

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:
The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report
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Hello again everyone! For a change, we have the chance to get these bytes out on time, or at least close to it, so let's head right to our look behind the red and yellow sign...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



024 00 350, \$23.50

Reporting Marks: NdeM 63362.

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar without Roofwalk,
Short Side Ladders, Single Youngstown
Door, National Railways of Mexico
(Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico).**

Brown (boxcar red) roof and ends. Brown sides with yellow panel covering most of side. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks and herald on left. Approximate Time Period: mid 1970s to mid 1980s.

We get a bingo on this car on RailcarPhotos.com, much to my surprise—and relief! The 63362 was found in March 1975 in San Luis Potosi (city and state, in North Central Mexico). The dimensional data is all in Spanish, and metric. The verbiage to the left of the door appears to read “Para transporte exclusivo materiales fsamtzyea” and “Devuelvase a los talleres de Aguascalientes.” The second part of that translates to “Return to Aguascalientes shops,” more or less. The first part refers to exclusive use to transport, well, something. My conclusion is that this is a captive service or special service car. Also on RailcarPhotos.com is NdeM 63714 from the same car series, that is in plain brown and white and marked for express service (servicio express), probably a lot more typical scheme than the yellow and brown on this MTL release. The car isn't a match for the MTL 020 body style; it has riveted sides and 3-4 ends. Considering that the cars were built by American Car and Foundry in 1946 per Micro-Trains' own car copy, this shouldn't be a surprise. The pulled roofwalk and reduced height ladders are correct, and the paint scheme depiction looks good.

Let's see if the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) can be of any help. In a word, no: the April 1975 edition has the series 62910 to 64506, into which the 63362 falls, but there are no subsets and no end notes. We just have the usual dimensional data, which is in the English system: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 40 feet 8 inches (I kind of doubt that), extreme height 14 feet 5 inches, capacity 3713 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 1317 cars in the group at the time. Combined with other large groups of 3636 cars, 4708 cars and 1185 cars, plus a few smaller groups, forty foot boxcars comprised over half of the NdeM's revenue roster. That's a huge percentage for 1975. The series in which we're interested dropped to 793 cars in the April

1981 ORER, and stood at 267 in January 1985. Just a single car remains in the entire series in the July 1989 Register. Of course this doesn't tell us much about this specific car or its unusual paint scheme. So the above Approximate Time Period is a bit more of a guess on this release than usual.



024 00 370, \$19.30

Reporting Marks: GN 11157.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar without Roofwalk, Short Side Ladders, Single Youngstown Door, Great Northern.

Green with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left, large "outline goat" herald on right, and simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s or 1978 (see text) to early 1980s.

Just a moment here... the Great Northern was merged into the Burlington Northern in 1970. And on the car we have a GN boxcar with consolidated stencils, which were used beginning circa 1974, and the U-1 wheel inspection dot, which was required in 1978? That can only mean one thing: this model represents a GN car as it appeared after the BN merger. In fact, the "strictly speaking" ATP would need to begin in 1978. This is a lot later than the ATP for the Z Scale version of this car which MTL released in January (catalog 503 00 10x) although we can borrow a bit from that UMTRR writeup. Let's see where we can go with that...

The ORER for April 1976 shows 329 cars in the GN series 10900 to 11373 in the BN registration. These were your basic "Box, Steel," AAR Designation XM, with the following dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 44 feet 4 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3715 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Five years later in April 1981, this group was all the way down to 36 cars, and there's exactly one car left in the April 1984 ORER. So it's a rather short "strictly speaking" ATP here.

We can expand the proto photo search to the entire series in relative safety, and we have to. Back in January I struck out looking for the 11157, and in fact the only photo of any GN boxcar in Glacier Green I could locate was the 20095 from a different series and with an eight foot door as of 1974, out on RailcarPhotos.com. I didn't do any better this time. But I can tell you from photos on RRPictureArchives.net that in 1978, besides the 11157 in this paint scheme, there was the 11161 in vermilion with large slanted roadname and the 11197 in vermilion red with "Empire Builder" roadname, a small herald that was rusting away, and consolidated stencils. We can learn enough from these photos, specifically looking at the side sill and the riveted sides, to understand that we don't have a match to the MTL 020 body style, and if that's not enough there is also the 10 foot interior height. In the car copy for the Z Scale release, Micro-Trains noted that the prototype series was built in 1948 by Pressed Steel Car Company, supporting the premise that this is a stand in on which the modeler will have to decide.



059 00 161 and 059 00 162, \$26.50 each

Reporting Marks: MERX 455 and 543.

40 Foot Steel Ice Refrigerator Car, National Packing Company.

Orange with brown sides and ends. Black lettering including large reporting marks on left. Black and red National Packing

Company artwork in white box on right. Approximate Time Period: early 1960s to early 1970s. Note: While a new release, a similar paint scheme also appeared on a two pack Special Run for the N Scale Collector's Society, Road Numbers 547 and 577, NSC Release Number 09-90. Those cars had brown trucks and black ends and roof.

I assume that the National Packing Company that appears on this virtual two-pack isn't the one that was formed in 1902 by Chicagoland packing companies including Armour and Swift in an attempt to dominate the meat packing industry. That company was forced to dissolve in 1920 (some sources say 1912), well too early for steel refrigerator cars. Though according to the "Encyclopedia of Chicago" online, that National Packing did have a fleet of 2,600 railroad cars.

I'm also pretty sure that we're also not talking about the National Beef Packing Company either, as the first location wasn't developed until 1968, and at Liberal, Kansas, not Kansas City which is called out on the National Packing decoration.

We find what is probably the "right" National Packing Company the way we sometimes find companies that don't have any other particular presence online: through court decisions. For example, there is National Packing Company v. National Labor Relations Board, a case from 1965 by the United States Court of Appeals Tenth Circuit. It's noted therein that "In June, 1962, the Company became engaged in the business of slaughtering and processing meat at Kansas City, Kansas." A second court decision, from June 1967, is in the matter of suit and countersuit between Ryder Truck Rental and National Packing Company, and we learn from that document that National was formerly known as Central Packing Company. Walthers did an HO Scale meat refrigerator car for Central Packing and its location is shown on the car as Kansas City, so that makes sense. The fate of that National Packing Company is not something I could find on the 'net.

So let's look at the cars. The MERX reporting marks were registered to the Mercantile Refrigerator Line, which was controlled by Merchants Despatch Transit Company, which itself was controlled by the New York Central. MDT built mostly for its parent but also leased cars to other railroads and shippers. National Packing would have been among the later customers. The reporting marks on these cars are in the same style as other MDT-lettered steel cars. According to the **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** by Gene Green, National Packing leased MERX 430 to 599. There are photos of MERX 434 as found in 1972 and MERX 547 from 1965 in the book, as well as a close-up of the National Packing emblem that appeared on the 547. Principal deltas between model and prototype are double rows of

rivets on the actual car versus single rows on the MTL 059 body style, and a straight sill on the model versus, well, let's just call it a non-straight sill on the prototype.

