



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

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Hello again everyone! Before getting started, I'm pleased to note that, for at least a few days anyway (!) the UMTRR Website has been caught up, with all releases through July 2016 now posted to the appropriate release tables. With the "publication" of this issue, of course I'm behind again, but let's hope for a faster turnaround this time!

Meanwhile, from behind the red and yellow sign it appears that depending on how one counts, passenger equipment releases are the emphasis in N Scale this month, although still fewer in number than freight releases in actual count. I'm including the "virtual two-pack" of Santa Fe express boxcars in this thought, which we'll get to right after the next in the Per Diem Series. All aboard...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



025 00 940, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: SSDK 1004.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Savannah State Docks Railroad.

#7 in the MTL N Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. Blue with white diagonal band on left. White roadname on right. Mostly

black lettering otherwise including reporting marks and "Georgia Ports Authority" on left. Two consolidated stencil panels on right below roadname. Black end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date on model) to no later than 1989.

I don't recall ever seeing this car live and in person in my travels, and perhaps not many other folks have either. Over on RRPictureArchives.net, which now hosts more than four million (!) photos, there is just a single image of one of the boxcars in the series, SSDK 1061. It was lensed in 1981 in Illinois. George Elwood's Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) adds photos of four cars, all taken from 1978 to 1981. It could be backlighting, shade, dirt, color shift of the photo, or something else entirely, but the shade of blue on the car as captured in all but one of these images looks a fair bit darker than on the Micro-Trains model. I don't think the actual car was that dark; it would have been darn near impossible to read black reporting marks. I might have gone with white lettering anyway, but I wasn't asked... Finally, we land on the bingo or exact match for this car on RailcarPhotos.com, a long way from its home base in San Diego, California in June 1979, and it does look to be about the same shade of blue as the MTL car.

Anyway, the entire revenue roster of the Savannah State Docks Railway as of the July 1980 Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) was this series of 100 boxcars numbered 1000 to 1099. These cars were leased from Itel Rail as noted right on the car side next to the consolidated stencils, and had these key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet 1 inch, outside length 57 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5347 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. The MTL 025 body style is of an FMC-built car, as these were, but the slightly smaller 5077 cubic foot size. The “look and feel” of the prototype is captured in this model in my estimation, but there will be quibbles in terms of the dimensions.

As of the July 1987 ORER the car count was down just one to 99. But in the next Equipment Register in the Research Accumulation, July 1989, that car count is down to zero – all gone. And that gives us a fairly tight Approximate Time Period. I’m not even going to try to figure out what happened to these cars after that.

I can mention what happened to the Savannah State Docks Railway, though. In 1998 the operation, which had been a public entity since its establishment in 1952, was privatized and became the Savannah Port Terminal Railroad, part of the Genesee and Wyoming Industries family of small and medium-sized railroads. G&W’s website describes the line, with reporting marks SAPT, as being 18 miles in length and interchanging with both Norfolk Southern (the former Central of Georgia line) and CSX Transportation (former Seaboard Coast Line).



034 00 411 and 034 00 412, \$23.60 each
Reporting Marks: ATSF 4166 and 4179.
50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Double Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Passenger express scheme of Pullman Green with gold lettering including circle cross herald and reporting marks on left and “Express” legend on right. Approximate Time Period: early decade of the 1960s at least.

We’ve seen these cars before, just not in this paint scheme. UMTRR Gang Member Ben

Woelk provided information from the book **Santa Fe Railway Passenger Car Reference Series -- Volume One : Head End Cars** which was published by the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society (www.atsf.com) . The FE-24 class of “Furniture” cars (as the Santa Fe referred to double-door boxcars), initially numbered 10000 to 10199, were built by Pullman in 1941 and were the first fifty foot cars to receive the “map” design and name train slogans. (Five of these cars were offered by Micro-Trains back in October 2001, Catalog 34262.) The cars were built to a variation on the AAR design with 5/5 Dreadnaught ends, rectangular panel steel roofs, riveted sides and two Youngstown doors totaling 14 feet 6 inches (so, yes, a “door thing” here). They were equipped with steam lines and initially rode on Allied Full Cushion trucks, which were found to be problematic and were replaced starting in 1942.

Starting in mid-1944 and completed in 1945 was a program to repaint and renumber the cars began. This resulted in new numbers in the 4000 series, coach green paint, and a simplified “Express” lettering scheme similar to the one on this new release replaced the maps and slogans. The ATP for these cars, though, is later, as the Santa Fe “circle cross” herald is the newer style, and how’s that for nitpicking detail. You’ll notice that there are both freight and passenger service capacities listed on this car: 100,000 pounds when hauling freight but just 60,000 pounds when in passenger service. And isn’t it interesting that this change took place during World War II, when work was often restricted to the Absolutely Necessary?

This particular variation of decoration may have been rather short lived. In 1961 the AT&SF moved to a green and gold scheme with the large circle cross herald, offered previously by Micro-Trains in April 2000 (Catalog 34240). Then, starting in 1965, the final paint scheme for these cars was introduced: the gray on gray motif with large circle cross herald, which has also been offered by MTL, most recently just last August (Catalog 34250/034 00 25x). According to the **Head End** book, these cars lasted into the beginning of Amtrak in 1971 with the last two cars retired in 1980.



066 00 080, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: CTTX 8511.

Three Dome Tank Car, Navy Gas and Supply Company.

Aluminum body with black underframe, trucks and details. Black reporting marks on left; red and orange Shell Oil trademark in center. Yellow “Navy Gas and Supply

Co / Colorado Distributors” and red “Denver Colorado” across car. Approximate Time Period: 1932 (build date on car) through the rest of the 1930s (a guess).

My ATP guess is about the same as it was for the August 2014 release of the single dome tank car (065 00 790) in this same scheme, also known as #7 in the MTL N Scale Tank Car Series. The online information on the Navy Gas and Supply Company hasn’t exactly increased since then either, with the largest number of citations returned in a search referring to the previously released Micro-Trains car! There is an image of a card from a card catalogue (remember those?) in the Denver Library: “California Company purchases Navy Gas and Supply firm, News August 17 1955, Page 35” (I’ve unabbreviated words here). From an advertisement in the **Greeley Daily Tribune** of July 27, 1939, we learn that Navy Gas and Supply also distributed Calso Gasoline (a brand that would later become Chevron). One new reference is to that same relationship, via an advertisement in the Craig Empire Courier of November 9, 1938: “Over a period of 13 years Navy Gas and Supply has grown to be the ‘largest individual petroleum marketer in the West’ by strict adherence to its guiding policy of always offering the finest motor products obtainable.” We assume that The California Company was referring to itself there! The headline of this ad was “21 Gun Salute to The Navy Gas and Supply Company”; meanwhile I’m still trying to understand why a company headquartered in a very landlocked state would have a name like “Navy” in the first place.

