



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #234 – June, 2016

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Hello again everyone! I hardly had the May UMTRR out the door when the June Micro-News was released... no rest for the columnist this time out. So once again it's time for another look behind the red and yellow sign... which includes yet another "split release" between the N and Z Per Diem Series, two throwbacks to the United States Bicentennial, a "not a reprint" bear and some elephants... and nine Z Scale boxcars, if you count the Runner Pack... off we go...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



022 00 191 and 022 00 192, \$23.95 each

Reporting Marks: UP 111090 and 111163.

40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Combination Plug and Youngstown Sliding Door, Union Pacific.

Brown (the UP's "Synthetic Red") with white lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left, and slogan "Ship and Travel The Automated Rail Way" on right. Red, white and blue shield herald on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1963 or 1964 (service date on car) into the mid-1970s.

The bingo, or exact match, to the second of the two road numbers in this virtual two-pack can be found on Page 8 of the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. These cars, the UP's Class B-50-10, were rebuilt in 1963 from cars in the railroad's 100000 series. Note the built date in 1943 which is a major clue to this rebuild. The former single door boxcars became combination door cars with an eight-foot plug door and a six-foot sliding door. The service date of January 1964 takes us out of the 1963 ATP, strictly speaking, and we'll get back to that in a moment. I'll be invoking Rule #1 on this for my own layout. Overall, we have a good match for the MTL 022 body style, with the side sills being the largest delta I could see from the **Color Guide** image.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1964 shows the series UP 111000 to 111499, the eventual full complement of cars, but with only 91 cars to that point. So it seems that the entire 500 car project wasn't actually completed in 1963. Before moving forward with ORERs I'll grab the dimensional data: inside length 40 feet 4 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 14 feet, and capacity 3883 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. An end note describes the combination door arrangement including that the plug door is eight feet wide – so no "door thing" here.

The January 1967 ORER is the next one chronologically in the UMTRR Research Accumulation, and it shows 490 of the possible 500 cars in service. And there's another end note: "Cars... have interior end and side lining removed for plywood and package lumber loading and are not suitable for loose lumber." That is a nice clue to what these cars were doing for the railroad at the time. Skipping to the April 1975 ORER, there were 425 cars listed and the two end notes are incorporated into the description. At this point in time you'd probably need to be thinking about running board (roofwalk) removal, and my ATP call takes this into consideration. The series didn't last much longer anyway, with a mere ten cars remaining as of the January 1978 Equipment Register.

This is actually the third Union Pacific paint scheme on a 022/22000 series car. The brown with white lettering and "Be Specific" slogan (22030) was first run back in 1973 and has been reprinted three times since. There's only been one release of the yellow and aluminum "Automated Railway" paint scheme (22050), and that was in 1989. The number of combination door cars on the UP's roster certainly suggests Runner Pack to me, but I think MTL would probably want to see how these pair of cars sells first.



025 00 920, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: ASAB 7035.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay.

#5 in the MTL N Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series.

Orange with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Small black and yellow "The Bay Line" centered on side left of door. Black and white double panel consolidated stencils on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1975 (build date) to early decade of the 2010s.

The Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay was built starting in 1902 and reached from Dothan, Alabama, where it was headquartered until the late 1980s, to Panama City, Florida, where it was based after that. Saint Andrews Bay was considered to be a prime port site as far back as initial European surveys of the area. Bay County, of which Panama City is the seat, is actually nine years younger than the railroad, having been split out of three other counties in the Panhandle. And Panama City wasn't officially incorporated until after the railroad arrived either.

The Bay Line's connections were made at Dothan with the Norfolk Southern and CSX; or Central of Georgia and Atlantic Coast Line if you'd prefer the predecessors, and also the Hartford and Slocomb, itself no stranger to 50 foot boxcars as you may know. At Cottondale, Florida, the line interchanged with the Louisville and Nashville, and at Panama City, with "Steamship Service, to North Atlantic Ports, to Europe and Africa, to [the] East Coast of South America, to [the] West Coast of South America, the Orient and Pacific Coast Ports via [the] Panama Canal." At least that's what they said in the February 1963 edition of the **Official Guide of the Railways**.

The “Atlanta” part of the formal roadname seems fanciful but at one time the line actually ran through passenger service from there down to Panama City in conjunction with the Central of Georgia. This arrangement lasted into the 1950s! And while low-key, it wasn't backward by any means; the line dieselized with RS-1s, and then switched to Geeps. It even bought three GP38s new from the factory.

The ASAB was owned by Stone Container Corporation which had an operation in Panama City. In January 1994 the line was sold to Rail Management Corporation, or RMC-- not to be confused with that popular model railroading magazine! RMC renamed it “Bay Line Railroad LLC” in deference to the ASAB’s better known nickname and also combined it with former CSX (ex-ACL) operations from Grimes to Abbeville, Alabama. The reporting marks flipped to BAYL from ASAB at that point however it appears that the markings on much of the rolling stock weren’t changed right away. The Bay Line was purchased by Genesee and Wyoming Industries in 2005.

We go to RRPictureArchives.net for the bingo to the car. It was a long way from home in Fullerton, California on the last day of November 1976, just fourteen months after it was built and looking quite nice and shiny. These cars were purchased by SSI Rail Corporation and leased to “The Bay Line”; in fact SSI was the first customer for this FMC 5077 cubic foot car according to the August 2000 issue of Rail Model Journal. It’s also noted there that the series ASAB 7000 to 7099 was orange, but didn’t carry the large SSI initials. “Some of the ASAB cars got a much larger black-outline herald instead of this small decal.” [This scheme with the much larger herald was depicted by Kadee Micro-Trains back in 1981, catalog number 25070.] The FMC 5077 car is the prototype for the MTL 025 body style, so there should be no more than minor quibbles with this release on that front. A close-up of the herald as it appeared on sister car ASAB 7058 suggests to me that it could have been a placard and not a decal.

The ORER for April 1976 shows the series 7000 to 7099 with these dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 55 feet 6 inches (I’d suggest extended draft gear trucks to emulate this), extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5077 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. We have a pretty tight estimate for the end of the ATP: between the January 2011 Equipment Register and the April 2013 ORER.

Many of these initially orange cars later received the typical “dip brown” paint, as early as July 1999 in the case of the actual 7035. But there were exceptions, also on RRPictureArchives. ASAB 7002 was found in September 2012. The original paint scheme including the yellow “Bay Line” herald is under there, but the car is full of rust spots and other weathering, plus graffiti over which the reporting marks are restenciled and a replacement door... and, remarkably, an ACI Label! ASAB 7006 and 7007 looked even more rusty on the same day at the same location, Smithville, Georgia on the Georgia Southwestern, another Genesee and Wyoming property.



069 00 211 and 069 00 212, \$27.90 each
Reporting Marks: CP 287188 and 287227.
50 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car, Rivet Sides, CP Rail.

Aluminum ("Action Silver") with black lettering including roadname and reporting marks at "A" end of car (the end with the mechanical refrigeration equipment) and red and white "Multimark" at the "B" end of the car (the end opposite the refrigeration equipment). Black and white double panel consolidated stencils and black and yellow

U-1 wheel inspection "dot" stencil. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s, or 1978 given U-1 "dot," to mid-1990s.

