



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

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Hello again everyone... there's the usual trainload of items to check out for the month – some of which may already be sold out, and some of which are delayed. Let's get right to it...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



025 00 780, \$24.15

Reporting Marks: MILW 50220.

50 Foot Exterior Post Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Milwaukee Road.

Yellow with aluminum roof. Mostly black lettering including slogan "America's

Resourceful Railroad" and reporting marks on left, and large roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1974 (build date given by MTL) through about 1990. *Note: This item has been reported as already sold out and discontinued at the factory.*

The site RRPictureArchives.net provides a bingo – that is, an exact match to the car – circa 1980. The paint scheme is good though there are some quibbles with details on the model versus the prototype, for example the side sills. That's not completely surprising considering that the 025 body style is a model of an FMC car and the prototype was built by SIECO (Southern Iron & Equipment Company). Overall, though, it's not a bad match; as usual, your opinion may vary.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for April 1975 shows all 570 possible cars in the series 50000 to 50569. They're described simply as "Box, Nailable Steel Floors" and had these key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5100 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. Upon the official 1986 merger of what was left of the Milwaukee Road into the Soo Line, 546 of the original 570 cars were still in service. There were 544 cars in the group in the July 1989 ORER, but sometime between then and the October 1991 Register, the entire series disappeared. And how's that for an abrupt end to the Approximate Time Period.

The **Milwaukee Road Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume Two**, may provide an insight into what happened. Accompanying a photo of MILW 50222 from the same series is the information that they were leased to the railroad by Southern Iron and Equipment. The successor Soo Line may have simply decided to terminate the lease and send all of the remaining cars back to SIECO. Make that Evans, actually, as it had acquired SIECO by then. Another fact I didn't know previously: SIECO started as a dealer of second-hand locomotives.



058 00 526, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: LPCX 207.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Southern Star Meat Products.

Yellow and red sides with brown roof and ends. Black lettering "Southern Star Meat Products" on yellow half of

side. White lettering including "Louisville Provision Co" and reporting marks on left. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: mid-1920s to early 1930s (a guess). Release #11 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

Alright, I can now abandon my plans to attempt this car with decals. (Said plans, and said decals, were both made prior to the turn of the previous century. Never let it be said that I'm fast.) This paint scheme is not for the fainthearted and I'm certainly glad to see that MTL has done the work for me.

The Louisville Provision Company was established in 1916 according to the book **Encyclopedia of Louisville**. Archive photos at the digital collection of the University of Louisville place the company's building at 914-940 East Market Street in the city. Much of the packing business was pork products, which reminds me of my first trip to Louisville; also the first time I was ever asked if I wanted "country ham" or "city ham" – which is quite another story entirely. The company was acquired by Klarer, another area packer, in 1947. Klarer consolidated its several operations under the "Southern Star" brand that was used by Louisville Provision. In the mid-1960's, Klarer built a modern plant in Louisville, which turned out to be ill-timed; and then there were strikes – rather common in the meat packing business. Teetering under financial losses, the company agreed to be acquired by Armour in 1969. By that time Armour was itself a subsidiary of Greyhound Corporation. It was a bit ironic that Armour would wind up with the Southern Star brand, as back in 1922 it had sued Louisville Provision over the use of "Southern Star."

As usual, we turn to the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** for a prototype photo. This time, it's on Page 158 and is of the exact car LPCX 207. The 207 was one of twelve 36 foot cars built by General American in July, 1925 and leased by Quaker City Refrigerator to Louisville Provision. MTL picks up this information for its car copy. The image of the actual car is straight on so I can't comment on the roof, but what I can see appears to be a pretty good match between prototype and model in terms of the carbody itself. The brake gear was different and more pronounced on the real LPCX 207.

Interestingly (and perhaps frustratingly), where I do draw a blank is in the ORER Accumulation. The LPCX reporting marks don't appear in either the April 1928 or the July 1935 Registers, either independently or as part of Quaker City or General American (which bought Quaker City outright in 1928). So the ATP stated above is strictly a guess, which should be taken with the appropriate grain of salt. Hmm, does that make it country or city ham? I keep getting those mixed up.



094 00 361 and 094 00 362, \$27.90 each.

Reporting Marks: POTX 1287 and 1660.

3 Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper with Long (Trough) Hatches, Potash Corporation.

Oxide red (MTL: "salmon red") with yellow conspicuity stripes and aluminum roofwalks. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and Potash Corp logo in center.

Approximate Time Period: 2010 to present.

Note: This item (both numbers) has been reported as already sold out and discontinued at the factory.

RailcarPhotos.com has build dates of July 2010 through February 2011 for these cars, numbered 1000 to 1099. They were built by National Steel Car Company over in Hamilton, Ontario expressly for potash service. Before going on, a quick chemistry reference: potash is a general term applied to several compounds which contain potassium. Potassium chloride (KCl) is the most common of these. Perhaps the most common use of some potash compounds is as fertilizer, so one is likely to see these cars anywhere in North America. The images on RailcarPhotos certainly bear this out. Cars in the series were captured from Pennsylvania to Washington State – though not in their "native" Saskatchewan.

The images show something that surprised me. I'd expected the prototype cars to be longer than the MTL model, as is the case for many modern builds; but they are actually noticeably shorter, that is, less long, than the 094 body style. Even MTL notes that they are custom built, which includes what looks like a reinforcing column at each end. RailcarPhotos cites a 47 foot overall length.

The ORER is no help here, not because I don't have one – I do, the January 2011 issue, late enough to catch the build – and not the ORER folks' fault either. The official registree of these cars, "PCS Sales (USA) Inc." has elected to not list its POTX cars in the Equipment Register. This is quite the annoying trend among private owners and lessors. Meanwhile, the Canadian Freight Car Gallery (freight.railfan.ca) provides more images including some with the cars just out of the National Steel Car plant. I finally get a chance to confirm the use of trough (long) hatches on these cars via a shot of POTX 1553 as of November 2010 – but I suppose by this time you wouldn't be surprised if I noted that the hatches are also less long than on the Micro-Trains car.



106 00 110, \$22.65

Reporting Marks: C&O 368973.

