

Hello again everyone, and before we start with this month's news and views, I need to back up to the post-Thanksgiving (oops, **American** Thanksgiving!) Black Friday promotion which with Micro-Trains once again surprised us. I'm going to be truly lazy here and grab the banner MTL used on their website:

**BLACK FRIDAY WEEKEND
CYBER SPECIAL**

PICK ONE 'CYBER CAR' FOR EVERY \$100 DOLLARS YOU PURCHASE

		
N CYBER #1 - Seaboard Air Line	N CYBER #2 - ATSF	N CYBER #3 - Canadian National
		
Z CYBER #4 - Conrail	Z CYBER #5 - Burlington Northern	Z CYBER #6 - ATSF

NOW THROUGH CYBER MONDAY

Now, how's that for lazy? As usual, we have absolutely no idea whatever how many of each car was available, how many were actually distributed, and whether there are any left over. It will be interesting to see whether any of these end up in the aftermarket. Meanwhile, believe it or not, I have already added these to the Release Tables. And the fact that I've updated the Release Tables with these Black Friday Specials does mean that, hurray, I'm caught up on the UMTRR Website! For now. So I guess I wasn't completely lazy. OK, I'll brag... I wasn't, as I'll relate below in the Discontinued Alert.

Speaking of Discontinued: **The 2016 Christmas Car (102 00 120) sold out before guess which umtrr-author was able to buy one.** If you know where I can find a copy, please let me know (not eBay, please). I would hate to break my streak of having each of the Holiday Cars.

With that out of the way, it's time to move along to the main part of the final column of Year Twenty of this enterprise...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



027 00 410, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: EACH 2455.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, East Camden and Highland.

#11 in the MTL N Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. Orange with white band in center of side. Black lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left, and State of

Arkansas map on right inside white band. Black end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date) to no later than 1989.

My first question: Is this shortline still in business? Answer: Yes. It's a relative newcomer, having been founded in 1971. The line runs about 48 miles from an interchange with the Union Pacific (formerly Cotton Belt) in Eagle Mills, Arkansas to East Camden, where it services the Highland Business Park. That location was formerly the Shumaker Ordnance Depot and was converted to civilian use in... 1971. The EACH is a subsidiary of Highland Resources, Incorporated which operates the park. Its website summarizes: "EACH is a full service, short-line railroad established to provide rail service to the tenants of Highland Industrial Park and on-track storage of railcars in East Camden, Arkansas and Minden, Louisiana." That second location, off the Kansas City Southern, is the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant. At each site there's capacity to store three thousand railcars, a source of revenue for shortlines these days.

The bingo, or exact road number match, for this car is over on RailcarPhotos.com. Both the ITEL Rail and the FMC logos are clearly visible to the left of the door. Data with the photo indicates that series EACH 2351 to 2500 was built in April 1979 as FMC's lot 18011. This was followed by the group 2501 to 2700 in October 1979, Lot 18069. These were 5327 cubic foot boxcars, just a few percentage points larger than the 5077 cubic foot cars that are the basis for the MTL 027 (and Z Scale 511) body style. However, the general design of the Micro-Trains car matches the prototype. In the Photos Can Sometimes Be Deceiving Department, I note that there is a 1979 image of sister car EACH 2415 posted to both Fallen Flags and RRPictureArchives.net. In that image, the car is in shade and the band looks more silver or gray than white.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for April 1980 shows 700 boxcars registered to the EACH. The series in which we're most interested had an inside length of 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet 1 inch, outside length 58 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, door opening 12 feet, and capacity 5327 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. These cars had nailable steel floors and end of car cushioning. The usual clue that these were leased from ITEL was present: the address for repair bills and other matters wasn't East Camden, Arkansas but San Francisco.

By the October 1986 ORER the two groups of 5327 cubic foot boxcars were combined into one series, EACH 2351 to 2700. There were 98 cars in the main series, described as before, and another 84 cars noted as just "Box, Steel." Eighty-four cars remained as of the July 1987 Register

but they are all gone by the July 1989 ORER, giving us a pretty tight end to the ATP. I expect that these cars were reassigned to other lessors, probably with no more than a wipeout of the EACH lettering. As we already know, however, trying to follow these cars around after their original lease has ended is a non-trivial task.



065 00 900 and 065 00 910, \$26.90 each.

Reporting Marks: WRNX 14132 and 14415.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Cars, Gulf.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Large "Gulf" name in center, in orange (the 900) or yellow (the 910). Approximate Time Period: Early 1960s to early 1970s.



We can be pretty confident about the absolute "no earlier than" start of the ATP here, since Gulf Oil acquired Warren in 1953 and with it the tank car fleet with reporting marks

WRNX. Calling a more specific repaint date for these cars would be significantly more difficult, however. Or would it?

Because there's a twist: this is not necessarily a case where the Warren fleet was absorbed into the Gulf roster. This was more like a "reverse merger" of tank car rosters. The January 1953 ORER shows only 1498 cars under the Gulf Oil registration, with reporting marks GRCX (Page 634) and 3800 cars under the Warren Petroleum Corporation registration with reporting marks WRNX (Page 689), which had 12749 as its highest numbered car at the time. The January 1959 Equipment Register shows only slight changes in this arrangement.

The next ORER I have in the Research Accumulation is from July 1963, and there are definitely changes. The entire Gulf Oil listing is gone, and the Warren Petroleum listing has cars out to road number 30052, including the series 14000 to 14478 which includes the road numbers MTL selected. Information is limited here: equipped with heater coils, class ICC 103, capacity 8000 gallons. That would be a delta to the MTL 065 body style which is a model of a General American 10,000 gallon tank car. There are no car counts and there's no roster total. Same thing in my next ORER, January 1967. And with the exception of a total car count of 2502, the same in my next ORER, October 1969.

However, in the next ORER in the Accumulation, April 1970, the registration is back to Gulf Oil Company - U.S. - Division of Gulf Oil Corporation. The series remains but we still have no idea how many cars are in it, or, of course, how they are painted. It's not until the July 1974 Register that this information becomes available—well, the car count, anyway, which stood at 136 out of a possible 471 in the series WRNX 14007 to 14478. And that's just in time because by the next ORER on my shelf, April 1975, the entire series is gone. Hmm, this is probably a recent benchmark in the number of Equipment Registers checked for one release... but I digress.

Besides the different colors for the Gulf trademark, the placement of the reporting marks and the dimensional data is not the same across both cars. That's an advance from what might have been done previously, i.e. just change the road number. This also suggests to me that MTL utilized exact reference photos for each of these cars.