Micro-Trains Z Scale Runner Pack #82 consisted of four of these cars, two of which have the same road numbers as these two here. Then (March 2015) as now, the story of these mechanical refrigerator cars needs a fair amount of assembly.

First, we'll note that the CP bought two very different styles of mechanical refrigerator cars in the mid-1960s. One group looked similar to the MTL 069 body style, though without running boards in some cases. The other group looked more like exterior post plug door boxcars with refrigeration equipment. In addition, we have another edition of "Fun With Multimarks." That's based on information in the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, which describes the red and white logo on the end opposite the refrigeration equipment on both sides of the car... and the actual MTL car, which I've now seen in person.

In the "Canadian Freight Cars" site (www.nakina.net), Ian Cranstone shows two groups of cars which together comprise the CP 286135 to 286413 series. One group, 286135 to 286279, was built in 1967 and the second, 286280 to 286413, was built in 1968. Cars from both of these groups had bulkheads added and were numbered into three groups which together went from road numbers 287100 to 287256. That set of numbers includes all four that MTL selected, though the last three are in the smaller group 287207 to 287256. Just to wrap up this part of the story, Cranstone has all of these cars off the roster by the July 1995 ORER.

Moving to Chris VanderHeide's "Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery," we see CP 286063 as of September 1980, an example of the much closer rivet side car, and CP 286151 brand new in July 1967 and built to the exterior post design. Both of these cars were carrying the earlier "Canadian Pacific / Controlled Temperature" script style lettering which MTL has released before (Catalog Number 69030/069 00 030, in 1989, 1991 and 2005).

But wait, there's more... Page 60 of the **Color Guide** shows CP 287217, just ten numbers away from one of the road numbers MTL chose, and that car is of the exterior post design. However, there's a bingo for the CP 287227 on Page 39 of the softcover **Canadian Rail Pictorial Volume Five** and that car is of the rivet side variety. Yikes! Did CP Rail not pay attention to the type

of cars it picked for refitting and renumbering? Didn't they know that many years later, it would drive a certain model train reviewer to reach for headache medication? Apparently the answer to both questions is "no." The key dimensional data is the same for both of the original groups so it wouldn't have made any difference in terms of loading capability, which is what freight agents care about, not external appearance.

At any rate, my check of the ORERs for April 1976, July 1980, April 1981 and April 1984 show that the addition of bulkheads to these refrigerator cars, which already had meat rails, took place over time. The full number series 287100 to 287256 reached all 156 possible cars no later than April 1984. These cars had an inside length of 43 feet, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet (regardless of the type of plug door), and capacity 3034 cubic feet or 126,000 pounds.

Given the mix and match nature of the prototype car series, I attempted to locate photos of the other car MTL released. The closest I got with the usual go-to sites was a shot of CP 287225 on Ken Harstine's "Boxcars and Freight Cars of North America" site (www.boxcars.us) which is of the exterior post style but further confirms the "Fun With Multimarks."



108 00 310, \$28.75

Reporting Marks: NW 1776.

Three Bay 100 Ton Open Hopper, Norfolk and Western.

One-of-a-kind United States Bicentennial scheme: Blue ends with the leftmost five

panels also in blue with circle of thirteen white stars at far left and large white reporting marks. Red and white bands on remainder of sides with blue roadname right of center in white band. ACI Label to right of roadname. Approximate Time Period: 1976 to at least 1981.

and



450 00 150, \$29.60

Reporting Marks: NWZ 1776.

40 Foot Trailer, Norfolk and Western.

One-of-a-kind United States Bicentennial scheme: Blue nose and roof. Blue panels closest to nose with circle of thirteen white stars at far left and yellow reporting marks.

Red and white bands on remainder of sides

and tail with yellow "runtogether" herald and roadname in center of white band on side. Yellow lettering on nose. Approximate Time Period: 1976 to at least 2009. Note: MTL has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders.

I'm going out of the usual catalog number sequence here since it makes sense to cover these two items together. In addition to the red, white and blue high-nose SD45 which was also numbered 1776, the Norfolk and Western did two other pieces of rolling stock which have been depicted by Micro-Trains in time for addition to your Bicentennial Train. (If you have one. If

not, an excuse to start one?) There was actually a fourth Bicentennial commemoration: a former Wabash caboose which was also done up in red, white and blue and was also numbered 1776, which probably gave the car accountants fits. The caboose went to scrap in this scheme, which makes me think that my ATPs are probably conservative; that is, the hopper and trailer were never repainted. (The diesel was.)

The open hopper NW 1776 was pulled from the railroad's set of Class H12 hoppers, which while three-bay, fourteen-panel and open, are not quite an exact match to the 108 body style that has as its prototype the earlier Class H11a. There's a single photo of the real car on RRPictureArchives.net and another view, from April 1981, on Page 69 of the **Norfolk and Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. In the **Color Guide** it's noted that the 1776 was originally numbered 138699 and was built in 1975. H12 cars were numbered 138001 to 141525 and had straight slope sheets, were sixteen inches longer than the H11s and had a capacity 150 cubic feet larger. The N&W's own Roanoke Shops built the series of 3833 cars for the railroad and another 1570 for other companies including Conrail, all between 1974 and 1979.

The **Color Guide**, Page 94, also has a three-quarter view of "van" NWZ 1776 as found in the Oak Island Yard in New Jersey in April 1976. The gold lettering really stands out in this shot. There are three other images on RRPictureArchives, two of which have the trailer in Roanoke in 2009 still in its commemorative scheme, but unfortunately with spray-painted graffiti on at least the nose of the van. (Aside to MTL: Weathered Release? Don't even think about it. ☺) The trailer has clearly seen better days, but at least it had been preserved up until at least then.



143 00 150, \$34.90

Car Name: Gatineau (will be shown as "CN 1058" in website listings).

Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor 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 centered on letterboard, car name at bottom center and multi-color maple leaf heralds at bottom left and right. Approximate Time Period: as wide as 1954 to 2001 for this particular car, see below.

Another Canadian National passenger car, another mystery. The paint scheme dates to around 1954 and there is a photo of a car named Gatineau on the CNRPhotos website as of 2001 in that paint scheme, which also yields the road number 1058. Also noted is that this car

was formerly Road Number 94, Road Number 99 with name "Bonaventure" and Road Number 1546, and that it was built by Canadian Car and Foundry in 1921 and that it was a 12-1 Sleeper. In the 2001 incarnation it was an observation, not a parlor car, and it was in company service as one of the line's fleet of business cars. Later photos of what I am presuming is the same car over on RRPictureArchives show it in a red and white scheme as part of the CN's "Santa Train," for example in 2006 in Illinois. I saw a note that the car was sold to the Canadian Pacific, in 2011 if I recall correctly.

Tracing the CN's business car fleet is, well, beyond the scope of this commentary. For example, according to the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 1**, it's noted that the line had at least eight cars named "Bonaventure," of which this car was one, or at least a car that was also named "Gatineau." The "Pullman Project" database doesn't list any cars which were initially given that name. The net of it is that not only is the ATP a guess, but so is the alignment with the prototype in this case. Could be that this is simply a "for completeness" release from Micro-Trains in order to give CN train assemblers a 28-1 Parlor Car, or it could be that there's evidence that I did not come across. I have a query out for Incremental Information so stand by for possibly more next month.