The service date on the cars is May 1962, so we can look at the July 1963 ORER (a new addition to the Research Library) and the MDT registration. And that's where it gets a little interesting. The car numbers cited in the **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** span three series: 400 to 449, 450 to 499, and 500 to 599. These groups add to a total of just 32 cars (10, 15 and 7 respectively). The dimensions of each group differ, and I'm just going to be lazy here and not provide any of them; but suffice to say that the cars were around 33 feet 2 inches inside length and either 41 feet 5 inches or 42 feet 6 inches outside length, with capacity between 75,000 and 80,000 pounds. The MERX groups were out of the ORER by the July 1974 issue which is the next one I have after the 1972 date of the photo of the 434. Ian Cranstone has a rundown of reporting marks on his Canadian Freight Cars site and has January 1973 as the date of the elimination of the MERX reporting marks.



140 00 070, \$21.40

Road Number: 4261 (will be preceded with "SP" in website listings).

Railway Post Office Car, Southern Pacific.

Pullman Green sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Delux gold roadname in center of letterboard. Legend "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" in center. Road number left and right. Approximate Time Period: 1914 to 1936.

We turn once again to our SP Special Correspondent David Carnell for this month's commentary, for which many thanks as always. Start quote:

"Detailed information on the SP RPO released this month is found in the book **Southern Pacific Passenger Cars Volume 3: Head End Equipment** on Pages 85 – 87. According to the book: 'SP 4261 was the first, last and only 60 foot postal car purchased by the SP after the dissolution of the Associated (Harriman Lines). Its design very nearly duplicated the Associated Lines Common Standard design as seen in Lot 4027. However, it was built to a new SP Common Standard designation C.S.P.211.'

"The car was built by in 1914 as Pullman Lot 4301 and designated Class 60-P-5. The car was delivered in the green with gold lettering paint scheme that is displayed on the Micro Trains car. The car served as an RPO until February 18, 1936 when it was converted to a postal-storage car. At some point, the car's paint scheme was changed to a second version of the green with gold lettering scheme and the road name was changed from SOUTHERN PACIFIC to SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES.

"A photo on the top of Page 87 shows the car in its as delivered scheme on November 27 1914. A photo on the bottom of Page 87 shows the car in the later green paint scheme circa

1940. The car was eventually painted in the two-tone gray scheme. Its disposition is listed as retired but no date is given. I'd estimate the ATP for the car to be 1914 to 1936.

"The Micro-Trains body style is not an exact match to the SP car. The main difference is that the SP car had a rounded Harriman roof while the MTL car has a clerestory roof. The MTL car has the same window and door placement as the SP car. The major difference is that SP car has rounded door corners and the doors have three panels and three mullions. The car ends, underframe and trucks closely match the actual car."



144 00 080, \$22.70

Road Number: 23 (will be preceded with "CP" in website listings).

Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Canadian Pacific.

Maroon sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Imitation gold roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center of side. Approximate Time Period: 1939 to at least 1965, but see text.

Morning Sun's **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 28, provides a 1965 photo of the prototype for this car, the caption that is the basis for the MTL car copy, and the fact that the actual car was only 62 feet 2 inches long. And had wood sides. That, friends, spells "stand in," or worse, even by relatively lax standards. It certainly makes for a short commentary. The ATP is derived from that same image caption: built in 1896, renumbered to 23 in 1939, and photographed in 1965 which certainly confirms that it lasted that long in service for the CP. A quick search revealed that the car was donated to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smith's Falls in 1990, in rather bad shape. It is one of the last surviving cars built by the Crossen Car Company. There is apparently a restoration project in progress but that's according to a photo site and not the official site of the Museum.

The previous Union Pacific and Great Northern observation releases were "fill in" cars, in the sense that the other heavyweight body styles had been run in those roadnames. This is the first CP paint scheme on an MTL heavyweight car, so maybe it is a hint of more things to come in CP maroon.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



071 00 550, \$24.90

Road Number: 122 (will be "RBBX 122" in website listings).

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

Painted in 1970s "Blue Train" paint scheme of white with red, white and blue lettering including "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus" name across center of flat cars.

Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1970s (we presume). Previous Releases: Runner Pack #50, Road Numbers 123, 126, 129, April 2011.

Another example of why I keep track of Runner Packs: were you to look in the regular release database that MTL provides on their website, you wouldn't see this car. That's because Runner Pack items aren't included; fortunately, they are on my website tables (yes, this is a shameless plug). Runner Pack #50 included two wagons for each flat car whereas this reprint is just the flat car; but not to worry since Micro-Trains informs us in the November Micro-News that the Wagon Six Pack is still available (Catalog 462 00 040, \$59.95). You'd need three flat cars to deploy all six of those wagons, though... which might be the point here. With the road number as small as it is on this release, three of a kind may be rather difficult to notice using the "three foot rule."



109 00 010, \$21.75

Road Number: 470017 (will be preceded with "PRR" in website listings).

Heavyweight Depressed Center Flat Car, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Oxide red with white lettering including roadname and road number in center of depressed section. Simulated covered pipe load with support frame (note support frame comes unassembled and unpainted). Approximate Time Period: early 1940s (1940 built date) to early 1970s for this road number, but late 1950s to early 1970s for the F43 class that this model actually represents. Previous Releases (as catalog number 109010): Road Number 470011, February 2001; Road Number 470016, January 2002.

Back in 2002 when this car was first reprinted, the bulk of my commentary was devoted to explaining how this car's road number aligned with one class of PRR depressed center flat cars, namely, the F35; but the body style better aligned with a different class of PRR depressed center flat cars, namely, the F43. Re-reading that commentary, I think I managed to confuse even myself. More clarity this time, please, Mr. Reviewer?

Okay, I'll try. Let's start with the F35s. They carried road numbers 470010 to 470019 and were built in 1940. The January 1943 ORER shows inside length of 53 feet 2 inches, outside length of 54 feet 4 inches, depressed platform length of 22 feet and area of 443 square feet, and capacity of 250,000 pounds. The ten cars lasted into at least 1968 and four of these cars made it all the way to the Penn Central listing in the April 1970 Equipment Register. There are two builder's photos of PRR 470011 on Rob's Pennsy Page (prr.railfan.net , no "www").

On to the F43. These were six cars numbered 470271 to 470276, built sometime between 1955 and 1958 based on the ORERs. (I don't have the exact build date.) This class closely resembles a car produced by Commonwealth Steel Casting for the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, except for the trucks, which weren't the Buckeye type on that run. The Pennsy, Erie Lackawanna, New York Central, GM&O, and Lehigh Valley were mentioned as all having

owned cars of a type similar to the 109000 body style, but MTL notes that the decking was customized for each road. A drawing of the F43 is on Rob's Pennsy Page and there's a 1970 photo of the 470275 in the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1), Page 40. All six were in place as of April 1968. These cars all went to the Penn Central and became Conrail's Class F43, numbered 766145 to 766150 for both PC and CR.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following items were announced as "off-cycle" releases for October via the Micro-Trains website on October 17 and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" also on October 18.*



025 44 730, \$26.70

Reporting Marks: NS 400028

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Norfolk Southern.

