

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

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Hello again everyone! We're late, as cautioned last issue, but at least we haven't run out of July yet. Please note that this edition includes both the June and July Weathered Releases — which are numerous, making for quite the long string of bytes this time around. And I do have a little side trip to tell you about which I took while on vacation. Off we go...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



021 00 886, \$19.30

Reporting Marks: PRR 19103.

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Plug Door,
Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Brown with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and shadow keystone on right. Yellow "Insulated QL" on door. Approximate Time Period: 1960 (build date) to late 1970s.

We'll start this coverage with a look in the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER), July 1963 edition. It shows the group PRR 19000 to 19399 described as "Box, Steel." The inside length was 40 feet even, inside width 9 feet 1 inch, inside height 9 feet 7 inches, outside length 41 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet 2 inches and capacity 3565 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. An end note calls out nailable steel floors in the doorway and end note 136 states "[C]ars are equipped with Evans 'Quick Loader' fixtures. The cars are insulated and are equipped for application of heaters." Micro-Trains mentions the Quick Loaders in its car copy.

This car was in the Pennsy's Class X54, while the recently released Z Scale boxcars represented Class X54A. The key deltas between model and prototype are the same, though: first, the real car had riveted, not welded, sides; and second, the sills on the prototype are completely straight, rather unusual on a car of this type, and a fixable detail if one is so inclined. The X54 and X54A were the last forty foot boxcars built by the PRR, and given the insulation they are technically refrigerator cars with AAR Class "RBL."

Photos of sister cars 19235, 19249, 19381 and 19384 are all on George Elwood's Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) and there are also images of X54s in print in all three Morning Sun Color Guides and even in the Penn Central Color Guide in PC paint (the former PRR 19302. There's also a shot of PRR 19142 in Classic Freight Cars Volume One. I guess you could say there's no shortage of images; however most do not show the "QL" designation on

the boxcar door. That could limit the Approximate Time Period a bit; however since we did not get a bingo on the 19103 in service, I can't be sure about that.

What do I mean by "no bingo in service"? Well, it turns out that a fully restored 19103 is in residence at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg! There are numerous photos of the car in the museum building available on RRPictureArchives.net . It happens to be coupled to the only surviving E-44 electric locomotive, the engine that I most closely associate with my childhood in Jersey City, so bonus points for that.

Quickly back to the ORERs, we find that of the original 400 X54s in the series, 385 were still with PRR reporting marks in the Penn Central listing of April 1970, and 281 made it to Conrail in the April 1976 Register. (And they're all shown as still having Quick Loaders.) However, just 16 remain in April 1981 which is where I stopped looking.



025 00 760, \$23.45 and

025 00 770, \$22.15

Reporting Marks: MP 357200 and 357198.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Superior Door, Missouri Pacific (Union Pacific).

The 357200 is yellow with aluminum roof and mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Small red, white and blue Union Pacific herald with "Building America" slogan on right.

The 357198 is brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left. Small red, white and blue Union Pacific herald on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s to possibly the present for the brown scheme and late decade of the 2000s to possibly the present for the yellow scheme, see text.

My initial thought on these cars: do I take them together or not? Micro-Trains did. They are just two road numbers apart, but they are in different paint schemes. Let's try and see what happens.

We quickly learn from RailcarPhotos.com that the series MP 356700 to 357687 is the former Railbox series RBOX 11000 to 11999. These were in the Railbox class of cars XAF11 which were built in 1975 by American Car & Foundry. As late as 2007 some of these cars was still wearing weathered and graffitied Railbox paint with an MP restencil. This is similar to the October 1992 three-pack MTL release of just such cars (Catalog 25502) which are in fact from the same prototype series. Micro-Trains' 025 body style is modeled after the FMC 5077 boxcar while the Railbox XAF11s are from AC&F and have a 5090 cubic foot capacity, so there will be some differences between model and prototype. The largest delta I can see is the roof angle; it's more "peaked" on the real cars. MTL's car copy remark about these cars being used in clearance car service is evidenced by the shot of MP 357361, also on

RailcarPhotos.com. That car has “hoops” around it corresponding to the size of the Space Shuttle rocket booster cars. Given that the Space Shuttle has been retired, I wonder if the car and others have lost those hoops by now, or will they continue to be used as clearance cars?

Fallen Flags has an image of MP 357218 as of April 2000 in the brown scheme that MTL has run. The paint already looks somewhat the worse for wear so it seems to me that we can back the ATP start into the mid-1990s. Considering that the MP was formally taken over by the UP in 1992 (though the corporate merger was not completed until 1997), I think that’s a pretty safe timeframe for the brown cars. And then we get bingos (or would that be “bingoes”?) on both road numbers MTL chose on RRPictureArchives.net. The 357198 was lensed in 2005. The 357200 images are from July 2009 and the paint looks like brand new. I think we have a split ATP start here.

The ORER for January 2011 is our proxy for “the present” and it’s showing only 29 cars remaining in the MP series. So I’m not completely confident that there are any left at this point; of course Rule #1 always applies. While here, we’ll get the dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 55 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet, capacity 5090 cubic feet and Gross Rail Weight 220,000 pounds. A subset of three more cars appear to be the clearance cars, since their extreme width is 13 feet and extreme height is 17 feet 5 inches; the previously noted MP 357361 included.



028 00 190, \$21.85

Reporting Marks: CNW 78212.

40 Foot Wood Single Sheathed Boxcar, Single Door, Chicago and North Western.

Brown with black ends. White lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and “Route of the 400” slogan on

right. Approximate Time Period: early 1940s to late 1960s.

“A masterpiece of the rails” was how the Chicago & North Western advertised the “400” on Page 763 of the January 1941 Official Guide of the Railways. The train left Chicago at 3PM and traveled to Minneapolis via Milwaukee and Saint Paul, arriving at Minneapolis at 9:45 PM. The southbound “400” left Minneapolis at 2:30 PM, arriving in Chicago at 9:45PM. The trains included a Tavern-Lunch Counter-Lounge Car, Coaches, a Dining Car, Parlor Cars with Drawing Rooms, and an Observation-Parlor Car with Lounge and Bar. Oh, and “stewardess service.” It wasn’t 400 miles in 400 minutes, it was better: 406.7 miles in 375 minutes. The train began service in 1935 and was renamed the “Twin Cities 400” later in 1941 as the C&NW rebranded many of its trains to “400s” regardless of how far they traveled or how long they took. The original “400” ended in 1963 and all of the North Western’s passenger service was discontinued upon the startup of Amtrak.

There’s a collection of images of C&NW freight cars on the site of the Chicago & North Western Historical Society (www.cnwhs.org) and included is a 1961 photo of a single

sheathed boxcar that is labeled as CNW 79212 but looks to me like it's actually 78212, which would give us a bingo on a proto photo. MTL's own car copy states that the car was serviced at Marshalltown, Iowa in August 1958, and that's what's on this car as well ("MN 8-58"). I think we have an image match here, although we don't exactly have a match between prototype and model. The door is six feet wide but it's a steel seven-panel Superior type, the diagonal bracing is in the opposite direction on the model than the real car, the right side has a full ladder, not grab irons, and the ends are different as well. Other than that...? Oh, the ends overhang the sides. I suppose that makes the MTL car a stand in. That "400" logo does look a bit clunky, but it's that way on the actual car as well.

If the 78212 was actually built in the decade of the 1910s as MTL notes in its car copy, it didn't carry that number then as the first time I pick it up is in the July 1943 ORER. That implies to me that these were actually "war emergency" boxcars built with wood sides to save steel; the way the ends overhang the sides is a clue.

At any rate, the 78212 belonged to the group 76900 to 78248, even numbers only, which was described in the July 1943 ORER as "Box, Steel Frame" with an inside length of 40 feet 6 inches, inside width of 8 feet 11 inches, inside height of 10 feet 4 inches, outside length of 42 feet, extreme height of 15 feet 2 inches, and capacity of 3863 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 248 cars in the group at that time, out of a possible 675. Ten years later in the January 1953 Equipment Register... well, this is interesting. The series had been split into the group 76900 to 77414 described as all steel, with 253 cars, and the group 77416 to 78248, described as steel frame only, with another 414 cars. This is indicative of the North Western's program to rebuild their wood single sheathed boxcars with steel sides. By July 1963, the wood sheathed car count was only down to 392 cars. Sometime between the January 1967 and April 1970 based on the ORERs, all the wood side cars were rebuilt to all steel, ending the Approximate Time Period.



058 00 110, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: NADX 3149.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Morrell Refrigerator Line.

Brown sides, black roof, ends, door hardware and bottom door sill. White lettering including company name and reporting marks on left and "Iowa's Pride Hams and Bacon Ottumwa, Iowa" on right. Red and white "Morrell's" legend mostly inside white heart symbol. Approximate Time Period: mid-1910s to as late as mid-1930s. Release #3 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

Let's start with the check of the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** for this latest Meat Packer car. A photo of the prototype is on Page 31. Authors Richard Hendrickson and Ed Kaminski note that this car was typical of mid-teens construction and featured "handsome and distinctive hand-painted lettering." The truss rod underframe, six hinge doors and use of grab irons for the sides is accurate between model and prototype.

The October 1919 ORER shows a narrative listing of the cars of the Morrell Refrigerator Line instead of a table. Not much there, though mention is made of the group 5600 to 5699 with 60,000 pounds capacity. No car counts or totals are given. We do a little better in the April 1928 Register, which has the Morrell Refrigerator Line entry in the more typical table format. There were 94 cars in the 5600 to 5699 series, with inside length 29 feet 9 inches, inside width 8 feet 1 inch, inside height 7 feet 2 inches, and capacity 1723 cubic feet for lading and 149 cubic feet for crushed ice only.

