



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

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Hello again everyone! I'm pleased to report that I have the proper e-mail address working again, and none too soon. I've got my work cut out for me for the final column for 2013, as the long awaited official pre-order announcement for the Micro-Trains N Scale SW1500 switchers has finally been made... though with a somewhat amorphous delivery date. There's also a new body style in Z Scale, a Brewery Car advertising "Manhattan" Beer that wasn't made in New York, a tank car with a Mexican flag, and another tank car with a white star. And then there's the pre-order announcement that includes a car that may have set the record length of time between suggestion and execution—for this byte-slinger personally, anyway! Intrigued? Read on...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



055 00 500, \$19.05

Reporting Marks: DAFX 55175.

33 Foot Open Hopper, United States Air Force.

Blue (including trucks and couplers but not wheels) with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Black and white consolidated stencils on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s to present.

I'm guessing on the Approximate Time Period for this car based solely on one feature: the use of consolidated stencils, which began around 1974 for single panel and went to double panel after that. I agree with Micro-Trains' noting that cars owned by the military but not used in "commercial service"—in other words, to transport materiel from to or from bases or between them—could have something other than the standard DODX reporting marks. And this car has the holdover DAFX reporting marks which were phased out beginning in the 1960s for those cars that were normally used on the North American railroad system.

Given that these cars probably wouldn't wander outside the confines of a military installation of some sort, I didn't bother checking the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for any given date. But I did quickly come upon a "bingo" for this car on RRPictureArchives.net. The later image of the car, taken in June 2009, shows it in storage at the Business Depot in Ogden, Utah. The MTL depiction of the car includes lettering that's actually nicer than what's on the car; the real 55175 looks like it was hand-lettered. The real car is also sporting an ACI Label, but that's easily remedied by the modeler. The actual hopper looks to be a good match to the MTL 055 body style, though without dimensions I can't confirm an exact correspondence. Based on the 2009 photo, it's also a bit worn down, and the deep blue paint has faded and chalked considerably—no doubt, from the high desert sun that beats down on Ogden many days of the year.

A second photo, from June 2005 and taken at Harrisville, Utah, leads me immediately to the question, "Does no rail car escape the graffiti artist these days?!?" Yes, friends, there was Unauthorized Decoration on this hopper, I believe spelling out the word "Metal." Why, yes, sir, the car was made of metal... anyway, on this image the blue is a bit deeper than in the 2009 view. You're still going to need a fair amount of white "wash" to simulate the shade of the car as it appeared then, however. I expect that any number of N Scalers might try this.

The graffiti might just help some operators invoke "Rule #1" (It's Your Railroad) however. Let's assume (or at least hope) that the military operation where this car currently resides is relatively secure and therefore safe from, ahem, "artists." If that's true, then the only way that "Metal" was added to the car was in-transit, meaning that once in a while the car could have moved on an actual railroad instead of being confined to a base. I checked and Harrisville, Utah is a small distance north of the Ogden Business Depot, so it's plausible that the car was "tagged" on the way to somewhere else. The 2005 and 2009 photos are of opposite sides of the car so I can't tell you whether the "Metal" remains.

Anyone who still doubts that \$20 is the new \$10 with respect to freight cars need only to look at this release as an example. There's a simple paint scheme, no load included, and an MSRP less than a dollar short of that twenty dollar level. OK, well, the sticker price might have been a little lower with black trucks versus the special blue ones. Lest anyone think I am singling out the folks in Oregon on this one, have a look at some of the other recent Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Prices of N Scale rolling stock.



058 00 190, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: GARE 9900.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Manhattan Brewing Company.

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe and door hardware. Black lettering including company name and location and reporting marks on left, and "Chicago's Favorite Old Manhattan Lager Beer" on right. White reporting marks on ends. Approximate Time Period: 1934 to mid-1930s. Release #8 in an expected twelve in the Brewery Reefer Series.

How about this: I can reprint myself from the September review of the Schott Brewing refrigerator car, since this car comes from the same prototype series, 9900 to 9924 as that car painted for Schott. And therefore, I reprint: From a design standpoint, the match to the 058 body style is pretty close, including grab irons on the sides, though there were end ladders on the real car while MTL has grab irons. But it's also noted that the cars were 40 feet long, not 36 feet. The inside length on the actual car is shown as a bit over 33 feet.

And I keep reprinting: The ORER for July 1935 will help with this, and sure enough, the outside length of the car is 42 feet 3 inches. That length is in the range of that of MTL 36 foot refrigerator car when considering the length over the couplers. (I measured.) However, I'm

not sure I'd call it "right." Some other key figures: Inside width 8 feet 2 inches, inside height 7 feet 3 inches, height to top of running board, 12 feet 4 inches, and extreme height 13 feet 11 inches (meaning to the top of the vertical brake staff), door opening 4 feet wide by 5 feet 4 inches high, with capacity of 80,000 pounds of lading and up to 11,400 pounds of ice.

Page 122 of the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** has an image of the 9900 which clearly shows the July 1934 repaint date of this car into the Manhattan Brewing scheme, which leads to a very short "strictly speaking" ATP. (I suspect many operators won't care.) Authors Richard Hendrickson and Ed Kaminski have two items of interest in the caption: first, these cars were originally built in 1911 and were acquired second-hand by General American; second, there was only this one car painted for Manhattan Brewing. So there are no "authentic" reprints possible here. Well, let's add one more data point: ventilator hoods over the hatch covers. Now that would be an interesting detail to model.

Interesting details abound in the history of this company. For example, there was another, er, business that was quite busy in Chicago during the time of the Manhattan Brewing Company: organized crime. Johnny Torio and a partner purchased Manhattan back in 1919 and Louis Greenberg, the "finance officer" for one Al Capone, was installed soon after as the manager. During Prohibition, the Manhattan Brewery changed names to Fort Dearborn Products Company, but illegally went right on making beer—or so it's alleged. Another "businessman," Frank Nitti, purchased control of the company in 1932 and it's said he still owned 85 percent of Manhattan when he took his own life in 1943. The company was accused of, among other things, using the words "Canadian" and "Wisconsin" for beers that were not actually made in either location.

Manhattan is also known for what's called the "Holy Grail" of beer cans, for one Tiger Beer; there's only one can known to exist. That Tiger Beer shouldn't be confused with the beverage of the same name currently made in Singapore. Meanwhile, the site eBeercans.com lists the approximate book value of one particular version of a plain "Manhattan Premium Beer" can with a flat top at \$110. And there's a webpage that has examples of many of the brands that Manhattan brewed, in fact it's an entire website devoted to a history of the company and its various brand names. Find it at, you guessed it, manhattanbrewing.com.

In 1947, long after the Approximate Time Period of this car, the company changed its name to Canadian Ace, perhaps to cut ties with its, let's say colorful, past. The company ceased operations in 1968 and the brewery was torn down in 1976. The above mentioned website includes photos of the vacant lot where the buildings once stood. The location that formerly hosted the brewery is adjacent to a railroad line... of course.



065 00 750, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: WSRX 438.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, Staroline (White Star Refining).

Silver and black tank with black underframe and trucks. Black reporting marks on far left. Red script "Staroline" in red above "Gasoline is Better" on left. Company trademark of white star in blue circle on right. Small black and white lettering on sides and ends. Approximate Time Period: 1931 to mid-1930s. Release #3 of an expected twelve in the Tank Car Series.

One thing we know for sure about the White Star Refining Company is that it was acquired by The Vacuum Oil Company in 1930. That was just the year before Vacuum merged with the Standard Oil Company of New York to form the Socony-Vacuum Corporation, which, after several name changes, became Mobil Oil Corporation in 1966. White Star had its home office in Detroit and produced Staroline Gasoline and Staroleum Motor Oil. A 1918 photo from the Bentley (Michigan) Public Library shows a filling station with three old-style glass-type gas pumps, in front of which is a sign that matches the slogan on the MTL car: "Staroline Gasoline is Better." Have a look at whatwasthere.com. (I'm sure I could get lost on that site, but duty calls.) A six by four foot porcelain sign that appeared identical to the one in the photo was sold earlier this year. It looks from an advertisement I also spotted online that White Star sold anti-knock motor fuel under the brand "Knockoline." I'm not sure I would use that name!

Page 990 of the ORER for August 1924 is almost at the very end of the book, and is the last page on which private owner equipment is listed. (Fun fact: The very last entry on that page is for the Zeigin-Clarke Oil and Gas Company. No, I haven't heard of it either.) That's where we find a text-only listing for White Star Refining Company. The run-on sentence describing the entire fleet can be parsed to determine that the 438 was part of the group 432 to 468, capacity 10,000 gallons and 10,000 pounds. Other than the TM designation, that's all we can learn. White Star rostered a total of 97 cars at the time, and presumably at least since July 1923 which is the date given at the bottom of the entry.