And speaking of evidence, I mentioned in the September 2015 coverage of the CN 12-1 Sleeper that there is a book titled **Canadian National Railways: An Annotated Historical Roster of Passenger Equipment, 1867-1992** which was compiled by Andrew Merrilees and edited by Gay Lepkey and Brian West. I noted that one either needs a large sum of money or a road trip to Toronto to see this book, but as luck would have it, I have now actually seen and held a copy of this extensive compendium of information. The Canadian Association of Model Railroaders co-sponsors a small show in Copetown, Ontario and on display there along with some exquisitely good models of CN passenger equipment in HO Scale was a copy of the book.



144 00 170, \$29.95

Car Name: Chico; Road Number: 37 (will be "ATSF 37" in website listings).

Heavyweight 3-2 Observation with Balloon Roof, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Silver (or aluminum) including trucks and couplers. Black lettering including roadname in center on letterboard, car name at bottom center and road number at bottom left and right. Approximate Time Period: the decade of the 2000s, see text.

Here we go again with another business car. I have a match to the road number on Page 31 of the **ATSF Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. It's a 37 alright, and it's an observation car being used as a business car, but the portion of the sides above and below the

windows has simulated fluting as with a streamlined “corrugated” passenger car. Further, there’s no “Chico” name. The photo is from 1970 and it’s in the business car section of the **Color Guide**. Jerry Laboda’s Passenger Car Photo Index cites a 1965 shot of the car, again with no “Chico” and what’s described as “Shadowline Paint” – that’s what the ATSF used to blend in heavyweight cars with streamlined equipment.

Meanwhile, over on RRPictureArchives.net, there are photos of the 37 with the Chico name, including a great shot taken in November 2009 in Kansas City. The paint and lettering align with how MTL decorated this release. Among the other images of the car is an overhead shot of the Chico’s roof; there are appliances mounted there including what looks like a GPS device which wasn’t even a wild dream in 1925 when this car was originally constructed!

A 2005 image of the same car is captioned, “Private Varnish.” Does that mean the car actually isn’t part of the Santa Fe roster? An image on Fallen Flags taken obliquely from the non-observation end does reveal a second road number, 800145. And what I hope is the final answer on this comes from the site RailSwap.com: “Car 37 was built in 1925 as one of ten steel business cars built between 1918 and 1928 by Pullman... numbered 30 to 39 and were known as the “30 series” cars. Sold by the Santa Fe into private ownership circa mid-1970s and acquired by present owners in 2002.” Can we assume that the car has only been “Chico” for as long as it’s been in the present private hands? I’m going to, pending any Incremental Information, but mind the “at least” caveat. As of 2015, the car could be yours for just \$245,000.

Turning back to the **Color Guide** for a moment, it’s noted therein that as of 1967, the Santa Fe rostered fifteen “large” and fifteen “small” business cars, all heavyweight, plus four lightweight cars. Those “small” cars, assigned to division superintendents, are intriguing. They’re just 52 feet in length, yet have full observation platforms. One of these cars is shown it what’s called its original paint: Pullman green with aluminum roof and yellow lettering.

In addition to the above, the **Ringling Brothers 70 Foot Flat Car 3-Pack (993 01 400, \$129.95)** is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 139 51 020, 104 (with Wagon #6, Catalog 474 51 110); 139 52 020, 112 (with Wagon #8, Catalog 474 52 111); 139 53 020, 124 (with Wagon #7, Catalog 474 53 112). I’ll replace the artwork at right with the actual product image on the UMTRR Website as soon as it’s available.



The following is in pre-order at present and is 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 June 30.



993 01 450, \$99.95

Royal American Shows 3-Pack

Expected to consist of the following items (preliminary artwork shown and is subject to change):

- Road Number 56, 145 Series Paired Window Coach. Red and yellow bands across sides, aluminum roof, black trucks and underframe. White and black lettering outlined in black: “Royal American Shows Winter

Headquarters Tampa Fla.” across letterboard. Road number on doors left and right. Multicolor mural illustrating the Tampa, Florida area across side below windows.

- Road Numbers 69 and 70, 148 Series Mail/Baggage Cars. Red and yellow bands across sides, aluminum roof, black trucks and underframe. White and lettering outlined in black: “World’s Largest Midway” on letterboard and “Royal American Shows” off center at bottom of side. Road number at bottom left and right. At least the 69 has a multicolor illustration of a tiger with legend “Flying Squadron.”

This three-pack makes it into the regular release category based on a 1966 image on Trainweb.org of the Tampa, Florida car. The window configuration isn’t the same as the 145 body style, but the mural looks quite close to the Micro-Trains artwork. The car was a long way from its Winter Headquarters, having been found in Brandon, Manitoba; you might recall that the Royal American Shows did considerable business in Canada. I did not have any success finding either of the mail/baggage cars, however, as usual, it’s difficult to prove the absence of something.

In my searching I learned that there is a softcover volume title **Royal American Shows: World’s Largest Midway, A Pictorial History**. Published in 1996, there were several copies available for sale but definitely at “collector” prices... I’ll have to wait on that given my extensive subscriber revenue. Meanwhile, I also came across images of trailers that align with MTL’s previous flat car and trailer set, and numerous photos of the circus flat cars as well, including one that appears to be a train led by a red and yellow Rock Island GP diesel. These cars certainly got around, which is to be expected with a carnival.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



042 00 010, \$20.90

Road Number: 25 (will be "Stark 25" in website listings).

40 Foot Double Sheathed Boxcar, Single Door, Fishbelly Underframe, Horizontal Brake Wheel, Stark Brothers.

White with black lettering with exception noted. Stark Brothers "bear" trademark with slogan "Stark Trees Bear Fruit" with word "Fruit" in red on left. "Stark Trees have a 79 Year Record" and "Stark Bros." and company locations on right. "Stark Bros." and road number and "Stark Trees" on door. Approximate Time Period: 2007 to present. Previous Releases (as Catalog Number 42010): Road Number 23, December 1976; Road Number 22, March 1992; Road Number 24, January 1998.

First, we'll declare a "not a reprint" with that single word "Fruit" appearing in red instead of in black as was the case with the previous three releases of this car. Second, though this car mostly represents a fond memory for me, I'll try to figure out the ATP anyway, assuming it actually existed at all, based on zero date information on the model.

Or is it really zero? "Stark Trees have a 79 Year Record" it's proclaimed in rather large print. When was Stark Trees founded, and couldn't we just add 79 years to that to start our searching?

In 2016, Stark Trees is not only a going concern, but it's been one for 200 years. (They're offering "Bicentennial Deals" on their website at this writing, but I have a "black thumb" meaning you don't want me near your plants.)

