



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #196 – April, 2013**

(Not affiliated with Micro-Trains Line, Inc.)

Copyright ©2013, George J. Irwin.

Please see legal notice at the end of this document.

### ***In Memory of George R. Irwin (1935-2013)***

Hello again everyone. This edition of the column is written with a particularly heavy heart, as I have lost the reader that was closest of all to me. I will return to that at the end of this column, but for now, let's do what we always do here.

#### **N SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



**020 00 896, \$17.50**

**Road Number: 21047 (will be "SOU 21047" in website listings).**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, Southern Railway.**

Brown with mostly white lettering including slogan "Southern Serves the South" and road number on left. "DF" in yellow on

door. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s through mid-1970s.

We start off the month's coverage with a bingo, or exact match, to this road number in the **Southern Railway Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** from Morning Sun. Page 33 of that volume is the first page with freight cars, and right there in a 1966 photo is the 21047. It's not a match to the Pullman-Standard PS-1 boxcar that is the 020 body style, beginning with riveted sides, continuing with 5/4 W-section Dreadnaught ends, and ending, perhaps, with the build date, 1944, and builder, Mount Vernon Car Company. As usual, your "stand-in" evaluation will vary. As of the 1966 photo, the roofwalk and full ladders remained intact. The service date of the 21047 was 1965 and I'm wondering if that's good for the start of the Approximate Time Period. Certainly "Southern Serves the South," which was introduced about 1960, was not part of the original decoration. It's noted in the Color Guide, and on the car itself, that the car was designated for pulp service.

The Color Guide calls out a series from 20950 to 21499, but the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1963 has a larger group, 20000 to 22999, of 2808 cars. At that time, though, these were rated for 50 tons, or 100,000 pounds, so we need to look a little later to align with the 55 ton capacity that is mentioned in the Color Guide and the MTL car copy. Or maybe the ORER folks weren't caught up on that information, since the January 1967 edition still has all these cars at 50 tons. What they did get the memo on was a subset of 165 cars, including the 21047, "equipped with interior stowing fixtures and differing in AAR Mechanical Designation... [of] XML." That would potentially explain the "DF" on the door

of this car. We'll grab the other dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 44 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3898 cubic feet.

It looks like the conclusion of the ATP is the mid-1970s. The July 1974 ORER has just 13 cars with the interior stowing features, and just twenty cars in the main series which has been expanded to 20000 to 22999. Only five are left as of the April 1975 Register, which is where I stopped looking. I suspect that you might not even need to worry about roofwalk removal this time.



037 00 110, \$21.10

**Reporting Marks: NYC 87572.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Superior Door, No Roofwalk, New York Central.**

Century green with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left. Small "cigar band" herald on right.

slogan "SL" in white on right hand door. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s through late 1980s.

The lack of roofwalk, the small herald, the reporting marks without the roadname... all point to a car lettered toward the end of the New York Central's tenure as an independent railroad. But then there are the double-box consolidated stencils, which actually point to an ATP in the Penn Central timeframe.

Actually, make that the Penn Central and Conrail timeframe in addition to the New York Central's. A double bingo – two photos – on RRPictureArchives.net are both from 1981 and show a pretty tired looking 87572. It's not so tired that we can't see riveted sides – a definite delta to the model – and cut down ladders, which may or not be a delta to the model depending on whether the roofwalk was pulled at the same time as the ladders were shortened. As I suspected there might be, there's a "door thing" here as well; the real car had an 8+7 foot door configuration while the MTL 037 body style has a pair of eight foot doors. Add plenty of rust and weathering including substantial "chalking" of the white lettering, and since it's 1981, a U-1 "yellow dot" wheel stencil is present on the prototype 87572 also.

In the January 1964 ORER, much of the 87000 series, including 87572, was taken by forty foot boxcars, so it's too early for the start of the ATP. In the January 1967 Register, well into the time of the small NYC heralds and minimal lettering, the series 87455 to 87669 includes just seven fifty foot cars described as "Box, Steel, 19 Belts No. 1 Type Appliances" along with 48 forty foot cars, which are shown as the exceptions even though they outnumber the main series. The fifty foot cars are starred, denoting additions. Their dimensions are as follows: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 14 feet 8 inches, capacity 4850 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, and door opening 8 feet. Well, how about that, an ORER "door thing"?

And here's another interesting data point: the individual numbers of neither group within the series is called out. I guess the ORER folks—or the New York Central folks who supplied the information—figured that the difference between the forty and fifty foot cars would be self-evident.

In the Penn Central listing in the ORER for April 1970, the group has jumped to 210 cars with 100,000 pounds capacity plus two more with 110,000 pounds capacity. Clearly the NYC was expanding this group in the couple of years leading up to the merger, very possibly by expanding the cars themselves, as “stretching” forty foot cars was a common rebuilding practice at the time. Jumping to the very first Conrail registration of April 1976 (can that really be 37 years ago?) the NYC series is down a bit to 192 cars; not bad. We know from the reference photos that there were still cars extant in 1981 and the April ORER from that year confirms this: 101 in all. But that's down to 18 in April 1984 in an expanded series of cars. Five of these hang on to sometime between July 1989 and October 1991.



**053 00 530, \$26.20**

**Reporting Marks: CNA 623052.**

**53 Foot Center Partition Flat Car,  
Canadian National.**

Yellow with mostly white lettering  
including reporting marks on left.

Approximate Time Period: December 1986 (build date) to present.

From down under, Stu Reeh of Australia checked in with some helpful research on this car, for which many thanks. First, there's a bingo on the 623052 in the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery ( [freight.railfan.ca](http://freight.railfan.ca) ) as of October 2008, and shots of sister cars in the series from as late as November 2011. (And of course, since it's a CN car, it's a “Centre-Beam,” eh?)

The images lead quickly to a second point: the car is a fair bit longer than the MTL 053 body style. Stu went over to Ian Cranstone's site ( [www.nakina.net](http://www.nakina.net) ) to confirm that the group CNA 623000 to 623099, built in December 1986 by Thrall, is of cars that are 73 foot inside length. That's nearly twenty feet longer than the MTL car, so not calling this a stand-in would be, well, stretching it a bit. (Sorry.) Cranstone has the cars as still in service, which we can confirm at least as far out as January 2011's ORER.