At any rate, we know from the previous Navy Gas and Supply car that it leased its rolling stock from the Canton Tank Car Company, which had in the July 1935 ORER a total of 777 tank cars. The series of otherwise not described tank cars in which the previous MTL release was included ended at 8510. Next to that is a single car series, 8511, which is noted as a “compartment car.” That usually, though not always, does mean three compartments, generally but not exactly correctly also known as a “three dome tank car.” (Even I’m not going to wander off from that description.) Other than an 8000 gallon or 80,000 pound capacity we have nothing from that ORER listing. Equipment Registers don’t tell us when the car was repainted out of the Navy Gas scheme. The 1955 purchase of the company seems too recent for the end of the ATP. Perhaps Navy Gas and Supply’s switch to distributing Calso Gasoline no later than the newspaper advertisement, now back to no later than November 1938, can let us guess. And guess we shall...

The bingo image for this car was thoughtfully supplied by MTL itself after my Research Accumulation didn’t turn up a photo. CTTX 8511 was, in fact, an order of one car, American Car and Foundry Lot Number 1252, built in January 1932. The most interesting fact to me in the photo caption is that “red and yellow stencil paste” was used for the Shell Products emblem in the center of the car.



108 00 321 and 108 00 322, \$25.30 each
Reporting Marks: CR 495003 and 495029.
Three Bay 100 Ton Open Hoppers, Conrail.
 Freight car red with mostly white lettering including small roadname and “wheel on rail” herald at top left, reporting marks on left and “Conrail Quality” CQ logo on right. Black and white double-panel consolidated stencils at bottom right. Yellow simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: 1993 (build date) or 2005 (given reflective stripes) into the decade of the 2010s.

The prototypes for these two cars belonged to Conrail’s H1M class of hoppers. This group part of a substantial replacement program for the road’s inherited fleet of coal cars which dated back to the Pennsylvania Railroad’s fleet. According to the Conrail Historical Society’s Conrail Photo Archive, these particular cars were built by the Holidaysburg (Pennsylvania) Car Shops in 1993, not 1976 as noted in MTL’s car copy. The reflective stripes were added later; images in the Conrail Photo Archive have cars without it as late as mid-2014. It’s reasonable to assume that this reflective tape (and that’s all it is, folks!) met the requirements for conspicuity stripes that began in 2005. And yes, that’s after the official breakup of Conrail.

I suppose I could grab images and/or dimensions of the Norfolk and Western's H11 class of open hoppers built around 1964, on which the MTL 108 body style is based, and compare with this Conrail H1M class of cars... but I'm just too lazy. I do note that the H11s had a 3,418 cubic foot capacity while the H1Ms have a 3,585 cubic foot capacity, making them slightly larger than what the 108 body style represents. However, both are fourteen panel three-bay hoppers and the "look and feel" is basically there, with some detail differences.

That of course means I checked an ORER, of course, and the particular one I started with is the April 1995 edition. (I validated that the cars do not appear in ORERs I own dated prior to 1993, confirming the Conrail Historical Society's information... not that I doubted it.) The series 495003 to 495499 had an outside length of 48 feet 3 inches, extreme height of 12 feet 7 inches, and weight capacity of 197,000 pounds. Jumping to the October 2014 Equipment Register, we see 266 cars remaining in Conrail paint in the Norfolk Southern registration, recalling that NS kept the CR reporting marks for freight equipment when it split Conrail with CSX Transportation. (CSX relettered its share of cars to "NYC" reporting marks, as noted last month.)



144 00 715, \$34.90

Car Name: Bonaventure (will be shown as "CN 98" in website listings).

Heavyweight 3-2 Business 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. "Balloon" style roof. Approximate Time Period: 1967 to no later than 1972, but see text for more on that ATP.

Back in June I quoted the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 1**, where it's noted that the line had at least eight cars named "Bonaventure." No, wait, make that nine cars. And here we are two months later with one of those nine! Which one?

Well, one choice would be Business Car 98, which was built by National Steel Car (the exterior shell) and Canadian National's own Pointe St. Charles Shops (the interior) in 1959. It has the smooth sides and balloon roof that are parts of the MTL model. The photo on Page 68 of the **Color Guide** is from 1965 and the car has only its number 98. According to the caption

accompanying the photo, the car was actually named “Bonaventure” only from 1965 to 1977, after which the name was removed. “In 1978 it was renumbered 15111, and in 1979 renumbered 95. In 1991 it was renamed 95 *Bonaventure*.” Was there someone at the CN Head Office that was looking for something to do? Anyway, by 1999 the car was named Pacific Spirit, and there goes what would be a rather strange ATP, but stay tuned.

The photo of the car in the **Color Guide** is of the same side as what’s pictured in the Micro-News and on the MTL website, and while the rounded windows are good, the exact arrangement isn’t a match—not really a surprise there.

But wait, there’s more! On Page 66 of the **Color Guide** is the seventh car to carry the name “Bonaventure”. The view in this image is oblique and mostly shows the end observation platform, plus enough of the rest of the car to be able to call out a balloon roof and smooth sides, again with a different window arrangement. I am guessing that this is not the car MTL had in mind with its depiction just because the photo reference isn’t as good.

And that’s just from the **Color Guide**, folks. Fortunately, I hit the World Wide Web as well, and came up with an image of the 98 as it looked in 1972, posted to CNRPhotos.com —and that would not be in green. By July of that year the car had been repainted into the later CN gray and black scheme. That makes the possible Approximate Time Period shorter, or perhaps even irrelevant for the 1959-built car, as perhaps it was repainted when it was renamed... This is all giving me a headache, which at the exchange rate prevalent at this writing, would be about 1.3 headaches in Canada.



145 00 100, \$29.95

Road Number: 6724 (will be “NH 6724” in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, New Haven.

Pullman Green with white lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950s and 1960s at least.

While most of Micro-Trains’ passenger car releases to date would be associated with long-distance service and perhaps the glamour of “name trains,” this one... would not. The bingo for this car is on Page 74 of the **New Haven Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. It was found in August 1956 awaiting its next commuter train run from Blackstone, Massachusetts (just north of Woonsocket, Rhode Island) into Boston’s South Station. The car was part of the series of coaches numbered 6700 to 6738 which were built by Osgood-Bradley

in 1914. They could accommodate 92 passengers and were equipped with “walkover” seats; that is, the kind that could be flipped to face front regardless of the direction in which the car was traveling. (I used to love flipping these on my rare tourist rides on the former Lackawanna Railroad.) The 6724 is referred to as a “smoker” in the photo caption, short for a car in which smoking was allowed. And no, it wasn’t a paired window coach. Rosters posted on George Elwood’s “Fallen Flags” site have these cars off the roster by 1971. By that time, the NH was already part of the Penn Central, having been force-fed into the PC in 1969.