50 Foot 14 Panel Steel Gondola with Low Cover, Chessie System/Chesapeake and Ohio.

Black with black and aluminum cover. Mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left, small "Ches-C" herald in center and roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: as mid-1970s (1976 rebuild date given by MTL) to late 1990s at most.

It's noted in the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** that although Chessie purchased plenty of dedicated coil steel cars, they also continued to equip standard gondolas for steel service as well. This is an example. The **Color Guide** doesn't have any examples from this particular series (i.e. no "bingo"), but there is a shot of C&O 368988 from the adjacent series. The 368988 has a three section cover, which MTL simulates via paint on its single continuous cover (interesting idea, I think). It's also noted in the Color Guide that only two sets of gondolas were purchased in the "Chessie era," which certainly means that this car would have painted in pre-Chessie Chesapeake & Ohio paint—as if MTL's car copy stating this gondola was built in 1967 isn't enough of a clue. Also according to Micro-Trains, the car was rebuilt in 1976, which is, I suspect, when the cover was added.

There is a view from above of the exact car on RRPictureArchives.net as found in February 1977. Other than the ACI Label, the lettering is all there on the Micro-Trains car, including the legend "Double Trough Coil Car" between the "Ches-C" herald and the roadname. The real car has a lot more rivets than the MTL 106 body style, for example a single horizontal row just below the roofline, and a double row at the floor line while the MTL car has just one row. And yes, there I go again, "rivet counting."

The ORER for April 1976 shows the series to which the MTL model belongs, 368950 to 368974 with AAR Designation GBSR and this long description: "Gondola, Steel Roof, 3 Sections, 3 Movable Bulkheads, 10 Adjustable Cross Bars, Troughs." The inside length was 50 feet 5 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 8 feet 4 inches, outside length 61 feet 6 inches, extreme height 9 feet 8 inches, and capacity 2155 cubic feet or 175,000 pounds. All 25 possible cars were in the group at that time. I think that the shorter than expected inside length is explained via the installed bulkheads, and the longer than expected outside length probably means end of car cushioning, which can be simulated via extended draft gear trucks—which MTL has, in fact, included on this car.

By the October 1986 Equipment Register, only eleven of the cars in the group still have the covers and equipment while thirteen, including the 368973, have been demoted to just plain gondolas. That ends the "strictly speaking" Approximate Time Period for this car. However, two gondolas in the group did remain through the July 1989 ORER and are gone by the October 1991 Register.



143 00 030, \$27.10

Reporting Marks: CB&Q 4515.

Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor Car, CB&Q (Burlington Route).

Pullman Green sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Metallic gold lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and reporting marks at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: at least 1940s and early 1950s, but see text.

The first online reference I found to CB&Q 4515 that was not a citation back to this model is an account of the "Exposition Flyer," a train jointly operated by the Burlington, the Rio

Grande and the Western Pacific. This train began service on June 10, 1939 and was replaced by the much more famous California Zephyr in 1949. According to the roster of this train on the website of the Rio Grande Modeling and Historical Society (www.drgw.org), from 1941 to 1949 CB&Q cars 4515 to 4519 were included. These were 70 foot steel chair cars, the Q's class PC-8. That's not really a match to the 143 body style which to begin with has a carbody that's 80 scale feet long. Thus, the "see text."

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for March 1943 shows a group of cars numbered CB&Q 4500 to 4527, each of which seats 64 and is "70 feet and over" in length. (That's a generic term used for many ORPTE entries.) Of the eighteen cars in the group, eight, including the 4515, had ice-activated air conditioning while the others had A/C that was electro-mechanical or steam-based. (Someday I'll have to look up how steam makes an air conditioning system work.) The same group of cars appeared the same way in the ORPTE for January 1953, the only other one I own (and even that via CD-ROM copy – they're expensive). I did not come across a build or retirement date for these cars in my wanderings, so I'll tag an "at least" onto what we do know from the Official Registers.

Incidentally, one of the other PC-8 class cars, the 4514, was once painted in a red, white and blue "Buy War Bonds" scheme. From an online photo of that car I note that six wheel trucks were used, and that the window arrangement is indeed different from the 143 body style. That "War Bonds" car is shown as a forthcoming product... in HO Scale brass. Oh, well.

In addition to the above items, the first three single release Civil War Era freight cars were also scheduled to be released mid-month, however, closer to UMTRR "press time" they were reported as being delayed to April 1. These cars were "pre-reviewed" in the November 2012 UMTRR and are as follows:



151 00 010, \$17.70 – Civil War Era Boxcar. Reporting Marks: U.S.M.R.R. 274. Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and road number on right.



152 00 010, \$17.70 – Civil War Era Caboose (Converted Boxcar). Reporting Marks: U.S.M.R.R. 46. Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on right, road number on left and road number on door.



153 00 010, \$16.90 – Civil War Era Flatcar. Reporting Marks: U.S.M.R.R. 144. Brown with white lettering including reporting marks across car. Simulated wood load included.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



020 00 566, \$19.10

Reporting Marks: RI 20032.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Rock Island.

Express service scheme of Pullman Green with gold lettering including "Route of the Rockets" slogan and reporting marks on left. Red and gold herald on right. Approximate Time

Period: 1941 (build date) to probably the mid-1960s, but you'll have to change the trucks for that, see text. Previous Release: Road Number 20039, December 2001.

The first run of this car was the second utilization of the Allied Full Cushion trucks introduced in October 2001 by MTL. The Rock Island called itself the "Route of the Rockets" referring to their series of passenger trains, and as with many of the line's other box cars, that slogan was included on this car. Since these particular boxcars were intended to be in passenger service from their build date, let's take a quick look at some Rock Island Rockets courtesy of the November 1946 **Official Guide of the Railways**.

The most prominently featured "Rocket" in the Guide was the "Rocky Mountain Rocket," trains 7 and 8, which ran between Chicago and Denver or Colorado Springs, via Bureau, Illinois; Des Moines, Iowa; Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska and Limon, Colorado which is where the Denver and Colorado Springs sections split. Running time was a respectable 19 hours to cover the nearly 1100 mile distance. Trains 7 and 8 carried sleeping cars and an observation car with 5 bedrooms, a buffet and lounge. At perhaps the other extreme of distance over the RI was the Peoria Rocket, which spanned just 161 miles between there and Chicago, taking only about two and a half hours. There was also the Choctaw Rocket, service for Little Rock, Oklahoma City, Amarillo and Tucumcari; the Twin Star Rocket which called on the Twin Cities; and the Zephyr Rocket, which as you might have guessed was a joint service between the Burlington Route and the Rock Island. All of these trains required no extra fare, but did have all reserved seating in coaches, parlor cars and Pullmans.