I noted with the release of the Morrell's Pride 40 foot refrigerator car in March that there still is a Morrell firm packing meats. On its website, John Morrell and Company describes itself as "considered to be the oldest continuously operating meat manufacturer in the U.S. In 2002 the company celebrated its 175th anniversary." The firm was founded in England in 1827. It is currently a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods.



077 00 220, \$24.25

Reporting Marks: CNA 794210.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, No Roofwalk, Canadian National.

Blue with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Simulated interior load included. Approximate Time Period: 1974 to 1988.

According to Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site (www.nakina.net), a total of 38 boxcars from several manufacturers came to parent Canadian National from subsidiary Grand Trunk Western starting in 1974 and remaining on the roster until 1988. They had DF loaders and were in automotive service. The largest of the groups to move to the CN was the series 794200 to 794230, formerly part of the GTW series 595500 to 595699.

The CNA reporting marks designate cars manufactured in the United States and available for service just like any other USA-built car. Many of these cars received the paint scheme with the typical roadname, reporting marks and "t-account" dimensional data arrangement but did not get the CN herald. I didn't find any images of this car series online or in print in the UMTRR Research Accumulation, but similar paint schemes on other boxcar series are certainly out there.

The April 1975 ORER has a mere two cars in the larger series 794200 to 794253. That's up to eight cars in the April 1976 Register and 37 in April 1981. We'll pause there for the details. The cars were described as "Box, Steel, DF Loaders (Automotive Service)" with AAR Designation XL. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4866 cubic feet or 114,000 pounds. Just one car remained in the July 1987 ORER and it's gone by July 1989.



096 00 080, \$27.75

Reporting Marks: BNSF 417579.

PS-2 3 Bay High Side Covered Hopper, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small circle cross on

right. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1998 to present.

It still has the circle cross so it's still the full railroad name, not just "BNSF," right? I'll make that assumption, since I'm not really a fan of the contraction of the name into the initials.

A July 2010 image of sister car 417375 on RailcarPhotos.com in the same paint scheme that MTL modeled includes the note that it's former ATSF 312540. I can't quite make out the class but it looks like GA-175 which would match what MTL has on the model. The 312540 did not belong to any of the Santa Fe series of high side covered hoppers of this type that I noted in the coverage of the ATSF painted car of this type (catalog 096 00 010, March 2011). However the "GA" is in line with how the Santa Fe classed its hoppers, covered or otherwise.

We're only nine numbers away with a shot of BNSF 417570, also from 2010 and on Fallen Flags, but it's in the reporting marks only scheme and those reporting marks are basic gothic—no Cooper Black used. Finally, we get a bingo via RRPictureArchives.net with three images of the 417579, taken in 2005 and 2009. The 2005 photo shows the lettering already starting to look a bit worn so I think my ATP is reasonable.

We'll test that reasonableness with a check of the ORERs. The July 1998 edition shows the car in its own entry. Then all of the Equipment Registers I have from the April 1999 through the January 2002 edition show only 29 cars in the series 417182 to 417579. That's down to 16 total cars in the January 2011 ORER. It seems to me that this large BNSF number series was never actually filled, which makes the 417579 one of a rather rare group among the more than 82,000 cars on the BNSF roster. These are 4427 cubic foot cars, with 54 foot 3 inch outside length, extreme height of 15 feet 1 inch and gross rail weight of 263,000 pounds.

By the way, assuming that the RailcarPhotos.com caption is accurate, there were still 102 cars in the ATSF series 312300 to 312796 which would have been the source for the BNSF series. So much for quick repainting, once again.



125 00 110, \$24.40

Reporting Marks: WPGX 949911.

Three Bay Ortner Hopper, Western Paving.

Green with white lettering including reporting marks and company name on left. Simulated gravel load included.

Approximate Time Period: late 1980s to late decade of the 2000s at least.

I guess the first question is, who is Western Paving? The company name is sufficiently small that I can't read the rest of the information from the car image. Fortunately, the MTL car copy tells us where to look: "Its primary use, by Western Paving & Construction Co., was to transport gravel to the Denver International Airport during its construction." What, helping the competition? That airport opened in 1995 after numerous delays, which gives us a sense as to where to start looking in ORERs.

Or maybe not, for the dreaded star appears in front of the reporting marks WPGX in the October 1991 Equipment Register: "The symbol (★) before a set of reporting marks assigned to a private car owner indicates cars bearing these marks are not registered in this issue of The Official Railway Equipment Register." Ditto for the July 1992 issue, and the October 1996... well, you get the idea.

So we'll have to troll the net to see what we can find. RailcarPhotos.com helps with nine photos of Ortner rapid discharge hoppers all taken in 2007 in Granite City, Illinois—a long way from Denver, but appropriate!-- and all in the 949900s. They are of various types, but the 949910 which is just one number away from the MTL selected road number is in the ballpark, though it has seven ribs while the 125 body style has nine.

How about the February 1996 issue of **Model Railroading** magazine, available online at Trainlife.com? There's an article on scratchbuilding these cars in that issue authored by Doug Geiger. He notes that the WPGX series started as 35 cars numbered 949901 to 949935, but that a number of them were in a head-on wreck while in service for the Denver Airport construction. "At least half the fleet was scrapped where they lay," Geiger reported. "The train was rebuilt with the remainder... plus some short normal style hoppers." That explains the images on RailcarPhotos.com.

All that's missing is a bit on the company itself. And I did not actually find much of anything there. Several companies use the name "Western Paving." While there is mention of what I think is the same one on the Ortner hopper being part of a consortium that built the Eisenhower Tunnel under the Continental Divide, part of Interstate 70 (What? More helping the competition?) there don't seem to be any recent references to the firm.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



035 00 020, \$17.90

Road Number: 55225 (will be "GN 55225" in website listings).

40 Foot Despatch Stock Car, Great Northern.

Red (GN's "Vermillion" shade) with white lettering including roadname and road

number on left. Release includes cattle corral kit (unassembled and undecorated). Approximate Time Period: 1958 (rebuild date) through 1970s. Previous Releases: Road Number 55236, October 1976; Road Number 55362, January 1977; Road Number 55336, January 1988; Road Number 55256, December 1998.

I can start with the July 2009 coverage of the Z Scale Runner Pack (#13) of these cars, particularly since one of the road numbers in that quartet is the same one done here. As you may already know, the prototype for this MTL body style in both N and Z Scales-- and the body style for other N Scale manufacturers' offerings for that matter-- is in fact a New York Central car, Lot 757-S, rebuilt from USRA style single sheathed boxcars in 1947. This effectively makes any other release a "stand in"; the only question is by what degree. MTL states that these cars were rebuilt in 1958 from wood boxcars and I've adjusted the ATP I gave for the Z Scale Runner Pack to reflect this.

Let's go to the ORER for January 1959 for these relative latecomers to the GN's stock car roster. The series 55200 to 55399 is described as "Stock, Steel Underframe" with AAR Mechanical Designation "SM" and these dimensions: inside length 40 feet 4 inches, inside width 8 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet, outside length 42 feet 6 inches, extreme height 13 feet 9 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3098 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. There were all 200 possible cars in 1959, and as long as I'm checking, 199 in January 1964 and 198 in April 1970 under the Burlington Northern registration. It looks like the series lasted through the Seventies, with three cars still hanging on in the April 1981 Equipment Register.

In 2009 I noted that I'd expect to find prototype photos in Scott Thompson's book **Great Northern Equipment Color Pictorial - Book One (GN Box & Stock Cars)**. While on holiday, I got a look at that volume and I was right. In addition to all the other stand in data above, there is a metal door with slots cut into it, a Camel brand door if I recall correctly. Also, the wide letterboard on the MTL 035 series cars isn't found on the GN cars. Instead, there is a small letterboard with the roadname above the midpoint of the side, and a smaller letterboard with the road number.



035 00 150, \$17.90

Reporting Marks: N&W 33033.

40 Foot Dispatch Stock Car, Norfolk & Western.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Release includes cattle chute kit

(unassembled and undecorated). Approximate Time Period: about 1955 to early 1970s; renumber for 1930s to 1950s, see text. Previous Release: Road Number 33000, April 2001.

I see that my original coverage of this release is a bit confusing so I'll straighten it out and add to it. These cars were built in 1928 and rebuilt in 1935, at which time they were numbered in the 29000s. According to MTL, in 1955 the cars were renumbered into the 33000 series, where they remained until they were taken off the roster.

A May 1953 reference photo of the previously run number, N&W 33000, is available via the large imagebase of the Norfolk and Western Historical Collection on Virginia Tech's website (direct URL spec.lib.vt.edu/imagebase/norfolksouthern/full/NS2780.jpeg). Comparison to the model shows that there isn't an exact match, mostly since the MTL 35000 body style has

solid boards running from left to right across the center of the car side, which is where they put the lettering. The N&W added its own letterboards for the road name on the right side of the car. At least in 1953, the prototype had a steel roofwalk as opposed to the wood one that's standard on the MTL model, but that's an easy change for those who so desire to make it. Meanwhile, the 1955 date MTL gives for renumbering might be a bit late—or not, as it usually took a while to get to all of the cars in a series.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: Please note that this time, we have both June and July announcements in this edition of the UMTRR.

The following items were announced as “off-cycle” releases for June 2012 via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line,” all on or about June 14.