And yes, they did, and I almost missed them, forgetting in my daze from sifting through Equipment Registers that the Morning Sun book **Tank Car Color Guide Volume 1** is also in the library. Page 19 of that book has the bingo for both the 14132 and the 14415. The 14132, with red "Gulf" was lensed in 1967 and the 14415 with yellow "Gulf" was photographed in 1969. Part of the caption: "Obviously cars from different sources comprised this set," since the 14132 was built by Petroleum Iron Works and the 14415 by General American. Two further notes from me as well. First, the "yellow" looks more like an orange to me, but I do still think this is a different color than the red, not a case of fading, as the car itself is quite clean. Second, given the smaller prototypes, the top of the "G" in Gulf extends over the walkway / platform on the real car, while the entire "G" is below the walkway / platform on the Micro-Trains model. And yes, how's that for nitpicking.

Page 60 of the softcover **Classic Freight Cars Volume 2**, on which there is a 1979 photo of WRNX 14280. The photo date given might be questionable given the ORER information we have available. I did not find any images of cars with "Gulf" in yellow. Meanwhile, over on the site RRPictureArchives.net there is a 2008 (!) photo of WRNX 14220 from the same general series, in white paint with orange "Gulf" trademark. On the other hand, the site boxcars.us has a 1973 shot of WRNX 14174 in plain black with white reporting marks and no "Gulf."



098 00 041 and 098 00 042, \$29.75 each
Reporting Marks: BNSF 808015 and 808022.

50 Foot Airslide Covered Hopper, BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe).

Mineral brown with some roof panels in gray. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small BNSF circle cross herald on right. White on black consolidated stencils at bottom right of center. Six yellow conspicuity stripes across bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 2011 to present.

Perhaps the most important lettering on these cars is right in the center: "Buffer [Service] Only - Do Not Load." Anyone who's seen a crude oil or ethanol train, on the BNSF or elsewhere, has probably seen one of these cars, or a similar older piece of rolling stock that's still sufficiently serviceable to be placed between locomotives and tank cars in a train. Certainly I have! Sometimes there are two of them. I've also seen buffer cars at both ends of a train.

Spacers between locomotives and, more importantly, their crews, and hazardous or flammable cargo isn't new. There have been previous regulations and practices dating back to the 1920s. I recall seeing an illustration of a flat car with hay bales stacked on it between a very early steam locomotive and passenger cars (an illustration I can't locate online, of course). How a highly combustible item such as hay provides protection against a relatively unstable early steam loco isn't clear to me, but it was a very early protocol in American Railroading.

Anyway, in trying to determine when these particular buffer cars might have been placed in service, I came across National Transportation Safety Board Recommendation R-08-13, which was issued in May 2008. (See www.nts.gov/safety/safety-recs/recletters/R08_13.pdf.)

This was an attempt to clarify the use of buffer cars and the spacing of "placarded" tank cars within a train. The NTSB's involvement was precipitated by the derailment of a Norfolk Southern train in Pennsylvania in October 2006, which resulted in the burning of twenty tank cars full of ethanol, release of the chemical into the Beaver River, and evacuation of part of the town of New Brighton. (Fortunately, there were no injuries or deaths.) "Because the accident train was a unit train transporting hazardous materials, questions were raised on scene about the number of buffer cars needed to separate train crews from the hazardous materials on unit trains. Buffer car regulations were initially developed to address the risks of transporting explosives, which needed to be isolated from ignition sources and from the train crew."

From there it gets confusing. When there is the option to place tank cars farther back in a train, railroads are required to do so. But ethanol unit trains – which are often considerably longer than, say, local freight trains – don't have any options since the entire train consists of tank cars. So, if I'm reading the document right, the railroads' position was that only one buffer car was required for a unit train. The Federal Railway Administration supported this position, but the NTSB recommended that it be revisited. Since I continue to see only single buffer cars in most unit trains, I think I can conclude what happened with the NTSB recommendation.

RailcarPhotos.com has shots of a number of these type of cars in buffer service, though not these specific road numbers, for example, BNSF 808097 photographed in 2015 and BNSF 808133 caught in 2013. These cars came from both the Santa Fe and the Burlington Northern and were General American products that match the particular design that MTL used for this body style. The prototype cars have had their hatch covers and outlet gates welded shut. Some online sources indicate that the cars were ballasted before being closed up. In any case, they certainly can't be loaded! Meanwhile, RRPictureArchives has the bingos we want. BNSF 808015, in a rather dark, oblique shot as of 2014, shows the rather sloppy renumbering which was applied. The image of BNSF 808023 is better; it's from 2012. Both of these cars were former Santa Fe and are technically class "MW" for Maintenance of Way. I'll speculate that this exempts the cars from the years of service regulations and allows them to be utilized for as long as they'll stay on the rails.

While the NTSB recommendation dates to 2008, and the photos of BNSF buffer cars I checked are from this decade, the ATP could go back to the beginning of the use of conspicuity stripes. The “swoosh” herald has appeared on other cars in the series. On the other hand, a few cars haven’t been repainted out of BN Cascade Green! I’ll conclude here by noting that other types of covered hoppers have been moved into buffer car service. Should MTL desire, they wouldn’t need to stop with these two examples.

And this just in: See the Incremental Information Section below for a first-hand account of these cars from our friend “The Masked Railroader.”



110 00 260, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: NLAX 191.

54 Foot General Service Tank Car, NASA Railway.

Black with moderate weathering. White lettering including restencil reporting marks on left. Approximate

Time Period: 1987 to 2011 (given by MTL). Car #4 in the NASA Series.

According to the Wikipedia entry on the NASA Railroad, there were four 100 ton tank cars on the line’s roster, out of the 75 total pieces of freight equipment. And zero photos I could locate online. Why would there be of a plain old second-hand heavily weathered tank car when there are those much more interesting rocket booster cars, helium cars and even the spacer cars? So, what we have here is the basic dead end. Can’t win ‘em all.

The more interesting cars are shown in a video produced by NASA itself, “Space Shuttle Era: NASA Railroad Keeps Boosters on Track.” We could call it “Incremental Information” as it provides views of the two Spacer Cars and the helium cars which have already been released in this series. It’s at www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZZV4yZCcEQ at this writing.



130 00 180, \$39.95

Reporting Marks: CSXT 904000.

Bay Window Caboose, Plain Sides, With Battery Box, CSX Transportation.

Red with aluminum roof, black lower sill and yellow side grab irons. White “Baltimore and Ohio / America’s 1st RR and black and yellow banner “175th

Anniversary” on left. White “Spirit of the B&O” and reporting marks on bay window. Yellow circles with American flag and B&O Capitol Dome heralds and wording “Linked to America’s History” on right. Approximate Time Period: 2003 to 2016 (see text).

It’s not a question of whether there are any photos of this special caboose, but how many! On RRPictureArchives there are more than two **pages** of images of this car, and there are more on

RailPictures.net. On the latter it's noted that this commemorative caboose was the brainchild of B&O caboose historian Dwight Jones. Jones has authored several books on this topic including the multi-volume **Encyclopedia of B&O Cabooses**. In fact, Jones and his brother actually did the painting of this caboose at no cost to CSX Transportation, using an actual B&O caboose which had been reassigned to CSX maintenance of way train service.

