



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #194 – February, 2013

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Hello again everyone! We add a little color to the UMTRR this issue – see above! As long as I was changing out the logo for the header of the website, I thought, why not add it to the column as well. Meanwhile, added to the Micro-Trains release parade this month is one colorful Meat Packer car, plus some colorful Ringling Brothers wagons, and, well, some more basic looking rolling stock as well. We lead off with a boxcar that I can't believe hasn't been issued before... but it hasn't! Let's have a look...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



020 00 906, \$19.10

Reporting Marks: CN 474927.

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

Brown (boxcar red) with white lettering including roadname (English one side, French other side) and reporting marks on left, and

“continuous line” (a.k.a. “wet noodle”) herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1960s (1965 service date given by MTL) and 1970s.

Hard to believe but true: There's never been a forty foot single door boxcar issued by MTL in this basic paint scheme. There have been CN cars in the white maple leaf (020 00 796, January 2009), and the green maple leaf (20206, January 1995 and January 1999) and even with the “wheat stalk” (20550, March 1986, December 1990 and June 1998), but never just the basic herald only version. There is of course the fact that this car's prototype series was not the Pullman-Standard PS-1, on which the 020 body style is based. Your take on how much of a “stand in” this car is may vary on that point.

Ian Cranstone's “Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net) has the series CN 474000 to 474599 built by Canadian Car and Foundry in April and May 1938. They had a forty foot inside length, ten foot inside height and a six foot door opening. There are a whole bunch of notes discussing renumbering, reclassification and even transfer of some of these cars to the CN's Newfoundland operations – narrow gauge! So the next question is, how many of these are left by the time the CN “wet noodle” –oops, I mean “continuous line”-- herald was adopted in 1960?

For that, we'll go to the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1963. And the answer is, “plenty.” More cars are included to result in the series CN 474000 to 477849, which had 3652 cars. To the above-mentioned dimensions I'll add an outside length of 41

feet 8 inches, extreme height of 14 feet 8 inches, and capacity of 3712 cubic feet or 90,000 pounds. Ian Cranstone has the series out of the ORERs by 1990, which I validated – 33 cars in July 1989, zero in October 1991. A stop along the way was July 1980 ORER, with 743 of the boxcars still in service. In all of those cases, you'd have to be thinking about roofwalk removal. So I'll call the Approximate Time Period at the 1970s for that reason.

While the CN herald was already in place, it's absolutely true that there were still a number of maple-leaf decorated cars around at the time and so there's no worry at all about mixing the schemes right through the decade of the 1960s. Witness for example CN 474800 in the Maple Leaf paint as of 1980, over on the "Fallen Flags" site (www.rr-fallenflags.org).

As for the car in the actual paint scheme MTL did this month... well, the UMTRR Research Accumulation came up dry, as did the usual online places. Fortunately, I guessed right that the source photo for this car is on Page 3 of the softcover volume **Canadian Railcar Pictorial Volume Two: 40 Foot Canadian National Boxcars Part 2**, which is in the Micro-Trains R&D Library. The fact that there are two forty-four page books devoted exclusively to the topic of forty foot CN boxcars implies that we could yet see more variations on the theme coming from the folks behind the red and yellow sign.



031 00 411 and 031 00 412, \$22.55 each.

Reporting Marks: PRR 83030 and 83052.

50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown (boxcar red) with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and "shadow keystone" herald on right. Simulated freight loads included. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (build date) to mid-1970s.

The first new boxcars to carry the "shadow keystone" scheme were these, PRR 82600 to 83099, a group of 500 cars built in 1958. These were Class X50 and were used for auto parts service according to Morning Sun's **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One). Page 86 of that book has a photo of PRR 83000 from that series, taken quite a bit later than 1958 given the consolidated stencils... and the weathering. Those stencils tell us that the cars' ATP would last at least into the Penn Central era. We'll check that. If you're online, the Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) has an undated shot of PRR 82682 found at North Little Rock, Arkansas. That car also has consolidated stencils and what looks like a service date of 1976. If true, then at least one made it to Conrail. We'll check that too.

But let's start with the ORER for January 1959. The series was at all 500 possible cars with these dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 52 feet, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4949 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Eighteen of the cars were equipped with racks for hauling automobile axles and were designated XAP instead of the usual XM. All of those cars were numbered 83000 or below so no match to the road numbers chosen by MTL.

Jumping to the April 1970 ORER and the Penn Central registration, we confirm that 317 of the cars remained with PRR lettering: 209 in the main series, 76 more in a major subset with a higher capacity of 110,000 pounds, and 32 more in six additional small subsets which had varying racks for various auto parts.

The Conrail listing in the April 1976 Equipment Register does show 133 cars remaining in the PRR group, with the same general subsetting: 90 cars in the main series, 34 more with 110,000 pounds capacity and nine with special racking for auto parts. The ATP can and probably should end here given roofwalk removal, but for the record, there were still three of these Pennsylvania Railroad cars in the April 1984 Register which is where I stopped looking. I suspect that some of these cars went to Penn Central or even Conrail paint, but that's another topic for another day, or perhaps another release.

Checking the example photos of the prototype series, we note two deltas: riveted sides, and a straight side sill running all the way across the car. This does make the 031 body style a "stand in" to some degree—the degree, of course, being up to the individual N Scaler. The two photos also show variation in terms of how the cars aged. The 83000 in the Color Guide looks like the color has faded, and there is plenty of wear and rust along the riveted seams. The 82682 on Fallen Flags looks quite dark versus its original lighter brown paint, though some of that appears to be from the actual photo.



049 00 630, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: RPRX 208.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Rath's Black Hawk Ham.

White and blue sides with brown roof and ends. Red "Rath's Black Hawk Ham" on white

half of side and "From the Land O'Corn" in white on blue half of side. Other lettering in white including reporting marks at lower left. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: 1933 (paint date) through mid-1930s. Release #10 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

I'm familiar with this car going all the way back to the 1970s release of an HO Scale kit by Train-Miniature that's in my dad's accumulation (in fact, I might have built that kit!). So nostalgia of a personal type would drive my interest in this car. The cool-looking paint scheme certainly makes this choice easy. I think others will agree. You've been cautioned.

