



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report**

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Hello again everyone! The coverage this month – which, yes, is coming to you later than I'd hoped – begins with an event from last month... MTL's Second Annual Black Friday Special. For the period from November 27 to December 3, Micro-Trains added a free specially weathered N or Z Scale car of the buyer's choice for any order over \$100 placed directly through their online store. Each of the cars included a representation of a certain Red-Nosed Reindeer ("borrowed" my usual header logo). There were three N Scale and three Z Scale items from which to choose, and just for a little variety, let's start these bytes right there. Please note that you'll need to check the appropriate "back issue" of the UMTRR for the full commentary though I'll add the prototype number series for those of you who might want to put a correct road number back onto your copy where MTL "knocked it out."

The N Scale choices were as follows (catalog numbers to be confirmed but I'm assuming that they will continue from the last number assigned to the 2014 Black Friday Special):



**995 02 019, \$N/A**

**Reporting Marks:** NW 6045 – (last two digits blanked out; prototype series was 604523 to 604546)

**60 Foot Steel Excess Height Boxcar, Double Plug Doors, Waffle Sides, Norfolk & Western.**

Black with mostly white lettering including runtogether "NW" herald and reporting marks on left and small roadname on right. Light weathering and "Rudolph" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1978 (build date) to present. Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 103070, Road Number 604535, November 2000; as Catalog Number 103 00 070, Road Number 604531, October 2013.



**995 02 020, \$N/A**

**Reporting Marks:** SFRD 206 – (last two digits blanked out; prototype series was 20500 to 20792).

**40 Foot Steel Ice Refrigerator Car with Preco Fan, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Orange with black roof and ends. Black lettering including reporting marks and large circle cross on left and "Ship and Travel Santa Fe All The Way" slogan on right. Small black and white circle crosses along bottom of side. Light to moderate weathering mostly as streaking from the roofline down the sides of the cars. "Rudolph" to right of door. Approximate Time Period: about 1958 to early 1970s. Previous Releases: Catalog Number 059 00 536, Road Number 20680, June 2010; then 059 5x 536 as part of the Santa Fe Reefer Weathered Train Set (993 01 280), Road Numbers 20608, 20660 and

20698, January 2015. Note: It's possible that any of the Weathered Train Set cars were used for this release.



**995 02 021, \$N/A**

**Reporting Marks:** MEC ---- (road number blanked out; prototype series was 6300 to 6349 but the previous road number might have been the only one in this paint scheme).

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, No Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Maine Central.**

Green with mostly yellow including roadname and reporting marks on left and large pine tree herald on right. Black and white consolidated stencils at bottom right. Four small white simulated reflective dots along bottom. Light weathering and "Rudolph" right of door slightly overlapping herald. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1980s at least. Previous Release: As Catalog Number 074 00 150, Road Number 6336, December 2014.

The Z Scale choices were as follows:



**995 02 022, \$N/A**

**Reporting Marks:** NYMX ---- (entire road number blanked out; prototype series was 1000 to 1099).

**51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car, Rivet Side, New York Central.**

Yellow sides with blue band. Aluminum roof and ends, black underframe. White lettering in blue band including reporting marks on left and "Mechanical Refrigerator" on right. Blue dimensional data on left and right. Blue and white "Water Level" "Type 4" herald on right above blue band. Light weathering and bright yellow patch panel covering road number and with "Rudolph" on left. Approximate Time Period: 1956 (build date) to early 1970s. Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 548 00 03x, Road Numbers 1025 and 1049, February 2014, then a Weathered Release 548 44 030, Road Number blanked out, December 2014.



**995 02 023, \$N/A**

**Reporting Marks:** CNW ---- (road number blanked out; prototype series was 95650 to 95869).

**PS-2 Covered Hopper, Two Bay, Chicago & North Western.**

Green with yellow lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and yellow "Employee Owned" herald in center. Light weathering and "Rudolph" at right over dimensional data. Approximate Time Period: after 1972 (1978 service date given by MTL) to as late as the mid-decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 531 00 210, Road Number 95854, October 2013; then a Weathered Release 531 44 210, Road Number 95788, March 2014.



**995 02 024, \$N/A**

**Reporting Marks: None** (blanked out; prototype series was MP 253450 to 253749).

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcars, Plug Door, Missouri Pacific.**

Brown with aluminum roof. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and "buzzsaw" herald on right. Moderate weathering especially on roof; black patch panel covering reporting marks, to the right of which is "Rudolph." Approximate Time Period: 1976 into the decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 511 00 17x, Road Numbers 253688 and 253675, January 2013, then a Weathered Release, 511 44 170, at least Road Number 253688 (again), August 2014.

The order, or should I say gift, window for these cars was quite short. While I can hardly say that I follow the entire aftermarket, I don't recall ever seeing any of the 2014 Black Friday Weathered Specials for sale on eBay or elsewhere, so there were either very few cars or very few if any people willing to let go of their copies.

With that out of the way, we now return you to your regularly scheduled edition of the UMTRR, with, at least in N Scale, plenty of white, perhaps to suggest that here in the Upper Northern Hemisphere, the snow season is upon us. We'll begin, however, with the latest in a series of express boxcars...

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



**020 00 986 and 020 00 987, \$29.70**

**Reporting Marks: CP 29104 and 29110.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Canadian Pacific.**

Box express passenger train scheme of maroon sides with black ends and roof. Gold lettering including roadname across top, reporting marks on left and legend "Equipped For Passenger Train Service" bottom left of door. Approximate Time Period: 1949 (renumber date) or 1953 (service date) to no later than 1984 for these particular road numbers, see text.

There's a near bingo to these cars on Page 24 of the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1, there's now a Volume 2 unfortunately for the Research Budget). CP 29106 has the basic paint scheme of maroon with black roof and ends. But the reporting marks are different; there are no lines above and below and the CP has periods after the initials (C.P.). The photo date for this car is 1983 and the service date is 1968. The series CP 29019 to 29115 was built in 1937 which confirms MTL's car copy for this paired release. The cars had riveted, not welded, sides and some details differ from the PS-1 that is the basis for the 020 body style. The passenger train equipment is of course not included.

The January 1940 edition of the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) doesn't list these cars, not surprising since they're considered to be passenger equipment. And, rats, neither does either edition of the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment that I have. However, Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site ( [www.nakina.net](http://www.nakina.net) ) tells me that I'm not looking diligently enough: the cars numbered 29019 to 29115 were renumbered in several groups from 1943 to 1949 from the original CP series 226000 to 228799, built in 1937 in three groups by National Steel Car and Canadian Car and Foundry. Strictly speaking, the car numbers MTL chose were in the last group, 29098 to 29115 which were renumbered in January 1949. They also were the last to leave the roster, removed in 1984. This doesn't help directly with these cars as refitted for passenger service, since they're still not in the ORERs I checked, but I can grab dimensions for the original series: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 42 feet 3 inches, extreme height 14 feet 6 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3715 cubic feet or 88,000 pounds.