The photos on RRPictureArchives.net do reveal two deltas. First, it appears that the car is painted differently from one side to the other. One side is as MTL decorated the car while the other side has the "175th Anniversary" legend in white without the banner and the linked circles without the yellow background. Second, the actual 904000 has windows between the "Baltimore & Ohio / America's 1st RR" and "175th Anniversary," three on one side and one on the other. This is unusual for a prototype caboose that's still operating in The Present as many cars have had their windows completely plated over. And they're also now called "shoving platforms" for the most part, but that's another story.

Photo evidence indicates that no later than July, 2016 the "175th" was updated to "185th" Anniversary, so there is a "strictly speaking" ATP in effect. It looks like CSXT just overpainted the "8" over the "7" so you could do the same, assuming a reasonable typeface match is available. I think it's "Monotype Corsiva" if you're curious, a font I have actually utilized in the past!



143 00 100, \$29.95

Road Number: 619 (will be "NH 619" in website listings).

Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor Car, New Haven.

Pullman Green with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. White lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950s and 1960s at least.

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment from January 1953 has this car in its own listing under the New Haven's entry. It's listed as a "Coach, Steel" equipped with Electro-Mechanical Air Conditioning, seating capacity of 88, inside length of 73 feet 10 inches and outside length of 83 feet 6 inches. Coaches 602 to 606, 612, 621, 622, and 627 to 637 have the same information. MTL notes that the 619 was converted from a parlor car to a coach in December 1949 for commuter service. It's possible that other 600-series coaches were also rebuilt from parlor cars.

My photo searches were not successful. The closest I could get were other numbers in the 600s which did not line up with the dimensions of the 619 according to the ORPTE. Those are cited on Jerry Laboda's "Passenger Car Photo Index" (passcarphotos.info). The only other data point I have is from an NH Passenger Roster transcribed to the Fallen Flags website, which indicates that all of the 600 series coaches were gone by 1971. Not much help there. Again, since I have nothing new on the paint scheme, I'll stick with the guess I've been using since the NH car series was begun by MTL earlier this year.



145 00 130, \$31.80

Road Number: 2080 (will be "NYC 2080" in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, New York Central.

Two-tone gray with white stripes, black roof, ends and underframe. White lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom below roadname. Approximate Time Period: about 1953 (in general) or 1959 (this specific car) to late 1960s, but see text.

We turn once again to long time UMTRR Gang Member Mike Kmetz for a guest commentary on this latest New York Central passenger car release. Start quote...

"The NYC coach 2080 in two-tone gray is this month's subject. This time I have no complaint with the rendition of this car in two-tone gray. Beginning in 1953, air-conditioned coaches began to be painted in this scheme. In fact, there is a photo of this very car taken in 1966 on Jerry Laboda's passenger car photo list (passcarphotos.info). The only problem is, that like most NYC coaches, this was not a paired-window coach, and it is on four-wheel trucks not six-wheel trucks like the model has. A better choice for MTL would have been to release their heavyweight 28-1 parlor car in NYC livery with 2800-series number. This would be a much closer match to a NYC paired-window coach. The six-wheel trucks would be correct for this series. Except for one added window on one side (and different interior), these would be exactly like the 31 coaches the NYC rebuilt from parlor cars in 1942. The additional window can be seen in the photo of coach 2819 on Page 29 of the **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 2**.

"And wouldn't it be great if MTL would create their up-coming single window coach patterned after the ubiquitous NYC coach and tool up some proper 4-wheel trucks?

"All that aside, this car has an interesting history. It was built in 1929 by American Car and Foundry as an open platform observation car for the Big Four. It was painted brown with a fawn window band for the Cincinnati-Detroit Motor Queen train. That didn't last very long. It then carried NYC number 55 and I suspect it may be one of those cars converted to a boat-tail observation car, like number 56 that saw service on the Pacemaker train. In July of 1942 it was apparently converted to a coach and was numbered 2120. Finally, in July 1959 it received number 2080 at which time it probably also got its two-tone gray livery. The Canada Southern web site (www.canadasouthern.com) has this car listed in NYC lot 2154 of five cars (NYC 2078-2081, Drawing Number G-27) that were rebuilt from observation cars in 1942 at the Central's Beech Grove, Indiana shops."

End quote, and thanks again, Mike!

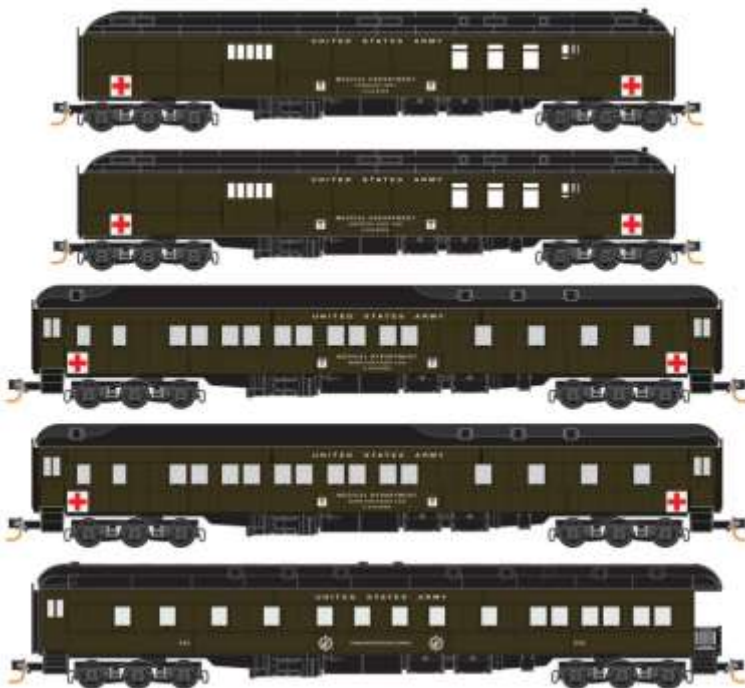


In addition to the above, the **Union Pacific Heavyweight Five-Pack (993 01 470, \$129.95)** is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2016 issue.

These are the catalog numbers of the individual items:

- 140 51 060, Road Number 2064, Heavyweight Railway Post Office.
- 145 52 060, Road Number 416 and 145 53 060, Road Number 409, Heavyweight Paired Window Coaches.
- 143 54 060, Road Number 1266, Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor Car.
- 144 55 060, Road Number 113, Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car.

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 December 31.



Scheduled Release May 2017:

993 01 520, \$139.95

U.S. Army Heavyweight Five-Pack.