More specifically from that Equipment Register, there are 86 cars online out of the original 100 built. They're described as “Flat, Steel, Bulkheads, Center Beam, Tie-Downs, Truck Centers 56 Feet, 10 Inch Travel (Lumber)” with the AAR Designation FBC. The inside length as noted is 73 feet, outside length 80 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, and Gross Rail Weight (that's car weight plus lading weight) of 263,000 pounds.

Besides the bingo in the Canadian Freight Car Gallery, there are a number of images of sister cars at the site [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net), going as recent as December 2012 at least. (I didn't check every photo.) That certainly cements the “to present” Approximate Time Period as far as I'm concerned. Some photos show the cars in service in the United States. And that

reinforces the use of the CNA reporting marks, for CN's equipment that was built in the United States. We've seen these in use before, perhaps most notably with a bunch of former Railbox boxcars taken over by the CN, many of which are still awaiting a repaint into their current owner's colors.



058 00 536, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: NPKX 100.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Nuckolls Packing Company.

Yellow sides with brown roof and ends. Black lettering including company name and reporting marks on left. Left or "A" side (above) has multicolor "Pikes Peak Lard" trademark. Right or "B" side (at right) has black and white "Mission Ham and Bacon" trademark. Black door hinges, bottom sill of door and side ladder rungs. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: 1925 (build date) to early 1930s (a guess). Release #12 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."



I suppose that if I were laying out the Micro-News, I'd have led with this car, and not just because it's the last in the series of twelve Meat Packer Refrigerator cars. (Not to worry, the Beverage Series is scheduled to start next month.) No, what I'd feature is the fact that, as the prototype did, this car advertises two different products.

And as usual we start with the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** by Richard Hendrickson and Ed Kaminski. Page 58 includes photos of both sides of the car; a straight on view of the "A" side and a three-quarter view of the "B" side. There are differences: a "door thing" of sorts with regard to the number of hinges (four on the real car, six on the model), and the side and end ladders. The authors call out a group of cars among the series 100 to 169 lettered for Nuckolls, leased from North American Car Company. It's also noted that Nuckolls had an entirely different paint scheme as of April 1935 on NPKX 115 from the same series. That could help define the end of the Approximate Time Period, if the end of the Billboard Refrigerator Era doesn't.

The April 1928 ORER shows, via a small entry for Nuckolls Packing, just ten cars numbered 100 to 109. The only dimensions given were inside length of 29 feet 4 inches, inside width of 8 feet 4 inches, inside height of 7 feet 7 inches, and capacity of 80,000 pounds or 1842 cubic feet with 130 cubic feet or 5300 pounds crushed ice. Nuckolls wasn't listed on its own in the July 1935 Register but was part of the North American Car Corporation registration instead. In that issue, the series was 100 to 107 plus the individual numbers 109, 110, 111 and 115. The same list of dimensions was provided. I suspect that the 100 to 169 group mentioned in **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** was never all leased to Nuckolls.



In 1910, an Official Souvenir Book was published for the attendees (we presume) of the Eighteenth National Irrigation Congress. What can best be described as a “puff piece” about the Nuckolls Packing Company was included in this book. But there are enough facts among the hyperbole to provide some insight. The company was founded by Emmett Nuckolls in 1890. A native of Virginia, Emmett relocated to Colorado in 1859 and lived in several locations, more or less following gold rushes. After that, Pueblo “seemed to offer better chances than any other locality for business and investment.” (Obviously this Souvenir Program was intended to advertise more than just local companies.) After starting a cattle raising business, Emmett and his three sons took over a small packing house, which was gradually expanded and was touted as “the most sanitary and most complete of any west of the Missouri River.” The Pike’s Peak brand of lard is mentioned but the Mission brand ham isn’t; instead there’s a “Peerless” brand. Sadly, in September 1910, not long after the publication of the Souvenir Guide, Emmett Nuckolls died from complications of a broken hip. His son John Marshall Nuckolls died three years later of what we’d now call a brain aneurysm.

The Denver Library’s digital collection has June 1921 aerial photos of the flooding of the Arkansas River, including standing water near the Nuckolls plant and freight cars stuck in the Missouri Pacific railroad yard. In a word, it’s a mess. Since there’s still an ORER listing in the 1935 book, we know the company survived the flood waters. A 1941 Department of Agriculture Guide lists a meat inspector at the Pueblo plant so we know the company lasted that long. And the January 1940, January 1945, July 1950, January 1955 and January 1959 ORERs all have the Nuckolls Packing Company listed with a different series of cars, 3000 to 3049, under General American instead of North American Car. While that’s well past the ATP, 1959 is a pretty good run for a relatively small packer. The trail goes cold after that for me in terms of the history of the company, except for a notation that the packing plant building in Pueblo was later used by Alpha Beta, a supermarket chain.



**099 00 140, \$21.55**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 434654.**

**Evans Three Bay Covered Hopper, BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe).**

Mineral brown with mostly white

lettering including reporting marks on left and small “circle cross” herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1997 to present.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway was officially “born” on the last day of December, 1996, though the planning of the merger started well before then. So it’s really no earlier than 1997 that these covered hoppers could have carried the modified circle cross herald of the BNSF.

The July 1997 ORER shows the series BNSF 434597 to 434754 with just 47 total cars (including two in a subset), which is actually pretty fast repainting work. Data accompanying an

October 2007 shot of sister car BNSF 434630 confirms several items. First, there's the paint scheme. Second, there's the general resemblance of the prototype to the MTL model despite having been a Gunderson, not an Evans. For example, the spotting feature of the 5-4-5 rib arrangement is the same on the model and the prototype. Third, the heritage of the car is confirmed; just as MTL has in its car copy, these covered hoppers were built in 1971 for the Burlington Northern and its subsidiary the Colorado and Southern (part of the CB&Q). In fact, the 434630 is noted to be former BN 458836, nee C&S 458836. As of the January 2011 ORER, there are only 35 cars remaining in the group, perhaps giving pause as to whether the "to present" ATP should really apply. Meanwhile, it appears that more cars are still rolling around in BN paint—61 in the series 458808 to 458999 as of the same date—than made it into the circle cross of the Burlington Northern's successor.



