN – and by long after, I mean ten, fifteen years. The photo of the 553211 on Fallen Flags was taken in 2003, for example – that's eighteen years after the move of these cars! Yikes! You'd think that the CN would be a little more up to date on repainting... never mind. I suppose this does call into question whether the 553211 has ever seen CN paint. I did not locate any online photos showing this, but it's hard to prove a negative. On the other hand, sister car 553238 was photographed in 1990 and looks freshly painted (that photo is found on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net) ). So I will hasten to add that the Approximate Time Period applies to the entire series of cars in this case.

#### N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below, Runner Pack #40, Four Northern Pacific boxcars (photo at right) has been released, one month earlier than originally scheduled. (Also check "Runner Pack Error?" below.) However, Runner Pack #39, Three Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus flat cars with loads, has been delayed until June.



*The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is October 2010. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close April 30.*



***Scheduled October 2010 Release:***

**Runner Pack #44: 993 00 045, \$74.95**

**Reporting Marks: MKT 419, 436, 455, 477.**

Quantity four of Missouri-Kansas-Texas two bay Center Flow® covered hoppers.

Green with mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and large “MKT” in center. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date given by MTL) to mid 1990’s. Previous Release (as catalog 92040): Road Number 450, February 1994.

Wow, that green and yellow paint didn’t wear well, if the photo of MKT 427 posted on RRPictureArchives.net is any indication. Taken in June 1993, the shot shows the bright green quite faded out, and a non-trivial portion of the letter T in the large MKT is gone. A 1994 photo of the MKT 430 looks, well, even worse.

Photos from 1980 photo of the MKT 400 and 403 found on Fallen Flags shows a car that’s nearly brand new. According to the car copy Micro-Trains wrote for the original release of this car, the group of one hundred two bay Center Flows were assembled by the Katy in November 1979 using parts from American Car and Foundry; the November 1979 date is confirmed by the photo of the 403 on Fallen Flags. There was a one page article on modeling this car in the May 1993 issue of Rail Model Journal, and there was a color photo of one of these cars in the very first (!) issue of RMJ, June 1989. So this small group of small covered hoppers has certainly received its share of attention.

The ORER for April 1981 is the closest I have to the build date. The series 400 to 499 consisted of all one hundred cars at the time, described as “Covered Hopper, Steel, Two Compartment, Four Hatches, Four Hopper Outlets” with AAR Designation LO. The inside length was 34 feet 9 inches, outside length 42 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch and capacity 2980 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. Based on the online photo evidence I jumped all the way to the October 1996 Equipment Register. The MKT was already under the Union Pacific’s ownership, but its cars were listed under the Missouri Pacific System – also part of the Omaha Borg by this time. Just two cars from the original one hundred were in service with MKT reporting marks by then, but I suspect that they were repainted into something less green and less subject to weathering, like for example Union Pacific gray and black.

## N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



**047 00 409, \$25.95**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Ice Refrigerator Car, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus Billboard Car #9: "These Trains..."**

Reporting Marks: None (reference in UMTRR website will be "RBB&B Billboard Car #9").

Brown with multi-color depiction of a circus train unloading scene with "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey" across top and "These Trains More Than One and One Third Miles Long Loaded with Ten Thousand Wonders From Every Land" across bottom.

I was wondering when Micro-Trains was going to get around to this artwork! Certainly a circus poster featuring a circus train was a natural choice for this series. Given the usual constraints that result when trying to put a large poster on a small freight car, MTL has focused on the bottom part of the original poster. So from left to right we have: elephants exiting a stock car, a fanciful circus wagon on a flat car, what looks like another stock car (based on the ventilator on the roof), a passenger car for the circus performers, and another flat car with wagons covered by tarps. All this, and a huge crowded mass of activity of people and animals. In the actual poster, there are thirteen tracks all occupied by circus train equipment, probably adding up to more than the "100 Railroad Cars" claimed at the top of the poster. The full scene shows the train flanked by a town, and in the distance, a river crossed by a suspension bridge into a city. The MTL artwork also condenses the Ringling Brothers name, dropping the "Combined Shows" wording, and moves the "Greatest Show on Earth" trademark from the bottom right of the poster to the top right of the car.