059 44 160, \$29.70

Reporting Marks: MERX 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. Moderate weathering in shades of rust. Approximate Time Period: early 1960s to early 1970s. Note: Previous Releases: Road Numbers 455 and 543, November 2011.

In a move which has become unusual in N Scale (but is still typical in Z Scale), MTL has just taken a previously released car and dirtied it up without sufficiently obscuring the road number or changing it. It's kind of tough to work with a road number that large, but then again, it's easier to see that it's the same road number as the previous release.

Recapping from the November 2011 UMTRR, the cars were leased by Merchants Despatch and had a service date of 1962, driving the ATP start. There were three different series of MERX cars but only added to 32 cars as of the July 1963 ORER. The dimensions differed somewhat across these three groups: 400 to 449, 450 to 499, and 500 to 599. The ATP is over no later than July 1974. 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, can be found in Morning Sun's **Refrigerator Car Color Guide**. 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 different sills between model and prototype.



993 05 110, \$89.95 - Baltimore & Ohio Weathered Four Pack. Consists of quantity four of 33 Foot Two Bay Open Hoppers, Offset Sides, Flat Ends. Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and medium "B&O" in center. Simulated coal load included. Each car has light to moderate weathering. Individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: Catalog 055 54 380, Road Number 727043; Catalog 055 55 380, Road Number 727052, Catalog 055 56 380, Road Number 727068; Catalog 055 54 380, Road Number 727077. Approximate Time Period: 1956 through 1970s. Previous Releases: Road Number 727044, July 2011, and in weathered form, Catalog 055 51 380 through 055 53 380, Road Numbers 727026, 727039 and 727040, part of the Baltimore & Ohio Weathered Train Set, Catalog 993 01 190, mid-month May 2012.

I don't think anyone expected what effectively amounts to consecutive releases of the same car in successive months. The B&O hopper jumps from one to eight different numbers in that two month span, and that puts the paint scheme ahead of many hoppers that have been offered by Micro-Trains in terms of road numbers offered. (It's become a lot harder to figure those counts out given Runner Packs, by the way, which is why I'm not being specific.)

And in addition, I can copy from a copy of the write-up for these hoppers from just last month, or more precisely what UMTRR Gang Member Brian DeVries provided to us going back to the July 2011 UMTRR. "The car is an N-44 class car modeled after those coming out of the B&O's DuBois Pennsylvania car shops beginning in October 1956 into 1957 and, continuing on in 1959-60. In all, some 3,300 cars were produced." Brian noted that "the paint scheme portrayed is the 'Late Billboard B&O' with the small ampersand which was used from 1955 onward. The only offset-side two-bay cars to carry this paint scheme prior to the N-44 project were some repainted N-35's and (a few) N-41's. This became the B&O's second most common look (behind the '13 Great States' Capitol dome logo). These cars were stenciled 're-built' but from the center-sills up, they were assembled from new Bethlehem Steel components. A few brake rigging and truck components were salvaged from older cars being scrapped at DuBois - hence the 're-built.'"

A quick reprint of ORER data: January 1959 shows the series 727000 to 728999 with 1997 cars, described simply as "Hopper, Steel" with AAR Designation HM. The inside length was 33 feet, inside width 10 feet 4 inches, outside length 34 feet, extreme height 10 feet 8 inches, and capacity 2145 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. This is before the second set of rebuilds that Brian mentioned, so it's not surprising that the January 1964 Equipment Register shows the

group as even larger: 3264 cars numbered from 727000 to 730299. Micro-Trains noted in its July 2011 car copy that the group was at just 25 cars by 1980. I see 182 in the April 1976 ORER. The Fallen Flags website has a Jim Sands photo of B&O 728306.

The following items were announced as "off-cycle" releases for July 2012 via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about July 16.



094 44 340, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: MRMX 5---- (last five digits obscured).

Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper with Trough Hatches, Wisconsin and Southern (Midwest Rail Leasing).

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks and small W&S herald on left and large roadname across center. Light to moderate weathering, mostly in shades of gray. Large multi-color graffiti across one side. Approximate Time Period: mid-2000s to present. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 501101, December 2011.

I am a bit surprised that this car would be released in a weathered version since, as you might recall, it was a quick sellout back in December 2011. Or perhaps the folks in Talent had some stock on hold for just this occasion? I guess we'll have to leave that to speculation.

Anyway, two images of the real MRMX 501101 as found on July 14, 2006 in Rochelle, Illinois are on RRPictureArchives.net. The real car is definitely a Plate C three bay center flow covered hopper with trough hatches. It's a bit smaller than the American Car & Foundry 4650 cubic foot car which is the basis for the 094 body style. You might also recall that the story of Midwest Railcar Corporation was a bit murky, at least in terms of the ORER listings. For a while the company it wasn't listed at all, which led to the ATP being somewhat of a guess. It still is. But it'll have to do. Please check the December 2011 UMTRR for more.

993 05 120, \$89.95 - Union Pacific Passenger Car Weathered Three Pack. Consists of the following items:



141 50 060, Car Name: "Lake Livingston"

Pullman Heavyweight 10-1-2 Sleeper, Union Pacific/Pullman. Armour Yellow sides, Harbor Mist Gray roof, ends, underframe and trucks (not

wheels). Red stripes and top and bottom of sides. Red lettering including roadname at top of left and right ends, "Pullman" in center of letterboard, and car name at bottom center. Light to moderate weathering including on trucks. Approximate Time Period: after 1948 to 1965. Previous Release (in unweathered form): March 2011.



142 50 060, Car Name: "Multnomah"

Pullman Heavyweight 12-1 Sleeper, Union Pacific/Pullman. Armour Yellow sides, Harbor Mist Gray roof, ends, underframe and trucks

(not wheels). Red stripes and top and bottom of sides. Red lettering including roadname at top of left and right ends, "Pullman" in center of letterboard, and car name at bottom center. Light to moderate weathering including on trucks. Approximate Time Period: after 1948 to 1962 (specifically for this car) or early 1960s (for others in the series). Previous Release (in unweathered form): April 2011.



143 50 060, Road Number: 1262 (will be "UP 1262" in website listings). Pullman Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor Car, Union Pacific/Pullman. Armour Yellow sides, Harbor Mist Gray roof, ends,

underframe and trucks (not wheels). Red stripes and top and bottom of sides. Red lettering including roadname at top of left and right ends, "Pullman" in center of letterboard, and car number at bottom center. Light to moderate weathering including on trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1931 (1935 with air conditioning) to 1948. Previous Release (in unweathered form): March 2011.

If the Wisconsin and Southern center flow is a surprise to me, this threesome is a shock. The MTL passenger cars have been very well received by nearly all accounts (leaving out the Eternally Unsatisfied boo-birds on selected Internet Forums). So I'm wondering how there could be "leftovers" for this Weathered set—unless there were very, very few "leftovers." Just a guess here.

Anyway, I will leave the reader to check the March and April 2011 UMTRRs for the complete coverage of these three heavyweights, and just note two things. First, the ATPs for the cars don't align perfectly, so a bit of an application of Rule #1 is technically required to run all three cars in a single train. Second, the fact that the Lake Livingston was converted to company service in 1965 gives me an idea: why not do the same for all of these cars? Micro-Scale offers decals that might help here, see their set number 90165 for example. I tend to think of UP passenger cars as being clean while in passenger train service, but when paying passengers weren't riding them, well, let's just say that standards were a little more relaxed.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #64, the three pack of auto racks, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2012 issue. The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks are as follows: 111 50 010, Santa Fe, ATSF 700272; 111 50 020, TTX, ETTX 711027; 111 50 050, Union Pacific/TTX, ETTX 820380.



The following items are in pre-order at present and are NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is January 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close July 31.

Scheduled January 2013 Release:

993 00 072, \$109.95

Quantity four of 53 Foot Centerbeam Flat Cars, TTX (Trailer Train).

Reporting Marks: TTZX 86060, 86068, 86072, 86076.

Yellow with black lettering including reporting marks on left, "TT" logo in center and company name on right. Simulated wood beam or plywood loads included (each for two cars). Approximate Time Period: 1986

(build date previously given by MTL) to early 2000's at least. Previous Releases: As catalog 53020: Road Number 86090, April 1995, Road Number 86097; as catalog 053 00 020, Road Number 86086, December 2009.



As I mentioned in December 2009 at the time of the most recent reprint, when the first run of this car was released, I had several different resources on which to draw. The TTX Corporation's own website (URL, unsurprisingly, www.ttx.com) had a PDF file with technical data describing the car class TSH64 to which these cars belong. Unfortunately, it looks like that page is no longer available, but TTX does describe this car type: "A favorite among shippers and railroads alike, the centerbeam primarily transports wood building products such as dimensional lumber (2x4's, 2x6's, etc.) and 4x8 sheets of plywood, particle board, and wallboard. Interestingly, when first developed in the late 1960's, the car's intended purpose was to carry pipe, steel tubes and girders, and those loads are still carried on centerbeams, but in relatively small quantities." TTX notes that most of its centerbeams are now 73 feet long.

We certainly do still have the January 1996 issue of **Rail Model Journal** (now online at Trainlife.com) in which a photo of the TTZX 86015 which accompanies a pretty extensive piece by D. Scott Chatfield on the centerbeam flat car. Chatfield tags the MTL car as a match to this series, down to the pulling eye in the corner posts which was included in Thrall's later construction of these cars. He also describes the 60 foot 8 inch version of the car as "short beams" versus the later and more populous 73 foot "long beam" cars.