130 00 110, \$29.80

Road Number: 13676 (will be "MP 13676" in website listings).

Bay Window Caboose, Plain Sides, Without Battery Box, Missouri Pacific.

Red (including trucks) with white stripe near bottom of side. White lettering

including road number on bay window and "buzzsaw" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: after 1976 through the 1980s.

This car harkens back—for me, anyway-- to the second release of the MTL steel sided "greenhouse" cupola caboose back in May 1996, in this same general red and white paint scheme. (That 100 body style is actually based on the MP/T&P caboose, so it's prototypical.) At the time, the **Missouri Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** hadn't even been published yet, so no need to apologize for not owning it. Let's see what a lookup in that volume brings.

And it brings, on Page 119, a shot of the previous car in the series, MP 13675. It and the car chosen by MTL were part of the group 13665 to 13714, built in September 1976 by International Car Company. The paint scheme is good, the use of swing-motion trucks is good, the red all over everything is good. The major delta, at least with respect to the October 1976 date of the photo, is the windows on the sides—besides the bay window that is. There were two square windows, unequally spaced left and right of the bay window.

We do better on the Fallen Flags website ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ) with a bingo on the actual MP 13676, which proves that sometimes a road number one away can be misleading. There are still two windows, but the one to the left of the bay is smaller and has rounded corners. This photo is also dated October 1976, so this doesn't seem to be a question of modification after delivery. It could be a matter of the other side of the caboose, though. I'd better note that for consideration.

So the next question is, did the windows other than in the bay ever disappear? We may not know that for sure, but there is a later undated photo of the 13676 that shows the windows boarded up. The “buzzsaw” herald on the car is quite worn out, almost seeming like a faded decal than an actual painted-on logo. There is also a photo of MP 13666 on Fallen Flags that does show the side windows smoothly plated over. If there were a date on that photo, we’d have a better shot at a tighter Approximate Time Period. The best I think we can do here is “after 1976.”

And the end of the ATP? Well, we know from the book **Cabooses of the Union Pacific Railroad** that while the UP picked up 407 bay window cabooses from the MP upon its purchase of the road, including all fifty of the series 13665 to 13714. We also know that these cars were not repainted into Union Pacific colors. As the UP phased out cabooses across its entire system, these MP cars were retired and probably scrapped, but exactly when was out of scope of the above book. A reasonable estimate is the late 1980s or early 1990s; we’ll go with the former.



**114 00 150 and 114 00 160, \$19.50 each.**

**Reporting Marks: None.**

**40 Foot Modern Log Cars with Variable Log Loads.**

Black unpainted frame and trucks with no lettering. Simulated log load included. Approximate Time Period: most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

February 2011 was the month of the most recent regular release of these cars, and since I didn’t write much then, perhaps I should reach back to earlier runs and pull something together.

Well, the term “modern” is of course relative in this case, but just the same, a version of the skeleton log car that would have a somewhat later ATP made its single release debut on July 2005. (Three of these cars with three different loads were part of June 2005’s Chehalis Western Special Edition Set and carry the first three “regular” catalog numbers.) The continued use of archbar trucks limits the “strictly speaking” deployment capabilities, although these, like the other unlettered cars, wouldn’t have been used in interchange service anyhow. So the archbars will be OK for the most part. On the prototype, stakes were collapsible or fixed, and that made a big difference in terms of unloading.

Which leads to an interesting question that was asked on several different model railroading forums: How did one unload these cars? For many years, it was “by whatever means necessary.” cursory ‘net research showed several methods. One was the “jill poke” which was basically a lever-- not compatible with stakes, good to go with chained logs once the chains and wedges were off. A basic dump off the side into a log pond was another way, and I couldn’t believe the angle at which the track was banked along the pond. How did the

entire car not go into the water right along with the load? Large cranes could and did assist with the process in some operations.

Eventually, direct unloaders of some sort supplanted the log dumps; this was made necessary at least in part by the change to fixed stakes on the flat cars. Yes, stakes made the log load more stable and less likely to fall out prior to reaching its destination, but then, at that destination, something had to reach around, or more likely over, those stakes. Thus machinery like the "Lumberjack" were developed.

One of the attributes of the Internet, sorry to say, is the sometimes ephemeral nature of websites, including some good ones. An example of this is the former "Steam in the Woods" site, which described equipment used in logging operations of the early 1900s. It was shut down some time ago by its proprietor. However, the 18 minute film "End of the Line" produced by the Rayonier Corporation in 1962 documents the last steam logging operation, and as far as I know that's still "gettable." (Though not yet online as far as I can tell.) My copy is part of a budget three DVD set called **America's Railroads: The Steam Train Legacy**. A quick search showed that it appears to be available from the usual outlets.

Rayonier replaced steam with diesels on its Gray's Harbor Line in Western Washington, but before that there was quite a sendoff. Shots of typical log cars abound as do excellent views of the Rayonier operation's Mallets (2-6-6-2s) and Mikados. I note that some of the logs on these cars really are huge as are some of the castings offered by MTL on previous releases of the various body styles in both N and Z. There is quite the variety of diameters of logs too, as several types of trees were harvested from the company's timberland.

*In addition to the above items*, the Western & Atlantic single release Civil War Era freight cars have been released. These cars were "pre-reviewed" in the November 2012 UMTRR and are as follows:



**151 00 020, \$17.70** – Civil War Era Boxcar. Reporting Marks: W&A RR 273. Red-brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and road number on right.

**153 00 020, \$16.90** – Civil War Era Flatcar. Reporting Marks: W&A RR 25. Red-brown with white lettering including reporting marks across car. Simulated cotton bale load included.



**152 00 020, \$17.70** – Civil War Era Caboose (Converted Boxcar). Reporting Marks: W&A RR 32. red-brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and road number on right.



## N SCALE REPRINTS:



025 00 670, \$29.15

**Reporting Marks: CNW 155393.**

**50 Foot Exterior Post Steel Boxcar,  
Single Youngstown Door, Chicago &  
North Western.**

Yellow with aluminum roof and black ends. Mostly black lettering reporting marks on left. Red, white and black "Chicago North Western System" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1980s to at least 2011. Previous Release: Road Number 155059, November 2004.