Given the variety of New Haven paint schemes, I’d hoped to find a bit more than I did about the Approximate Time Period. I know that the black and orange of the McGuinness era co-existed with the Pullman Green that this car sported. The **Color Guide** points out that the NH’s famous Osgood-Bradley “American Flyer” coaches were repainted Pullman Green if necessary between May 1950 and May 1954, and Forest Green after that. Photos of other passenger equipment in the **Color Guide** show cars with the roadname in the same lettering style as this MTL release, all dated starting in the 1950s. So with the “at least” caveat, I’ll go with an ATP of the 1950s and 1960s for this car.



149 00 080, \$29.95

Road Number: 4502 (will be “CP 4502” in website listings).

Heavyweight Horse Car, Canadian Pacific.

Maroon with black roof, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including roadname on letterboard (split by center door) and road number at bottom left and right. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1920 (build date given by MTL) into the 1950s at least, but see text.

This time, I must admit that it’s been tough research for this item. All I’ve got directly are my two lookups in the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment. The March 1943 edition shows the series of “Horse Express” cars numbered 4500 to 4515, which are described as “60 feet and under 70 feet” and carry a per-diem charge of \$6.50 with a mileage charge of three cents. There were twelve cars in the series at that time. We do a little better with the description of the seven cars remaining in the January 1953 ORPTE: it’s now “Horse Express, **Wood**” (my emphasis) with an inside length of 59 feet and outside length of 63 feet 5 inches. That’s both a different material and different length than the MTL 149 body style, so without having a photo reference, I can tell you that “stand in” is probably the most appropriate designation. While wood cars certainly were in use on the CP for decades, their presence was more and more rare over time and so I’m not sure I want to use the same Approximate Time

Period for this car has I have with other Canadian Pacific passenger equipment modeled by Micro-Trains.

Interestingly, though, two steel horse cars owned by the CP did have quite the repurposing: the former 4560 and 4565 became the 80 and 81, used by the railroad as "Archive Display Cars." Online it's noted that these cars carried everything from a large scale model of the Canadian Pacific Royal Hudson to a N Scale layout depicting scenes along the CP. That is, when they weren't carrying the "usual" artifacts attesting to the history of the railroad. Photos of the 80 and 81 are, let's say, a lot easier to find than any from the series I'm supposed to be discussing!



**452 00 091 and 452 00 092, \$30.80 each
Trailer Numbers: 23221 and 23458 (website listing TBD).**

48 Foot Smooth Side Trailers, Nestle Baby Ruth.

Aluminum roof and nose; black undercarriage. Full color sides with

depiction of Baby Ruth candy bar and slogan "America's Baby." Tail of the 091 release has wording "A Taste Only An 18-wheeler Can Haul"; tail of the 092 release has wording, "If You Can Taste The Whole Peanuts And Creamy Caramel, You're Too Close." See images at right. Approximate Time Period: the present. Note: MTL has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders.



Take the Billboard Refrigerator cars for Baby Ruth, add about eighty years and this is what you have... Billboard Trailers! That's one way of looking at these new releases. Here's another way: The nominal capacity of the typical 48 foot dry van is between 40,000 and 45,000 pounds based on a few online sources I checked. That's between half and two-thirds of the capacity of the Billboard Refrigerator cars from the 1930s. So I might be tempted to take exception to the claim, "A taste only an 18-wheeler can haul" by that metric! On the other hand, the basic 48 foot trailer also holds more than 3500 cubic feet of lading, which is more than either the 36 foot wood refrigerator car or its 40 foot counterpart. In any case, that's a lot of candy bars.

I did locate a prototype photo with the "18-wheeler" wording over on Pinterest. I would think that the painters of refrigerator cars during the Billboard Era would be amazed at what can be done now with color, and the idea (which I haven't validated) that the full-side graphics could be a large-size printout that's attached to the trailer, not painted directly on it. I can't help but wonder if there would have been protests about the legality of trailers sporting these full-size advertisements, when the Interstate Commerce Commission banned them (and its successor still does!) on railroad equipment. Are we sure that these Baby Ruth trailers only haul Baby Ruth candy, and not the products of some smaller competitor? I'm just kidding... mostly...



469 00 030, \$13.95

Reporting Marks: STRU 833429.

53 Foot Corrugated Container, Sea Star.

Blue (including roof) with red ends. White "Sea Star" across side and website address at

bottom left. Approximate Time Period: at least 2011 to present. Note: MTL has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders.

The website URL on the MTL model of the container, www.seastarline.com, redirects. "Welcome to the new home of Totem Ocean and Sea Star Line," a banner exclaims on the website of TOTE Maritime (totemaritime.com). "Innovation that moves Alaska and Puerto Rico," states another. On the "History and Values" page of the site, it's noted: "TOTE Maritime's Operating in the Jones Act trade since 1975, TOTE companies strategically and efficiently route cargo from anywhere in North America to Puerto Rico and Alaska." According to the Wikipedians, TOTE is a subsidiary of Saltchuk, the largest privately held company in Washington State, and does business in the "Lower 48" as well as Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, mostly in distribution and transportation ventures. Sea Star and its Alaskan counterpart Totem Ocean Trailer Express were renamed to TOTE Maritime in September 2015. The firm received the world's first container ship powered by Liquefied Natural Gas.

And therefore I find myself in another learning opportunity, as I often do when slinging these bytes, namely: "What is the Jones Act?" Wow, it goes back farther than I thought. It's part of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (!) and regulates maritime commerce between United States cities. That would include any of the current points at which Sea Star and its parent calls, Jacksonville, Florida and Ponce, Puerto Rico being principal points on that list. The United States Maritime Administration notes that "Coastwise or Jones Act vessels typically handle a combined total of over one billion tons of cargo annually. These cargoes are mostly bulk products such as petroleum, coal, iron ore, grain, crushed rock and decorative stone. However, high value containerized products dominate the U.S.-flag domestic trade to Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico." Makes sense to me.

A press release issued by Sea Star in March 2011 announced the ordering of "100 brand-new 53-foot cargo containers to serve customers at its Jacksonville and Philadelphia ports. The containers will be available for immediate use in the third quarter of 2011 — just in time to accommodate the pre-holiday shipping season. The investment increases Sea Star Line's existing 53-foot container fleet by 25 percent, making it the youngest 53-foot fleet serving the Caribbean and Puerto Rico." So we've got an "at least" 2011 for the Approximate Time Period here. The full press release is at <https://www.prlog.org/11381423-sea-star-line-boosts-53-container-fleet-by-25-positions-company-for-growth.html> if you're curious, and includes a prototype photo that matches the MTL model's paint scheme. I'm going to assume that the transition from Sea Star to TOTE Maritime will happen over time, making the ATP "to present" — just like with transitions of railroad equipment from old to new names. Meanwhile, a photo of STRU 833302 on RRPictureArchives.net includes a caption speculating that it's a modified 40 foot container. That would lend more credibility to the 2011 start of the ATP for the 833429.