Relatively new to the UMTRR accumulation is a coffee mug (well, a tea mug in my case) that my father had in storage for a number of years. The illustration is very similar to the poster and the car. I'm not sure whether the text on the mug is accurate versus an actual poster, though; it reads: "100 Double Length Steel Railroad Cars Crammed and Jammed with Wonders from All Corners of the Earth." Never mind that the stock cars at the right of the drawing aren't steel cars!



**074 00 119, \$23.95**

**40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #21: Herbert Hoover (31st 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.

As the tease (and the trivia answer!) in last month's UMTRR I mentioned that the 31<sup>st</sup> President was the subject of one of the more famous "bloopers" in broadcast history: being introduced as "Hoobert Heever." Considering the tenure of Herbert Hoover as Chief Executive, I suppose that some would conclude that his entire Presidency was a Blooper, but as I've discovered numerous times while researching and writing about the subjects of this Micro-Trains Special Edition series, there's a lot more to learn.

The Summer 2004 issue of **Prologue** Magazine, published by the National Archives and reprinted online at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) contains the article "The Ordeal of Herbert Hoover." Authors Richard Norton Smith and Timothy Walch, both of whom served as Director of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum in West Branch, Iowa, note that "He was elected thirty-first President of the United States in a 1928 landslide, but within a few short months he had become a scapegoat in his own land. Even today, Herbert Hoover remains indelibly linked to an economic crisis that put millions of Americans out of work in the 1930s. His 1932 defeat left Hoover's once-bright reputation in shambles. But Herbert Hoover refused to fade away... Usually cast as a President defined by his failure to contain the Great Depression, Hoover's story is far more complex and more interesting."

Herbert Hoover was born in West Branch, Iowa and was the middle of three children. The family were followers of the Quaker religious tradition and his mother was an active minister. Both parents died in their mid-thirties, and Herbert was an orphan at the age of nine and one half. The three children were split up and Herbert ended up in Oregon with an uncle. He was to have attended a Quaker college with funds put aside by his late mother, but a visit from a mining engineer convinced him to try a new tuition-free university in California called Stanford.

Stanford wasn't really "free" but the enterprising Bert Hoover involved himself in numerous jobs and businesses to pay the bills in the "pioneer" class of Stanford. He met his wife Lou Henry who was also a geology student at Stanford. After graduation he began a succession of positions in mining which included a position in Western Australia sampling, surveying and evaluating gold mines. From there he was sent to China, where he found himself caught up in the Boxer Rebellion. After surviving that, Hoover became a partner at the company in which he worked, at the relatively young age of 27. He became known as the "Great Engineer"—and this time, we're not referring to trains. He eventually began his own engineering firm.

When World War I broke out, the Hoovers were in London, and the "Great Engineer" turned his talents to a humanitarian cause, the Belgian Relief effort. The Germans had occupied Belgium and food supplies to ten million people were cut off. Hoover organized what became a worldwide effort to provide food and clothing to the occupied nation; this included negotiating with both the Germans and British to allow safe passage of relief ships. The Committee for Relief of Belgium was absolutely above board and was later audited to find

that it spent less than one-half of one percent on administrative expenses. Hoover took no compensation and accepted no awards for his service. When the United States entered the First World War, Hoover was called back to serve by President Woodrow Wilson to become "U.S. Food Administrator." He called for voluntary "meatless Mondays" and "wheatless Wednesdays" among other tactics to conserve food at home in order to send it overseas. When WWI ended, Hoover returned to Europe to lead the effort to prevent starvation there. He locked horns with those who did not want to provide for Germany, saying that "bodies and deformed minds in the next generation would be a poor foundation on which to rebuild civilization." He returned to the United States and planned a dream house overlooking Stanford University, having further expanded his reputation as the "Great Engineer."

President Warren G. Harding had other ideas and asked him to serve in his Cabinet. Given a choice between Commerce and Interior, he chose Commerce, and proceeded to transform it into what we now call a service organization. Hoover worked to eliminate waste of all kinds in American industry, for example by recommending standards for and simplification of ordinary items like nuts and bolts. When Harding died and was succeeded by Calvin Coolidge, Hoover stayed on as Commerce Secretary. When Coolidge decided not to run for a second full term as President, Hoover ran and was elected.