George Elwood's Fallen Flags site had a bingo on the first release of this car, CNW 155059, as it appeared in Elmira, New York in April 1989, and we hit the jackpot again with the reprint road number on the same site, caught in Salt Lake City in March 1988. The original MTL car copy appears to have been, well, reprinted, and it gives a service date of January 1989, which I can't confirm or deny. (The image is just a bit too small to read the actual service date.)

Students of the exterior-post boxcar will immediately notice that the ends on the prototype don't match the ones on the MTL 025 body style. In fact, the real cars were built by American Car & Foundry and have the "Precision Design" type ends whereas the MTL cars are based on FMC-built cars. The start of the ATP can be driven by the service date – whatever it might be. Or perhaps it's the application of the "Chicago/System" variation on the herald, that is, the words "Chicago" and "System" appear above and below the prominent "North Western" in the herald. Prior to that it was "Employee/Owned" for a while, as the C&NW was. Non-employees were again allowed to buy stock in the line in 1982, so the "Chicago/System" herald is older than I thought. Maybe a better bet is the return of "Traditional Yellow" paint to rolling stock, which occurred in 1991.

Be that as it may, the ORER for July 1989 shows the main series 155000 to 155099 with AAR Designation XM and the description "Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe, 25K." The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 58 feet even, extreme height 15 feet even, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5095 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. There were 89 cars in the main series, and also two sub-series adding five more cars.

In the January 2002 ORER under the Union Pacific, a total of 78 cars remained in the series with CNW lettering including eight that were simply "Box, Steel." Since it's now been more than eight years since the first run of the car, it's prudent to keep checking Equipment Registers. Or at least the latest one in the Research Accumulation, the January 2011, where 18 cars are shown. While "Traditional Yellow" might have worn better than the "Safety Yellow" it replaced, any cars still in the 1980's paint would probably be extremely weathered by now. Witness, for example, CNW 155072 as found in 2006; the red in the herald is almost gone, the door is about one-third covered in rust, and there is plenty of graffiti, which is itself quite weathered.



032 00 340, \$28.10

**Reporting Marks: GN 36866.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Great Northern.**

Green with red door. White lettering including reporting marks on left and large "Cushioned Ride" on right. Red, white and black "side facing goat" herald on left

and "waving goat" to right of doors. White simulated reflective panels along bottom sill. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (build date) through about 1985 (but mind the roofwalk, see text). Previous Release (as catalog number 32340): Road Number 36871, March 1996, as part of the BN Fallen Flags Four-Pack, Catalog 21212.

I was hardly writing what could be called a reasonable UMTRR in March 1996, but I did dutifully report the very quick sellout of the BN Fallen Flags Four-Pack. Specifically, the dealer from which I was receiving information at the time noted that he blew through 56 copies of the pack in four days, which is also the amount of time that the set went into "backorder" status at the factory. Today, I think we'd just call this the Bye-Bye Board. I also cited a well-timed "Ask Paint Shop" column in the April 1996 issue of Model Railroader in which Jim Hediger stated that the Rocky character debuted in 1960 and was used until 1967. And that's about all he – I mean I – wrote.

The Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Page 57, includes a 1967 photo of GN 36871 which was the road number on MTL's 1996 release. While the MTL model is based on a Pullman-Standard product, these cars were built by American Car & Foundry, so I'd expect some differences. And there are: from the photo we note different ends than the 032 body style, the use of a short ladder instead of grab irons on the left, and possibly a different roof. There is a "door thing" per the caption – the MTL car has an eight foot plug door while the real car had a nine foot version – though that's harder to discern with respect to plug doors in my opinion. The paint and lettering look good.

The January 1967 ORER shows the series 36800 to 36999, described as "Box, All Steel, Hydra-Cushion" with an end note calling out the nine foot plug doors – they were still that unusual at the time to be worth being specified. The inside length was 50 feet 8 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 55 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 9 feet, and capacity 4940 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. There were 199 cars of the original 200 in service at the time.

Under the Burlington Northern registration of April 1970, there were 197 of the original 200 cars in place in the Great Northern series. As of July 1974 that was down to 180 cars, and by that time I'd be thinking about roofwalk removal. Ignoring that, there were 91 in the January 1985 Register but the series is gone completely from the October 1986 ORER, so there's a pretty abrupt end to the Approximate Time Period.

## 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 April 16.*



**065 44 370, \$21.85**

**Reporting Marks: USAX 109—(last two digits obscured).**

**39 Foot Tank Car, Single Dome, United States Army Transportation Corps.**

Black with white lettering including reporting marks and "United States Army"

on left and Transportation Corps logo on right. Light weathering mostly in black. Approximate Time Period: 1960s and 1970s. Previous Releases: Road Number 10986, July 1995; Road Number 10936, June 2003; then Runner Pack #70 with Road Numbers 10938, 10944, 10950, and 10956, April 2012. *Note: It is possible but not confirmed that any of the road numbers in Runner Pack #70 were used for this release.*

I'll recap from the Runner Pack coverage of April 2012, which was itself a recap from previous releases of this car. MTL had previously stated that this car was serviced in built in 1942. But the ORER for July 1950, which shows almost 3400 tank cars registered to the Department of the Army, doesn't include any tank cars in the 19000s. The same is true in the January 1959 Register. Finally, we get somewhere in the January 1964 ORER, where the armed forces have all been consolidated under the rather bureaucratic sounding "Department of Defense - Defense Traffic Management Service" listing. A group of ICC-103 type tank cars with USAX reporting marks are numbered from 10038 to 11167. There are 851 cars in this group.

By the April 1970 ORER, the restenciling of rolling stock from USAX, USNX, et cetera reporting marks into unified DODX reporting marks was well underway, although the series of tankers with which we're concerned could have been wearing either the new or old initials. The group is down to 530 cars by then. By April 1976 it looks like the DODX transition has been completed, and there are only 126 tankers in the series left, so that's where I stopped looking.

