

Hello again everyone! Well, no news was... um, no news from the National N Scale Convention, otherwise known as the gathering organized by the N Scale Enthusiast. The big Micro-Trains item was already known: the release of the Mail/Baggage Car, the latest in the heavyweight series of N Scale passenger cars. Otherwise, there will be plenty of opportunity for me to copy and paste, which usually leads me into trouble... let's see if I can avoid Oopses this time around as we take our look behind the red and yellow sing.

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



049 00 720, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: NADX 6266.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Fishbelly Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Baby Ruth Series #2.

Red (sides, roof and ends). Black reporting marks on left and dimensional data on left

and right. Large "Baby Ruth / Good Candy" in yellow with black outline across car, yellow "A Curtiss Product" above door and black "Curtiss Candy Company / Otto Schnering, President, Chicago" in yellow band below door. White lettering on ends. Approximate Time Period: 1931 (build date) to mid-1930s.

NADX 6266 was part of the North American Car Company's series of refrigerator cars numbered from 6000 to 6399, as found in the February 1931 issue of the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER). Not much dimensional data is provided: just the inside length of 31 feet 1 inch, inside height of 8 feet 2½ inches and inside height of 7 feet 1 inch. The cars could carry 9102 pounds or 246 cubic feet of chunk ice and 1938 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds of lading. All 400 cars were present at the time. The July 1935 ORER had the same information but no car count. After that, the Billboard Refrigerator era was coming rapidly to a close so the large Baby Ruth would have disappeared from this car.

Right on the cover of the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** by Hendrickson and Kaminski is a color (!) rendition of this very car. It's reprinted on Page 14 of that volume, where note is made that although this is a colorized image, it's contemporary with the actual car's life and is therefore "presumed to be trustworthy." A black and white image is on Page 62 of the book as well, where an August 1931 date for the paint scheme is given. The authors mention elsewhere that these "billboards" were hand painted, and that's rather obvious on this car: look at the way the letters are formed, especially the second "b" and "y" in "Baby Ruth."



105 00 570, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: ROCK 502407.

50 Foot Steel Side 14 Panel Gondola, The Rock (Rock Island).

Black with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and “The Rock” roadname left of center. Blue and white stylized R herald on right. Yellow U-1 wheel inspection stencil and black and white double panel consolidated stencils on right. Simulated wood load included. Approximate Time Period: 1978 to early 1980s at least.

The 2016 National N Scale Convention will take place in Kansas City, and had things turned out differently – okay, **very** differently – the attendees to this gathering might have been able to spend some spare hours railfanning The Rock as it entered the Kansas City area from the north, west and east. Alas, the company entered its final bankruptcy in 1970 and was liquidated in 1980. Some model railroaders haven’t forgotten the Rock Island Lines, though, and imagine modern locomotives in the railroad’s paint scheme. And the real life Iowa Interstate has painted “heritage unit” ES44ACs in colors inspired by the RI.

This gondola was released in Z Scale in March as part of a “virtual two-pack” so I can conduct a copy and paste... mostly. The earliest possible start for the ATP for this car would be 1975 (forty years ago!), when the Rock Island adopted its “The Rock” paint scheme. The presence of the U-1 wheel inspection stencil pushes the “strictly speaking” ATP beginning to March, 1978. That’s just two years from the end of the Rock Island in March, 1980 and the removal of its listing from the Equipment Register.

Fortunately, there is the January 1978 issue of the ORER in the Research Accumulation. And... there’s no match to either road number in that issue. Note closely, though, the stenciling “ER 5-78” on the models. Given how quickly the Rock Island was painting cars in the Rock scheme, usually renumbering as part of the process, it’s not surprising that I wouldn’t see these particular gondolas in the January 1978 Register. Since I have nothing between then and July 1980 ORER, in which the Rock is not listed, I can’t help with a precise number series this time.

However, there is a bingo to the 502407 which appears on Page 79 of the **Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The car’s photo was taken in July, 1980, a few months after the demise of its owner. The caption accompanying the photo is useful and was partially used by MTL for its car copy. This car, and presumably the 502414 as well, were originally built in 1957 by Pullman-Standard and carried road numbers 2400 to 2499. These cars did have a wood floor, drop ends and fourteen panels, two out of three of which align with the MTL 105 500 body style since the ends are fixed on that model. The new road number protocol seems simple enough: drop a “50” in front of the original four digit number, thus the 502407 was probably the 2407. Returning to the January 1978 ORER, 93 of the original 100 cars remained in the 2400 to 2499 series, so there had not been much repainting up to that point.



110 00 211 and 110 00 212, \$32.40 each
Reporting Marks: SCMX 2276 and 2277.
56 Foot General Service Tank Cars, Shell.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Black emergency instructions on yellow panel right of center. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1968 (build date) but more likely the early 1980s, to the early decade of the 2000s, as painted.

According to the July Micro-News, these cars are... Shell licensed products? Okay, I guess, although there's no trademark or mention of the company name on these tank cars. If you know your reporting marks—and we do, but I doubt that the majority of the general public does—you would understand that these cars are in the employ of Shell Oil Company.

The ORER for April 1970 is the closest in the Research Accumulation to the June 1968 build date for these cars. It shows 30 cars with AAR Designation TLI numbered 2262 to 2291, with 23,000 gallons capacity. They are of ICC type 111A 100-W-3 and were among a total of 1539 cars in the Shell Oil Company registration at the time. There were 67 different home points for these cars, from coast to coast across the United States. Leaping all the way to the January 2011 Equipment Register, we find a combined series 2229 to 2400 with 60 cars, so it's possible that these two cars might still be in service. But let's not forget the nominal forty year service life typically assigned to some rolling stock. Oh, and the number of Home Points shrank all the way to... none.

We have a bingo on SCMX 2276 over on RailcarPhotos.com, in the form of a 2003 photo taken by noted freight car scholar David Casdorff. The June 1968 build date is easily seen, but I don't think that the sans serif lettering goes back that far. (For example, Union Tank Car didn't switch to sans serif lettering until around 1982.) The key delta between prototype and model is up top: the platform arrangement differs, with the ladder on the real car reaching dead center of what appears to be a symmetrical square platform. What's missing from the car tells me that the Approximate Time Period doesn't reach to The Present: conspicuity stripes and the tank qualification stencil, which were required starting in 2005 and no later than 2000 respectively. Obviously the 2276 escaped from that regulation if it was not stenciled with that, well, stencil, in 2003.

Speaking of tank qualification, if you'd like to know more about the technical details of this process, there's a PDF copy of a Powerpoint presentation that was delivered at a Hazardous Materials Seminar in 2013. Search on "tank qualification stencil" to find it... the URL is way too long to share here. It's worth it just for the interesting illustrations, the last of which could have been an inspiration for MTL's Civil War Era tank cars!



148 00 030, \$29.95

Road Number: 1923 (will be "CB&Q 1923" in website listings).

70 Foot Heavyweight Mail/Baggage Car, Burlington (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy).

Pullman green sides and ends; black roof, underbody and trucks. Gold lettering including roadname in center of letterboard, "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" under windows, road number at bottom center, and "Railway Express Agency" near baggage door. Approximate Time Period: early 1950s to as late as the late 1960s.

Here's the release of the latest and ninth Heavyweight body style from Micro-Trains that will most closely model the prototype. The basis for the 148 body style is an American Car and Foundry car built for the "Q" in 1914, with three windows in the mail compartment and a single baggage door at the opposite end. Note that the sides are mirror images of each other; that is, the baggage door is at the same end of the car on both sides. Well, let me just show you (at right); ignore that the colors look different in my photo.