And then the dominoes fell. Looking back from eighty years later, we might think of the Great Depression as a single downward economic fall, but it wasn't. The stock market crashed in October 1929, seven months after Hoover took the nation's highest office, but recovered a bit. But then a drought hit the Midwest and caused crop failures. The country was starting to come back from that when a financial crisis in Europe spread to the United States, impacting banks. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act on 1930 led to retaliation against American goods and reduced trade worldwide. Hoover was looked upon to vanquish the Depression as our country's leader, and when he didn't, was largely blamed for it and its effects. Franklin Delano Roosevelt easily defeated him in the 1932 election.

But life was not over for Hoover. He worked on food programs for Europe, post-World War II and chaired the Hoover Commission, charged with reorganizing President Truman's executive departments. The Boys and Girls Clubs of America became his pet charity. He wrote a total of sixteen books on topics ranging from President Woodrow Wilson to fishing. By the time of his death in 1964, Herbert Hoover had rehabilitated his image. The Miller Center concludes, "He is no longer blamed for causing the Depression; instead, scholars note that Hoover's efforts to combat its effects were extraordinary when compared to federal anti-depression measures invoked during previous economic crises."

We have a bit of a challenge in this month's trivia question! Friends with Nathaniel Hawthorne in college? No middle name? Fifth out of eight children? OK, figured out with a little detective work, but here's a hint for those of you who are fans of the television series M\*A\*S\*H (and I think you know I am): What's "Hawkeye's" real name? If you said "Benjamin Franklin Pierce," then you've got the solution—simply remove the "Benjamin" and you get the 14<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. Get those entries in, and good luck! Or at least better luck than mine, as I still haven't won...



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

**Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



**500 00 631 and 500 00 632, \$23.80 each**

**Reporting Marks: B&O 467004 and B&O 467006.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Door, Baltimore and Ohio.**

Oxide red with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and “13 States” Capitol Dome herald on right. Simulated loads included: stacked bag load with the B&O 467004 and crate load with the B&O 467006. Approximate Time Period: 1947 (build date) into the 1960’s at least.

I will do a recap for these cars since this particular paint scheme was done only back in December 2009 in N Scale, but for just one car, the 467004 (humph). The prototype for these cars was the group of 1000 M55-H class boxcars built to 1944 AAR design by the Pressed Steel Car Company. These were built to the B&O standard ten foot interior height, which automatically makes the MTL body style a “stand in” for the real thing (though perhaps a bit difficult to notice in Z Scale). There is a photo of B&O 467673 from that same group of cars on the Fallen Flags site, with a new date of July 1947, a reweigh date of July 1954, and the paint scheme that MTL utilized. Although that particular car had a Superior door when photographed, that doesn’t prove that the doors on the model cars are incorrect. In fact, B&O expert Brian DeVries, who provided much of the material for my December 2009 entry on this car in N Scale, noted Incrementally that the only photo of a car of this series on which he’s ever seen a Superior door is that same shot of the 467673.

The ORER for July 1950 provides a “door thing”: the real cars had seven foot door openings vs. the six foot door on the MTL model. (Again, in Z Scale this might not matter to you.) The rest of the vital statistics: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet as we’ve already discussed, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, outside length 42 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, capacity 3715 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 999 cars in service out of a possible one thousand. Quickly going through selected later ORERs we find 981 cars in the group in January 1959 but just 391 total in January 1964, 312 in January 1967 and 251 in January 1970. By April 1976 only 70 cars remained. By that time I think they would have been painted into some other B&O decoration, perhaps the simpler version with reporting marks only on the left and small capital dome (without the “13 States” legend) on the right. Actually, that the paint scheme would be the most likely limiting factor for this car’s Approximate Time Period and could have been flipped well before the seventies. But we’ll throw in an “at least” to the ATP since we can’t track all thousand cars in the series.