**051 00 170, \$37.90**

**Road Number: 2558 (will be "UP 2558" in website listings).**

**34 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Caboose, Slanted Cupola, Union Pacific "Safe Holidays."**

White sides, roof and sides and top of cupola. Yellow ends and ends of cupola. Red hardware

except silver smokejack. Black underframe and trucks. Black lettering below cupola "Safe - Happy Holidays To You" (in all caps) and red roadname below cupola. Black road number at end opposite cupola. Approximate Time Period: at least 1954 but probably 1953 to a few years after that.

I rarely get a chance to use the book **Caboose of the Union Pacific Railroad**, but I certainly can this time, and I can confirm that this car was among the original "Safety Slogan" cabooses that were painted by the UP between 1953 and 1954. The 2558 is one of those known to have the white sides; there is a December 1954 photo extant (though it's not in the book). This car was a Union Pacific Class CA-1 which aligns with the Micro-Trains 051 body style. Should MTL want to do a reprint for next year, the 3253 is also confirmed with this slogan. Furthermore, there were at least two other slogans done on the CA-1s: "Drive With Care Everywhere" and "Remember No Accidents In August" (I can guess which month MTL would choose for that release!). In fact twenty-three CA-1s were painted with the "Drive" safety slogan. (Runner Pack? Probably not...) Five of these had all yellow cupolas.

While it's true that safety slogans were used on UP cabooses into the 1970s, that doesn't necessarily mean these exact cabooses. UP painted steel cabooses and transfer cabooses, including their CA-4s and CA-5s, with white sides as on the 2558. In 1955 they switched to sheet metal placards, which they called "slogan boards," on otherwise yellow cabooses. That lasted until 1970. The painted-on safety slogans which are perhaps most familiar to us debuted in 1973. Meanwhile, though, we have a prototypically correct holiday greeting which can easily be used by UP modelers of the mid-1950s, and with application of Rule #1, everyone else.





058 00 221, \$29.95

**Reporting Marks: NADX 4537.**

**36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Baby Ruth Series #7.**

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe. Black reporting marks and dimensional data on left. Red legend "Curtiss Baby Ruth Daily Capacity 7,500,000 Bars Candy" on left. Red crooked arrow on door pointing to red on white depiction of a Baby Ruth candy bar on right. White lettering on ends. Arch bar trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1927 to mid-1930s.

One more trip to the **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** book, Page 61, provides two images of this car, one of which is the actual NADX 4537 and the other sister car 4530... which was done in August (at right). I think this makes this more of a reprint than a new release but you can judge for yourself on that. (Certainly MTL's choice of catalog number strongly suggests this as well.) It's noted that they appear to have identical paint schemes with the distinctive 'crooked arrow' across the door. Both have truss rod underframes and both appear to still have arch bar trucks." The service date on both cars is 1927 which helps with the start of the ATP.



The Approximate Time Period for Billboard Cars ends before the ban on Arch Bar Trucks in interchange service, so the usual "mid-1930s" is probably okay here. As of the July 1935 ORER the series NADX 4500 to 4546 was still in place, but the car counts had been eliminated. The colorful Baby Ruth decoration would have been eliminated soon after.

*Note: While MTL has the Erie Western TOFC Flat, 071 00 030, listed as a New Release in the December Micro-News, it's a reprint and I'm covering it in that section.*



084 00 060, \$26.80

**Reporting Marks: WP 5035.**

**40 Foot Drop Bottom Gondola with Woodchip Extension, Western Pacific.**

Black with yellow lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname across top of gondola, and "Keep California Green" on woodchip extension. Simulated woodchip load included. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (renumber date given by MTL) or 1967 (service date) to early 1990s.

The bingo for this car is on Page 82 of the **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. These cars were built by General American in December 1953 as general service cars, numbered 9101 to 9500. Western railroads in particular utilized drop-bottom gondolas for all sorts of lading—"General Service" these were indeed. Thirty-five of the original four hundred cars were renumbered in 1958 and 1959 when equipped with tall side extensions—tall enough, in fact, to require an "excess height" warning. Thirty-five more

cars were converted and renumbered in 1964 and 1965, bringing the total to seventy, numbered 5001 to 5070.

The 5035 is presumably the last of the first group of thirty-five and a check of the ORER for July 1963 confirms this. The extreme height on these cars was 17 feet, while I get a bit over 14 scale feet for the MTL 084 body style. (I doubt anyone would quibble unless they knew this...) The rest of the dimensions: inside length 45 feet 10 inches, outside length 47 feet 3 inches, and capacity 5600 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. By the January 1970 ORER the other thirty-five converted cars had been added; note though that they still carried the AAR Designation "GS." They were described as "Gondola, Steel Underframe, Wood Racks, Drop Bottom, Side Dump." Fifty-five of the original seventy cars were on the roster as of July 1980. According to the Color Guide, by then several of the cars were refitted for alfalfa pellets for export, including the spraying of foam insulation on the outside of the wooden extensions. That would be an interesting modeling project. April 1995's ORER shows just one car remaining, which is where I stopped looking, except to note that the car series was in excess of the Plate F dimensions. Yes, these were tall cars!

The **Color Guide** points out that these cars were in what I would call captive service between mills on the WP and a fiberboard plant located on the Santa Fe. In addition to the 5009 in alfalfa service (repainted as well, plain black with reporting marks only), there is also a shot of the 5031 without its woodchip extension in the **Color Guide**.



**111 00 170, \$44.95**

**Reporting Marks: PW 102649.**

**89 Foot Tri-Level Closed Autorack, Providence & Worcester.**

White with aluminum roof and protective panels. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks left of center and herald and roadname on white background on protective panel of racking. Double-panel consolidated stencils on right; several black on yellow warning placards. Yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2008 to present.

Having seen these cars in trains in the area on numerous occasions while casually railfanning, or getting stopped at road crossings, I'd been wondering when Micro-Trains would release one of these. Wait no longer, George...

And speaking of George—Elwood, that is—his Fallen Flags website includes photos of P&W autoracks going back to 2010. The closest match to the number MTL modeled is PW 102645, just four road numbers away, as found in Dolton, Illinois in November 2010. Hey, look, no graffiti! And an illustration, literally, of how difficult it is to get a car that's 89 feet long into a single shot. In this particular image, the car looks a bit more gray than white, but trust me, these are white... well, at least they started that way. For a bingo on the 102649, we go north of the border to Oakville, Ontario, Christmas Day 2009, for several shots of different parts of the car, as posted to RRPictureArchives.net. Oakville, a bit southwest of Toronto, is home to a Ford Assembly Plant. The car got around, as it was also captured in Nebraska three months earlier.