Brown (boxcar red) with mostly white lettering including "speed" initials and reporting marks on left. Light to moderate weathering. Graffiti on one side in black, white and red including stylized skull on door. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1990s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Numbers 400011 and 400016, August 2011.

After a question about whether this obviously Halloween-themed car was based on an actual prototype appeared in an online forum, I checked right with the source. The answer: no, it's more of a composite of several different designs. Prototypical or not, I'm not sure I'd want to come across that frightening looking skull rolling past me at a railroad crossing!

A quick summary of the car underneath the, ahem, decoration: the prototype was originally part of the Southern Railway series 40500 to 41499, built by Pullman-Standard in 1968 (thanks again to Joe Shaw for that information). These became NS Class BS79, number series 400000 to 400911 sometime before 1991. By 1992 the group was up to its full complement of 912 cars but by the year 2000 that number was just 43 cars. The MTL model is a bit of a stand in based on proto photos including of a relatively clean looking NS 400028 itself (i.e. a "bingo") on the website RRPictureArchives.net. The ends and door differ, and the prototype's side sill is a bit deeper with angled ends.



031 44 380, \$23.65

Reporting Marks: MILW 16619

50 Foot Steel Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Milwaukee Road.

Brown with yellow door. White lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and "tilted rectangle" herald on right. Legend "LRD" in brown on door. Light to moderate weathering (including on the trucks). Approximate Time Period: 1966 (rebuild date given by MTL in May 2011) to early 1980s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 16606, May 2011.

I got a bingo on the May unweathered release as it appeared in 1966 on the Fallen Flags site, probably not long after the car was rebuilt with Load Restraining Devices, the "LRD" reference on the door. The series of just thirty cars numbered 16606 to 16635 was originally built in 1957 and appears to have been off the roster no later than 1984. In 1970 there was a variety of specialized equipment described in the ORER, including "movable bulkheads, load dividers, or compartmentizers," and "rub rails or side fillers" and finally "retractable side fillers." The real car had riveted, not welded, sides, and the closer you get to the early 1980s end of the Approximate Time Period the more the modeler should be thinking about pulling the roofwalk.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #57, four 40 foot skeleton log cars with uprights and loads, is now available. UMTRR coverage was provided in the May 2011 issue. The individual catalog numbers are as follows: 114 50 110, 114 50 120, 114 50 130 and 114 50 140. And this time there are no road numbers to report since the cars are unpainted and not lettered.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is May 2012. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close November 30.

Scheduled May 2012 Release:

N Scale "Multi-Pack" #63: 993 00 063, \$89.95

Consists of the following items, all lettered for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway also known as just BNSF Railway these days:



027 50 300, Reporting Marks: BNSF 714014.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks and small BNSF circle cross herald on left. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s to present. Previous Release (as catalog 027

00 300): Road Number 714083, January 2008.

The "to present" may not apply to the entire BNSF series 713955 to 704315, and it probably doesn't, but thanks to some research provided to UMTRR HQ by an anonymous reader, I can tell you that this particular car is still roaming the rails at this writing. This is a class A435 built as BN 321702 in February 1975, which puts it in the original series BN 321600 to 322099.

The first ORER I have after the BNSF merger is from July 1998 and there is a not very full series numbered 713955 to 704315. Just 36 cars are in place out of a possible 360. They are

described as “Box, Steel, 50K, 20 Inch Travel, Nailable Steel Floors, Movable Bulkheads” with AAR Classification XL and AAR Type Code A435. First, that “20 Inch Travel” doesn't refer to how far it can go! It's most likely a reference to the Cushion Underframe, so get out those extended draft gear trucks. The XL refers to Loader Equipped and the A435 decrypts to, character by character, equipped box car; 49 to under 59 feet inside length, cushion draft gear or underframe; Class XL; and plug door 9 feet to under 11 feet wide. Who needs the dimensions after that? We do! Here they are: inside length, 50 feet 7 inches, inside height 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 58 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet, capacity 4973 cubic feet or 148,000 pounds. MTL's 027 series body style more or less follows the FMC 5077 cubic foot x-post boxcar, so this might not be a match, but don't forget the interior bulkheads will cut down the cubic capacity. There were 93 cars in the January 2000 ORER and then 150 cars in the group in the January 2002 Register, but that was down to 41 cars in the October 2007 Register. Prototype photos are available on Railcarphotos.com at least; but be sure to narrow down your search by choosing the A435 class or you'll need to wade through more than ten thousand matches.



**092 50 190, Reporting Marks: BNSF 406116.
2 Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper.**

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large circle cross herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1997 (via repaint date given by MTL) to present. Previous Release (as catalog 092 00 190): Road Number 406031, November 2005.

This car was originally built back in April 1967 and while it was BN 435817 before being repainted to the BNSF according to our source, it would have started with one of the BN predecessors—which one we're not sure. The BN series is probably 435800 to 4395899 if anyone wants to take a shot at tracing the car back farther. Meanwhile, I'll reprint my findings from the October 2004 ORER which I checked for the first run of this car (from which we also get the start of the ATP). There were several series of AAR Class LO “Covered Hoppers” with the same general dimensions. Our particular interest is the group 406000 to 406133, of 62 total cars with outside dimensions of 39 feet 11 inch length, 10 feet 8 inch width and 15 feet 1 inch height. The capacity is 2970 cubic feet and the Gross Rail Weight (car plus lading) is 263,000 pounds. These cars appear to be numbered down to 406142 for a total of 67 cars. There's another group with 38 feet 11 inch length but still 2970 cubic foot capacity that starts with 406202 and ends with 406559, yielding another 259 cars. There remained 100 cars in the 406000 to 406133 group as of the October 2007 ORER. Among the more than 8000 (!) photos of BNSF covered hoppers on RRPictureArchives.net there is a bingo on the 406116 caught in October 2006 in Corona, Minnesota. The body style should be a good match and the paint looks on target as well, though some white weathering would be in order.



094 50 110, Reporting Marks: BNSF 422215.

3 Bay Covered Hopper with Trough Hatches.

Green with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small circle cross herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1997 to about 2000 in this paint scheme, see text.

Previous Release (as catalog 94110): Road Number 422033, January 1998.

The original run of this car was the very first Micro-Trains release painted for the BNSF, back when it was still officially the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. I commented then that while the circle cross was retained from the Santa Fe side, it had been altered by BNSF to add the words "Burlington Northern" across the top of the enlarged circle and "Railway" round the bottom. (Kind of like the BN geographically "surrounded" the ATSF? Uh, never mind.) When the BNSF killed the circle cross in favor of the "swoosh" it ended a tradition that began on the Santa Fe back in 1901.