Brian DeVries also tells us that it's debatable whether these cars would have been in service carrying loads that MTL has provided with the car. The B&O had plenty of cars with eight foot six inch interior heights which would have been used for Less than Car Load service — and that's very possibly what crate loads and stacked bag loads might have been. And yes, you'd expect that Doors would be Closed and Locked Before Moving Car, meaning that the 1:220 Scale inhabitants of your pike wouldn't be able to tell what was in the car anyway.



**505 00 250, \$25.85**

**Reporting Marks: NYC 92101.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door,  
New York Central.**

Experimental paint scheme: light blue sides, black roof and ends. White lettering including "NY Central" script roadname and reporting marks on left and modified oval herald on right. "DF" legend on door. Approximate Time Period: September 1958, into 1959 and perhaps a bit after that, see text.

OK, so here we go... again. Back in August 2000, MTL released the N Scale version of this car, which was reported to be unique among fifty foot NYC boxcars in its decoration in an experimental paint scheme. (There was also a forty foot car in the same scheme, NYC 220539.) In May 2009, MTL did a reprint with road number 92102 and it turns out that the car in the reference photo in Morning Sun's Color Guide to the NYC, Page 85, was of the 92102 not the 92101. But here we have the 92101 again, this time in Z Scale?

At any rate, even though the car pictured is numbered 92102, the caption for the photo in the MSCG calls out 92100 and 92101 as being former Chesapeake and Ohio boxcars built by Pullman-Standard in 1957, a fact repeated on the Canada Southern website. That site calls out the 92102 as having the experimental paint scheme but also shows it as a one car series with a double door, Lot 741-B, and the January 1959 ORER also notes a 15 foot door opening. Methinks we do not have the whole story here.

I do think that, as I always have, that this white on blue scheme would have been a real eye-catcher. The sharp "NY Central" fit right in with the move to more modern graphics that was part of the railroads' "era of color". But Century Green proved more popular with the road's brass, I guess, and the modern NYC scheme with which we're more familiar debuted two months after the photo that appears in the NYC Color Guide was taken. Although the car itself survived into the 1970's, I don't think the paint scheme did, and obviously that limits the Approximate Time Period significantly. I'm probably stretching things too far out just by saying "1958 and 1959". The indication from the MSCG that these cars were in captive service for floor manufacturer Flintkote further limits the plausibility of having this car on your model pike. I suspect that the "I like it" reason will be given for any number of purchases, though, and as a Central fan myself, what's not to like?



**982 01 191 and 982 01 192, \$202.95 each**  
**Road Numbers: 712 and 713 (preceded by**  
**"GN" in website listings).**  
**GP9 Diesels, Great Northern.**

"Empire Builder" scheme of orange with pullman green bands set off by imitation gold stripes. Black frame and handrails and white sill stripe. Imitation gold roadname on pullman green stripe in center of long hood. Green road number below roadname on orange portion of long hood. Black, red and white "goat" herald. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) to late 1960's or early 1970's.

It's a colorful paint scheme, and an expensive one to execute as well, as evidenced by the jump into the above \$200 MSRP range for these diesels. And, of course, just looking at it!

Ben Ringnalda's "Great Northern Empire" website ( <http://www.greatnorthernempire.net> ) offers us a complete number by number roster of all 79 of the GN's GP9 units, so it's just a matter of scrolling down to the appropriate road numbers on the correct page. The site has pages for all Great Northern diesels and is well worth a closer look.

Both units were built in April 1957 and were painted in the Empire Builder scheme depicted here. The "simplified Empire Builder" scheme was not used on these particular Geeps, but the 714 did get the GN "Big Sky Blue" scheme which debuted in 1967. So we have a bit of a split Approximate Time Period, strictly speaking. The 714 became BN 1787 and was wrecked in 1991 then rebuilt to a GP28 and given BNSF road number 1512, where it remained on the roster as of the last verification date of November 2001. The 713 became BN 1786 but was sold to GE Credit on the last day of 1985. It's listed as belonging to the Little Rock and Western with road number 103 as of 1986 but is not shown on the "survivors" list on the Great Northern Empire website.