Let's go backwards in the ORER lookups: the October 2014 edition shows the 102649 in a series... by itself. That's not very helpful! Let's try expanding to the 102000s which yields a list of onesie-twosie registrations, adding up to thirty cars numbered from 102422 to 102649. The PW actually has many more cars listed under its Warwick Railroad reporting marks WRWK than under its primary reporting marks, but it's the PW where the auto racks are found. The dimensions of the 102649 are inside length 89 feet 9 inches, outside length 93 feet 10 inches, extreme height 19 feet, and gross rail weight (car plus lading) of 182,000 pounds. Its dimensions fall into Plate J, which is a lot larger than the Plate C noted here much more frequently, and according to RRPictureArchives, its load limit is 80,000 pounds, meaning that the piece of rolling stock weighs more than what it actually carries. The Gross Rail Weight is the most likely reason for the onesie-twosie listings in the Equipment Register, since that appears to be the only dimension that differs from one line to the next, and even then, not by much, relatively speaking, only a thousand pounds here or there. I suspect rounding of that Gross Rail Weight as well, meaning that the actual difference between cars could be even less than that.

Moving back in time from there, the first time I pick up the 102649 is in the Equipment Register for January 2011. The next earliest I have is the October 2007 ORER, and it's not in there—in fact there are no autoracks at all and the PW had only 81 total cars of which 77 were gondolas. I'll call the ATP at "no earlier than 2008" but those 2009 photos probably mean that year is a better bet. Conspicuity stripes were mandated before then so no worries there—they should be on the MTL model to be correct, and they are.



**146 00 020, \$29.95**

**Road Number: 1048 (will be "GN 1048" in website listings.**

**Heavyweight Diner, Great Northern "Empire Builder".**

Pullman green sides, black roof, ends and underframe. Gold lettering including large "Empire Builder" in center of letterboard, roadname at far left and far right of letterboard, road number at bottom left and right, and car name "Indiana" at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1929 (build date) to around 1947.

MTL mentions in its car copy that a "Dinner in the Diner" choice was a steak with all the trimmings for \$1.25. I suspect that might have been in 1929 when the Great Northern's "Empire Builder" train began service. A menu from 1941's "Empire Builder" did include a "Dinner Steak" as one of four main course choices in "Dinner Plate #1" for that \$1.25. The other four were "Fresh Seasonable Fish," "Grilled Sugar-Cured Ham," and "Roast Milk-Fed Chicken." Dinner included a soup, salad, vegetable, dessert and coffee, tea, milk or Postum. The site Streamlinermemories.info has a PDF of the entire menu from that time as well as other memorabilia from the train. Caution: You might get lost in that site! And if that doesn't completely whet your appetite, over on the site gngoat.org there is a complete set of recipes utilized on the "Empire Builder." Copies of these were left on tables for diners to keep or to share. Should they want to mail them to someone right from the train, the GN took care of the postage as well. Those were the days of first-class railroad travel, to be sure.

With reference to getting lost, a search on "Great Northern Diner Indiana" results in some, well, not terribly useful results. I did see a reference on the board of Railway Preservation News that the 1048 became a streamlined heavyweight baggage-express-RPO, road number 96, possibly in 1952 based on the citation. A link to a photo turned out to be a dead end. Most of the other references that don't point to actual diners (as in the non-moving restaurants!) are to the MTL offering itself. The "Empire Builder" was converted from a heavyweight to a lightweight streamlined consist in 1947 so it's unlikely in my opinion that the "Empire Builder" paint scheme would have remained on this car after that. I did not come across any prototype photos but I did learn that the "State" series of diners was introduced by the GN on the "Oriental Limited", the predecessor to the "Empire Builder." It's noted that Pullman built 22 identical cars starting in 1924. If the cutaway photo over on gnflyer.com is representative of the "Indiana" then we probably have a "stand in" based on the window arrangement. This may also be a "for completeness" release in terms of the paint scheme but I can't be sure one way or the other on this.

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for March 1943 lists twenty-two diners numbered 1030 to 1051. They had ice-based air conditioning and seated 32 people each. They're shown as 83 feet 10 inches long over the buffers. The 1048 is gone from the ORPTE of January 1953 but there are nine diners from the series still listed (1033, 1034, 1036, 1037, 1039, 1040, 1046, 1050 and 1051), with capacity raised to 36 people.



**450 00 140, \$26.25**

**Reporting Marks: EREZ 208500.**

**40 Foot Trailer, Erie Western.**

White with blue and green stripes at left of sides partially wrapping around the nose or tail. Black herald on nose and tail, and black lettering

including roadname in center and road number at rear of side. Approximate Time Period: 1977 to 1979 (more or less). Note: This item was not included in Micro-Trains standing orders to dealers.



Hmm, do I trace the brief history of the Erie Western here or with the TOFC flat car reprint that immediately follows? Ah, let's do it here.

The Erie Western Railway was created by shippers who were left out in the cold following the official startup of Conrail in April, 1976. Had things been different, the Erie Lackawanna would have been out of Conrail and in Dereco, a holding company made up of the EL and the Delaware & Hudson, and controlled by the Norfolk and Western. Suffice to say, that's not what happened, and the EL was a last-minute "throw in" into Conrail. Not included was the former Erie Railroad lines west of Marion, Ohio, which is southwest of Cleveland and on roughly a straight line from there to Dayton. There were still shippers on that line, and Conrail was forced to provide service but only until a substitute could be located as Conrail had no intention of keeping that line active. (It's often been said that Conrail was keen on tearing up just about everything that wasn't part of the Penn Central.)

In Indiana, a group of shippers got together with others and formed the Erie Western as what was essentially a lifeline. The line quickly made a splash with its white rolling stock, plus C420s and RS3s which came second or third hand. (At least two of the RS's were also painted white!) The line's herald was a stylized "E" strongly suggested by the EL's own herald, but within which an arrow nominally pointing west could be discerned. The road stretched over the former Erie/EL mainline from Wren, Ohio, just over the Indiana state line, northwest to Hammond, on the Illinois state line. From there the EW reached Chicago over the Chicago and Western Indiana, the same way that the Erie and EL had done previously.

The Erie Western had an extremely short Approximate Time Period: September 1977 to June 1979. To put it bluntly, the experiment failed – there certainly was a reason why Conrail had to be created out of a bunch of bankrupt railroads and the creation of a shortline where a Class 1 railroad had struggled misses more than it hits. Following the EW's demise, the Chicago and Indiana gave it a go but lasted only for a few months and it too was gone by New Year's Eve of 1979. The trackage itself was mostly torn up by a few years later. The Erie Western's equipment, which I'll guess was leased, went to other operators, for example Atlantic Container Line (AEWZ) for these trailers.

#### **N SCALE REPRINTS:**



**071 00 030, \$29.95**

**Reporting Marks: ERES 250005.**

**89 Foot TOFC Flat Car, Erie Western.**

White with black lettering including

reporting marks on left and roadname left of center Small black herald and green and blue diagonal stripes on right, next to double-panel consolidated stencils. Approximate Time Period: 1977 to 1979 (more or less). Previous Release: As Catalog Number 71030, Road Number 250015, May 1993.

Continuing the Erie Western story now, in the Research Accumulation only the January 1978 ORER has a listing for the railroad. Unfortunately, the line was too new to have any freight

equipment, and only three locomotives were listed to cover the 158 miles of line operated. Track Connections and Junction Points were numerous: just about every line that came into Chicago, plus Conrail, the C&O, the L&N and the N&W at other points in Indiana.