First, we'll go to the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** by Hendrickson and Kaminski, where on Page 166, we've got a "bingo"-- a prototype photo of this exact car. It was leased to the Rath Packing Company of Waterloo, Iowa by Mather Stock Car Company, one of the cars in the series 100 to 299. According to the authors, Rath was one of Mather's most loyal customers and Rath leased cars from them from the 1920s to the 1950s. Mather was absorbed by North American Car Company in the late 1950s following a long, slow decline.

This particular car was painted in this colorful scheme in 1933 and was photographed in 1934. Given the billboard refrigerator ban, the actual ATP won't be long at all. I suspect this will be cheerfully ignored by many operators-- see "Rule #1." ("It's your railroad.") The car is forty feet long and has a flat underframe, vertical brake staff and straight sills, in other words, a good match from what I can see in the photo. That would not include comparison with the ends and roof which aren't visible in the straight-on image. Extremely small lettering on the top board next to the roof reads, "Mather Patent Line Low Temperature Refrigerator Car." I can't blame MTL for omitting this—it's smaller than the dimensional data and looks like it can't be more than an actual inch or two high!

The ORER for July 1935 has the Rath Packing Company cars called out in a separate registration even though Mather is designated as the owner. The series 200 to 499 had inside dimensions of 30 feet 4 ½ inches long, 7 feet 9 ¾ inches wide and 7 feet 1 ½ inches high and a capacity of 1578 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds, plus another 5,000 pounds in the ice bunkers. Remember that the ice bunkers took up space that wasn't included in the inside dimensions, so a 30 foot inside length car could easily be a car that was 40 feet long overall.

The Rath Packing Company had a relatively long history among independent meat packers. The original Rath company was located in Dubuque, Iowa and was destroyed by fire in early 1891. George Rath, the father who founded the company, decided to remain in Dubuque but his son Edward Rath and a cousin John Rath were enticed by an offer from Waterloo to locate there. (Thus illustrating that competition among communities for industry, in the form of tax concessions and other incentives, is not really a new phenomenon!) The Rath Packing Company opened in Waterloo later in 1891. War contracts helped the company to prosper and Rath was the fifth largest packer overall at the end of World War II. From then, a slow decline began, marked by labor troubles and an obsolete infrastructure. Rath became an employee-owned company in 1980 but closed for good in 1985.



059 00 556, \$27.10

Reporting Marks: APPX 317.

40 Foot Steel Ice Refrigerator Car, Agar Packing Company.

Yellow with brown roof and ends. Black lettering including large reporting marks on left. Black, white and red company logo on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1960s. New release, but originally done with an unprototypical legend for the N Scale Collector (NSC ID 98-65) with road number 317 (!) as part of the NSC's Meat Packing Set #2 in 1998 (NSC ID 98-67).

We have kind of a bonus Meat Packer car this month, and a "reprint" of sorts from an N Scale Collector Special Run Series of, ahem, the previous century. No worries that the road number is the same on both cars. In accordance with the Micro-Trains policy of the period, the NSC Meat Packer cars had extra lettering on it designating them as Special Runs. The price tag of \$127.50 for each NSC five pack, or \$25.50 per car, makes the MSRP of this regular release of nearly fifteen years later look pretty good by comparison.

The very large reporting marks are a giveaway to the lessor of this car to Agar: the Merchants Despatch Transit Company. MDT was mostly the carbuilding and refrigerator operation for the New York Central Railroad, but it also leased cars to other companies. According to Morning Sun's **Refrigerator Car Color Guide**, "APPX reporting marks first appeared sometime between 1948 and 1950 on cars leased from MDT." Page 57 of the book includes a photo of APPX 319 as found in April 1963. And we've got a bingo to APPX 317, as of July 1964, on Page 50 of the book **Classic Freight Cars Volume 3**. We've got at least an okay match between model and prototype, the most obvious difference to me being the rivet pattern on the sides (yes, I'm "counting rivets" again!).

I pick up the APPX reporting marks in the July 1953 ORER, but for the series 100 to 299. I do The 300 to 399 group appears in the January 1959 Equipment Register, with these dimensions: inside length 33 feet 2 inches, inside width 8 feet 3 inches, inside height 7 feet 3 7/8 inches, outside length 41 feet 5 inches, extreme height 10 feet 3 inches, and capacity 2120 cubic feet or 70,000 pounds, plus another ten to twelve thousand pounds for ice. However, there are only five cars in the group at that time. That count climbed to 32 in the July 1963 ORER, but the capacity changed to 2047 cubic feet or 85,000 pounds. Interesting. By January 1967 the count was back down to five cars. The APPX reporting marks were gone by the April 1970 Equipment Register.

I didn't find much on the history of the Agar Packing Company, except that it was acquired by Bluebird Foods during the 1970s. Bluebird was founded by Rose Cook Small, a woman who started a meat market with her first husband in 1933 and built it into what was once the largest meat-processing business in the United States. Besides Agar, Bluebird bought Patrick Cudahy, DAK, and Mid-South Packers. Small sold the company in 1980. A James Agar Company is mentioned in a Federal Trade Commission Report printed in 1919. I'm not sure this is the same company. Volume 61 of "The National Provisioner," also from 1919, reported that the Agar Packing Company merged with the Davies packing interests of Canada to form a company with plants in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg and Chicago.



096 00 110, \$25.55

Reporting Marks: SL-SF 79492.

PS-2 3 Bay High Side Covered Hoppers, Frisco (St. Louis-San Francisco).

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and large "FRISCO"

in center. Approximate Time Period: 1971 (build date) to late 1980s.

Morning Sun's **Frisco/Katy Color Guide to Freight Equipment**, Page 103, provides a bingo on this car—a rather well weathered bingo, though. The photo of the real SL-SF 79492 is from 1985 and shows the car with plenty of dirt, a few bent handrails, and the dimensional data and service date redone in white over brown paint. The build date of March 1971 is still visible. The 79492 belonged to the series SL-SF 79300 to 79499, built by Pullman-Standard. This group added to a roster of eight hundred cars of this type already purchased by or under lease to the Frisco.