So 1816 plus 79 would be 1895, a possible starting point for these boxcars. But **The Official Railway Equipment Guide** (predecessor of the ORER) editions for August 1895 and August 1896 show no listing for Stark Brothers. There was a short discussion on the Steam Era Freight Cars YahooGroup which didn't confirm or deny the existence of this car, other than to note that the Train-Miniature HO Scale version would represent a very unusual car for that time period, a forty foot boxcar with a Murphy Roof – which happens to be what the 042 body style is also. The T-M car, unlike the MTL car, has the Record at 85 years, which would put the start year at 1901. No listing for Stark in the November 1901 or June 1905 ORERs either. As always, while it's difficult to prove the absence of something, I didn't find any evidence that this car actually existed. It has, however, been around a rather long time as a model railroad item. If **Model Railroader** indexed advertising along with articles in its online database, I suspect I would see boxcars with the Stark Brothers Bear going back into the 1940s, although not in 1:1 size. The Stark Brothers' current website does have an illustration of a train of "Stark Bro's Nurseries" cars on its Bicentennial Celebration page—but the cars are refrigerator cars and what's pulling it is either an FT or early F3 diesel!

And that brings me to the fond memory part of this commentary: the fact that the Train-Miniature HO Scale version of this car was part of my late father's collection. I'm quite sure

that he bought it because he liked it, without regard to whether there was a prototype for it. T-M began manufacturing rolling stock in the late 1960s, which was around the time that I started helping my dad build simple freight car kits. I'm not sure the Stark Trees car was one of them, but I'm pretty sure I was in one of the hobby shops we visited in Northern New Jersey when my dad added the car to his accumulation.

N 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 June 14.*



070 44 080, \$59.95

Reporting Marks: SLC 128 and 139.

Weathered San Luis Central 2-Pack.

Base cars are orange with aluminum roof and dark blue door. The 128 (Catalog Number 070 51 080) has a brown patch panel entire left of door and a brown patch panel covering most of the Santa Fe's "Ship and Travel" slogan. The 193 (Catalog Number 070 52 080) has lighter orange patch panels covering the roadname in the Santa Fe circle cross herald left of door, original

SFRC reporting marks on left and large Santa Fe roadname on right. Both cars have heavy weathering; the 128 also has graffiti along bottom of one side. Approximate Time Period: 1986 to early decade of the 2010s (at widest). Previous Releases: None, though the 128 is based on the same paint scheme which appears in unweathered form as Catalog Number 70070 released in October 1994 and February 2000.

MTL supplies the prototype photos, to which we'll return, but first let's mention the lesser known railroad which hasn't been honored with a car by Micro-Trains since the second-hand express refrigerator released in May 2005 (Catalog 052 00 100). The San Luis Central rated just about one column inch of space on Page 390 of **The Official Railway Guide** (Freight Service Edition) of November-December 1975. Running from the Union Depot (!) in Monte Vista, Colorado, where it connected with the Rio Grande, to the town of Center, the line served a small portion of south central Colorado, not far from more famous Rocky Mountain destinations. Monte Vista is about 17 miles west of Alamosa, if you're looking on a road map. The SLC is still in operation, down to thirteen miles from fifteen. It now connects with the San Luis and Rio Grande, successor to the Rio Grande, and from there the SLRG goes to the Union Pacific at Walsenburg.

The Union Pacific's own site offers a thumbnail history-- well, they have to take care of those feeder lines, start quote: "The company was incorporated February 19, 1913. The first portion of the line opened in September 1913 to haul sugar beets to an on-line processing mill. Beet growing did not prove popular with local farmers, and the facility soon closed. Other

agricultural crops including potatoes, barley, wheat, peas and lettuce are grown in the fertile San Luis Valley. Passenger service ended in 1937. Pea Vine Corp acquired the entire capital stock from the estate of the railroad's founder in 1969." The SLC is currently a subsidiary of Rail World, which also owns the ill-fated Montreal, Maine and Atlantic (the 2013 Lac-Mégantic, Québec railroad disaster which claimed 47 lives and destroyed much of the town occurred on the MMA).

MTL posted citations to photos on RRPictureArchives.net of both the 128, captured in 2002 at Monte Vista, and the 139, found in 2008 in Walsenburg, so right on or in the neighborhood of the San Luis Central itself. The paint and lettering are spot on, as you'd expect. The actual cars looked larger than the MTL 070 body style, with the trucks well inboard of the ends unlike with the Micro-Trains model. In addition, it's noted right on RRPictureArchives that the 128 has a dry capacity of 4050 cubic feet while the 139 is larger at 4282 cubic feet. Finally, these cars don't have a running board (roofwalk), were equipped with half-height ladders, and sport ends that differ from the Micro-Trains model.

Off to the ORER collection for some research. While the presence of the U-1 wheel inspection "dot" would put the Strictly Speaking ATP at 1978 or later, that's not a factor this time. The first issue of the Equipment Register in which I pick these up is October 1986; the one I have before that is April 1985 so we have a pretty tight beginning to the Approximate Time Period. I want to skip to the January 2000 ORER though, as it shows a division in the small group of Mechanical Refrigerator cars numbered 120 to 139. The main group of 13 cars has an inside length of 50 feet 10 inches, inside width 9 feet, inside height 9 feet 4 inches, outside length 63 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, and capacity 4282 cubic feet or 129,000 pounds. This group includes the 139. The 128 is part of a subset of four cars which differ on the capacity at 4050 cubic feet or 134,000 pounds, the inside length at 50 feet 10 inches and the outside length at 63 feet 9 inches; the door is also four inches less tall. Quickly wrapping up the Equipment Register check, the 139 is gone before the April 2013 issue and the 128 has left the roster before the October 2014 book.

I attempted a "bonus round" of figuring out from which Santa Fe series of cars these two dispositions were made, but I can't do much better than speculate here. The RR-96 class of cars, built around 1969, looks possible for the SLC 128. In contrast, the Santa Fe-painted 070 body style reprint from February 2000 is done as an RR-71 class which was built in 1962.

Should this release work out for the folks behind the red and yellow sign, there's at least one other railroad from which the SLC picked up mechanical refrigerator cars: the Milwaukee Road. SLC 178 has the same, let's say minimalist, redecoration for its second-hand owner. In addition, the SLC 139 is based on the ATSF paint scheme with the large roadname replacing the "Ship and Travel" slogan. Assuming that an image of an older mechanically-cooled car from what was once called the Santa Fe Refrigerator Department can be located, that's another potential future release.



105 44 750, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: CIGX 801990.

50 Foot Steel 14 Panel Gondola, Straight Sides, Fixed Ends, CIGX (CIT Group).

Black with rust colored trucks, couplers and draft gear. White lettering including reporting marks on left. Extensive graffiti covering one side of car (other side is presumed to be “clean”). Approximate Time Period: at least 2011 based on prototype. Previous Releases: None.

The image on Flickr to which Micro-Trains refers us was uploaded to the “Freight Train Graffiti Photos” album just last month, and it’s the only photo in said album. Does that imply a “to present” ATP? No, because the image was followed from another Flickr user who took the photo on New Year’s Eve 2010 and noted, “Stitched wholecar” – which either is a brag or a comment on this image being a combination of several digital exposures. Hey, I can’t even figure out what this graffiti says, never mind the technical stuff!