There's a photo of USAX 10956 in the book **Classic Freight Cars Volume 2**. It is also a single dome tank car with about the same looks, found in Anchorage, Alaska in 1977. However, the Fallen Flags site ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ) has two photos from 1968 and 1969 of tank cars in the same group that are painted silver and black with black lettering but still including USAX reporting marks. Does that mean that we've overreached on the Approximate Time Period? It's hard to say.

993 05 150, \$94.95

**H&S Railway Weathered / Graffiti Three Pack.**

**Reporting Marks: HS 3938, 5723 and 3861.**

Consists of three H&S Railway (formerly Hartford and Slocomb) 50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcars with Single Doors. Approximate Time Period: 2000 to present. Previous Releases: None, though two of the underlying boxcar paint schemes have been released before. The individual items are as follows (both sides of each car shown):



025 51 009, HS 3938 (former Sabine River & Northern). Red with mostly white lettering including Sabine River & Northern herald and roadname on left. Patch panel in black with HS reporting marks in white. Extensive weathering, simulated rust and graffiti on B side of car.



025 52 019, HS 5723 (former St. Laurence Railroad). White (actually, a very faded blue) with painted out roadname in blue blocks. Patch panel in black with HS reporting marks in white. Extensive weathering, simulated rust and graffiti on both sides of car. Black panel on door of B side of car simulating removal of National Railway Utilization placard (see text).



025 53 029, HS 3861 (former Valdosta Southern). Faded yellow with black door on A side of car. Black lettering including Valdosta Southern herald and roadname on left. Patch panel in black with HS reporting marks in white. Extensive weathering, simulated rust and graffiti on both sides of car.

Well, I hope I've gotten this column to you before this three-pack sells out—you've been cautioned. These cars not only appear to be well-executed and complex, and worthy competition to custom-painted models which often sell for "big bucks" on eBay, but they're all based on prototype cars. MTL was kind enough to provide the direct links on its website to images on RRPictureArchives.net, and I'll leave you to check those out.

The H&S—just the initials—was a successor to the Hartford and Slocomb Railroad, which operated between Dothan and Hartford, Alabama. It was originally part of the Chattahoochee and Gulf Railroad which was built in 1900 and leased by the Central of Georgia. The Hartford and Slocomb was purchased by the Itel Corporation in 1975 and used it as a vehicle for its incentive per diem boxcars. Those were the colorful x-post boxcars that were meant to relieve shortages until the creation of Railbox and a general slump in traffic ended that strategy... the railroad version of a "bubble" I would think. Itel also was in the business of servicing railcars and its shops were on the railroad. In 1992 the 22 miles of the Hartford & Slocomb were cut back to six miles, and the line was sold to Gulf & Ohio



Railways, an assortment of shortlines. The H&S was purchased by Genesee & Wyoming Industries in 2006 and its operations merged into a second line called the Chattahoochee and Gulf to form the Chattahoochee Bay Railroad. Meanwhile, the three battle-scarred veterans in the Runner Pack are also from railroads that heavily used incentive per diem boxcars, but I'll leave the exercise of learning more about those to the reader.

In the January 2007 ORER, two of the three boxcars, namely the HS 3861 and the HS 3938, are shown as 5347 cubic foot cars, while the HS 5723 is a 5277 cubic foot car. The MTL 025 body style is a model of the FMC 5077 cubic foot car, so allow me to summarize by saying there will be differences between the prototypes and the models.

**N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #75, four CP Rail plug door boxcars without roofwalk, will be available mid-month per the Micro-News (though advertised as already available on the MTL website). UMTRR coverage was in the October 2012 issue. The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks for these items are as follows: 074 51 010, 165165; 074 52 010, 165198; 074 53 010, 165222; 074 54 010, 165223.



*The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is October 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close April 30.*



**Scheduled October 2013 Release:**

**993 00 081, \$64.95**

**Quantity four of 50 Foot Steel Boxcars with Double Youngstown Doors, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

**Reporting Marks: PRR 32129, 32144, 32152, 32163.**

Brown with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on right. Black and white shadow keystone on left. Approximate Time Period: Late 1960s (based on paint scheme) to late 1980s. Previous Release (as Catalog 34472/34080): Road Number 32156, July 1974 (with both Magne-Matic and Rapido Couplers). These cars should carry individual catalog numbers 034 5x 080.

Well, this is certainly a blast from the N Scale past. Not only were Kadee Micro-Trains cars still being issued with a choice of Rapido or Magne-Matic Couplers, but this release was also among those with the infamous clip-on trucks. (And I should probably stop right there on that topic.) It'll be more than thirty-nine years since the first and only N Scale release of this car. With the improvements to the underframe tooling and the printing and painting processes since mid-1974, I fully expect that we'll be able to declare a technical "not a reprint" on this Runner Pack. However, the last Z Scale version of this car was released in June 2004, and so I can "reprint" myself from that coverage.

The shadow keystone of the PRR debuted in 1954 but the use of the PRR reporting marks between the large roadname and the road number didn't start until November 1957 according to the RPI website. That's not an issue here since these X55a Class cars weren't built until 1960. That's the "New" date on the Kadее N Scale model from '74 which makes sense. The January 1964 ORER shows 698 cars in the series 32001 to 32700. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 52 feet, extreme height 15 feet 2 inches, door opening 15 feet (a "door thing" versus the model to which we'll return) and capacity 4860 cubic feet or 90,000 pounds. That seems a little light so let's check the end notes: first, they had 19 Belt Rail Evans DF Loaders and were used for automobile parts; second, they had nailable steel floors. Nothing unusual there.

Robert Schoenberg's excellent "Rob's Pennsy Page" ( [pr.railfan.net](http://pr.railfan.net) ) includes an equipment drawing for the X55a does indeed indicate a nominal capacity of just 45 tons. Rob also notes that there's a photo of PRR 32099 from the series in the "SK2a" scheme-- which, to save time, is the one MTL used-- on Page 52 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. And there it is, with a caption confirming that the cars are from 1960 and were built at the Samuel Rea Shops. Comparing model to prototype, there are two deltas that come up right away: riveted sides on the real cars and welded sides on the MTL body style, and a 7+8 foot door arrangement that yields the 15 foot door opening on the actual cars versus an 8+8 door set for 16 feet on the Micro-Trains car. The ends look a bit divergent as well, but not obviously so to me.