Our anonymous helper didn't find this particular road number in the sources available but did catch road number 422214 as the former BN 446408 built in 1975. That would put it in the BN series 446000 to 446499. The BNSF series was 421873 to 422285 and stood at 322 total cars as of the October 2007 ORER. The outside length was 54 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, gross rail weight 263,000 pounds, and most importantly capacity 4650 cubic feet. That does line up with the CF4650 that is the prototype for the MTL 094 body style. So does a photo of BN 446219 in the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, which also notes American Car and Foundry as the builder and the use of trough hatches. So we should have a pretty good match here between actual and model.

The ATP start is from the MTL car copy for the first release. MTL noted then that "at that time this car was painted in April 1997, the standard for freight car colors had not been decided. In September 1997, mineral brown was made the official color." I think that information helps to drive a shorter ATP for this car than for the others, as I would expect the BNSF to have repainted the car from green to brown. We get a bingo on RailcarPhotos.com on the first number MTL ran, 422033, as of July 1997, but that's the only one among two pages of images of the BNSF series that shows a car in green. So I've called "about 2000" as the end of the ATP. I could be wrongly conservative about this. I also did not find any photos of the reprint road number, so I can't confirm or deny that it was ever painted green.



094 50 330, Reporting Marks: BNSF 482824

3 Bay Covered Hopper with Trough Hatches.

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. Previous Releases (as catalog 094 00 33x): Road Numbers 482710 and 482853, December 2010.

I'll briefly excerpt myself from the December 2010 coverage of the virtual two-pack of this "swoosh" painted car. The MTL 094 body style is too small to accurately represent the prototype, which is a series of 60 foot outside length 5161 cubic foot capacity hoppers numbered 482500 to 483999, as found in the October 2007 ORER. These cars were built by Trinity. We already know from the previous Center Flow car in this quartet that the BNSF continues to own CF4650s—such as the series 421873 to 422285 mentioned above—that are similarly painted with the "swoosh" herald.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: In addition to the below items, the Veterans Tribute Set (993 21 140, \$169.95) is scheduled to be released mid-month according to Micro-Trains. UMTRR coverage was provided in the June 2011 issue and pre-orders were taken in June, but the images of this set weren't yet available. So here they are:



140 50 009, United States Air Force. Blue sides with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including "United States Air Force" at top center and reporting marks (USAF 1947) at bottom right. Red, white and blue

stacked stripes with motto "Aim High / Fly Fight Win" in blue in white stripe. Multicolor seal of the branch in center.



140 50 019, United States Army. Green sides with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including "United States Army" at top center and reporting marks (USA 1775) at bottom right. Red, white and blue stacked

stripes with motto "This We'll Defend" in blue in white stripe. Multicolor seal of the branch in center.



140 50 029, United States Coast Guard. White sides with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including "United States Coast Guard" at top center and reporting marks (USCG 1780) at bottom right. Red, white and

blue stacked stripes with motto "Always Ready" in blue in white stripe. (Note: Online sources cite the Latin "Semper Paratus" as the official motto.) Multicolor seal of the branch in center.



140 50 039, United States Marines. Red sides with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including "United States Marine Corps" at top center and reporting marks (USMC 1775) at bottom right. Red, white and

blue stacked stripes with motto "Always Faithful" (English translation of motto "Semper Fidelis") in blue in white stripe. Multicolor seal of the branch in center.



140 50 049, United States Navy. Blue sides with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including "United States Navy" at top center and reporting marks (USN 1775) at bottom right. Red, white and blue stacked stripes with motto "Honor, Courage, Commitment" in blue in white stripe. (The U.S. Navy site states that the Navy has no official motto.) Multicolor seal of the branch in center.



035 00 372, \$34.95

50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Car with Circus Wagon, Ringling Brothers Big Top Extravaganza #9. Reporting Marks RBBX 20157.

Orange with red floor. Black lettering consisting of reporting marks only. Includes circus animal cage wagon in red with gold markings and lettering "Ringling Bros." across top.

Well, a self-pat on back for this byte-slinger for guessing correctly that the 371 in last month's circus wagon flat car was a hint that a second flat car with wagon would follow. MTL says that this cage wagons "typically carries large cats." I assume we don't mean overgrown tabbies and Siamese.

According to Wikipedia, the term "lion taming" refers to any number of wild felines, including not just lions but also tigers, leopards, jaguars, cheetahs and pumas. Taming is done in zoos as well as circuses. Perhaps the most famous lion tamer of contemporary times would be the late Gunther Gabel-Williams who worked in the Red Unit of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. The Lacey family worked and works in Europe; Martin Lacey trained tigers for Esso Gasoline advertisements ("Put a tiger in your tank," but that's another story). Among the early lion tamers was George Wombwell who owned his own menagerie and bred the first lion in captivity in Britain. For fans of the band Duran Duran, their latest album released in late 2010 (really!) includes the song "The Man Who Stole A Leopard" which tells the fictional story of, well, just what the title says.



074 00 137, \$23.95

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #38: James Buchanan.

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.

James Buchanan was the last American President to be born in the 18th Century, on April 23, 1791 to be exact, in relatively comfortable circumstances in rural Pennsylvania. His father was a successful businessman and Buchanan became a successful lawyer, eventually amassing a fortune of a quarter million dollars – which was quite a lot in those times – before reaching the age of thirty. But it apparently wasn't enough for the family of Ann Coleman, the woman with whom the young Buchanan fell in love. Coleman's family opposed the proposed marriage, claiming it was only for the money that the Colemans had from the iron business. Then gossip placed Buchanan with another woman. Ann Coleman broke off the engagement and then tragically died a few days later under unknown circumstances (some accounts blame "hysteria"). Buchanan remained a bachelor for the rest of his life, the only Chief Executive to have never married.

Buchanan served in the House of Representatives from 1821 to 1831 and supported Andrew Jackson's bid for the Presidency. Jackson implicated Buchanan – and many others – as part of the "Corrupt Bargain" of 1824 that put John Quincy Adams in the White House instead of Jackson, but Buchanan stayed loyal to Jackson and helped Jackson's successful runs for the Presidency in 1828 and 1832. Buchanan was rewarded with the position of envoy to Russia and skillfully negotiated a trade treaty. Upon returning he was appointed to the Senate.

Then began a series of Presidential election cycles in which Buchanan was an also-ran. He was passed over for the Democratic nomination in favor of James Polk for the 1844 election, witnessed Whig Zachary Taylor's win for 1848 term, and was locked in a battle with Stephen Douglas for the nomination for 1852, which neither won, as compromise candidate Franklin Pierce got the nod. During this time, Buchanan did rise to head the Senate's Foreign Relations committee and he was minister to England. But he viewed the election of 1856 as his last chance, as he was sixty-five years old. In fact, his nickname had become "Old Buck."