Anyway, CIGX is one of the reporting marks utilized by The CIT Group / Capital Finance, Incorporated, and unlike many private owners at present does continue to list its roster in the ORER. According to the October 2014 ORER, the 801990 is included in the mish-mosh of gondolas of various lengths in the general range of 55 to 57 feet outside length, numbered from 800766 to 802141 with a headache-inducing number of subsets of individual cars. The prototype car does have fourteen panels but is also noticeably larger than the 1057x body style and tops out at a load limit of 221,400 pounds – that information is stenciled right on the car and right over the, um, artwork. The Approximate Time Period most likely exceeds the “at least” on either side of 2011. It’s certainly possible that this car hasn’t been repainted since it was, ahem, additionally decorated.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #117** (993 00 117, \$79.95), four NITX/ Rio Grande 50 Foot Plug Door Boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 031 51 480, 50809; 031 52 480, 50835; 031 53 480, 50852; 031 54 480, 50867. 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 noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close June 30.



Scheduled Delivery December 2016:

993 00 123, \$89.95.

Reporting Marks: C&O 272150, 272164, 272176, 272188.

Quantity four of 50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Double Doors and End Door, Chesapeake and Ohio.

Dark blue with white lettering including reporting marks on left and "C&O For Progress" herald on right. Simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side including doors. Approximate Time Period:

1960 to present, but see text. Previous Releases: As Catalog 78070/078 00 070, Road Number 272189, April 1998; Road Number 272175, July 2002.

Dark blue? How about "Really, Really, Really Dark Blue?" As in, "can't tell it from black"? OK, maybe these former Pere Marquette cars weren't that dark blue, but in a certain light they certainly look that way to me. And in another certain light, they don't, as in the official MTL photo of the July 2002 release from the archives (at right).



The book **Classic Freight Cars Volume 8**, Page 17, shows a picture of the first road number MTL released, 272189, taken sometime after its repaint in December 1960. The end doors are shut alright but the side doors are partially open! The blue paint is holding up fairly well but evidence of door opening and closing is there in the form of rusty looking scratches on the car side. There's an interesting effect to model for those of us who weather. (And possibly a future Weathered Release with any leftovers from this pack...)

Since the last run of this car, I was able to obtain a very inexpensive copy of the book **Pere Marquette Revenue Freight Cars**. (Highly recommended just for the shots of the interiors of boxcars of the period!) On Pages 128 to 131 of that volume there is information on the original series PM 72100 to 72199, which was divided into two groups. The first group of 25 cars did not have end doors. (Which means they can be done with some compromises on the MTL 034 body style, hint hint.) The second group, which became the C&O cars in these forthcoming Runner Pack, was comprised of the remaining 75 cars. All 100 were delivered by Greenville Car Company in 1941. The detailed description of the car results in two deltas to the MTL 078 body style of which I wasn't aware: Duryea cushion underframe and Viking roof. "By 1961," it's reported, "49 of the remaining cars were renumbered into the C&O series... with 48 of these having been relegated to general service." Twenty-four of the cars still had Pere Marquette markings at that time.

The January 1964 ORER shows the C&O series as simply "Box, Steel" but with AAR Classification XML, meaning a general service car with a loader of some sort. The inside length

was 50 feet 6 inches, outside length 52 feet 11 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches and extreme height 14 feet 9 inches. The door opening was 14 feet 6 inches which is 18 inches shorter than the MTL model-- yep, a "Door Thing" though relatively hard to spot. Capacity was 4,656 cubic feet and 100,000 pounds. There were 73 cars remaining in the series, none left still in Pere Marquette paint. By April of 1970 this group was down to 57 cars, and they were off the roster by April 1976.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



148 00 260, \$32.95

Ringling Brothers Heavyweight Series #10, Heavyweight Mail/Baggage Car, "Elephants."

Red with aluminum roof and black underframe. "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey" in yellow with black outline, and "The World Famous Herds of Majestic Elephants" in multicolor lettering. Multicolor artwork "Five Rings of Performing Elephants" in center. No road number.

By now you've probably read that the Ringling Brothers' featuring of "The World Famous Herds of Majestic Elephants" has come to an end. On May 1, 2016, their final performance made two years ahead of the originally announced schedule, eleven Asian elephants "retired" from the circus. They will join others at the Ringling Brothers Center for Elephant Conservation in Central Florida, bringing the population there to forty-two. Something I didn't know about this change is that the Center has been in collaboration with Pediatric Oncologist Dr. Joshua Schiffman and the team from Intermountain Primary Children's Hospital, the Department of Pediatrics and Huntsman Cancer Institute, all in Salt Lake City, Utah. They're trying to understand why elephants rarely get cancer, and so far they believe the presence of the P53 gene in both Asian and African elephants enables this resistance to this disease which is so deadly to humans. On the other hand, the circus has met increasing levels of protest against their use of these animals in their show. This is despite some opinions that they were being treated better than before: Susan Nance, author of *Entertaining Elephants: Animal Agency and the Business of the American Circus*, noted that "Fifty years ago, they would have been chained inside a rail car." (Uh-oh.) The final performance came after the elephants were featured in the circus for 145 years, and it will be interesting to see what Ringling Brothers has planned for its next season without what has been an iconic part of their show.

The following is in pre-order at present and is 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 June 30.



Scheduled Delivery October 2016:

993 21 280, \$234.95

White Christmas Delivery Train Set.

Expected to consist of the following (artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary):

- 987 Series FT-A Powered Diesel Locomotive, Road Number 2016, including a large figurine of “Micro-Mouse,” the MTL mascot (assembled and painted but not installed on the locomotive)

- 083 Series 40 Foot Drop Bottom

Gondola, Reporting Marks WCD 12, with load of three evergreen trees

- Two of 055 Series 33 Foot Two Bay Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Reporting Marks WCD 8 and 25, each with a load of simulated snow
- 100 Series 34 Foot Steel Offset Cupola Caboose

Each item is shown in a multicolor scheme of blue, white, red and purple with legend “White Christmas Delivery” and red details on the locomotive and caboose.

Fortunately for me and those who might question my sanity, I think UMTRR HQ is sufficiently soundproof that no one heard me playing several different renditions of the song “White Christmas” smack in the middle of June. Sure, it’s the Bing Crosby version that is far and away the most popular – it topped the Billboard Singles Chart three separate times, in 1942, 1945 and 1946. It is reported to have sold more than 50 million copies worldwide across a 1942 recording and a deliberately close to identical 1947 remake (necessary because the 1942 master was damaged). But there have been, according to the Wikipedians, more than five hundred other versions of the Irving Berlin-penned holiday classic. What’s not as well known is that there is an opening verse that is rarely included:

The sun is shining, the grass is green,
The orange and palm trees sway.
There’s never been such a day
in Beverly Hills, L.A.
But it’s December the twenty-fourth, –
And I am longing to be up North –

Ah, but those lyrics are on Robert Goulet's 1963 cover of the song, and if you grew up in my house, you heard Goulet's version much more often than Crosby's. And if you were me, you played David Seville's 1961 version even more than that; a straight take on the song that is on the otherwise done for fun album **Christmas with the Chipmunks**.