The real 1923 is preserved at the Illinois Railway Museum; it was donated to them by the CB&Q. A plaque near the car describes the purpose of this car well: "Passenger cars usually carried several cars at the front for baggage and mail. On lightly-traveled routes, the functions were often combined." As such, the car would be a natural fit on many branch lines or on secondary or tertiary trains on main lines, and a useful option for model railroads.

Pictures of the actual car are plentiful on the 'net including on the museum's site (direct URL www.irm.org/gallery/CBQ1923). The paint scheme on the MTL model matches what's currently on the car in the museum and how it appeared in service. That is, how it appeared in service after 1928, since, as noted with the recent MTL baggage car releases, the Railway Express Agency wasn't formed until then. (CB&Q cars were lettered "Adams Express Company" before that according to a photo of sister car 1933 on the Fallen Flags site.) At first these were lettered in Railroad Roman. The "ribbon" style lettering was used later; sources I found online give 1951 and 1952 most frequently for this change, so it's "early 1950s" for the start of the Approximate Time Period. The car is technically still "in service" at the Illinois Railway Museum—it's not only operable, but it's used in trains to demonstrate the "grab" of mail pouches. But that's not what I had in mind for the ATP's conclusion.

Fortunately, there's the **CB&Q Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Page 8 of that volume includes photos of CB&Q 1910, the very first Mail/Baggage car built for the line, still in service in 1967, and CB&Q 1914, caught in a consist in 1965. Those two cars aren't exactly the same as the 1923, for example with four windows in the Railway Post Office section of the car. But it's noted that the forty-nine Baggage/Mail cars had "basically the same appearance" and were 70 feet 8 ½ inches long with a 30 foot RPO section. I'm going to further stretch that to an Approximate Time Period being about the same for all of these cars, albeit with a "as late as" disclaimer. The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE) for both March 1943 and January 1953 list a single group of Baggage/Mail cars numbered 1910 to 1949, with a car count of 38 in 1943 and 35 in 1953. Obviously the 1923 was among those cars, since it was on the CB&Q's roster long enough to be donated.



148 00 150, \$34.90

Road Number: 7806 (will be "CN 7806" in website listings).

70 Foot Heavyweight Mail/Baggage Car, Canadian National.

Black and green sides separated and bounded by yellow horizontal stripes (top, below center and bottom) with black roof, ends and underframe. Yellow lettering including roadname off-center on letterboard, "Mail & Express" with circled star and road number at bottom center and "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" below RPO windows. Multi-color maple leaf heralds at bottom left and right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1959 (based on paint scheme) to as late as the early 1970s.

Since I have the ORPTEs "open" (I have digital copies) let's start there: in March 1943 the CN rostered a series numbered from 7773 to 7839. Of these, 45 cars were in the main series and 18 more were "exceptions" which were not equipped with electric lights. The 7806 would have been in the main series, which presumably did have electric lights. These cars were described as "Mail and Baggage" with a length of "70 feet and over."

This group was divided in the January 1953 ORPTE and we get a little more information: cars 7805 to 7809 had a 42 foot long baggage compartment, 31 foot long mail compartment, inside length of 72 feet 10 inches and length over buffers of 77 feet 4 inches. All five possible cars were in place in this short series. I find it a bit hard to believe that one of the larger group, the 7775, still didn't have electric lights! Well, you did get a small discount on the mileage and per diem charges. Bring your own whale oil, perhaps?

Anyway, there is a bingo on the 7806 on the "CNRPhotos" gallery (www.cnrphotos.com) as of 1971. That's later than I would have thought considering that the Canadian National went to its black and white scheme for passenger cars starting in 1961. But that certainly allows us

to extend the ATP to another “as late as” date. Via Rail Canada took over CN’s passenger operations, as well as their equipment, in 1977 so I’m not sure how much longer the heavyweight car would have lasted.

And here’s a surprise, for me, anyway: This black and green color scheme was introduced in 1959, just two years before the CN went to its “wet noodle” logo. I suppose it makes more sense that the 7806 would have remained in that paint scheme in 1971 –its decoration was still relatively fresh. And better news is that I don’t have to dig out the original build date of the car... I can be so lazy sometimes... though I’d estimate that if the cars were consecutively numbered as they were built, the 7806 would have been constructed no later than the mid-1930s.

Prior to the introduction of the two-toned decoration, CN passenger cars were painted with all olive green sides with black roof. That’s according to the **CN Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 1**, in which it’s also pointed out that some of the CN’s mail and baggage cars were renumbered into the 70000s when converted to mail storage cars.

Comparing prototype to model, keeping in mind that the opposite side of the real 7806 is shown in the online image (the only one I could locate on line, for that matter), there are differences in the roof detail, the number of windows in the baggage door, and possibly the trucks. There are drip guards over both doors. You’ll be hearing this broken record for the remainder of the MTL releases on this body style: “it’s based on a CB&Q prototype and deltas to other railroads’ cars will be expected.” I’ve already heard from a CN fan that while the car is technically a stand-in, it’s a pretty good one.

And one more tidbit before moving on: You might be wondering if it’s appropriate for a car in service for a company which has its head office “north of the border” to be lettered “United States Mail Railway Post Office.” The short answer in this case is yes, even if we didn’t have the prototype photo to confirm this. The CN had routes in the USA, including its Central Vermont and Grand Trunk Western subsidiaries, and there were through trains from Toronto and Montreal down into Detroit and Chicago.



In addition to the above, the Canadian National/ Wisconsin Central SW1500 locomotives (986 00 521 and 522, \$134.95 each) are expected to be released mid-month and should be at or near MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage of this item was in the February 2015 issue. We’ll have the images of the actual units on the UMTRR website as soon as they become available.

In addition to the above, the following items are in pre-order at present and are NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close July 31.



Scheduled Delivery November 2015:

993 01 350, \$89.95

Road Numbers: 53, 54, and 55 (will be preceded with "RAS" in website listings). Royal American Shows Heavyweight Three Pack.

Will consist of three Heavyweight 12-1 Sleepers (142 series body style). Each car will be red with yellow band horizontally across middle of car, aluminum roof and

black underframe and trucks. White "World's Largest Midway" lettering at top center, white with black shadowed name "Royal American Shows" at bottom center and road numbers at left and right. Approximate Time Period: at least mid-1960s to no later than 1997 (the show's end).

I'm calling this a regular release, not a Special Edition, since there certainly was a circus train for this traveling show, although specific alignment between prototype and model rolling stock might be inexact. When I provided a quick look at the Royal American Shows back in the November 2014 UMTRR, I noted that their trains could run to ninety cars at times, so there's clearly plenty of opportunity to expand upon the first Royal American Set which consisted of five heavyweight passenger cars. Flat cars for equipment might be a bit more problematic since the ones for which I saw images online don't look anything like any current N Scale product of which I'm aware. Please feel free to find more on the circus that called itself "The Most Beautiful Show on Earth" in that November 2014 UMTRR.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



020 00 093, \$19.95.

Reporting Marks: SP 32772.

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

Ninth and presumably final release in the MTL "1972 Series." Boxcar red (including trucks, wheels and couplers) with white

lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left. Black and white circular "Southern Pacific Lines" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1955 (based on service date/paint scheme) to no later than mid-1960s (based on road number). Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 20093/20080, Road Number 105043, November 1972 and Road Number 105049, April 1973, then as Catalog Number 20080, Road Number 105048, October 1979; Road Number 105047, May 1993 and Road Number 105045, April 1998.

