

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:
The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report
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Hello again everyone! Well, we wrap up Year 14 of this modest enterprise, and Year One of the popular PDF format, with quite the variety of releases, somewhat biased toward models of fairly recent rolling stock. You might recall last month I gave a workout to my copy of the Official Railway Equipment Register from April 1971. This month I'm instead turning pages in my most recent edition, the January 2007 issue. I'd certainly like to update that to something in the 2009 to 2010 range, but the prices for those newer copies have been a bit too rich for my budget, given that enormous subscription revenue. Okay, actually more than a bit rich—around a three digit number on that Internet Auction Community. Hey, UMTRR Gang, if you happen to see one for substantially smaller money than that, please let me know. Meanwhile, let's get to what we're here for...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



025 00 720, \$22.40

Reporting Marks: CPAA 211077.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, CP Rail.

Red with aluminum roof. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks and roadname on left. Small orange rectangular panels along bottom of side, Includes simulated vent cover panels (modeler installed). Approximate Time Period: late 1990s to present.

It can't be much easier to locate a prototype photo of this car, at least during the month of release. Micro-Trains has included it right on their own website as an illustration of how to install the vent cover panels onto the car sides. I don't think it's appropriate to reprint that photo since it was used by MTL with permission of the original photographer, but since I do have MTL's kind permission to use their images, at right is what the model looks like with the panels installed. The obvious next question in my mind is "What are vent cover panels?" I suppose I could take the simple answer, which sometimes is applicable.



We find another image of the same car on the Canadian Freight Car Gallery (URL <http://freight.railfan.ca>) as it appeared in February 2003. It's noted that this car is in woodpulp service and is vented. So I guess that's what the covers are for! And the vents would allow air to circulate to help dry out the woodpulp.

The car was originally built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating, which means it's not an exact match to the MTL 025 body style. The largest difference I noted was with the car ends based

on photos of other cars in the series. I suspect that the cars weren't vented when originally constructed.

CP isn't the original owner of these cars according to the caption; Berwick built the car in 1979 and CP got them in 1996 which would start our Approximate Time Period. The reporting marks really are in two different styles, with the "CP" in standard lettering and the "AA" in italics. It looks like the "AA" was added later. Ian Cranstone confirms this on his "Canadian Freight Cars" site (<http://www.nakina.net>) stating that they were ex-CP of the same number series. MTL says that the CPAA reporting marks designated a USA built car — that's true. But the use of the car in the USA is not exactly correct. In fact, all of the photos of cars in the group on the Canadian Freight Car Gallery were taken in Canada.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for October 1996 has an end note: "Cars were purchased in the United States and under U.S. Customs regulations may be used in the same manner as cars carrying Marks of United States owned railroads in the handling of both international and U.S. domestic traffic." This applied to all of the series of cars marked "CPAA" including the one in which we're interested. The group of "Box, Steel" was numbered 211000 to 211100 for 101 total cars. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 55 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet 4 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5277 cubic feet or 196,000 pounds.

The photos online date to no later than August 2007 and the ORER for October 2007 shows 95 of the original 101 cars still in service. Is that good enough for a "to present" ATP? Probably.



050 00 220, \$28.70

Reporting Marks: T&NO 383.

34 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Caboose, Slant Cupola, Southern Pacific / Texas and New Orleans.

Brown carbody, trucks and details with orange ends. White lettering including roadname and reporting marks below cupola. White side grab irons. Simulated window "glass" installed. Approximate Time Period: 1928 (build date) or early 1940s (based on repack date on model) to early 1960s.

The Micro-Trains 050 body style is based on the steel framed wood sided prototype cabooses built by Southern Pacific during the period 1928 to 1930, so we should have no more than a few minor quibbles, if any, with respect to the accuracy of this offering. This particular car is lettered as a C-30-2, in print that's about as small as I can read these days with a magnifier and my glasses! The C-30-1, C-30-2 and the C-30-3 were the first cabooses built under what became known as the "Harriman Common Standard" after the design standardization principles of E. H. Harriman. Prolific railroad writer Anthony W. Thompson has authored an entire volume covering just the Espee's cabooses; it's Volume 2 in his Southern Pacific Freight Car series. (Not in the UMTRR Accumulation at the moment, however.)

The “Handbook of Texas Online” (<http://www.tshaonline.org>) has a writeup on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad. Fun fact: It was originally built to the “state gauge” of 66 inches; well, I guess everything’s big in Texas. It took almost 25 years for the Texas and New Orleans to span its projected distance between Houston and New Orleans, but on August 30, 1880, the first run between the two cities left from Houston. In 1881 the Southern Pacific took over the T&NO as part of its transcontinental line from San Francisco to New Orleans. The SP used the T&NO as a consolidating corporation for its Texas operations – which you might recall, had to be legally separate from railroads outside of Texas – until that requirement ended and the T&NO was formally merged into the SP on November 1, 1961.

The ORER for January 1943 shows, under the registration for “Southern Pacific Lines in Texas and Louisiana,” a single line calling out 230 cabooses numbered from 1 to 940. Not much help there. We do know in general that the use of wooden cabooses lasted into the 1950s and I’m comfortable calling the ATP at the end of the T&NO. The start date more likely depends on the paint scheme; I’m not sure it’s really all the way back in 1928 but I do see, just barely as the print is even smaller than the build date, a repack date in 1941 on the model.



065 00 700, \$19.90

Reporting Marks: APWX 7166.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, American Pacific Whaling Company.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and company name across car. Approximate Time Period: 1917 (build date given by MTL) to early or mid-1920s.

No, I’d never heard of the American Pacific Whaling Company either. But how about this: a 1931 photo of the American Pacific Whaling Company’s buildings at Akutan, Alaska, located on the “Alaska’s Digital Archives” site (main URL <http://vilda.alaska.edu>). The several buildings in the complex look relatively small and of fairly straightforward wood construction; they just seem to be screaming, “Model me!”

According to the book “The History of Modern Whaling” (published in 1967 and available via Google Books) the American Pacific Whaling Company was one of several operations under the management of the Toronto-based Victoria Whaling Company. This concern once had a virtual monopoly on the industry on the Pacific Coast from California to Alaska. Akutan was the base of operations after shutdown of the facility in Grays Harbor (I’m assuming the one in Washington State). From 1926 to 1939 the Akutan port was in operation, after which time all whaling operations were conducted by “floating factory” ships that processed whales as soon as they were caught.

I can transcribe the entire listing out of the ORER for October 1919. “The tank cars of this company are marked ‘American Pacific Whaling Company’ and ‘A.P.W.X.’ and numbered

7165 to 7179, inclusive (capacity 10000 gallons, 100,000 pounds). Total, ...cars. Report movements and mileage, and send bills for repairs to cars to American Pacific Whaling Co, L.C. Smith Building, Seattle, Wash. Send remittances to Geo. R. Donovan, 64 King Street East, Toronto, Ont.” And that’s it. The ellipses where the number of cars should be? That’s in the actual listing. I suppose if the series 7165 to 7179 is inclusive, that would give us 15 cars, and of course the road number MTL chose is in that range. There is no listing for the American Pacific Whaling Company in the April 1928 ORER which is the next one in the Research Accumulation. So it looks like we have a pretty short Approximate Time Period given MTL’s noting that the car it modeled was built in 1917. I’ll speculate that once the operation was moved to Alaska, there wasn’t much need for tank cars, since the facility in Akutan was out in the Aleutian Islands and well away from any rail service.



094 00 331 and 094 00 332, \$31.90 each
Reporting Marks: BNSF 482710 and BNSF 482853.
Three Bay Center Flow® Covered Hoppers, BNSF Railway (Burlington Northern Santa Fe).

Brown with aluminum roofwalks and hatches. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and “swoosh” or “wedge” herald on right. Yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom sill. Approximate Time Period: 2005 to present.

I don’t have any issues with Warren Buffett acquiring what could be the largest “train set” of sorts in the history of the world, though the Berkshire Hathaway purchase of the BNSF Railway, and although I’m not a fan of the “swoosh” or “wedge” herald that was adopted in 2005 (driving the start of the ATP), I suppose I can get used to it. But what I really can’t stand is the name change: it’s no longer the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, it’s officially “BNSF Railway.” Bleah.