RRPictureArchives.net has an oblique shot of ERES 250048, presumed to be a sister car to the two numbers MTL has run, as found in Huntington, Indiana on a wintry-looking day in February 1979. According to the "DT&I Modelers Page" ( [dti.railfan.net](http://dti.railfan.net) ), the TOFC cars went to the Crab Orchard and Egyptian Railroad, a shortline in Illinois, with only a change in reporting marks from ERES to COER keeping the road numbers 250000 to 250049. Of those 50, 34 went to the DT&I, as did 42 other cars from a second Erie Western group of TOFC flats, 250050 to 250099, becoming the series DTI 90000 to 90099. From the DT&I, the cars went to the Iowa Traction (IATR) leasing fleet. At least one, the IATR 90128, remained in white as late as the Year 2000!

During its short life, the company also rostered covered hoppers, which went to Evans Leasing after the road's demise, and boxcars in blue with white lettering, some of which made their way to the Green Mountain Railway. Say what you want about the Erie Western, but they were certainly ambitious. There have been some models over the years across scales, but a rather judicious application of Rule #1 is needed to run these cars on your model pike unless you happen to be modeling that short Approximate Time Period.

**N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** In addition to the below, the MOW Heavyweight Weathered Set (993 01 360, \$139.95) is expected to be released mid-month and should be at dealers as you read this. The pre-review of this set was in the August 2015 UMTRR, but the images of the actual cars weren't available then, so here they are now:



**142 51 029**, Road Number X98453, "Bunk Car," Heavyweight 12-1 Sleeper.



**146 52 009**, Road Number X98477, "Crew Kitchen Car," Heavyweight Diner.



**147 53 049**, Road Number 98429, "Tool Car," Heavyweight Baggage Car.



**147 54 059**, Road Number X98563, "Shop Car," Heavyweight Baggage Car.



**144 55 049**, Road Number X98496, "Foreman Car," Heavyweight 3-2 Observation.

*The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about December 11.*



**025 44 850, \$27.40**

**Reporting Marks: AGR 2922.**

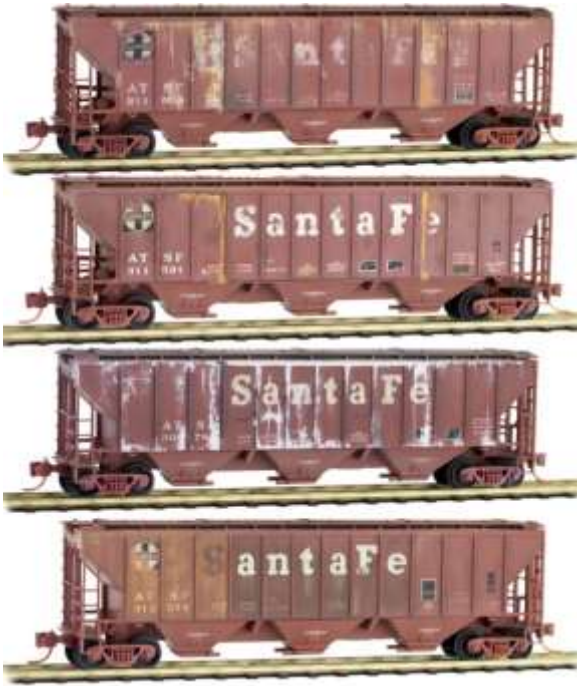
**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Alabama & Gulf Coast (Virginia Central Restencil).**

Green with aluminum roof (well, at least that's the base color). White Virginia Central herald and roadname on left. White AGR reporting marks on black patch panel atop light green patch panel on left. Black and white double panel consolidated stencils on far right. Light to moderate weathering on sides and ends and heavy rust effects on roof. Approximate Time Period: at least 2006 but could be from 2002 to present.

What is now the Alabama and Gulf Coast Railway, one of the larger of the many holdings of Genesee and Wyoming Industries, used to be the farthest east section of the St. Louis-San Francisco and then the Burlington Northern. Yes, the Frisco and then the BN reached all the way to Florida, although Pensacola is in the far west portion of the panhandle of that state. The line was spun off in 1997, not long after the BN became part of the BNSF, and the Alabama and Gulf Coast went from States Rail to RailAmerica to the G&W family. Its main line runs from Pensacola north and west some 348 miles to Columbus, Mississippi. Through trackage rights the AGR also reaches isolated trackage in Mobile, Alabama.

Based on my cursory research, it appears that this car started as one of the Virginia Central 1100 series boxcars, shown as new in 1981 in a photo on RRPictureArchives.net. They didn't last long; they're not in the April 1981 ORER and the entire railroad is gone from the April 1984 ORER which is the next one I have in the Research Accumulation. RRPictureArchives also has the photo which was used as the guide for this Weathered Release, which shows the car in the AGR reporting marks as of May 2006. In between, apparently there was a long strange trip for this car, with lettering for at least Seaboard System (SBD), then CSX, then the Columbus & Greenville (CAGY) and possibly the Lake Erie, Franklin and Clarion, the Hutchinson Northern, and the Oklahoma, Kansas & Texas subsidiary of the Katy! You'd think that at some point someone would have thought to paint out the original Virginia Central name... but no...

The ORER for January 2006 shows the AGR 2922 in its own series (!). It was a 5277 cubic foot car, a bit larger than the MTL 025 body style but still within Plate C clearances. Dimensions were in the typical range for the x-post boxcars of the time: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet 6 inches, outside length 55 feet 7 inches, and extreme height 15 feet 2 inches. I went forward and backward in my ORERs and came up with an ATP starting no later than January 2002 and ending on or sometime after the October 2014 Register, though of course the paint, patched and all, might not look the same through that entire span, and there's also the matter of conspicuity stripes. Who knows, maybe the 1981 paint was finally covered over; if so, it would probably have been in basic brown.



**993 05 310, \$129.95**

**Reporting Marks: ATSF 311508, 311591, 308786 and 312375.**

**Four-Pack of 3 Bay High Side Covered Hoppers, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Brown (including trucks and couplers) with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large Cooper Black roadname across top center. Black and white circle cross herald on left (except the 308786 where it's faded away). Consolidated stencils and ACI Labels placed in various positions on right. Heavy weathering and fading effects on all cars. Approximate Time Period: around 2005. Previous Releases (unweathered): Technically none, but Catalog 096 00 010 from March 2011 is ATSF 308694 from one of the same prototype series.

Just when you think you've seen it all in terms of weathering, here's this set which in my opinion sets a new high bar for Micro-Trains, if not for the scale and the hobby. Based on prototype photos, which are all available at [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net), these models represent Santa Fe covered hoppers which have clearly seen better days.

I don't think these are going to be called reprints of the very first high-side covered hopper MTL offered (by the way, I'll have the individual catalog numbers on the website later). But the 308786 was, as was the March 2011 release, part of a large group of Santa Fe's covered hoppers. Freight car class GA-161 carried the road numbers 307500 to 308749 according to the "Santa Fe Archives" website and were built in 1966. There was also a GA-161a class numbered 308750 to 309999 and a GA-161b class numbered 311000 to 311499. Taken together, well, that's a lot of covered hoppers. (And yes, "GA" is a gondola designation, just an idiosyncrasy of the Santa Fe.) In that case, the paint scheme chosen by MTL isn't the "as delivered" however; that would have been the version without the large "Cooper Black" roadname which was adopted circa 1972 by the railroad. Meanwhile, the 311508 and 311591 are GA-173s and the 312375 is a GA-175. Both of these groups were built in 1971 and are also 4427 cubic foot cars. These classes had road numbers 311500 to 311899 and 312300 to 312799 respectively.