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, which allowed its namesake territories to decide for themselves whether they wanted slavery, further embroiled the nation in the slavery question, led to a near civil war in "Bleeding Kansas" and tarnished both Stephen Douglas and Franklin Pierce. This provided the opportunity for Buchanan. He was from the North, but supported the South's right to hold slaves and felt abolitionists were more of a threat to the Union than the South was. This actually made him an electable candidate for 1856 and he was nominated by the Democrats. The newly created Republican Party chose John Frémont, who had fame but little else politically. Frémont was opposed to the expansion of slavery in the territories and Buchanan countered with the states' rights argument. The "Know Nothing Party" ran with former President Millard Fillmore. The election was closer than it appeared from the electoral vote tally. Buchanan carried the South and border states except for Maryland, but only four states in the North, and with the Know-Nothings a force in a three way race, Buchanan did not actually receive a majority of the popular vote.

Even Buchanan himself was troubled about taking office during a time when the nation was close to being torn apart about slavery. Before the campaign, he wrote, "I had hoped for the nomination in 1844, again in 1848, and even in 1852, but now I would hesitate to take it.

Before many years the abolitionists will bring war upon this land. It may come during the next presidential term.” He was almost right about the timing.

Two days after Buchanan’s inauguration, the Supreme Court issued the Dred Scott Decision, in which they stated that a slave taken to a free state was not free, because slaves were property and not people. This decision also invalidated the Missouri Compromise and the Court stated that slavery could not be banned in new states or new territories. It was a sweeping victory for slavery proponents and a huge setback for abolitionists. Buchanan was an influence on the Court in favor of the decision and the split of the country became wider. Buchanan’s handling of the eventual admission of “Bleeding Kansas” as a free state was seen as ineptitude on his part. And to make matters worse, the country sank into an economic recession as well. The Republican Party took over the House of Representatives in the mid-term election that followed, and Stephen Douglas remained as Buchanan’s staunch opponent in the Senate. And then, the John Brown incident of 1859 made things worse.

Buchanan had pledged to serve just one term as President and that left Stephen Douglas as the apparent front-runner. However, many Democrats broke ranks and supported then-Vice President Breckenridge. The party was hopelessly split, leading to the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Six weeks later, South Carolina seceded from the Union. Six more states seceded within the next six weeks—all while Buchanan was still President. Still hoping for compromise and reconciliation, Buchanan did little and got neither. He left the Presidency with a nation divided, and retreated deeply into a private life until his death in June 1868. He was heavily blamed for the coming of the Civil War although he was hardly the only person responsible. The Miller Center summarizes things: “Hopes ran high that the new President, “Old Buck,” might be the man to avert national crisis. He failed entirely... By refusing to take a firm stand on either side of the slavery issue, Buchanan failed to resolve the question, leaving his nation’s gravest crisis to his successor.”

I’m rather pleased to tell you that I knew the answer to the Presidential Trivia Question without having to look it up. Who was the first President, and the first United States citizen, in fact, to win the Nobel Peace Prize? That would be Theodore Roosevelt. We’ll talk more about that award next issue, but meanwhile, get your entries into Micro-Trains now... they are running out of Presidents to put on cars, so they are running out of contests!

The following item was announced as an “off-cycle” release for October via the Micro-Trains website on October 17 and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line” on October 18.



099 00 130, \$22.30

Three Bay Evans Covered Hopper, “Bah Humbug” Holiday Car. Reporting Marks MTL 2011.

White with black reporting marks at far right. Multicolor depiction of “Bah Humbug Bug” on left. Multicolor “sign” reading “Merry Christmas from Micro-Mouse” oversprayed with “Bah Humbug” on right.

When the October cars were released, including the 2011 Holiday Car, MTL said to look for a surprise graffiti car mid-month... and “look” is the operative word! Although technically a “graffiti car,” it was not only not posted prominently with the other weathered releases, it wasn’t featured on the front page of the MTL website at all. You had to know to go into the “New Releases” page and then click on the “Micro-Mouse ‘Bah Humbug’ Car”. Which is really a bit of a misnomer since the Micro-Mouse doesn’t appear on the car at all.

The phrase “Bah humbug” is most closely associated with one Ebenezer Scrooge, main character of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Story” but the term “humbug” did not originate in that story. “Humbug” was first described as a hoax or jest and dates back to at least 1751 (while “A Christmas Carol” was published in 1843). A certain circus man named P. T. Barnum – Barnum, Barnum, where have I heard name that before? – was fond of “humbugs” as publicity stunts, including for the singer Jenny Lind, a soprano singer known as the “Swedish Nightingale,” which made her a celebrity before she even arrived in the United States to tour for Barnum. Lind had genuine talent, so I’m not sure that Barnum’s publicity was truly a “humbug” in the hoax sense of the word. But here’s another “humbug” that I’ve been waiting to sneak into these bytes somewhere, though I thought it would be with the Ringling Brothers Special Editions. Barnum was well known for posting signs in his museum of exhibits which read “This way to the egress.” Most people did not know that “egress” is another word for “exit,” thought it was another display, and proceeded outside. Bah, humbug indeed!

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



518 00 051, \$27.30

Reporting Marks: MCPX 2000.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Mandan Creamery and Produce Company.

Yellow sides, brown ends, roof, and sill below door. Black door details. Black and red lettering including company name and reporting marks on left, and products on right (“Turkeys, Eggs, Butter, Poultry”). Black solid outline of turkey on lower right. Approximate Time Period: 1934 to as late as the late 1930’s, but see text.

Four feet, when reduced to Z Scale, becomes 48/220 or a bit over two-tenths of an actual inch. How much will that matter to Z Scalers? We’re about to find out. First, we’ll reprint ourselves on the story behind this car from the November 2009 coverage of Micro-Trains’ N Scale release of this car.

Mandan, North Dakota is just across the Missouri River from Bismarck, close enough that the two cities share a convention and visitors bureau. It was in 1915 that Hoy Russell started operation of the Mandan Creamery and Produce Company on the corner of 4th Avenue and

West Main Street. According to the website of the Mandan Historical Society, the firm “became one of the largest butter manufacturers and turkey processors in the United States... Around 30,000 pounds of butter was the average year round daily production of the Mandan and Minot plants with peak production of 60,000 pounds daily being reached during the summer months.” Changes to the dairy and grocery industry led to... no, not the usual stories of the company going out of business or being absorbed. Instead, the company stopped processing turkeys after World War II, then moved out of the dairy business as well, choosing to focus on premium pork products. The company changed its name to Cloverdale, using a brand that they had already established as Mandan Creamery. Still operating on the outskirts of Mandan, Cloverdale Foods continues to tell “The Story of Good Taste” across much of the western United States. And it is still operated by the Russell Family.

And now we need to diverge for the coverage of the Z Scale release. The prototype for this car is found on Page 54 of the excellent work “Billboard Refrigerator Cars” by Richard H. Hendrickson and Edward S. Kaminski. We immediately see, however, that the real MCPX 2000 was not a 40 foot refrigerator car, but a 36 foot car. But a 40 foot car is what MTL has in 1:220 (at least for now) and that’s what they used. Also easily observed is the use of two hinges per door on the actual car versus three hinges per door on the MTL model. The lettering, as usual, looks spot on, with the caveat that the photo of the prototype is in black and white, however I don’t think there are any worries there. Most of the caption that accompanies the photo is lifted directly for the MTL car copy. That might make the reference to “NAC” a little confusing as it’s taken out of context. It refers to the North American Car Company, a major supplier of lease cars to private owners during much of the 20th Century.