The 1941 build year for this car predates the introduction of the PS-1 style of boxcar on which the MTL 20000 series is based, so some Rock Island fans may have their teeth set on edge at the present time. In fact, the August 1996 issue of **Rail Model Journal** states that the series 20000 to 20039 was actually a "Modified 1937 AAR" design, which featured a 10 foot 6 inch interior height, 5/5 Dreadnaught ends and a six foot Youngstown door. The group of 40 was built by Pressed Steel Car company as their lot 164 and had Allied trucks as modeled by Micro-Trains. Another ten cars, in the series 20040 to 20049, were also built in 1941 and had S-1-L lateral motion trucks. I already knew from the UMTRR of December 2001 (from which the above is "reprinted") that these cars wouldn't be in the ORER. What I didn't have then, though, was the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for January 1953, which gets pulled out for the second consecutive review. The series RI 20000 to 20050 is shown with inside length of 40 feet 6 inches, outside length of 44 feet 3 inches, and capacity of 75,000 pounds when used in passenger service. If you're wondering whether these cars were

subject to per diem and mileage charges, as with most passenger equipment: yes, they were; \$9.50 per day and .048 cents per mile.

The end of the ATP as I see it could come with the switch-out of those supplied Allied trucks, which occurred by 1955 when they were banned for interchange service by the Interstate Commerce Commission. We do know that express cars did move from road to road; for instance, it wouldn't be unusual to see Rock Island cars on the Southern Pacific which was the other half of the "Golden State Route" from Chicago to California. The RI could have held on to the cars with the Allied trucks for intra-line service, but its entire passenger service was fast fading away and was down to only a few Illinois-only trains and commuter service in the area around Chicago by the time Amtrak took over in 1971.



021 00 460, \$24.60

Reporting Marks: RBWX 60296.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Western Fruit Express.

Yellow sides, silver roof, freight car red ends. Black lettering including Great Northern roadname and reporting marks on

left, and 1960's "outline goat" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s into the 1970s. Previous Release: Road Number 60292, March 2004.

This release represents a Western Fruit Express refrigerator car although it is, in the MTL parlance, a plug door boxcar. That's OK though, as we'll see shortly. The build date clearly predates the time period of the "final" Great Northern paint scheme with the circa 1967 "outline goat" herald (introduced as part of the GN's sky blue motif). It may seem odd, but the outline goat did grace the sides of both mechanical and ice cooled refrigerator cars, in fact, even some wood reefers.

The March 1953 build date is late enough that these cars could have started their lives as plug door boxcars, although they'd have been among the first. Before going to the ORER contemporaneous with the ATP, I looked backward to the January 1964 edition. The series in which RBWX 60292 would have been placed isn't shown; so much for this being the original road number on the prototype. So, over to the April 1970 Register we go. The series 60238 to 60332 is shown as an addition to the WFE roster in that listing, with AAR Designation RB and the simple description "Refrigerator." The inside length was 40 feet even, inside height 9 feet 1 inch, outside length 44 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 3376 cubic feet or 115,000 pounds. Importantly, there are no dimensions of ice bunkers given; had they been, it would have been a dead giveaway that MTL was cheating by issuing this car as a plug door boxcar instead of a true plug door reefer with hatches-- a body style that they don't have. But we're fine here. So it really is an insulated boxcar, which is still described as a "refrigerator" as noted many times before. Hmm, perhaps the "RB" in the reporting marks stood for "Refrigerator Boxcar"? Ah, maybe not.

There were 93 cars in the roster in this series at the April 1970 date, and then 169 cars in the expanded series 60238 to 60423 in April 1976. It's possible that the paint stayed as depicted by MTL at that point, but as you go farther forward in time from there, it becomes more likely that the "Great Northern" would have been painted out, and perhaps the herald as well. And then, there's that roofwalk as well, which most likely would have been pulled. By the April 1981 ORER the Western Fruit Express listing is deleted and the cars all moved to the Burlington Northern listing. I lose track of the cars at that point but suffice to say that the ATP is over with. Some WFE cars made an intermediate stop at the "WHIX" reporting marks before the "X" was removed, and some went right from "WFEX" to "WFE" as well. I believe that the "Western Fruit Express" name was painted on some Burlington Northern Santa Fe cars with reporting marks "BNFE", but it's been a while since I've seen one.

Although there are several different examples of the outline goat's appearance on WFE cars available online, I didn't find any that specifically matched this car or its prototype series. However—and I don't know how I missed this with the initial run—the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has a bingo on the first road number run, RBWX 60292, on Page 93. The prototype car had a straight side sill—pretty easy to fix on the model; and riveted sides, not so easy to fix on the model. The photo is dated September, 1968, just a few months after last reweigh or service date of March 1968. An interesting error crept into the dimensional data on the real car: the last line reads "BLT IH 3 1953" which translates to "Built Inside Height March 1953."



045 00 200, \$20.45

Reporting Marks: BN 612750.

50 Foot Steel Flat Car, Fishbelly Sides, Burlington Northern.

BN Green with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname in center. Simulated "Construction Chassis" load included. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s and early 1980s as painted (1979 repaint date given by MTL). Previous Releases: Road Number 612765, September 1998; Road Number 612743, August 2002.

While there aren't any specific matches to this relatively low quantity, and relatively short lived, BN flatcar series in the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, there are similar cars in basically the same paint scheme. Perhaps the most interesting is BN 613191, which was modified in 1983 to carry canisters of radioactive material. I'm not sure I'd want to see one of those go by in a train. But at least I'm sure of what that load is, even as I'm not quite sure what MTL is trying to represent with what it includes with this reprint.