All of the prototype photos were taken in the span October 2004 to December 2005. A check of the BNSF Railway entry in the ORER for January 2006 shows only 172 cars remaining in the group 307533 to 309988, which includes the 308786, out of what was once a group of 2500 cars. The group of GA-173s is down to 163 cars numbered from 311503 to 311899, which covers the 311508 and 311591, and the GA-175 series has dropped to 208 cars numbered 312300 to 312796, which includes the 312375. The key dimensions are the same for all of



these cars including the outside length of 54 feet 3 inches. As of the January 2011 ORER, the car counts are 24, 60 and 97 for each of these groups. Just a few cars remained in the October 2014 Equipment Register, so I don't think I'd extend the ATP to The Present in any case. However the cars would be looking even worse than they did in 2004 and 2005, which is, whether we like it or not, already a decade or more ago.

**N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcements, **Runner Pack #111** (993 00 111, \$79.95), four Rio Grande (D&RGW) three bay open hoppers with loads, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 108 51 060, 14657; 108 52 060, 14722; 108 53 060, 14986; 108 54 060, 14990. These are the third through sixth road numbers for this car.



*The following 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 December 31.*



**Scheduled May 2016 Release:**

993 00 116, \$99.95.

Reporting Marks SOO LINE 72453, 72555, 72639, 72755.

**Quantity four of Three Bay Covered Hoppers, Soo Line.**

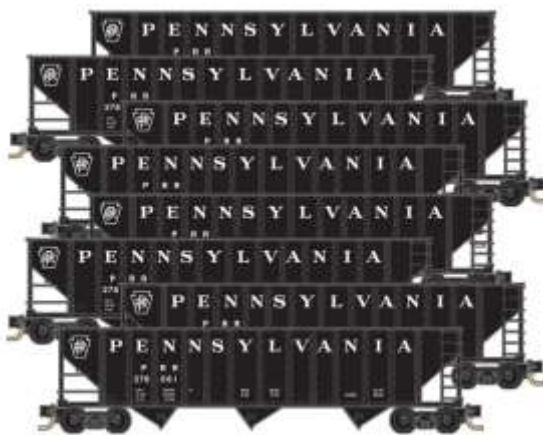
Light gray (my guess from the reference photo, see text) with black reporting marks on left and dimensional data across car. Green roadname at

top center and green "A Soo Line Colormark Car" legend at top left. The third and fourth panels from the right are green with a stylized wheat sheaf on the third panel in yellow. Approximate Time Period: 1971 (build date) to late 1990s. Previous Releases: None. Individual Catalog Numbers for this Runner Pack will be provided upon release. Artwork shown is preliminary and actual product may differ.

My acquisition of the book **Soo Line Freight Equipment and Cabooses** has proven to be handy so far, and I suspect it's in MTL's R&D Library also. Page 122 of that volume includes a photo of Soo Line 72855, one of 300 cars built in 1971 by Thrall Manufacturing for the Soo Line. These 4750 cubic foot cars carried odd numbers only, from 72451 to 73049. The Soo went back to Thrall for 150 more of these in 1972; together they were the Soo's class CH15 though the second group isn't painted exactly the same. Of the 300 car order, "the first 200 cars had gravity discharge gates and the last 100 cars had gravity and pneumatic gates. The green Colormark panel indicated that the cars were designed for a single type load.

The ORER for October 1972 shows the cars separated by the differing hardware. All of the road numbers MTL chose fit into the first group, 72451 to 72849 so we'll focus there – and there's already one car missing from the original 200. The inside length was 54 feet 3 inches, outside length 58 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet and capacity 4750 cubic feet or 198,000 pounds. As of January 1985 the car count was 187 and in October 1991 it was 164. A single car snuck into the January 2000 ORER. Keep in mind that over time, in addition to the accumulation of weathering (at least), there would have been consolidated stencils and the U-1 wheel inspection dot added to these cars, so a bit of decaling might be in order depending on the precise timeframe modeled. (The artwork does show the ACI Label.) Strictly speaking, the ATP should be the early 1970s as shown in the artwork.

Two questions remain for me with respect to this release. First, what color is it exactly? I had originally thought these were white, but the photo in the Soo Line book shows more of a light gray – it's hard to tell. Second, on which of the two covered hopper body styles will MTL release this car? Neither is an exact match to the prototype. The 099 "Evans Three Bay Covered Hopper" (example at right which also happens to be a Soo Line release) has the 5-5-5 rib pattern with spacing, but the real Soo Line cars had additional seams at the slope sheets, which look like additional double ribs. The 096 "PS-2 3 Bay High Side Covered Hopper" has evenly spaced ribs and isn't as close. My vote is for the 099, but that and \$99.95 (MSRP) will get you this Runner Pack...



***Scheduled May 2016 Release:***

**993 00 810, \$179.95.**

**Reporting Marks PRR 276009, 276018, 276023, 276026, 276044, 276061, 276076\*, 276099.**

**Quantity eight of 100 Ton Three Bay Open Hoppers with Load, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Black with white lettering including large roadname across top, plain keystone at top left and reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1959 to late 1970s, but see text. Previous Releases: None (in this paint scheme). Artwork shown is preliminary and actual product may differ.

The seventh road number (asterisked above) was shown with seven digits in the MTL Micro-News and seems out of sequence on the MTL website as well (listed as 276763). I've therefore guessed at what the actual road number will be.

Let's start straight away with the "see text" since there are implications that can be fixed: The preliminary artwork for this Eight Pack indicates the PRR Class H39a. The road numbers provided align in the January 1964 ORER listing for that class, specifically the enormous series PRR 274002 to 280159, which was 6156 cars all by itself at that time. However, the H39a cars were quite a bit smaller than the MTL 108 body style, with an inside length of 39 feet 10 inches, outside length of 41 feet, extreme height of 11 feet and capacity of 2603 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.

Fortunately, that can be easily addressed. The MTL 108 body style is based on a Norfolk & Western prototype, their class H11a, which was also copied directly by the Pennsy for its H43 classes of open hoppers (H43, H43a, H43b and H43c), built beginning in 1964. In fact, MTL has already done a correct PRR open hopper of this class on this car. “Rob’s Pennsy Page” ([URL prr.railfan.net](http://URL.prr.railfan.net)) has plenty of information on this class of cars (as it does for many other classes of PRR equipment!) including the four series of road numbers which could be utilized instead. The paint scheme is different—no full roadname, just the initials, plain keystone and yellow dot indicating suitability for unit train service. The most recent “clean” release of this car was in November 2010 (shown at right, 108 00 040). The road number groups for the H43s include 180000 to 180199 (H43), 225000 to 226499 (H43a), 226500 to 229499 (H43b), and 229500 to 230499 (H43c). Plenty to choose from! Should this be the path MTL picks, the Approximate Time Period would be from 1964 through the late 1970s. Conrail did pick up some of these cars with the original PRR paint scheme still intact, though obviously weathered, as was the MTL Weathered Release of this car done in April 2011. The Approximate Time Period for the H39s as depicted in the artwork would be also to the 1970s. The **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1) has photos of PRR H39s in the full roadname scheme as of 1959 and 1977.