We'll grab the ORER for July 1974 for the key dimensions: inside length 49 feet 3 inches, outside length 54 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, capacity 4427 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. Out of the original 200 cars, five were already off the roster. That's pretty fast attrition for a bit over three years.

The Frisco was merged into the Burlington Northern in 1980 but the 1985 date of the photo in the Color Guide allows us to jump to the January 1985 Equipment Register, where there are 157 cars still in service. The count was down to 85 cars in July 1989. The series is completely gone in July 1992. I suspect that most of the former Frisco cars were repainted by their new owner. There are several examples of this in the BN Color Guide also produced by Morning Sun, though not from this particular series.



142 00 030, \$27.10

Car Name: Pocomoke.

12-1 Heavyweight Sleeping Car, Pullman / CB&Q (Burlington Route).

Pullman Green sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Metallic gold lettering including "Pullman" in center of letterboard and car name at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1910 to 1953. Note: This car is erroneously listed as "Burlington Northern" in the February Micro-News.

A member of Trainboard posted several links which are very useful to us here. We'll take them in reverse chronological order. First, there's reposted correspondence on the CBQ Group, provided to the Colorado Railroad Museum, that the "Pocomoke," along with the cars "Adriatha" and "Morehead" was sent to the Burlington's Aurora, Illinois shops in May, 1953. Direction given to the shops was as follows: "All Pullman markings should be obliterated and replaced with CB&Q lettering; these cars to be renumbered 606, 608 and 609 respectively." The Pocomoke became the 609, and that's most definitely the end of the Approximate Time Period. Second, there's a shot of the car in service as the Pocomoke in 1950, a ways from "Q" rails in Boston, in the archive section of Northeast.Railfan.Net. (The direct link is www.northeast.railfan.net/images/cbq_pocomoke0.jpg .) The side of the prototype car visible in the image isn't a match to either side of the MTL 142 body style just looking at the window arrangements. This might not be surprising since the real Pocomoke was a Plan 2410A car, not a 3410 that is the basis for the Micro-Trains car. Jerry Laboda's list of available cars for the MTL body style actually does include several names for CB&Q cars (McKnight, McNab, McLeansboro, Mackenzie, McQuesten and McKinnell) which might be better choices for the Burlington modeler.

It's noted on the Pullman Project website (pullmanproject.com) that the Pocomoke was built as a Pullman pool car in 1913 and equipped with air conditioning in 1935. The fact that it was a pool car means it may or may not have run specifically on the Burlington. Checking into this would be quite the task, and I'm way too lazy for that. We do know that the car was sold to the CB&Q circa 1948 as part of the Pullman Divestiture and that it most certainly did run on the line after that. It appears to have been scrapped sometime in the early part of the 1960s.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



125 00 010, \$24.90

Reporting Marks: SP 481396.

Three Bay Ortner Hopper, Southern Pacific.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname across center. Approximate Time Period: early

1980s (1981 build date given by MTL) into the decade of the 2000s. Previous Release (as catalog 125010): Road Number 481388, November 2004.

Time certainly flies. It's been nearly eight and one-half years since the first release in what was then Micro-Trains 99th body style. At that time, the "as late as the present" was okay for the end of the Approximate Time Period. We'll need to see if that still holds true.

Internet-wise, there is a pretty amazing lack of data on Ortner, which was acquired by Trinity Industries in 1987. Ortner's fairly unique looking square cars were by no means the first rapid discharge hoppers they built; in fact, by 1980, the year before this car was built, they'd already done ten thousand cars that looked more like the traditional hoppers we're used to seeing. This car sees special duty, in aggregate service, for example, but it does tend to move in unit trains. Which, I know, begs the question "why not a Runner Pack" (other than the Amtrak one, that is, from 2009), but I suspect that renumbering these shouldn't be terribly difficult. Meanwhile, there hasn't been all that much in print either. A look through the Model Train Magazine Index resulted in just eight citations for Ortner, two of which are the two-part article in the February and March 1996 issues of Model Railroading which described how to scratchbuild (!) a model. (That piece did get us pictures of Micro-Trains' Western Paving release from last year.)

The Southern Pacific's roster of these cars appears to be limited to the number series 481150 to 481399, which numbered 248 out of the possible 250 cars in the January 1985 ORER. Check out the disparity between the inside length, 29 feet 8 inches, and the outside length, 43 feet 10 inches. Annoyingly, there is no inside height specified, but the extreme height is given as 12 feet 10 inches. The capacity is 2300 cubic feet or 199,000 pounds. The lading carried in these cars tended to be heavier than that typically carried in hoppers. There were 246 cars listed in October 1996, and 140 still in place in the SP series under the Union Pacific in January 2002. Only seven remained as of the January 2011 ORER though—not enough for a "to present" in my estimation. In addition, photos on espee.railfan.net and RRPictureArchives.net have two of these cars in reporting marks only decoration. The 481215 was found in Albany, Oregon in 2009 for example. I still wouldn't expect a depiction of that scheme anytime soon from MTL.

Lee Gautreaux's site comes to the rescue with a shot of SP 481356 in the MTL-depicted decoration as of 1984, an image that Gautreaux himself took of the 481363, and shots of two other Espee Ortners as well. That's four more cars than I had eight and one-half years ago! Gautreaux notes that "these cars were very common in Texas and Louisiana hauling sand, gravel and aggregates." Other pictures on the page may point to what happened to them: same number series, but with reporting marks SPTX, found in Austin in September 2006.

They have the basic brown paint and plain white reporting marks as the repainted cars mentioned above. SPTX points back to—guess who—Trinity Rail Management, Inc. which listed 134 hoppers in the series 481150 to 481399... or the same numbers as what appear to be the former Southern Pacific cars, in the January 2011 Equipment Register.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:

The following items were announced as mid-month releases via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about February 14.



054 44 020, \$25.75

Reporting Marks: SP 508436.

61 Foot Steel Bulkhead Flat Car, Southern Pacific.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left.

Moderate weathering. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s to present, or mid-1970s to late 1980s, strictly speaking (see November 2012 UMTRR). Previous Releases (as Catalog Number 54020 except for the last): A six-pack (Catalog 54022) with road numbers 508420, 508452, 508733, 508774, 508842 and 508874, December 1986; a second six-pack (also Catalog 54022) with road numbers 508402, 508425, 508437, 508477, 508478 and 508482, December 1988; Road Number 508898, March 2003; Road Number 580422, November 2012.