Scheduled to consist of two 148 series Mail/ Baggage Cars, two 141 Series 10-1-2 Sleepers, and one 144 Series 3-2 Observation car. Each car is Olive Green with black roof, underframe and details. All cars have white lettering including "United States Army" in center of letterboard. Except for the observation, cars have red cross on white background at far left and right and "Medical Department," car type and reporting marks in center, with caduceus at left and right of this. The observation car has "Transportation Corps" with Transportation Corps symbol at left

and right and road number at left center and right center. Approximate Time Period: 1940s. MTL artwork is preliminary and is subject to change. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

A World War II-era magazine advertisement placed by the New York Central Railroad has the headline, "Trains In White." It's a description of the Army Hospital Trains that rode the Central's rails and many other railroads as well. The very bottom of the full-page advertisement shows one hospital train's consist: steam locomotive, baggage car, ward car, ward dressing car, two more ward cars, kitchen car, another ward dressing car, two more ward cars and a personnel car. The rest of the page has a cutaway of a hospital ward car with callout descriptions of some of its features. The ad is reprinted in an article by Michael T. Fleming, MD which originally appeared in *The Timetable*, a publication of the Piedmont Division of the Southeast Region of the National Model Railroad Association. The piece, which also contains historical data and modeling information for hospital trains, is available online at this writing: www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/sr201508hospital.pdf.

That same New York Central advertisement is reprinted on the site railwaysurgery.org which is looked after by Robert S. Gillespie, MD, MPH. (In this case, MPH stands for "Master of Public Health," no, I couldn't resist checking.) Gillespie also wrote "Trains in White" which appears in the **Classic Trains** special issue **Railroads and World War II** published in November 2007. He writes, "Hospital trains reached their pinnacle during World War II, although they were used in many conflicts. The number, complexity and resources devoted to hospital trains during this war far exceed that of any other period." There are floor plan diagrams for Hospital Unit Cars, Ward Cars and Ward Dressing Cars. There's also a reprint of the article "Hospitals on Wheels" which originally appeared in the September 1945 issue of **Railroad** magazine. American Car and Foundry built two hundred hospital cars at a cost of \$57,000 each.

Gillespie also provides a brief description of each type of car. Ward Cars were "like a hospital ward, these cars contained berths to hold patients." Ward Dressing Cars were "ward cars with a 'dressing room' at one end. The dressing room was a clean area used to change dressings. It could also serve as an operating room for emergency surgery." The New York Central advertisement notes this as well: "In an emergency, the [railroad] representative would have [the] train sidetracked, and the most delicate operation could be performed here." There were also full-size Kitchen Cars (not the same as the Troop Kitchen Car, MTL's 118 body style) and "Unit Cars," described as "A hybrid design that served as a self-contained 'unit,' these cars typically had a ward area with berths, a small kitchen, and a dressing room. The unit car became the most popular design, because of its flexibility." The author notes that "By the end of World War II, the U.S. Army owned 202 unit cars, 80 ward cars, 38 ward dressing cars and 60 kitchen cars, a total of 380 cars."

Photos of these specially built cars during and after construction reveal a major difference between the AC&F cars and the MTL models: the real cars may have been heavyweight by definition but they looked more like smooth sided cars. However, it's also plausible that any number of other cars were pressed into service for hospital trains, so the use of equipment more like the MTL body styles is not completely out of the question. As always, it's up to the modeler to decide.

Though hospital trains had some use in the Korean War, by that time they were being replaced by air transportation for casualties. The World War II era hospital cars were retired and either scrapped or sold off. One of the purchasers was the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.



Scheduled Delivery May 2017:

993 51 530, \$84.95

Merchants Despatch Four-Pack.

Scheduled to consist of four MTL 151 series Civil War Era boxcars as follows:

- Brown (boxcar red) with white lettering including “Merchants Despatch Transportation Company” in semi-circle on left, road number 249 and “Fruit Car” on right.
- Brown (boxcar red) with white lettering including “Merchants Despatch Transportation Company” in semi-circle on left, road number 298 on right.
- Dark brown with gray roof; white lettering including “Merchants Despatch Transportation Company” in semi-circle on left, road number 3101 on right.
- Gray with brown shadowed lettering including “Merchants Despatch Transportation Company” in semi-circle on left, road number 1516 on door, and “New York Boston and Milwaukee / Milwaukee Line” on right.

Approximate Time Period: early 1870s to no later than 1875 (Milwaukee Line car) or 1895 (other cars). MTL artwork is preliminary and is subject to change. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

Here’s a forthcoming set of cars that were, relatively speaking, right from the backyard of UMTRR HQ. As such, I’d better get this right, right? Well, there’s an entire book titled **Merchants Despatch: Its History and Equipment**, written by Roger Hinman and published by Signature Press in 2011. It appears to be MTL’s direct source material for at least two of these cars. It will also be my primary source for information here.

There were several different incarnations of Merchants Despatch. I tend to think of the car lessor which was owned by the New York Central and then Penn Central and Conrail. The large shop complex in East Rochester was legally Despatch Shops, Incorporated although it was closely linked to MDT. But for these cars, we need to go back quite a bit farther, to MDT’s original business of being a fast freight carrier. The company was founded in 1855 to set up expedited shipments of merchandise between specific cities, initially including Boston, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland and Chicago. In order to make this happen, the company rented rolling stock for its shipments, contracting with, among others, the New York Central Railroad, to transport them on faster schedules than what was usual for a freight train.

“Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt took notice of this. Having taken control of the New York Central in 1868, he had negotiated new terms with Merchants Despatch which sunk its profits to effectively zero. In 1871 the Merchants Despatch Transportation Company was reorganized with Vanderbilt’s son William in control but with James C. Fargo running operations. (Besides being the Fargo in Wells, Fargo and Company that family also ran American Express.) Among the first orders of business was the assembly of a freight car fleet, as had been done by the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad. By 1877 this fleet numbered three thousand cars. You wouldn’t find these in an ORER since it wouldn’t be published for the first time until 1885.

The first cars owned outright by MDT were 29 foot boxcars ordered in 1871. These were soon joined by “frost proof” insulated cars that guarded against freezing of cargo in winter months and “Fruit Cars” which had ventilation. Page 86 of the **Merchants Despatch** book includes a line drawing from the **Railroad Atlas for 1879** of the “Milwaukee Line” boxcar with Road Number 1516; certainly one of the more unusual “bingo” examples I’ve been able to cite. Car 3101 is pictured on Page 90 in glorious black and white as it appeared at the Centennial Exposition in 1876. There isn’t an exact match to the other two road numbers but there are similar paint schemes shown. The use of link and pin couplers appears to be correct for the entire lifespan of these cars, since they weren’t banned from interchange service until 1900. With the advent of larger cars, all of the 29 foot cars were off the roster and destroyed by 1895, although 1731 of them were gone no later than 1893. Of the four cars, it’s likely that the “Milwaukee Line” car was gone first, repainted into a non-specific scheme by 1875. Should you prefer to run the car as is later than that, I won’t tell...