By the February 1931 Equipment Register, White Star's roster has increased to 274 cars, of which everything numbered from 501 to 625 was to have repair bills sent to the Pennsylvania Tank Line. With no specific car counts, just a total, I can't tell for sure that the 438 was on the roster. However, we'll fix that in a moment. In the July 1935 Register, the WSRX reporting marks are shown under Socony-Vacuum, White Star-Ohio Division. This suggests to me that Socony-Vacuum might have picked up White Star in order to invade the territory of another Standard Oil, namely, "of Ohio" or Sohio. The original breakup of the Standard Oil Trust assigned specific territorial boundaries to each of the companies that were created – thus, for example, you have "Standard Oil of New York" – but those companies found ways to enter each other's states. The WSRX reporting marks were kept by Mobil; for example there is the MTL red and white Mobilgas tank car released in 2006 (Catalog 065 00 030).

An early Christmas present—from me to me— was the book **Tank Cars American Car & Foundry Company 1865 to 1955** by Edward Kaminski. And on Page 119 of that volume is a bingo to this car, a builder's photo dated August 6, 1931. There are some differences, for example, the ladder doesn't reach all the way to the dome and the underframe has a center beam on which the reporting marks are printed. What's more interesting is the caption, according to which the WSRX 438 was precisely a one car order! On top of that, we also saw a 438 in the 1924 ORER, with a 10,000 gallon capacity. Could the 438 have been a replacement for a wrecked tank car? We might never know.



094 00 380, \$28.75

Reporting Marks: SP 496167.

Three-Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, Southern Pacific.

Gray (including trucks and couplers but not wheels) with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname in center. Approximate Time Period: 1965 (build date) through the 1980s. *Note: This item is being reported by some MTL dealers as being already sold out and discontinued, however, that is not officially confirmed by MTL.*

The **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume Two**, provides a bingo on this car on Page 71. The 496167 was part of the SP series 496000 to 496199, two hundred cars built by American Car & Foundry in 1965. These were the Southern Pacific's class H-100-12 and were of 4460 cubic foot capacity. "The ACF 4460 design was in essence a reduced height 4650 Center Flow," stated Color Guide author James Kincaid. That means that while we have a bingo to the car, we don't have a bingo to the Micro-Trains 094 body style; but I don't know anyone else who makes this exact version of the ACF Center Flow either. MTL does appear to have every bit of the lettering down, from the all large capital letters roadname (versus the larger "S" and "P" in a more commonly seen version) to the Railroad Roman font for the reporting marks to the red and yellow warning sideboard to the left of the roadname. The 1983 build date in the Micro-Trains car copy is a typo: the 1965 new date is correct on the actual car.

The closest ORER to that build date in the UMTRR Research Accumulation is January 1967. There we find the series already down three cars to 197. The description is interesting: "Hopper, Steel, Inverted Tear Drop Design, Center Flow, Lined." Obviously it was the early stage of introduction of this car type to North American railroads! The inside length was 46 feet 9 inches, outside length 51 feet 2 inches, extreme height 14 feet 8 inches, capacity as already noted 4460 cubic feet, or 190,000 pounds. By the October 1976 Equipment Register the description was "Covered Hopper, Steel, Tear Drop, Center Flow, Lined, Trough Hatches" and the group was down to 181 cars. However, in the July 1980 book that's down to 26 cars, and in April 1984 ORER just 19. The series hangs on through the 1980s, and two remain in the April 1995 Register which is where I stopped looking. Based on a much later photo on the Fallen Flags site—specifically, from 2004—it appears that much of the series went through the Golden West Service process. The shot is of car SP 496051, repatriated to its original reporting marks, perhaps, but certainly not in the as delivered paint scheme.



110 00 150, \$35.80

Reporting Marks: GATX 1705.

54 Foot General Service Tank Car, Zahori.

Black with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large company name on right. Mexican flag in green, white, red and yellow on far right. Black on yellow emergency advisory information below company name on right. Black on white Tank Qualification Stencil on right below Mexican flag. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 2000s.

Here's the mission statement of Industrias Zahori, directly from their website: "Ser la mejor opción en calidad, servicio y confiabilidad en la elaboración y distribución de materiales impermeabilizantes, asfálticos y de la construcción, en México y Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, anticipando y excediendo las expectativas de los clientes a través de la mejora continua de los procesos, productos y el desarrollo del personal, incrementando el valor para los inversionistas y contribuyendo con acciones que beneficien a la comunidad." Courtesy of Google Translate: "Be the best choice in quality, service and reliability in the development and distribution of waterproofing, asphalt materials and construction in Mexico and the United States, anticipating and exceeding customer expectations through continuous process improvement, products and staff development, increasing the value for investors and contributing to actions that benefit the community." I suppose I would have figured this out eventually. (Given that while in Valencia to visit some of my wife's family a couple of years ago, it took me about fifteen minutes to form one simple sentence, if left to me, the translation would have appeared in the Incremental Information Department in about Issue #300...)

We get a bingo to this car, complete with Zahori name and Mexican flag, by way of a June 2007 image posted on RRPictureArchives.net. The general "look and feel" between prototype and model is there, although like many if not all tank cars, the prototype has "shelf couplers" which would be a nice item for MTL to consider making. The length of the real car looked to be greater than the 110 body style, and in fact, the data accompanying the photo has the car at 59 feet 8 inches, a noticeable difference to the Micro-Trains car.

In the "details, details, details" department, the start of the Approximate Time Period could be tied to the use of the Tank Qualification Stencil; that's the black on white table on the far right end of the car. These were mandatory for all tank cars by July 2000. "Qualification" is analogous to "air worthiness" testing performed on planes, meant to address potential problems like leakage before they occur. The qualification stenciling indicates when a series of inspections took place, and when they are next due. An article by Stuart Streit in the September 2000 issue of **Railroad Model Craftsman** details these qualification standards and also provides some background on the history of testing tank cars. Meanwhile, the "strictly speaking" end of the ATP could be called out by the lack of conspicuity stripes—those vertical yellow reflective bars that also appear on just about every freight car these days. Their use started in 2005 and I've read that all rolling stock must have them by 2020 or so. The 2007 photo shows the car without stripes, so you're fine to that point at least.

A second photo of the car as of April 2010, also on RRPictureArchives.net, gives us what may be a better way to call the end of the ATP. The conspicuity stripes are there, and they're more like an orange than yellow. But the Zahori name has been painted out and appears as "ghost" lettering.

Were Micro-Trains to include conspicuity stripes, though, that would have meant even more paint "hits" and more cost to what is already a deceptively complex car. Plain black tank car? Yes, and with white, yellow, black, red, and green markings. Put that on what is one of the more expensive body styles to produce and you wind up with the price point of, well, where it is. I suspect that it would have been a more expensive car had not MTL contracted to do a Special Run of three four-packs of CGTX cars for a model train dealer. This regular run might have been scheduled such that MTL was outputting General Service Tank Cars anyway, thus taking advantage of "economies of scale." (The same might be true November's regular run release of two CP Rail stock cars in the same month as the Rio Grande Runner Pack of the same body style.) Pretty smart thinking, I'd say.



122 00 061 and 122 00 062, \$28.95 each.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 37349 and 37360.

60 Foot Double Door Boxcar, Wide Truck Spacing, Santa Fe (ATSF).

Red with black roof, ends, and top sill. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks and large circle cross herald on left. Yellow and white slogan "Super Shock Control - A Smoother Ride" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (build date) to mid-1970s.

The **Santa Fe Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 55, has an image of a one-month old ATSF 37359 from the same series as the two cars MTL presents this month. These cars carried the Santa Fe's class FE-36 but were of AAR Designation XAP. There may be some deltas between the actual cars which were built in the Santa Fe's own shops and the Micro-Trains 122 body style which is based on the Greenville sixty foot car. Two I see from the photo aren't of construction, but of paint: the running board appears to be aluminum colored, not black; and the side ladders are black on the 37359, not red. The lettering appears to be spot on, including the warning panels reading "This car excess height / 15'6" above top of rail" and the small black and white circle crosses, meant to represent reflective material – which are printed inside the ladders. How big could that pad printer have been? Note that the black and white "excess height car" panel at the top of the ends wasn't yet in common use, so the use of the warnings on the sides was acceptable at the time.