054 44 080, \$28.75

Reporting Marks: GVSR 459019.

61 Foot Steel Bulkhead Flat Car, Golden West Service (Galveston Railway).

Blue with yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname in center. "Golden West Service" logo in red and yellow on right. Light weathering and graffiti on right end of one side. Approximate Time Period: early 1990s to early 2000s. Previous Release: Road Number 459003, June 2001; Road Number 459001, November 2012.

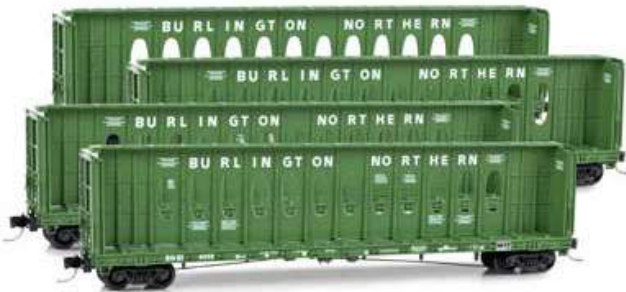
center. "Golden West Service" logo in red and yellow on right. Light weathering and graffiti on right end of one side. Approximate Time Period: early 1990s to early 2000s. Previous Release: Road Number 459003, June 2001; Road Number 459001, November 2012.

It hasn't been that long since the previous runs of the "clean" versions of these cars so I'll briefly recap from the November 2012 UMTRR. These cars could very well be from the same series, given the relationship between the Southern Pacific and the Golden West Service. As SP cars, they were numbered from 508400 to 508889, and with GVSR reporting marks, they were in the general group 443000 to 459034 as of 1992 and 443000 to 461044 as of 1996. Both sets of cars have much shorter bulkheads on the prototype than on the model, and the model car is a bit shorter in overall length, which was over 65 feet. The item that makes me think that these cars went from SP to Golden West and back again is a 2010 photo of SP 508884 in Maintenance of Way service—a restenciled Golden West car in very faded blue. That image and other information is on Lee Gautreaux's "Railgoat" website (www.railgoat.railfan.net).

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #73, four Union Pacific 50 Foot X-Post Double Door Boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2012 issue. The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks for these items are as follows: 030 51 180, Road Number 300300; 030 52 180, Road Number 300318; 030 53 180, Road Number 300329; 030 54 180, Road Number 300335.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is August 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close February 28.



Scheduled August 2013 Release:

993 00 079, \$99.95

Quantity four of 60 Foot Centerbeam Flat Cars, Burlington Northern.

Reporting Marks: BN 624425, 624437, 624449, 624481.

Green with mostly white lettering including reporting marks at bottom left and roadname across top of center beam. Approximate Time

Period: 1980 (build date) to mid-1990s. Previous Releases (as Catalog Number 53010): Road Number 624463, January 1995; Road Number 624469, May 1998. The Runner Pack releases should carry individual catalog numbers 053 5x 010.

At least as far as the UMTRR Research Accumulation is concerned, the definitive print reference on the prototype for this body style is Scott Chatfield's article in the January 1996 issue of **Rail Model Journal** (available online at Trainlife.com). Chatfield calls the MTL car a match to the Burlington Northern's order of 300 of these cars, and that's good enough for me. This Runner Pack adds four more numbers to the two already release, but that's barely a dent in the three hundred cars in the series. Fortunately, further renumbering won't be difficult, and the reporting marks are small enough that you might not be worried.

The series you'll want is BN 624400 to 624699, listed in the April 1984 ORER with the description "Flat, Center Beam, Tie-Downs, Truck Centers 52 Feet, 10 Inch Travel (Lumber)." The inside length was 60 feet 8 inches, inside height 11 feet 2 inches, outside length 68 feet, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, and capacity 199,000 pounds. These cars were within Plate C dimensions. Just one was missing from the original 300 cars at the time. In the October 1996 Register, there were two groups split by capacity adding up to 289 cars. By January 2006 within the BNSF Railway registration, there remained 253 in the BN series. My proxy for "the present," the January 2011 ORER, shows just 24 cars left.

Our anonymous assistant on BNSF subjects adds that as of the real “the present,” there’s just three cars left in BN paint, the 624544, 624590 and 624660. The successor series for these BN cars is BNSF 559175-559453, of which there are 23 cars remaining as of this writing. BN also had a series of cars built in 1977 numbered 624100 to 624289 which are now BNSF 559000 to 559129. Micro-Trains has done a BNSF Centerbeam (catalog 53 00 070, Road Number 559041, released April 2009).

Morning Sun’s **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has a shot of a fully loaded BN 624665 as of 1984, and an unloaded BN 624221, from a 1977-built series of cars, in the paint scheme that MTL used for its car. I imagine that the two schemes are essentially identical, if not the actual cars.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



101 00 706, \$24.95

Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Battle of Antietam.

Car #6 in the Smithsonian Civil War Series.

Side A is gray with smooth side across which is rendered a full color depiction of the Battle of Antietam based on artwork provided by the Smithsonian Institution. Side B of car is in gray with United States and Confederate flags either side of the door. No reporting marks or road number appear on this car.

A quick look on a certain large internet seller of books and many other things reveals that there have been entire volumes written about the Battle of Antietam. Last year, as part of a series called “Making Sense of the Civil War,” my wife led and facilitated a discussion of the event. So, as usual, it’s not practical to do more than offer a brief summary in these bytes.

The National Park Service offers a two-page printable overview on its website describing the historic site (www.nps.gov/ancm/index.htm). The Battle of Antietam, also called the Battle of Sharpsburg, took place on September 17, 1862. Confederate General Robert E. Lee stated that “we cannot afford to be idle” after the South won the Second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) in late August, planned to take the Civil War to the North, “liberating” Maryland and moving into Pennsylvania. He hoped that a successful invasion would further demoralize the North and influence the mid-term Union elections. Lee split his army, sending Stonewall Jackson to capture the key gateway of Harper’s Ferry while he moved northward into Maryland. President Lincoln sent Major General George McClelland to reorganize the army and hold the Union territory.