The photo in the **Color Guide** dates to 1976 so at least one made it that far. Further consulting Rob's Pennsy Page, some X55a cars were repainted for the Penn Central as well; PC 270278 was PRR 32023 for example. But 361 cars still decorated for the Pennsy were in the Conrail listing in the April 1976 ORER, and 83 lasted until April 1981. By then the roofwalks surely would have been pulled, and the original lettering would have been quite faded as well.

### **N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:**



**101 00 708, \$24.95**

**Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Battle of Gettysburg.**

**Car #8 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 website [civilwar.org](http://civilwar.org) , an enterprise of the Civil War Trust, has a very quick synopsis of the Battle of Gettysburg, which occurred from July 1 to July 3, 1863. General Lee of the Confederate forces faced General Meade of the Union forces. At first Lee held the upper hand, driving the Union right through Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill. Next Lee attacked the

flanks of the Union army but did not gain any further ground. The Union retook its lost ground on the third day of the battle, despite a Confederate offensive known as Pickett's Charge. (The image on the MTL car is a reproduction of a painting by Thure de Thulstrup of this action.) Each of the three days of this battle ranks among the top fifteen bloodiest battles of the Civil War. All in all, it's estimated that between both sides, more than fifty thousand soldiers were killed, wounded, missing or captured during the Battle of Gettysburg. That included nine generals out of the 120 that were present at the site.

Four months later, the dedication of the Gettysburg's Soldiers National Cemetery was the venue for what was probably Abraham Lincoln's most famous speech: the Gettysburg Address. What's less known is that while the previous speaker, the orator Edward Everett, was on stage for two hours, Lincoln's remarks were just ten sentences in length and required only two minutes.

*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 April 30.*

993 21 120, \$229.95 – P.T. Barnum Circus Train Set. Consists of the following items depicted here in MTL preliminary artwork. Catalog and road numbers will be listed upon release.



Bachmann 4-4-0 Steam Locomotive with MTL paint and lettering, Road Number 71.

151 Series Civil War Era Boxcar, Road Number 1, "The Greatest Show on Earth" with image of P.T. Barnum.



153 Series Civil War Era Flat Car with red and gold calliope wagon, Road Number 20.



153 Series Civil War Era Flat Car with blue and red calliope wagon, Road Number 16.



153 Series Civil War Era Flat Car with gold "Old Woman in a Shoe" circus wagon, Road Number 32.

152 Series Civil War Era Caboose (Converted Boxcar), Road Number 5, with image of elephant and "The Greatest Show on Earth" slogan.



Yes, this is a Special Edition use of the latest body styles from MTL, and I suppose the boo-birds are already gathering in the usual venues to complain about this. (But there's this concept called amortization, you see...) Because the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circuses didn't become "Combined Shows" until 1919, so MTL needed to choose one or the other for this set. The slogan "The Greatest Show on Earth" was used by the Barnum Circus—more properly, "P.T. Barnum's Great Traveling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan, and Hippodrome" even before that show was combined with James Anthony Bailey's in 1881. And so you have the P.T. Barnum predecessor to the show that still operates today as the focal point of this set.

Phineas Taylor Barnum actually didn't get into the circus business until he was 61 years old. Before that, he was already well-known as a promoter and showman, author and politician. While it's not true that he said "There's a sucker born every minute" it is true that he posted signs in his "Barnum's American Museum" reading "This way to the Egress"... which many did not know is another word for "Exit." He also believed in "profitable philanthropy," which he described thusly: "[I]f by improving and beautifying our city Bridgeport, Connecticut, and adding to the pleasure and prosperity of my neighbors, I can do so at a profit, the incentive to 'good works' will be twice as strong as if it were otherwise." Barnum served two terms in the Connecticut Legislature and a year as Bridgeport's mayor, and was enough of a favorite son of that city to be chosen for the obverse of the Bridgeport Centennial Commemorative Half Dollar of 1936.

Although the colorful locomotive and "caboose" (converted boxcar) are certainly colorful and reflective of the rather garish marketing materials used during the Approximate Time Period of this train, it's the wagons that hold my interest more. The calliope is a steam-powered musical instrument, possibly named for the Greek muse of epic poetry; were it named for the muse of music, it would have been a "euterpe." As it plays a series of large whistles—locomotive whistles at first, by the way—it doesn't vary in tone or volume. Even a small one could be heard for miles, just the thing to let potential patrons know that that the circus was coming to town. Today calliopes are also powered by compressed air. And then there's the Old Woman in the Shoe. Yes, that was a real wagon; it's in a circus museum.

In, of all things, the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of **Billboard** Magazine (November 1, 1994), it's noted that the "greatest danger" to circuses was "riding the rails. The railroads, the traveling shows' lifelines, also often proved to be deathtraps." The article about circuses (coverage of which was a major part of **Billboard's** earlier years) goes on to describe several particularly bad accidents. And there's more: "Perhaps less dramatic, but no less catastrophic, for the traveling shows, were the railroads often high and indiscriminate rates... there were no government control[s]; they were declared private carriers, so they were at the whim of the railway operators." I would imagine that the relationship between the shows that still use circus trains and the railroads is a little more productive today.

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



## Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



518 00 190, \$26.95

**Reporting Marks: NPKX 100.**

**36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Nuckolls Packing Company.**

Yellow sides with brown roof and ends.

Black lettering including company name

and reporting marks on left. Left or "A" side has multicolor "Pikes Peak Lard" trademark. Right or "B" side has black and white "Mission Ham and Bacon" trademark. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: mid-1920s to early 1930s (a guess). Release #12 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."



Please see the commentary on the N Scale release of this car above (058 00 536). Note, however, that the prototype car is 36 feet long while the Z Scale model is 40 scale feet long. The images above are of the N Scale car which MTL used in the Micro-News.



538 00 140 and 538 00 140, \$19.35 each.

**Reporting Marks: None.**

**40 Foot Modern Log Cars with Variable Log Loads.**

Black unpainted frame and trucks with no lettering. Simulated log load included.