The ORER for January 1964 shows the series 37300 to 37399 with all one hundred possible cars in service. They were described as "Auto, Parts, Shock Control" with an inside length of 60 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 11 feet 2 inches, outside length 65 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet 4 inches, door opening 16 feet and capacity 6220 cubic

feet or 180,000 pounds. In the October 1972 Register this group was reclassified as AAR Designation XP and split into four groups. The first group retained the 180,000 pound capacity and accounted for 65 cars. The second had 27 cars and a capacity reduced to 131,000 pounds; an end note called out installation of bulkheads and engine racks. A third group of four cars numbered 37346 to 37349 had “roller bearing” –I assume roller bearing trucks – and there was a fourth “group” of one car, the 37430, which also had bulkheads and engine racks. While I’m reasonably confident that the “Super Shock Control” paint was still intact, if weathered, on these cars, the early seventies is when you’d need to start thinking about roofwalk removal. The “Excess Height” band on the ends would probably have appeared as well. So while there were still a total of 95 of these cars on the rails as of the April 1981 ORER, I think I need to call the ATP sooner than that. Rule #1 always applies, of course.

In addition to the above items, the Manassas Gap single release Civil War Era freight cars have been released. These cars were “pre-reviewed” in the July 2013 UMTRR and are as follows:



151 00 050, \$17.70 – Civil War Era Boxcar. Road Number: 32. Brown with white lettering including roadname on left and road number on right.



152 00 050, \$17.70 – Civil War Era Caboose (Converted Boxcar). Reporting Marks: MGR 8. Brown with white reporting marks (only) on left.



153 00 050, \$16.90 – Civil War Era Flatcar. Road Number: 64. Brown with white lettering including roadname and road number across car. Simulated raw lumber (split logs) load included.

NEW RELEASE PRE-ORDERS OPEN: *The following items are in pre-order at present and are NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as shown below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close December 31. Images in this section are artist’s renditions and are subject to change.*



Scheduled Release Spring 2014:

986 00 011 and 986 00 012, \$129.95 each

Road Numbers: 1318 and 1319 (will be preceded with “UP” in website listings).

SW1500 Locomotive, Union Pacific.

Yellow and gray hood, black underframe. Red striping along sill and near top of hood. Red lettering including roadname on hood and road number on cab. Small red, white and blue shield herald on cab below road number. Approximate Time Period: 1987 and 1988 for the these specific units, but mid-1990s to about 2000 for other UP (not “UPY”) road numbers.

OK, where to start. We have only artist's drawings to work with and not finished product, so a detail by detail comparison of prototype to model wouldn't necessarily be productive. Perhaps before I start to "be specific" (sorry) with the Union Pacific offerings, I might mention a few general facts about this particular locomotive model.

The Second Diesel Spotter's Guide, Copyright 1973, is actually so dated now that it shows the SW1500 as still being in production! Building of these units began in 1966. They, like the close cousin SW1000 and SW1001 models, are powered by an EMD 645E engine; but the 1500s have the 12 cylinder version. "These units are the successors to the SW600 / SW900 / SW1200 / RS1325 line of switching and light roadswitching locomotives in EMD's catalog," notes the book's author Jerry Pinkepank. A spotting feature of the SW1500 is dual stacks. These locomotives were built with AAR and Flexicoil trucks. Its successor was the MP15DC. The last SW1500 was built in 1974—but that's noted in the **Spotter's Guide**. With 808 units built for a wide variety of original owners, and even more roadnames possible as secondary owners, Micro-Trains could keep quite busy making N Scale versions of this locomotive.

Surprisingly, to me anyway, the Union Pacific was apparently not one of the original customers for the SW1500. They wound up with plenty as they took over other railroads. One example is the UP 1318. It was formerly the Missouri Pacific's—they only had four—with the same road number. It might present a bit of an issue for MTL. When in UP colors, it was with the "Missouri Pacific" style roadname—squared off letters and numbers on what was otherwise the UP paint scheme. Further, according to RRPictureArchives.net which has a shot of the 1318 as of December 1987, the unit was painted this way for only about another year before being sold to the Chicago Rail Link. The 1319, also a former MP unit, went to the Chicago Rail Link as well by 1988, and then on to the East Jersey Railroad and Terminal Company in Bayonne, New Jersey as of February 2010. So it's quite the short Approximate Time Period for these particular switchers in Union Pacific colors. Other SW1500s were on the roster for much longer, for example the 106 former Southern Pacific and Cotton Belt units that were re-designated "UPY" or Union Pacific Yard units. The site UtahRails.net has a complete listing of these locos. The SP's SW1500s had Flexicoil trucks, though, planned by MTL for future runs—which might explain the road number choices for these UP units.



Scheduled Release Spring 2014:

986 00 021 and 986 00 022, \$109.95 each

Road Numbers: 2202 and 2203 (will be preceded with "NS" in website listings).

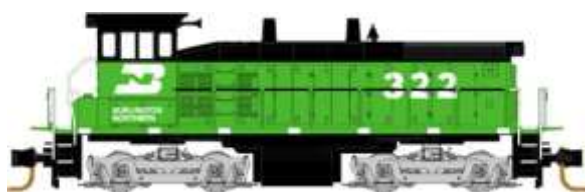
SW1500 Locomotive, Norfolk Southern.

Black with yellow handrails. White lettering including speed lettering NS and roadname on hood and road number on cab. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1999 to around 2010.

The Norfolk Southern's SW1500s numbered 2290 to 2347, came mostly from the Southern Railway with a few from the Illinois Terminal. The group 2200 to 2242, including the two numbers selected by Micro-Trains, all came from Conrail as part of the split of that company between NS and CSX Transportation. According to the site nslocos.com, the 2202 was

originally Penn Central 9507 built in 1971, then Conrail 9507. The 2203 was built in 1972 and was previously PC 9510 and CR 9510. Neither have the “PRR” sublettering that usually denotes former Conrail units, though. (It’s complicated, but the NS “revived” the Pennsy reporting marks for the diesels that they picked up from Conrail.) The 2202 has AGS, for Alabama Great Southern, a former Southern Railway subsidiary, and the 2203 has just “NS”. Both units have small white parallelogram stripes along the sill and zebra striped pilots, which if not reproduced in 1:160 by MTL, would be something for the modeler to add. The 2203 as shown on the nslocos.com site includes an appliance of some sort on the cab roof, once again illustrating that locomotives might be “standard” in some ways, but not identical.

The ATP doesn’t quite reach The Present for the 2202 or 2203, which were sold to Progress Rail no later than 2010. In fact, all of the ex-Conrail SW1500s were either retired or sold off, though some of the former Southern Railway fleet remains in service.



Scheduled Release Spring 2014:

986 00 031 and 986 00 032, \$129.95 each

Road Numbers: 313 and 322 (will be preceded with “BN” in website listings).

SW1500 Locomotive, Burlington Northern.

Green and black hood and cab with black underframe. Black, green and white handrails. White lettering including herald and roadname on cab and road number on front end of hood. White zebra stripes on front end and partially on cab rear. Approximate Time Period: 1973 (build date) to late 1990s.

According to the Wikipedia page on the SW1500, the BN was an original owner of these units, having purchased fifteen of them numbered 310 to 324 in 1973. The BN also picked up ten Great Northern SW1500s which were numbered BN 300 to 309. They’d get more from the Frisco as well. According to that same Wikipedia page, the 310 to 324 were repainted to BNSF 3456 to 3470. Looking on the website “Don’s Depot” (specifically, the direct URL of donsdepot.donrossgroup.net/dr1324.htm) it looks like the BNSF restenciling (but not necessarily repainting!) occurred in the late 1990s. Photos show a cab roof-mounted single rotating beacon on the 322 as well as a bell attached to the roof just in front of the front stack. Details, details... they probably will need to be added in specific places to get things “just right.” Based on the artwork the bell will be in the right place on these BN examples, though.

The BN 313 did eventually get repainted into full BNSF regalia as its 3459 and was shown at the Topeka Shops in July 2002, that photo being on RRPictureArchives.net. But it was stripped of most of its insides by 2006 and looked pretty forlorn on shop trucks in Silvis, Illinois in January 2007. I think we’re seeing a pattern here... nothing announced so far making it all the way to The Present. (The next one won’t either.)

I believe that MTL clearly knows that the typeface, font, style, whatever you want to call it of the road number is not correct in the artist’s rendition of these BN units. And I believe that means that will be fixed once the units are actually produced.



Scheduled Release Spring 2014:

986 00 041 and 986 00 042, \$109.95 each

Road Numbers: 9590 and 9594 (will be preceded with "CR" in website listings).

SW1500 Locomotive, Conrail.

Blue with black and white handrails; black underframe. White lettering including roadname and herald on hood and road number on cab. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s to late 1990s.

For the fourth of the announced roadnames we go to the website of the Conrail Historical Society (thechrhs.org , no "www") for a bit of background. The line had 121 of these, inherited from predecessors Penn Central, Reading, Indiana Harbor Belt and Indianapolis Union. Five of these were sold by 1984 and a few more were gone by 1996, but the majority survived to the split of Conrail in 1999. As with most of their equipment, the transition to Conrail Blue was not immediate. The CRHS site has an ex-Penn Central unit, 9505, with only that same "CR" in white right over the PC herald. And I recall ex-Reading units at Port Reading, New Jersey, ignominiously painted out with a hasty "CR" - in Penn Central font, to add further insult- added where the Reading herald was once proudly displayed.