Anyway, despite the song initially being in the 1942 film **Holiday Inn** (said to be the inspiration for the name of the well-known hotel chain!) it also gave its name to the 1954 motion picture, and the movie **White Christmas** was the top-grossing film for that calendar year. The film **White Christmas** had the "let's put on a show" theme that has been popular for musical plots- "plots" being relative, of course.

If the actual product looks anything like the MTL rendition, it's going to be difficult for me to stay away from this set. The colors look absolutely stunning and do remind me greatly of a snowfall at twilight. As for the Micro-Mouse figure that's coming with the set, I'll offer two pieces of advice and counsel: First, don't expect Mr. Mouse to fit in tunnels or under bridges, as I'd estimate the need for at least HO Scale clearances with "him" atop the locomotive! (And the trees in the gondola probably won't clear either if being carried vertically. That's easier to fix.) Second, it appears from the artwork that the Micro-Mouse will be fit into the space where the dynamic brake cover would be. I hope (ask? plead?) that MTL will include that roof part for those of us who won't be able to accommodate Mr. Mouse on our layouts.

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



503 00 131 and 503 00 132, \$24.95 each.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 33294 and 33303.

40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Doors, No Running Board (Roofwalk), Short Ladders, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Mineral red (including trucks, wheels and couplers) with white lettering including reporting marks and large circle cross herald on left and slogan "Ship and Travel Santa Fe - all the way" on right. Simulated reflective circle crosses in black and white along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: early to mid-1970s (1970 service date on cars).

With a Santa Fe car class of Bx-13, yes, there's no doubt that this offering represents a rebuild of a much older car. Pages 13 and 14 of the book **Santa Fe Freight Cars In Color Volume One** include four photos of these cars including a bingo on the 33294. These cars were originally single sheathed wood sided cars (!) built by General American in 1931 and were rebuilt in 1951 and 1952. The initial number series was 135000 to 135999 and they went into the group 32500

to 33484. “[The] cars retained their original underframe and ends when rebuilt,” reported author and Santa Fe historian Stephen Priest (who is also the present editor of **Railroad Model Craftsman** magazine, perhaps one reason why there’s never been a **Santa Fe Freight Cars In Color Volume Two...**). Those ends are a little different from the MTL 503 body style, but not screamingly so in my opinion. What is more of a delta, though again, hard to spot at 1:220 proportion, is that the redone sides are mounted outboard from the ends—it’s not a simple 90 degree angle here. If you can notice that there are rivets missing from the Micro-Trains model when they should be there, your eyesight is far better than mine. Also to be filed under “Consistent Inconsistency”: while the MTL-selected road number 33294 serviced in 1970 correctly has short ladders, sister car ATSF 33437 which was serviced in 1971 has the running board removed but retained its full ladders.

The paint scheme and running board removal drive the Approximate Time Period here and the 1970 service date helps as well, though the version with large circle cross and “Ship and Travel” slogan does date back to 1959. (The build date of 1931 is correct as noted above.) The ORER for April 1970 shows a healthy quantity of 716 cars, described as “Box, Steel Sheathed” and with these dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 44 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 6 feet and capacity 3960 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Surprisingly, though at least of this series of cars, the 32683, made it into the post-slogan scheme with large Cooper Black roadname, the entire group of Bx-13s was out of the ORER between April 1976, when just five remained, and October 1976, when the series was gone.



503 00 141 and 503 00 142, \$24.95 each.

Reporting Marks: GN 11595 and 11620.

40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Doors, No Running Board (Roofwalk), Short Ladders, Great Northern

Blue (the GN’s “Big Sky Blue”) with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large outline goat herald on right. Simulated reflective dots in white along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1967 (based on paint scheme) to early 1980s.

We go from one book that is exclusively about boxcars to another book that is mostly about boxcars: the Four Ways West publication **Great Northern Equipment Pictorial Book One - Box Cars and Stock Cars**, by Scott R. Thompson. Page 35 of that volume contains a bingo to the 11620 as found in Fort Worth, Texas in November 1967, already in the Big Sky Blue paint and also without its running board and with half-height ladders. It’s noted that “the 500 cars in the 11375 to 11874 series were typically equipped with a six foot Camel door and all of the cars had welded side panels.” Camel doors mostly look like Youngstown doors, at least in this case. These cars were built in 1948 and were included in “a very aggressive freight car fleet maintenance program... refitted or overhauled an average of once every seven years” versus

the national average of every eleven years. That didn't necessarily mean a new paint job, although the GN was certainly famous for its variety of decorating. (An example of this, also on Page 35, is a pair of photos of sister car 11821 taken sixteen years apart, one in brand new vermillion red and the other with the same paint and without the running board.)

The ORER for January 1967 is where we'll go though it probably predates the Big Sky Blue repaint by a bit. The series 11375 to 11874 had an inside length of 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening 6 feet and capacity 3715 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 474 of the original 500 cars in service at the time. Of those, 458 were included in the Burlington Northern merger as shown in the April 1970 Equipment Register. The July 1980 ORER shows 82 of the cars still in service, but only five in January 1985 which is where I stopped looking.



510 00 340, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: SRN 5159.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Sabine River and Northern.

#5 in the MTL Z Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series.

Red with mostly white lettering including herald, roadname and reporting marks on left. Black and white double panel consolidated stencils at lower right. Approximate Time Period: 1976 (build date on car) into the decade of the 2010s at least.

Number 5 in the Z Scale Per Diem series represents a car which was in service for a relatively obscure shortline owned by a paper products manufacturer. The builder of the car was FMC, the shortline is the Sabine River and Northern, and the owner was Inland Container Corporation.

But guess what? This line doesn't have as long a history as you might expect. In fact, it wasn't built until the mid-1960s, having been chartered on April 20, 1965. That makes it younger than your UMTRR-Author... uh, never mind. The Handbook of Texas Online (Direct URL www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqs05) includes a history of the shortline and the thread of its ownership; it was originally built to service an Owens-Illinois linerboard mill and grew to serve other mills including Temple-Inland's in Evadale. The line is located in southeast Texas, north of Beaumont; the Sabine River in the name forms the boundary between Texas and Louisiana about another twenty miles to the east. The Union Pacific has an interline marketing agreement with the SR&N. Inland, part of Temple-Inland, has an interesting history in itself; it grew out of the invention of the "Chick Pullman," the first paperboard container designed for baby chicks, was owned by Time Incorporated for a while, and was spun off in the 1980s.

The ORER for October 1976 shows exactly one series of cars in the registration for the SR&N: this one, numbered 5000 to 5199, with AAR Classification XM and description "Box, Steel, Nailable Steel Floor, Cushion Underframe." They're not kidding about that last point, for the inside length is 50 feet 6 inches and the outside length is 57 feet 3 inches. If MTL had extended

draft gear trucks in Z Scale, I would have used them. The rest of the dimensions: inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 11 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5295 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. Assuming that the 510 body style mirrors the N Scale 025 body style, the prototype is a little larger; the Micro-Trains car is a model of the FMC 5077 cubic foot car.