Another potential “bleah” here is that MTL chose road numbers for Center Flow covered hoppers that are much newer than the prototype ACF 4650 cubic foot car on which the 094 body style is based. Specifically, these two cars align with a series of 60 foot outside length 5161 cubic foot capacity hoppers numbered 482500 to 483999, as found in the October 2007 ORER. There are a large quantity of example images on RRPictureArchives.net of cars in this series, although not specifically of the two road numbers MTL used. There’s a bingo on the 482710 on RailcarPhotos.com and it’s noted there that these cars were built by Trinity.

BNSF 403612 and 403639 are examples of CF4650s that might have been better choices for road numbers for this release. The “swoosh” logo is there but the reporting marks are smaller and the roofwalks are not aluminum. They’re part of the large series BNSF 402083 to 403745 which is a mixture of 4600 and 4650 cubic foot capacity hoppers.



105 00 526, \$22.35

Reporting Marks: CNW 741048.

**50 Foot Steel 15 Panel Gondola, Fixed Ends,
Union Pacific (Chicago & North Western
Reporting Marks).**

UP “synthetic red” (brown) with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left. Red, white and blue Union Pacific shield herald on right. Simulated holding tanks load included. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 2000s.

We get a bingo on this car on RailcarPhotos.com, caught in Texas on my wife’s birthday (!) in December 2003. (No, I was not the photographer—I think I have my priorities straight!) This is a 15 panel gondola with fixed ends, to be sure, and it’s a UP Class G-100-80 if I’m reading the small print correctly. The use of the Union Pacific’s font for the CNW reporting marks is accurate, though perhaps a bit blasphemous to C&NW fans.

Given the photo date I went to the October 2004 ORER, to find in the Union Pacific registration the series CNW 741000 to 741099. This is a mix of AAR Designated GBS and GB gondolas, all with inside length of 52 feet 6 inches, inside height of 4 feet 6 inches (with one exception at 4 feet 5 inches), outside length of 56 feet 11 inches, extreme height of 8 feet 5 inches, and capacity of 2244 or 2246 cubic feet. We don’t get weight capacities in these later ORERs, just Gross Rail Weights which are 263,000 pounds. There were 54 cars in the main series at that time plus 13 more in four subseries. From the dimensions, the MTL model is a bit less long than the prototype, and also a little less tall. The key consequence to the model is that the herald looks a bit squeezed up against the consolidated stencils. From online research I found that the cars were built by Thrall.

Just to see how far back this group went, whether it was painted as MTL depicted it or not, I traced back through my ORER stash. All one hundred possible cars were shown in the October 1996 Equipment Register under the Union Pacific, into which the Chicago and North Western was merged in 1995. But the gondolas go back farther than that. The full complement is shown in the April 1984 ORER, and then there are 52 shown as a partial series in the April 1981 book. So it looks like delivery of these cars to the C&NW would have been in the very early 1980s. Though obviously not painted with a Union Pacific shield.

In fact, based on other images on RailcarPhotos.com we can see that the C&NW paint scheme was green with yellow reporting marks, white lettering, and the black, white and red C&NW herald. At least one from the group, the 741097, remained in that decoration through May 2007. This could make for a follow on release for Micro-Trains. This also means that we can’t be sure of how many gondolas in this group actually have been repainted in the UP “synthetic red.” The Approximate Time Period looks to be the decade of the 2000s for that reason, not any earlier I’d think. The CNW 741048 MTL modeled is called out specifically in a subset of the main series in the January 2007 ORER so we know it’s still around at least that long.

I'm not sure exactly what the simulated load is supposed to be carrying in real life, though I can tell you it's a one piece casting with all four tanks molded into a base. It's not holding "Diesel," for sure; maybe it's diesel fuel, or perhaps it's waste oil being returned for processing of some sort.



143 00 040, \$22.70

Road Number: 3010 (will be "ATSF 3010" in website listings).

Pullman Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor Car, Pullman/Santa Fe.

Pullman Green sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Gold lettering including "Pullman" at center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1927 to 1948, but see text.

There was more than one piece of equipment lettered for the Santa Fe and numbered 3010! I've found an H16-44 diesel, and a GP20u diesel, both with those numbers. And there was a 3010 Class of 2-10-2 steam locomotives, which, at least on the Santa Fe, were known as the "Santa Fe" type, and among those was a Number 3010. No mistaking any of those for a passenger car though.

A flyer online for the HO Scale supplier "The Coach Yard" calls out the ATSF series 3010 to 3019 as being of heavyweight 72 seat coaches with air conditioning hatches. They were built by Pullman in 1927 and assigned to the 1946 version of the Santa Fe's train "The Grand Canyon." The Orange Empire Railway Museum lists the 3010 among its collection referring to it as a "chair car." That's as close as we're going to get, since according to online sources I found there were no 28-1 parlor cars lettered "Santa Fe." That means we drop the dreaded "see text" after the Approximate Time Period, which I'll somewhat arbitrarily set as between the build date of 1927 and the Pullman divestiture of 1948, although in this case there really wasn't anything to divest. If we go the other way and look at the use of heavyweight chair cars on the Santa Fe in general, you'd probably be able to tweak the ATP somewhat. I'll leave that exercise to the reader. This is a case of MTL more or less knowing (despite the groaning of some N Scalpers) that a car in Santa Fe lettering is going to sell, even though it's not exactly a prototypical release. My online searching did not result in a photo reference to any cars in the 3010 to 3019 series, which could have told us how close of a stand in the Parlor Car would be to the Santa Fe's chair cars.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



053 00 030, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: UP 217011.

60 Foot Steel Centerbeam Flat Car, Union Pacific.

Yellow with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Red roadname across top of center beam and "Cushioned Load" across bottom of center beam. Approximate Time Period: 1977 (build date) through the present. Previous Releases (as catalog 53030): Road Number 217009, June 1995.

In January 1996, a year after Micro-Trains' introduction of this body style, Rail Model Journal profiled this type of car and pronounced MTL's effort "a beautiful model of the Thrall 60-foot girder beam, complete with brake rigging." While the model is, technically speaking, a best match for the later Burlington Northern and Trailer Train orders of this car, that's only given the pulling eyes in the corner posts and the centered key slots. Plenty close enough for most modelers.

The ORER for April 1981 is the closest I have to the build date of March 1977 given by MTL. It shows the series of 75 cars numbered 217000 to 217074, described as "Flat, Center Beam Bulkheads" with AAR Designation FBS. The dimensions: inside length 60 feet 8 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 11 feet 2 inches, outside length 69 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, and capacity 198,000 pounds.

Between January 1985 and October 1986 according to the ORER Accumulation, the UP tacked on another set of Centerbeam cars to the original set, resulting in the series 217000 to 217142. These cars are roughly the same except for the outside length which was listed at 70 feet 6 inches for the new additions. I suspect that the UP combined the cars together since the inside dimensions and thus the capacity in lumber or whatever was to be carried would be the same. And that's what the professional users of the ORER care about, never mind whether that makes things more difficult for reviewers! At any rate, we should still be good in terms of being able to follow the group of cars in which we're interested. For example, in the January 2007 ORER, the latest one I have, there are 66 cars with an outside length of 66 feet 2 inches, and 50 more with an outside length of 70 feet 6 inches all in the combined series 217000 to 217141.

I had expected there to be a photo of the UP Centerbeam in the RMJ piece, and there is—but of the original Micro-Trains release, not a prototype reference! We also strike out in both Volumes 1 and 2 of the Morning Sun Color Guide to the UP.

So it's off to the 'net to see what we can find. George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (at <http://www.rr-fallenflags.org>) has a rather dark shot of UP 217020 from 2001, a much better image of UP 217049 from 2002, and a decent capture of UP 217053 from August 2006. The image of the 217053 shows the fading of the original UP Armour Yellow paint to more of

a rusty, dirty yellow-brown tone. There's a nontrivial amount of rusting of the center beam. The key data point is that the as delivered paint remains, at least on that car. For a bit of a "before and after" comparison, stay with Fallen Flags for photos of UP 217065 from 1989 and 1999, recognizing that the "before" was still some twelve years after delivery.



071 00 540, \$24.90

Reporting Marks: RBBX 84714.

89 Foot TOFC Flat Car, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Aluminum (including trucks and couplers) with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 2000s at least (MTL gives renumber date as 1999). Previous Releases: Road Number 84702, part of RBB&B Train Set (Catalog 993 01 140), April 2010; Road Numbers 80701, 80702 and 84709, as Runner Pack #39 (Catalog 993 00 039), June 2010.