In addition to the above, 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 August 31.



Scheduled Delivery December 2016:

470 00 249 and 470 00 259, \$34.95 each

Ringling Brothers Wagon 2-Packs (#1 and #2).

The 249 set includes wagon numbers 9 and 10, are red with white top band and roof. Black "Ringling Bros. and" in white band and yellow "Barnum & Bailey" on red part of side. The 259 set includes wagon number 12 painted as the 9 and 10, and wagon number 11 which has a narrower white top band and all lettering in yellow. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

narrows white top band and all lettering in yellow. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.



Scheduled Delivery January 2017:

470 00 269, \$34.95

Ringling Brothers Wagon 2-Pack (#3).

First wagon is a cage wagon which is blue with yellow "marquee" dots outlined in red around the cage bars, and yellow "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey" at top. Second wagon is red with yellow stars, yellow "Ringling Bros." at top and yellow "The Greatest Show on Earth" in yellow on blue banner. These wagons have no numbers. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.



Scheduled Delivery January 2017:

462 00 060, \$34.95

Royal American Shows Wagon 2-Pack #1 (White and Orange)

First wagon is white with white "Royal American Shows" on blue banner at top and "World's Largest Midway" globe in blue and red in center, flanked by multicolor depictions of a tiger and lion. Second wagon is orange with blue scrollwork, orange "Royal American Shows" on blue banner and "World's Largest Midway" globe device in black, blue and white at bottom center. These wagons have no numbers. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

numbers. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.



Scheduled Delivery January 2017:

462 00 070, \$34.95

Royal American Shows Wagon 2-Pack #2 (Red and Yellow).

First wagon is red with white lettering and scrollwork; second wagon is pale yellow with gray lettering and scrollwork. Lettering on both is large "Royal American Shows." These wagons have no numbers. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

Yes, MTL did announce Ringling Brothers wagons **and** circus flat cars, but technically the flat cars are reprints so they can be found in that section. I'm being picky, I suppose; on the other hand, I'm not calling these wagons out as Special Editions, either, since I imagine that these or something similar did exist at one time or another. These sets will, for the first time, include wagon chocks, which are also being made available as a separate part (see MTL Announcements section). I'm presuming these are the "vintage" wagon chock versions for the Ringling Brothers sets and the "modern" versions for the Royal American Shows pairs.

An Approximate Time Period for any of these wagons is likely to be fairly wide, although I doubt that it would extend to the present. First, the Royal American Shows is no longer in operation, having completed its last date in October 1997. Second, the Ringling Brothers wagons are likely to be much larger in size now than the "vintage" wagons being offered. Does that affect the popularity of these items? Not really, in my estimation.

Over on the website of the International Independent Showmen's Museum I located an image of a Royal American Shows circus flat car with three wagons loaded on it. This illustrates the point that these wagons could be used to fill out the already-released set of three RAS flat cars, which were issued with four wagons (993 01 380, March 2016). The same holds true for the Ringling Brothers 70 Foot Flat Car 3-Pack (993 01 400, June 2016).

N SCALE REPRINTS:



100 00 320, \$30.95

Road Number: 1147 (will be "SP 1147" in website listings).

36 Foot Steel Caboose, Offset Cupola, Southern Pacific.

Silver with black lettering including roadname (accented with red S and P with black shadowing) across top, road number below cupola, and "Trailer-Flatcar Service" below windows. Approximate Time Period: 1954 to 1960s. Previous Release: Road Number 1147 (same number), as part of the Southern Pacific / Cotton Belt TOFC Set (993 01 190), August 2012. Also issued as a special run commissioned by the N Scale Collectors Society (now the N Scale Enthusiast), NSC Number MTL 10-37 with Road Number 1099, part of the "SP Vintage Piggyback Trailer-Flatcar Service" pack.

I can't believe it's already been four years since this caboose was issued as part of a train set, the only previous time it's been available from MTL. I'm also surprised that the road number utilized in that 2012 set was used again, since there are at least six other road numbers available.

We get a bingo on this caboose on Page 57 of Morning Sun's **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One). The caboose isn't even the main subject of the 1958 photo—it's the new auto rack equipped flat car behind it. The 1147 is already rather dirty, so it wasn't freshly painted for display at this inspection event. It was one of seven SP

C-40-3 and one C-40-1 cabooses that were painted in this scheme in 1954 and 1955, inspired by the silver trailers in use by the Espee at the time. These cars ran with special “hot” piggyback service between San Francisco and Los Angeles. According to Richard Percy’s site (URL.espee.railfan.net) these cars lasted into the 1960s. He’s got the list of the SP cabooses that received this paint as well, for those of you who might want to change road numbers, or have multiple road numbers (!): 1069, 1076, 1096, 1097, 1147, 1181 and 1201 among the C-40-3s, plus C-40-1 number 1031. The MTL model isn’t an exact match to the prototype, with the cupola and riveted construction being significant deltas.

In addition to the above, 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 August 31.



Scheduled Delivery December 2016:

139 00 021, 139 00 022 and 139 00 023, \$23.95 each

Road Numbers: 107, 122 and 141 (will be preceded with “RBB&B” in website listings).

70 Foot Flat Cars, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Aluminum with black underframe and trucks. Red lettering outlined in black: road number at each end and “Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows” across car. Approximate Time Period: about 1928 to 1960s at least. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 104, 112 and 124, as part of the Ringling Brothers 70 Foot Flat Car 3-Pack, Catalog 993 01 400, Individual Car Catalog Numbers 139 5x 020, June 2016. Artwork shown is preliminary and is subject to change with actual release, though I expect these cars will be the same as in the three-pack. I’m including just one of the cars as an example here.

I mentioned in my January 2016 pre-order coverage of the Ringling Brothers Three-Pack cited above that I came across a photo of about three-fifths of one of these cars in the September 1943 issue of **Model Railroader**. Reprinting myself, from the “NG” in “Ringling” to the “CO” in “Combined” is visible. I think the point of the photo, though, was to show the trucks and tractors, lettered for the circus and sporting numbers, mounted tightly adjacent across the flat car. “Maybe you’d like to build a circus train,” the caption reads. “This photo of the prototype... will give some idea of what it should contain other than railroad equipment. To follow the lines of Ringling, the train should consist of three sections of 22 cars each. Section 1 carries canvas and poles for the big top and cabooses for the working crew; section 2 carries the animals in trucks on flat cars as shown, and section 3 carries the performers’ coaches.” I think that means MTL can be issuing Ringling Brothers equipment for quite some time to come! And it also illustrates that the Approximate Time Period for these cars contains the time around September 1943.