Unlike previous Per Diem cars in this series thus far, this car stayed on its original roster for quite a while. In October 1991, just nine cars had slipped out of this series, and eleven years after that, in January 2002, there were still a total of 144 cars with some variance in Gross Rail Weight. The latest ORER I have, October 2014, shows ten cars remaining, though I'm not sure that gives us an ATP of "to present."

I did briefly check for a bingo on the 5159 but didn't locate one, so I'll leverage my previous look at George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (check under "Miscellaneous 'S' Railroads at www.rr-fallenflags.org). There are several shots of various SR&N boxcars all in including a roster shot of what looks like a brand new car, road number 5092, a three-quarter view of road number 5183, and a not so new looking road number 5327. All of these are in the red and white paint job that MTL used. The door types on these cars vary and at least one, installed on 5327, reasonably matches the one that Micro-Trains uses. As usual, the older the cars get, the worse they look, so keep that in mind if you're into weathering.

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 June 14.*



506 44 280, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: CN 551009.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Door, Canadian National.

Brown with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and

"wet noodle" herald on right. Moderate weathering; "hobo tagging" on right below herald. Approximate Time Period: 1965 (renumber date) to early 1980s, or no later than the year 2000. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Numbers 551009 and 551050, March 2014. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that either of the two previous releases could have been utilized for this Weathered Release.

The Hobo Tagging this month includes "Knights of the Rail" – pretty straightforward there – and an upside-down triangle, indicating in at least one translation "Road Spoiled, Full of Other Hobos." Perhaps it's full of the Knights of the Rail, having a convention? Actually, by the 1960 adoption of this Canadian National paint scheme, hobos would have been as likely as not to be going to a convention as opposed to actually living along railroads.

As noted in the March 2014 coverage of the “clean” releases, Ian Cranstone’s “Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net) has a string of road number groups for the cars that started as the group 598000 to 598499. These cars were built by Canadian Car and Foundry in late 1957, as MTL noted then in its car copy. Also as related in the car copy, these two were renumbered about 1965 once their service as “automobile cars” was completed. Cranstone has the April 2000 ORER as the final appearance for this series... we’ll take it as the liberal end of the ATP, keeping in mind that roofwalks would have been removed well before that.



531 44 240, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: CR 87---- (last four digits obscured)

33 Foot PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, 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. Light weathering and multicolor graffiti “ICH” on at least one side obscuring road number. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s to mid-1990s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Numbers 878290 and 878342, December 2015. Note: It’s possible but not confirmed that either of the two previous releases could have been utilized for this Weathered Release.

Well, that’s probably not a Hobo Tag, but at least I can read it this time although I don’t know the significance, if any. As noted in last December’s coverage of the “clean” releases, these cars in Conrail’s Class 860H were built by Pullman-Standard in 1956 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. The large graffiti is more appropriate for the later end of the Approximate Time Period for this car.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #92** (994 00 092, \$89.95), four NITX/ Rio Grande 50 Foot Plug Door Boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 507 51 640, 50809; 507 52 640, 50835; 507 53 640, 50852; 507 54 640, 50867. 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 noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close June 30.



Scheduled November 2016 Release:

994 00 097, \$134.95.

Reporting Marks: SP 513985 A to E.

Quantity five of 68 Foot "Husky-Stack" Well Car, Southern Pacific.

Red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks and "Speed Lettering" roadname on A and B cars and roadname on C, D and E cars.

Yellow simulated reflective squares on

far right and left of each car. Black and white consolidated stencils on right end of A and B cars. Approximate Time Period: 1991 to no later than 2013. Previous Releases: None. Artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Catalog numbers (in the 540 series) will be confirmed upon release.

There have been three Southern Pacific well cars previously released by MTL, but in the earlier scheme with the gothic roadname prior to the acquisition of the SP by the Rio Grande's parent company, and the subsequent adoption of the "Speed Lettering" roadname. That took place in 1991, which would drive the start of the Approximate Time Period, except that this five-unit car doesn't appear in the ORER until at least April 1995. The 100 cars, numbered 513900 to 513999, are described as "Flat"—not very useful-- with AAR Designation S367, which translates to "Stack Car, Wells: All 48 foot, Five Wells, IBC Type Heavy Capacity (125 Ton Trucks), two 20 foot or two 24 foot or one 40 foot or one 45 foot or one 48 foot container(s) in all wells with one 40 foot or one 45 foot or one 48 foot or one 53 foot container stacked on top of all wells." The inside length of this car is 48 feet—that's per unit, outside length 304 feet 6 inches—that's the whole thing, extreme height of 11 feet 1 inch, and capacity 579,000 pounds. It's probably safe to say that the "Speed Lettering" was included in the "as delivered" paint.

There's a bingo on the "A" unit of this car over on RRPictureArchives.net, taken in 2006 and clearly illustrating the main delta between this Runner Pack and the prototype: shared trucks between units. On Trainboard.com in the Z Scale section there is a guide on how to replace couplers with drawbars and turn those five cars into one set. I "bumped" that thread, originally posted in 2011, so it should be easy to locate. I'm pretty sure the right sequence of units is B, C, D, E, A; or A, E, D, C, B if looking from the other side.

The Union Pacific purchased the SP in 1996. The ORER entry for January 2000 shows 99 of the original 100 cars in service under a variety of subsets differing in Gross Rail Weight. By the April 2007 ORER this Gross Rail Weight was up to a seemingly absurd 999,000 pounds for 97 of these 99 units! Between the April 2013 and October 2014 Registers, however, the count dropped from 96 total to exactly one. I'm not sure what happened there but I am sure that the ATP doesn't go to the present.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Pre-orders for the N Scale NASA Series were extended to June 15, although that's after "Press Time" for this issue of the UMTRR given my practice of including the month's Weathered Releases which makes that Old News. What is interesting is that Micro-Trains is planning to revive a long-lost body style... which isn't even theirs! Projected to be included in the twelve-car series is a helium tank car, which is apparently still produced by Roco and will be painted by MTL. The first appearance of this car dates all the way back to the Atlas "First Generation" of N Scale which was first available in the late 1960s. All twelve cars will be painted and weathered.



Micro-Trains is also making available "parts packs" which to me look basically like a complete SW1500 without the chassis. You have a choice of Version 1, with AAR Truck Frames or Version 2 with Flexi-Coil Truck Frames. Catalog numbers 986 00 001 and 986 00 002 carry an MSRP of \$19.95 each. If

you need just the Flexi-Coil Truck Frames for a retrofit of an existing SW1500, that's available as well (003 02 510, \$1.95). I certainly hope this doesn't mean the end of SW1500 releases due to chassis unavailability – but I hasten to add that this is just speculation on my part.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Topping the bye-bye board this month are four of the five Weathered Releases from last month. Only the N Scale Reading hopper is left. The N Scale Santa Fe and BNSF Center Flows are outta here (094 44 100 and 094 44 420); as are the Z Scale Great Northern "Robot" and PRR Merchandise Service hobo tagged boxcars (500 44 440 and 505 44 330). Also gone from May is the CSX 53 Foot Container (469 00 010), with the AX Sun Container right behind it on the Almost Gone list. And also gone is the N Scale Kansas City Southern Center Flow (094 00 270), and so much for Market Saturation on that paint scheme! Yikes, I haven't even updated the website with May releases yet... (That's coming soon.)