Unlike the previous releases of Ringling Brothers TOFC flat cars, this car comes without a load, though MTL has released more wagons separately this month (see "MTL Announcements" below). There are eleven photos of the prototype RBBX 84714 on the website RRPictureArchives.net alone, and one data point from them is that there is hardly any decoration on the car beyond the reporting marks. It does appear that there are conspicuity stripes, but they are also aluminum colored and easy to miss. From the prototype photos it will be easy to discern some differences between model and prototype, for example the rails along the top of the sides and the completely flat floor. "Flat cars were often modified by Ringling Brothers to fit their specific needs," says MTL, and the photo evidence supports this.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:

The following items were announced as "off-cycle" releases via the Micro-Trains website on November 16 and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" on November 18.



074 44 040, \$19.30

Reporting Marks: CP 285601.

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, No Roofwalk, Canadian Pacific.

Aluminum with black ends. Red lettering including large script roadname and "Controlled Temperature" in same style as roadname. Black reporting marks on left. Moderate weathering and multicolor graffiti on one side of car. Approximate Time Period: late 1960's to early 1990's. Previous Releases (as catalog number 74040/x): Road Number 285606, July 1998; Road Number 285608, August 1998; Road

Number 285602, September 1998; Road Number 285605, October 1998; Road Number 285611, April 2010.

This is a differently numbered car from the April 2010 release, but the prototype information is the same of course, so I'll refer you to the April UMTRR for that commentary.



993 01 150, \$199.95

New York Central Weathered Train Set. *Consists of five items, reviewed individually below.*

I needed some specific information from MTL when this ambitious offering was announced, not the least of which was the individual catalog numbers for inclusion on the UMTRR Website's 2010 Release Table. My opening line to the folks at MTL: "You're killing me." Besides the extra work (whine, snivel, complain) in reviewing a whole train set of five pieces, one of which is a paint scheme not previously done by Micro-Trains, it also happens to be for a railroad that is one of my favorites. Don't ask if my wallet is feeling a bit lighter at the moment!

Let's take a deep breath and cover each of the five items in turn. Just for a little variety, I won't stick to straight catalog number order this time, as I want to place the NYC caboose where it belongs, at the end.



987 51 010, New York Central Powered FT-A Diesel Locomotive. Road Number: 1601. Black with white lettering including roadname on side and three stripes on nose. Small red and white oval herald on nose. Light weathering applied to carbody and trucks. Approximate Time Period: mid- to late-1940s (1944 build date) as painted. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 1600 and 1601, October 2002 (as part of 992 01 02x FT-A & FT-B two unit sets).

Still heavily into steam engines when these units were first introduced, the Water Level Route put just a toe in the water, purchasing only two ABBA FT sets. They were numbered 1600 to 1603 for the As and 2400 to 2403 for the Bs, although they remained in drawbarred pairs throughout their service life. In 1946 two F2's (yes, there was such a thing!) were purchased to split one ABBA set of FT's into two sets of an FT-A plus and FT-B plus an F2.

These units didn't remain in this modeled paint scheme throughout their service life, though. MTL chose the "as delivered" version of these units for release, and, despite my penchant for the Central, I've got to say that this is probably the most uninteresting scheme into which an FT was painted! The "dip black" quickly gave way to the impressive two-tone gray lightning stripe. Although I can't dig out an exact date for that transition, there are various photos dating to the late 1940's of other NYC units in the stripes and there's a 1956 photo of 1600/2400 in stripes in "The Revolutionary Diesel." That would limit the ATP for these units even though they didn't actually leave the roster until the 1960's. The light weathering seems about right to me; I don't recall ever reading or hearing anything about the Central allowing its locomotives to get very dirty. I note that MTL did re-use a road number from the original run of FT's... or maybe it actually re-used some of the original run of FT's!



045 50 040, New York Central 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Car. Reporting Marks: NYC 499848. Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and small oval herald on right.

Simulated steel plate load included. Moderate weathering applied to car. Approximate Time Period: 1950 to early 1960s as painted. Previous Releases: as catalog 45044/45040, Road Number 499804, May 1975 and Road Number 499824, November 1975; as catalog 45040, Road Number 499853, July 1996; as catalog 045 00 040, Road Number 499845, November 2005.

This car was part of the Central's Lot 793-F which was built in 1950 by General American. The ORER for July 1950 shows the series 499800 to 500299 with 490 cars. The previous two series which shared the same dimensional data run from 499300 to 499799 for another 500 choices. Speaking of those dimensions, they were: "inside length" 53 feet 6 inches (making the MTL car a little less long than it should be), "inside width" 10 feet 4 inches, outside length 54 feet 3 inches, height to top of platform 3 feet 5 inches. The "extreme height" of 7 feet 3 inches probably means to the top of the brake wheel in this case.

The "Canada Southern" website (<http://www.canadasouthern.com>) has this group of cars lasting through Penn Central and into Conrail, surviving until 1991. There were a total of 134 cars in the series as of the April 1970 ORER. But I doubt that the paint scheme as depicted by MTL made it to the Penn Central timeframe. There was still redecorating money in the budget in 1955 when the changeover was made from the Railroad Roman font to the "Stretched Sans-Serif" font for both the reporting marks and the herald. In addition, black absolutely replaced red on flat cars starting about 1960, with black car cement being used in certain paint shops prior to then. I'm being a bit liberal at calling the ATP into the 1960s but there's probably no one who can prove the absence of any stragglers with the as-delivered paint. Meanwhile, you might have already picked up on the fact that the ATP of the flat car doesn't overlap at all with the ATP of the diesel. True enough, however the paint scheme on the flat car was in use during the time that the FT was in the "dip black," even if these particular cars weren't yet built. So in theory, you can get away with this pairing. What about the other cars in the set? Read on...



085 50 021, New York Central 33 Foot Two Bay Panel Side Hopper. Reporting Marks: NYC 850262. Brown with black patch panel on right. White lettering including reporting marks on left; road number and limited dimensional data over gray patch panel.

Simulated coal load included. Light weathering applied to car. Approximate Time Period: early 1940s to early 1950s, but see text. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 850268 and 850276, July 2007.

Back in July 2007 when the original unweathered—and unpatched!—NYC versions of this hopper were produced as a “virtual two pack,” long time UMTRR Gang Member Brian Hilgenberg assisted with some information. I’ll quote Brian once again: “According to the 1954 NYC classification book, 100 cars were converted to panel sides at the Beech Grove shops in 1936. They were lot 645-H, in series 850300-850399. The MTL models however, are painted in the boxcar red scheme used after February 1941. The classification book further states that the cars were rebuilt to flat sides in 1951. The January 1952 ORER shows series 850210-850399 with 97 cars; 87 with 1880 cubic foot capacity (flat sides) and 10 with 1980 cubic foot capacity (panel sides). This would give you an ATP of 1941 to 1951.” I was able to stretch that a little more since there were a few cars in the January 1953 ORER. There were portions of twelve previous lots of NYC hoppers used to create the 645-H series.

Within that ATP is the January 1943 ORER and the vital statistics for this group: inside length 30 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, outside length 31 feet 11 inches, extreme height 11 feet 5 inches, capacity 1980 cubic feet as Brian mentions or 110,000 pounds. There were 188 cars in the group, and another 98 with the same dimensions numbered NYC 851200 to 851299.

This is all well and good, but here’s the “see text” part: the overpainting doesn’t really resemble anything I’ve ever seen used by the New York Central. It actually appears to be more like the Conrail font than the Central’s. Or maybe it’s more like the NYC reporting marks that CSX used to designate its share of the former Conrail freight car fleet. While the ATP of the car itself is OK, the restenciling just looks out of place to my eyes. You could certainly invoke “Rule #1” (“It’s your railroad”) and decree that this is a one shot maintenance of way overpaint of some sort.



105 50 720, New York Central 50 Foot 14 Panel Gondola, Straight Sides, Fixed Ends. Reporting Marks: NYC 501213. Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and small oval

herald on right. Road number in white over oxide red patch. Simulated scrap load included. Light weathering and simulated chalk marks applied to car. Approximate Time Period: early 1940s to early 1950s, but see text. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 501218 and 501226, March 2010.

UMTRR Gang Member Mike Kmetz helped with the March 2010 commentary on the original release of these cars, and cited the Canada Southern website as the source of much of what he passed along to us.