N SCALE REPRINTS:



101 00 040, \$35.90

Reporting Marks: UP 518256.

40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Single Door, Union Pacific.

Yellow sides, aluminum roof, ends, lower side sill, and trucks. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Large red, white and blue shield medallion on left. Multicolor “Automated Railway” logo

on right. Red and white “Appliance” sideboard on left. Approximate Time Period: 1967 (build date on car) to mid-1980s. Previous Release: Road Number 518250, February 2006.

These almost certainly had to be the most colorful of the assigned boxcar pool at the Whirlpool plant in Evansville, Indiana. There’s no doubt about what these cars are carrying; the bright red and white “Appliances” sideboard says so. And there’s no shortage of color on the rest of the car either, which, as I have noted before, is a key contributor to that up-there MSRP.

The April 1970 ORER shows the short series 518250 to 518263 described as “Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe” with a couple of notes indicating the 19 Belt DF-2 loaders and that the cars “are excess height and have no running boards” -- still unusual features in 1970. The stats: inside

length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 13 feet, outside length 47 feet 5 inches (indicating that perhaps medium extension trucks would work also), extreme height 17 feet, door opening 10 feet, capacity 5028 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. There were 14 cars in this group, but the sets 518270 to 518287 and 518300 to 518304 have identical dimensions, for a total of 37 cars-- still just .06% of the total Union Pacific fleet at the time.

By April 1981 there were 12 of the 14 cars in service in the group (and 31 overall) and they'd been given 22 Belt DF-2 loaders and classified into the "Plate F" dimension set. Eleven (and 26 total) remained in October 1986. It looks like the series was gone by July 1987, a quick exit.

These cars carried the Union Pacific class B-50-55. A bingo to the first road number MTL released, 518250, is found on Page 31 of the **UP Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One). The prototype had a completely flat roof and thin diagonal lines angling toward the door -- weld lines, perhaps? These are differences to the 101 body style.



In addition to the above, three single release Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus Flat Cars are scheduled to be available mid-month. These are Catalog 139 00 021, Road Number 107; Catalog 139 00 022, Road Number 122; and Catalog 139 00 023, Road Number 141. Each is priced at \$23.95. I'm showing only the image of the 021 release here.



Also, two sets of Ringling Brothers Circus Wagons are scheduled to be available mid-month. Catalog Number 470 00 249, shown at left, includes Wagons 9 and 10, and Catalog Number 470 00 259 has Wagons 11 and 12. Each pair is \$34.95. Both the flat cars and wagons were open for pre-orders in August 2016.

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 December 13.*



025 44 006, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: EEC 1311.

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door,
East Erie Commercial Railroad.**



Base car is freight car red (brown) white lettering including reporting marks on left. One side of car has mountain scene with full moon which is partially graffitied over. Other side of car has mostly white “scribble” graffiti with small multicolor

tagging left of door. Approximate Time Period: at least 2008 based on date of prototype photo. Previous Releases: None.

I think this release gets filed in the “No Honor Among Taggers” Department. Okay, as you know I’m not really a fan of graffiti. The colors on the mountainscape are nice, though, and I can almost like the full moon depicted on the car. But is it that someone else overpainted that graffiti with that white and black I-have-no-idea-what-they’re-saying scrawl?

Anyway, the prototype photo MTL supplied was not dated, so I did what every other self-respecting overzealous researcher would do: I searched on Flickr to try to locate the photo. Instead, I located a different photo of the same car, this one dated 2008. (I certainly found plenty of East Erie Commercial-marked cars, including one that was clearly a former Delta Valley and Southern car, that railroad being on Per Diem Series Car #1.)

I almost wish I hadn’t opened the ORER for January 2011 to the East Erie Commercial Railroad’s registration. The main series EEC 450 to 1348 is accompanied by more than two entire pages of subsets! Among them is the 1311 along with 174 other cars with 5347 cubic foot capacity. That is a little bigger than the 5077 cubic foot car that is the basis for the 025 body style. The car is a 50 foot 6 inch inside length “Box, Steel” with AAR Designation XP, a ten foot door opening and a gross rail weight of 220,000 pounds.

Although it seems these days that graffiti lasts as long as the car it’s on does, I believe we might have an exception in this case. The road numbers all around the 1311 are shown on the site RRPictureArchives.net as being “now BKTY.” That’s a revived reporting mark for the Union Pacific, formerly utilized by the Missouri-Kansas-Texas or Katy as being leased cars from the Southern Pacific’s Bankers Leasing Corporation. I don’t think Bankers Leasing is around anymore, but we do know that the UP has brought back plenty of heritage reporting marks. So it’s entirely possible that the EEC 1311 has BKTY reporting marks, and, I hope, a new paint job. Also of note is that the prototype 1311 has a door that closely aligns to what Micro-Trains used on its model. Other cars in the 1300s have different doors, although it’s clear from the ORER that the EEC really didn’t care how much it mixed up different sized boxcars in its numbering, ahem, sequence.

Speaking of numbers, here’s some trivia: With this release, MTL needs to “reboot” its catalog number sequence for the 025 body style. They’ve run out of numbers that end in zero, so following the practice they used with the 020 body style, with is by far the car type that has the largest number of individual paint schemes.



098 44 010, \$32.95.

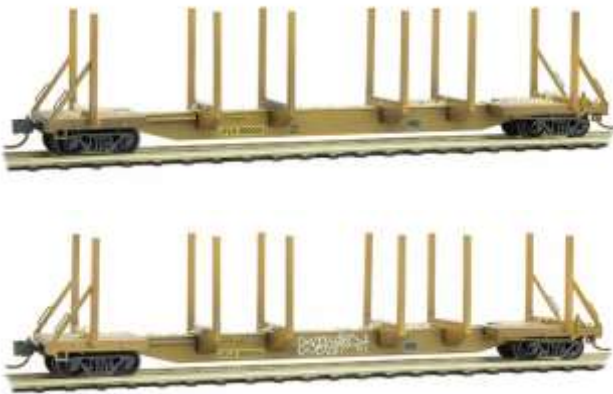
Reporting Marks: GACX 48567.

50 Foot Airslide Covered Hopper, General American (GACX).

Base car is light blue with dark blue panel at far left. Black lettering including reporting marks on left. Yellow "GATX Airslide" on dark blue panel. White on black consolidated stencils at bottom right. Light weathering and multicolor graffiti on at least one side; black caption "I'm not one to graffiti" left of reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: at least 2005, based on prototype photo date. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Numbers 47906 and 47924, September 2016.

"I'm not one to graffiti," graffitied one graffitier. Cute. No, wait, the actual car graffiti reads something like "I've never been in love like this before" – if I am reading it right – which is close to the title of the Top 10 Smash "Never Knew Love Like This Before" by Stephanie Mills from the Summer of 1980. Probably just a coincidence there, and more proof that you never know what I'm going to write in this column...