The 9590 and 9594 are both former Reading units. RRPictureArchives has a 1977 shot of one of those infamous paint-outs; they couldn't even get the digits in the road number (which was 2751) straight, they were in such a hurry. The unit is back in a proper paint scheme by November 1979 and is working in Edison, New Jersey. And the 9594, ex-Reading 2755, is actually in Port Reading as of March 1979. It's possible that somewhere in the archives, I have a photo of this one myself. One aftermarket detail that might be interesting to add is a canvas cover over the front of the hood. The 9594 went to Norfolk Southern as its 2235 and the 9590 became NS 2234 and then ADMX 2234, working for Archer-Daniels-Midland.

Scheduled Release April 2014: 993 05 210, \$84.95, War Bonds Three-Pack. Consists of:



020 series 40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown (probably the PRR's "Freight Car Color") with white lettering including "Buy War Bonds" slogan, roadname and road number on left, and small circle keystone on right. Road Number

54409 (will be preceded by "PRR" in website listings). Approximate Time Period: early to mid-1940s at least, but see text.



057 series 33 Foot Two Bay Hopper, Composite Sides, Flat Ends, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown (probably the PRR's "Freight Car Color") with white lettering including "Buy War Bonds" slogan, roadname and road number left of center, and small

circle keystone on right. Road Number 220977 (will be preceded by "PRR" in website

listings). Previous Releases: Road Number 220877, April 1994; Road Number 220886, April 2004. Approximate Time Period: early 1940s to early 1950s at least.



058 series 36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Swift Refrigerator Line.

Entire car (including ends) is painted in equal size red, white and blue bands from top to bottom. Red band has gold lettering “Swift Refrigerator Line / Refrigerator” across top. White band has “Buy More War Bonds” across center of side. Blue band has white reporting marks on left and dimensional data. Reporting Marks: SRLX 6306. Door has a black outlined white “V”. Approximate Time Period: 1943 to early 1950s.

The clear standout car in this forthcoming trio is the third numerically by catalog number, but I’ll start with it anyway. I don’t even know how many years ago, but definitely before 2003, I purchased two copies of the Atlas HO Scale version of the Swift “War Bonds” car, which was a special run they did for Hobbytyme Distributors. One was for my dad, which, sadly, will come back to me now that he’s gone. And one was sent out to Micro-Trains. In a letter to Eric Smith I sent along with the car, I said that this would be a great offering for Micro-Trains to do some July – they were doing the Armed Forces cars at the time – but that given the complexity, including three colors on the ends as well as the sides, that this would probably be their first forty dollar car. Probably some ten or more years later – absolutely a personal record for time suggested to time produced for any car ideas I’ve provided – it looks like I might be right about that price point, depending on how you split up the cost of the three cars in this pack. (Officially, these cars are not priced individually.)

Lest anyone question whether this set belongs here and not in the Special Editions section, might I point you to the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars**, Page 189, where not just one but three of these Swift cars in this striking paint scheme are pictured. Authors Hendrickson and Kaminski note that “though not a billboard scheme, certain kinds of wartime advertising were permitted on freight cars through World War II. The 6306 is closest to the camera, so we have a bingo here. The length of the car is called out at 37 feet 5 inches, a bit longer than the MTL 058 body style.

The website that unofficially compiles information on the HO Scale Sunshine Kits line (www.sunshinekits.com) provides us with the start of the Approximate Time Period. “In 1943 with war bond sales flagging, the government ‘encouraged’ railroads to use their cars to advertise the purchase of more bonds by the public... Most familiar are the efforts of the Santa Fe on its BX-36 USRA rebuilt boxcars and the Pennsy on its X-31 round top cars.” The order form for these cars, which were from the SRLX 2500, 5200, and 6700 series, shows what we call the ATP stretching to the early 1950s, so we’ll go with that. While painted for Swift, the cars were actually being operated by General American since the 1930s when they purchased the Swift fleet.

The ORER for January 1943 shows the series SRLX 6100 to 6599 under the General American Transportation Corporation – Wood Car Division listing. The inside length was 30 feet 4 inches between bulkheads, inside width 7 feet 9 inches, inside height 7 feet 1 inch, outside length 37 feet 5 inches, door opening 4 feet, and extreme height 14 feet. The capacity was 75,000 pounds of lading within 1462 cubic feet, along with 146 cubic feet or 6000 pounds of crushed ice.

With the colorful car done, let's turn our attention to the two Pennsy "War Bonds" cars. The composite hopper has been run twice before, in two different shades of brown. The 1996 rerun had more red, like the PRR's "red oxide" or "Freight Car Color" of the time. (If you throw in the third-party Al's Kustom Kars run of this paint scheme, road number 220987, that's three different shades of brown; Al's was even more reddish.) As long as the January 1943 ORER is off the shelf, let's take a look. There were 500 cars in the H31b class numbered 220842 to 221341, described as "Hopper, Steel Frame." The inside length was 31 feet 6 inches, outside length 32 feet 9 inches, extreme height 10 feet 4 inches, and capacity 1738 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

We can go to "Rob's Pennsy Page" (pr.railfan.net) for a quicker rundown of the car counts from there. These cars lasted as composite side hoppers longer than I thought. As of April 1952 there were 492 on the roster. A gradual rebuilding to steel side cars, class H31c, began after that, and was effectively done no later than October 1958. How long the "Buy War Bonds" advertisement lasted is a different question, so I've hedged the ATP a bit.

That brings us to the boxcar, which will be a new release. You might already recall that the PRR did not have many PS-1 boxcars at all—they may have been "The Standard Railroad of the World" by their reckoning, but that didn't mean they followed everyone else's standards! The PS-1 type modeled by MTL as their 020 body style is too new for a wartime slogan boxcar in any case. And, again checking the January 1943 ORER, the road number 54409 on the artwork actually corresponds to the X29 class of boxcar. Micro-Trains has a better choice for this car, and that's one of their four 120 body styles of "AAR/USRA" boxcar. The artwork certainly implies that this won't be the case, but remember the phrase "Artwork for Representation Only." There's plenty of time to make a switch of cars here, and let's hope that change is made. For now, though, we'll stop right here, and provide an update in a later column if need be.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



064 00 050, \$17.70

Reporting Marks: NS 157342.

57 Foot TOFC Flat Car, Norfolk Southern.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small herald on right. Approximate Time Period: early 1990s to mid-decade of the 2000s. Previous Release (as Catalog Number 64050): Road Number 157271, September 1996.

While there are no “bingos” there for either this new road number or the previously run one, UMTRR Gang Member Joe Shaw’s Norfolk Southern site (www.krunk.org/~joeshaw/pics) is a go-to location for photos of these particular cars. All of the photos are from the years 2003, 2004 and 2005; there are eight different road numbers to choose from. This includes an overhead shot of the 157491 which shows cutouts in the floor and a steel grid deck. Both of these features are deltas to the MTL 064 body style. The cutouts seem particularly difficult to reproduce in a mass production model—the crossbeams of the underframe are exposed and one can see straight down to the track. Yikes, watch that first step! There’s what looks like a channel down the center of that gap which could allow for trailer hitch storage.

A large format photo of the NS 157020 also on Joe’s site allows us to read the NS Class of these cars, namely, FS-135. That designation appears on the Micro-Trains model as well. A search on that leads to a reference on the Norfolk & Western Historical Society Archives, where we find six documents dated April 1984 referring to the conversion of Southern Railway boxcars to TOFC flat cars, resulting in the Southern series of cars numbered 155125 to 155999. When transferred to the NS, these became the series 157000 to 157849.

Right in the middle of the time period for Joe Shaw’s photos is the October 2004 ORER, which shows these flat cars right in the middle of groups of open hoppers and gondolas. There were 285 cars in the group at the time. The actual length of these cars is less than the MTL version, at 50 feet 8 inch “inside length” and 54 feet 5 inch “outside length” (over the couplers). That does make sense considering their conversion from boxcars. I also note that there were no leftovers still in Southern Railway paint by this time.

To broaden the Approximate Time Period from that central point, I need to go both backward and forward in the ORER Accumulation. I first pick up the NS-painted cars in, believe it or not, the October 1991 Register, where there had already been 293 cars restenciled to the new reporting marks. That’s out of just ten series of cars that had been flipped to NS from the predecessor roads, and 880 total pieces of rolling stock. For a brief time, then, this group of TOFC flat cars outnumbered everything else in the Norfolk Southern-lettered roster! That didn’t last long, of course, although just nine months later in the July 1992 ORER, there were 849 cars in the NS series. Now that’s fast repainting. The end of the ATP appears to be a bit after the October 2007 Register when just 48 cars remained; the series is gone from the January 2011 ORER so we don’t get “to present” on this one.