The January 2000 ORER showed, across various series and sub-series, a total of 271 cars in the group of road numbers from 86000 to 86274, which was just four shy of the theoretical maximum. A few vital statistics: inside length 60 feet 8 inches, inside width 8 feet 3 inches, inside height 11 feet 5 inches, outside length 68 feet (suggesting extended draft gear trucks), extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, gross rail weight 263,000 pounds. Since the only difference present is the AAR Car Type Code which is F383 for two subsets and F483 for the other twelve subgroups, and there are no dimensional differences otherwise, it's beyond me why

there are fourteen entries for road numbers 86000 to 86274 inclusive; but then again, I've never tried to understand the rationale behind some of these listings. The January 2011 ORER also shows a bunch of subsets which sum to 260 cars, so at least in terms of quantity I think we're good to "the present."

What could limit the ATP, though, is the paint scheme. The Trailer Train name yielded to TTX in 1991 and that allows plenty of time for relettering of these cars. A small selection of images on RailcarPhotos.net shows just that in most cases. The change was pretty basic: remove "Trailer Train" and the double T logo and replace with a white on black "TTX." However, I do note a David Casdorff photo of TTZX 86171 in the MTL modeled paint scheme, that is dated March 2002. So I think we're safe with the early 2000s as an "at least" for this group.

Scheduled January 2013 Release:

993 00 801, \$149.95

Quantity eight (!) of 33 Foot Open Hoppers, Rib Sides, Peak Ends, Norfolk and Western. Reporting Marks: N&W 38431, 38583, 38630, 38692, 38725, 38726, 38738, 38744.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, small roadname across top center and large "N & W" in center. Simulated coal loads included. Approximate Time Period: 1959 to mid-1970s. Previous Releases (as catalog number 91010): A three-pack (catalog 91012) with road numbers 38221, 38360 and 38482, May 1993; another three pack (also catalog 91012) with road numbers 39522, 39636 and 39748, October 1995; then Runner Pack #12 with road numbers 39525, 39540, 39632, 39663, April 2008.



If you're going to release a body style in exactly one roadname, you might as well do it big. So far that's been true of the 091 body style, which has only been done in the black and white of the Norfolk and Western, which was nothing if not a huge coal hauler. The N&W was such a big believer in coal that it was among the last railroads to give up on steam power; in fact, it skipped the entire "first generation" of mainline diesel locomotives. In 1954 it was all-steam; by 1960 it was all diesel.

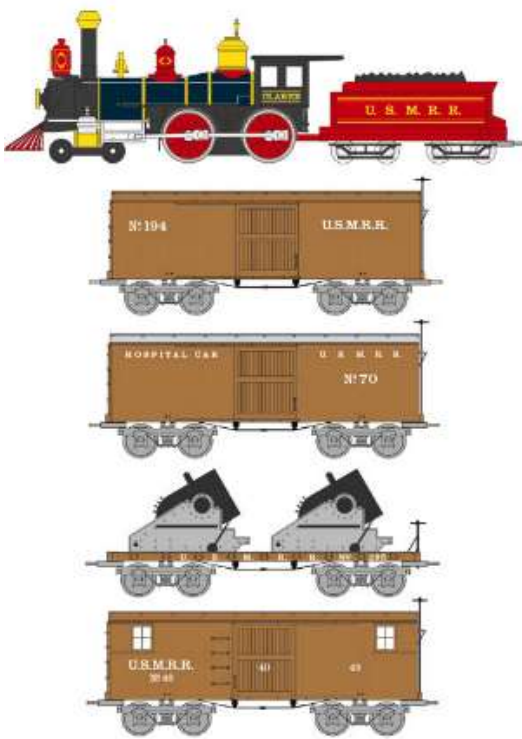
This eight-pack brings to eighteen the number of these cars done by MTL. But that's a rounding error versus the 1999 cars of the prototype series 38000 to 39999 according to the January 1940 ORER. The inside length of these cars was 30 feet 11 inches, inside width 9 feet 9 inches, outside length 32 feet 4 inches, extreme height 12 feet 1 inch, capacity 1998 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds.

However, that series is actually of fishbelly side hoppers, the N&W's Class HLs. According to the N&W Historical Society, HLs were rebuilt to Class H9s between 1936 and 1940 and numbered into non-consecutive series ranging from 58500s to 95000s. The H9 class is a closer match to the 091 body style, although the shape of the peak end is different. As such better road number choices for these cars would be between 60000 and 65814, which were painted

from 1950 to 1963 in the scheme that MTL depicts. After 1963, they were painted in the scheme using the "hamburger" herald. The July 1974 ORER shows 1370 cars numbered 58500 to 65999, which includes the sequence above. Just one remains as of April 1984.

Sample photos of the HL and H9 are available on the Virginia Tech Imagebase, which we also used for the stock car photo reference above. The URL is imagebase.lib.vt.edu, then browse for "Railroad," the N&W Historical Photographic Collection, Railroad Cars and then hopper cars-- there are plenty of images "on loan" from Norfolk Southern.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases this month (again!). MTL announced that the SP/Cotton Belt Train Set will ship in late July or early August. We'll provide the images of that set next issue or as soon as they become available.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is November 2012. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close July 31.

993 21 200, \$189.95, Union Civil War Train Set.

Expected to consist of the following items (artist's conception at left): Bachmann 4-4-0 steam locomotive "Clarke" with Micro-Trains paint and link and pin coupler, two 26 foot boxcars, 26 foot flat car with simulated siege mortar loads, and 26 foot converted boxcar caboose.

Paint scheme of above items is generally brown with white lettering, except for locomotive with is blue and black with multicolor accents and red tender with yellow lettering. Exact models may differ from artwork. Models are equipped with non-operating link-and-pin couplers. Catalog numbers and details of

individual items will be listed in a future UMTRR and on the UMTRR website following MTL release of this set.

The United States Military Railroad was, to oversimplify things, the resolution of the general inability of the various private railroads to support the Civil War effort around and south of Washington. Tracks were very lightly built by today's standards, steel rail hadn't been developed yet, and track gauges ranged considerably. That last point was the worst of it, since frequent transfers of lading were required, leading to inefficient use of rolling stock as well as long transit times, when military movements required, well, the opposite.

In 1862 the government assumed control of all railroads in the eastern war zone. Daniel Craig McCallum and Herman Haupt were given command of what became the United States

Military Railroad. McCallum was already a well known engineer and bridge builder, and Haupt was the first Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the man in charge of the building of the Hoosac Tunnel. Among their achievements was the building of a bridge spanning Potomac Creek in nine days, when the previous version took nine months. Haupt ignored conventional wisdom that a trestle could be no more than one story high and constructed one 400 feet long and 100 feet high. President Lincoln was amazed that fully loaded trains could roll over this: "Upon my word, gentlemen, there is nothing in it but beanpoles and cornstalks."

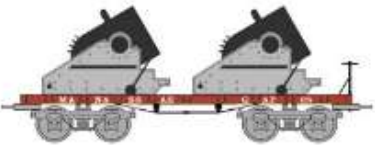
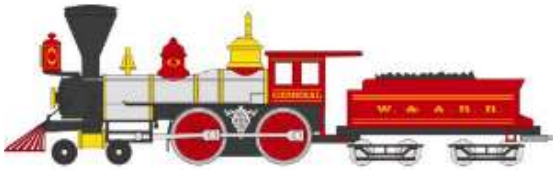
There are two references I'll recommend for further reading. First is the blog of former N Scaler Bernie Kampinski (URL usmrr.blogspot.com). He's building a model of the United States Military Railroad in 1/48th Scale, but also has a host of interesting information about the prototype and the importance of railroads in the Civil War. Second is a web transcription of a 1938 article from the Journal of the American Military History Foundation titled "The United States Military Railroads, 1862-1865: War Time Operation and Maintenance" (found at penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Journals/JAMHF/2/2/Military_Railroads*.html).

I'll defer review of the actual cars for later releases of the body style, since it's hard to review against conceptual artwork! It should be noted that there have been some online concerns about the choice of motive power. But the Bachmann 4-4-0 has been significantly improved in terms of running characteristics. In fact Mark Peterson's **N Scale Locomotive Encyclopedia** (www.visi.com/~spookshow/locos.html) gives the most recent release a grade of B. DCC conversion, however, will be a challenge, and plastic turnout frogs can be an issue given the short wheelbase of the tender trucks (which is how power is picked up). It's also been noted online that extensive break-in is useful for these little locomotives. Back in 1980, **Model Railroader** commented that the Bachmann model represents the 119, which was the Union Pacific's steam engine at the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. As such I would not expect exact matches to any specific United States Military Railroad prototype. But photos of USMRR 4-4-0s available on Flickr and elsewhere do show that the general idea is there.

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is December 2012. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close July 31.

993 21 210, \$189.95, Confederate Civil War Train Set. Expected to consist of the following items (artist's conception at left): Bachmann 4-4-0 steam locomotive with Micro-Trains paint and link and pin coupler, 26 foot boxcars, 26 foot flat car with simulated lumber load, 26 foot flat car with simulated siege mortar loads, and 26 foot converted boxcar caboos.

Paint scheme of set is generally brown with white lettering, except for locomotive which is in the Western & Atlantic's "General" paint scheme, silver and black with multicolor accents and red tender with yellow lettering. Exact models may differ from artwork. Models are equipped with non-operating link-and-pin couplers. Catalog numbers and details of individual items will be listed following upon MTL release of this set, in the UMTRR and on the UMTRR Website.



David L. Bright has done all of us an immense favor by creating and maintaining the site "Confederate Railroads" (www.csa-railroads.com). Bright says that he created the site specifically because it's so difficult to find information about these lines. So far, Bright has collected more than 9000 items, many of which are transcriptions of newspaper coverage of the time period. From his site I can provide a bit of information on the five railroads that MTL represents with this forthcoming set.