Hendrickson and Kaminski noted that MCPX 2000 “was assigned to Mandan Creamery for a short period beginning in April, 1934.” The North American Car Company registration in the July 1935 ORER shows the series MCPX 2000 to 2019 and not a lot else: just an inside length of 30 feet 6 1/4 inches, inside width of 8 feet 3 5/8 inches and inside height of 7 feet 7 inches, plus capacities. The number of cars in service was not given. An end note adds that these cars had brine tanks and were not suitable for chunk ice. The January 1940 ORER did not include a listing for the MCPX reporting marks. So that “brief period” referenced seems to check out and the Approximate Time Period appears to be rather short indeed. Even if the car itself is a little longer than it should be.



**518 00 061 and 518 00 062, \$24.90 each.
Reporting Marks: SRLX 5820 and 5839.
40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed
Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff,
Swift Refrigerator Line.**

Red sides and ends with white top trim, brown roof, black underframe, trucks bottom door sill. White lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large “Swift” name on right. Approximate Time Period: about 1950 (based on paint scheme) to early 1960s at most, but see text.

We again note the caveat of the delta between the MTL 518 body style and, well, 36 foot refrigerator cars, like the prototypes for these two cars. With that out of the way, we'll turn to Morning Sun's **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** by Gene Green, Page 99. There we find a June 1951 shot of SRLX 5839. The author explains that this car was part of a rebuilding program that resulted in the number series 5800 to 6099, the quantity of which peaked in 1950. It was about 1950 that the paint scheme depicted by MTL (faithfully except for some very small lettering) became the standard for Swift cars. That red and white scheme was replaced by the silver and red "Swift's Premium" scheme starting in 1959.

The General American Transportation Company's ORER listing for January 1953 shows the SRLX series 5800 to 6099 with dimensions that align more with 36 foot cars than 40 foot cars. Specifically: inside length 29 feet 5 inches (makes sense given the ice bunkers), inside height 6 feet 4 inches, outside length 36 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet. The door opening was 4 feet wide by 6 feet high. The capacity was 1551 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds and the cars carried up to 6000 pounds of crushed ice-- no chunk ice, please. There were 283 cars in the series at that time. But the end of the ATP came relatively quickly after that. In the January 1959 Equipment Register a combined series numbered 3500 to 6099 counted 109 cars; that was down to just two in the July 1963 ORER.



535 50 069, \$28.15

Reporting Marks: MKT 105

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT).

Green with mostly yellow lettering including large MKT in center and road number on right. Yellow diagonal stripes on ends and short white

stripes along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1970s to 1992, but see text.

We'll get right to the "see text": the real MKT 105 is an extended vision caboose built by the International Car Company, and doesn't at all resemble the MTL body style. I think it's fair to say that this offering is for those who just want to have a Katy caboose behind the SD40-2s also released this month (see below).

According to Don Strack's UtahRails.net website, the Union Pacific took over the Katy's 58 cabooses (and the railroad itself, of course) and retired all but the 105 between March 1989 and November 1991. The 105 was the last of the MKT's cabooses that was officially retired, on 28 April 1992. It's listed as stored in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Just to confuse things, however, there is an undated photo of it privately owned at Fallon, Nevada on the "Central California Rails" website (cencalrails.railfan.net, look for the page "Central California Rails Caboose Index MNO"). It seems to me that 105 might not be the original number of the car in Nevada, though. Have a look for yourself; but in the meantime, it's also without a doubt not a match to the MTL 535 body style.



970 01 121 and 970 01 122, \$195.95 each
 Road Numbers: 619 and 624 (preceded by "MKT" in website listings).
 SD40-2 Diesels, Missouri-Kansas-Texas.

Green with black frame and white sill.
 Yellow lettering including large MKT

initials on long hood, road number on cab, diagonal stripes on nose and cab, and small horizontal stripes on walkway. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1980s.

According to the website (www.trainweb.org/emdloco), the fourth of five orders for the MKT from Electro-Motive Division included these two road numbers. This was also the largest single order, and also the only one in double digits: exactly ten units numbered 619 to 628. The order number was 796305 and they were built in July 1980. By the time all five orders were in, the MKT would own thirty-seven SD40-2s numbered from 600 to 636. There's a little bit of variation in online descriptions of what happened next, but the net is that all of the MKT's roster went over to the Union Pacific when the UP took over the MKT. According to UtahRails.net, all were renumbered into the UP series 3809 to 3844 in 1989 and 1990. Many of the fleet were retired in 2000 and 2001. The 619, which became UP 3827, was sold to LTEX Rail and kept the UP road number. The 624 carried Western Pacific (!) reporting marks for a time and was retired in August 2001.

A somewhat less than pristine looking MKT 624 was caught in 1989 in Lincoln, Nebraska on a Union Pacific freight; the photo is posted on the "Great Plains - West Rail Galleries" site. I found it at www.trainweb.org/screamingeagle/gallery/mkt.htm , however it's noted there that the gallery is now found on RRPictureArchives.net where there are other photos of the 624 as well as the 619. There are as usual some small nitpicks between prototype and model, perhaps most notably the need to paint the handrail ends and step edges.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following item was announced as "off-cycle" releases for October via the Micro-Trains website on October 15 and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" also on October 15.*

994 50 090, \$99.95 - Eastern Roads Weathered Set. This consists of the following four items described below. Further detail on each release can be found in the UMTRR covering the most recent previous release.



500 44 060, Reporting Marks PRR 602--- (last three digits of road number obscured)
 40 Foot Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.

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 Releases (in unweathered form): (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), then Runner Pack #30 (Catalog 994 00 030) with Road Numbers 602800, 602935, 603050 and 603100, June 2011.

Between Runner Pack #30 and this weathered release which leverages the remaining stock, there’s been a switcheroo: the door on this car is the Youngstown version and the doors on the Runner Pack cars were Superior version. That does provide a little bit of distinction even with the duplicative road numbers.

The prototype series was the PRR’s Class X43a, built in 1950 and 1951 by American Car and Foundry and numbered 602000 to 603499. The real X43s don’t match the MTL body style on several counts. The “shadow keystone” on the car was used from 1954 to 1961 so this is not an “as delivered” release. Many of these cars made it to the Penn Central merger.



**500 44 680, Reporting Marks NYC 386-- (last two digits of road number obscured).
40 Foot Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, New York Central.**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and oval “New York Central System” herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1924 (build date given by MTL) or early 1950s (based on service date given by MTL) to early 1960s, but see text. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Numbers 38626 and 38659, April 2011.

The “see text” for this release and the previously unweathered cars was that the prototype was a significant stretch to be placed on the MTL body style which is of a PS-1 boxcar. The series wasn’t found in my ORER accumulation until 1953, with only 66 cars in the group 38000 to 38999, and I stopped looking after the January 1967 ORER when just four cars remained. It is at least theoretically possible that this car could have been found in a train with the other three, but I think this is unlikely in terms of the ATPs. Your mileage may vary, of course.