076 00 010, \$23.95

Reporting Marks: CN 557668.

50 Foot Steel Combination Door Boxcar, No Roofwalk, Canadian / Canadien National.

Brown with mostly white lettering including roadname (English one side, French other side)

and reporting marks on left, large “wet noodle” herald on right, and simulated reflective “dots” along bottom sill. Approximate Time Period: 1974 (build date for this road number, see text) to mid-decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 550235, June 1997.

What is now the UMTRR was still in its infancy when this first release on the 76/076 body style was released in 1997. My ORER Accumulation actually stopped at 1992 (!) then so I couldn't get very far in terms of an Approximate Time Period, though I did note that with the paint scheme introduced in 1960 and similar cars built in 1962, you could theoretically add the roofwalk back, change the road number and lose the Consolidated Stencil and be able to backdate this car. That's probably true, but there are other items of interest with respect to this reprint.

First, while the previously run road number 550235 corresponds to a group of boxcars built for the CN in 1972 as reported in MTL's car copy, that series ends at CN 557439 according to the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. The next series of cars, CN 557440 to 557739, was built in 1974, and includes the reprint road number. Both sets of cars were constructed by National Steel Car Company and closely resemble each other.

That's not to say that they closely resemble the MTL 076 body style, though as always the degree to which this is a "stand in" is left to the individual modeler. The most obvious delta is the type of "auxiliary" or plug door: it's what I'd call a more modern type, closer to what appears on the MTL 027 body style. There are a large number of photos of these two series of cars on the Fallen Flags site which show this much more easily than I can describe it (URL www.rr-fallenflags.org). There's also a "door thing," though less worrisome, in that the real cars had a ten foot sliding door and an eight foot plug door, adding to eighteen feet; on the MTL car the doors are eight feet each or a total of sixteen feet. Staying with the doors, according to the Color Guide, many of the sliding doors were originally painted green to signify lumber service, something to play with if you're inclined. Fallen Flags shows several of these cars with replacement Superior type doors. Come to think of it, MTL makes ten foot doors of this type, meant for their x-post boxcars. I checked and I believe these can be made to fit on the 076 body style. Also note that on the real cars, the side ladders didn't reach to the roof and the brake wheel is mounted low rather than high. Though not a delta to the model, I also observed that some cars have the roadname, reporting marks and "T-account" dimensional data panel squished up against the plug door, while others have those stencils farther left, with the "D" in "Canadian" lining up under the left end of the door guide.

Checking the ORER for July 1974 we quickly see why MTL reused 1972 in its car copy. The two groups of cars built in different years are combined into one line in the Equipment Register, for a series numbered 557000 to 557739. Yep, the ORER strikes again! There were 738 cars in service at the time, with these vital statistics: inside length 52 feet 8 inches, inside height 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 11 inches, outside length 57 feet 8 inches, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, door opening 18 feet as already noted, and capacity 5304 cubic feet or 158,000 pounds.

Given that there are photos of cars in this group on Fallen Flags dating into the mid-decade of the 2000s, I jumped to the January 2011 ORER, the latest in the Research Accumulation. (I suppose I do need another update.) However, just three cars remain, so "to present" isn't going to work here.



106 00 080, \$20.40

Road Number: 376771 (will be preceded with "PRR" in website listings).

50 Foot 14 Panel Steel Gondola with Low Cover, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Red-brown (the PRR's "Freight Car Color" of the time), including cover, trucks and couplers. Mostly white lettering including roadname across most of the car and road number below the "SY" in "PENNSYLVANIA". Black and white shadow keystone herald on far right. Approximate Time Period: Late 1950s (1957 service date given by MTL) to early 1970s at the latest. Previous Release: Road Number 376704, October 2002.

According to MTL, this car was serviced in 1957, three years after the Pennsy's famous "shadow keystone" was introduced. The shadow keystone replaced the venerable "circle keystone" and was almost twice as big as the circle was on most cars. The shadow lasted until 1961 when it was removed, but the large keystone remained. When the shadow keystone was introduced, the roadname was also made significantly larger; that lasted until it was replaced with just the "PRR" reporting marks, also in 1961. When first offered this was the first PRR gondola in something other than the circle keystone.

The ORER for January 1959 shows a large series, PRR Class G31d, numbered 375750 to 376949, with a total of 1,196 cars. However, there was a main series with 1002 cars and several subsets. The previously run road number, 376704, was called out in an end note as having a cover. How about the 376771? I just need to check Notes 12, 78, 93, 88, 94 and 111... yes, I know that's not in numerical order, but that's how the subsets are laid out on the page! At any rate, the short answer is "no," not an exception. Does that mean that this reprinted road number should not have a cover? Before pointing the artillery in the general direction of Talent, Oregon, I need to point out that it's hard to prove the absence of something. I doubt that anyone could say conclusively that the 376771 never had a cover. We do know of five that did, at least according to the ORER anyway: 375774, 375910, 375945, the previously run 376704, and 376839. Before leaving that issue, let's check the key dimensions of the main series: inside length 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 3 inches, outside length 54 feet 8 inches, extreme height 7 feet, capacity 1646 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.

The ORER lookups I did back in 2002 showed that the entire series of PRR G31d gondolas was effectively gone by the time Conrail came into the scene, but it's certainly likely that some of the former PRR cars were repainted into Penn Central and not actually retired as of that point. There is the matter of the more Spartan lettering scheme supplanting the full roadname and shadow keystone as depicted on this reprint, but it's also true that the PRR had more important things to do than repaint rolling stock. Such as, stay in business.

"Rob's Pennsy Page" (prp.railfan.net) has scans of the actual prototype drawings of the cars, with and without covers. You'll also find on that site more information on the G31s at large and photo references online and in print to these cars in several different paint schemes.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following items were announced a 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 December 12. Oh, and there are four of them...*



037 44 110, \$24.95

Reporting Marks: NYC 87590.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Door, No Roofwalk, Full Ladders, 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. Moderate weathering; graffiti "Happy New Year" on one side. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s through late 1980s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 87575, April 2013.

Given the lack of roofwalk and the appearance of double box consolidated stencils, a weathered version of this car is arguably more appropriate to this paint scheme as depicted, and as originally released back in April of this year. I traced the story of this car through the ORERs in that issue as well, so I'll just summarize here. These NYC cars were probably "stretched" from 40 foot cars in the same series. Just seven cars, not called out by road number, are sprinkled among a group of forty foot cars in the group 87455 to 87669. The car count got at least as high as 210 cars in the Penn Central listing in the April 1970 ORER, and lasted well into Conrail with the last five remaining until sometime between July 1989 and October 1991.



038 44 440, \$26.70

Reporting Marks: SOO LINE 177746.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Soo Line.

White with red door. Black lettering including large roadname across car ("SOO" on left and "LINE" on right). Moderate weathering; extensive Christmas-themed graffiti on both sides (different on each side). Appropriate Time Period: late 1970s to late 1990s. Previous Releases: None.

Okay, so how does one review a car that does not have any visible reporting marks in the provided image, and for which there's been no apparent previous release? Well, one could guess, or one could just ask Micro-Trains, which I did. While the reporting marks are obliterated on the side of the car shown in the image, they are on the ends of the car.

A freshly painted SOO 177746 appears on RRPictureArchives.net as of March 1980. It has a service date of 1979, double panel consolidated stencils, and the U-1 wheel inspection dot—all hidden under the Christmas message on the model. Checking the July 1974 ORER as a sample, it was part of the group 177698 to 177856, with AAR Designation of XL and described as "Box, Steel, 20 Inch Travel Cushion Underframe, 8 Nylon Belts Per Car, Plug Doors". These cars had an inside length of 50 feet 6 inches, outside length of 57 feet 10 inches, door opening of 10 feet and capacity 4996 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. There were

78 total cars in the series including two that had Tote-Bin Type Containers “considered part of car.” These cars actually entered the Soo Line roster sometime between the July 1963 ORER, where they are a “coming soon” series listed with no car count, and January 1964 when there are 80 cars in the group. That wouldn’t be a bad range for the start of the Approximate Time Period, but I think these cars would have been built with roofwalks, so the actual ATP would have started later. It looks like the end of the ATP is just after the year 2000, with five left in the January 2000 ORER and just one in the January 2002 edition.

I suppose this is beside the point for a model boxcar that’s simply “dressed up” for Christmas. It might also be noted, and reasonably so, that the era of car-covering graffiti was just getting started around the time that many of the prototypes for these cars were already leaving the rails for the last time. So “Rule #1” (It’s Your Railroad) applies in any case.