The Western and Atlantic connected Atlanta with Chattanooga and owned probably the single most famous piece of equipment of the entire war, the

locomotive "General." Since MTL is planning to release a Civil War Special Edition car depicting the Great Locomotive Chase, we'll hold discussion of that steamer except to note that, as with the Union 4-4-0, there are going to be differences between the Bachmann model and the real "General." There are numerous photos of the engine, which is preserved at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw, Georgia. The Western and Atlantic eventually was merged into the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis, which in turn became part of the Louisville and Nashville.

Bright calls the Memphis and Charleston an "extremely valuable cross-Confederacy road." It ran from Memphis to Stevenson, Alabama and with what we would call trackage rights today reached Chattanooga on the Nashville and Chattanooga.

That "N.O.J.&G.N." on the flat car with the lumber load stands for the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern which ran north out of New Orleans. It was chartered in 1852 and it was intended to connect with the Mobile and Ohio. When the Union attacked New Orleans, the NOJ&GN was deployed to evacuate troops and materiel out of the city.

The Manassas Gap railroad ran out of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia towards Alexandria. It was prominent in the First Battle of Manassas; an unfinished portion figured in the Second Battle of Manassas. It was torn up later in the war after the Confederate Army left the area.

Finally, the roadname on the “caboose” is the Atlantic & North Carolina, which operated from Goldsboro to a point on Beaufort Inlet, which became Morehead City. That settlement was occupied by the Union in 1862, ending the strategy of using the inlet as an alternative shipping port to Norfolk.

I had been under the impression that at the time of the Civil War, the Confederate Railroads were relatively disconnected from each other. That wasn’t true based on the maps on the “Confederate Railroads” site. Although the routes were sometimes circuitous, it was possible to travel from Maryland to as far west as Monroe, Louisiana. Like the North, however, there were different track gauges in use; unlike the North, most lines were either 5 foot gauge or what would become Standard Gauge of 4 feet 8 ½ inches.

N#3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



515 00 100, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: NADX 3149.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Morrell Refrigerator Line.

Brown sides, black roof, ends, door hardware and bottom door sill. White lettering including company name and reporting marks on left and “Iowa’s Pride Hams and Bacon Ottumwa, Iowa” on right. Red and white “Morrell’s” legend mostly inside white heart symbol. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1925 but probably early 1930’s. Release #3 of an expected twelve in the “Meat Packer Reefer Series.”

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above, though note that this Z Scale release is on a forty foot refrigerator car while the prototype and the N Scale release were thirty-six foot truss rod cars. The image above is of the N Scale car.



531 00 200, \$23.10

Reporting Marks: CSXT 225492.

Two Bay PS-2 Covered Hopper, CSX Transportation.

White with black lettering including reporting marks on left and CSX monogram on right. Small red and yellow “Ease Up!” advisories at top left and top right. Approximate Time Period: late 1980s or early 1990s to present.

We get a bingo on this car on George Elwood’s Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) via an image taken in Massachusetts in September 2010. The three-quarter view shows a detail that’s a little out of the ordinary: the end reporting marks are on the hopper, not the end frame. As of the photo date, there were yellow conspicuity stripes added to the sides of the car. Fallen Flags has other shots of sister cars as well.

There's a second bingo on RailcarPhotos.com of the 225492 as of August 2007. There are not yet conspicuity stripes on the car at that time so the "strictly speaking" ATP ends somewhere between the dates of the two photos. We can make out the 2600 cubic foot stencil on the earlier image. The photo caption calls out the covered hopper as CSX Class HC-19. RRPictureArchives.net notes that this is a B&O and C&O class, and shows CSXT 225500, eight numbers away, as being the former B&O 600124. MTL's car copy notes that the car was built in 1965 so that makes sense.

Let's check the ORERs, starting with the July 1989 issue which shows the series 225490 to 225564. Only the outside dimensions are given: length 37 feet 11 inches, extreme width 10 feet 7 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches. The capacity was shown as 200,000 pounds or 2600 cubic feet. There were 44 cars in the group at that time, but I wonder whether they actually had full CSX paint or just restenciling which causes me to hedge the ATP start a bit. Incidentally, the B&O series in which this car was formerly numbered was 600104 to 600193, which had 26 cars at the time. Given the 2010 photo we'll jump all the way to the January 2011 Equipment Register where 15 cars are shown as still in service.



535 00 350, \$29.60

Road Number: 17007 (will be "RI 17007" in website listings).

30 Foot Center Cupola Caboose, Rock Island.

Brown with yellow carbody ends and white hardware. White lettering including roadname at top center and road number at bottom center.

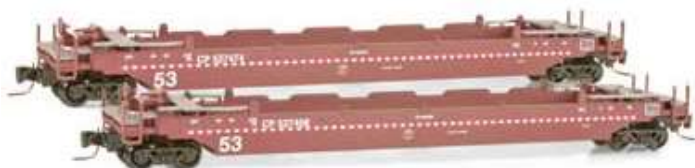
Approximate Time Period: late 1970s, but see text.

According to Morning Sun's **Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, the International Car Company delivered three batches of cabooses to the Rock Island. The first was 17000 to 17029, in 1958; the second was 17030 to 17049, in 1960, and the third was 17050 to 17061, in 1964. All told, there were 62 cabooses purchased, all of the "Extended Vision" type—and thus you have the "see text" as that's not much like the MTL body style. International followed those sales to the line with 150 bay window cabooses.

The paint scheme chosen by MTL represents the final one for these cars. The key here is the yellow ends, added for visibility, and "speed" lettering. There's a photo of the first car in the first group of Extended Vision cabooses, Rock Island 17000, as found in July 1977. It would be less than three years before "The Rock" was gone forever. Some of the cars were "captured" following the Rock Island's demise. A listing compiled by Roger Kirkpatrick of those appears on the Rock Island Historical Society's website (URL www.rits.org).

Interestingly, there is a better choice for an RI caboose a few pages farther on in the Color Guide: the road picked up a few Northeastern style center cupola cabooses from the Lehigh Valley in 1972. The match to the 535 body style isn't perfect there either, but it's significantly

closer. The series was numbered 17600 to 17605 except for 17602 which was never repainted out of the LV scheme. I'll leave a look for images of those cars online to the reader.



540 00 121 and 540 00 122, \$29.75 each.
Reporting Marks: CP 527408 and 527474.
Husky Stack Well Cars, Canadian Pacific.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 2004 to present.

We return to Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site (www.nakina.net) for information on this large group of single well double stack cars. And I do mean large group: up to 3000 cars numbered 527000 to 529999, built in several groups by Trinity Industries and then National Steel Car. Cranstone confirms the first 2000 of these cars were built between July 2004 and February 2005. They hold 53 foot long containers – and yes, that's a delta to the MTL model which is a model of a car that carries 48 foot containers – presence of the "53" on the car notwithstanding.

Via RRPictureArchives.net, you have a choice of images of the 527408 either loaded or unloaded; the former in Manville, New Jersey in June 2005 and the latter in Wawaka, Indiana in April 2012. The car is a single; no issue with articulation here. As you might guess, they are still in service. The January 2011 ORER shows 993 cars in the group 527000 to 529999 with these dimensions: inside length 53 feet 1 inch, outside length 76 feet 10 inches, extreme height 4 feet 1 inch (obviously without a load!), and gross rail weight 220,000 pounds.

Along with this release, MTL has issued new painted containers; see "MTL Announcements" below for those.



970 01 160 and 970 01 170, \$195.95 each
Road Numbers: 6609 and 784 (will be preceded by "SOO" in website listings).
SD40-2 Diesel Locomotives, Soo Line.

White with red accent on nose, bottom sill, and part of cab; black on top of nose. White handrails and end rails. Black lettering including road number on cab and large "SOO" on long hood, gothic lettering on the 160 release and "parallelogram" herald on the 170 release. White "SOO LINE" on nose.

Approximate Time Period: 1980 or 1988 to at least 2006 (but no later than 2010) for the 160 release and 1974 to no later than 1984 for the 170 release.

When delivered in October 1974, SD40-2s numbered 775 to 786 carried the "parallelogram" scheme. It's not just a swap of heralds from the earlier scheme in that the roadname was

removed from the nose and the road number was originally placed in the back of the long hood. The numbers were hard to read there so they were replaced in a more typical position on the cab. The “Unofficial Soo Line Diesel Roster” website (sooline.dieselrosters.com , no “www,” and of course I like the website name!) shows the 784 as being repainted into the later SOO scheme at an unknown date – we’ll come back to that – and then into the CP “Dual Flags” scheme in December 1993. It was sold in September 2004. The Fallen Flags website has the 784 already in the later scheme as of 1984 so we know that the end of the ATP isn’t any later than that.

That later scheme is known as the “hockey stick” – take a look at how the red accent slopes down and over across the sill to see where that nickname originated – and the 6609 was MTL model has them we can set a more strictly speaking start of the ATP for this unit. It’s still in the “hockey stick” as late as February 2006 based on images available online. As of June 2011 it had been repainted into Canadian Pacific colors.

There are some differences between the as-delivered Soo Line units and the MTL models. We’ve already mentioned the dynamic brakes; the Soo also had smaller 3200 gallon fuel tanks and extra cab windows. This is more true for the earlier units like the 784 than for the newer units. The website (www.sooline.org) of the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society has more information on these diesels including illustrations of both the “parallelogram” and “hockey stick” paint schemes.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: Note: As with the N Scale releases, we’re covering both the June and July items in this edition of the column.