Approximate Time Period: most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Please see the commentary on the N Scale Releases (114 00 0x0) above.



980 01 010, \$129.95 and 980 02 010, \$99.95

**Road Numbers: 1474 and 1474B (will be preceded with "UP" in website listings).**

**F7A and F7B Powered Diesels, Union Pacific.**

Armour yellow with red stripes and green panel at top of nose. Mostly gray roof; gray underframe and trucks; gray ends on B unit. Red lettering with black outline: Roadname across carbody on both units; road number below cab window on A unit and at rear of B unit. (Image of B unit shows the rear of the unit on the left.)

Approximate Time Period: 1951 (build date) to 1964. Note: These items were originally announced in March and then delayed until this month.



As Micro-Trains hints, while the yellow, gray and red Union Pacific livery was long-lived, these units were not in service all that long. From UtahRails.net we get the story: in-service dates of just 1951 to 1964 for the fifteen A-units numbered 1464 to 1480 and the thirty B-units number 1464B and C to 1494B and C. And that's if you count when the last of these diesels left service. The 1474 was traded back to EMD in February 1964 and the 1474B in April 1963, but the retirements began in early 1963. The units were only built in 1951 and 1952. Not much of an Approximate Time Period there. And not much of a fleet either, compared to the earlier F3's. The UP peaked at 20 F7As and 36 F7Bs, versus 89 F3As and 90 F3Bs.

And that makes online photo spotting a challenge. Searching "UP 1474" results in the rebuilt GP40-M that the line had much later, and adding "F7" to the mix results with the MTL artwork being first up. Not what we were looking for. Don Strack, the person behind UtahRails.net, previously published **Diesels of the Union Pacific**, a two-volume set with lots of photos, no doubt including some of the relatively scarce F7s. Meanwhile, we'll have to settle for a single black and white shot of 1471 and 1476B on RRPictureArchives.net. I think they get the point across—some nitpicks here and there between prototype and model, but overall, pretty faithful to the real thing.

**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 April 12.*



**994 05 050, \$99.95**

**Golden West Service Weathered 4-Pack.**

**Reporting Marks:** VCY 7648—(last two digits obscured), 764818, 764832, 7648—(again, last two digits obscured).

Consists of four Ventura County Railway / Golden West Service 50 Foot Exterior Post Plug Door boxcars. Each car is dark blue with yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Red and yellow squares right of the roadname. Approximate Time Period: mid-1990s through mid-decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: Runner Pack #45 with Road Numbers 764810, 764822, 764834, and

764846, October 2012. Note: Per MTL, two of these cars have new (not previously released) road numbers, while the other two cars are drawn from Runner Pack #45 (any of those four road numbers). Individual catalog numbers for this set are 511 55 140 to 511 58 140, in the order listed above.

The road numbers for this quartet are in the same prototype series as previous N and Z Scale runs, so once again, I'll borrow from my previous commentaries.

These cars don't appear in the July 1992 ORER for the Ventura County Railway (that's the "VCY"), but are in the ORER for October 1996. The series 764500 to 764899 had 332 cars described as "Box, Steel" with AAR Designation XP. The vital statistics: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 11 inches, outside length 57 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 4 inches, door opening 12 feet, and capacity 5258 cubic feet or 149,000 pounds. There were still 327 cars in the series as of the January 2002 ORER. The entire Ventura County Railway listing is gone from the October 2004 Equipment Register, however the VCY cars were transferred to the Galveston Railroad registration. Only 109 cars were left at that point, and only 31 remained as of January 2006 which is where I stopped looking.

As I've recounted before, the Golden West Service was a joint venture of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Greenbrier Companies, and Gunderson. It came about as the result of the cash-strapped SP's need for rolling stock. Gunderson rebuilt that rolling stock taken from the Espee and leased it back to them through Greenbrier. The reporting marks corresponded to three railroads that probably couldn't fit all of the cars on their rosters on their actual physical trackage. In this case, "VCY" denotes the Ventura County Railway; the others were Coe Rail Inc. and Galveston Railroad, L.P. John Mosbarger preserved a four page brochure advertising "Southern Pacific Lines' New Golden West Service Railcar Fleet" in living color on his "Shasta Route" website (URL <http://shastaroute.railfan.net> , then hit the "SP Miscellaneous" button). The refurbishment of nine thousand cars was to be completed by 1993. The entire operation is more or less in the past tense, however, as Union Pacific has reclaimed the Golden West fleet and put its own predecessor railroads' reporting marks on it, including at least SP, SSW and DRGW. So while the Approximate Time Period ends approximately in the middle of the last decade, it's possible to simply restencil the cars for one of the UP railroads and you're good to go to The Present.

**Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #52, four Union Pacific bulkhead flatcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the October 2012 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 527 51 010, 262113; 527 52 010, 262126; 527 53 010, 262150; 527 54 010, 262174.



*The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is October 2013. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close April 30.*



*Scheduled October 2013 Release:*

**994 00 058, \$69.95**

**Quantity four of 50 Foot Steel Boxcars with Double Youngstown Doors, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

**Reporting Marks: PRR 32129, 32144, 32152, 32163.**

Brown with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on right. Black and white shadow keystone on left. Approximate Time Period: Late 1960s (based on paint scheme) to late 1980s.

Previous Releases (as Catalog Number 13701/13701-2): Road Number 32156, April 1988; Road Number 32155, June 2004; both with either Marklin or Magne-Matic Couplers. The Runner Pack releases should carry individual catalog numbers 506 5x 010.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale version of this Runner Pack above (993 00 081).

**Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** No releases this month.

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

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** In keeping with the Civil War Era — or later — theme, there is an N Scale “Mess Hall Kit” (499 90 952, \$29.95) which looks like any number of buildings I’ve seen on back roads. That was all for the announcements until MTL surprised us with two mid-month Z Scale items: a Union Pacific Table Top Train set (994 03 010, \$229.95) and a 12-pack “Mixed Load Variety Set” (799 43 992, \$26.95).