The nominal prototype of this car was the NYC's Lot 656-G. These were cars taken from the 1927 build of NYC gondolas by General American Car Company, Lot 557-G. Those were 46 foot interior length 13 panel gondolas, as opposed to the 52 foot MTL 14 panel model, and were steel, straight-sided with fishbelly center sill. A vertical staff brake wheel was mounted at one end. In 1937 the East Buffalo shops modified thirty of these cars to carry six air-activated cement containers and the cars were renumbered 501212-501241. So the original release works with the containers, but the road number for this car doesn't really work without them.

Well, how about the NYC removing the containers then, George? Yes, certainly possible, though not likely since I did not see the series without the cement containers all the way through the coming of Penn Central. And the car would probably have been repainted into freight car brown since that was what the NYC used between 1941 and 1956. What might actually have worked a little better for MTL is a road number between 704000 and 704499, since that was the series of the original, that is to say unmodified, Lot 557-G. Am I confused yet? The net of it is that we have a stand in of a different kind here, since the road number aligns with a car that was modified for special service, but the car itself isn't modified. So we have another "see text," although if you don't look at the road number you do have a typical NYC gondola that could match with the FT locomotive.



050 50 230, New York Central 34 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Caboose, Slant Cupola. Reporting Marks: NYC 17836. Brown with white lettering including reporting marks in center. Light weathering and simulated chalk marks applied to car. Approximate Time Period: mid-1920s to early 1950s. Previous Releases: None.

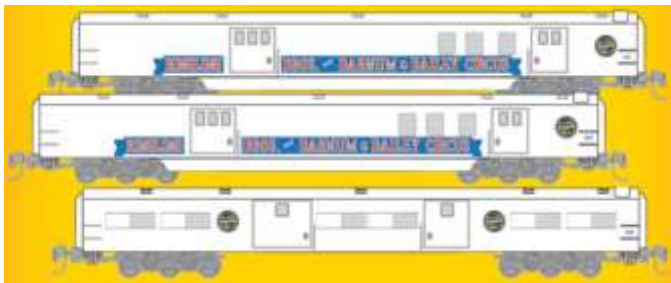
It figures that I would be most interested in the least decorated item in the set, doesn't it? This plainly lettered wood sided caboose has not been previously released by MTL. The exact 17836 can be found on Page 89 of Morning Sun's Color Guide to the NYC (Volume One). The prototype was built in 1895 for the NYC-controlled Michigan Central as its 2185. It and others like it were rebuilt between 1925 and 1929 with steel underframes. Unfortunately (for me especially!) the MTL body style is a stand-in: the real car had a 30 foot carbody, four double hung windows in a different configuration, a less tall cupola, two truss rods (!) and a wooden battery box mounted below the underframe. The lack of an NYC oval herald is somewhat unusual for the time, but prototypical. The photo in the MSCG is dated 1951 so we know that the "waycar" — that was the Central's term for caboose — was around at least that long. It's noted elsewhere in the book that the NYC's priority following the Second World War was transitioning from steam to diesel motive power, not modernizing its caboose fleet; so it was not unusual to see wood-sided waycars into the 1960s. The relatively

long ATP for this caboose means it easily matches the ATP for the FT locomotive, although as we've noted, the freight cars in between are a bit suspect, especially the panel side hopper given how it is painted.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #46, Four Mobil Oil tank cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was provided in the June 2010 issue.

The following item is in pre-order at present is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is July 2011. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close December 30. Please note that artwork is for representation only and actual models may vary.



Scheduled July 2011 Release:

Runner Pack #53: 993 00 053, \$89.95

Road Numbers: 131, 133, 136.

Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey
"Blue Train" three car multi-pack.

Includes two "animal/supply cars" (based on Railway Post Office cars) and one "stock car" (based on a Baggage Car). All models will be white; animal/supply cars will have red, white and blue banner "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus" across bottom of car and "Greatest Show on Earth" globe logos on right. Stock car will have "Greatest Show" logos left and right of center of car. Road numbers on far right of each car. Cars are Con-Cor models decorated by Micro-Trains and fitted with Micro-Trains trucks and couplers.

I already know that I'm going to get a zero on trying to find references to these cars online, having done a fruitless search previously upon announcements of other "White-Schemed Blue Train" items. So I'll keep this short: The models will most likely be stand-ins, but that will most likely not deter fans of Circus Trains.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



074 00 128, \$23.95

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #28: George H. W. Bush (41st 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.

I was very curious about what the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia (<http://millercenter.org/>), my go-to scholarly resource for this part of the column, would have to say about the “Impact and Legacy” of the President known as “Bush 41.” And while they do draw a few conclusions, they carefully caveat even those: “The passage of time is essential in formulating a true understanding of any presidency—only after the partisan battles have cooled and a policy legacy is fully matured can an honest assessment be made of President George H. W. Bush’s place in history.” I think that’s fair.

George Herbert Walker Bush was born on June 12, 1924 in Milton, Massachusetts. His father Prescott was a senator from Connecticut, and his family was quite well-to-do. Bush was the youngest Navy pilot in World War II (as noted in the MTL trivia question) and then attended Yale University. After graduating he struck out on his own and moved to Texas for a career in the oil business. In Houston he became involved in politics and served two terms as a Congressman before a failed bid for the Senate. But he was appointed by President Richard Nixon to be our ambassador to the United Nations, and held several positions in the Nixon and Ford Administrations. Most notable of these was Director of Central Intelligence. Bush gained significant experience with foreign policy. This experience was tapped by Ronald Reagan to be the Vice Presidential candidate in the election of 1980 following Bush’s own run for the Republican Presidential nomination. Reagan and Bush won easily in both 1980 and 1984. Bush continued his foreign policy focus during his two terms as Vice President. For the 1988 elections, Bush outpaced his primary opponents to win the Presidential nomination and selected Dan Quayle as his running mate. Bush ran on a theme of continuing the Reagan legacy but also sought “a kinder, gentler nation” and promised, “Read my lips, no new taxes.” This prompted Buffalo-based political satirist Mark Russell to quip: “Read my lips, he’s going to raise the old ones.” Russell was right, and some Republicans never forgot or forgave this, which would mean trouble in 1992.

Bush’s presidency was fairly well dominated by international events, including the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Soviet Union, and the first Gulf War. Bush formed a coalition of nations to repel the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a war which lasted just two months. The coalition held together although there was questioning as to whether

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein should have been pursued and deposed; an aim which Bush said was never the goal of "Operation Desert Storm."

As successful as the First Gulf War and Bush's foreign policies were, Americans were more focused on domestic issues for the Election of 1992, and Bush's action to raise taxes despite promising otherwise alienated some Republicans. Bush also lost key members of the team who had helped him get elected in 1988. Observers note that Bush seemed to run a lackluster campaign, and the presence of Ross Perot as a third-party candidate also took away votes. His Democratic opponent Bill Clinton made good use of the slogan, "It's the economy, stupid" and unseated Bush in the election. But Clinton and Bush joined together to lead relief efforts for the victims of the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 and also led efforts to provide help to Haiti following the earthquake there in 2010. Bush remained active in politics through his children, and back home in Texas and at his long time house in Kennebunkport, Maine became active members of the community.

And of course, you probably know about the "Bush 41" locomotive painted by the Union Pacific, a diesel decorated in the colors of Air Force One, the presidential aircraft and honoring both the President and his museum and library in College Station, Texas. The loco was painted and presented prior to the grand opening of the "Tracks of the Iron Horse" exhibit in November 2005. "When we set out to design the Bush Library and Museum, I did not want it to be about just one person – rather, we wanted to touch a broader cross-section of American life, encompassing an eventful period of our history," Bush commented when UP 4141 was unveiled.

On to this month's trivia question, and this time we don't have a father and son, but a grandfather and grandson—a fact I did not know about the 23rd President. His grandfather was the ninth president—the one who died in office just thirty two days after his inauguration. Need more help? He's the only president to be preceded and succeeded by the same man. And don't forget that reference to service in the Civil War. Ah, let's not tease any more; we're referring to Benjamin Harrison. Get those entries into Micro-Trains, and good luck!

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



500 00 671 and 500 00 672, \$22.20 each.

Reporting Marks: CN 521992 and 521999.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Canadian National.

Mineral red (brown) with white lettering including roadname (in English both sides) and reporting marks on left. Green and white Maple Leaf herald with slogan "Canada's Largest Railway" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1942 to mid-1950s based on paint scheme.