The series to which this third road number belongs is 612700 to 612984, and there are only four cars in the group as of the July 1974 ORER and seven in the April 1976 Register. That figure climbs to 47 in the October 1981 ORER then slips to 40 for the October 1986 book. Then it crashes to a single car in the October 1991 book, so the 1979 repaint quoted by MTL is pretty late in the ATP of the car, at least with this road number. The model is a little shorter

than the prototype which has an inside length of 53 feet 6 inches and an outside length of 56 feet 11 inches. The cars' capacity was 154,000 pounds.

One of our readers supplied both the heritage of these cars-- BN 612700-612894 was previously NP 62300-62494 built in 1965 by General Steel Industries—and a prototype photo from 1980 on RRPictureArchives.net. The brake wheel on the actual is end mounted, not side mounted as on the 045 body style.

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 March 15.



020 44 296, \$23.95

Reporting Marks: UP 193455.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Union Pacific.

Mineral red including trucks and couplers with yellow door. Yellow lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and slogan on right:

"Be Specific-Ship Union Pacific" on one side and "Road of the Streamliners" on the other side. Light to moderate weathering including on trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1950 (based on paint scheme) through 1960s. Previous Releases: A three pack 20286-2, July 1995, with Road Numbers 187305, 187307 and 187309, each with catalog number 20286; then Road Number 193450, February 2002; Road Numbers 193434 and 193449, August 2012. This road number has not been previously released.

All of the "previous release" information kind of goes out the window with the introduction of a yellow door to this particular weathered run—technically we have a "not a reprint." The paint scheme with alternating slogans is confusing enough in the MTL lineage: the first three cars were lettered as UP Class B-50-24 in the 187000s and the next three as B-50-33 and the 194000s. None of these are actually PS-1s though, instead the prototype was the Modified 1937 AAR Design cars, built in the UP's own Omaha shops. They were among 2,743 built between April 1941 and June 1943 to that design. The B-50-33s had road numbers 193000 to 193748, riveted sides, and different ends and sills than the MTL 020 body style.

Reprinting myself from the August 2012 UMTRR, the Approximate Time Period for the use of this particular paint scheme is rather narrow, according to information on the RPI Website. Although the UP had been utilizing dual slogans on their cars since 1936, it wasn't until 1949 that "Serves all the West" was replaced by "Be Specific-Ship Union Pacific." The other side remained "Route of the Streamliners" but only until 1953 when it was eliminated in favor "Be Specific" on both sides. The service date of October 1950 that MTL used on the car is therefore quite appropriate. I didn't find an image from anywhere in the UP B-50-33 class, but I can point you to Ken Harstine's "Boxcars and Freight Cars of North America" site (

www.boxcars.us) for examples of both sides of the lettering on different series of Union Pacific boxcars. See the “UP” section, Page 2. And of course that means I didn’t get anywhere with finding one of these cars with a yellow door. However, as always, it’s difficult to prove the absence of something.

Given the paint scheme, we’ll start the ORER lookups with the July 1950 edition. The cars were described as “U.P. Box, Steel, Z-Bar” and as noted above were numbered 193000 to 193748. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches and inside height 10 feet 6 inches. The outside length was 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 6 feet and capacity 3921 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 741 cars in the group at the time. Although the paint scheme may have changed by this time, perhaps to the “Automated Rail Way” version, in January 1964 there remained 717 cars in the group with the end note that they were “being progressively equipped with side wall lading anchors, AAR Mechanical Designation XME.” In April 1970 there were 558 cars left, but that was all the way down to 13 in the April 1976 Equipment Register. You’d have to be thinking roofwalk removal by then anyway. I’ll call the ATP a bit earlier at the 1960s.



993 05 140, \$99.95

**Norfolk Southern Gondola Weathered/
Graffiti Three Pack.**

Consists of three Norfolk Southern 50 Foot Steel 14 Panel Gondolas, Straight Sides, Fixed Ends. Each car is black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Extensive multi-color graffiti across on side of car. Approximate Time Period: the present. Previous Releases: None. Individual catalog and road numbers of cars are

as follows: 105 51 730, 194178; 105 52 730, 194059; 105 53 730, 201364.

The road numbers for these cars are kind of all over the place (and out of sequence) but that’s because these MTL depictions are based on actual cars and their graffiti. MTL posted links to photos of each of these cars on their website; they’re on RRPictureArchives.net and on Flickr. The first thing you might notice about these cars is that seem to be a fair bit larger than the MTL 105 body style. That’s true, as we’ll confirm in a moment. Yes, that does mean “stand in,” but as usual your annoyance may vary. I’d submit that there is much more disagreement about the concept of graffitied cars in general than the fidelity of any one model in particular. By the way, while I’ve set the ATP at “the present,” the actual photo dates are from April 2011 and June 2012. Close enough.

From RailcarPhotos.com which has some, er, less decorated, road numbers of this type, we learn that Thrall built these cars which are 15 panel and 52 feet 6 inch inside length, but with different ends. The oldest image I found dates to 2006, and shots of this series included on the site are just about from coast to coast, from Perth Amboy, New Jersey to Colton, California.

The ORER for January 2001 shows the first two cars as part of the series 193900 to 194267. Besides the above mentioned inside length of 52 feet 6 inches, they have an inside width of 9 feet 6 inches, inside height of 5 feet 6 inches, outside length of 57 feet 1 inch, extreme height of 8 feet 2 inches, and capacity of 2244 cubic feet with a gross rail weight of 263,000 pounds. In other words, they're not your grandfather's gondolas. The third number MTL chose, 201364, is part of a small set 201364 to 201368, which is part of an Equipment Register page with lots of single and small quantity entries around that road number. The 201364 is a 2743 cubic foot gondola, that is, even larger than the other two.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #74, four Chesapeake & Ohio / Chessie System Three-Bay Covered Hoppers with Trough Hatches, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the September 2012 issue. The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks for these items are as follows: 094 51 250, 607220; 094 52 250, 607296; 094 53 250, 607305; 094 54 250, 607388.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is September 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close March 29.



Scheduled September 2013 Release:

993 00 080, \$64.95

Quantity four of 40 Foot Drop Bottom Gondola, Union Pacific.

Reporting Marks: To be announced; should be in the UP 65000 to 66799 series.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks at left and roadname in center. Approximate Time Period: Late 1960s (based on paint scheme) to late 1980s. Previous Release: Road Number 66775, November 2007. The Runner Pack releases should carry individual catalog numbers 083 5x 010.