The following items were announced as an “off-cycle” release for June 2012 via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line,” all on or about June 14.



500 44 400, \$25.75

Reporting Marks: SP 979 – (last two numbers obscured).

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Southern Pacific “Overnights”.

Black with white lettering including roadname and roadnumber on left. Red and yellow “Southern Pacific Lines” circle herald on left and red and yellow arrow-through-circle “Overnights” device on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1950's only (from the paint scheme). Previous Releases: As catalog 14140/14140-2, Road Number 97947, February 1999, with Superior Door; As catalog 500 5x 400, Runner Pack #9 (994 00 009) with Road Numbers 97620, 97806, 97955, 98060, September 2009. This is a weathered version of an earlier release. Note: It is possible but not confirmed that all Runner Pack road numbers could be in this weathered release. Also note that this release has already been sold out and discontinued but may be available at dealers.

The source material for this weathered release is, no doubt, a reach all the way back to Runner Pack #9, and we'll reach back to the March 2009 UMTRR for the commentary. The first item of note is that the MTL depiction, being a model of a Pullman-Standard PS-1, is going to be a "stand in" of sorts, as the real Espee never painted any PS-1 boxcars in this scheme and did not own any PS-1s during the ATP of this paint scheme. The Overnights cars were SP's B-50-24 class built in 1946 by Mount Vernon Manufacturing in series 97620 to 98069. There were 500 built with 50 put in express service and the rest painted black with white and yellow lettering and full road name, as MTL has decorated the models. But the use of the full "Southern Pacific" roadname instead of the SP initials for the reporting marks was during a short mid-1950's window prior to the repainting of these cars into the silver with black and red "Overnights" scheme (see the Runner Pack announcement below). Even I didn't realize how short this makes the "strictly speaking" ATP, even though the "Overnights" Service was started well before then. Feel free to make use of your modelers license to extend that time period as needed.

The January 1953 ORER has that series 97620 to 98069, described as "Box, All Steel, Lightweight" and had these dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 14 feet 6 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3715 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 448 cars in the group at that time and also in January 1955, but as a renumbering program for these cars kicked in, just 109 remained between road numbers 97621 and 98067.

And now, for a whole train worth of weathered passenger cars... for which we will mostly depend on the commentaries from the original unweathered releases.



550 44 070, \$24.95

Reporting Marks: SP 91 – (last two numbers obscured). Lightweight Streamline 6-6-4 Sleeper Car, Southern Pacific.

Silver with red band. Silver roadname inside red band. Small "winged circle" device and reporting marks at bottom center. Light weathering particularly on roof. Approximate Time Period: 1958 to early 1970s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 9155, July 2009.



552 44 070, \$24.95

Reporting Marks: SP 22 – (last two numbers obscured). Lightweight Streamlined Coach, Southern Pacific.

Silver with red band. Silver roadname inside red band. Small "winged circle" device and reporting marks at bottom center. Light weathering particularly on roof. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 2212, August 2009.

I'll go slightly out of catalog number sequence here in order to cover both SP single cars together. There's a rundown of the Espee's paint schemes for passenger cars on Richard

Percy's "My Espee Modeler's" site (espee.railfan.net , no "www"). I'll quote Jim Lancaster, who provided the content to Richard, directly here: "In 1950 the streamlined Sunset Limited went into service between Los Angeles and New Orleans. The cars were stainless steel with a red letterboard. This was known as the Sunset color scheme. It lasted until 1958... In 1958 the SP adopted a simplified Sunset color scheme as their standard for all passenger cars."

It's the simplified Sunset scheme that's depicted on these cars. With some exceptions, this was the SP's paint scheme until the coming of Amtrak in 1971. I'm told that the series for these cars was 9150 to 9165. There is a five part article in **Mainline Modeler** on painting SP Passenger Cars that ran from April to September 1995. The only hit I got on line referred to the SP 9155 (the road number under that weathering) as a 6-6-4 sleeper that was part of the Union Pacific's "City of San Francisco" consist in 1950, which would have pre-dated this paint scheme.

For the coach, I'll reprint UMTRR Gang Member David Carnell's research on the previously run unweathered version: "Information is from **Southern Pacific Passenger Cars, Volume 1: Coaches and Chair Cars, Chapter 7, Rebuilt Chair Cars and Secondhand Purchases** by the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society. According to the book these cars were built by American Car and Foundry for the Chicago and North Western in 1953 for City of San Francisco service. Southern Pacific purchased cars 2211-2215 and 2219 from C&NW in May 1961 to use in City of San Francisco service. C&NW had severed its ties with Southern Pacific and Union Pacific transcontinental passenger service in 1955 so these cars ran over the C&NW for six years before going back into City of San Francisco service.

"The cars were initially painted into the Simulated Stainless Steel with Scarlet letterboard scheme. In the mid to late 1960s, several were repainted into UP Harbor Mist Gray and Armour Yellow. There is a picture of SP 2212 on page 412 on the passenger car book in the Harbor Mist Gray and Armour Yellow scheme. The picture is dated May 3, 1967.

"Another picture of SP 2212 is on Page 29 of Morning Sun's **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 3**. The shot shows this car in an Amtrak train in March 1972 painted in the stainless steel scheme with sunset herald. This picture appears to be the source for the MTL car. This puts the ATP of this car from about 1970 to 1974. Amtrak purchased SP 2211-2215 in 1974 and renumbered them Amtrak 4465-4469."



550 44 080, \$24.95

Reporting Marks: RI 6—(last two numbers obscured). Lightweight Streamline 6-6-4 Sleeper Car, Rock Island.

Silver with black lettering including roadname at top center, car name "Golden Chariot" at bottom center and road number on left. Very light weathering particularly on roof. Approximate Time Period: 1947 to early 1960s at least. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 606, June 2010. Note: This item has already been sold out and discontinued by MTL but may be available at dealers.

Page 13 of Morning Sun's **Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** includes a photo of the "Golden Chariot," one of the RI series 601 to 606. Thirteen total cars were built by Pullman-Standard in 1942 and served for Pullman on the Golden State for the SP and RI. When Pullman's monopoly on sleeper service ended, the SP took six of the cars and the Rock Island seven. In 1947 the RI changed the Pullman numbers which were 501 to 506 and added names.

The photo of the "Golden Chariot" appears to be of the opposite side of the car from the one Micro-Trains shows, but thinking mirror image I think we've got a pretty good match between model and prototype. The lettering on the real car seems to be on separately applied letterboards that are not much larger than the lettering footprint itself, a bit different than the direct printing on the car. The photo of the real car is dated in the early 1960s so we know that the ATP lasted that long, but I'll add an "at least" here.

994 05 030, \$74.95 - SP/RI 3-Pack. Consists of the following items:



553 50 070, Smoothside Streamlined Baggage Car, Southern Pacific. Reporting Marks: SP 2—(last two digits obscured). Silver with red band. Silver roadname inside red band. Small "winged circle" device and reporting marks at bottom center. Light weathering on roof and sides. Approximate Time Period: 1970 to 1973 in service in this paint scheme. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 2212, September 2009.

We'll go back to David Carnell for more on this car. He cites the book **Southern Pacific Passenger Cars, Volume 3: Head End Equipment** by the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society. Specific information on this car is found in Chapter 19, "Southern Pacific Lightweight Baggage Cars: Development and Production 1937-1962," Pages 447 to 463.

"SP 296 [again the previously released unweathered car] is a Pacific Car & Foundry 'Economy Baggage Car' built as SP 6704 on April 18, 1962. It is one of one hundred cars in SP's Class B-66-2. When the car was delivered, it was painted gray with white lettering. The car was retired from regular service December 23, 1970. At this time it went into company service and was repainted into the Simulated Stainless Steel and Scarlet paint scheme for this service. The car was retired in July 1973 and went to the Golden Gate Railroad Museum. The museum sold the car in November 2005 and it was renumbered RCBX 296. This gives the car an Approximate Time Period of about three years in company service."



553 50 075, Smoothside Streamlined Baggage Car, Southern Pacific. Reporting Marks: SP 66—(last two digits obscured). Gray with light gray lettering including roadname at top center and reporting marks at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (build date given by MTL) to early 1970s. Previous Release: Road Number 6637, November 2009.

Again according to Richard Percy's "Espee Modeler's Page," the Southern Pacific had a number of different paint schemes across its passenger car fleet, corresponding to the specific trains to which they were assigned. And you can guess what then happened starting in the mid-1950s: cars were assigned to other trains, and rather non-uniform looking consists resulted. In 1958 the SP opted for a single scheme-- well, if you can call two different colors "a single scheme." (And even that had an exception in cars assigned to joint UP/SP "City" trains.) The Red/Stainless Steel "Sunset Limited" scheme was adopted as the standard for non-head end cars, and solid dark gray for head end cars. And that brings us to this baggage car. MTL says it was one of a fleet of fifty cars built in 1959 and 1960 by the St. Louis Car Company. These were called "economy" baggage cars and were built for the SP and the Rock Island. A key spotting feature is the use of one double baggage door and one single baggage door per side, which is an immediately noted delta between the real and the MTL model. If I am correctly interpreting the SP Class for these cars, they were 66 feet long, a bit shorter than the model.



553 50 080, Smoothside Streamlined Baggage Car, Rock Island. Reporting Marks: RI 43 – (last two digits obscured). Silver with black lettering including roadname at top center, "Railway

Express Agency" at bottom center and road number on right. Light to moderate weathering on sides and roof. Approximate Time Period (in unweathered form): 1961 to early 1970s or later, see text. Previous Release: Road Number 4363, August 2010.