While the Canadian National once owned one of the largest fleets of box cars in North America-- a whopping 69,479 listed in April of 1952-- this one is out of the ordinary because of the slogan. "Canada's Largest Railway" was what was painted on CN box cars, including three aluminum colored cars, for about a year according to CDS Lettering' "Railway Equipment Diagrams." Typically, that slogan was "Serves All Canada." What is a little confusing is what "about a year" it was; for dry transfer set CDS has 1942 and for another, 1945. As a tiebreaker, the RPI website has 1945. Regardless of the year, boxcars stayed painted in the slogan for some time. Both MTL and CDS estimated the mid-1950s; Micro-Trains did when they released the 521992 as a reprint in January 1999. We'll take it.

The actual build date of the prototype cars seems to fit with the 1945 date, since per Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site (<http://www.nakina.net>) the group 521500 to 521999, of five hundred cars, was built by Eastern Car Works in July 1945. (As such, these cars won't be an exact match to the MTL model which is based on the Pullman-Standard PS-1.) Another five hundred numbered 522000 to 522499 were constructed by Eastern Car Works in January 1946. Prior to these batches, boxcars numbered 520000 to 521499 were supplied by National Steel Car. All of these groups are listed together in the ORER for July 1950 to give us the series 520000 to 522499 containing 2491 cars. These are described simply as "Box, Steel" with AAR Designation XM and these dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 8 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3712 cubic feet or 120,000 pounds.

This one lookup should do given the Approximate Time Period for the paint scheme, but I'll tack on that there were 2432 cars in the series in January 1959. Soon after, CN would get away from maple leaves altogether in favor of the "wet noodle" herald. Ian Cranstone notes a large amount of renumbering of this original series as well and I'll refer you to his excellent website for more on that point.



507 00 451 and 507 00 452, \$27.20 each.

**Reporting Marks: GARX 50920 and GARX 50925.
50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Plug Door, GARX/Denver
and Rio Grande Western.**

Orange with black ends. Black lettering including reporting marks on left and "Rio Grande / The Action Road" speed lettering roadname and

slogan. Green "No Damage" device on left. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s to no later than the late 1980s.

This car represents a follow on to the unusual paint scheme on GARX 50900 to 50999 which was modeled by Micro-Trains in December 2009, in N Scale that is (catalog 032 00 450). At that time I called the Approximate Time Period as being from the build date of 1957 to the late 1960s, so I guess we'll pick up from there.

First, though, we'll excerpt from ourselves and the December 2009 UMTRR. Back in the mid-1950's, General American was promoting the idea of insulated boxcars. These would be for goods that didn't need refrigeration, but did need protection from extreme temperatures. General American leased cars in an attempt to get them out on rails and the Rio Grande took 100 of them with reporting marks GARX 50900 to 50999. The ORER for January 1959 shows this group as part of a larger series GARX 50000 to 51999 of a total of 920 cars in two groups differing by capacity. The dimensions of both groups were the same: inside length 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 9 feet 6 inches, outside length 53 feet, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 7 feet 7 inches, and cubic capacity 4300 feet. The much larger subset of 842 cars had a weight capacity of 96,000 pounds; the cars leased to the Rio Grande were in this group. The second subset of 78 cars had a weight capacity of 89,000 pounds. An end note calls out the General American-Evans Company "D.F." loading devices "having nine rows perforated wall angles." The unusual paint scheme that these RBL cars originally wore had the roadname spelled out with the flying roadname, and is shown on Page 49 of the Morning Sun Color Guide to the Rio Grande.

But also on Page 49 is GARX 50921 in the paint scheme represented here, in a photo dated October 1968. We see that the MTL model is not a perfect match to the prototype. There is a "door thing" given the 7 foot 7 inch size of the plug door, but it's a lot harder to notice such things on plug doors versus sliding ones, particularly in Z Scale. The side sill is straight all the way across the car, which can be fixed. Not so easy to fix is the row of horizontal rivets either side of the plug door, about halfway up and intersecting the bottom of the "No Damage" band on the left. I don't think these rivets were related to the presence of DF loaders, instead, like the steel meat packer refrigerator cars that have similar rivets, they may be simply indicative of horizontal panels used to construct the car.

I did not venture beyond the January 1959 ORER for the lookup on the GARX series back in December 2009, but since our ATP starts in the 1960s I will have to now. The January 1967 Equipment Register shows a much larger group of numbers, 50000 to 53999, with 494 cars of 96,000 pounds capacity and three exceptions with just 89,000 pounds capacity. From my travels online checking for other prototype photos, I've found that that number series includes cars leased to other railroads, at least the Frisco, Southern Pacific and Illinois Central. (All possible follow up releases, if you ignore the differences between prototype and model.) Then things get a bit nuts: in the April 1970 book the group of cars in which we're interested has been collapsed into the ridiculously large series 100 to 53999 with some exceptions. The entire assemblage was just 438 cars total, including the exceptions. It's down to a total of 291 cars in the April 1981 ORER and just three in the July 1989 Register (Numbered 100 to 53999? Come on!) which is where I stopped looking. It's entirely possible that these cars came off lease and were returned to General American prior to that date, so the ATP has a "no later than" caveat.



510 00 180, \$39.70.

Reporting Marks: MEC 32068.

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Pan Am
Railways/ Maine Central.**

Blue with black lower band (sides and ends). Aluminum roof. Mostly white lettering which differs on each side of the car. One side

has reporting marks and large "PAN AM" name on left and large "Pan Am" globe trademark on right. Other side has reporting marks and small "Pan Am Railways" on left and "Pan Am" globe on right. Small United States flag at top left of side. Yellow visibility stripes at points along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: 2005 to present.

We can leverage the April 2007 UMTRR writeup of the N Scale version of this car, although without the hoopla that accompanied that N Scale release, which blew out of the factory in the first 2½ hours of the first day of release. I expect the 1:220 version will take a bit longer to sell out, but maybe not that much longer.

The Pan Am name has been around since about 1927, but the latest use of what was once a logo known the world over as the trademark of Pan American World Airways has become the rebranding of the Guilford companies, including the Guilford Rail System, to the Pan Am companies. This name change took place in March 2006, and is noted in more detail in the first issue of the "Pan Am Clipper" newsletter on the Pan Am Railways site (URL at this writing still <http://www.guilfordrail.com>). Pan Am painted boxcars and locomotives started showing up, which often resulted in the question, "Is this for real?" And it was, although I'm still not a fan of this concept of using an airline trademark on a railroad car. Ah, well, they didn't ask me.

Some of these cars started life in the orange and green Maine Central "pine tree" scheme, and then perhaps went to the later "Big G" Guilford scheme. There's no ability to distinguish the branded from the rebranded in the ORER listing for the Maine Central as of January 2006, but I can tell you that there were a selection of 5347 and 5272 cubic foot boxcars in the series 31900 to 32149, with 158 of the former and 75 of the latter, for a total of 233 cars or about a quarter of the total MEC fleet. (The MTL body style is a model of the FMC 5077 cubic foot boxcar, so it's a bit small.) I can't get any later than that issue of the Register because, inexplicably, the Maine Central is not listed in either of the 2007 ORERs that are in the Research Accumulation! (There's also no entry for either Guilford or Pan Am Railways.) But on the Fallen Flags site, we do have a great "before and after" pairing of images of the exact MEC 32068, the first in the "pine tree" from February 2005 and the second in the Pan Am scheme dated July 2005 (which would have been before the official transition announcement). And just to illustrate that despite the lack of an ORER entry, these cars survive, I offer you an image of sister car MEC 32103 taken in August 2010.

What is common to both N and Z Scale Micro-Trains releases of this car is fairly apparent: the price tag. Yikes, almost forty bucks for a boxcar. (The N Scale run was \$35.95.) I'll reprint

my somewhat speculative explanation—not necessarily a defense—of why this car is expensive. 1) The two sides of the prototype are painted differently. This essentially requires a different set of painting masks. 2) The car is rib sided (technically, “exterior post”) which makes the painting more difficult than it is for, say, the Special Edition State Cars. There’s a reason why smooth side cars were chosen for those and other Special Editions! 3) The black band on the car is not only on the sides, but on the ends, for additional complexity. 4) On Trainboard back in 2007 it was noted by Joe D’Amato of MTL that the white on dark color requires multiple paint passes. The State and Canada cars are printed on aluminum and white respectively; and I think there is a difference between the “four color process” printing on the Special Edition cars and this car which may be more “conventional” in terms of how they are painted. 5) Don't forget those yellow visibility stripes along the side of the car... yet another color, and I think anyone who’s painted yellow over anything knows how, er, challenging that can be. 6) Finally, the costs of a run are spread over the number of units. We never know how many units that is, but I am reasonably certain that Z Scale production runs are materially smaller than N Scale runs. At least for now.