There are plenty of online images of the GP9s in the Big Sky Blue paint and even a couple of Geeps in the "modified Empire Builder" garb, but in the original Empire Builder paint that MTL used? Not so much. There is a 1970 photo of sister unit 711 still in original paint as of 1970. Honorable mention to the September 1961 photo lensed at Scenic, Washington (that's a location not an adjective) which is an overhead shot of the 778 leading what looks like five of its mates on the point of a long train. I can tell from the photos that the ends of the handrails should be white; as you probably already know, Micro-Trains leaves that extra painting to the modeler lest the price point go even higher. I can also tell from this and other photos that the inclusion of dynamic brakes is correct—and expected, given that the Great Northern was railroad that served plenty of mountainous territory. Some of the details, among them the bell and the air horn, will need a bit of rearranging to be more accurate versus the prototype.

One more general comment: Starting this month I'm going to try to remember that the diesel model doesn't have a dash, that is, it's "GP9" and not "GP-9". According to a reference in issue Number 9 of the "Seaboard-Coast Line Modeler" the EMD manuals for General Purpose locomotives didn't have a dash. The article is about GP7s (no dash) but the same applies to GP9's (no dash) as well.

#### Z SCALE REPRINTS:



**540 00 041 and 540 00 042, \$35.75 each**

**Reporting Marks: SP 513414A and SP 513414B.**

**Gunderson Husky-Stack® Well Car, Southern Pacific.**

Red with silver details. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Sold with decorated containers which vary by release. Approximate Time Period: early 1990's (1992 build date) to present. Previous Release: Road Number 513419 (A), May 2005. Note: While listed in the Micro-News and MTL website as a new release, this actually is a reprint.

MTL calls out that these paired releases are part of a five-unit drawbar connected set on the prototype. The ORER for October 1996 shows 40 (!) of these sets in the series 513390 to 513429, next to another 75 (!) numbered 513430 to 513504. These are all given AAR Classification FCA and the description "Flat, Well, COFC-Double Stack, 5 Unit Articulated". The inside length is 48 feet but that's per well. The outside length is 304 feet 6 inches and the extreme height-- unloaded, of course, is 7 feet 11 inches. The total capacity is 585,000 pounds. The October 2007 Register shows most of these still in service with SP reporting marks under the Union Pacific listing, although some of the descriptions have been knocked back to just "Flat" with an inside length changed to 60 feet. With the change from capacity to Gross Rail Weight, we get a sense of how heavy these things are: subtract the GRL of 801,000 pounds from the capacity above and we find that the 5 unit set comes in at about 216,000 pounds, give or take a brake wheel.

As I mentioned back in 2005, the Fallen Flags website ( <http://www.rr-fallenflags.org> ) has shots of all five units that comprise SP 513419 as of March 2004. Er, this set isn't drawbar connected, but truck sharing between units. The "A" unit of the SP 513412 also on Fallen Flags, photographed in March 2008, shows the same arrangement, as well as plenty of graffiti. I located the actual 513414 A on RRPictureArchives.net in a photo from January 2009 and it's definitely sharing trucks between the A unit and the next unit. Also, the units aren't all lettered the same; the middle two have the phrase "Double Stack 125 Service" and the center unit has, well, not much at all. As the A and B units, though, the MTL depicted cars would be at the ends and as such the decoration is a good fit. By the way, I think the sequence is A, E, D, C, and B... or B, C, D, E, A if you're on the other side of the track.

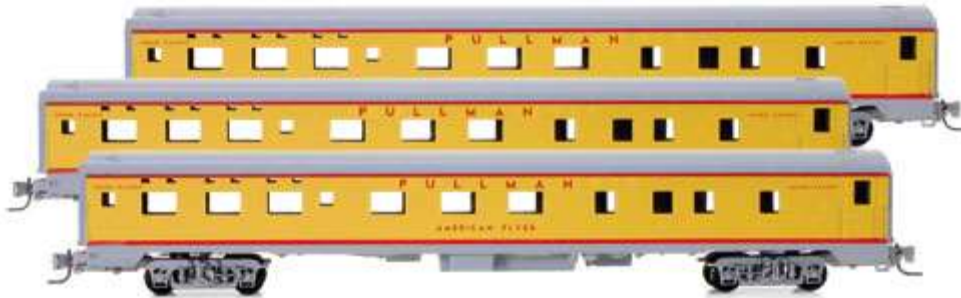
I was being lazy in the header description of the car by not mentioning the exact containers that are included with this release. Part of my laziness stems from not being able to see the entire lower position on the second car, which necessitated a call out to Micro-Trains. For the record, the "A" unit (540 00 041) has a forty-foot Conquest container and a forty-foot Hapag-Lloyd container, and the "B" unit (540 00 042) includes a forty-foot Hamburg-Sud container and two Maersk twenty-foot containers. All of those boxes have been previously released.

**Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** No releases since the last UMTRR.

#### **Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:**

Although announced for release this month, Runner Pack #17, Three Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus flat cars with loads, has been delayed until June. So there are no Z Scale Runner Pack releases this month.

*The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is November 2010. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close May 27.*



***Scheduled November 2010 Release:***

**Runner Pack #23: 994 00 023, \$79.95**

**Car Names: American Flyer, American Haven, American Consulate.**

**Quantity three of Pullman sleeper cars, Pullman/ Union Pacific.**

Yellow with gray bands, roof and underframe details. Red stripes across car. Red lettering including "Pullman" (in capital letters) at top center and car name at bottom center, and small "Union Pacific" (in capital letters) at top left and top right, all in Union Pacific style lettering. Approximate Time Period: mid 1940's (except American Consulate) or 1950 (American Consulate only) to mid-1960s. Previous Releases: None specifically, but a sleeper in Union Pacific colors and lettering was released in January 2009, Catalog 550 00 010.

Having done the initial releases of their passenger cars without specific names and with decals enabling the modeler to pick from a variety of choices, Micro-Trains opts to go with the more typical pre-printing of car names on this Runner Pack. (Has the Market Spoken on that point?) Buying three cars at a time allows a bit of a quantity discount over the single car pricing as well (the UP car was \$26.80 when released in 2009).



From the "Union Pacific Passenger Cars" section of the website Utahrails.net we get the story of these three particular cars. American Flyer and American Haven were built by Pullman in 1942 and American Consulate was built by American Car and Foundry in 1950. The two Pullman cars were assigned to the Overland Route (Chicago to San Francisco or Los Angeles), and were sold to the UP but leased back to Pullman from sometime between December 31, 1945 and January 1, 1947, depending on the source referenced. The American Consulate had a similar arrangement. The cars were returned to the Union Pacific in the mid to late 1960s. The American Flyer became UP 906081 and the American Haven the UP 906061, but the American Consulate went to Mexico in 1967.

#### **Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:**



**502 00 523, \$22.95**

**Reporting Marks: MS 1817.**

**40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, Mississippi 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 bird (Mockingbird) and state flower (Magnolia) on right. Twenty-second release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

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

Okay, so how many of you out there still spell Mississippi by kind of singing it? I know I do... fortunately, the "Three Mississippi" song by Terri Clark is a lot better. Remember using the counting of a number and "Mississippi" (or the shorter "Miss-ippi" if you were cheating) to serve as a proxy for one second?

Something rather unhappy that I did not know is reported on the SHG Resources timeline of the state: the Natchez tribe was a early victim of hostilities between Native Americans and Europeans. The French attempted to establish a fort near Natchez in the early 1700's; the Natchez slaughtered them, and the French slaughtered back, ending that tribe right there and then. I also didn't know that the Ojibwe moved to the area from the Great Lakes and Canada. I did know that the Choctaw and the Chickasaw called the region home.

What became Mississippi was under a number of flags-- French, Spanish and English-- before becoming part of the United States in several major pieces in the late 1700's and early 1800's. The Mississippi Territory was organized in 1798 and the Natchez Trace was developed as an early road not long after. The territory became the twentieth state in 1817. Jackson became the capital in 1822 and was one of the first planned cities in the country-- and was named for then Major General Andrew Jackson. Not bad, even before you're president, you get a state

capital. The first state supported institution for the disabled was the Mississippi School for the Blind in 1844. The state seceded in 1861; two key control points were Ship Island on the Gulf Coast and the railroad center of Corinth. (The same one that's in the railroad name Corinth and Counce.) The state was readmitted in 1870.