The prototype photo, over on RRPictureArchives.net, is dated May of 2005 and is captioned as being part of a Norfolk Southern train observed on the fourteenth of that month, so I think we're good on the date. As I noted in the September coverage of this car, the first in the new body style, these cars lasted at least into the decade of the 2000s.



115 44 040, \$57.95

Reporting Marks: JTLX 900035 and 900039.

JTLX Log Car Two-Pack.

Consists of two 65 Foot Modern Log Cars. Base car is yellow with black reporting marks on brighter yellow patch panel on left. White on black consolidated stencils on right. Lightly weathered. The 900039 has minimal white "scrawl" graffiti. Simulated load residue. Approximate Time Period: early decade of the 2000s to present. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 900020 and 900028,

June 2015. Individual catalog numbers are 115 51 040 (the 900035) and 115 52 040 (the 900039).

As I noted in the June 2015 coverage of the "clean" virtual two-pack of these cars, the JTLX reporting marks are registered to CIT Group/Capital Finance, Incorporated in the January 2011 ORER. While I'm there, I'll note that the series 900001 to 900099 consisted of 89 cars, with inside length 65 feet 5 inches, outside length 68 feet 7 inches, extreme height 16 feet 6 inches, and gross rail weight 263,000 pounds. Reaching back to the October 2004 Register, though, JTLX is under the listing for Joseph Leasing Company, and there were 99 cars listed in the same series. The January 2002 ORER is the earliest edition in which I see these cars, and all 100 are

there. I can also update forward to the October 2014 ORER, which lists 82 cars. I think the “to present” ATP is still good.

I have a bingo on the 900035, carrying a pole load, on RRPictureArchives.net. The image is from October 2012. The 115 body style isn’t an exact match to this car, with the most notable difference being a lack of diagonal stiffeners on the outermost two of the six uprights. There’s also an actual brake wheel installed instead of a brake lever. From other photos there I note that the placement of those reporting marks varies a bit from car to car. Last time I also referenced the site freightcars.midatlanticrr.com; however as of this writing it’s “suspended.”

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #123** (993 00 123, \$99.95), four Missouri Pacific “Eagle Merchandise Service” forty foot single door boxcars, is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 020 51 806, 46866; 020 52 806, 46894; 020 00 806, 46944; 020 54 806, 46978. These are the second through fifth 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 December 31.



Scheduled Delivery May 2017:

993 00 128, \$89.95.

Reporting Marks: ACFX 87271, 87277, 87282.

Quantity three of 65 Foot General Service Tank Car, General Electric Railcar Services (formerly ACF Industries or Shippers Car Line).

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black double panel consolidated stencils on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s (1974 build date) to about the year 2000. Previous Release: Road Number 87281, August 2001; then Weathered Four-Pack 993 05 060 with Road Numbers 87276, 87279, 87284, 87288; January 2011. Individual catalog numbers should be 110 5x 010.

Remember, folks, always check the Weathered Releases before deciding how many previous releases there have been for a car! This Runner Pack will contain the sixth through eighth road numbers for this particular car, not the second through fourth. Almost did an “oops” there.

Anyway, with the lack of both conspicuity stripes and tank qualification stencils, we would know that the ATP for these cars does not extend to the present. Tank qualification stencils came first, starting in the year 2000, and they were added to tank cars relatively quickly. While the actual prototypes did continue in service beyond 2000 – for example, there’s a shot of sister car ACFX 87275 as of March 2009 with stencil and stripes on RRPictureArchives.net – the lack of these on this forthcoming release does end the Approximate Time Period earlier. Of course, there is always Rule #1.

The April 1976 ORER, the closest one I have to the MTL-given built year of 1974, shows this car under Shippers Car Line, not ACF. The road number series 86567 to 87947 of 1,370 cars with AAR Class TMI and 200,000 pounds capacity. The cars in this series was marked either “ACFX” or “SHPX.” And that’s it, unfortunately; as usual, tank cars are not well described in the ORER. The October 1986 Register shows a breakup of the large group into multiple smaller ones, including ACFX 87271 to 87289 which covers all three road numbers here.

By October 1991, Shippers Car Line is gone, ACF Industries is the registration for the cars, and that there are still 18 cars in the short series as in 1986. In April 1998 17 cars still remained in the group, but they and all ACFX cars had become part of the more than 120,000 car fleet registered to and looked after by General Electric Rail Services. They were still listed that way in the January 2000 ORER, which is where I stopped looking given the, well, qualification. (Sorry.)

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No pre-orders this month and just one new item...



101 00 819, \$23.95

Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, “Magical Greeting.”

Car #9 in the Vintage Postcard Series.

Ends, roof, side sill and edges of sides are green. End ladders are red. Side A has a multicolor rendition of a picture postcard with off-yellow and green graphics at left

and right. Side B has a “Postcard Message” from Micro-Trains. No reporting marks or road number appear on this car.

Of the nine cars in the Vintage Postcard Series, only two, this one and #4, do not feature Santa Claus. And unlike the previous two cars released this year to wrap up the series, I was able to locate the source postcard straight away. I don’t think I’m violating any copyrights on this work by adding it here since odds are that the postcard is over one hundred years old at this point. Micro-Trains did modify the original artwork a bit for space reasons



and you'll also note that the greeting has changed from the rather dated "Happy be your Christmas" to the more typical "Merry Christmas."

With that, the Vintage Postcard Series concludes. MTL shows all nine cars still available, though the companion SW1500 and bay window caboose appear to be sold out at the factory.

NARROW GAUGE (Nn3) RELEASES: No releases this month. In fact, no releases this year...

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



500 00 911 and 500 00 912, \$25.80 each
Reporting Marks: NYSW 501 and 505.
40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Youngstown Door, Susquehanna (New York, Susquehanna and Western).

Green with yellow lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Slogan "Ship with Susie-Q" and multicolor "Susie-Q" character on right. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (paint date given by MTL) through 1970s.

I suppose it is not a good idea to admit this.
I can often leverage previous coverage of N

Scale releases of Micro-Trains products for Z Scale coverage, and this is one of those times. That means I need to tease out the catalog number of the N Scale item and then reach back into the UMTRR Archives for what I'd previously written. And one of the data points stuck in my brain is that the N Scale release of this car carries Catalog 020 00 670/20670. I did not have to look this up! Gee, George, you really do have a lot of trivia in your brain!

It could be because a prized item in my own accumulation is the January 2000 N Scale reprint, the label for which is autographed by Walter Rich, whose Delaware Otsego Corporation owned the NYS&W from 1980 onwards. I met Walter at a public event not long after the car was released. I got three copies direct from the factory. I gave Walter one, had him autograph the labels on the other two, kept one of those and sent the other back to Micro-Trains.