092 44 310, \$28.90

Reporting Marks: ACFX 44728.

Two Bay Center Flow® Covered Hopper, ACF Industries (American Car & Foundry) / Shippers Car Line.

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left in Futura Bold font. Light weathering and graffiti on both sides (different on each side per MTL). Approximate Time Period: early 2010s to present. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 44684, September 2013.

Now we see what Micro-Trains was up to in September with the plain version of this car. That “clean” car had consolidated stencils, consistent with its 1980 build date, but not conspicuity stripes, and also had the Futura Bold font for its reporting marks, which was at least unusual if not unique—back in 1980 that is. The car was part of the series 44674 to 44731 and was built to the ACF2980 design, which is the basis for the MTL 092 body style.

Jump to this release, though, and there’s a much later start to the Approximate Time Period, courtesy of the addition of those conspicuity stripes—right over the graffiti on the side that’s visible in the image. I suppose I should have this memorized by now, but looking it up once again, it was 2005 when the Federal Railway Administration published the ruling that began the requirements for this safety striping. The ATP couldn’t be any earlier than 2005, therefore, and would probably be later since the requirement was to have 20 percent of tank, box, gondola, and hoppers (open or covered) striped by May 31, 2007.

The reference photo at RRPictureArchives.net that MTL provides to show that this car is “based on actual events” has a shooting date of January 2013. This may be the first time I’ve called “early 2010s” as the start of the Approximate Time Period! Also from the photo (direct URL www.rrpicturearchives.net/showPicture.aspx?id=3343422) I note that the real car has extended draft gear, and I don’t recall ever seeing that on a short Center Flow car before. Incidentally, the other photo of the 44728 is from November 2007 and shows the other side of the car, weathered but without any graffiti and without conspicuity stripes either.



094 44 090, \$28.75

Reporting Marks: SOO 115--- (last three digits obscured).

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

Gray with black lettering and large red “CP Rail”

roadname at left; alternating red and white stripe along the bottom of the car. Heavy weathering and brown patch panel obscuring part of road number. Approximate time period: 1995 to as late as the present. Previous Release (as catalog number 94090): Road Number 116960, October 1997; then Eight Pack #3 (993 00 803) with Road Numbers 115655, 116273, 116491, 116804, 116952, 116966, 116998 and 117047, September 2013. *Note: It is likely but not confirmed that all of the Eight Pack road numbers were used for this Weathered Release.*

MTL repurposes at least a few of the September Eight Packs for this Weathered Release – the clue is the partially “knocked out” road number. As discussed before, and lamented by a few readers and on-line commenters, the typical North American freight car would not be allowed to travel very far with unreadable digits in the road number. (In fact, a number of “artists” who cover an almost an entire car with graffiti leave the road number intact.) Fortunately, we can reach back to the March 2013 “pre-review” of the Eight Pack to point out that anything from 115000 to 117149 will be good since that was the original series span. The specific decals used to add back three digits to the road number probably isn’t critical – the real railroads just are not that particular these days.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #83 (993 00 083, \$89.95), four Northern Pacific 40 Foot Double Sheathed Wood Refrigerator Cars with Vertical Brake Staff, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2013 issue. (The pre-order announcement was a month later than usual.) The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks for these items are as follows: 049 51 260, 93417; 049 52 260, 93450; 049 53 260, 93596; 049 54 260, 93600.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is May 2014. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close December 31.



Scheduled May 2014 Release:

993 00 088, \$89.95

Quantity four of 40 Foot Drop Bottom Gondolas with Woodside Extensions, Southern Pacific Reporting Marks: SP 352006, 352008, 352011, 352013.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on extension. Black and white circular "Southern Pacific Lines" herald on right. Simulated sugar beet loads included. Approximate Time Period: 1956 to early 1970s.

Previous Releases: Road Numbers 352005 and 352010, August 2008.

When the first two numbers of these cars were released, our Southern Pacific Special Correspondent David Carnell provided a guest commentary, which we'll reprint here, start quote:

This information is taken from Tony Thompson's **Southern Pacific Freight Cars, Vol. 1: Gondolas and Stock Cars**. The first information on the cars is found in Chapter 7. The G-50-18 class, totally 550 cars numbered from 89854 to 90403, was built in 1946 by Bethlehem Steel. These cars are all steel construction with eight side panels, are approximately 40 feet in length and had a capacity of 50 tons (100,000 pounds). The MTL car copy incorrectly refers to these cars as being built by Pressed Steel Car Company; those cars were class G-50-20 and were composite construction, not all steel.

The MTL cars are a good match for the actual gondola without side extensions. In 1956, the G-50-18 cars were renumbered into the series 364025-364724. There were still 550 cars in service by the date of renumbering.

In the 1950s, SP began assigning GS gondolas to woodchip service. The first cars were converted in the SP Bayshore Shops in 1950. At this time eight G-50-18 gondolas received 9 foot 5 inch side extensions. These cars were assigned to service on the Northwestern Pacific and identified as "mill block" cars. In 1956 all of the GS gondolas in woodchip service were reassigned to the 350000 number series. One group of 13 G-50-18 was assigned the number series 352005-352017. The MTL cars come from this group of cars. These cars had a capacity of 4885 cu. ft. and had 12 foot 7 inch side extensions. The group of 13 cars remained relatively intact through 1970 when their number was reduced to 12 but most were off the roster by 1975 when only 1 car of the series was still in service. These cars were soon being replaced by larger cars. As an aside, the lumber industry nicknamed these cars "Jacks."

These cars are a good stand in for the actual SP woodchip cars. They appear to have the later 12 foot 7 inch extensions since there are 4 ladder rungs on the extensions. The paint scheme and road numbers appear to give these cars an ATP of 1956 to 1975.

End quote, and thanks again, David. Lee Gautreaux's website (www.railgoat.railfan.net) has a shot of SP 352165 in a plainer paint scheme lensed by Tim O'Connor in 1972. And official SP specification sheets captured on Richard Percy's SP Site (URL.espee.railfan.net , no "www") include the short series of cars on which MTL based its offering.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases or pre-order announcements this month. That's the first time in a while this has happened.

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



518 00 280, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: GARE 9900.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Manhattan Brewing Company.

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe and door hardware. Black lettering including company name and location and reporting marks on left, and "Chicago's Favorite Old Manhattan Lager Beer" on right. White reporting marks on ends. Approximate Time Period: 1934 to mid-1930s. Release #8 in an expected twelve in the Brewery Reefer Series.

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release of this car above (058 00 180). Note that the Z Scale version has the more correct 40 foot length although the actual car had a truss rod underframe.



548 00 011 and 548 00 012, \$22.30 each

Reporting Marks: NPMX 152 and 154.

51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car, Riveted Side, Northern Pacific.

Aluminum with black lettering including reporting marks on left and "Vista Dome North Coast Limited" slogan on right. Medium red, white and black NP monad

herald on right. Reporting Marks: NPMX 155. Approximate Time Period: mid- to late 1950s as painted, then to at least 1970 as "NPM," see text.

We start coverage of the newest body style in Z Scale with two "virtual two packs" of cars that have been previously run in N Scale. This, as you might have guessed, allows me to be extremely lazy and reprint myself for the most part.

So... these Northern Pacific cars were originally part of the fleet of Merchants Despatch Transit Company, a subsidiary of the New York Central, and carried the NPMX reporting marks while registered to that company. The January 1959 ORER which is the closest issue I

have to the 1956 built date of these cars shows them under the MDT registration. NPMX 150 to 249 were described simply as “Refrigerator.” An end note called out sliding doors! That’s as opposed to the hinged doors that were far more typical of refrigerator cars at the time. The inside length was 44 feet 5 inches and described as being “between ice tanks with bulkheads in place” – not really applicable for mechanical refrigerator cars! The inside width was 8 feet 6 inches, inside height 8 feet even, outside length 52 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 6 feet wide by 7 feet 9 inches high, and capacity 3023 cubic feet or 120,000 pounds. All 100 cars were in service at that time. Assuming that the Z Scale body style matches the N Scale one, there would be a small and perhaps not even noticeable “door thing” working here, with the model’s plug door being about seven feet wide versus the six foot door opening quoted in the Register.

By the January 1964 ORER, the series is with the Northern Pacific and has the reporting marks NPM, not NPMX, and in addition, the NPMX reporting marks are gone from the Merchants Despatch listing. In this issue, unlike the 1959 ORER, the cars are shown with the AAR Mechanical Designation RP, defined as “Mechanical Refrigerator” and further described as “A house car equipped with insulation, with or without means of ventilation and provided with apparatus or other device for furnishing protection against heat and/or cold. Apparatus operated by power other than through the car axle.” More importantly, we have an Approximate Time Period that is pretty short, strictly speaking.