**N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** In addition to the below, MTL is now offering “blank” versions of the **2015 Custom Christmas Car (101 00 802A, B and C, \$39.95 each)**. The difference is that there’s no customer-specified message on Side A. The choice of one of three holiday scenes on Side B remains (shown below).



**101 00 816, \$23.95**

**Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, “Santa Claus.”**

**Car #6 in the Postcard Series.**

Ends, roof, side sill and edges of sides are green. End ladders are red. Side A has a multicolor rendition of a picture postcard with off-yellow and green graphics at left and right. Side B has a “Postcard Message” from Micro-Trains. No reporting marks or road number appear on this car.

A search on the phrase “Santa Claus Vintage Postcard” returns “way too many images,” which directly leads to the question, “How crazy am I?” in terms of checking each one for a match to the artwork MTL utilized for this third and final release in the series for the year. (There are more to come next year.) Changing the search phrase to “Santa Claus Train



Vintage Postcard” results in images of Old Saint Nick riding a train, not necessarily handing one to a child, and also mixes in postcards of just trains without Santa present at all. (And the image of the MTL car also shows up, though not its source.) I have a feeling I would need all Twelve Days of Christmas to locate the match for this one...

So let’s try another angle: the origin of model trains, or maybe I should say “toy trains” since that’s more accurate for the late 1800s and early part of the 1900s. The Wikipedia page on “toy trains” is a bit of a mess (I edited the proportions of Z to O Scale, for example) but the net of it is that “models” of the real thing appeared but not for years after railroads were built in Europe and North America. Early toy trains were push toys, if they had rolling wheels at all. What we now call “tinplate” was literally that at first, stamped metal with lithography, starting circa the 1870s. The model of a steam locomotive that one of the children in the postcard is holding is most likely an example of this. The next advance was from push-it-yourself to clockwork mechanisms. A great leap was to electrically powered trains, though that would take a while.



148 00 250, \$32.95

**Ringling Brothers Heavyweight Series #4, “Equestrian Car” Mail/Baggage Car.**

Red with aluminum roof. Black underframe and trucks. Yellow lettering outlined in black on left: “Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey.” Multicolor artwork on yellow background in center: “Worlds [sic] Best Equestrian Acrobats.” Multicolor artwork on right of horse with acrobatic rider: “The Greatest Horseback Riders of All Time.” No road number.

Sure, the lions and tigers and bears — oh my — get top of mind attention at the circus, but let’s not forget that horses are a large part of the show. In fact, they were also a large part of the preparation for the show as well at one time, but here we’ll stick with the circus acts. There are not quite as many matches for “Ringling Brothers equestrian posters” as there are for “Santa Claus Vintage Postcard” (ha!) but there are plenty to choose from nonetheless. One announces the “Congress of World Famous Horse Acts Introduced by All [of] Europe’s Greatest Trainers – Hundreds of Beautiful Marvelously Trained Horses More Than Fifty in One Number.” Another poster has a single white horse, but you might be looking more at the attractive holder of the reins instead. From the 1930s, there was Miss Dorothy Herbert, billed as the “World’s Most Daring Horsewoman” – taking her horse Satan (!) over burning obstacles... while blindfolded! (Her, we presume, not the horse.) The Great Balkani Troupe was “A Glorious Oriental Equestrian Sensation.” In 1906 another posted proclaimed, “A Whole Horse Show” with “The Most Marvelously Trained High School Horses” – whatever that meant. Perhaps the most unusual act I came across was “Crandall and his Comic Burlesque Equestrian Act” – except he was on a mule, not a horse. They are still equestrians, though, being the product of a male donkey and a female horse. In fact, a mule competed in the United States Dressage Finals in 2014 for the first time... but I digress, as usual...



In addition to the above, the **Bakery Wagon 2-Pack** (470 00 229, \$34.95) should also be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2015 issue.



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

### Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



**500 00 881 and 500 00 882, \$28.60 each.**

**Reporting Marks: CP 29104 and 29110.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Canadian Pacific.**

Box express passenger train scheme of maroon sides with black ends and roof. Gold lettering including roadname across top, reporting marks on left and legend "Equipped For Passenger Train Service" bottom left of door. Approximate Time Period: 1949 (renumber date) or 1953 (service date) to no later than 1984 for these particular road numbers, see text.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale releases (020 00 98x) above.



**518 00 371, \$29.95**

**Reporting Marks: NADX 4537.**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Baby Ruth Series #7.**

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe. Black reporting marks and dimensional data on left. Red legend "Curtiss Baby Ruth Daily Capacity 7,500,000 Bars Candy" on left. Red crooked arrow on door pointing to red on white depiction of a Baby Ruth candy bar on right. White lettering on ends. Arch bar trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1927 to mid-1930s.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release (058 00 221) above, but note that the Z Scale car is a 40 foot car with straight underframe whereas the N Scale version is the more correct 36 foot truss rod underframe car.



**531 00 241 and 531 00 242, \$21.80 each.**

**Reporting Marks: CR 878290 and 878342.**

**PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hoppers, Conrail.**

Brown (including trucks and couplers but not wheels) with mostly white lettering including large reporting marks on left and large roadname across. Black and white double panel consolidated stencils on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s to mid-1990s.

MTL's car copy for this virtual two-pack is, well, wrong; I wouldn't have expected that a PS-2 would have been built in 1983. Actually, these two and others in Conrail

Class 860H were built by Pullman-Standard, but in 1956, and for the New York Central, also carrying Class 860-H for that Conrail predecessor. The NYC's road numbers were 883100 to 883499, while the Conrail road numbers were, at least in July 1980, from 878184 to 878567, though there were only 77 cars in that series at that time. That's fewer than the 90 cars still lettered in the original NYC series in the same issue of the ORER, but more than the 40 that were lettered for the Penn Central (also 883100 to 883499). While I'm here, I'll provide the usual dimensional data for these PS-2 two bay cars: inside length 29 feet 3 inches, outside length 37 feet 9 inches, extreme height 13 feet 3 inches, capacity 2003 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds, with some exceptions at their original rating of 140,000 pounds. By the October 1986 Register, Conrail had combined some 2600 cubic foot covered hoppers into this mix, possibly from the Pennsylvania Railroad. Twelve cars remained in the April 1995 ORER. I don't think that any survived long enough to see the split of Conrail equipment between Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation.