What should be the final release in the 1972 Series is most definitely a “not a reprint.” First, it’s a different shade of boxcar red than the previous runs; second, the trucks and couplers are also brown this time, and third and most importantly, the road number is from a completely different car series.

For a bit of background, the previous runs going all the way back to 1972 were from the series 103600 to 105599, which numbered 1715 in the February 1963 ORER but just 166 as of April 1970. The last 500 of these were the SP’s Class B-50-28 and were built by Pullman-Standard in 1951. The first three Kadee releases of this car don’t have the class designation and the most recent two do, which make them rather minor “not a reprints.”

This latest issue, with road number 32772, is part of the SP Class B-50-18. Knowing that in general, the lower the last number is, the older the cars are, you’re probably guessing that the -18s were a fair bit older than the -28s. And you’d be right. A total of 1,750 of these cars were built in 1936 and 1937. A listing on the Steam Era Freight Cars website ([URL steamerafreightcars.com/prototype/frtcars/spboxcars.pdf](http://URLsteamerafreightcars.com/prototype/frtcars/spboxcars.pdf)) shows the particulars: a 4/5 Dreadnaught end, Hutchins panel roof, and six foot Youngstown door. A Universal brake wheel was used for road numbers 32770 to 33119, which were built by Pullman-Standard. These attributes mean differences between the 020 body style and the prototype, but the “door thing” has been resolved versus the previous runs of this MTL car, namely a six foot door on the model but a seven foot door on the B-50-28 prototype. I doubt that the Micro-Trains car copy is correct with respect to the model having archbar trucks or being “rebuilt” in 1955; that “SAC 7-55” is probably a service date, not a rebuild date.

The 1955 service date does align with the introduction of the large roadname paint scheme and I’d say is as good a place as any to start the Approximate Time Period. The ORER for January 1955 shows a total of 1667 cars in the main series 32270 to 34519, plus another 30 that were equipped for automobile parts. The dimensional data for all of the cars was the same: inside height 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3713 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

However! It’s noted in several places that the B-50-18 class was renumbered to 114753 to 116447. That happened over time, but by the January 1964 ORER the group 32271 to 34509 was down to just 55 cars and it’s gone completely by the January 1967 Equipment Register. So it’s “mid-1960s” – at latest – for the end of the Approximate Time Period.

I did not find any matches to images of either this road number or any car in the series in this paint scheme. Over on Ken Harstine’s site (www.boxcars.us) there’s a shot of an SP 40 foot boxcar taken in 1970 that was caught at too sharp an angle to be able to pick out the road number definitively. It is in the same paint scheme and sports what looks like a six foot door and a five digit road number. But the 32772 would have been renumbered by this time anyway. My guess is that MTL found its reference photo in Volume 4 of Tony Thompson’s collection of **Southern Pacific Freight Cars** books. Another source for information on the B-50-18 class is the February 1993 issue of **Railroad Model Craftsman**.



020 00 390, \$25.60.

Reporting Marks: NYC 162444.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, New York Central.

Century green sides, black roof and ends. White lettering including large reporting marks on right. Large black, white and red

“cigar band” herald on left. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (based on paint scheme) to early 1970s. Previous Releases (as Catalog Number 20390): Road Number 166780, December 1988; Road Number 166816, August 1989.

The New York Central System Historical Society has posted on its website a two part history of the “NYC Oval,” the monogram that was reported first used on timetables as early as 1893. This publication is either in the Kadee/Micro-Trains R&D files or the photos included are, as there are cars that have been offered as part of the MTL line which are pictured (examples: the fifty foot double door boxcar with road number 64000 and the despatch stock car numbered 28000). Check nycshs.org/nycs-research-information/ for this and other articles being made available by the NYCSHS. There’s another set of articles about NYC cabooses!

While an early version of the large “cigar band” without the word “System” appeared on just ten 50 foot boxcars in late 1958, it was 1959 when the full push of the “Road to the Future” program was implemented on NYC equipment. This car is an example of the version that was adopted, including “century green” sides and black ends and roof. Starting in late 1963, the scheme was gradually “economized,” let us say, with the change to green ends and roof in order to drop a paint color, and the shrinking of the NYC herald. The line between the reporting marks and road number was eliminated as well. The net of it is that the final version of the NYC’s “Road to the Future” didn’t seem nearly as optimistic as what was introduced... and for good reason.

Meanwhile, this particular car is a bit of a “not a reprint” since the reporting marks have been made closer to the prototype. This reprint is also not part of the same prototype series as the first two runs. According to the softcover **Freight Equipment of the New York Central Volume 1**, the 162444 was part of the series 162000 to 163999, Despatch Shops’ Lot 743-B built not far up the road from UMTRR HQ in East Rochester, New York. There’s a nitpick here in that MTL should have changed the build date to sometime in 1945 versus the 1948 that’s carried over from the previous two releases.

I found two images, neither of which are a bingo but are from the same group. The **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1), Page 71, has a shot of sister car 162440, freshly painted in November 1959. The “Canada Southern” website (URL www.canadasouthern.com) has an image of NYC 163671 in glorious black and white, undated but sporting an August 1959 service date. Interestingly – well, to me, anyway – while the NYC usually put the lot numbers of cars somewhere on the sides, in this case above the 12 foot wide herald, it is present on the 163671 but missing from the 162440. The MTL car doesn’t have the lot number but that’s not necessarily wrong. Comparing prototype to

model, the key delta is, well, rivets: the real cars had riveted sides while the MTL 020 body style has welded sides. The side sills are a bit different as well.

Incidentally, a shot of NYC 162237 from the same series in the **Freight Equipment** book shows the sharp line of demarcation between paint schemes. It was in brown with white lettering and the earlier NYC System oval, and it was painted at the Central's Beech Grove, Indiana shops in February 1959, just eight months before Beech Grove outshopped the 162444 in the spanking new Century Green scheme.

While the ORER for January 1959 won't tell us anything about paint schemes, it does indicate that the series 162000 to 163999 had 1922 cars. The dimensions were: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3898 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. The car count was 1854 in January 1964. It's noted on the Canada Southern site that 500 of the 743-B cars were rebuilt in 1965 at Beech Grove under lot 969-B and given road numbers 207000 to 207499. That helped to shrink the 743-B series down to 886 cars as of January 1967. Under the Penn Central as of October 1969, multiple groups of NYC boxcars were combined into the group 159000 to 166999 which had 876 total cars. That was down to a mere 22 boxcars under the first Conrail listing in April 1976 which is where I stopped looking.



054 00 191 and 054 00 192, \$27.90 each
Reporting Marks: TTPX 804533 and 804602.

61 Foot Bulkhead Flat Cars, TTX (Trailer Train).

Yellow with mostly black lettering. Reporting marks in white on black panel on left. TTX logo in white on black panel on right. Four white reflective stripes across car. Simulated water tank load included (different with each of the two

cars). Approximate Time Period: 2001 (build date given by MTL) to present. Previous Release: Road Number 804610, February 2011.