982 01 230, \$175.95

**Road Number: 508 (will be preceded with
“N&W” in website listings).**

GP9 Diesel, Norfolk and Western.

Dark blue with black trucks and underframe.

Yellow sill stripe and lettering including

roadname on long hood, “hamburger” herald and road number on cab and herald on each end. Approximate Time Period: 1966 to 1970 for this unit, or mid 1960s to early 1970s in general.

I was a bit dismayed to find that my own model railroad, which is set in the Spring of 1963, could not use any equipment lettered with the circular N&W herald—also somewhat cheekily called the “Hamburger” herald—because that logo was introduced in December 1963. (I suppose I could invoke “Rule #1.”) The Approximate Time Period for this unit starts a bit later than that according to Micro-Trains’ car copy, and it doesn’t last very long either.

According to “The Diesel Shop” website (<http://www.thedieselshop.us>), GP9s 506 to 521 were built new for the Norfolk and Western, along with the units 762 to 767 which were renumbered 500 to 505. These were built for passenger service. This is nowhere near the total number of GP9s that the N&W rostered, as they also had road numbers 620 to 699, 710 to 713, 714 to 761, and 768 to 914. Wow, that’s a lot of Geeps if all of those numbers were actually used. And that’s not counting the GP9s that came from lines like the Wabash and the Nickel Plate that the N&W took control as part of its expansion out of its original service area.

We have a bingo on N&W 508 on Flickr with a May 1967 photo posted by Leon Kay (which I assume he also took) at Vandercook, Illinois (near Danville). The first check is for dynamic brakes, and they are there. But as noted in “The Second Diesel Spotter’s Guide” the

passenger version GP9s (and GP7s as well) had a longer tank in the underframe that was divided into fuel and water compartments. This usually caused the air reservoirs, which would no longer fit underneath, to be mounted atop the long hood, resulting in the “torpedo tube” look. But in this photo, we see the air tanks mounted just above the divided tank. This looks like an easier fix should the modeler be so inclined. There’s also a shot on Railpictures.net of the 508 leading the former Wabash passenger train “Blue Bird” out of Chicago bound for St. Louis in July 1965, and we note the clean and sharp looking bell mounted atop the end of the high short hood. Now that would be a cool detail to add, more easily spotted than the change to the air tank if you ask me.

I probably don’t need to cover the entire history of the 508, although I’ll note that the original paint scheme was black with simple yellow lettering that was about the same as the steam locomotives that they replaced. Micro-Trains notes that the dark blue was called “Pevler Blue” after the N&W’s then president Herman Pevler, and was replaced soon after his retirement in 1970. It was 1971 when the runtogether “NW” herald—if you want to call it that—supplanted the “hamburger” and “dip black” replaced dark blue on diesels. However, “Don’s Rail Photos” (direct URL <http://donsdepot.donrossgroup.net/dr1704.htm>) shows N&W 759 still in the blue and yellow as of June 1974, so even if the 508’s blue was gone soon after Pevlar’s retirement per MTL, the “at large” paint scheme stuck around a bit longer. Meanwhile, N&Ws GP9 number 521 in maroon and yellow is preserved at the Roanoke Transportation Museum.

Z SCALE REPRINTS:



524 00 070, \$19.70

Reporting Marks: RBBX 84714.

60 Foot Flat Car, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Aluminum (including trucks and couplers) with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 2000s at least (MTL gives renumber date as 1999). Previous Releases: Road Number 84702, part of RBB&B Train Set (Catalog 994 01 050), March 2010; Road Numbers 80701, 80702 and 84709, as Runner Pack #17 (Catalog 994 00 017), June 2010.

Like the other 60 foot flat cars already released by MTL, this is a compromise using existing tooling since the real flat car is 89 feet long. (And the same road number is on the N Scale 89 foot flat car reprint reviewed above.) As with the N Scale release above, this car comes without a load, though MTL has released more wagons separately this month (see “MTL Announcements” below). I expect that this reprint will appeal most greatly to those Z Scalers that are already well into assembling their Red Unit Train.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: The following item was announced as an “off-cycle” release via the Micro-Trains website on November 16 and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line” on November 18.



515 44 170, \$24.80

Road Number: 96451 (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.” Moderate black and gray weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1907 (build date given by MTL) to early 1910’s. Previously released in unweathered form as Catalog 515 00 170 in February 2010.

Unlike the N Scale releases, the Z Scale items appear to remain weathering of surplus stock of a previous run-- at least for now. We covered the story of the Star Union Line in the February 2010 issue of the UMTRR, to which I will refer you.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #24, four Baltimore and Ohio boxcars, has been released. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2010 issue.

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is June 2011. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close December 30.



Scheduled June 2011 Release:

Runner Pack #30: 994 00 030, \$64.95

Road Numbers: 602800, 602935, 603050, 603100 (each will be preceded with “PRR” in website listings).

Quantity four of Pennsylvania Railroad 40 foot steel boxcars with single Superior doors.

Oxide red (technically, the PRR’s “freight car color”) with white lettering including roadname and “calendar” style road number on left and large

shadow keystone herald on right. Approximate Time Period: mid 1950s (based on paint scheme, see text) to early 1970s at least. Previous Release (as catalog 14106, now 500 00 060): Road Number 47015, November 1986 (with Marklin couplers) and September 1987 (with Magne-Matic Couplers); Road Number 603116, March 1997; Road Number 603120, April 1999 (last two with either Marklin or Magne-Matic Couplers).

The road numbers on this Runner Pack are the same that were used on N Scale Runner Pack #1, so we can leverage the October 2006 UMTRR coverage of that release.

Micro-Trains will certainly not exhaust its potential supply of cars in this particular series any time soon. According to Rob's Pennsy Page (<http://pr.railfan.net> , no "www") there were 1500 of these Class X43a boxcars built between December 1950 and February 1951. They have 12 panel welded sides, a diagonal panel roof, R+3/4 early improved Dreadnaught ends, seven rung ladders, and a seven foot Youngstown door. Even without knowing all of this, knowing that they were built by American Car and Foundry is enough to understand that the MTL body style, which is based on the Pullman-Standard PS-1, isn't going to be an exact match. (The Pennsy's X48s were PS-1s with 8 foot wide six panel Superior doors, but there were just twenty on the roster.) Rob notes that "All cars in the 600000 numbers had a 6 inch white triangle above the car number. This designated the cars for segregated maintenance. The cars were leased from the Chicago Car Company and all maintenance costs were charged back to Chicago Car Company."

Let's grab the vital statistics for the X43a series numbered 602000 to 603499 from the July 1953 ORER: Inside length, 40 feet 6 inches, inside height, 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 7 feet as already noted (and yes, that is a "door thing" though probably minor in 1:220), capacity 3898 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 1495 cars in the group then, and skipping way forward, still 1353 of them in April 1968 and a total of 888 in April 1970 under the Penn Central split 591 to 297 between 50 ton and 55 ton capacity cars. From the April 1970 ORER, it looks like these X43a cars were going into the PC series 119970 to 121329, more than enough to cover the cars that remained at that time.

As with the previous runs, the paint scheme chosen is the "shadow keystone" variety of the Pennsylvania, which was in use from 1954 to 1961 when it was replaced by the plain keystone. This means that these cars were initially painted with the circle keystone scheme; Rob's Pennsy Page cites a photo of 602000 in that decoration in the book "Pennsy Power 3." Within that general paint scheme, there were several variations. Somewhat importantly, the "calendar" style numbering in which the numbers are not all in a line was used only from February to June of 1954. Not to worry; given that repainting was not top of mind for the Pennsy I think you're good at least into the 1960's with this, if you're all that concerned in the first place. The numbering went to straight line after that and to the Gothic font in 1960 and 1961. Before that, the PRR reporting marks were added in between the large roadname and rather large number; both were made smaller to enable it all to fit.

Morning Sun's PRR Color Guide Volume 2 has shots of PRR 602232 and 603350 in the later plain keystone scheme. Fallen Flags has two photos of PRR 602961 taken at the Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia as of August 1975, but also in plain keystone. And in a clear blasphemy, some of the dimensional data has been restenciled in the font used by the New York Central! While I found other photo references to this series, none were in the shadow keystone scheme. I'm still hoping for some Incremental Information on this if it's out there.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



502 00 530, \$22.95

Reporting Marks: DE 1787.