Twentieth Century "firsts" for the Magnolia State include the forerunner of the 4-H Clubs in 1907, industrial revenue bond in 1936 and the landmark Brown vs. Board of Education desegregation decision of 1954. Engineer Casey Jones rode into legend in Vaughn and his home and a museum are in Jackson. "Mississippi History Now!" has an excellent compendium of articles about the state and its inhabitants ( <http://mshistory.k12.ms.us> ).

Mississippi has a rich literary tradition; Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams and William Faulkner from are there, for starters. In fact, Faulkner sticks in my mind as the "freelancer" of his own reality-based county as the setting for his works; not unlike what many of us do in model railroading. And John Grisham is from Oxford which was part the basis for Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County.

The Mississippi musical tradition is amazing, with blues, rock and country all having roots there. Perhaps Elvis Presley is the first artist that comes to mind, but there's also B.B. King, Robert Johnson, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, Leontyne Price, Sam Cooke, Jerry Lee Lewis, Mary Wilson, Cassandra Wilson, Charley Pride, Jimmie Rodgers, Marty Stewart, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette, Leann Rimes, Faith Hill, Jimmy Buffett, Brandy, Britney Spears, Lance Bass, the Staples Singers, and of course the Blind Boys of Mississippi. Football fans probably already know that Brett Farve is a native, but add Walter Payton and Jerry Rice. Critic Craig Clayborne and legendary sports announcer Red Barber were from there, as were civil rights leaders Charles and Medgar Evers. The deep voice of James Earl Jones was first heard in Arkabutla; others in the acting field include Morgan Freeman and Sela Ward. And talk show tycoon Oprah Winfrey is from there, as was the force behind Kermit, Big Bird, and the other Muppets, Jim Henson.

The Magnolia State has gotten short shrift in my travels-- not as bad as South Dakota, but not much more. My official setting foot event was a sneak-in from Memphis during a late 1990's business trip. (I got Arkansas the same way, so don't feel too badly, Mississippians.) Memphis is just about on the border of Tennessee and Mississippi, and the area is settled enough that you wouldn't really be able to tell the transition without the welcome sign. I did hit a hobby shop there. My second and so far only other visit was a second sneak-in during my overnighter in December 2000 to New Orleans, using Interstate 10.



**515 00 609, \$29.95**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Boxcar, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus Billboard Car #9: "These Trains..."**

Reporting Marks: None (reference in UMTRR website will be "RBB&B Billboard Car #9).

Brown with multi-color depiction of a circus train unloading scene with "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey" across top and "These Trains More Than One and One Third Miles Long Loaded with Ten Thousand Wonders From Every Land" across bottom.

Please see the review of the N Scale release above.

### **HO<sub>n</sub>3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE):**



**New Release: 850 00 080**

**Reporting Marks: NCO 01001**

**30 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Nevada-California-Oregon.**

Yellow with brown sides and ends, black hatches and door sill. Black lettering including diamond herald "Sierra Nevada Route" on left and reporting marks on right. Approximate Time Period: 1915 to mid-1920's (1921 service date shown on car).

The Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad had one of the longer narrow gauge routes, from Reno, Nevada into Northern California and then up to Lakeview, Oregon. But its ambitions were greater, not unlike many railroad enterprises; the line was headed for both the Columbia River and the Oregon Coast, neither of which happened. But some of the route survives today, including the line out of Reno which became part of the Western Pacific and a fair amount of the California section which went to the Southern Pacific. Although not at three foot gauge, of course.

The April 1928 ORER the N-C-O listing is just a small item way back on Page 855, indicating 100 miles of standard gauge line and 55 miles of 3 foot gauge line, with no freight cars listed. It's actually surprising that the listing existed at all in the Equipment Register, as the railroad was already a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific which used the route from Alturas southward as part of an alternate route from Klamath Falls, Oregon to its mainline in Nevada. The SP purchased the line in October 1926 and spent from July 1927 to September 1929 changing it to standard gauge, after which it formally absorbed it.