There's a bingo to the second of the two road numbers, CR 878342, on Page 109 of the **Conrail Color Guide to Freight Equipment Volume 1** (as far as I know, there's not been a Volume 2 yet). The car was caught in August 1985 at Oak Island Yard in Newark, New Jersey. The paint is generally accurate although the car itself has "double ribs" at the far left and far right where the 531 body style has "single ribs" in those spots. The U-1 wheel inspection "dot" is not on this car, which suggests to me that it was repainted sometime after 1978. Brown appears to have been a less common color than gray for Conrail's covered hoppers, particularly the PS-2s. I wish I could read the lettering dead center of the car, which I believe refers to specific use, which might be a reason for the brown paint. I know it's "Something" Loading Only, but that's as far as I can get from the images available.



980 01 431 and 980 01 432, \$119.95 each

980 02 431 and 980 02 432, \$109.95 each

Road Numbers: 1736 and 1685 (A-units); 2436 and 2420 (B-units) (will be preceded by "NYC" in website listings).

Powered F7A and F7B Diesel Locomotives, New York Central.

Black with white lettering including roadname across side and road number at rear. A-units have cigar band herald on nose flanked by a single white stripe that extends partially around the sides to a point below the cab, and white on black numberboards. Approximate Time Period (given paint scheme): Decade of the 1960s.

In the book **New York Central Lightning Stripes Volume 2**, Page 115, this particular paint scheme is identified as "cigar band on black." F7A units 1670, 1679 and 1791 are in a 1965 photo on that page, but only the 1670 has this exact paint scheme. The other two have a smaller road

number centered beneath the roadname which is also smaller to allow for the inclusion of the road number in that position. Based on the quantity of photos in the two **Lightning Stripes** books, the smaller road number version seemed far more common for F7s—but please note that this is hardly a statistically valid sample! There are FAs that have the "cigar band on black" with the large road number as well. The "C" in Central is a bit larger, but not quite as large a difference in proportion depicted on the MTL models. And yes, that's a nitpick. I did find an undated photo of NYC 1832 over on the "Canada Southern" website, however, the image must be from 1964 or later since the first car in the freight train it's pulling is painted for the Vermont Railway. And the Fallen Flags site has a bingo on the 1736 as of 1966 in the paint scheme MTL chose. It looks like fresh paint to me.

Regardless of the where it is or how large it is, the numbers on these units are "as delivered," with the F7As carrying 1636 to 1873 and the F7Bs having 2420 to 2435, according to the website [thedieselshop.us](http://thedieselshop.us). While built in 1949, the cigar band herald wasn't adopted by the New York Central until 1959, so this is clearly not the "as delivered" paint scheme—that would have been, well, Lightning Stripes. The Penn Central did inherit F7s from the NYC and the Pennsylvania Railroad; according to a January 1970 roster these went into the rather large number series 1403 to 1905 (A units) and 3429 to 3561 (B units). How quickly and sloppily the New York Central lettering was replaced with Penn Central lettering is out of scope of this commentary...

**Z SCALE REPRINTS:** No releases this month.

**Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about December 11.*



**994 01 130, \$239.95**

**Santa Fe Weathered Train Set.**

Consists of the following items (individual weathered catalog numbers will be added to the UMTRR Website when available):

**F7A Powered Diesel Locomotive, Santa Fe 'Bluebird' Paint Scheme.** Road Number 325 or 329, Unweathered Catalog Number 980 01 10x. Light weathering. Please see the April 2015 UMTRR for full coverage.

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Santa Fe.** Road Number 151923 or 151951. Unweathered Catalog Number 511 00 22x. Light weathering. Please see the December 2014 UMTRR for full coverage.

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Santa Fe.** Road Number 39504, 39522, 39525 or 39536. Unweathered Catalog Number 503 5x 120 (Runner Pack #75, Released March 2015). Weathered with black graffiti on right. Please see the October 2014 UMTRR for full coverage.

**33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Missouri Pacific.** Road Number 58731 or 58850. Unweathered Catalog Number 533 00 09x. Light weathering. Please see the September 2014 UMTRR for full coverage.

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Burlington Northern.** Road Number 376218, 376222, 376235 or 376249. Unweathered Catalog Number 510 5x 120 (Runner Pack #54, Released June 2013). Reporting marks covered by Christmas-themed graffiti on one side. Please see the December 2012 UMTRR for coverage (this back issue is on the UMTRR website). UMTRR Gang Member David Grothe noted that the graffiti is modeled



after that found on a prototype boxcar, ATW 84176, the image for which is on RRPictureArchives.net – thanks, David!

**30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, “Maintenance of Way.”** Yellow with black underframe and hardware. Red lettering including “M.W.” reporting marks in center. No road number. Moderate weathering at bottom of sides.

I’ve gone to an “express” listing above given that other than the “M.W.” Caboose, all of the components of this set have been released before as “clean” items. I have indicated all of the possible road numbers for each item based on those previous releases, assuming that there’s no graffiti on the other side of the Burlington Northern x-post boxcar.

**Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcements, **Runner Pack #86** (994 00 086, \$74.95), four Baltimore and Ohio PS-2 Covered Hoppers, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 531 51 230, 631105; 531 52 230, 631123; 531 53 230, 631139; 531 54 230, 631140. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car, which hasn’t been previously released.



*The following 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 December 31.*



**Scheduled May 2016 Release:**

**994 00 091, \$99.95**

**Reporting Marks: NYC 162216, 162444, 162637, 162955.**

**Quantity four of 40 Foot Steel Boxcars, 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: None. Catalog Numbers will be in the 500 series. Artwork shown is preliminary and actual product may differ.

I don’t think the actual product will differ all that much from the artwork this time around, since the N Scale version of this car was just reprinted in July (see image at right). The possible exception is the size of the reporting marks, which would be alright. That N Scale boxcar’s



road number, 162444, is also in this Runner Pack, so I'll excerpt from the July 2015 UMTRR here.

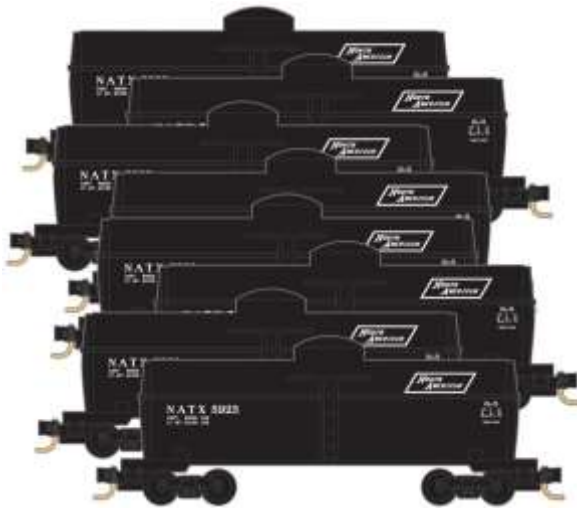
While an early version of the large "cigar band" herald without the word "System" appeared on just ten 50 foot boxcars in late 1958, it was 1959 when the full push of the "Road to the Future" program was implemented on NYC equipment. This car is an example of the version that was adopted, including "century 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.

According to the softcover **Freight Equipment of the New York Central Volume 1**, these cars were 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](http://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.