**501 44 260, Reporting Marks PRR 194--- (last two digits of road number obscured).
40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Dark boxcar red with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Large black and white “shadow keystone” on right. Yellow “Insulated” and “PC” (for Pullman Compartmentizer) on door. Light weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1960

(build date) to mid-1970s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Numbers 19440 and 19492, January 2009.

Like many plug door boxcars, these are classified as “refrigerator” cars with AAR Designation RBL. The series 19400 to 19499, Pennsylvania class X54A, were built in 1960 and were the last 40 foot boxcars constructed by the PRR. At least some of them were in service for the Campbell Soup Company. The model differs from the prototype on the sides (the real ones were riveted) and the sill (which was unusually straight on the real cars). The group went almost intact into the Penn Central, with 98 cars in 1970, and 29 cars survived in PRR paint into Conrail as of April 1976, but the ATP ends before 1981.



**522 44 020, Reporting Marks NYC 7---05 (middle two digits of road number obscured).
50 Foot Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends,
New York Central.**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and oval “New York Central System” herald on right. Simulated gravel load included. Light to moderate weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1951 (build date) through mid-1970’s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Runner Pack #20 (994 00 020) with Road Numbers 715105, 715152, 715208 and 715233, September 2010.

This is a fairly long lived series, although gondolas don’t age well as we already know (or can tell from photos of beat up cars). The NYC series 715100 to 715899 was built in 1951 and 111 cars in that original group made it all the way to Conrail in April 1976. We know that doesn’t tell us anything about how they were painted. What MTL depicts on these cars aligns with the early 1950s practice of the New York Central, with freight car red sides, white lettering, and the NYC oval without a black background. The lettering matches that shown in the CDS Equipment Diagrams book. In the 1960s the Central went to black gondolas, with some Century Green mixed in, but I’m quite confident that the freight car red cars co-existed with the black and green gondolas. So this car should be OK with the two Pennsy boxcars.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #35, four modern log cars with uprights and loads, has been released. UMTRR coverage was in the April 2011 issue. The catalog numbers and road numbers for individual cars in this Runner Pack are as follows: 538 50 100, 538 50 110, 538 50 120 and 538 50 130.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is May 2012. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close November 30.



Scheduled May 2012 Release:

Z Scale Runner Pack #41: 994 00 041, \$74.95

Reporting Marks: TTPX 80825, 80883, 81001, 81259.

Quantity four of 60 foot bulkhead flat cars, Trailer Train.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left. White and yellow Trailer

Train name on right. Simulated stacked board lumber loads included. Approximate Time Period: 1969 (build date given by MTL) to 1980s at least. Previous Releases: Catalog Number 527 00 02x, Road Numbers 80280 and 80252, October 2007.

[The following is largely reprinted from the October 2007 UMTRR coverage of the previous release.]

MTL notes that these cars were built in 1969 and so we go to the April 1970 ORER for a look. Sneeze and you'll miss it: only two lines in the entire Trailer Train Company's listing, down at the bottom of Page 861. (As you can guess, I sneezed.) There is a single car numbered 80000 as Class F68h, then another 234 numbered from 80001 to 80240 as Class F68ah. Wait a minute, that doesn't include the numbers MTL modeled! That lag in ORER updates sometimes... really...

Take two... July 1974, that's better. This time, the series of Class F68ah goes from 80001 all the way to 81259, taking in 1031 cars. The inside length is 62 feet, inside width 10 feet 4 inches, outside length 73 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet, and capacity 180,000 pounds (no cubic footage given). That group was numbered up to 81359 and totaled 1235 cars in the July 1992 ORER, but keep in mind that Trailer Train had become TTX and the paint scheme might therefore have been changed from brown to yellow. If you're not worried about this, you might be able to get all the way "To Present" as there are a total of 861 cars in the series listed in the October 2007 Equipment Register. And thus the "at least" in the ATP above. However, all of the photos of the series in RailcarPhotos.com are from 1999 through 2009 and show flat cars in yellow paint.

In the definition of the Trailer Train reporting marks, "TTPX" is listed as "Flat cars equipped with bulkheads spaced 62 feet 0 inches apart and seventeen (17) transverse tie-down anchors with chains; used for transporting wallboard, plywood, etc." Thanks for counting those anchors, I was so not ready to try that myself from a photo.

Speaking of which, Fallen Flags (URL www.rrfallenflags.org) has one of sister car 80318 as of September 1972. We get a good look at the lettering, which appears to match pretty well. I'm fairly sure that the build date on the prototype is in 1969, despite what the April '70 ORER says, or doesn't say. If only that Bethlehem Steel trademark were a little bigger, it would have been nice to include, but even MTL has its limits at 1:220 actual size. We can confirm the use of wood to line the inside of the bulkheads. There does appear to be somewhat of a difference in the design of the outside of the bulkheads as well as overhang of the wood

lining past the edge of said bulkheads, and the truck placement on the actual car is more inboard than on the MTL model. Fallen Flags has sister car TTPX 80290 in full length and a close up shot as of March 1985. It's carrying, guess what? A stacked lumber load, although in not the same configuration as what's included with each of the MTL Runner Pack cars. It appears that there are metal channels attached to the floor of the car, upon which the cargo is loaded. All this is detail that can be added by the modeler, and I don't doubt that some Z Scalpers will do exactly that.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



502 00 540, \$22.95

Reporting Marks: WV 1863.

40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, West Virginia 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 (Cardinal) and state flower (Rosebay Rhododendron) on right. Fortieth release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

[The following is largely reprinted from the January 2005 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release of this car.]

Okay, history buffs, why is it that Virginia was one of the first states, and West Virginia was the 35th state and the last state east of the Mississippi to be admitted to the Union? You're on your way to the answer if you consider the admission date: June 20, 1863. During the Civil War, that is. Virginia's western counties did not go along with the rest of the state's decision to secede from the Union. In fact, in May 1861, 25 counties met at the First Wheeling Convention and repudiated the secession decision. They created the Restored Government of Virginia and adopted a "dismemberment ordinance" to become a new state called, initially, Kanawha. The state was admitted as West Virginia, though. I have a feeling that this all was a lot uglier than the timeline of state history that I found (at the URL www.shgresources.com/wv/timeline/) indicates. One hint: There was a state constitutional amendment passed in 1866 denying citizenship and suffrage to anyone who aided the Confederacy; it wasn't repealed until 1871. Two years later, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad was completed across the state; you just know I had to get the main subject of this column in here someplace. A key reason for the railroads' coming was mining, and the state has been a focal point for that industry, and, unfortunately, its disasters, including the worst one in United States history which killed 362 people in December 1907. Looking through the timeline, it's hard to believe how many times the state capitol burned as well.