We go back to Morning Sun's **Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, and so does MTL as the car copy appears to be based on the caption for the photo of the 4363 that's on Page 24 of that book. As Micro-Trains reports, twenty-five baggage / mail / express cars were built in 1961 by the St. Louis Car Company and numbered 4360 to 4384. The REA legend on the car is a hint of its multiple purposes.

The photo of the 4363 in the Color Guide is from 1969 and shows it in very good shape. It also shows that one opening per side has a single sliding door while the other has a double door, a difference between model and prototype. The underbody detail looks different as well. The real car had an inside length of 65 feet 7 inches and an outside length of 70 feet 1 inch over the buffers. It had a twenty-five ton capacity and included bathroom facilities as well as space for a messenger. Messenger space would be appropriate given the potential for high value express shipments.

In the MSCG it's reported that some of the cars were retired in 1970 and 1971, but some stayed around for company service following the takeover of the RI's intercity passenger service by Amtrak. The 4363 appears to be one of those kept on, as seen in an image on RRPictureArchives.net. Renumbered to a maintenance of way road number 96532 (which is what you'll need to do the lookup on if checking the website) but with all the original lettering still showing, the car is rusting away on a siding in Union, Missouri sometime in the nineties.

The following item was announced as an "off-cycle" release for July 2012 via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about July 16.



507 44 240, \$27.80

Reporting Marks: CN ----xx (first four numbers obscured).

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Canadian National.

Brown with yellow door. Mostly white lettering including roadname (English on one side, French on one side) and reporting marks on left and "wet noodle" CN monogram on right. White visibility "dots" along bottom of side (most covered by patches). Light weathering and black patch panels along bottom of sides. Approximate Time Period: 1964 to at least the 1970s, see text. Previous Releases: As catalog 13624, Road Number 353228, June 2003 (with either Magne-Matic or Marklin Couplers), then as catalog 507 5x 240, Runner Pack #6 (994 00 006) with Road Numbers 353200, 353210, 353223, 353226, June 2009. This is a weathered version of an earlier release. Note: It is possible but not confirmed that all Runner Pack road numbers could be in this weathered release.

So was it a good idea for MTL to block out the first four digits of the road number instead of the last two? You betcha! It turns out that the ATP for the road numbers released in Runner Pack #6 (and the single car that preceded it as well) is quite limited, specifically to the years 1964 to 1967. By 1967 the entire group was renumbered from the series 353000 to 353299 to the series 401000 to 401299. So there would have been a "strictly speaking" ATP of no more than three years in which these cars could have operated. (Save Rule #1, of course). By obscuring the front of the road number instead of the back, Micro-Trains extends the ATP to the time of Roofwalk Removal, which I'll peg in the 1970s. ORER checks showed the cars with the new numbers surviving into the 2000s, but I'm quite sure that the running boards did not.

A circa 1965 photo of CN 353226 in Morning Sun's **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 2** shows that there are differences in the ends and side sills with respect to the model against the prototype. The yellow door indicated special service hauling newspaper.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #43, four Burlington Northern Santa Fe Husky-Stack cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2012 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows:



540 51 060, 240620A; 540 52 060, 240620B; 540 53 060, 240752A; 540 54 060, 240752B.

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is January 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close July 31.

994 00 049, \$89.95

Quantity four of 40 Foot Steel Box Cars, Single Superior Door, Southern Pacific "Overnights." Reporting Marks: SP 163313, 163322, 163327, 163330. Silver sides and roof, black ends. Black and red lettering including reporting marks on left and "Southern Pacific Overnights" wording on right. Orange and black "Southern Pacific Lines" herald on left. Approximate Time Period: mid-1950s through 1960s. Previous Releases: as Catalog 500 00 58x, Road Numbers 163324 and 163326, June 2009.



So given that all three of the Morning Sun Color Guides that have the Southern Pacific as their subject have been added to the UMTRR Research Accumulation, do you think I could do better this time than trotting out the two single page articles from 2002 on the SP "Overnights" boxcars that appeared in **N Scale Railroading** magazine? Not that there's anything wrong with those articles, but still...

And the answer is yes. Pages 9 and 10 of Volume 2 of the Morning Sun series include photos of the 122158 from February 1972 (!) and the 163052 as of April 1966. According to Color Guide author James Kincaid, the original series SP 97620 to 98069, which were the "Overnight" cars painted black, as in the Weathered Release above, were part of the 1956 general renumbering. Some went to the group 121834 to 122311 as SP Class B-50-16 and others, including the four to be depicted in this Runner Pack, got numbers from 163049 to 163348 in SP Class B-50-24. The 163052 as pictured has lost its "Overnights" word either through paint or fading, and the circle herald is black only, not black and orange, again deliberately or otherwise. But meanwhile the 122158 has only its number changed and is as MTL depicted the paint scheme otherwise, and the photo is from six years later—so go figure. Note that the cars were built by Mount Vernon and as such aren't a match to the PS-1 that is the source of the MTL 500 body style. The side sills are different but more importantly the sides are riveted on the prototype and welded on the model.

The ORER for January 1959 shows the group 163049 to 163350 described as "Box, All Steel, Overnight Merchandise" (!) with inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 6 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 100,000 pounds. There were 166 cars in the main series with 3715 cubic foot capacity and six exceptions with 3696 cubic foot capacity from a one inch smaller interior height due to a thicker floor. And how's that for trivia. A stop at the April 1970 edition of the ORER shows 31 cars remaining in the group, and based on the photo in the Color Guide it wouldn't surprise me to know that they remained in some form of the "Overnights" scheme until their retirement.

Scheduled January 2013 Release:

994 00 801, \$149.95

Quantity eight (!) of 33 Foot Open Hoppers, Rib Sides, Flat Ends, Norfolk and Western. Reporting Marks: N&W 38431, 38583, 38630, 38692, 38725, 38726, 38738, 38744.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, small roadname across top center and large "N & W" in center. Simulated coal loads included. Approximate Time Period: 1959 to mid-1970s. Previous Releases: None.



The same issue with a slight twist appears with this Z Scale Runner Pack as with the N Scale Runner Pack discussed above. The difference is that the Z Scale body style has flat ends, which makes it a bit less of a match for the HL Class. The key difference is still the fishbelly sides on the prototype cars in this N&W number series. As noted above, better road number choices for these cars would be between 60000 and 65814, but you still have the lack of peak ends with these cars.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



502 00 545, \$22.95

Reporting Marks: PA 1787.

40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, Pennsylvania 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 (Ruffed Grouse) and state flower (Mountain Laurel) on right. Forty-fifth release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

[Note: This commentary is largely reprinted from the July 2005 UMTRR.]

"Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania, refuse to use the pen!" goes one line of the song "But, Mr. Adams" from one of my all time favorite stage plays and films, **1776**. The verse is a reference to Ben Franklin's decline of the offer to write the Declaration of Independence. Franklin is most closely associated with Pennsylvania, but he wouldn't make my native list since he was from Boston. This all links together with my first official setting foot in the Keystone State: it was 1974, it was in Philadelphia via Amtrak train from New Jersey, and we visited Independence Hall, among other historic sites. My first comment: "It looks just like the movie!" The movie **1776**, of course. And yes, it did look like the movie set, although I think I had that backwards.

If the Swedes had been able to hold onto their claim on the area surrounding Tinicum Island, we might be writing about a much larger state of Delaware than about Pennsylvania. But that didn't happen, and the Dutch takeover of New Sweden didn't last long either, with the British tossing both of its rivals out of the area for good by 1674.

William Penn became proprietor of "Penn's Woods" in early 1681 as payment of a 16,000 pound debt owed by King Charles II of Great Britain. It was to include the land between the 39th and 42nd degrees of north latitude and from the Delaware River westward for five degrees of longitude. Penn sought the area as a refuge for his Friends, or, more properly, the Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers. It's one of four "states" that is really a Commonwealth. Its laws of the land were notably tolerant and included the "Great Law," a humanitarian code that guaranteed liberty of conscience. Also interesting in this vein is that though William Penn was granted all the land in Pennsylvania by the King, he and his heirs chose not to grant or settle any part of it without first buying the claims of Indians who lived there, a task not completely accomplished until 1789. This included tribes such as the Delaware, Erie, and Black and White Minqua, also known as the Honniasont and Susquehanna. As tolerant as this was, and as free as religions were, the colony still included slaves. But the Pennsylvania Gradual Abolition Act of 1780 was the first emancipation statute in the United States.

While Pennsylvania played a pivotal role in the American Revolution-- they don't call it Independence Hall for nothing!-- the constitution that the Commonwealth adopted, calling for a Supreme Executive Council instead of a Governor, upset many patriots but lasted until 1789. Constitutionalist who were gradually gaining influence in Pennsylvania helped get the Commonwealth into the United States just behind Delaware on December 12, 1787.

Growing industry and strong agriculture co-existed in Pennsylvania for the first half of the 19th Century. For example, the Cambria Works were the largest mills in the country. The state became a major battleground of the Civil War for a short time, culminating in the Battle of Gettysburg which was one of the most bitterly fought contests in military history. Progressive changes to the constitution occurred several times but it wasn't all forward progress: free African-Americans had been disenfranchised in one change in 1837.