During the mid-1960s era in which this attractive green car rolled, the NYS&W was not much more than a glorified shortline in Northern New Jersey. It had been cut back to Sparta Junction, where there was connection with the Lehigh and Hudson River. The rest of the line to Hainesburg Junction was nullified when the Lehigh and New England quit in 1961; the Pennsylvania-based portion and Hanford branch were already gone. Track continued to deteriorate and service continued to retreat towards Susie's home base of Little Ferry. A washout cut what operation there was all the way back to Butler.

With the coming of Conrail, the Suskie was about the railroad in the area not painted in Big Blue. The Delaware Otsego Corporation assumed control of the line, and aggressively expanded its reach by picking up former Lackawanna Railroad lines from Binghamton to Utica and Syracuse. A connection to those was needed, so the line got trackage rights on the former Erie Railroad's Southern Tier route—ironic considering that the Erie once controlled the NYS&W. But to compete effectively with Conrail and avoid expensive haulage rights agreements, the unthinkable was done—rebuilding of track! The line from Butler to Sparta was put back in 1986. Along with a section of the Lehigh and Hudson River which had been exsessed by Conrail, the Suskie connected to Waldwick, New York and then over trackage rights to Binghamton. (It's since leased this trackage through a subsidiary.) This allowed the NYS&W to handle stack trains on behalf of Sea-Land to its intermodal terminal in Little Ferry. Track which once could hardly handle S-2 switchers played host to big widecab diesels! The Susie-Q also was the designated operator for the Delaware and Hudson for a time. Still independent itself after a fashion--it's 80 percent owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern-- the line is again more of a local freight operation following the split of Conrail by those same two railroad giants. But it's still around-- more than can be said for its former competitors.

The ORER from January 1964 is a little too early to show this series, which was repainted in September of that year. However, the series 501 to 524, with all 24 cars, is found in the January 1967 ORER. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet even, and inside width 9 feet even. The outside length was 42 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 2 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3645 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. There were still 24 cars in the ORER for July 1978, but they were gone from revenue service by the April 1981 Equipment Register. I believe that a single Susie-Q car remained at or near Little Ferry after that. I have a dim and perhaps faulty memory of actually seeing one there.

A three-quarter view of sister car NYSW 508 in the book **Classic Freight Cars Volume 7** betrays that it is actually a steel rebuild of a much older car, and the caption accompanying the circa 1966 photo confirms this as well as it being a second hand purchase. George Elwood's Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) has shots of several of these cars as well. The Susie-Q did have PS-1 cars, which are the basis for the MTL 500 body style. But they didn't have Susie-Q on them, being painted in either yellow and green or in basic boxcar red.



511 00 230, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: EACH 2455.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, East Camden and Highland.

#11 in the MTL Z Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. Orange with white band in center

of side. Black lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left, and State of Arkansas map on right inside white band. Black end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date) to no later than 1989.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Release above (027 00 410).



533 00 141 and 533 00 142, \$21.95 each

**Reporting Marks: MILW 96340 and 96432.
33 Foot Steel Open Hopper, Offset Sides,
Flat Ends, Milwaukee Road.**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and "Milwaukee Road" tilted rectangle herald on right. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1953 (1958 repaint date on cars) into the 1960s at least.

According to the **Milwaukee Road Color Guide to Freight and Passenger**

Equipment Volume 2, the line "had a modest sized fleet of two bay hoppers for a railroad its size... like most western railroads, the Milwaukee hauled a lot of coal in gondolas believing it to be a more versatile car." Well, I suppose it was more versatile if you weren't the one shoveling out the coal! Page 97 of the **Color Guide** has a 1958 shot of MILW 95587 with the caption that it was probably in 1957 when this car's herald was changed from the previous 1930s era herald to the "The Milwaukee Road" tilted rectangle. That later version of the herald was adopted circa 1953, so repainting was gradual. The "billboard style" roadname was the next paint scheme, adopted in the 1960s. It's also noted in the **Color Guide** that the Milwaukee built its "coal cars" in its own shops, so there are probably some differences between the real 94570 and the model. In addition, cars in the 95000 series, previously offered in N Scale by Kadee and Micro-Trains, were rebuilt with reinforced sides according to photos on the Fallen Flags website dating from the 1973 and 1983. So the exact ATP could be a bit of a challenge.

The series 96000 to 96999 arrived sometime between 1945 and 1950 based on my ORER lookups. These were 33 foot inside length hoppers with capacity 2145 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Jumping all the way to the April 1970 ORER, probably already out of the ATP for this paint scheme, there were 298 cars in service. The April 1975 Register shows the series but with no car count. Perhaps these hoppers were moved to another group, like the 95000s. By 1976 the 96000s numbers were being utilized for covered hoppers.

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 December 31.



Scheduled Delivery May 2017:

994 01 180, \$119.95, Linde Liquefied Gas Car 4-Pack.

Will consist of four 500 series 40 foot steel boxcars with single Youngstown doors as follows:

Reporting Marks LAPX 2023. Green roof, ends and lower half of sides including doors. Green “Linde Liquefied Gases” on left and Union Carbide logo on right on white half of side. White reporting marks and data on green half of side. White on black consolidated stencils, yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection “dot” and multicolor ACI label on right. Approximate Time Period: at least 1978 (given U-1 “dot”) to no later than 1992.

Reporting Marks LAPX 2038. Green with white band across side including door. Green and white Linde / Union Carbide logo on left; green “Industrial Gases” on white band on right. White reporting marks on left. White on black consolidated stencils, yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection “dot” and multicolor ACI label on right. Approximate Time Period: early 1960s or 1978 (given U-1 “dot”) to no later than 1992.

Reporting Marks LAPX 2047. Green with white lettering. Union Carbide logo plus “Gas Products” on left; “Linde Liquefied Gases” on right. White reporting marks on left. White on black consolidated stencils, yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection “dot” and multicolor ACI label on right. Approximate Time Period: at least 1978 (given U-1 “dot”) to no later than 1992.

Reporting Marks LAPX 2034. White with green lettering and green stripe across car (including door). Union Carbide logo plus “Gas Products” on left; “Linde Liquefied Gases” on right. Green reporting marks on far left. White on black double panel consolidated stencils on right. Approximate Time Period: at least 1979 (given photo evidence) to no later than 1992.