What to do if you model 1963, as I do? Just paint over the “X” from the car. That’s apparently what the Northern Pacific did, based on photos in the **Northern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Page 95 of that volume includes a photo of NPM 139 from the previous series, dated November 21, 1962. The silver paint doesn’t have to be an exact match; it isn’t on the prototype.

At the start of the Burlington Northern in April 1970, 99 of the original 100 cars remained in service. But by the July 1974 ORER, the entire combined refrigerator fleet of the BN and its predecessor roads including the NP had been restenciled and renumbered, and the NPM reporting marks are gone. I can’t really guess the BN series into which this group went. I wouldn’t doubt that a translation from NPM to BN exists.



548 00 021 and 548 00 022, \$27.95 each

Reporting Marks: CN 231031 and 231034.

51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car, Riveted Side, Canadian National.

Yellow sides, black ends, roof and details. Black lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large “wet noodle” herald on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s (1965 renumber date) to late 1980s.

This car model represents the “after” phase of the prototypes’ service on the CN. The “before” was the lease of 75 cars by the CN from North American Car Company. Built by

Pacific Car and Foundry in December 1962 and January 1963, they were lettered into the NIRX series 16500 to 16579. When the CN purchased these outright, they changed the reporting marks to their own. In October 1965 these were renumbered CN 231000 to 231074.

According to the Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Car Equipment, Volume 2, these refrigerators were initially used to ship perishable food products to the Atlantic provinces. There is both a “before” photo of a car lettered NIRX 16520 as of January 1963 and an “after” photo of CN 231031 – a “bingo” there – as of September 1978, on Pages 41 and 42 of the volume respectively. And how about an “in between” photo, on the cover of **Canadian Rail Car Pictorial Volume Six** ? Car 16519, with CN reporting marks patched over the NIRX initials, is found in an undated photo in Edmonton, Alberta. That softcover also states that the cars were off the roster by October 1989.

Let’s grab the April 1970 ORER. At the time there were 72 cars in the series described as simply “Mechanical Refrigerator” with AAR Classification RP and these vital statistics: inside length 45 feet 7 inches and outside length 54 feet 10 inches, inside height 8 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch. The difference in the heights and lengths is accounted for by insulation and mechanical refrigerator equipment (which could keep the temperature between 0 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit according to the Color Guide). The door opening was 8 feet wide by 8 feet 8 inches tall, and the capacity was 3305 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.



980 01 291 and 980 01 292, \$109.95 each
Road Numbers: 917 and 921 (will be preceded with “WP” in website listings).

F7 Powered A Units, Western Pacific.

“Perlman” dark green with orange lettering including roadname and road number on side. Orange stripes on nose and above and below roadname and road number across side. Staggered WP initials on nose. Approximate Time Period: 1971 (introduction of paint scheme) to early 1980s.

According to the book **Western Pacific Locomotives and Cars** by Patrick C. Dorin, three of the last four F7s in service for the WP were painted in this last WP locomotive paint scheme: road numbers 917, 918 and 921. (The 913 stayed in modified orange and silver until its retirement.) The book has a black and white photo of the 917 at North Platte, Nebraska on the Union Pacific in an undated photo on Page 54. There’s a color shot of 917 as of May 1981 on Page 118. These singly numbered units were originally part of ABCD sets.

Moving online, the “Western Pacific Online” site (www.wplives.com) has an all-time roster of WP diesels from 1922 to 1982. It’s noted there that an A-B-B-A set of F7s cost over \$650,000. The 917 (formerly 917D) and 921 (formerly 921D) are shown in that roster with no “vacated date” through 1982. And there’s a good reason for this...

That last quartet of F7s became known as the “Fab Four” and ran out additional mileage while becoming among the most photographed diesels anywhere. As MTL notes in its car copy, the 921 became the first donation to what was then called the Portola Railroad Museum and is now the Western Pacific Railroad Museum, part of the Feather River Rail Society. The 917 was acquired in 2005 and is not only still operational, it’s part of the museum’s “Rent a Locomotive” attraction. Both locos have been repainted into a version of the classic orange and silver paint that preceded the Perlman Green on the MTL models.

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 December 12.*



522 44 280, \$59.95.

A two-pack of 50 Foot Steel Fishbelly Side Gondola, Drop Ends, CP Rail. Reporting Marks CP 340223 and 347078.

Action red with mostly white lettering including roadname on left and reporting marks right of center. Black and white “multimark” on right. Light to moderate weathering on the 340223. Weathering and graffiti and a white on black patch panel with restenciled reporting marks on the 347078. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s (given paint scheme) into the 1970s at least. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Number 340222, December 2003; then Runner Pack #48 (994 00 048) with Road Numbers 340204, 340223, 340236, and 340245, December 2012. *Note: It is possible but not confirmed that all four numbers from the Runner Pack were used for this release.*

Although now fading into relative obscurity, the triangle in a semi-circle logo of the Canadian Pacific was all the rage when it debuted in 1968. Note that I said “Canadian Pacific,” not “CP Rail.” That’s because the “multimark” was to grace the spectrum of the CP’s transportation offerings, including CP Rail, to be sure, but also CP Ships, CP Air, and CP Trucks. One little problem with the multimark: it’s pretty expensive to paint it all over your freight equipment, especially when it’s at the same “end” of the car. To emulate the prototype, the MTL Paint Shop requires separate “mirror image” masks for each side... which adds cost. Is it any surprise that the multimark was eventually dropped on much of the CP’s equipment, even prior to the re-adoption of the “Canadian Pacific Railway” name? See the page “Fun With Multimarks” on my site for an illustration of this, which is probably the only way I can describe it! All that having been said, CP Rail dropped the “multimark at same end” protocol for the less expensive practice of painting both sides of the car the same way. If this reprint follows the original release, then that’s how MTL painted these two cars as well.

The CP Rail image is from 1968 but the gondola series 340200 to 340999 is from 1953, a fact noted by MTL in the car copy for the 2003 release and confirmed on Ian Cranstone’s

“Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net). Therefore, when factory fresh, it was probably painted in solid black with basic white lettering.

Given the paint scheme, we’ll pick it up in the ORER for April 1970, which shows the series 340200 to 340999. It’s described as “Gondola, Steel, Drop Ends, Solid Wood Floor. ” They had an inside length of 52 feet 3 inches, inside height of 3 feet 6 inches, outside length of 57 feet 6 inches and capacity of 1746 cubic feet or 165,000 pounds. There were 779 cars in the group in that issue, then 509 in April 1976, 427 in April 1981, 233 in October 1996 and just two in January 2002.

Sister car CP 340222 can be found as of June 1980 in the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Canadian Pacific Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The number of panels (14) and the drop ends are good, though the rivet patterns are different, which will be somewhat tough to spot at 1:220th actual size. The red-with-multimark and black schemes co-existed, as evidenced by an image of CP 340642 from December 1974 on the next page of the Color Guide.

And then it gets more interesting. The restencil number on the weathered and graffiti car, as shown in the image, appears to have a transposition: I read it as 347078, not 340778 which would keep it in the appropriate series. However, checking again with “Canadian Freight Cars,” it turns out that the current series 347000 to 347100 is also of gondolas with 52 foot 6 inch inside length, built between 1976 and 1977 and renumbered out of the group 345500 to 345701. (Previous to 1983, these numbers were used for coal service gondolas built circa 1949.) The 347078 would be a 16 panel flat fixed end gondola, not a match for the MTL body style, but would still be a gondola. Or we could also conclude that the person renumbering the car over the top of the graffiti was just having a bad day! It happens.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #60 (994 00 060, \$89.95), four Northern Pacific 40 Foot Double Sheathed Wood Refrigerator Cars with Vertical Brake Staff, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2013 issue. (The pre-order announcement was a month later than usual.) The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks for these items are as follows: 518 51 330, 93417; 518 52 330, 93450; 518 53 330, 93596; 518 54 330, 93600.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is May 2014. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close December 31.



Scheduled May 2014 Release:

994 00 065, \$79.95

Quantity four of Canadian National 40 Foot Steel Double Door Boxcars.

Reporting Marks: CN 583682, 583754, 583776, and 583798.

Each car is brown with green doors and white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large "wet noodle" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s

through late 1970s, but see text. Previous Release: Road Number 583794, February 2006. Individual cars should carry Catalog Number 501 5x 090.

We begin with a word on those green doors: "Sometimes." That's the word from **CDS Railway Equipment Diagrams**, specifically: "Some of these cars had green doors indicating lumber service." That implies that others don't, so for some additional variety, practice your number restenciling and get out that boxcar red paint for a go at those doors.