Since the 106 body style was based on the UP prototype, I don't think there will be any reasonable quibbles in terms of fidelity here. To "Be Specific" (sorry), the white lettering on this car replaced the yellow lettering in 1966 per the RPI Website. I'll back up just a bit from there to the January 1964 ORER to find 1787 cars numbered 65000 to 66799 in the Union Pacific listing. The inside length of these cars was 41 feet even, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 5 feet, outside length 42 feet 9 inches and extreme height 9 feet 4 inches. The capacity was 1948 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Curiously, the cars are described as "U.P. Gondola, Steel, Fixed Ends." The AAR Designation gives it away: "GS" translates to "An open top car, having fixed sides and ends and drop bottom, consisting of doors hinged at center sills to dump outside of rails." (If it dumps between the rails, it's a Class "GE.")

In the April 1970 Register, the series was down just a bit to 1761, five years later in April 1975 there were 1617 and six years after that in April 1981 the group numbered 1084. The end of the ATP appears to be around the end of the Eighties as there are just ten cars left in the 1989 and three hangers on in 1991 which is where I stopped looking.

Back in 2007 upon the initial release of this car, David Carnell pointed us to Page 42 of Morning Sun's **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 2** which is now part of the Research Accumulation. The exact car as of July 1972 is presented there "a little worse for the wear with dinged up sides and some weathering." By that time there is an ACI Label as well. David reported that "the lettering is the same, including the gaps in the UP reporting mark and road numbers" and that the MTL car copy at the time aligned with the photo caption. Given the sheer size of the group of prototype cars, it's certainly well overdue for a Runner Pack – at least one.



Scheduled September 2013 Release:

993 00 803, \$189.95

Quantity eight of Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers, Trough (Long) Hatches, CP Rail / Soo Line.

Reporting Marks: To be announced; should be in the SOO series.

Gray with black lettering and large red "CP Rail" roadname at left; alternating red and white stripe along the bottom of the car. Approximate time period: 1995 to as late as the present. Previous Release (as catalog number 94090): Road Number 116960, October 1997. Runner Pack catalog numbers should be in the 094 5x 090 series.

When the first run of this car was released more than fifteen years ago, it was noted on the then-new MTL website that the CP assigned these center flows SOO LINE reporting marks "in order to reduce the domestic tax." Whether they meant the Canadian or United States tax is unclear, but what was clear was that this wasn't the first time reporting marks were preserved, or created, for financial purposes. The Canada Southern (CASO) and Toledo and Ohio Central (TOC) are examples of the former case which come to mind, but my favorite is the Central Railroad of Pennsylvania, incarnated, mostly on paper and reporting marks, by the Central Railroad of New Jersey strictly to dodge Jersey taxes. Quoth New Jersey: I don't think so.

Anyway, the Soo Line, despite being controlled via majority stock ownership by the Canadian Pacific for a number of years, it wasn't "officially absorbed" until 1990 – and even that "official" doesn't seem completely official to me if there's still a separate ORER entry. The "new Soo" was created in 1961 through a three way merger of the "old" Soo Line, more properly known as the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault St. Marie; the Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic (which was actually the "surviving company" in merger terms); and the "old"

Wisconsin Central. The WC spent only 26 years formally folded into the system and was “reborn” as an independent company in 1987, later going into the CP’s rival Canadian National. The Soo picked up what was left of the Milwaukee Road in 1985. At its peak prior to that, the Soo stretched northwestward from Chicago to the unlikely locales of Portal, North Dakota and Noyes, Minnesota-- unlikely until you know that these are CP interchanges, that is. Better known ports of call for the Soo included Duluth/Superior, the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Bismarck and Minot. There’s a thumbnail history of the Soo Line, both “old” and “new” at the webpage kohlin.com/soo/soo-hist.htm (no “www”).

The really small print—some in italics, yet—provides both the build date, December 1995, and the builder, National Steel Car Company, probably in Hamilton, Ontario (or, the same place as this month’s Potash Corp. covered hoppers). That helps with ORER lookups, starting with the October 1996 issue. There we find the series 115000 to 117149, a group of 1925 cars described as “Covered Hopper, 4850 Cubic Foot Capacity.” How convenient is that? The cars’ key dimensions are 55 feet 8 inch outside length, 15 feet 5 inch extreme height, and 224,000 pounds capacity. Jumping to the January 2011 Equipment Register, I think we’re safe with a “to present” ATP since the car count is actually up a bit to 2106.

However, that depends on confirming the continued existence of the paint scheme. CP Rail reverted to Canadian Pacific in 1996, which was the year after these cars were built. It’s not unreasonable to assume that some of these cars were restenciled with the “old” name (in the “new” font of course). In this case, though, there are so many cars in the series that I doubt that CP has gotten to all of them; and besides, we’ve probably all seen covered hoppers in “as delivered” paint schemes that were built well before 1995.

As it turns out, RailcarPhotos.com has 43 images of cars in the Soo Line series, and all but one of the cars pictured are in the paint scheme MTL depicts. The latest shot is from December 2012. I think we’re good. While I’m here, I’ll mention what you might already suspect: the prototype car is not an exact match to the 094 body style, particularly with respect to the ends. As usual, the degree to which the term “stand in” is applied is up to the modeler.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



101 00 707, \$24.95

Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Emancipation Proclamation.

Car #7 in the Smithsonian Civil War Series.

Side A is gray with smooth side across which is rendered full color 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.

The Emancipation Proclamation was frequently summarized—at least where I went to school—as the means by which “Lincoln freed the slaves.” That’s not quite what happened. It was actually the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1865, which made slavery illegal in the United States (and was the pivotal plot device in the recent film **Lincoln**). The Proclamation instead was an order given by President Lincoln, in his role as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, which directed that anyone enslaved in Confederate territory that was not already controlled by Union forces would be “forever free.” The border states of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, none of which seceded, were not affected by the order, and neither was Tennessee or some areas of Virginia and Louisiana which were already under Union jurisdiction. Even so, the Proclamation covered over three-quarters of the estimated four million people enslaved at the time.