The twelve hour battle began at dawn with the two armies on opposite sides of Antietam Creek. McClelland’s plan was to come at the left, then the right, then break the center. Lee shifted his men around to withstand the attacks, but sustained more than 15,000 casualties. The Confederates were bent but not broken, and many of the Union troops never actually

saw battle since they didn't make it to the front lines. The next day, the staggering toll began to become apparent (though it was never precisely counted): 23,000 casualties including 3,650 dead, more in one single day than any other in American history, before or since. The Confederate forces did pull back from their invasion of the North, but they would be back.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the Battle of Antietam did not take place on the field of war itself. With the invasion of Northern territory, President Lincoln saw the opportunity to make the Civil War not just for the preservation of the Union, but for the end of slavery. Five days later, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation. As written on the National Park Service website, "The proclamation reflected Lincoln's new way of thinking about the conflict. Until this time, it was seen as a rebellion, a fight to preserve the Union without touching slavery. Now Lincoln was threatening to crush the Confederacy by destroying slavery, the basis of its economy and society. Now the North was waging a moral crusade to free the slaves... the enlistment of black Americans as soldiers could give the Union's ailing war machine a much-needed boost."

In addition to the above item, two Ringling Brothers' Vintage Wagon Packs are now available. Pre-orders were taken for these items in September 2012. Pre-production samples are shown here.



Catalog Number 470 00 059 (\$29.95) consists of two gold wagons, and Catalog Number 470 00 069 (\$29.95) consists of one purple and one green wagon.

Also released this month is the MTL/Smithsonian Civil War 150th Anniversary Union Train Set (993 01 200, \$189.95). (The Confederate Train Set is scheduled for release in March.) The individual items in this set are as follows (all United States Military Railroad).



993 01 200, Bachmann 4-4-0 Steam Locomotive with MTL paint and link and pin coupler on tender, Locomotive Name "Clarke."



151 00 009, 26 Foot Boxcar, Road Number 194.
151 00 019, 26 Foot Boxcar, "Hospital Car," Road Number 70.



153 00 009, 26 Foot Flat Car with 2 Mortar Loads, Road Number 295.
152 50 009, 26 Foot Converted Boxcar (Caboose), Road Number 49.

MTL notes that the link and pin couplers supplied with this set won't couple and uncouple with "hands-free" operation – in other words, not automatically!

Finally, available mid-month (which is, most likely, as you read this) is the Grand Central Terminal 100th Anniversary Passenger Set (993 01 220, \$229.95). The individual catalog numbers for each item are as follows (all lettered in white for the New York Central Railroad except where noted):



985 50 708, Model Power 4-6-2 Pacific Steam Locomotive with MTL Magne-Matic coupler on tender, Road Number 1306.



140 50 110, Railway Post Office, Road Number 4868.



145 51 110 and 145 52 110, Heavyweight Coaches, Road Numbers 1446 and 1452.



144 50 110, Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Pullman "Central Plains."

N₃ SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



500 00 751 and 500 00 752, \$28.90 each. Road Numbers: 466032 and 466096 (will be preceded with "B&O" in website listings).

40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Door, Baltimore and Ohio "Sentinel Service."

Aluminum sides with blue band. Aluminum ends and roof. Blue lettering including "Sentinel Fast Freight Service," roadname and roadnumber on left. Multicolor "Sentinel Service" logo on right. White dimensional data on blue band on sides. Blue end markings. Approximate Time Period: late 1940s through at least the 1950s.

Records show that the first one hundred cars of the B&O series 460000 to 460499 built in 1945 by General American were painted in this attractive scheme. (The rest of the cars received the more typical B&O oxide red with white lettering.) The “Sentinel Fast Freight Service” was the Baltimore & Ohio’s entry into the expedited freight business, and an attempt to stem the tide of traffic moving toward trucks. The railroad guaranteed delivery on a certain date with this service and “Siding to Siding Dependability”, long before the days of Express Mail or “absolutely positively” commitments.

Checking the ORER for January 1953, we find that the series, like many of the B&O’s boxcars, had a ten foot inside height, a concession to the low clearances along the railroad’s lines – and a delta to the MTL body style. (And everyone else’s widely available model boxcars, as far as I know.) The rest of the dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, outside length 42 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening 7 feet (oops, a “door thing” but hard to tell in 1:220) and capacity 3715 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. The total series numbered 496 of the possible 500, but that’s not terribly relevant since not all of these cars got “Sentinel” paint. For that matter, additional ORER lookups probably aren’t either.

Morning Sun’s B&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment includes three photos of the Sentinel boxcars, including a bingo on the 466032 from 1954. The first thing to “go” on the car in terms of weathering appears to be the green in the signal on the Sentinel logo on the right, revealing that the green was painted over the yellow base for the device. The resulting “yellow board” is rather fitting given that the battle for less than carload service was ultimately lost to trucking. There is also a freshly painted 466098 on display at the York, Pennsylvania Fair in 1951. Finally, there’s a shot of the 466074 in an unknown location at an unknown date, but we do see the reweigh date of April 1957 which means the photo was taken then or later. Thus I think we can extend the Approximate Time Period to “at least” the end of the 1950s, and probably later.



507 00 601 and 507 00 602, \$26.15 each
Reporting Marks: WP 59115 and 59116.
50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Plug Door,
Western Pacific.

Brown with yellow lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left, and large “WP” initials with

slogan “The Western Way” on right. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (build date) to no later than 1976.

Morning Sun’s **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 46, provides a bingo on the WP 59116, one of the two cars Micro-Trains has modeled. Those two are part of a short series of twenty-five insulated boxcars numbered 59101 to 59125, built in October 1959 by Pullman-Standard. These came delivered with the “The Western Way” slogan as depicted by MTL and were among the first sets of cars to be painted this way. The stylized “PC” on the door stands for Pullman-Standard Compartmentizer according to the

Color Guide; other groups received Evans DF Loaders or Pacific Car and Foundry "Car-Pac" loaders. (A more interesting picture on the same page of the Color Guide is of WP 60040 with the Car-Pac loaders, and what appears to be a pigeon convention on the roof!) The model to prototype fidelity looks pretty good to this reviewer, including the welded sides and the shape of the side sills.