Also among the Weathered Releases that have left the building are the Z Scale Railbox Two-Pack (510 44 221, February), and the N Scale Buffalo and Pittsburgh “Shoe Gum” boxcar (030 44 290, March) and BNSF Two-Bay Center Flow (092 44 281, April).

Returning to the usual catalog number order now for Z Scale, sold out are the second number of the Santa Fe gray on gray boxcar (506 00 192, September 2015, first number already gone), the first number of the Ontario Northland x-post boxcar with “chevrons” (511 00 261, February, second number still available), the second number of the Canadian National x-post boxcar (512 00 012, September 2015, first number already gone), the second and fourth Baby Ruth refrigerator cars (518 00 360, July 2015 and 518 00 380, September 2015), the second number of the Western Fruit Express mechanical refrigerator (548 00 042, April, first number still available), the Baltimore and Ohio streamlined sleeper (550 00 130, February) and the Canadian National streamlined coach (552 00 140, April).

Besides the Weathered Releases above, there are also a fair number of “clean” cars in N Scale that are gone. The first and second releases in the Baby Ruth series are first in catalog number order (049 00 710 and 049 00 720, June and July 2015 respectively). The Soo Line caboose reprint is out (051 00 070, December 2014). The Western Pacific covered gondola reprint is empty (106 00 220, April). Both numbers of the Norfolk Southern three-bay hopper are also unloaded (108 00 28x, January), as are both numbers of the Burlington Northern / TTX autorack reprint (111 00 03x, January). Staying with autoracks, the Providence and Worcester release has rolled away (111 00 170, December 2015). The first number of the CP Rail log car is gone (115 00 051, March, second number still available). Both numbers of the Pennsylvania Railroad 60 foot double door boxcar have sold out (122 00 07x, November 2014). This month’s runner-up for the “oldest release to sell out” award is the Pennsylvania Railroad “John Greenleaf Whittier” 12-1 sleeper (142 00 050, February 2011) but the winner is the Santa Fe 28-1 Parlor Car (143 00 040, December 2010). Much newer are the Pennsylvania Mail/Baggage Car (148 00 050, August 2015) and the Ringling Brothers “Goliath” horse car (149 00 240, January).

MTL’s “Soon To Be Out” list now includes Runner Packs—hurray—and there are a trainload of warnings for the Z Scale releases—namely (or should that be “numberly”?) 66, 68, 71, 80, 87, 88, 89 and 91! I might be busy again next month for this part of the column.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: While researching something else—and isn’t that how it always happens?—I came across some information from Dick Dawson on the Modern Freight Cars List YahooGroup (MFCL) with regard to what I call the “40 Year Law.” That was adopted to keep aging cars out of Interchange Service (there’s no limit for company service), but as it turns out, it’s more complicated than that. Here’s what Dick wrote: “Cars built on or after July 1, 1974 are permitted to operate until their 50th year. Cars built prior to then are limited to 40 years life unless they apply for and receive Rebuilt Status or Extended Service Status (ESX) from the Association of American Railroads. Cars may also apply for Increased Life Status (ILS) which enables them to operate for 40 years from the granting of ILS, not to exceed 65 years from the original date built. The requirements to receive ILS are much more extensive (and expensive) than those to receive Rebuilt or EXS and so relatively few cars

have gone through the process. Since the Federal Railroad Administration limits life to 50 years, cars seeking ILS must receive authorization from the FRA as well as the AAR.

“ILS was created at the request of TTX Company so that flush-deck standard-level and flush-deck low-level 89' flatcars could operate through two 30-year auto rack superstructure lives plus five years in between to go through the required upgrading. It took a lot of negotiation with the AAR Equipment Engineering Committee and the FRA Office of Safety to get the process established and about \$1,500,000 to perform the required testing. In addition to the 89 foot flatcars intended for auto rack service, TTX has also obtained ILS for 60 foot chain tie-down flatcars. I believe that at least one other car owner has received ILS for some cars. Auto rack life has improved to the point that many railroads now require more than 30 years remaining life before they will place a new superstructure on a flatcar. That makes ILS less beneficial than originally intended for 89 foot flatcars, but it can be useful for some other car types.

Speaking of Modern Freight Cars, this posting by railcar expert D. Scott Chatfield on that list also caught my eye: “1995 is an important demarcation in ‘modern era freight cars’ because 286,000 Gross Rail Limit became legal in unrestricted interchange and plain bearing [trucks] were banned in unrestricted interchange, both in January 1995. Several of us debated this issue some years ago, because as someone mentioned recently ‘modern,’ as in post-steam, now covers a 56 year span. I suggested calling 1960 to 1994 ‘space age freight cars’ and 1995-onward ‘tagger age.’ Tagging was still uncommon in 1995 but was really widespread by 1999.”

OOPS PATROL: I’m sure I’ll uncover something when I catch up on my UMTRR Website Updates, now due for June and overdue for May. Anything I find will be corrected for the website tables.

FINALLY, MISSING FROM THE BOARDS, AND ON THE RUN: I have been absent, perhaps noticeably but probably not, from the online discussion forums about N Scale, and just about everything else for that matter, for the last few months at least, well, with the exception of Facebook which for better or worse has become a principal means of communication with my non-model railroad friends. So what’s happened?

It’s nothing personal. And in fact it’s due to some good news, especially for my doctor who has been, let us say, strongly recommending that I get my otherwise corporate-day-job body out for some exercise, hopefully heading off some potential consequences that could happen if I don’t.

When I’m not working or writing, I enjoy getting on my bicycle—I have what I would call a very low end model of the higher end, aluminum frame but still relatively inexpensive. While riding a trail back in March, I came across an advertisement for a 5K run on that same trail and wondered whether it might be fun to try something different to mix it up with biking, and, as I found out, use different muscles from either biking or simple walking.



To make the long story somewhat shorter, I did decide to take up running, and I'm very happy to say that I have gone from Zero on April 1 (yes, of this year) to a spur-of-the-moment decision to run in my first official 5K race on June 5! My time was a respectable 32 minutes 18 seconds, not bad for a card-carrying member of the AARP who had literally never done this before. Since it didn't happen without pictures, here's me just before the event began. My friends and family, and my two helpful and very patient "running coaches," who have both done the New York City Marathon—twice each!—are pleased. So is my doctor, other than wondering what took so long. They've all already tagged me for a half-marathon next year, but let's not get ahead of ourselves!

I bring this up because when I suppose I should be working on the July edition of these bytes, I will instead be down in my home state for my second attempt at a 5K race. This time, it will be at the Statue of Liberty, and it will be the first time I've set foot there since I was in high school. This 5K is a fundraiser for the Special Olympics of New Jersey, and it should be fun since it takes place early in the morning of July 4 before the monument is open to the general public. I've already raised the required amount of funds to participate but if you're interested in supporting a worthy cause—and your faithful commentator—here's the link:

https://www.classy.org/fundraise?is_new=1&fcid=701646

I should note that many companies, including the one at which I'm employed, will match donations. The page citation above includes information on that potential doubling of your contribution. No obligation—as I mentioned, I'm already at my modest fundraising goal—but every little bit helps.

Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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