According to **Canadian Rail Car Pictorial Volume 2A**, the series 583000 to 583997 was rebuilt starting in the mid-1960s from part of CN's then thirty year old steel boxcar fleet. This was a stopgap for lumber service while other types of freight cars were designed for shipping lumber, for example centerbeam and large bulkhead flat cars. This rebuild included a number of modifications, including, apparently, roofwalk removal and side ladder shortening. My previous Approximate Time Period took into account the idea that the cars would not have the running boards gone until the 1970s. But that changes to a "see text" with this information that's new to me.

The April 1970 ORER has 769 cars with AAR Classification XM and description "Box, Steel, Staggered Doors." The inside length is 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 1 inch, outside length 44 feet 3 inches, extreme height 14 feet 8 inches, door opening 12 feet 1 inch, and capacity 3770 cubic feet or 95,000 pounds. Returning to Ian Cranstone's Canadian Freight Cars site, in addition to the CN, some of these rebuilds were assigned to subsidiary Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific with DWC reporting marks. Cranstone has all of the cars gone by January 1995.

The "door thing" that I often cite on MTL releases is basically not a factor on this car. The doors on Z Scale double door cars, unlike their N Scale counterparts, are six scale feet wide for a 12 foot opening that is one inch short of the real thing. Some of the prototype's rebuilding programs, quite possibly including this one, used pre-owned six foot doors according to the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 2**: "[C]ars were rebuilt with double doors for a 12 foot 1 inch opening utilizing surplus 6 foot doors from cars converted to 9 foot doors." Meanwhile, the **Canadian Rail Car Pictorial Volume 2A** has photos of CN 583071 and 583915, both of which are shown with Youngstown type doors versus the Superior doors on the MTL model. That doesn't prove that MTL is wrong across given that we see only two of almost 1000 cars.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



524 00 106, \$24.95

Reporting Marks: USAAC 667442.

60 Foot Flat Car with “Bungay Buckaroo” container.

Release #6 in the World War II Nose Art Series.

Gray flat car with black lettering including reporting marks on left and “U.S. Army Air Corps” in center. Green container with multicolor artwork including nose art depiction on left.

The name “Bungay Buckaroo” has a few meanings in war history. The most direct link to the MTL release is, of course, the aircraft, a four-engine twin-tail Consolidated B-24 “Liberator” bomber. More of these were built during for World War II than any other design and a total of 18,493 were delivered. According to PlanesOfThePast.com , just eight survive in the United States, six of which are static display only. The “Bungay Buckaroo” is one of them, is on display indoors at the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. Two of the Liberators, the “Witchcraft” and the “Diamond Lil” are still airworthy. (MTL, take note!)

The Royal Air Force flew many of these planes, and that leads to the second reference to the name: the website of the Norfolk and Suffolk (England) Aviation Museum describes the 446th Bombardment Group Museum. “[It] is housed in a World War Two Nissen hut, erected to house the displays of uniforms, medals and badges worn and donated by members of the 446th B.G. who served at Flixton. Other artifacts on display include photographic displays of aircraft, both in the air and on the ground around the base, engines, a B24 rear gun turret, wheel and oleo, 50 calibre machine guns and items found on the base in the 90s.” This Group was also known as—you guessed it—the “Bungay Buckeroos.”

I can’t quite follow the story across websites but it appears that a plane later renamed “Bungay Buckaroo” was the leader of the 446th as it led the 8th Air Force on the first mission of D-Day, June 6, 1944. I’m not completely sure that this is the same plane that at the museum in Pima. The plane now at Pima was part of the Royal Air Force and then was part of the Indian Air Force until it was donated by the Government of India to the museum.

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

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Civil War Era kit in N Scale is not a building, and I’m not even sure it can be called a “structure.” It is a Car Float Kit (499 90 960, \$27.95) which can hold five cars in a 1 x 5 arrangement. The cars sit perpendicular to the long side of the float, with hardly any room for error on either side. Watch that first step! Unlike other true structure kits, this time I don’t know for how much later than the Civil War these would be plausible. Two loads were announced as well: “Stick Lumber” in Z Scale (799 43 952, \$9.95 for two) and a pair of big “Mine Trucks” in N Scale, or even bigger in Z (499 43 903, \$14.95).

SPECIAL RUN NEWS: Those of you who have been around long enough know that my looking after of a Special Run indirectly led to what you're reading at the moment. So it's always nice to see a reader doing the same. Patrick Martin is the latest of the UMTRR Gang Members in this elite group and the Special Run in which he's involved is, to say the least, quite unusual!

The Riddle Coach and Hearse Company of Ravenna, Ohio had a fleet of 25 wood double sheathed boxcars numbered 2 to 26. (We don't know why they didn't use Road Number 1.) The Micro-Trains Special Run is based on an image that appeared in Riddle's 1905 catalog. The company began all the way back in 1831



as the Clark Carriage Company. It was purchased by brothers-in-law Charles Merts and Henry W. Riddle in 1861, who renamed it for themselves; following Merts' retirement, the company became what's on the car. Initially the firm made horse-drawn vehicles, including, yes, hearses. Presidents William McKinley and Warren G. Harding "took their last ride" in hearses made by Riddle, as did, many years later, Roy Rogers.

As real horses were replaced with automobiles, Riddle diversified, first into ambulance and hearse bodies for White truck chassis, then to complete ambulances, hearses and finally standard passenger cars. Riddle Coach and Hearse became Riddle Manufacturing Company in 1919, which would more or less end the Approximate Time Period for the car, and ceased operations altogether in 1926.

Patrick, who provided most of the above, adds that "Riddle used the cars for both outgoing shipment of finished carriages and hearses, and incoming shipments of lumber. When shipping finished product, Riddle would padlock the car doors and mail the key to the consignee. The Micro Trains double sheathed wood boxcar differs from the prototype in that the prototype had a truss rod underframe and also had end doors." I can confirm that there is no Riddle listed in the October 1919 or April 1924 ORERs, but the June 1905 Equipment Register does have about the shortest possible entry which discloses the series 2 to 26 and requesting that movements, mileage and bills for repairs or remittances to the company at Ravenna, Ohio. (Ravenna is southeast of Cleveland and just about due west of Youngstown. Any number of railroads could have served it.) And yes, there is a website reference as well: thomasriddle.net/cah/ (no "www") which offers a rich amount of background on the company.

The MTL Special Run cars are being sold by the Illini Chapter of the Professional Car Society. That's a worldwide group "devoted to the preservation of vintage funeral coaches, ambulances and limousines." They are priced at \$29.95 (US) + \$5.15 shipping. Checks or money orders can be made payable and mailed to: Illini Chapter PCS, 918 W. Colfax Street, Palatine, IL 60067, or a PayPal payment can be sent to superior1980@yahoo.com which is Patrick Martin's e-mail.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: As if I didn't already have enough to do, the Bye-Bye board is of rather imposing proportions as well this month. Grumble. Furthermore—and perhaps this belongs in “Oops Patrol”—I have already updated the UMTRR website, during which I noted that a number of items MTL has on the December discontinued list had previously been announced as sold out. And do I have that list anymore? No! So this time I'm just going to hit the highlights of the items which have left the building. In N Scale, that short list of outs would include both numbers of last month's CP Rail stock cars (035 00 16x), both numbers of the new log cars in both Georgia-Pacific (115 00 01x, July) and Federal Paper Board (115 00 02x, August), the Kanotex Tank Car (065 00 730, October) and the Nuckoll's Packing wood refrigerator car (058 00 536, April). In Z Scale, highlights of the sellouts include the Berkshire (518 00 080, May 2012), Rath's Black Hawk Ham (518 00 170, February) and Canadian Pacific (518 00 340, September) refrigerator cars. In addition to all of the single car updates to the annual release tables, I've also caught up with the current state of the Runner Pack availability. Well, current to the end of last month, anyway.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: New additions to the UMTRR Research Accumulation fill in some gaps to last month's releases, and plenty of other earlier cars from behind the red and yellow sign as well. For now, let's stick to the November cars. First, the book **Tank Cars American Car and Foundry Company 1865 to 1985** by Edward S. Kaminski includes a bingo on the Warren Petroleum Tank car, WRNX 204, MTL catalog number 065 00 740. The real thing was an 8074 gallon car, smaller than the 065 body style, and had a taller dome with a flat top which differs from the MTL depiction as well. The 204 was one of 64 cars built in November 1948 as MTL reported. Second, Canadian Rail Car Pictorial Volume 5: Canadian Pacific Stock and Refrigerator Cars, Page 11, includes a bingo to CP Rail 277095, one of the two stock cars from last month (035 00 16x). That car has its roofwalk removed, which according to author Richard Yaremko, was the practice before repainting the cars into CP Rail Action Red.

OOPS PATROL: It appears that I have once again botched copying and pasting of catalog numbers, this time for the Brewery Series of cars. It's fixed on the website... I hope.

AND THAT WRAPS UP 2013: Have a happy and safe Holiday Season, and until next year, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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