But—and how's this for nitpicking—there is what amounts to a tiny "door thing" according to the listing in the July 1963 Equipment Register. The door opening is 8 feet 7 inches while the MTL body style door is only 8 feet. Horrors! That's 0.0318 inch when reduced to Z Scale! Anyway, the rest of the key dimensions were as follows: inside length 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 9 feet 6 inches (remember the insulation will reduce the interior size), outside length 51 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, and capacity 4389 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. There was already one car missing from the original 25 at that time. Also note that the cars were technically "Refrigerator" cars with AAR Designation RBL, as we often see with plug door boxcars. However, they are described as "Box, All Steel, Insulated." End notes call out roller bearing trucks and DF type loaders.

The WP sometimes changed paint schemes like you and I change socks, so I can't be all that sure of the Approximate Time Period except via photo evidence. The picture in the Color Guide is from 1960—not all that helpful for a car built in late 1959. Ken Harstine's "Boxcars and Freight Cars of North America" site (www.boxcars.us) does have a November 1960 photo of the WP 59013—helpful if you don't have the Color Guide. Checking through the ORER accumulation, the ATP can't end any later than between the April 1975 Register, where 22 cars remain, and the April 1976 Register, where the series is completely gone. Throw in repainting and roofwalk removal, and the ATP could be less long than that. Even at its maximum, the total service life in the original series is rather short.



518 00 170, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: RPRX 208.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Rath's Black Hawk Ham.

White and blue sides with brown roof and ends. Red "Rath's Black Hawk

Ham" on white half of side and "From the Land O'Corn" in white on blue half of side. Other lettering in white including reporting marks at lower left. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: 1933 (paint date) through mid-1930s. Release #10 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release of this car above (049 00 630).



980 01 030, \$109.95 and 980 02 030, \$94.95

Road Numbers: 1641 (A unit) and 2442 (B unit) (Will be preceded with "NYC" in website listings).

Powered F7A and F7B Locomotives, New York Central.

Black with gray "lightning stripe" bordered with thin white stripes and accented with white stripes on nose of A unit. White lettering including road name and road number on side of both A and B unit. Approximate Time Period: 1949 to mid-1960s. Micro-Trains noted that these locomotives will be shipped mid-month which should have them on the way to dealers at UMTRR "press time." Previous Releases of the Powered A Unit (as Catalog 14003): Road Number 3501, March 1986; Road Number 3505, May 1989; Road Number 1710, February 1995. Previous Release of Unpowered B Unit (as Catalog Number 980 12 030): Road Number 2421, February 2007.

This is a bit of a mix between a New Release and a Reprint. MTL has not released a Powered B Unit in this paint scheme. While the Powered A is the fourth road number in NYC colors, it's the first from Micro-Trains on the improved F7A model. So it's not a surprise that the "New" designation has been applied here.

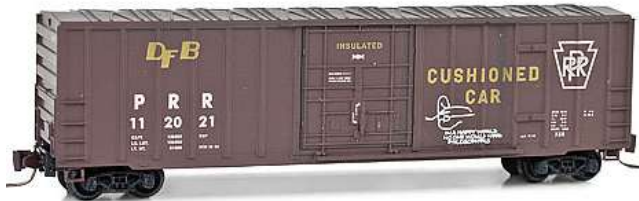
As part of my research for these releases, I treated myself to a page by page distraction into the two Morning Sun volumes titled **New York Central Lightning Stripes**, both by the late David R. Sweetland and published in 1990 and 1993 respectively. While I did not get a "bingo" on either the 1641 or the 2442, I certainly had a good time looking!

The New York Central was a big customer for F7s, with multiple purchases from EMD for these units. When the roster was complete, the F7As numbered from 1636 to 1873 and the F7Bs from 2420 to 2474. Units 1670 and 1671 are pictured on Page 57 of **Lightning Stripes Volume Two**, riding the turntable at Albany, New York in November 1949, soon after their delivery. It's noted that earlier units were painted in the predecessor scheme with a shorter lightning stripe on the A unit and no stripe at all on the B unit. Therefore, if the F7s were delivered in road number sequence, then the road numbers MTL chose may not have been in the full lightning stripe scheme when delivered. Duly noted in the ATP.

Deeming the lightning stripes too expensive, the NYC had switched to the "cigar band" scheme of a single white stripe over a black carbody in the early 1960s. According to **Lightning Stripes Volume Two**, most cab units were in the cigar band by October 1964. However, F7A 1870 as of March 1963 in Cleveland (which is, by the way, where the FTs ended up) and F7A 1653 in Erie, Pennsylvania in February 1965 were both still in lightning stripes, giving us a reasonable estimate of the end of the ATP. Over two hundred of the Central's F7s were brought into the Penn Central merger of 1968.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month (assuming the above NYC F7s are “New Releases”!)

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following item was announced as an “off-cycle” release via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line,” all on or about February 14.*



511 44 010, \$22.90

Reporting Marks: PRR 112021.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Dark boxcar red with white and yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and “Cushioned Car” and plain keystone herald on right. Light weathering and white graffiti below “Cushioned Car” wording on one side of car. Approximate Time Period: 1965 (build date) through early 1970s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 112015, December 2006.

This is one of the uncommon Z Scale Weathered Releases that is in a new road number. I’ll speculate that this was planned to be a regular reprint at one point and then it was decided to flip it to a weathered car instead.

The prototype for this car was the Pennsy’s X58 group, the only series of PRR boxcars built to the “modern” exterior post design that is standard today. They were built in 1964 and 1965 and varied by subclass. The 112015 was part of the unsuffixed X58s and were actually AAR Classification RBL, or technically “refrigerator” cars given their insulation. X58As were Class XPs, X58Bs were XLs and X58Cs were XLs or plain XMs. Equipment inside these cars varied so one might have seen an “SL” (Transco SL-1 loaders) or an “LD” (Equipco Load Divider bulkheads) instead of the “DFB” (Evans Damage Free Bulkheads) above the reporting marks. It all added up to more than 2500 cars of this type as of April 1968, of which the X58s numbered 1074 cars by themselves. “Rob’s Pennsy Page” (pr.railfan.net) has this information and an on-line equipment diagram; of each of the subclasses, no less.