*Scheduled May 2016 Release:*

994 00 810, \$164.95

**Reporting Marks:** NATX 5911, 5923, 5932, 5945, 5958, 5963, 5970, 5992.

**Quantity eight of 39 Foot Single Dome Tank Cars, North American Car Line.**

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and parallelogram "North American" logo on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1950s (based on paint scheme) to mid-1970s. Previous Releases: None. Catalog Numbers will be in the 530 series. Artwork shown is preliminary and actual product may differ.

This is an oldie but goodie... the prototype, not the model, that is. According to the **Tank Car Color Guide Volume 1**, Page 11, the series of North American Tank Car series 5500 to 5999 was constructed by Pressed Steel Car Company during the period August to October 1929. That's not unusual, but what is different is that the accompanying image, of NATX 5957, was taken in February 1974! I also found an image of NATX 5586, from October 1974, over on RRPictureArchives.net.

Which raises an important Approximate Time Period question: When did North American Car use the "North American" logo? I think that most cars didn't ever have it, and those that did had one of two versions: a rectangle (all angles 90 degrees) or a parallelogram (angles something other than 90 degrees). It appears that this series of cars had both: a set of O Scale decals offered by Protocraft has the rectangle, as does the NATX 5957 in the **Tank Car Color Guide**, but the photo of NATX 5586 on RRPictureArchives has the parallelogram that MTL will be using on their Eight Pack. But when did that happen?

We have a partial answer when considering that North American leased out more than just tank cars. So it's off to the **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** (!) to note that there are photos of NATX reefers with forms of the logo dating back to the mid-1950s. Author Gene Green stated in that book that North American added its logo to some NWX (North Western Refrigerator Line) cars "sometime after" purchasing that company in 1955. That will have to do, as an online search of phrases around "North American Car" result in an "are you crazy?" number of results.

The ORER for January 1959 shows the series NATX 5000 to 5999 with 692 cars of 80,000 pounds capacity, plus a few exceptions—and nothing else. As usual, dimensional data on tank cars is, let us say, sparse, in Equipment Registers. Jumping to the July 1974 ORER based on the photos available, the series is down to 116 cars plus six exceptions in the number series 5290 to 5998. Only twenty of those are left by the January 1978 Register which is where I stopped looking.

The photo of the NATX 5957 in the **Tank Car Color Guide** is a three-quarter view; on the car's end is stenciled the capacity of 7978 gallons. The car also seems to be more long and less tall than the MTL 530 body style and has a different underframe arrangement. As always, the degree to which this is a stand in is left to the reader.

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

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Well, this is easy: MTL didn't announce anything beyond what's already been covered... although that's quite a lot.

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** Three of the N Scale "1972 Series" boxcar reprints lead off the bye-bye board this time: the Grand Trunk Western (020 00 018, November 2014), the Norfolk and Western (020 00 039, January) and the Rock Island (020 00 058, March). We say Shalom to the 2013 "Happy Hanukkah" car (021 00 560, November 2013). Both of the POW/MIA Graffiti cars have sold out (025 44 840 and 094 44 400, October). In a surprise (to me, anyway), last month's CB&Q stock car "not a reprint" has already had its last roundup (035 00 130). The Milwaukee Road yellow gondola reprint has been cleaned out (048 00 110, November 2014). The Maine Central boxcar—um, the one without the Rudolph stencil is gone (073 00 150, December 2014). The winner of the Oldest Release Discontinued this month is the Canadian Pacific 3-2 Observation (144 00 080, November 2011). Three Civil War Era cars have marched off: the first number of the Union Pacific "California Fast Freight" (151 00 081, March), the second number of the Central Pacific boxcar (151 00 092, April) and the single release of the Central Pacific caboose/boxcar (152 00 090, also April).

In Z Scale, there are seventeen items that have left the building, as opposed to only thirteen N Scale offerings which are outta here. First in catalog number order is the second number of the Burlington Northern boxcar (500 00 781, December 2014). That's followed by the Norfolk and Western fifty foot plug door boxcar (507 00 620, August 2014). The "Orange"—make that the CN "Orange" Weathered/Graffiti Halloween Special x-post boxcar—has been squeezed out (510 44 260, September). Then there's the second number of the orange Rio Grande x-post plug door boxcar (511 00 242, June), the first number of the green Chicago and North Western gondola (522 00 251, January) and the first number of the blue "The Rock" gondola (522 00 261, March). The reprint Southern Pacific gondola is gone (523 00 030, July 2014). The reprinted sixty foot flat car for the Missouri Pacific has rolled away (524 00 030, August 2014). Two more Nose Art releases have flown off: the Kentucky Belle (524 00 110, May 2014) and the Bourbon Boxcar (524 00 111, June 2014). Both numbers of the Great Northern bulkhead flat (527 00 13x, October 2014) and the Missouri Pacific hopper—again, without a Rudolph (533 00 09x, September 2014)—are sold out. Wrapping up the list this month are three mechanical refrigerator cars: the first number of the Western Fruit Express (548 00 041, April) and both numbers of the Canadian Pacific (548 00 05x, July 2014).

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** Further to last month's N Scale Runner Pack announcement for four BNSF Railway Centerbeam Flat Cars, our friend "The Masked Railroader" offers a correction on the dates of the original BN series: "Burlington Northern



bought cars in two groups from Thrall. In **1977**, they took 190 cars numbered 624100 to 624289, and in **1983**, 300 more numbered 624400 to 624699." "Masked" noted that official BN information conflicts with the article in the January 1996 **Rail Model Journal**. He also added the successor railroad's information: "BN 624100 to 624289 became BNSF 559000 to 559129 while the second series BN 624400 to 624699 became BNSF 559175 to 559453. So the numbers BNSF 599038, 559040, 559055, 559100 of the Runner Pack are from the first series."

Peter Wisniewski noted that I "have pondered the meaning of the 'aware.' tag on couple of the recent MTL weathered cars. As far as I know," Peter relates, "That is simply a signature identifying the tagger. That is why there is a plethora of various graffiti images out there with the 'aware.' word in it. Another prolific tagger is ICHABOD or ICH. Again, that identifies a person who painted the images."

Brian DeVries offered an image example showing B&O baggage cars painted in the "tri-color era" over on the Fallen Flags site. I suppose I ought to put this in Oops Patrol because I checked that site and went right by it... anyway, it's the B&O's 669 and shows the roadname centered, unlike the B&O 490 which did have the lettering offset way to the right. I can also offer a shot of B&O 661, a two doors per side baggage car in the same paint scheme as of 1953 at East Salamanca, New York, on both the cover of and on Page 115 of the Morning Sun book **Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railway in Color Volume One**... and it's a beautiful vintage image of almost exactly half the car! Now that's frustrating...

**OOPS PATROL:** See note above on the B&O baggage car miss... but I didn't find any fat-fingering from November – which doesn't mean there wasn't any...

**AND THAT ENDS YEAR NINETEEN(!).** We're late, so I'll just wish everyone a happy and healthy Holiday Season, and until next time, when we begin Year Twenty of this enterprise, do the best you can!

Cheers,  
George

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