The Emancipation Proclamation was not universally popular, even in the North. The “Copperhead” Democrats who opposed the war and sought reunification via continuing to allow slavery were enraged. Enough voters agreed that the Democrats took 28 incremental seats in the House of Representatives in 1862. (This wasn’t a large proportion, and the Republicans gained five seats in the Senate in the same election.) What the order did do was dissuade Europe from supporting the Confederacy, unite the war with the cause of abolition, and take away a source of labor from the “rebel” states. It’s estimated that over fifty thousand slaves were freed the first day that the proclamation was in effect, January 1, 1863.

Meanwhile, I find the artwork that Micro-Trains used for this car to be fascinating, and I wish I knew the source for it. (I’m assuming that it’s from somewhere in the Smithsonian Institution, but that only narrows things down so much.) Instead of a rendition of the actual signing of the document, MTL used a symbolic representation of the event.

In addition to the above item, also released this month is the **MTL/Smithsonian Civil War 150th Anniversary Confederate Train Set** (993 01 210, \$189.95). UMTRR coverage was in the July 2012 issue. The individual items in this set are as follows:



985 01 509, Bachmann 4-4-0 Steam Locomotive with MTL paint and link and pin coupler on tender, Western & Atlantic Railroad “The General”.

151 50 029, 26 Foot Boxcar, Memphis & Charleston, Road Number 861.



153 50 019, 26 Foot Flat Car with Wood Load, New Orleans, Jackson & Great Northern, Road Number 42.



153 50 029, 26 Foot Flat Car with 2 Mortar Loads, Manassas Gap, Road Number 68.

152 50 019, 26 Foot Converted Boxcar (Caboose), Atlantic & North Carolina, Road Number 1.



MTL again 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.

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



518 00 180, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: LPCX 207.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Southern Star Meat Products.

Yellow and red sides with brown roof and ends. Black lettering "Southern

Star Meat Products" on yellow half of side. White lettering including "Louisville Provision Co" and reporting marks on left. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: mid-1920s to early 1930s (a guess). Release #11 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release of this car above (058 00 526). Note, however, that the prototype car is 36 feet long while the Z Scale model is 40 scale feet long.



520 00 181 and 520 00 182, \$25.15 each

Road Numbers: 135453 and 135499 (will be preceded with "PRR" in website listings).

40 Foot Stock Cars, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown with white lettering including roadname and road number on left and circle keystone herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1934 (build date) to early 1960s at most.

I don't think I've ever used the site "Bill's Pennsy Photos" before (and I'm far too lazy to check) but it's the first place I found a bingo on Road Number 135499 From that citation

(direct URL <http://www.billspennsyphotos.com/apps/photos/photo?photoid=75353289>) we're told that this car was part of PRR Class K7a and was built in 1913. Except that's not right; the "circle keystone" wasn't adapted by the PRR for rolling stock until 1930, and furthermore, the ORER for April 1928 doesn't show any cars in the 135000's at all.

From "Rob's Pennsy Page" we get the end of the Approximate Time Period: just 3 cars left in the October 1963 ORER, a drop from 117 in October 1958 and 1420 in October 1944. The series numbered 134079 to 135499 maxes out at 1420 so the group would have been at full strength since built. We also get the same photo of the 135499 cited again, this time credited as belonging to "Modern Locos and Cars 1939" which was a PRR publication. In that version of the photo, the real build date, 1934, is clearly visible. That's a little better. There's also a link to a K7 class car being used in tomato service, just in case you were wondering if stock cars did anything else besides carry livestock.

The ORER for July 1935 shows a shorter series 135190 to 135499 numbering 290-something cars (the last digit of the car count is cut off in the scan of the digital version I have). The cars are called out as being double deck, with an inside length of 40 feet 5 inches, inside width of 8 feet 10 inches, inside height of 8 feet 11 inches, outside length of 42 feet 6 inches, extreme height of 14 feet 2 inches, and capacity of 3192 cubic feet of 100,000 pounds. There's no reference to how much clearance is available within each of the two double decks; that's information that is frequently provided, and, I dare say, would have been helpful to the freight agent.

The 520 body style exactly matches only a specific class of New York Central stock cars, so it's true that this is only a stand in, but there have certainly been worse ones. There actually is somewhat of a wider slat a bit less than halfway up the side of the car; not as pronounced as on the MTL car, but still that's something. The prototype photo does reveal the floor of the top deck just above that wider slat, and it's clear that the deck is fixed in place. Meanwhile, an HO model of the K7a, offered with and without sound, is also painted in roadnames besides the Pennsylvania, so I guess stand-ins to one degree or another aren't limited to Z Scale or to the Micro-Trains stock car.



522 00 461 and 522 00 462, \$25.75 each
Reporting Marks: GN 72820 and 72845.

**50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides,
Drop Ends, Great Northern.**

Vermillion red with white lettering including small reporting marks on left and large roadname off center to right. Black and white side-facing goat herald on right. Simulated spool load included with each car. Approximate Time Period: late 1950s (1957 build date given by MTL) to as late as the early decade of the 2000s.

The Great Northern Railway began life as a piece of paper in Jim Hill's desk drawer. What?

As anyone who has ever played the PC-based game **Railroad Tycoon** knows, Jim Hill is one of the toughest opponents one can face. He was not particularly cut-throat when compared to the other tycoons, just persevering, smart, and very forward looking. An example of this was his 1881 purchase of the Minneapolis and Saint Cloud Railway, which had no track, no route and no equipment-- but enormous rights granted to it by the Minnesota State Legislature. In 1889 Jim Hill changed the name of the Minneapolis and Saint Cloud to the Great Northern, and merged his actual railroad properties into it. The "new" GN had much broader latitude and Hill tried to use this latitude to consolidate the operations of the GN with the Northern Pacific. Minnesota howled, Hill roared back that it was perfectly legal under the charter originally granted to the Minneapolis and Saint Cloud, and the legal maneuvering went all the way to the Supreme Court. Had they not ruled against Hill and the Great Northern in 1896, we might have been celebrating the 125th anniversary of the BN next year-- or at least the Great Northern Pacific. Hill tried at least one other time to bring the NP and GN together before his passing, and it took until 1970 to make official the plans that started in Hill's desk drawer.