The January 1967 ORER showed the series 112000 to 112299 with all 300 possible cars, described as “Box, Steel, 20 inch Travel Cushion Underframe” and, as I mentioned the RBL classification. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 3 inches (allowing for insulation), inside width 9 feet even (ditto), outside length 57 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 2 inches, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, capacity 4358 cubic feet and 135,000 pounds. As of April 1970 and the Penn Central listing, there were 283 cars in the group. It’s noted online that these were among the last cars repainted from the Pennsy scheme, although I recall some pretty hideous paint-outs rolling by me in New Jersey. The PC had properly repainted some X58s into, for example, the series 361299 to 362372. While I’m reasonably sure that when the Jade Green PC paint was put on, the running boards came off, X58s remaining with the as delivered PRR paint most likely also had the roofwalks pulled. So the ATP ending in the early 1970s is a change I’ve made from the first release of this car.

Entering Conrail in the April 1976 ORER, there were still a total of 168 cars with the PRR keystone in place. By April 1981 the end was near for the PRR paint, with just 14 cars left in this particular group. But Conrail paint, or at least stenciling, was on some X58 cars numbered 361910 to 362009.

Morning Sun's **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** notes alongside a photo of PRR 118223, also an X58, that the insulated cars were meant to carry pre-cooled foods that needed to be kept cool but not actually refrigerated enroute. The insulation weight took the capacity down to 135,000 pounds from the 140,000 that was typical of the other X58 subclasses. As long as I've got a reference photo or two, I might as well deliver the not so good news: the MTL body style is really more of a stand in. Topping the list of differences, if you'll pardon the pun, is that the real cars initially had a roofwalk and full ladders! The prototype cars had eight ribs on each side of the door while the model has seven. The ends on the real cars are the more "traditional" 4/4 Dreadnaught type (I think that's right) but the MTL model has the more modern squared off end ribs. At least the door is a pretty close match.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #50, four Chesapeake & Ohio boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2012 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 507 51 570, 22585; 507 52 570, 22598; 507 53 570, 22620; 507 54 570, 22633.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is August 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close February 28.



Scheduled August 2013 Release:

994 00 056, \$79.95

Quantity four of 50 Foot Steel Post Boxcars, Plug Door, Milwaukee Road.

Reporting Marks: MILW 16606, 16609, 16615, 16628.

Brown with yellow door. White lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and "tilted rectangle" herald on right. Legend "LRD" in brown on door. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (rebuild date given by MTL) to early

1980s. Previous Releases: None. Note that image is of the N Scale version (released May 2011). The Z Scale version should be similar. Catalog Numbers expected to be 505 5x 300 which will be confirmed upon release.

George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) has a bingo on MILW 16606, also one of the four cars in this forthcoming quartet, in the form of an image from the Jim Sands Collection, taken in 1966 in Milwaukee. It looks to be fresh out of the paint shop. That makes sense considering the MTL car copy, which states that it was rebuilt and equipped with Load Restraining Devices (the "LRD" reference on the door) in April 1966. The prototype car has riveted sides while the 505 body style has welded sides. The low angle of the photo precludes much in the way of further comment.

While MTL says the car was built in 1957, we'll focus on the years following the rebuild. The ORER for January 1967 shows a relatively short series of thirty cars numbered 16606 to 16635. They were described as "Box, Movable Bulkheads" with AAR Classification XML. The inside length was 49 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 9 feet (a slight "door thing" there versus MTL's eight foot door), and capacity 4560 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds.

It seems that it might have taken the folks over at the ORER some time to catch up to the Milwaukee's rebuilding of these cars. In the April 1970 Equipment Register we have a bunch of end notes for this group of cars, calling out "movable bulkheads, load dividers, or compartmentizers," and "rub rails or side fillers" and finally "retractable side fillers." The group remains at thirty cars with the 16606 one of four in a subset with a different inside width of 9 feet 4 inches. By the time we get to the July 1974 ORER, we should be thinking about roofwalk removal, but we'll check anyway: all thirty cars present and accounted for with a 17 to 13 split on the inside width. The second of those subsets which includes the 16606 carries an explanation: "Adjustable Side Fillers Removed." Also, this group is end-noted "Specially equipped interiors and not suitable for general service."

The Milwaukee Road became a Fallen Flag in 1986 with what was left of it being merged into Canadian Pacific's Soo Line. The 16606 was not among the cars that were transferred to the new owner; it looks like they were off the roster no later than 1984. So "early 1980s" it is for the end of the ATP, but mind that roofwalk.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases this month, but we do have the start of a new series open for pre-orders.

The following items are in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is July and August 2013 (see below). UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close February 28.



Scheduled July 2013 Release:

Catalog Number TBD, \$24.95

World War II Nose Art Series #1, "Belle Wringer." Silver 60 foot flat car with black lettering including reporting marks on left and

"U.S. Army Air Corps" in center. Green 40 foot container with multicolor artwork depicting "Belle Wringer" from nose art on plane with serial number 44-50694.



Scheduled August 2013 Release:

Catalog Number TBD, \$24.95

World War II Nose Art Series #2, "Caboose."

Green 60 foot flat car with white lettering including reporting marks on left and "U.S. Army Air Corps" in center. Gray 40 foot container with multicolor artwork depicting "Caboose" from nose art on plane with serial number 44-67980.

Both items above are shown using Micro-Trains representational artwork; actual product may differ.

Well, this is a surprise for Z Scalpers and for this reviewer. And a cause of a bit of envy among the N Scalpers who wonder why this wasn't announced in N Scale also. There are several reasons in my opinion, not the least of which is the already existing series of World War II themed rolling stock (from another manufacturer!) including, if I recall correctly, nose art.) Anyone who's watched any World War II films has already seen the inspiration for this new series of twelve releases, plus a planned companion F7 diesel and caboose.