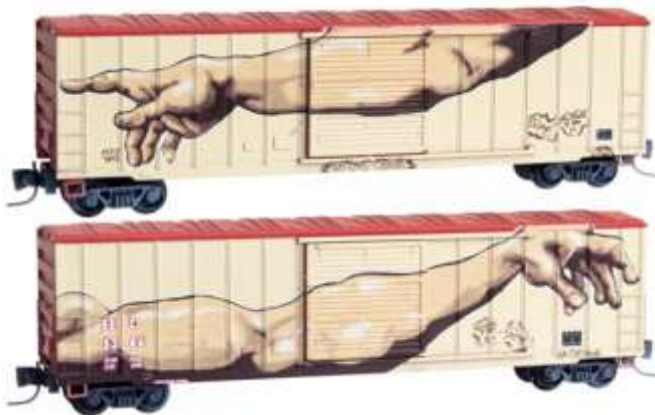
I'll mostly reprint myself from the 2011 first run of this car. It was in 1991 that Trailer Train became TTX. Given the 2001 build date of these cars given by MTL I expect that the paint scheme MTL used for these cars was "as delivered" with the TTX logo. I checked the Fallen Flags site and found sister cars in this same paint scheme as late as 2014, so I think we continue to be OK with a "to present" Approximate Time Period. The only potential weak link on the ATP is the inclusion of the reflective stripes; if they're "conspicuity stripes" then the start date might be more like 2005, the year in which they were first required.

The ORER for January 2002 shows the series TTPX 804400 to 804699 with all 300 possible cars, described simply as "Flat" with AAR Mechanical Designation "FB" and a Gross Rail

Weight of 286,000 pounds. The inside length is 62 feet, a bit more than the MTL model but closer than I thought it would be. The outside length is 72 feet 7 inches; that counts the bulkheads and the distance over the couplers, which are extended on the prototype. The model does fall a bit short on that dimension. The extreme height is 15 feet 5 inches. The latest I can go ORER-wise is January 2011 and the roster is down just two cars to 298 of the original 300.

George Elwood's Fallen Flags website (www.rr-fallenflags.org) has a number of images of cars in this series and RailcarPhotos.com has a bingo on the 804610 which was the original MTL run in 2011. It's carrying a pipe load and a fair amount of graffiti considering how little square footage there is on which scrawls can be spray-painted. The wood attached to the inside of the bulkheads looked a bit worse for wear. The car also had the remains of wooden stakes inserted into some but not all of the stake pockets; perhaps a detail to attempt with the simulated stakes that MTL supplies with the car.

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 July 15.*



025 44 810, \$59.95, 'The Creation of Adam' Two-Pack. Includes the following cars:

025 52 820, "Hand of God"

Reporting Marks FCRD 5072.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, First Coast Railroad. and

025 51 810, "Hand of Adam"

Reporting Marks EEC 5344.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, East Erie Commercial.

Both cars are boxcar red with one side of each car depicting half of an excerpt of the painting "The Creation of Adam." The other side of each car is in standard decoration with white lettering including reporting marks on left (the EEC car) or black and white lettering with reporting marks on left (the FCRD car). Approximate Time Period: at least 2013 and 2014. Previous Releases: None. I did intentionally reverse the catalog numbers to align with the order in which they're pictured in the official MTL image.

"The Creation of Adam" strikes me as more of a response to a clue on the quiz show **Jeopardy!** than the name of a Micro-Trains release! (By the way, shameless plug: if you'd like to know how I fared on the actual **Jeopardy!** contestant on-line test, check the Irwin's Journal Online part of my website: www.irwinsjournal.com/ijonline/ijquestion.htm).

The actual "The Creation of Adam" graces a portion of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and was painted by Michelangelo in the Approximate Time Period of 1511 to 1512. It's the best

known of all of the frescoes there, and is the fourth in sequence of scenes from the Bible's Book of Genesis. It's also a bit smaller than the freight cars, occupying a "mere" 9 feet 2 inches by 18 feet 8 inches. Art historians and observers continue to find symbolism in this most famous example of art (thought to be second only in recognizability to the Mona Lisa among painted works). It's been theorized that it not only displays Michelangelo's extensive knowledge of physical anatomy, but also contains a pretty fair image of the geography of the human brain (look carefully at the background on the right).



Some five hundred years later, two freight cars were, well, decorated with a portion of the famous fresco. Yes, the inspiration for this MTL Weathered Release is as real as the art which in turn inspired the prototype. The two boxcars were photographed together in Orange, California in February 2013, and the image is posted on RRPictureArchives.net . The EEC reporting marks are seen just about everywhere on North American rails; they belong to the East Erie Commercial Railroad which, among other things, serves the General Electric Locomotive plant in, you guessed, the eastern section of the city of Erie, Pennsylvania. As of the January 2011 ORER it rostered 5906 cars, which, if coupled together, would doubtless clog the shortline's twelve miles of track! Among the collection listed is the series 5200 to 5549, a mish-mash of 50 foot 6 inch inside length boxcars with various capacities. Somewhere in there is the 5344, we presume. Previous to its arrival on the EEC roster, it started as Seaboard System 135630 according to RRPictureArchives, then was lettered for CSX, Mid-South, the Mexican railroad FCCM, and then the H&S Railway (formerly the Hartford and Slocumb). When boxcars are painted for the EEC and not just restenciled, the preferred color is brown and the preferred amount of lettering is "minimal." Oh, and there's a "door thing" as the car carried a Superior panel door when it was, ahem, redecorated.

The First Coast Railroad boxcar 5072 does have a Youngstown-style door as, um, repainted, so MTL is half-right, though I suppose that will be of little consideration for most N Scalers. The FCRC is one of the many shortline properties of Genesee and Wyoming Industries and since 2005 has operated on 32 miles of former Seaboard Air Line trackage in extreme northeast Florida and southeast Georgia. With just 372 cars in the January 2011 ORER, the FCRD's roster isn't as impressive as the EEC's, but like the East Erie Commercial, its cars were managed by GE Railcar Services. The 5072 is an AAR Classification XP boxcar with 50 foot 6 inch inside length and 5347 cubic foot capacity, a bit larger than the 5077 type car that is the basis for the MTL body style.

As usual, the question that comes immediately to my mind when seeing cars with sides completely painted over like this is: "How could they have been in the same place for that long?" I guess with this "twin pack," that goes double.



038 44 540, \$26.70

Reporting Marks: ICG 150205.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Illinois Central Gulf.

Orange with mostly black lettering including large reporting marks on left. White "Cushion

Underframe / Insulated" legend at top right. Double panel consolidated stencils and black on yellow "Keep Off Roof/No Running Board" warning at bottom right. Extensive weathering including simulated rust on sides. Approximate Time Period: 1980s. Previous Releases: None.

Well, when you're a Weathered Release competing with one of the most well-known artworks of all time, you'd think it would be "no contest." But the "rusty" cars that MTL has done recently have earned high praise in modeling circles, so don't be too sure that this car won't hit the bye-bye board too far behind that fancy two-pack just above.

This car sports the what I'd call pretty spartan (no, that's not capitalized, spell check!) lettering which was typical of the ICG before it reverted back to being just the Illinois Central in 1990. There is the vestige of an earlier, fancier paint scheme up top with the "Cushion Underframe / Insulated" legend which used to be applied to ICG cars along with the large roadname and solid rail herald... and also back before 1972 when the Illinois Central used its split rail herald.