I first told the above story back in March 2000 when the N Scale version of this car, Catalog 105540, was released as part of a Burlington Northern four-pack. Aha, you might already be saying, but the 105 series is a fixed end gondola, not a drop end gondola. And you'd be right. But which version is, well, right?

The **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 87, provides the answer with a convenient three-quarter view of GN 72839 which was the road number of MTL's N Scale release. And the answer is: fixed end. The brake wheel is actually end mounted, in fact. These were the first nominal fifty foot mill gondolas delivered to the GN and were built by Pullman-Standard in 1957. The Color Guide caption also provides the same dimensional data that I usually look up in the ORER: inside length 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 8 feet 1 inch, and capacity 140,000 pounds. The photo shows another delta between model and prototype, and that's the placement of the roadname. It was more centered on the real car, which had 15 panels, and shifted right on the MTL car which has 14 panels.

Checking the ORERs, we start in January 1959 with all 200 cars present in the series 72800 to 72999. There was a rather quick decline to 147 cars in the January 1964 ORER, somewhat due to 24 of the original group being pulled and given covers and the new number series 73800 to 73824. But there were only two fewer in the first Burlington Northern entry from April 1970. Eleven years later in the April 1981 Register, 110 cars remained in GN reporting marks under the BN. And, believe it or not, the January 2000 ORER shows five cars remaining in the original series, under Burlington Northern Santa Fe. The last doesn't leave the roster until after October 2004. I'm not sure that the original paint scheme remained, or much of it, anyway, after that long a time.

The Union Pacific F7A and B units (980 01 010, \$129.95 and 980 02 010, \$99.95) originally announced for release this month have been delayed until April 1, and will be covered in next month's UMTRR.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

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 March 14.*



501 44 130, \$30.80

Reporting Marks: GN 15466.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Superior Doors, Great Northern.

Vermillion (red) with black roof and ends. White lettering including reporting marks on left and large slanted roadname on right. Small black and white herald on left. Light to moderate weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1963 to mid-1970s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Numbers 15460 and 15466, November 2009. Note: It is possible but not confirmed that both original road numbers may be part of this weathered release.

Back in 2009, MTL leveraged both a recent N Scale release and a paint scheme originally commissioned by the N Scale Collector's Society. In 1:160 this car was done as part of the "Western Road Pack #2" announced in the January/February 2002 issue of the NSC Magazine. A photo of sister car GN 15467 appears in that issue, as does information from GN expert Hank Stevens.

It's been long enough since the original release of this car that it's worth a "reprint" of the commentary from November 2009. The A.A. Morrison Company purchased former Erie Lackawanna ex-Erie Railroad boxcars, fixed them up, painted them, and leased them to at least two railroads: the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern. The GN took delivery of their leased boxcars in 1963. These were steel sheathed boxcars, which was typical on many railroads. Not so much on the Great Northern, though, which had on its roster a large quantity of plywood-sheathed boxcars in support of its large wood products customers. Also not typical of GN boxcars was the use of black roof and ends. Hank Stevens wrote that he thought this might have denoted the cars as leased.

It appears that during the refurbishment process, the cars were modified. They are shown as single door cars in the Erie Railroad's entry in the January 1959 ORER. But they are double door cars in the GN listing in the ORER for January 1964. As long as we're there, here are the rest of the vital statistics: Series 15000 to 15449, 548 cars, inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, capacity 3720 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, door opening 12 feet. Note that the model has Superior doors. We can't say for certain whether the entire fleet had the same type of

door. The photo of the 15467 in the NSC Magazine shows it with Youngstown doors, but that's not one of the road numbers MTL chose.

In the Burlington Northern listing for April 1970, the Great Northern series has 516 cars of the original 550, not bad. But a bit over four years later, in July 1974, that was all the way down to 125 cars, and just nine months later in April 1975 the group was down to 92. By that time you'd probably be looking at roofwalk removal anyway, but for the record, the series is gone no later than April 1981. Based on how fast it was dropping, though, I'm going to call the ATP at the mid-seventies.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #51, four Northern Pacific two-bay offset hoppers, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the September 2012 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 533 51 050, 70215; 533 52 050, 70224; 533 53 050, 70352; 533 54 050, 70368.



The following items are in pre-order at present and are NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is September 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close March 29.



Scheduled September 2013 Release:

994 00 057, \$89.95

Quantity four of 40 Foot Double Sheathed Wood Refrigerator Car, Pacific Fruit Express / Western Pacific.

Reporting Marks: PFE with Road Numbers TBD, probably in the 52xxx series. Exact road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

Orange sides, brown ends and roof, black underframe and trucks. Black lettering including "Pacific Fruit Express" and

reporting marks on left. Black and white Western Pacific square "Feather" herald on right. White end marking. Approximate Time Period: 1929 to early 1950s. Previous Releases: None. Catalog Numbers will be in the 518 series and will be confirmed upon release.

This quartet depicts the refrigerator cars of the junior partner in Pacific Fruit Express. The Southern Pacific and Union Pacific heralds far outnumbered the Western Pacific's on PFE cars, but the WP still had the series 50001 to 52775 in the January 1940 ORER, in two groups slightly differing on several dimensions. While we're here, we'll try to combine the vital statistics look: inside length was just over 33 feet 2 inches, inside width around 8 feet 2 inches, inside height 7 feet (don't forget all that ice and insulation holding down those dimensions), outside length 41 feet 8 or 9 inches, extreme height either 14 feet 7 inches or 15

feet 2 inches, capacity for lading (not ice) at 1918 or 1998 cubic feet or 70,000 pounds, and capacity for ice of at least 10,000 pounds depending on whether it was crushed, chunked or coarse. There were a total of 2682 cars across this series, and an end note sorts out which cars were larger or smaller.

The book **Western Pacific Locomotives and Cars** (Volume 1) by Patrick C. Doran includes an undated photo of PFE 52405 which was built in 1924. The paint scheme MTL chose matches the car, down to the lines above and below the reporting marks. Garth Groff, posting on the "wplist" YahooGroup, noted that the WP actually owned the refrigerator cars, not the Pacific Fruit Express. That's because the WP planned to have its own independent "Western Refrigerator Express" at first before joining the PFE as a junior partner. The PFE maintained the cars on WP's behalf and so they have the typical PFE paint and lettering. That paint wasn't orange until around 1929; it was yellow before that. Starting around 1952, WP reconditioned 889 cars of its fleet for continued service and renumbered them into the series 55000-55899, ending the Approximate Time Period for this Runner Pack. Those were scrapped around 1960, except for some retained for company service. The WP quit the PFE entirely in 1967, switching to Fruit Growers Express.