I pretty much drew a blank on this car. I found the data point that it could have been a purchase from the Florence and Cripple Creek, based on an item on the a part of the "Slim

Rails" website that covers the line ( <http://www.urbaneagle.com/nco> ). The book "Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California" (excerpted on Google Books) notes that in 1915 there was a sale of equipment from the F&CC to the N-C-O: two locomotives, three passenger cars, two mail and express cars and seventy-eight freight cars, for the bargain price, even then, of just \$22,750, plus shipping. The "Sierra Nevada Route" herald used on the MTL car is reprinted as an illustration for this chapter of the book. A check with Micro-Trains reveals that their source material was the November/December 2001 issue of "Narrow Gauge And Short Line Gazette."

**HOn3 SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** No releases since last issue.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Have you been looking for the "King of the Road" — oops, I mean the "Man on Hay Bale" load that was included with the N Scale Northern Pacific boxcar reprint (020 00 980, October 2009)? There's a pair of them — identical twins, perhaps? — available now (499 43 959, \$8.95). Listed as HOn3 Scale but probably useful otherwise as well are a pair of "gondola rock loads" (899 43 902). In N Scale, the new "military warehouse kit" (499 90 910, \$29.95) could fit a variety of locations. Micro-Trains kicks off a series of Z Scale waterfront buildings with a pier and building kit (799 90 929, \$49.95). Announced as coming in the Summer is the first new Micro-Track item in a while, a 80 foot through plate girder bridge. However, I am a bit surprised to report that there were no major MTL announcements at the first National Z Scale Convention, which was largely sponsored by Micro-Trains itself.

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** I can't say I'm surprised that leading off the Bye-Bye Board this month is last month's virtual two pack of Southern Pacific drop bottom gondolas with wood load (083 00 08x). As long as we're on that body style, the first number of the Illinois Central drop bottom gondola (083 00 071, June 2009) has also left the building; the second number is still available. The Presidential Series cars for Woodrow Wilson (074 00 111, July 2009) and Barack Obama (074 00 119, March) have sold out. Also gone: the Conrail bay window caboose (130 00 020, June 2009), the Penn Central excess height boxcar (102 00 090, June 2009), the Monon boxcar reprint (020 00 770, March) and the Lackawanna hopper with "Blue Coal" (056 00 410, February). In Z Scale there are just four "outs," starting with the state cars for Nevada (502 00 511, May 2009) and South Carolina (502 00 512, June 2009). The other two cars are painted for the Union Pacific: the first number of the "We Can Handle It" plug door boxcar (507 00 531, February) and the sleeper passenger car (550 00 010, January 2009).

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** Several items this month. We start with my incrementing myself on the Z Scale D&H bulkhead flatcars, courtesy of the Morning Sun D&H Color Guide which is the latest addition to the UMTRR Research Accumulation. The MSCG gives October 1976 as the repaint date for the D&H 8006 which was one of the two road numbers in the release, so "mid-1970s" seems okay for the Approximate Time Period. It's confirmed that the as delivered paint was black and white and that the cars came from the Chesapeake and Ohio with some sold to the Atlantic Coast Line and the rest going to the Maine Central.

**OOPS PATROL:** Er, George, you can't have an East Broad Top Nn3 boxcar issued and "No Releases This Month" in Nn3 in the same month. Well, there's one example of a "copy and paste" gone awry...

**RUNNER PACK ERROR?:** A sharp-eyed UMTRR Gang Member has already received Runner Pack #40, the four pack of Northern Pacific combination door boxcars released ahead of schedule this month. On his copy, the road number 8715 is missing on one side of the car. Has anyone else observed this on their copy of the Runner Pack, and have I just set off a feeding frenzy? Maybe, maybe not, which is why I'm asking. Please let the Gang know if you've found similar in your Runner Pack and I'll pass word along in the next issue.

**FINALLY... THANKS FOR THE CITATIONS:** As most of you know from my posts on various discussion forums, I'm a long time subscriber to the two both magazines that are devoted to N Scale. I'd like to take a moment to thank Kirk Reddie, Editor of **N Scale Railroading** and Scott Forrest who had a article in the May/June 2010 **N-Scale**, for mentioning my name and work. I sometimes think that these bytes go out into cyberspace with barely any impact, but I was definitely proven wrong this past month. I'll continue to try to deserve your support! Until next time, unless breaking news warrants, do the best you can!

Cheers,  
George

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