This car has a service date of December 1980 but the ORER for July of that year does not have a matching road number. Neither does the April 1981 Register but perhaps the folks at the ORER hadn't caught up to the changes in the railroad's roster. At any rate, there is ICG 150200 to 150226 in the next issue I have, April 1984. It's a short series with a longish description: "Refrigerator, 20 Inch Keystone Cushion Underframe, Load Dividers, Collapsible Side Fillers, 50K." The inside length was 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 9 feet 10 inches, outside length 57 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet (a slight "door thing" here) and capacity 4630 cubic feet or 139,000 pounds. Though 27 cars could fit in that number series, there were only five at the time. In fact, there were never more than five in the group, and just one remained in April 1997 which is where I stopped looking.

With just five cars, I didn't think I'd find a bingo, but I did, and I suppose Micro-Trains found the same image of ICG 150205 on RRPictureArchives.net and worked to replicate the rusting effects. It's quite unusual to find a photo of a plug door car with its plug door open, but this one is! That service date of December 1980 does in fact appear to be on the car, though its picture was taken in May 1996. Comparing prototype to model, I see two differences, namely the use of a short ladder instead of grab irons on the left, and the shape of the side sills. The real car appears to have a nest built under the left grab iron, which suggests to me that the car hadn't gone anywhere recently and wasn't likely to be rolling again anytime soon.

And how about this... while I didn't locate an exact match, I found what might have been the previous Illinois Central series for these cars. If I'm right – and I might **not** be – the IC series 49900 to 49965, built in 1962 by General American, might have tapped to become part of the short ICG group. When constructed, the IC was still painting its boxcars brown. Is this a possible Micro-Trains future release? Despite the deltas to the MTL product (with a running board, so the 032 not the 077 body style), I'd be interested.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #106** (993 00 106, \$129.95), four Northern Pacific “Savings Bonds” 50 Foot Single Door Boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the February 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 077 51 010, 31138; 077 52 010, 31226; 077 53 010, 31250; 077 54 010, 31309. These are the second through fifth road numbers for this car. Also note that these are “not a reprint” cars versus the first release, as they have red trucks, an ACI label and a “Keep Off Roof” warning at the bottom right, none of which were on the initial run of this car in August 1995.



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



Scheduled December 2015 Release:

993 00 111, \$79.95

Quantity four of Three Bay 100 Ton Open Hoppers, Rio Grande (Denver & Rio Grande Western).

Reporting Marks: D&RGW 14657, 14722, 14986, 14990.

Black with white lettering including large reporting marks on left and speed lettering roadname offset from center. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) through 1980s as painted. Previous Releases: as Catalog 108060, Road Number 14689,

August 2002; as Catalog 108 00 060, Road Number 14975, July 2008. Individual catalog numbers for this release should be 108 5x 060.

The Rio Grande owned almost 2400 hoppers of various types to transport black diamonds by 1970, including the series from which this model was taken. Two series of these open hoppers delivered to the Rio Grande in 1966 were built by Bethlehem Steel. They were built similarly to the Pennsylvania Railroad's H39 design by Bethlehem Steel according to the Rio

Grande Modeling and Historical Society (www.drgw.org), however in the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** it's noted that the cars were actually larger than the Pennsy's H39. Since western coal wasn't as dense as eastern coal, the Rio Grande's cars could be built a bit bigger. Even so, these cars had three bays, thirteen ribs and rivets and were used for coal and stone service. They were numbered 14600 to 14799 and 14800 to 14999.

Based on my research, I've concluded that this is the "as delivered" paint scheme. It was a year later in 1967 that the reporting marks had been switched from the Roman style serif font depicted on the MTL model to a sans-serif Gothic font. The "stacked" Rio Grande logo-- the one that goes with the "Action Road" slogan-- was also introduced in 1967. There's a 1987 photo of sister car 14975 on Page 81 of the **Color Guide**. It remains in the "as delivered" scheme, but added to the right side car by that time are the U-1 inspection dot, under the "n" in "Grande" and double panel consolidated stencils, under the "d" in "Grande." It looks like there's the scar of a former ACI label as well.

Let's go to the April 1970 ORER for the dimensions of this series 14800 to 14999: inside length 39 feet 10 inches, outside length 40 feet 11 inches. Extreme height is 11 feet even. My measurements of a 108 series car show that it's a little longer and a bit taller than the D&RGW car, which appears to confirm what's stated in the **Color Guide**. Capacity is 2600 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds; that's just 77 tons, not 100, but the truck capacities have something to do with that as well as the actual car frame. There were 196 cars in this group out of the possible 200. By April 1981 this series had been combined with the adjacent one, giving 374 cars from road numbers 14600 to 14999. There were 348 cars in this group as of in July 1989 and 313 in October 1996. By this point some of the cars may have been brought up to date with the Action Road paint scheme, but images on George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site also show the original scheme still existed into at least into the 1980's. As in the **Color Guide**, there's a 1994 shot of car number 14627 with restenciled reporting marks and consolidated stencils, but also carrying the as painted speed lettering herald. There remained about 200 cars in multiple series with DRGW marks under Union Pacific ownership as late as January 2000, but seems to me that the ATP for "as painted" would have been over by then.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: In addition to the below announcements, the Ringling Brothers "Dragons" TOFC 2-Pack (064 00 150, \$79.95) is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the March 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers are as follows: 57 Foot Flat Car, 064 51 150, Reporting Marks RBX 105, with "Dragons" trailer, 452 52 170; and 57 Foot Flat Car, 064 53 150, Reporting Marks RBX 112, with "Funundrum" trailer, 452 54 180.



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



Scheduled Delivery December 2015:

470 00 029, \$34.95

Bakery Wagon Two-Pack.

Consists of two 15 foot wagons of different design. First wagon is multicolored with advertising for "Dexter's Mother's Bread." Second wagon is green and yellow with multicolored advertising for "Sweety Kakes" cupcakes. Preliminary artwork shown and is subject to change.

Yes, there was a Dexter's Mother's Bread, or at least there was a postcard for a horse-drawn "bread wagon." (The actual postcard is listed for sale; it the asking price is 175 U.S. dollars. "Seller Optimism" doesn't seem to be limited to model trains, does it?) The photo is undated but was taken in Waterbury, Connecticut.

The July 27, 1921 issue of **The Norwalk Hour** newspaper (found on Google News) includes an advertisement which proclaimed Dexter's Mother's Bread to be "A Household Name for Over 50 Years" and then went on to describe its various positive attributes: "Delicious... Dexter's Mother's Bread is the kind with the golden brown crust, the light, spongy grain; always cuts smoothly, butters easily, toasts finely, keeps moist, and always tastes and smells sweet and appetizing... Nutritious... Dexter's Mother's Bread contains the life-giving, body building vitamins [sic] necessary to good health. Good food for the hard-working people, the husky boy or girl, the aged people or the little children... Satisfying... Dexter's Mother's Bread makes you smack your lips for more- it leaves that lingering sensation of a good meal. The family asks for it and the children cry for it."

The most common result of an image search on this product is a sign made up to look like a blackboard on which is inscribed, "Don't forget Dexter's Mother's Bread." Several online citations place the Dexter's Bakery in Springfield, Massachusetts but I didn't find any history beyond that.