All of the WP/PFE refrigerator cars were wood sheathed and had wood ends and were clones of the PFE R-30-12 or R-30-13 design, later rebuilt to R-30-9 specifications. Dick Harley, also on "wplist," gives 1938 to 1940 as the rebuild period to cars with taller bodies, which might correspond with the rebuild date of April 1939 that MTL gave when the N Scale version of this car was reprinted in December 2008.



Scheduled September 2013 Release:

994 00 803, \$129.95

Quantity eight of 39 Foot Tank Cars, Union Tank Car Line.

Reporting Marks: UTLX 73244, 73253, 73262, 73271, 73300, 73319, 73328, 73337.

Black with yellow lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: Late 1940s to early 1960s. Previous Releases (as Catalog 14403 or 14403-2): Road Number 73327, with Marklin Couplers, March 1985 and with Magne-Matic Couplers, July 1987; Road Number 73325 with both coupler types, September 1997; Road Number 73355 with both coupler types, March 2001. Catalog

Numbers expected to be 505 5x 030 but will be confirmed upon release.

I find it a bit hard to believe that I need to go back twelve years, to 2001, for the last time I covered cars in this series, but I do. (The most recent N Scale version was done in 2002, but the road numbers are in the 8000s, not the 73000s.) At that time, Micro-Trains noted a build

date of 1946, which, when added with information from the RPI website indicated that Union Tank Car added its name above the reporting marks starting in the late 1930s, leads me to believe that the cars are in the “as delivered” paint scheme.

One thing hasn’t changed: the closest ORER I have to that 1946 build date is still the July 1950 edition. Listed therein are a whopping 4,455 cars of 80,000 pounds capacity and another 794 cars of 100,000 pounds capacity in the series 70000 to 79999. These cars are all of AAR Classification TM, which is your basic uninsulated tank car of welded construction. Am I really crazy enough to check each of the eight road numbers’ capacities? Yes... and I think MTL was as well since all eight cars are in the 80,000 pounds main series.

More than 3600 of these cars remained in January 1964. The series actually grew back to over 7000 cars in the April 1976 Register. I wasn’t sure that this referred to the same group of cars, and a photo in Classic Freight Cars Volume 2 confirmed this: UTLX 78390 was built in 1968 and was a 22,000 gallon car. (Plus, it was lettered with the trademark and then current slogan “McDonalds is your kind of place” as well.) UTLX briefly went to white lettering for its tank cars in the 1960s as well, so an ATP ending early in that decade seems prudent. As if that’s not enough, a browse through George Elwood’s “Fallen Flags” site revealed photos of UTLX tank cars from 1968 on, and every one was of a larger car than that represented by the MTL model. So maybe even an early 1960s ATP end is too optimistic.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases this month.

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

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: First, a couple of loads this month: in N Scale, there’s a pair of “Crated Spools” (499 43 988, \$9.95) and in Z Scale, a two-pack of “Industrial Blowers” (799 43 948, \$9.95). Meanwhile, this didn’t take long: the Civil War-era Rigid Wood Beam Trucks are now a spare part (003 02 190, \$3.95/pair) and so are the Link and Pin Couplers (001 02 060, \$8.95 for two pair). Staying with the Civil War—and for some time later, actually—there’s now an N Scale “Wagons and Fencing Kit” (499 90 951, \$14.95) which includes a length of split rail fencing and a pair of horse drawn wagons (horses not included).

DISCONTINUED ALERT: In honor of March Madness (also known as the NCAA Division 1 Men’s Basketball Tournament), perhaps I could call the bye-bye board the “Elite Eight.” Since that’s how many sold out items are listed in the Micro-News... well, sort of.

We’ll start with Z Scale: The weathered Grand Trunk Western boxcar two-pack (511 44 130, December 2012) is outta here. Two Great Northern cars are gone: the first number of the red boxcar (506 00 261, June 2011, second number already gone) and the first number of the offset hopper (533 00 041, June 2012, second number still available). Finally the second number of the Pennsylvania Railroad ribside hopper has left the building (534 00 012, April 2012, first number already gone).

In N Scale, if you missed last month's Agar Packing Company refrigerator car (059 00 556), you may be frozen out. Gone from January is the Pennsylvania Railroad reprint flat car with load (045 00 140). The unweathered plain BNSF x-post boxcar (025 00 740, September 2011) has left the building—not to be confused with the 2012 Weathered Four Pack. Not to be confused with the unweathered Runner Pack, the weathered and graffitied Canadian National three bay hopper from mid-January has not just left, but gone screaming out of the building (that makes sense when you look at the car). Aftermarket prices are currently well above MSRP, which suggests to me that this run was not a high quantity one.

But wait, there's more...though not on the official Outs List at the end of the Micro-News, inside the M-N it was announced that all three of last month's mid-month Weathered Releases are history. That would be the Southern Pacific (054 44 020) and Golden West Service (054 00 080) N Scale bulkhead flat cars and the Pennsylvania Z Scale x-post boxcar (511 44 010).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Further to discussions of previous releases, we had two references to "Joint Line N Scale" four packs that relate to recent items. First, the weathered 60 foot excess height boxcar in ATSF (103 44 060, "Gates") brought to Bruce Minturn's mind the "Acequia" set with Road Numbers 37562, 37568, 37576... and 37566, which was the number MTL used for the Weathered Car. The N Scale Collector number for the set was 06-36. With respect to the forthcoming Runner Pack #79 of four Burlington Northern Centerbeam flat cars, another reader pointed out the "Littleton" set, issued in 2002 by Joint Line N Scale included Road Numbers 624464, 624465, 624466, and 624468 and NSC Number 02-64 for the set. The "Joint Line" in the name refers to the tracks between Denver and Pueblo, combined by the United States Railway Administration in 1918 and shared ever since, nowadays by UP and BNSF.

AND THAT WRAPS UP MARCH. Until next time, do the best you can...

Cheers,
George

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