40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, Delaware 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 (Blue Hen Chicken) and state flower (Peach Blossom) on right. Thirtieth release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

[The following is largely reprinted from the July 2007 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release of this car.]

Well, we know history won't repeat itself; the first State Car in both N and Z Scales was for Illinois, but the last car in N Scale, Delaware, will not be the final release in Z Scale. That honor will be saved for another state.

The same Lenni Lenape tribe of Native Americans that I studied as being part of New Jersey's heritage were the dominant people in what is now Delaware in the 1400s and 1500s. Minquas from the Susquehanna Valley attacked the Lenni Lenape villages starting about 1600, and then the Europeans arrived. Henry Hudson sighted the bay and river in 1609 and Captain Samuel Argall named it for Virginia's Governor, Lord De La Warr. The Dutch were first to attempt a settlement in 1631 at what is now Lewes, but were wiped out by Native Americans. The Swedes were next, led by Peter Minuet at Fort Christina, now Wilmington. New Sweden ceded to New York when the British moved in on New Netherlands, but Peter Stuyvesant built another fort and re-established New Netherland, which was then retaken as New Sweden, but then re-re-taken by the Dutch. By 1674 the smoke had cleared, and the British were back in control. They handed the area to William Penn. Yes, these names should be familiar to those who've studied the colonial history of New York and Pennsylvania. Even then, Delaware wasn't all that far away.

And good thing, for on July 1 and 2, 1776 an ailing Cesar Rodney made an historic ride from Delaware to Philadelphia to cast the deciding vote in favor of American independence in the Delaware delegation. Without his "yea," the delegation from there was tied one for, one against, and Virginia's motion in favor of independence would have been defeated. And that's why Cesar Rodney is pictured speeding on his horse on the State Quarter. It might not have mattered to the colony anyway; they had already declared independence from Great Britain on June 15! And perhaps that would have made them The First State even if they had not been the first to ratify the United States Constitution on December 7, 1787. They'd had practice, having declared themselves the "Three Lower Counties Upon Delaware" separate

from Pennsylvania, back in 1704. In 1792, the official name was changed from Delaware State to the State of Delaware.

Ever wonder what the “E.I.” in “E.I. duPont” stands for? Well, no, but in case you did, it's for Éleuthère Irénée, the French founder of a gunpowder factory near Wilmington in 1802, the predecessor of the giant chemical corporation that is still closely connected with the state and has made such diverse products there as nitroglycerin and nylons. Transportation was important given Delaware's position between North and South. The Newport and Gap Turnpike opened in 1808, the first toll road in Delaware; the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal opened in 1829, connecting those Bays. And the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad, all one and a half miles of it, opened in 1832 with horse cars and then steam locomotives. Six years later, the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore began service. It became part of the mighty Pennsylvania's system.

Delaware was truly a border state during the Civil War: it continued to have slavery but did not join the Confederacy. Most of its residents fought for the North but some fought for the South.

I've had what I think is the most interesting fact about Delaware that I've come across tucked away for a while. And it's all about the Mason-Dixon Line. What do you mean, George, isn't that the famous boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania? Well, yes, that's correct, but it's not complete. Also part of that famous demarcation, which is a series of several lines, is the arc that is part of a circle of points twelve miles distant from New Castle, Delaware. The arc intersects the straight line commonly thought of as “the” line running along the parallel at 39 degrees 43 minutes north (of the Equator, that is). There is a “wedge” created with respect to these two lines, the area of which was disputed by Delaware and Pennsylvania until 1921! (It did go to Delaware.) The “North Line” running between Maryland and Delaware, which is not truly north-south in direction, was also surveyed as part of the Mason and Dixon work, as evidenced by the Mason-Dixon Monument off Delaware Route 55 in the southwestern corner of the state.

Mason and Dixon were not from Delaware, but others were: actresses Valerie Bertinelli and Elisabeth Shue, Henry Heimlich, inventor of the Manuever that has saved countless choking victims from death, playwright Robert Bird, astronomer Annie Jump Cannon, authors Henry Canby and John Phillips, artist Howard Pyle, George Read, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and of course Cesar Rodney. I note that one website calls these folks “Famous Delawareans.”

I have crossed into and through Delaware at least a dozen times, probably more. My guess is that the first time was along Interstate 95 going to Washington, DC and I'm not even sure that there was a stop. But the most memorable trip included Lewes, the terminus for the Cape May Ferry. That ferry, besides being a pleasant run across Delaware Bay to the southernmost point of my home state of New Jersey, is also, technically speaking, a part of US Route 9. Indeed, though Route 9 is thought of as “so Joisey” by we natives (yes, I know it runs up to Canada) it actually continues from on from Lewes to its junction with US 13 near

Laurel, in Sussex County. As long as I'm running on with semi-useless trivia on Federal Highways, I'll mention that while Interstate 95 runs through Delaware, its predecessor US 1 does not, the only state along the Eastern Seaboard where that's true.

HO_{n3} SCALE (NARROW GAUGE):



855 00 090, \$35.30

Road Number : 7 (will be "C&NoW 7" in website listings).

30 Foot Flat Car, Colorado and Northwestern.

Brown including truck frames and details. White lettering including roadname and road number across car. Simulated lumber load included. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1900's.

Since there is no ORER entry for the Colorado and Northwestern to help us with the Approximate Time Period, we will have to settle for the information we already have from MTL's various N_{n3} Scale releases. We'll start with the book "American Narrow Gauge Railroads" by George Hilton for a quick look at this line. It began as a Union Pacific venture in 1881, at first as a means to get gold and silver out of Boulder Canyon in Colorado, but intended to stretch all the way to Salt Lake City and thence to the Pacific. Like many slim gauge lines, it was not exactly constructed for the ages, and it was prone to flooding. That's exactly what occurred in May 1894 when it rained for about 60 straight hours. Just two miles of the line were left after that washout, and the UP lost interest. Local businessmen revived and rebuilt the line as the Colorado and Northwestern Railway, with mining traffic in mind to be sure, but also tourist traffic. This line actually came down into Union Station in Denver via a third rail on the Colorado and Southern.

However, neither the mines nor the tourists lasted very long. Better mines elsewhere killed off the former, with a brief spike during World War I, and better roads into and out of Boulder killed off the latter. Despite various reorganizations including the Denver, Boulder and Western, the railroad was finished and completely dismantled by the beginning of 1920.

For the most recent reprint of the N_{n3} boxcar in April 2008, UMTRR Gang Member Bruce Bird provided the following from the book "Colorado's Mountain Railroads" by Robert LeMassena: "Due to a monetary panic of 1893 and a flood of 1894 the UP decided not to rebuild its Greeley, Salt Lake & Pacific Railroad, which connected Boulder with the precious metal mines west of the city. However the mining and smelting industry was far from dead so, some Eastern capitalists formed a new company, the Colorado & Northwestern RailWAY in 1897... The line was reorganized in 1904 to the C&N Railroad and failed again in 1909. It was then reorganized as the Denver, Boulder & Western, which lasted until 1917, with removal of the line in 1920." MTL leverages this information for the car copy on this item.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Circus train loads continue to be issued from behind the red and yellow sign. In Z Scale, there are two items. First is a two pack of wagons in plain red (799 43 930, \$9.95). Second is a four pack of wagons painted in white with red trim and multicolor Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey name and "Greatest Show on Earth" logo (760 00 050, \$49.95). Move those four wagons up from 1:220 to 1:160 and add two "utility vehicles" and you've got the new N Scale pack (462 00 030, \$59.95). The intricate depiction of the Ringling Brothers paint is what drives these MSRPs; I would imagine it's pretty costly to paint up the real ones this way as well. Also of interest is a way to make those loads look better on their 89 foot N Scale flat cars: a package of four pair of "Wagon Racks" (499 90 920, \$11.95) The idea is to attach the racks to the flat cars, and then the wagons to the racks. There is still the matter of the stay cables and other hardware, but that exercise remains left to the modeler.

Two more items in N Scale: a pair of crushed stone loads for 50 foot gondolas (499 43 966, \$8.95) and a pair of GPA Amphibious Jeeps (499 91 901, \$11.95), which are shown at this writing as being delayed with backorders being taken by MTL. And as an extra detail to dress up the ends of the MTL heavyweight passenger cars we have a set of eight scissor gates (499 90 921, \$9.95) in etched metal.