As also previously noted, Trainweb (www.trainweb.org/circus/train_equipment.htm , please note that they are now using anti-ad blocker banners which cover the page and prevent its being read!) provides information on these cars, including that Ringling Brothers started their conversion from wooden flat cars to this type around 1928. It's noted that the circus paid railroads by the car, so it was advantageous for circuses to obtain longer and longer cars. That included the 70 foot "inside length" flat cars built by the Warren Tank Car Company, or by their competition, Mount Vernon Car.

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 August 12.*



092 44 320, \$32.90

Reporting Marks: NAHX 490218.

2 Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, GE Rail Services (but see text).

Base car is gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left; white on black double-panel consolidated stencils on right.

One side of car has large black graffiti

depiction of an American 4-4-0 steam locomotive and green "Aware" caption. Approximate Time Period: at least 2014 and 2015 (based on prototype photo dates). Previous Releases: None.

MTL necessarily uses a bit of sleight-of-hand on this car, which becomes immediately apparent when viewing the prototype photo which is on RailcarPhotos.com. The real car has (or had) the road number 490218, but belonged to the Southern Pacific. As noted previously in these bytes, under the terms of the licensing agreement with the Union Pacific, no graffiti may be depicted on any models with its reporting marks, including any of its predecessors. That means that if MTL (and you!) want this car it will need to be with different reporting marks. In this case, the folks in Talent selected NAHX which was originally registered to North American Car Company but has since moved over to the vast General Electric Railcar Services empire. This also means that the large SP roadname won't appear on the non-graffiti side of the car, just reporting marks.

From here I have a choice: see if there really was an NAHX 490218, or go with the actual prototype car for lookups. (And I have I mentioned that just because MTL can't have this car with SP reporting marks, that doesn't mean you can't change them after purchase...) I'll choose the latter. The 490218 is from the prototype series SP 490100 to 490499 which was built in 1975 by American Car and Foundry, and was in the SP's class H-100-31. According to Lee Gautreaux, on his "Railgoat" page (www.railgoat.railfan.net) these cars were 2971 cubic feet and had different dimensions than the typical AC&F two bay center flows. So they're not going to be exact matches to the 092 body style, though they'll look fairly close.

Gautreaux has photos of cars in these series as late as May 2015, though invoking the "40 Year Rule" we're pretty close to retirement for this fleet. There were 212 cars remaining of the

original 400 in the ORER for October 2014. Of course, not a lot of this matters since the graffiti car could theoretically have no more than a “point in time” ATP. There are actually three photos of this car on RailcarPhotos, though, ranging from October 2014 to October 2015, plus others elsewhere online.



092 44 330, \$32.90

Reporting Marks: ACFX 218835.

2 Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, GE Rail Services (but see text).

Base car is gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left; white on black double-panel consolidated stencils on right.

One side of car has large black and white graffiti depiction of a sheep chasing a dollar sign (\$) and black “aware” caption. Approximate Time Period: at least 2014 and 2015 (based on prototype photo dates). Previous Releases: None.

The tagger “aware” may be providing interesting looking and even humorous artwork on the sides of freight cars (depending on your overall perspective of graffiti, of course) but I think that Micro-Trains wishes that he or she or they would paying more diligent attention to licensing agreements! As with the 092 44 320 release above, this car needs falsified reporting marks, and this time, MTL swaps “UP” for “ACFX” which is certainly a set of letters seen often on covered hoppers, even now.

I’ll do the same as above here and cover the Union Pacific car on which the prototypical graffiti appears. The prototype photo reference is over on RRPictureArchives.net, and again, there are three shots, ranging from September 2014 to May 2015. UP 218835 belongs to the group 218748 to 218899, of which there were 149 cars in the October 2014 ORER. With an outside length of 41 feet 11 inches and capacity of 3250 cubic feet, these cars are a fair bit larger than the MTL 092 body style, which is of the AC&F 2970 cubic foot design—though both cars are two bay covered hoppers.



094 44 060, \$32.90

Reporting Marks: CSXT 255794.

3 Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, CSX Transportation.

Beige with heavy weathering including extensive dark rust. Black lettering including

reporting marks on left and CSX logo on right. Black and white double panel consolidated stencils at bottom right. Yellow conspicuity stripes across bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 (based on conspicuity stripes) to at least 2014. Previous Releases (unweathered): As Catalog 94060, Road Number 254227, October 1995; As Catalog 094 00 060, Road Number 254238, September 2007.

No need to worry about licensing agreements this time: first, it's not a Union Pacific family car (at least not yet, I can hear some of you joking) and there's no graffiti, just an awful lot of weathering. The prototype photo reference is an unusual one: it's one of a series of covered hoppers in CSX and predecessor schemes which were all taken by photographer John Pluta at the CSX/Norfolk Southern diamond crossings in Cordele, Georgia. The 255794 is in about the middle of the photo set but don't overlook the Seaboard System, Chessie System and even Family Lines cars which have all been restenciled to CSX reporting marks. All but two of the photos were taken in 2014.

As of the October 2014 ORER, the CSXT series 255447 to 255838 was a mix of 45 cars with 4700 cubic foot capacity and another 14 cars with 4600 cubic foot capacity. The latter group had a greater outside length, of 57 feet 4 inches versus 54 feet 8 inches for the 4700 cubic foot cars. In either case, the MTL 094 body style is a model of the AC&F 4650 cubic foot car, which was more common and not quite like the CSXT car in the photo. It's possible that the 255794 might be traced all the way back to the HC-24 or HC-24A classes of cars that were built for the Chesapeake and Ohio in 1967 and 1971 respectively. But that's way beside the point since the ATP for this release would start no sooner than the beginning of the application of conspicuity stripes in 2005.



116 44 010, \$25.70

Road Number: 9972

Troop Sleeper, Pullman.

Pullman green with black roof. Delux gold lettering including "Pullman" across top, "Troop Sleeper" across bottom, and road

number on bottom left and bottom right. Light to moderate weathering and all windows painted over. Approximate Time Period: 1943 through about 1950. Previous Releases (all unweathered): Road Numbers 9010, 9153 and 9426, May 2003; Road Numbers 9082 and 9340, July 2003; Road Numbers 9027 and 9356, May 2005; Road Number 9148, May 2007; then Runner Pack #27 with Road Numbers 9149, 9257, 9316 and 9488, May 2009; then Runner Pack #58 with Road Numbers 9015, 9120, 9276 and 9304, December 2011.