West Virginia got a real shot in the arm from an unlikely source when the song "Take Me Home, Country Roads" was recorded by John Denver. The phrase "Almost Heaven, West Virginia" became the springboard for a tourist campaign that brought visitors to experience

the wild, rugged beauty of the state, and was even featured on some real live rolling stock in the 1970's-- remember the South Branch Valley Railroad and their green and yellow boxcars?

A few famous West Virginians include gymnast and Olympic sweetheart Mary Lou Retton, actress and "Alias" star Jennifer Garner, baseball players George Brett and Steve Yeager, author Pearl S. Buck, entertainer and "Hollywood Squares" host Peter Marshall, and test pilot extraordinaire Chuck Yeager.

My first foray into West Virginia was strictly on a lark on my birthday in 1988. It was one of those times when I needed to get away to rethink things... OK, I was getting over a girl. I only got as far as the easternmost panhandle along Interstate 81, where I made a stop in Martinsburg to set foot in the state and make it official. The next visit was even shorter, a cheat of sorts to be able to tally the state again. I hit the very top of northern panhandle that sticks up into Ohio, along US 30 for just a few miles. It was August of 1988 and I was on what I called "The Whirlwind Tour," something still I haven't yet talked much about. The third visit was much longer and I wasn't alone; I was with my then fiancé Rosemary in 1990 and we traveled the state from north to south including a look at the New River Gorge. I brought the kids to the state in April 2009, an event dutifully recorded in "The Photo Section" on the IrwinsJournal.com website (look for the January - May 2009 page).

The following item was announced as an "off-cycle" release for October via the Micro-Trains website on October 17 and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" on October 18.



507 00 540, \$22.65

50 Foot Plug Door Boxcar, "Bah Humbug" Holiday Car. Reporting Marks MTL 2011.

White with black reporting marks at far right. Multicolor depiction of "Bah Humbug Bug" on left. Multicolor "sign" reading "Merry Christmas from Micro-Mouse" oversprayed with "Bah Humbug" on right.

As with the N Scale "Bah Humbug" covered hopper, this mid-month offering was teased in the Micro-News but was relatively buried in the MTL website, as an add to the "new releases" page. The story of "Bah Humbug" is the same regardless of the scale of the car on which it's "spray painted," so I will refer you to the discussion of the N Scale "humbug" above.

HOn3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Another pretty quiet month. An N Scale paper freight load is new (499 43 976, two for \$9.95). A Z Scale crate / box load probably has applications in N Scale as well (799 43 940, two for \$9.95). MTL has started carrying Z Scale rulers (English and Metric) and clearance gauges from NZT Products. Micro-Trains also has two other merchandise items. A coffee mug (995 30 016, \$9.95) in brown and red with MTL logo includes a slot in the handle for a spoon. "Micro-Trains Freight Yard on the Go" stitching is

on the outside of a duffel bag (995 30 015, \$24.95) that also includes cardboard dividers for storage of boxed rolling stock.

STRUCTURE KITS: The Z Scale seacoast theme continues with a neat little lighthouse kit (799 90 954, \$34.95). It's not the traditional tapered cylinder design, but more of a house atop a platform. In N Scale, the first two pre-order Ringling Brothers themed kits have been released: the General Store (499 90 432, \$32.95) and the Small Hotel (499 90 933, \$36.95). As noted with the pre-order announcement, the circus theme is carried via peel and stick advertising labels so these kits have more general uses.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: We'll start with Z Scale, which places just three items on the bye-bye board this month. First is the first number of the Lehigh Valley gondola (522 00 211, October 2009, second number also gone). Then there's the second number of the Delaware & Hudson bulkhead flat car (526 00 102, April 2010, first number still available). And finally the most recent release of the Modern Log Car has left the building (538 00 090, January 2010). I'll note that I already had the LV gondola and D&H bulkhead flat shown as sold out in my website listings, so this may be a repeat.

Atop the bye-bye board in N Scale, and also numerically first, is the Union Pacific boxcar reprint (020 00 070). The Milwaukee Road hopper reprint is outta here (055 00 300, July). The John F. Kennedy Presidential Car is sold out (074 00 135, August). The most recent unweathered reprint of the Grand Trunk Western Center Flow is gone (092 00 010, August 2010). The gray Rock Island high side covered hopper has rolled out (096 00 030, May). The 2009 Holiday Car, featuring Micro-Mouse in a sneaker, has run its course (102 00 100, November 2009). The weathered Conrail sixty foot boxcar (103 44 020, mid-month August) is gone, as is the first number of the Western Pacific three bay hopper (108 00 201, August 2010, first number still available). Finally, while one set of Ringling Brothers wagons is noted as still available in the November Micro-News, another set has left town (462 00 030).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: The With respect to the N Scale US Army flat car Runner Pack announced for pre-orders last month, Steven Purvis "just wanted to sound off" (how appropriate!) with some background for any of us that don't know much about military vehicle history... and that definitely includes me! Start quote:

"The four pack release of US Army flat cars has one glaring problem. The loads! With out access to the actual model, using only the small drawing that was in the UMTRR, it is fairly certain that we are looking at a M3A1 (Stuart III). While it is certainly true that very small numbers of various models of M3s were still in use by obscure militaries even as late as the 1960s, the US military was all but done with the M3 by the end of 1943. I think it would be very safe to say that by the beginning of the ATP for this car any M3s in the USA would have been long placed in museum's. I have noticed this before, that while MTL seems to invest some time and effort at researching rolling stock, the same does **not** appear to be the case for the various military loads they have released. The military loads do not seem to be appropriate for the cars they are released with. For example, the Z scale M1 Abrams tanks would be hauled on the modern 6 axle DODX flats.

Just for fun, a more correct light tank load for this car would have been either the M24 Chaffee (obsolete by the early 1950s but possibly being hauled back to depots for disposition), or the newly released M41 Walker Bulldog.

One other nitpick for me, and it applies to both MTL and GHQ, and any other military model manufacture. We rarely see a military model that is in "shipping" mode. The models mostly seem to be in "combat" mode. Photos of USA military domestic rail shipments will show the vehicles with guns stowed (particularly any externally mounted machine guns, and main guns firmly held in the travel locks), no external tactical gear attached, and numerous wooden crates either on the vehicles or on the car deck."

Many thanks for the detail, Steve. Remember, Incremental Information is always welcome here at UMTRR HQ.

OOPS PATROL: The Ringling Brothers flat car from last month (045 00 371) has a red floor, which I missed in my product description.

FINALLY, MAJOR BLOCKAGE: The powers that be over at Hotmail and MSN once again blocked delivery of the UMTRR to a statistically significant percentage of my readers. This is the third time in five months that this has occurred, and frankly, it's getting me down. Since there's no practical approach to getting either my ISP or Microsoft to understand that what I am sending is not spam and should not be blocked, I'm forced to request that if you happen to have a Hotmail or MSN address and can change it to something else within reason, please do so. I understand and appreciate that not everyone has an alternate e-ddress, but it would be helpful to The Cause if you did and transferred your subscription to it. In the meantime, we will continue to do the best we can to make sure these bytes arrive in your mailbox.

Cheers,
George

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