STRUCTURE KITS: All three scales have new offerings this month. MTL continues with modest items in HO, which is not really a bad way to begin, with a Freight Ramp Kit (899 90 902, \$17.95). In N Scale there is an interesting kit, the "Smudge Oil Depot" (499 90 917, \$28.95) consisting of a small shed and platform along with two round tanks. It's not apparent from the image how large this is, but I suspect this will fit in those odd corners of layouts that most modelers have. In the smallest MTL scale we have the most ambitious items: there's a Sardine Boat (799 43 931, \$12.95) and Logging Water Tank Kit (799 90 938, \$27.95) in Z Scale. Don't just think of that boat as going into the "water," though. There have been a couple of threads on discussion boards on the topic of shipping boats by rail. This MTL item could be a load as well as a vessel. As usual, these kits are unassembled and undecorated. The logging water tank is an open design—no roof—which is appropriate for the time and place. This should result in some very creative ideas for how to fill it with "water."

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Despite there not being any official bye-bye board for November—although I will yet need to verify exactly what happened over at Micro-Trains—there is a relatively reasonable number of items on the outs list this month. Well, if you call almost two columns reasonable, I suppose.

We'll begin with three HOn3 items. Two are painted for the Denver and Rio Grande Western: the second number of the flat car (855 00 032, January 2009) and the gondola with load (860 00 040, April 2009). Also outta here is the Sumpter Valley flat car with load (855 00 040, October 2009).

There are a bunch of Z Scale items including three "both numbers" releases: the virtual two pack of Northern Pacific boxcars in green (503 00 09x, August), the pair of Kansas City Southern x-post boxcars (511 00 07x, November 2008) and the duo of United States Silica covered hoppers (531 00 11x, October 2009). Two state cars are gone: the Alabama (502 00

515, September 2009) and Kentucky (502 00 516, October 2009). Ringling Brothers Billboard Car #5 (515 00 605, December 2009) has left town. The Pennsylvania streamlined coach (552 00 060, September 2009) has departed. The unique Santa Fe "Shock Control" boxcar has rolled on (505 00 240, July 2009). So has the Burlington Northern caboose (535 00 290, April). Okay, well, I've delayed the "one of two numbers" rundown as long as I could, so here goes: the second Burlington green boxcar (503 00 062, July 2009, first number already gone); the Southern Railway x-post boxcar (511 00 081, January, second number still available); the first Chesapeake & Ohio gondola with load (522 00 181, February 2009, second number still available); the second British Columbia bulkhead flat car (527 00 062, September, first number also sold out); and the first Kansas City Southern well car (540 00 091, February, second number still in stock).

And to conclude the rundown of the run out, there are nine N Scale items. The Richard Nixon (074 00 117, January) and Zachary Taylor (074 00 118, February) cars have left office. The Ringling Brothers "Pie Car" (985 00 604, October) has left the building. The Santa Fe ice refrigerator car (059 00 536, June) has gone "all the way." Somewhat surprisingly to me, the Canadian Pacific TOFC flat (064 00 090, October) is sold out; not at all surprisingly to me, the "Evil Pumpkin" weathered Center Flow (094 44 320) is gone too. Despite its price tag, the multi-color Union Pacific 60 foot boxcar is gone, and pretty quickly (102 00 020, October). And the Koppers tank car (065 00 670, April) has drained. Finally, a "one of two" in N Scale as well: the first number of the Sunoco tank car (065 00 691, October, second number still available). Wait, make that ten items, since the Railbox Weathered Four Pack blew out of the factory less than 24 hours after it was announced. And speaking of that item...

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: I mentioned last time the unfortunate interaction between paint and Dullcoat that occurred on one N Scaler's copy of the Railbox Weathered Four Pack. What I did not remember (and perhaps this is an Oops?) is that this happened to one of the UMTRR Gang Members! Tom Vitacco tells us the rest of the story, which has a satisfying ending thanks to the subject of this column, start quote:

"I have a minor correction in one of your comments regarding the MTL Railbox Grafitti cars and Dullcote. Unless there have been multiple reports to MTL I am probably the guy who told MTL about this issue. The Dullcote actually only dissolved the grafitti and not the actual weathering on the cars.

"I had incorrectly assumed that the grafitti were decals but apparently they are some type of paint. When I sprayed the Dullcote (from a can), the colored portions of the grafitti ran down the side of the car leaving a indistinct blob of white background.

"To my complete surprise MTL actually sent me three replacement cars upon receipt of my email (they would have sent me all four of the cars but they didn't have a full set). I really didn't expect this and even wrote that I was just advising them of the issue to prevent others from encountering this problem. You just can't beat their overly-generous response to a mistake that was 100% my fault..."



Thanks for sharing, Tom. With his e-mail to UMTRR HQ Tom attached a couple of photos of the result of the Dullcoat Encounter, and he's given permission to share them with you, so here they are, including a close-up:



SPECIAL RUN NEWS: I would be remiss as a fan of the Water Level Route if I did not mention George Hollwedel's latest "Proto N Scale" offering. He's commissioned MTL for a New York Central PS-1 boxcar. These are in boxcar red with black ends and roof and white lettering including NYC oval herald. The prototypes for these cars were really the Pullman-Standard PS-1s that are the basis for the MTL 020 body style. These could be a nice add to the NYC Weathered Train although a bit late with the start of the Approximate Time Period of 1951.

OOPS PATROL: Hoo boy, another "fail" on copy and paste. The 141 00 040 Santa Fe/Pullman 10-1-2 Heavyweight Sleeper included the text description of the previous Great Northern "Empire Builder" release instead of what it was supposed to have. The commentary was correct, just the description was wrong. Well, at least they are all Pullman Green, anyway.

And as I was preparing the magazine article referenced next, I noticed an alarming number of errors and omissions in the 2010 Release and Month by Month tables on the UMTRR Website. Alarming to me, anyway. I'm hoping to get them fixed by the end of this month, or sooner.

COMING SOON TO THE NSC NSE MAGAZINE: Talk about multitasking... while slinging these bytes together, I've been concurrently working on the next edition of the annual "Micro-Trains Year in Review," which has appeared in the January/February issue of "The N Scale Collector" magazine for almost as long as I've been doing the UMTRR. The 2010 edition of the piece will mark a change, as it won't be going in the NSC Magazine, but the NSE Magazine. The organization, formally recognizing (finally!) that it's not just about "collecting" in the strict sense of the term, is becoming "The N Scale Enthusiast" and the magazine is changing names as well. My take: it's about time. But I wonder whether it will be able to shake the perception among a non-trivial percentage of N Scalers that whatever it's

called it's just "about collectors ruining the hobby." If I thought that were the case, by the way, I would never have started contributing, however, I've also tried to popularize the term "accumulator." That's defined by me as "anyone who has more trains than could possibly fit on the layout at one time." If you think that includes just about everyone, you've got the idea!

FINALLY, IT'S A "MAJOR AWARD": Those of you who will be watching the classic film "A Christmas Story" this month or are otherwise familiar with the writings of the late Jean Shepherd, are probably familiar with the story of the leg lamp. This episode appears as the story "My Old Man and the Lascivious Special Award That Heralded the Birth of Pop Art" in Shep's book "In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash". (My copy was autographed by Shep in 1982.) "A Christmas Story" does the scene in which The Old Man receives and opens the box faithfully to the original story: "It's a major award." Though it's not really explained in the film as much as the book, the lady's leg was a play on the drink Nehi, which is pronounced "knee-high" – which is about where the lampshade that came with the lamp fell. A major award, indeed.

Well, I'm happy to report that I've finally received and opened a Major Award as well. No, not a leg lamp! You can buy those now. But they are still "Frag-ee-lay." (You'll have to watch the movie if you don't get that last word.)



No, it's the famous Presidential Oath boxcar which, as you know, that is given to five people per month who correctly answer the Presidential Trivia Question posed by MTL. And yes, I'm a winner... finally! And I'm very much

appreciative that I can add #90 out of the run of 200 to the Accumulation. While that does mean that I'm disqualified from future drawings, it does not mean that I will stop assisting the rest of the UMTRR Gang in their quest to win their own cars. I'll do the best I can to help out my fellow model railroaders! Until next time, you do the same.

Cheers,
George

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