It's been more than four years since the last release of this car in this scheme. Though there have been seventeen road numbers counting this one, that's a tiny fraction of the 2400 troop sleepers which were constructed for the United States Government between October 1943 and May 1946. Micro-Trains had plenty of source information including articles and drawings in the December 2001 and February 2002 issues of **Model Railroader**, and eight pages of coverage of troop sleepers and troop kitchen cars in the Winter 2001 issue of **Classic Trains**. As you might recall, reviews of this body style at the time were overwhelmingly if not unanimously positive.

The weathering effects on this release include something unusual in my estimation: a complete "paint out" of the windows. We know that while thoroughly deployed while in service, they still were hardly "well used" by the end of World War II, especially compared to the old, tired equipment that the railroads had to hang onto from before the war. So most of the troop

sleepers were sold off to railroads and repurposed by them for all sorts of duties. Among the common modifications made were plating over of windows. This is somewhat simulated here with the paint out in the same Pullman Green that's used on the body shell, but I'm not sure that this tactic would work for a model of a car of this type in post-war deployment.

Meanwhile, I validated that restored troop sleeper 7407 is still on display, complete with a set of Allied Full Cushion trucks, at the Mad River and NKP Railroad Museum in Bellevue, Ohio, though the website has changed to www.madrivermuseum since my original 2003 coverage.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #119** (993 00 119, \$109.95), four Florida East Coast Ortner Hoppers, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the March 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 125 51 020, 15065; 125 52 020, 15093; 125 53 020, 15107; 125 54 020, 15124. These are the third through sixth road numbers for this car.



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 August 31.



Scheduled Delivery January 2017:

993 00 124, \$109.95.

Reporting Marks: GN 171717, 171756, 171839, 171865.

Quantity four of Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers, Trough Hatches, Great Northern.

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and "Great Northern / Grain Loading" in center. Black and red side facing goat herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) to at least the late 1980s. Previous Release:

As Catalog 94160, Road Number 171747, September 1999.

There's so much emphasis on Great Northern's many and varied paint schemes for box cars among fans that it's easy to forget that the GN was also quite the granger road as well. Grain elevators from Minnesota to Washington kept local freights busy, especially at harvest time. 1961 revenues from grain totaled \$50 million according to GN records; that was easily number one amongst all categories. To carry that grain, the road, like most others in the 1960s, was moving away from box cars and toward covered hoppers. The paint scheme with the

simplified version of the famous “Rocky” herald was pretty much standard for this type of car, whether the Airslide type, the cylindrical variety, or the Center Flows featured in this month’s Runner Pack announcement.

In the September 1999 ORER I mention that a photo of this car in this paint scheme was taken in 1987, or 17 years after the Great Northern was merged into the Burlington Northern. But I didn’t cite the source then, fortunately I quickly found two: GN 171778 and 171818 over on the Fallen Flags site, plus 171939 from 1983. Meanwhile, the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has an undated image of GN 171863 on Page 76. These cars were built in 1966 by American Car and Foundry, their Lot #11-02619 and GN’s series 171700 to 171999. These were CF4650 cars and that model is the basis for MTL’s 094 body style.

The ORER for October 1969 shows these cars as “large within Plate C dimensions,” specifically 49 feet 9 inches inside length, 51 feet 11 inches outside length, 15 feet 6 inches extreme height, and capacity 200,000 pounds in addition to the 4650 cubic feet. Two of the cars were already missing from the original set of three hundred.

Given the 1987 photos on Fallen Flags of cars still in this paint scheme, I jumped to the Burlington Northern listing in the ORER for July of that year to note 167 cars remaining with GN reporting marks. I hasten to add that at least the 171732 from the series was repainted in Big Sky Blue with the outline goat herald, and its image is also on Fallen Flags, but certainly there were cars with the “as delivered” paint scheme in existence at that time. Just to wrap things up, the last Equipment Register in which I see any Great Northern cars in the series is July 1992 when 38 cars remained; they’re all gone by the April 1995 ORER. This doesn’t diverge all that much from the typical in the case of the BN; there were plenty of cars lettered for predecessors remaining on the rails through the 1980s and even the 1990s.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



149 00 250, \$32.95

Ringling Brothers Heavyweight Series #12, Heavyweight Horse Car, “Menagerie.”

Red ends and hardware, aluminum roof, black underframe. Multicolor depiction of numerous wild animals in a savannah-like landscape across entire side of car. “Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey” in red with black outline at top. Blue, gold and red “The Greatest Show on Earth” globe at far right. No road number.

I believe this is the final car in the Ringling Brothers Heavyweight Series, and it certainly includes plenty of animals – and no, they don’t all co-exist in the wild. (The kangaroos under the word “Bailey” is the giveaway.) “World’s Biggest Menagerie” was a slogan of the Ringling Brothers Circus prior to its combination with Barnum & Bailey and it appears on some of the posters from the time period. And the textbook definition of “menagerie” is “a collection of wild animals kept in captivity for exhibition.” I don’t think artwork showing lions and tigers and bears, oh my in cages would spur the imagination nearly as much as depicting the same creatures in a more natural setting. Such as a savannah, for example, defined as “a grassland ecosystem characterized by the trees being sufficiently widely spaced so that the canopy does not close” (thank you, Wikipedians). The Serengeti in Africa is a prime example of this landscape, though it’s said to cover about twenty percent of the world’s land area. Areas classified as savannah exist around the globe, including in the United States.



In addition to the above, the **Napa Valley Train Set (993 01 430, \$239.95)** is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the March 2016 issue. As you can see, in the current official MTL image of the set, the actual passenger cars are included, but the powered FT diesel is still in the “artist’s rendering.” We’ll attempt to rectify that as well as obtain the individual catalog numbers for the UMTRR Website.

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 August 31.



Scheduled Delivery November 2016: 101 00 803, \$39.95 Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, 2016 Custom Christmas Car.

Deep Blue with two options for Side A to include customer-specified message and two options for Side B, see images. Must be ordered directly from Micro-Trains either through an MTL dealer or using an order form available on the Micro-Trains website.

The third version of the Custom Christmas Car switches up the base color to a shade of blue to which I'm particularly partial (a decision over which I had no influence, but I like it!), suggesting to me the deep nights of the holiday season in the Northern Hemisphere. (For those of you Down Under, perhaps a Sunny Yellow car will be made available next year...)

This time, MTL has just two options for the "picture" side of the car, but also two options for the "message side"; the postcard "Option 1" has a simulated Micro-Trains 2016 "stamp" at the top right.



NARROW GAUGE (N₁3) RELEASES: No releases this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



500 00 901 and 500 00 902, \$33.60 each.
Reporting Marks: D&RGW 69750 and 69789.
40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Superior Doors,
Rio Grande (Denver and Rio Grande
Western).

Sides are orange ("Grande gold") and aluminum (silver) with black stripe. Black ends, orange roof. Black lettering including large reporting marks on left and "speed lettering" roadname on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (based on paint scheme) into the 1970s.