Meanwhile, I was not as lucky with a query on "Sweety Cakes," which seems to me to be more like a somewhat risky term of affection than a brand of frosted baked goods. There is, however, a connection to the Philadelphia placement of what I think might be a "fantasy" paint scheme for "Sweety Kakes." And that's the Tasty Bakery Company, producer of the Tastykake line of baked goods including some of my childhood favorites. The company filed a trademark for the brand "Sweetie Kakes" ("ie", not "y") in 1998 for its Valentine's Day-themed chocolate cupcakes with cream filling and red icing with white heart-shaped sprinkles. Tastykake is better known for its Chocolate Juniors (introduced in 1917), Kandy Kakes and, at least in my former home, chocolate chip bars. The company was founded in 1914, went public in 1961 and was independent until its sale to Flowers Foods in 2011. I

think that perhaps someone at Micro-Trains has their own connection to the Philadelphia area, although Tastykakes are starting to have a wider distribution now than before. For example, they're now in stores not far from UMTRR HQ.



Scheduled Delivery November 2015:

101 00 802, \$39.95

Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, 2015 Custom Christmas Car.

Available only through direct order with Micro-Trains (see their website for order form). Side A is white with

green outline and customized message, with "Micro-Trains 2015" simulated postage stamp at top right. Side B is one of a choice of three alternatives, all rendered in multicolor process (shown at right): 1) stylized steam locomotive and evergreen trees; 2) a mid-century of the 1800s scene with steam locomotive-pulled train and activities in the snow; 3) a photographic image of a tourist train on the Alaska Railroad. Each of the three cars has the legend "Merry Christmas" at the top right of Side B.



Repeat of a sellout? Well, technically yes, since MTL only made as many 2014 custom Christmas cars as were ordered. But if the previous year's run wasn't successful, we wouldn't be seeing this opportunity – and now MTL has outdone even that idea with three choices which should appeal to a wide variety of N Scalers. Or perhaps you'll be ordering all three options?

NARROW GAUGE RELEASES (Nn3, HOn3): No releases this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES: In addition to the below, delivery of the **Rio Grande F7A and**



F7B Diesels (980 01 391 and 980 01 392, \$134.95 each, and 980 02 391 and 980 02 392 \$109.95 each) which were announced in May was delayed to mid-June, per the June Micro-News. This announcement was made after the May UMTRR went "to press," and explains why we didn't have the product images for you last month. Some work on the "Month by Month" page of the UMTRR website is pending...

Also, the reprinted **Canadian National F7A and F7B Diesels** (980 01 191 and 980 01 192, \$134.95 each, and 980 02 191 and 980 02 192 \$109.95 each) which were scheduled for June were released this month. The usual high resolution images of those weren't yet available at "press time," so as soon as they are, they'll be on the UMTRR website. Meanwhile, here's a "reprint" of last month's image of the pair of units.



With that clarified, let's go to the July new releases...



500 00 861 and 500 00 862, \$29.95 each
Reporting Marks: C&O 12498 and 12505.
40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Door, Chesapeake & Ohio "LCL Service."
 Blue with yellow band. Yellow reporting marks on left and roadname on right split by large mostly yellow "C&O." Blue dimensional data. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (service/paint date) to late 1960s.

The following is mostly reprinted from the May 2014 coverage of the N Scale release of this item.

We jump directly to Page 23 of the **Chesapeake & Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** for a bingo, or exact match of the road number, to C&O 12498. This car was part of the series 12392 to 13135, and started as a boxcar built in 1924 for C&O predecessor Hocking Valley which was merged in 1937. It was rebuilt with steel sides in 1941. You might already be guessing that this means the car isn't a match to the MTL 020 body style, and you'd be right. A closer, but not exact, match would have been one of the Micro-Trains 1205 / 120500 series boxcars since the prototype had straight sills and a vertical brake staff with corrugated ends, specifically a Murphy type. Those ends are close to what MTL uses on its 515 series double sheathed boxcar. There isn't anything available in Z Scale (and perhaps in any other scale either) that comes close to the construction of this car. The design appears to be unique to the C&O.

Not all of the series of cars was painted this way. The rest had the more typical boxcar red paint with white lettering including the "C&O for Progress" herald. The scheme MTL used replicates that used by the Chessie for cars dedicated to less than carload or LCL service between freight stations on the line. The start of the Approximate Time Period of 1957 was probably already too late to save this type of traffic, as trucks were decimating the railroad's share of relatively small freight shipments. Before the end of the next decade, LCL and freight stations themselves would largely be gone from the C&O system.

It's noted in the **Color Guide** that "the individual numbers of those cars painted in the LCL scheme can be found in an Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) of the late 1950s or early 1960s." Well, that seems like a great segue, so let's head over to the ORER for January 1959. I thought that this might be a small quantity of cars... but no, it's one hundred cars out of the 587 in the overall series that are noted as "equipped for exclusive LCL merchandise between freight houses on Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Company line." I'll assume that there's no particular interest in having me list all one hundred cars (right?) so I'll just confirm the obvious: the 12498 is among the group, though the 12505 is not. The dimensions don't differ between these cars and the rest of the group: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet 6 inches, inside height just 8 feet 8 inches, outside length 42 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 1 inch, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 2983 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. In the January 1964 ORER, 97 cars remain listed as for LCL service out of a total of 546 in the overall series. In the January 1967 Register, there were 67 LCL-designated cars and just 72 in the rest of the group. The 12498 remains among the group of LCL cars. In the ORER for April 1970 the 33 cars shown as being in LCL service, no longer including the 12498, outnumber the 17 remaining cars in the main series. That's the latest Equipment Register in the Research Accumulation that still calls out the LCL boxcars. Two cars from the group hang on through at least April 1975 which is where I stopped looking.

Our C&O Special Correspondent James Pugh recommends three issues of the **C&O Historical Society Magazine** for more on this topic. The December 1998 issue has a substantial article on the prototype cars, including why they're so difficult to model, while the July and September 2005 issues discuss the C&O's Less Than Carload business in general. It's noted by the C&OHS that after being in LCL service, a few of these cars ended in company service at the docks at Newport News, Virginia and were stenciled as such without further repainting.



518 00 360, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: NADX 6266.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Fishbelly Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Baby Ruth Series #2.

Red (sides, roof and ends). Black reporting marks on left and dimensional data on left and right. Large "Baby Ruth / Good Candy" in yellow with black outline across car, yellow "A Curtiss Product" above door and black "Curtiss Candy Company / Otto Schnering, President, Chicago" in yellow band below door. White lettering on ends. Approximate Time Period: 1931 (build date) to mid-1930s.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release (049 00 720) above.

Z SCALE REPRINTS:



502 00 161 and 502 00 162, \$26.80 each

Reporting Marks: BCOL 8003 and 8006.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, British Columbia Railway.

Green with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname on right. Multicolor "dogwood" herald on right.

Approximate Time Period: early 1970s to mid-1980s. Previous Releases (as Catalog Number 14916/14916-2): Road Number 8004, October 1996; Road Number 8002, May 2003 (both with either Marklin or Magne-Matic Couplers). Note: MTL had only the image of the 162 release (Road Number 8006) available at "press time."

On April 1, 1972, the Pacific Great Eastern Railway officially changed its name to the British Columbia Railway, and traded in their previous caribou and "map" heralds for a striking orange, green and white flower, and their box car red for a green that suggested growth and vitality. The line became BC Rail, and its colors became red, white and blue, and then became part of the Canadian National system. But back in 1972, it was an interesting move for a railway that had pretty much labored in relative obscurity. Had the PGE or BCOL reached its ultimate dream goal, though, it would hardly have stayed in the background; it would have been the first and only rail link to Alaska.