The page "Military Aircraft Nose Art: An American Tradition" on the "Through Our Parents' Eyes" website (direct URL <http://parentseyes.arizona.edu/militarynoseart/overview3.htm>) provides a short history of the practice. "Since men's lives depended as much upon a well-functioning airplane as upon able fellow crew members, it is easy to understand why they personalized these inanimate machines," writes Dr. James S. Griffith on the page. Subjects range from the patriotic to the racy – and the farther away the planes were expected to be from American shores, the racier the art got! (A fair amount of it was censored before coming home.) While the Second World War was the conflict most closely associated with the practice, nose art has appeared in every conflict since then. The practice was also not limited to the United States; in fact it's said to have grown out of German and Italian painting of symbols on planes. But America certainly raised nose art to, well, an art form.

So, are there "prototype photos"... of a plane? Well, yes, actually! The "Caboose" is on a page showing the planes of the "315th" (more properly, the 315th Bomb Wing in Guam) on the website nose-art.net. Prints of "Belle Wringer" are available commercially. Did you catch the wringer catching the belle's skirt? (Maybe I should start with, "Do you know what a wringer is?") There's no shortage of artwork from which MTL can choose- and that's just sticking with the G-Rated varieties.

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

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Rather quiet this month. In Z Scale there is only a new load, of simulated scrap metal for the fifty foot gondolas (799 43 947, two for \$9.95). In N Scale there's an "MOW Storage Shed Load" (499 43 987, \$4.95) which is basically a depiction of a piece of a boxcar with a new end wall and doors. There is also an N Scale "Civil War Era Transfer Dock Kit" (499 90 950, \$29.95) unassembled and unpainted as usual, but with applications that I think go well beyond the 1860s.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Not so quiet this month. One HOn3 Scale item is easy enough though: the White Pass & Yukon gondola with load (860 00 050, July 2009). The bye-board for Z Scale isn't too long either, with five items, starting with both numbers of the Baltimore & Ohio offset hopper (533 00 02x, March 2012) and the second number of the Southern Pacific ribside hopper (534 00 022, April 2012, first number still available). Rounding out the 1:220 outs are the North Dakota state car (502 00 534, May 2011) and the second number of the Union Pacific "synthetic red" boxcar (506 00 272, August 2011, first number still available).

The N Scale list of cars is more extensive, starting with both numbers of the Great Northern Greenville double door boxcar (122 00 03x) from last month. Perhaps the "anything with the GN goat on it sells" theory is still applicable! Four weathered releases have left the building: the Pennsylvania plug door boxcar (021 44 886, November 2012), the "The Rock" boxcar (073 44 220, August 2012), the Katy boxcar with very large MKT (077 44 220, November 2011) and the Grand Trunk Western center flow (092 44 010, May 2011). Three Ringling Brothers "Big Top Extravaganza" cars have left town: the "Gorilla Car" (035 00 190, January 2011), the second flat car with wagon (045 00 372, November 2011) and the "Clown Caboose" (051 00 270, May 2011). Four passenger cars have departed the station: sleepers for the Santa Fe (141 00 040, October 2010) and Union Pacific (141 00 060, November 2011), the Union Pacific parlor car (143 00 060, March 2011) and the Canadian Pacific observation car (144 00 080, November 2011). The single release Southern Pacific and Pacific Fruit Express trailers have trucked out (450 00 080 and 450 00 130, December 2012). And finally there are these sellouts, in catalog number order: the "The Rock" x-post boxcar reprint (025 00 170, December 2012), the BC Rail x-post boxcar (026 00 050, October 2012), the Pennsylvania Railroad gondola (046 00 400, also October 2012), the Evansville Packing Meat Packer refrigerator car (058 00 140, also October 2012—a hat trick!), and the Delaware & Hudson combination door boxcar (076 00 020, March 2011).

OOPS PATROL: In the January UMTRR, I got the catalog number wrong on the N Scale Decker Meats refrigerator car; it's 049 00 640, not 049 00 630. My website listings are correct.

Unfortunately, that's not the half of it... as the 103 44 060 Santa Fe "Gates" weathered and graffitied car from last month was in fact done with a **previously unreleased** road number. I took an error in the MTL



Database from their website, which has the previous road numbers as 37562 and 37566 when they were actually 37562 and 37565, and brought it right into the January UMTRR. Instead of, perhaps, checking my own accumulation for the previous road numbers... Fortunately, Steven Purvis did check his, and reported this error, for which many thanks. But staying with that car for a moment longer...

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Last month in my commentary on the "Gates" car above, I wondered how so many additional colors could have been added for what was a price point not much above the unweathered version of the car. Peter Wisniewski did some detective work on this, and offers this possible explanation. "While

regular car decorations are still done by Tampo printing, one color at a time, graffiti is done a bit differently. My explanation is unofficial, mind you, as I only deduced this by careful examination of the printing method and my experience with computer printers.

“MTL prints graffiti using some fancy flat-bed, direct-to-substrate color ink jet printer which uses an organic-solvent ink. They most likely place a bunch of cars on the bed of the printer and it then ‘prints’ the full-color graffiti directly onto the car sides. Because it is a color ink jet printer, it can print any color in a single operation (just like the color printer you most likely have hooked up to your PC at home).

“If the car has dark coloring then there is one more painting operation: white ink or paint is applied to the graffiti areas, before the car is placed in the ink jet printer. That provides the white background needed for the transparent color inks to properly show up on a dark-colored car. That white background can be applied either using the Tampo printing or the standard masking and spraying. So, as you can see, no matter how many different colors are in the graffiti artwork, there are at the most only two extra printing operations.”

Thanks for the explanation, Peter. My experience on this subject is largely limited to changing ink cartridges more often than I’d prefer, so there’s nothing useful I can add. When I toured the MTL factory last July, there was no graffiti work going on, only weathering, which was being done by hand.

FINALLY, AARP, HERE WE COME: I think that if anyone had told me when I started this modest enterprise that I would not only still be at it more than seventeen years later, but I would also reach my eligibility for membership in the AARP while still doing the UMTRR, I’d have bet against that person big time. And so it is this month that your faithful byte-slinger becomes eligible for that esteemed organization that is (obviously) not only for Retired Persons. Which is good, because Retired Person is not an attribute I will have anytime soon. I suppose I am slowing down here and there a little bit, and the eyesight isn’t what it used to be. On the other hand, as I’ve often said, continuing to have birthdays certainly beats the alternative, which is ceasing to have birthdays. If you know what I mean...

Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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