The following is a "reprint" from the April 2012 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release of this car (020 00 866, Road Number 67989).

The Rio Grande went all the way from 1916 to 1939 without buying any forty foot general purpose boxcars, but when they did start ordering them again, it was in considerable quantities... as in, more than two thousand! The last set of cars bought before World War II was numbered 69400 to 69899 and was delivered in February 1942. Unlike previous builds for the D&RGW by Pressed Steel Car Company, this last set had seven-panel Superior Doors and steel running boards. As delivered, these were in brown paint with white lettering including the speed lettering roadname. But in 1959, some cars rolled out of the Rio Grande's Burnham Shops in this attention-getting "Grande gold" and silver scheme.

Sister car D&RGW 69676 can be found on Page 35 of Morning Sun's **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Its paint has held up pretty well from 1959 to the 1976

photo date, although by this time the road number had been prefixed with “AX” to denote company service. The prototype car has straight side sills and riveted sides which are deltas to the MTL 020 body style. The real cars also had Duryea sliding center sills to help reduce damage to cargo, which were banned from interchange service in the early 1970s (various dates are shown in ‘net searches).

The ORER for January 1959 is probably just a bit too early for these cars to be repainted. We’ll take it anyway since it’s the dimensions we want: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 4 inches, outside length 42 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3850 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. The group was numbered 65700 to 69899, taking in several Pressed Steel Car orders, and totaled 2274 cars. The Duryea underframe interchange ban probably marks the end of the Approximate Time Period, and I’ve called it that way. For the record, there were 241 cars shown as still in service as of the April 1970 ORER and 165 in April 1976, and none in April 1981.



506 00 341 and 506 00 342, \$24.90 each
Reporting Marks: ATSF 4166 and 4179.
50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Double Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Passenger express scheme of Pullman Green with gold lettering including circle cross herald and reporting marks on left and “Express” legend on right. Approximate Time Period: early decade of the 1960s.



Please see the coverage of the N Scale Releases above (034 00 41x).



510 00 360, \$27.95
Reporting Marks: SSDK 1004.
50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Savannah State Docks Railroad.

#7 in the MTL Z Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. Blue with white diagonal band on left. White

roadname on right. Mostly black lettering otherwise including reporting marks and “Georgia Ports Authority” on left. Two consolidated stencil panels on right below roadname. Black end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date on model) to no later than 1989.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Release above (025 00 940).



In addition to the above, the **ATSF Passenger Car Four-Pack (994 01 150, \$109.95)** was scheduled to be released mid-month and should be at Micro-Trains dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the April 2016 issue. The images are now available, and here they are with the individual item information:

- 550 51 151, Streamlined Sleeper, "Sweetwater Valley."
- 550 52 152, Streamlined Sleeper, "Surprise Valley."
- 552 53 150, Streamlined Coach, Road Number 3071.
- 553 54 150, Streamlined Baggage Car, Road Number 3918.

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 August 12.*



500 44 880, \$29.60

Reporting Marks: CP 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. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Numbers 29104 and 29110, 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, it was just last month that I wrote, "By the way, in the course of my research I found that my birthday, 2/10, is considered code for 'There are thieves about.' (Don't get any ideas, folks in Talent...)" And what should appear this month but that very tag... However, I must hasten to point out that February 10 was also the birthday of the Edwards Brothers, Keith and Dale, who are the "K" and "D" in Kadee. So no bad feelings here. The other tag this month is two diamonds, which is shown on one source as "Be Quiet," which would make sense if There Are Thieves About.

As noted in the December 2015 coverage of the “clean” releases, Ian Cranstone’s “Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net) 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.

There’s a near bingo to these cars on Page 24 of the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1). 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.



994 05 120, \$99.95

Reporting Marks: GVSR 767158, ----- (road number obscured), 767--- (last three digits obscured), 767155.

Fifty Foot Exterior Post Boxcars, Single Door, Golden West Service Weathered Four-Pack.

Blue with mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Red and yellow block “herald” next to roadname on right. Black and white single panel consolidated stencils on far right. Light to moderate weathering and various amounts of graffiti along bottom of each car. Approximate Time Period: 1990s to mid-decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Number 767062, March 1993 (with Magne-Matic or Marklin Coupler); then Runner Pack #93 with Road Numbers 767043, 767090, 767135 and 767166, July 2016.

Well, this will get you some economies of scale! Four cars last month and four more this month, all in the same paint scheme. Of course, we don’t know if there was some “reuse” of road numbers from last month’s “clean” Runner Pack on the two middle cars, though I doubt it this soon after the release of said Runner Pack. The February 2016 pre-order coverage here in these bytes related that the series was GVSR 767000 to 767199, so it’s a safe bet that under that graffiti there are road numbers in that series. That group was down to only three cars in the January 2007 ORER, with any remaining cars returned to the Union Pacific family of

reporting marks (SP, SSW, DRGW at least) as the Golden West Service partnership ended. These cars appeared in the ORER between the July 1989 and October 1991 issues, giving us a fairly tight ATP start.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #94** (994 00 094, \$79.95), four Southern Pacific 40 Foot Despatch Stock Cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the March 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 520 51 210, 73456; 520 52 210, 73463; 520 53 210, 73522; 520 54 210, 73535. 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 August 31.



Scheduled January 2017 Release:

994 00 099, \$74.95.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 180866, 180868, 180879, 180884.

Quantity four of 33 Two Bay Open Hoppers, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and white "circle cross" herald above and left of reporting marks. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: 1941 to

late 1940s (based on reporting marks with periods) but possibly as late as the early 1970's, see text. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 180808 and 180874, March 2012. Catalog numbers should be 533 5x 010.

I'm going to be really lazy here and "reprint" myself from the March 2012 coverage of what was the first release of a Micro-Trains Z Scale hopper. And that "reprint" went back to the third run of the N Scale counterpart in April 2003, when two long time UMTRR Gang Members did most of the heavy lifting for me. First, George Hollwedel checked with his data library and found that freight car historian Richard Hendrickson said the GA-54 can be modeled with an Athearn hopper in HO. That helped via comparison to the MTL 055, and now 533, body styles. "I looked at the Athearn hopper," George reported, "and it has extended ends, but otherwise looks like the 55000 MT body. I'm counting it among the 'very close' at least." Coming from George, that was a pretty good endorsement.