Let's trek back to the December 1973 **Official Guide of the Railways** and see that the BCOL offered daily passenger service from North Vancouver to Prince George, 462 miles through some of the most spectacular, and isolated, country in North America. Rail Diesel Cars were the standard equipment on Numbers 1 and 2, the "Cariboo Dayliner," and, yes, that is "Cariboo" with two o's. It's named for the area's mountain range, not the animal. (I had to check too.) It was an all day excursion leaving North Vancouver at 800 hours and arriving in Prince George at 2200 hours—that's 10 PM for we folks "South of the Border." From Prince George there was only freight service to Chetwynd, 193 miles farther north and east. Lines to Dawson Creek (not the TV series!) and Fort Nelson diverged there. Fort Nelson is on the Alaska Highway and is only around a hundred miles from the Northwest Territories. That would probably qualify the BCOL as the farthest north railway connected into the North American system. (The Alaska Railroad is, of course, even farther north, but its rail connections are by sea.)

Predating the BCOL, the February 1964 ORER shows Pacific Great Eastern series numbered 8000 to 8011, AAR Classification XMIH and complete with thermostatically controlled underslung alcohol heaters and three inch thick insulation. You'd better have those if you're going to Fort Nelson! April 1976 shows that the 11 original cars were still around, but could be lettered either "PGE" or "BCOL." That's not much help. January 1985 found just six cars remaining under the "BC Rail" listing numbered 8003 to 8011. These hung around until the July 1989 ORER but were gone from the October 1991 Register. Chances are that the roofwalk would have been gone before then anyway. These were the vital statistics: inside

length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet 5 inches (limited by the insulation), outside length 42 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet, capacity 3356 cubic feet or 113,000 pounds. On his website (www.nakina.net) Ian Cranstone notes these cars were built by "DOSCO" or Dominion Coal and Steel, which was Eastern Car Company and became Hawker Siddeley then Trenton Works. His note showing the cars as gone by 1990 is in alignment with my findings.

The last MTL issuance of this particular car was back in March 2006 in N Scale, and since then I've added to the UMTRR Research Accumulation the softcover **Canadian Rail Car Pictorial Volume 9** which covers "Part 1" of the PGE/BCOL boxcars. Although there were only 11 of these cars in total, the book has four photos of this series, three in PGE paint and one, the 8006 in fact (bingo!) in BCOL paint. There's an immediate delta visible: no running board on the car, which had been removed while still painted in the brown and white of the Pacific Great Eastern. The ladders have also been cut down on sides and ends. I wouldn't expect the heater equipment to be included in the release, and it's not, but that could be a nice aftermarket opportunity for some 3-D printed parts.

Z 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 July 15.*



510 44 240, \$59.95, 'The Creation of Adam' Two-Pack. Includes the following cars:

510 52 250, "Hand of God"

Reporting Marks FCRD 5072.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Superior Door, First Coast Railroad and

510 51 240, "Hand of Adam"

Reporting Marks EEC 5344.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Superior Door, East Erie Commercial.

Both cars are boxcar red with one side of each car depicting half of an excerpt of the painting "The Creation of Adam." The other side of each car is in standard decoration with white lettering including reporting marks on left (the EEC car) or black and white lettering with reporting marks on left (the FCRD car). Approximate Time Period: at least 2013 and 2014. Previous Releases: None. I did intentionally reverse the catalog numbers to align with the order in which they're pictured in the official MTL image.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (025 44 810).

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #81** (994 00 081, \$114.95), four Pennsylvania Railroad “Merchandise Service” 50 foot single door boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the February 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these are as follows: 505 51 330, 118652; 505 52 330, 118663; 505 53 330, 118774; 505 54 330, 118785. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is 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 July 31.



Scheduled December 2015 Release:

994 00 086, \$89.95

Quantity four of PS-1 Two Bay Covered Hoppers, Baltimore & Ohio.

Reporting Marks: B&O 631105, 631123, 631139, 631140.

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks and small capitol dome herald on left and large “B&O” in center. Double panel consolidated stencils on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s (based on paint scheme) or 1977 (based on service date) into the 1980s. Previous Releases: None.

Individual car numbers will be in the 530 series. Artwork is preliminary and actual release may differ.

According to the **B&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, the N43 class of B&O covered hoppers was built in 1955 by Pullman-Standard and numbered 631100 to 631299. Page 58 of the **Color Guide** includes a bingo on the 631139 as found in March, 1981. Other than an ACI label and equipment trust plaque at the bottom right, the lettering in the MTL artwork matches what’s on the car. And the car itself should be a match for the 530 body style as well.

The B&O had a plethora of paint schemes, and this one dates to the mid-1960s according to both the **Color Guide** and the information on the B&O Historical Society’s website. This iteration follows the one in which the roadname was placed above the large “B&O” – in return for dropping the full name, the small capitol dome herald re-appears. Although it’s possible that any of the B&O’s equipment could have been repainted into Chessie System colors after 1973, it’s noted in the Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment that most covered hoppers kept their pre-Chessie paint well into and past the Chessie era. On the other hand, B&O 631247 from the same series got the yellow and blue paint and the

“Ches-C” in 1974; its photo is on Fallen Flags (www.rr-fallenflags.org). The photo in the Color Guide is from the early 1980s so that gives us an “at least” for the end of the ATP.

The ORER for October 1976 will do for a lookup. There are 495 cars in the larger series 631100 to 631699, with inside length 29 feet 3 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, outside length 37 feet 9 inches, extreme height 13 feet 2 inches, and capacity 2003 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. Seventy-eight of those cars remain with B&O reporting marks in the July 1989 Register but they’re all gone by the October 1991 ORER.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: In addition to the below announcements, the Ringling Brothers “Dragons” TOFC 2-Pack (524 00 150, \$79.95) is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the March 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers are as follows: 524 51 150, Reporting Marks RBX 105 with “Dragons” container, 761 52 240; 524 53 150, RBX 112 with “Funundrum” container, 761 54 250.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is 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 July 31.



Scheduled Delivery October 2015:

994 21 060, \$189.95

Reindeer Belt Christmas Set.

Expected to consist of an F7A locomotive, plus three streamlined baggage cars (553 series body style), all decorated in red, green and white with depictions of Santa’s Reindeer. Preliminary artwork shown, actual item may differ.

The reindeer are the same, the concept is similar, but the train is different: a month after announcing pre-orders for the N Scale version of this set, here’s the announcement for the companion set in Z Scale. No third-party locomotive needed for this one, and the F7 will certainly do to pull three baggage cars. Besides, aren’t those “eight tiny reindeer,” well, nine, counting Rudolph? Last month’s coverage of the N Scale pre-announcement probably has you “reindeered out” so I think we’ll stop right here...

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Just one kit this month: an N Scale “Rural Depot” (499 90 978, \$24.95). The footprint is 8 3/8 inches long by 2 1/8 inches wide. That might seem long, but I think that most of us, due to space constraints, can’t allow our passenger stations to extend

very far down the track. I know that down at the depots on my home layout, the passengers need to crowd into just one door in order to exit at the platform—and that's with my standard equipment for 1963, which is a Rail Diesel Car!



DISCONTINUED ALERT: Another trainload this month, even after removing previously announced sellouts from the official list. Let's start with the single Nn3 release on the bye-bye board, the Dimensional Data refrigerator car (803 00 001, December 2014).