There are lots of famous Pennsylvanians. I'd have a list just from Philadelphia: actor and comedian Bill Cosby, sculptor and inventor of the mobile Alexander Calder, singer Mario Lanza, anthropologist Margaret Mead, and actor W.C. Fields who famously said, "On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia." Others from the Commonwealth include actor James Stewart, dancer Gene Kelly, bandleaders Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey and Fred Waring, psychologist B.F. Skinner, president James Buchanan, auto executive Lee Iacocca, financier Andrew Mellon, painter Andrew Wyeth, and authors Gertrude Stein and Louisa May Alcott.

Things came full circle in a sense after the N Scale version of this car was released, when it was my turn to take my children to visit Philadelphia. Of course, this included a tour of Independence Hall. The tour is more guided and more supervised than I remember it. But it still looks like the movie.

HOn3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): Another Weathered Release to cover this time:

The following item was announced as an “off-cycle” release for July 2012 via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line,” all on or about July 16.



860 44 010, \$44.40

Reporting Marks: C&S 4505.

30 Foot Gondola, Wood Sided, Colorado and Southern.

Freight car red (brown) with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and white circle herald on right. Light weathering mostly in shades of gray. Simulated gravel load included. Approximate Time Period: early 1920s to late 1930s (1937 service date). Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Number 4507, January 2008; Road Number 4517, February 2008; Road Number 4505, June 2010. This is a weathered version of a previously released road number. Note that details (not shown in image above) are included and are added by the modeler.

The C&S as of the August 1924 ORER rostered four series of “Coal” cars-- what we usually refer to as gondolas. The series from which MTL took the 4507 was from 4498 to 4547 which was of 49 cars. These groups of cars were around the same dimensions and carried 50,000 pounds of lading although the cubic foot capacity varied. All together this amounted to 377 cars or more than one-third of the 1007 narrow gauge cars the C&S operated at the time.

Though the build date of this car is 1910 as per MTL, the “button herald” was in use starting approximately 1920 according to San Juan Decals which offers the button herald as well as other C&S schemes including the large “C & S” that preceded it on these cars. Using the 1937 service date printed on the car would result in an awfully short Less Approximate Time Period, as the C&S narrow gauge was torn up starting in 1938 and equipment was being sold off. So I went with the broader ATP in this case.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Since I am foregoing a more complete review of them– this column is long enough already as it is!—I’d better begin with the new Z Scale containers which can be used with, among other cars, the new CP Husky-Stack cars noted above. There is a four pack 40 foot containers, in red with the Genstar company name either plain white or white on a blue panel. Catalog 761 00 110 has an MSRP of \$19.95. Also released this month is a mixed four-pack of 20 foot containers, two for CAST in blue with white lettering and two for ACL (the container line, not the railroad!) in red with white lettering. It’s catalog 760 00 120 also at an MSRP of \$19.95.

Sticking with Z Scale, there’s now a Micro-Track girder bridge decorated for the Rock Island in silver and black (990 40 957, \$13.15). On their Facebook page, MTL also announced the restock of other Micro-Track... actually, perhaps “celebrated” is the more appropriate verb. As noted in the last UMTRR, a selection of SD40-2s are now back in stock: specifically, the

KCS, NS, Conrail, UP, ATSF, Milwaukee, SP, MKT and C&NW roadnames. (There will be a test on all those initials later.)

We'll transition from Z to N Scales via the new loads announced. In Z there's a pair of bulkhead lumber loads (799 43 944, \$9.95) and in N Scale there's a pair of generator loads (499 43 983, \$9.95). Sticking with N Scale, there is a new structure kit for a Waterfront Hotel (499 90 943, \$24.95). But that's not all: via the E-Line for July, MTL also disclosed plans for a series of Civil War era building kits to appear starting in August. From buildings to trucks: MTL has added medium and long extension Bettendorf trucks with couplers to its bulk pack offerings (003 10 022 and 033 10 024 respectively, \$49.50 for ten pair of trucks).

DISCONTINUED ALERT: No rest for the weary columnist this month, as the bye-bye board includes all four lines of equipment and runs one car past two columns in the July Micro-News! We'll take a deep breath and do the best we can, starting with the easy subsets first.

And those would be the narrow gauge cars, two in each scale. First, in Nn3 the boxcars for the Carson and Colorado (800 00 200, December 2009) and Ilwaco Railway and Navigation (800 00 210, August 2010) have left the building. In HOn3, the Colorado and Southern gondola reprint (860 00 010, June 2010) is gone – I'd expect that the remaining stock went into the July Weathered release – and the fifth 30 foot log car with load (865 00 050, August 2010) is outta here as well.

In N Scale, it does not at all surprise me that the Western Pacific "feather" boxcar from June is gone (020 00 210). So is the Meat Packer Car #2 for Chas Wolff Packing (058 00 516). We'll cover the rest of the outs in catalog number order as usual, starting with some boxcars: the Chicago Great Western "DF" plug door reprint (021 00 430, July 2011), the Boston and Maine/Guilford x-post reprint (025 00 400, March 2011), the first number of the Norfolk Southern x-post with load (025 00 731, August 2011, second number still available), and the yellow Frisco plug door reprint (038 00 480, November 2010). The second number of the BNSF flat car with load has rolled on (044 00 122, January 2011, first number still available). The American Pacific Whaling Company tank car is tapped out (065 00 700, December 2010). It's back to boxcars for the yellow Maine Central (073 00 120, October 2010) and over to Center Flows for the Sid Richardson Carbon Company release (093 00 100, March 2011). We close the N Scale sellouts with New York Central and Penn Central depressed center flat cars which represent the same series at different points in time (109 00 020, April 2011 and 109 00 100, August 2010), the CSX Ortner Hopper (125 00 100, April 2011) and the Penn Central bay window caboose (130 00 050, November 2009).

Moving to Z Scale, we have a tie for the winner of the fastest sellout for the month: first, the Weathered Release of the Southern Pacific black "Overnights" boxcar (500 44 400), and yes, that is one of the cars that is in this month's column... Other 40 foot boxcars gone include the second number of the Rock Island (500 00 622, January 2010, first number already sold out), the second number of the MKT (500 00 662, October 2010, first number also gone), the first number of the Canadian National "Canada's Largest Railway" scheme (500 00 671, December 2010, second number also sold out), the black "C&O for Progress" (500 00 690, April), and the

Santa Fe double door (501 00 200, February 2011). More boxcars? Okay, how about two Great Northerns, first the first number of the 40 foot car in green (503 00 101, January 2011, second number already gone) and the first number of the 50 foot plug door in red with slant roadname (506 00 261, June 2011, second number still available). Alright, one more boxcar, the plug door for Trona Chemicals (507 00 460, January 2011). Both numbers of the Boston and Maine PS-2 covered hopper are gone (531 00 13x, September 2010), which completes the rundown of runouts of freight cars. But wait, there's more, specifically passenger cars: the Rock Island Sleeper in both the unweathered (550 00 080) and weathered versions (550 44 080), the latter of which is the other tie for fastest sellout this month; the Southern Pacific Coach (552 00 070, August 2009); and the Rock Island baggage car (553 00 080, August 2010).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: The Pennsylvania Railroad boxcar with double door and end door released in May (078 00 010) is a bit of a "not a reprint." The roofwalk on this reprint is wood, whereas the first two runs carried steel roofwalks. (All executed in plastic, of course.) It's debatable whether a car in the Shadow Keystone paint would have kept a wood roofwalk, since they were outlawed on new cars circa 1945. I suppose Rule #1 still applies.

OOPS PATROL: My interpretation of the animal that appears on the Chas Wolff Packing Company refrigerator cars was called to task by a reader: "You state that there is an image of a wolf painted on the car. Well, I have never seen a wolf with pig-like ears and a curly pigtail. It is also wearing a ribbon (I suspect that it is a ribbon which would be attached to a prize winning pig, butchered by the Chaswolff Packing Co)." I suppose I should have been more vague—but then again, during my visit with Micro-Trains this month, they remarked that they weren't sure what the animal was supposed to be either. Hey, and speaking of visits...

FINALLY, A VISIT WITH MICRO-TRAINS: The mostly annual visit to the Bay Area to see my wife's family usually doesn't allow such things as an additional 800 mile round trip drive up to Talent, Oregon... but this year was an exception. And so, for the first time in more than twelve years, the folks at Micro-Trains welcomed this independent reviewer of Micro-Trains. (It would have been nice to attend the National N Scale Convention which was held in Medford the week before, but the day job dictated otherwise.)

I toured the factory and met many of the folks that have been responsible for bringing you the subjects of this column. Some things have changed behind the red and yellow sign since my last appearance in Talent in 1999—most notably, I'd say, of all things, the printing process for the Micro-News! (Think very large printer replaced by very quick color multifunction device...) I got an inside look at the research, design, manufacturing and painting process, and like many before me I am sure, marveled at how quickly and efficiently those small parts can be assembled! (I've long since given up on putting together my own couplers.) Any secrets to share? Well, no, not really, and besides, that wouldn't be fair anyway. I can say I saw a few of the July release of Z Scale Canadian National boxcars being weathered—and yes, it's quite the process!

Later, I had lunch with MTL CEO Eric Smith, his wife Vicki and Product Planning Coordinator Chris Randall—try the Sourdough Pancakes at Breadboard in Ashland, you can't go wrong! Afterwards, I had a quick chat with Chris and Eric about the upcoming Civil War series, and before taking my leave for a fast run back down Interstate 5, there was, naturally, a photo to commemorate the occasion. That's Chris on the left, Eric on the right, and your faithful byte-slinger in the middle. Many thanks to the folks at MTL for making me feel welcome, and for their nice posting of the visit on their Facebook page.



And that's all for now... we'll be back to whatever passes for normal around here for the August column. Until then, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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