Then Brad Scherer offered information from the publication **Santa Fe Railway Listing of Freight Cars by Class and Car Number 1906-1991**, compiled by Larry Occhiello and published by the Santa Fe Railway Historical Society. "In it is listed cars by number series and class over the included years," Brad told us. "Looking up the road number, we find that this is a class GA-54, built in 1941." That's in agreement with MTL's car copy then and now. "As you may remember," Brad continued, "Santa Fe classified its gondolas and hoppers in a single type of class, differentiated by letters and numbers. Thus, all hoppers and gondolas are GA-class (for <G>ondol<A>), and these were part of the 80th series (26 letters of the alphabet + 54) of hoppers and gondolas received. Looking up the Ga-54 class, the number series of 200 cars goes from 180800 to 180999. The brief description is 'Hopper 33 feet, 2 bay.' The manufacturer is listed as the General American Transportation Corporation." Brad relayed the "live listing" of car counts for the GA-54 as well: 1942 and 1945, 200; 1947 through 1961, 199; 1963, 161; 1965, 120; 1968, 90; 1970, 73; 1971, 61; 1973, 19; 1974, 7; 1977, 4; 1978, zero.

Brad noted that the "live listing" made no mention of paint scheme — just like the ORERs don't! But we have that information from the RPI site through a look at how the reporting marks changed over time. The move away from the ampersand, that is, from "A.T.&S.F" to "A.T.S.F." took place in 1938, prior to the delivery of these cars. In 1944, the periods went away, turning "A.T.S.F." into just "ATSF." This would impact the "strictly speaking" ATP, depending on how fast you think the cars were restenciled. The RPI listing for the Santa Fe also notes that in 1941 the line put heralds on its hoppers for the first time. I wonder if that first occurred on this series of cars?

We'll grab the July 1943 ORER for the vital statistics: series 180800 to 180999 had inside length of 33 feet, inside height of 7 feet 5 inches, outside length of 34 feet and extreme height of 10 feet 7½ inches. Cubic footage was 2191 and capacity was 100,000 pounds.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: A leak? From the UMTRR Spy Network comes an unconfirmed report that Micro-Trains first release of the new airslide hopper will be the GATX/GACX blue scheme. The 2016 Product Guide, Page 3, has a rendering of this body style; grab that whole guide online at www.micro-trains.com/publicfiles/monthly/PG2016.pdf. For now, I'll leave the reader to find a prototype photo... hey, I have to have something to put in the column when it's actually released. And that's supposed to be next month, so I guess we'll "See You In September" (if you're old enough to get the song reference, more power to you).

A definite: The inside cover of the Summer 2016 issue of The N Scale Enthusiast includes the announcement of Micro-Trains "Friendship Train Series." It's based on the actual 1947 train that consisted of shipments of food collected by Americans for post-World War II relief efforts in France and Italy. I'm going to hold official coverage of this until next month since the announcement hasn't yet hit the website or the Micro-News.

Also, Eric Smith noted in his column in the latest N Scale Enthusiast an announcement also made at the National N Scale Convention: the recent 53 foot ribside container will be followed shortly with a 48 foot version. Oh, great, George gets to learn more about intermodal boxes...

The wagon chocks that will be included with the forthcoming Ringling Brothers and Royal American Shows circus wagons are already available separately. The “vintage” version has Catalog Number 499 90 964 and the “modern” version is 499 90 980. MSRP is \$5.95 for a pack of 24 chocks, each of which fits under one wagon of the “vintage” or “modern” type.

The N Scale **Heavyweight Horse Car** is now available in a painted and unlettered version,



Pullman Green with black roof, Catalog Number 149 00 001, \$24.95. It's unassembled, just as is the case with the other painted/unlettered heavyweight passenger cars.

I don't know how long this has been around, but it's news to me: Current and recent MTL Special Runs are listed on their own page on the Micro-Trains website. This includes those commissioned by our own UMTRR Gang Member George Hollwedel, such as the three-pack of Santa Fe wood cabooses (waycars). The URL is <http://special.micro-trainsline.com/>.

Meanwhile, the URL for the overall MTL site has been quietly shifted back to the original place in cyberspace: www.micro-trains.com. Those release databases are still there, just scroll all the way down to the bottom of the main page for the “Downloads” link and click that.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Topping the bye-bye board, to really no surprise at all to this byte-slinger, is last month's N Scale Pan Am Railways/Boston & Maine boxcar (025 00 980). Not far behind are both Norfolk and Western Bicentennial Scheme N Scale items: the three-bay hopper (108 00 310) and trailer (450 00 150). Also outta here from 2016 in N Scale are: the Great Northern double-sheathed boxcar reprint (041 00 030, April), the Pennsylvania Railroad one-of-a-kind panel side hopper (085 00 080, March), and the second number of the CP Rail log car (115 00 052, March, first number already gone). Continuing to work backward chronologically in N Scale sellouts, we have from 2015: both numbers of the Canadian Pacific express scheme boxcar (020 00 986 and 987, December); the weathered Soo Line boxcar (020 44 900, April); the second number of the Bangor and Aroostook State of Maine boxcar (031 00 472, March); the yellow lettered Union Pacific drop bottom gondola (083 00 100, September); and the Canadian National red caboose (100 00 360, August). From back in 2013 there are three Civil War Era caboose converted boxcars that have marched off: the United States Military Railroad version (152 00 010, March – note I have this as already sold out); the Baltimore and Ohio scheme (152 00 030, May) and the Manassas Gap release (152 00 050, December). Finally, the oldest car to have left the building this month is the Santa Fe 12-1 Sleeper (142 00 040, November 2010).

In Z Scale, the newest item to sell out, and the only one from this year, is the Canadian National Streamlined Baggage Car (553 00 140, April). There are several singles gone from 2015 which,

in catalog number order, are: the second number of the Western Pacific brown boxcar with square feather (505 00 342, August, though I show it as already discontinued); the second number of the Soo Line white with red door x-post plug door boxcar (511 00 252, November, first number already gone); the second number of the green and yellow Reading gondola (522 00 272, October, first number also gone); the Delaware and Hudson "Breast Cancer Awareness" gondola (523 00 060, October); and both numbers of the Soo Line bulkhead flat car (527 00 15x, June). Staying with the Soo Line, the "Merry Christmas" weathered two-pack of x-post plug door boxcars has left the building (511 44 180, November 2014). Runner Pack #66 consisted of unlettered unpainted log cars, and now it's unavailable from the factory (994 00 066, June 2014). And finally, we have listed as sold out the Santa Fe Weathered Three-Pack of PS-2 covered hoppers from October 2014. MTL lists the Catalog Number as 994 01 030 but I believe it also carried the number 994 05 010; either way, it's gone.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: None received this month. Hey, it's summertime, at least in the Northern Hemisphere...

OOPS PATROL: I expected I would find some during my catch up on the UMTRR Website Updates, and I did, in fact, "too numerous to mention." I even found errors in tables from previous years – yikes! Oh, well, I think all the bugs have been swatted. If something else seems amiss, please let me know.

AND THAT WRAPS UP AUGUST. Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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