Moving to Z Scale, we'll begin with two of the Nose Art containers on flat cars, 524 00 106 from December 2013 and 524 00 107 from January 2014. The Micro-News has these listed as "Surprise Attack" and "Bock's Car," but they're actually "Bungay Buckaroo" and "Sleepy Time Gal." I'm going to assume that the Catalog Numbers are right and will adjust next month if need be. Meanwhile, from just last month, the first number of the Rio Grande x-post boxcar has left the building (511 00 241), and from the mid-month before that, the Railbox "Body Builder" weathered/graffiti release has also (510 44 220). Next up are some halves of virtual two-packs: the second number of the Burlington Northern 40 foot boxcar is (500 00 702, December 2014), the second number of the Canadian National x-post boxcar with website notation (511 00 202, October 2013) and the first number of the "The Rock" gondola (522 00 261, March). Finally, two of the Tank Car Series have drained off: the Shell in white on black (530 00 402, September 2014) and the Pan Am Oils (530 00 408, February).

In N Scale, it's probably fair to call the KCS/ATSF Weathered Boxcar Two-Pack from last month a blow-out (020 44 966) with the ATSF "eye" Weathered/Graffiti x-post boxcar not far behind (030 44 250). Sticking with Weathered items, also sold out are the Air Force hopper (055 44 500, February 2014) and the BNSF/TTX enclosed auto rack (111 44 160, May).

The quickest non-weathered cars to march out were the United States Army boxcar reprint (020 00 456), the Civil War Era tank car for the US Military Railroad (154 00 010), and the first number of the JTLX log flatcar (115 00 041), all from just last month. Two very differently painted cabooses, one for the Southern Pacific (100 00 050) and one for the American Civil War (100 00 350), both from May, are gone.

The New York Central "1972 Series" boxcar reprint (020 00 047, February) sold out a lot faster than the previous run of this car did. The unweathered Great Northern double door boxcar (023 00 352, May) joins its Weathered counterpart on the bye-bye board. Same for the unweathered MD&W x-post boxcar reprint (026 00 060, June 2014). The first numbers of the BAR/State of Maine boxcar (031 00 471, March) and the Union Pacific center partition flatcar reprint (053 00 711, June 2014) have rolled away. Brewery Series #8, for Sudbury (058 00 180, October 2013), showed "Even the Camel Can't" stay in stock forever. Tank Car Series #12, for Mexican Petroleum (065 00 840 September 2014), is gone. The second number of the

Santa Fe “gray band” general service tank car (110 00 122, August 2014) has also emptied out. Closing out the closeouts this time are the Great Northern 3-2 Heavyweight Observation (144 00 020, October 2011) and the second number of the Union Pacific Civil War Era flatcar (153 00 082, March).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Roger Perkins helped out with more on the US Army boxcar reprint from last month, including one of his photos! “The USAX 61-06143 is a bit confusing. The 61-xxxx indicates this is a Navy boxcar, so the simple way out is to assume it’s ex-USAX and renumber for the Navy series. Seen at Earle Naval Weapons Station clinches the deal for me. Looking in my files I see I have the subject car in a photo. It’s easy to see the Navy number over the white Army number, well, faded and washed out. The photo also shows the height difference with a more standard 40 or 50 footer.”



Roger also commented on the Approximate Time Period for military boxcars in general, in an e-mail titled “Ammo Boxcars,” start quote:

“The Navy boxcars were indeed used captive to the ammunition handling bases. Trains with boxcars of bombs and shells were delivered in regular or USAX cars to places like Earle (Naval Weapons Station, in New Jersey). There the material was stored in bunkers or revetments. It was often transferred to the Navy boxcars for moving around the base and out to piers for ship loading. I think you can find pictures of the piers at Earle on the internet.

“About 15 years ago the ammo people started shipping in 40 foot containers and the stuff is loaded directly to ships in those containers. Navy boxcars in the 61- group can still be found at Navy bases, usually serving as storage. A couple of years ago Concord Naval Weapons Station had a massive boxcar trashing operation... all got chewed up at that base.

“But a few years ago Earle NWS got fifty (I heard) rebuilt box cars noted as painted white instead of the silver or navy gray. These were in the 04xxx, 05xxx and 06xxx number groups. In the photo (at right) note that the door is a tad smaller than the opening (???) and it’s a riveted side car. The government saving money, I guess. USN 61-06516 has different doors, but two as expected.



“As a side bar, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard still has flat cars that were rebuilt in 1951; at that time they got new decking, arch bar trucks replaced and a paint job. They were 50 foot cars. There is an exception to the usual car numbers at that base. About twenty years ago,

several ex-Elgin, Joliet and Eastern gondolas were delivered as USNX but still never leave base."

End quote, and many thanks, Roger.

Dennis Lloyd noted with respect to the N Scale Reindeer Belt Train Set pre-order announcement from last month, and this month's Z Scale Reindeer Belt Train Set also for that matter, that "I think the reindeer's name is Donder, which in German, goes with Blitzen. However, Donner is listed as an alternate."

And James Pugh checked in with his discovery that the real C&O 3563, one of the cabooses depicted in Z Scale by Micro-Trains last month, was recently sold by Ozark Mountain Railcar, a third party rolling stock dealer, for an undisclosed amount. Try this URL:
www.ozarkmountainrailcar.com/detail.asp?id=885&n=Chesapeake--Ohio-Railroad-Caboose--3563--SOLD

OOPS PATROL: None detected or reported from last month's column. I hope.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DATABASES? Perhaps the number one question I've been asked by readers in the past few months has not to do with any specific release, but all of them, in the form of the MTL databases that were posted to their previous version of the website. Technically, they are still out there if you know where to look (and I do, that would be www.micro-trains.com/data_base.php). However, they haven't been updated since March, as April was the launch month for the new MTL website (micro-trainsline.com). I use the listings too, and I've asked about this on our behalf. Please stand by...

FINALLY, A NEW ORER IS HOW MUCH?!?: With January 2011 now a whopping 4 ½ years ago as I write this, or an eternity in terms of keeping up with the Current State of Railroad Rolling Stock, I've stepped up my search a bit for a more current Official Railway Equipment Register. Most back issues of the ORER have, well, declined significantly in price, with issues from the 1960s through the 1990s getting downright inexpensive and demand for copies from the 1950s backward suppressed in my opinion by the availability of digital versions, a number of which I myself have. (I'm not giving up my original paper copies of Registers from 1924, 1928 and 1931 though!) However, the few copies that are from this year or last that show up on a certain Internet Auction Community are bid upon fast and furious, and have crossed into the triple digit price point more than once. I suspect this is a consequence of supply and demand – there just wouldn't be as many printed copies of the latest issues out there as there used to be.

Okay, so since I don't exactly expect to find, say, a January 2015 ORER, at a local garage sale any time soon, perhaps the best approach is to go to the source. And so I found myself on the landline with the customer service department of the publishers of the ORER. "If I don't want a full subscription," I queried, "can I purchase a single copy?" The good news: Yes, I can. The bad news: It's \$150, plus tax! This, versus \$379 plus \$18 shipping for a full year's subscription of four issues. Holy quantity discount, Batman!

Well, the net of it is that despite a recent influx of new subscribers to this “free and worth at least as much” enterprise (and welcome aboard, by the way), the revenue from the UMTRR—namely, zero—is not going to enable the direct purchase of a 2014 or 2015 ORER. And so, the search continues... and of course, any leads from anyone out there would be much appreciated. I suspect that the days of ORERs being passed down from headquarters to regional offices to local stations to railfans (or the trash pile) are long gone, but you never know.

And at this writing, there is another 2014 ORER out there on eBay out collecting bids... hmmm...

Cheers,
George

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