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** The bye-bye board is pretty active this month. We’ll start in N Scale with last month’s Milwaukee Road boxcar reprint (025 00 780) and at least the second number of last month’s Potash Corporation covered hopper (094 00 362) though my information is that both road numbers left the building very quickly. Three weathered cars exited: the Southern Pacific bulkhead flat car (054 44 020, February), the National Packing Company refrigerator car (059 44 160, June 2012) and the Northern Pacific woodchip gondola (084 44 050, April 2012). Two Meat Packer refrigerators have sold out: the Rath “Black Hawk” (049 00 630, February) and Decker (049 00 640, January). The second number of the Union Pacific x-post boxcar has rolled on (027 00 252, May 2012). The unweathered Golden West Service bulkhead flat (054 00 080, November) is sold out, as are the Frisco covered hopper (096 00 110, February) and the Turquoise and Purple Ringling Brothers wagons (470 00 069). Noted in the Micro-News but not in the official list is last month’s Union Pacific weathered boxcar (020 44 296). One more N Scale release, specifically an Nn3 release, is also the oldest of the MTL releases to be discontinued this month: the Southern Pacific boxcar (800 00 190, August 2009).

In Z Scale we’ll go in catalog number order, and that means starting with last month’s Great Northern weathered boxcar (501 44 130). Continuing along, the yellow Union Pacific plug door boxcar (507 00 560, January 2012) and the Pennsylvania weathered x-post boxcar (511 44



010, February) are gone. Three wood refrigerators have chilled: the first number of the Swift refrigerator car (518 00 061, November 2011), the Kingan Meat Packers car (518 00 120, September 2012) and the Decker Meat Packers car (518 00 170, January). The Canadian National stock car has been driven out of town (520 00 170, November 2012), and completing the list is the first number of the Southern Pacific ribside hopper (534 00 021, April 2012).

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** Although not specifically railroad related, Bill Travers was reminded of his experience with country ham and city ham by my remark about them in my commentary on last month's Southern Star Meat Packer refrigerator car. "Although I grew up in Western Pennsylvania, I spent 28 years in Western New York before moving to NC in 1992. Yes, country ham is still on the menu as well as city ham. I remember going into a supermarket when I first moved here, seeing ham slices in the aisle not refrigerated. I found out that the salt in country ham will not allow any bacteria to grow on or in the ham."

**OOPS PATROL:** I transposed the catalog numbers of last month's Norfolk Southern Weathered Gondola set. Here's the corrected catalog and road number information: 105 51 730, 194178; 105 52 730, 194059; 105 53 730, 201364.

**FINALLY, LOSING A READER.** One of the unfortunate realities of maintaining my distribution list is receiving word that one of my subscribers has passed away. I always appreciate that the next of kin of the reader takes the time to let me know. This happens more than I would like. This time, though, the news of losing a subscriber involves my own father, George Robert Irwin. Almost since its inception I have been mailing, and sometimes hand delivering, printed copies of the UMTRR to him; he and my mother didn't own a computer at their house so I always made sure he had a hard copy.

Most of you do not know that in 2009 my dad was diagnosed with Stage 4 Adenocarcinoma of the lungs -- that's cancer of a fairly aggressive type. (He didn't smoke.) The chemotherapy worked wonders and his own will to live was very strong. The statistical probability of survival actually ends at two years-- and for many, it's just weeks. Yet he was with us for nearly four years including his 50th Wedding Anniversary, 75th Birthday and the wedding of his great niece just last year, where he and my mom danced to "their song" as the couple married the longest at the reception. I took him to his first Railroad Prototype Meet just last year also, which he and I thoroughly enjoyed.

After Thanksgiving last year he began to feel seriously unwell again and could not have his maintenance chemotherapy due to a low white blood cell count. He was admitted to the hospital in late February; we were told it was pneumonia, which he had, but the official diagnosis was leukemia. A further round of five days of chemotherapy had no effect and from that point on we knew things had taken an inevitable turn. It was still a shock, however, when I got the call at 4:45 in the morning on April 6 that he had passed. The end came without any pain as far as we know.

I'm grateful that I was able to bring the family in for one last visit to the hospital where he was being treated, only the weekend before. I handed him the printed copy of the UMTRR for March and when I could see that he could not focus on something that he truly loved to read and discuss with me, I think a bit of my heart broke right there and then. So officially, the last UMTRR that he read was the February 2013 column. You might have noticed that there were no exclamation points in the March edition, and there aren't any here either.

In between starting and finishing this edition of the UMTRR, I've been down in New Jersey for the arrangements and the funeral services and to help my mom and only brother out. My wife and children were able to travel from UMTRR HQ for the services as well.

There was an Army honor guard and a bagpiper at the funeral services and more than 100 people attended his visiting hours, including the local American Legion Post of which he was Chaplain for many years. We laid him to rest with an HO Scale Lackawanna hopper in the casket-- to honor his Hoboken birthplace, his coal mining predecessors, his own grandfather and of course, his affection for trains. A Railway Express Agency pencil was placed in the box with the hopper to recall his father who worked there for decades. His friend from all the way back in Kindergarten added a Pennsylvania Railroad timetable. He also wore several lapel pins including one from the mayor of the town where he lived since 1969.

My dad will be missed by more people than even I knew. It hasn't quite hit me yet -- I'm still focused on "what needs to get done." I know that once they start up again in the fall, I will find attending train shows bittersweet. I would always call him to tell him about the shows, good, bad or indifferent.

Meanwhile, I have a great deal of catching up to do after being away for much of the last two months, and so, other than this humble enterprise, I will remain "off the grid" for a while. There is no question that the UMTRR will continue, however.

Until next time,  
George

[Legalese: You've received this because you've requested a UMTRR e-mail subscription. If there's been some mistake, please let me know via e-mail at [umtrr@irwinsjournal.com](mailto:umtrr@irwinsjournal.com), including "UMTRR" in the subject line (all other e-mail including to any other addresses in the [irwinsjournal.com](http://irwinsjournal.com) domain is automatically deleted unread). You may also reply to this e-mail, but PLEASE delete attachments and other text first. All information contained herein is supplied "as is" and no warranties are express or implied. Trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Images of releases provided through courtesy of Micro-Trains Line, Inc. The Federal Trade Commission considers this effort to be an "endorsement." I assume readers can make up their own minds.]