Each car will contain an interior tank load. Reporting Marks and Catalog Numbers will be confirmed upon release. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

The September 2016 UMTRR has my full coverage of this four-pack, which was announced for pre-orders in N Scale at that time. (If you need that “back issue” let me know and I’ll do my best to get it to you in a reasonable timeframe...) However, I overlooked the fact that long time UMTRR Gang Member Jeff Maurer sent over some Incremental Information, start quote:

“At their height, Linde had around 500 (498 in 1955) of these special tank cars operating under the LAPX (built and leased from GATX) and SERX (built by ACF and leased from Shippers Car Line) reporting marks. The first cars were built in 1939 with most of the cars being built during the 1940s, and continued to see use into the 1990s (there were still 14 listed in the 1992 ORER). They were built to have tanks permanently mounted inside of the boxcars with the box being used to protect and help insulate the tanks inside. They were built to Linde’s specifications to transport cryogenic gases (that is a gas that exists in a liquid state only at extremely low temperatures) like liquid oxygen (normal boiling point -297 degrees) and liquid nitrogen (normal boiling point -320 degrees). The box cars were based on the ARA 1932 design and, depending on when they were built, had either 4/4 “W” section ends, 4/5 Dreadnaught section ends or flat ends (sheet steel). All of the cars were beefed up from 50 tons to 70 tons to withstand the weight of the loaded tanks. They also wore at least six different paint schemes in their lifetimes with most of the changes happening in the 1970s.

“These were the paint schemes:

1939 until 1945, dark green (or brown) with white diamond and lettering

1945 until late 1950s, brown (boxcar red) with white diamond and lettering

Late 1950s into 1960s, green with white stripe, Linde Industrial Gases

Early 1970s, half green, half white

Mid 1970s, all green

1979 on, all white; usually the roof walk was removed at this time and ladders limited to three rungs

“It would not have been unusual to find cars wearing all four of the paint schemes that MTL is offering running at one time, as long as that time is after 1979. Photos for the green with white stripe cars are rather easy to find, but as for the brown with white stripe car that was produced by N Scale Collector, I have yet to see a picture of that car, not to say that there isn’t one that exists). I’m hoping that MTL eventually does the earlier cars from the 1950’s (white diamond cars) in a future release. “

Z SCALE REPRINTS: A quartet in Armour Yellow and Harbor Mist Gray...



980 01 011 and 980 01 012, \$139.95 each; Road Numbers: 1426 and 1449

and

980 02 011 and 980 02 012, \$114.95 each; Road Numbers 1426B and 1449B

F7A and F7B Powered Diesels, Union Pacific.

Each unit is yellow with partially gray roof (A units) or full gray roof (B units) accented by red striping. Green anti-glare panel on nose in front of cab windows. Aluminum trucks, Gray lower sills, grille, and pilot (on A-units). Roadname and road number in red on side of units. A units have winged UP medallion on nose and white on black numberboards. Approximate Time Period: 1951 to x. Previous Releases, A Unit: As Catalog 14001/14001-2, Road Number 1458, March 1986; Road Number 1455, December 1994; Road Number 1467, December 2002. As Catalog 980 01 010, Road Number 1469, April 2005 and Road Number 1468, September 2011. All but the last release were available with either Magne-Matic or

Marklin Couplers. Previous Releases, Powered B Unit: As Catalog 980 02 010, Road Number 1474B, April 2013; Road Number 1478B, May 2014.

Let’s head right over to Don Strack’s UtahRails.net, my go to source for the Union Pacific diesel roster, for specifics on each of these four units. First, I’ll note that the units were technically F3s, not F7s, but the UP converted many of these to F7 specifications – and it can be difficult to

tell late F3s from F7s anyway without a very trained eye. (Which I don't have, particularly when reduced to 1:220 proportion.) There were "true" F7s on the Union Pacific's roster as well, numbered from 1466 to 1483 and from 1466B and C to 1494 B and C. This includes former EMD demonstrator units.

Meanwhile, the F7As 1426 and 1449 were both built in 1948 and traded back to EMD in 1964. However, the ATP for the B units is a lot shorter. The 1426B was built in February 1948 and regearred and renumbered to 1520B in December 1950. The 1449B became 1406C and then 1528C by October 1951, also with regearing in the process. These units were remanufactured F9Bs in 1958, receiving numbers 533B and 516B respectively, and then were also traded into EMD in 1966. Have I said that UtahRails.net is very comprehensive?

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about December 13.*



506 44 340, \$27.25.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 4166.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown 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. Light to moderate weathering and hobo tagging to right of door. Approximate Time Period: early decade of the 1960s. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Numbers 4166 and 4179, August 2016. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that either of the previous two road numbers could have been used for this Weathered Release.

More seriousness on the Hobo Tagging this month, if you're a hobo. The two joined circles translate to "Police here frown on hobos." The symbol next to it means "Be ready to defend yourself." I've seen that symbol on images with the line coming out of the bottom, i.e. upside down from the way MTL depicted it. Either way sends the message.

As noted in the August coverage of the Z and N Scale releases of this car, the paint scheme is relatively short-lived, lasting, strictly speaking, from just 1961 to 1965.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: Runner Pack #98

(994 00 098, \$114.95), four Pan Am Railways/ Boston and Maine 50 foot exterior post boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 510 51 110, 3313; 510 52 110, 3320; 510 53 110, 3345; 510 54 110, 3352. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously



released. Yes, the catalog number is way out of sequence, but MTL hasn't used it before – I checked.

There was no pre-order announcement for Z Scale Runner Packs this month; the Linde Boxcar Four-Pack announcement most likely replaces that.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: As promised, the N Scale True-Scale Couplers are now available in brown plastic, in the same configurations and quantities as the black plastic version. Which are: Short Shank, 2 Pair, 001 22 300, \$3.45; Long Shank, 2 Pair, 001 22 301, \$3.45; Short Shank, 10 Pair, 001 25 300, \$15.95; Long Shank, 10 Pair, 001 25 301, \$15.95.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: I can connect Micro-Trains' revival of the Roco Helium Car body style for two releases to even more information about the prototype. Freight car scholar Tony Thompson did a three-part series on the real cars including how to upgrade the AHM HO Scale version, which is similar to the Roco/Atlas First Generation N Scale car that MTL uses. The installments of the series, on Thompson's "Modeling the SP" blog, are here: <http://modelingthesp.blogspot.com/2012/04/helium-cars-part-1.html> , then <http://modelingthesp.blogspot.com/2012/06/helium-cars-part-2.html> and winds up here <http://modelingthesp.blogspot.com/2012/11/helium-cars-part-3.html> .



Speaking of the MTL revival of the Helium Car, prior to the NASA Series release last month, it was used as a part of the Dr. Mort's Creepy Carnival Train Set which was issued in September. MTL didn't have a photo of the set or the item numbers then, but I was able to get both for the website updates, and here is that information...

- 987 51 019, FT-A Diesel Locomotive
 - 140 52 079, Heavyweight RPO
 - 139 53 009, Circus Flat Car
 - 985 56 903, Modified Roco Helium Car "The Exhibit" with MTL decoration, trucks and couplers.
 - 144 57 059, Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car
- Well... almost. I suspect that the trailer and circus wagon also have specific catalog numbers which have '54' and '55' respectively as the two center digits.

Further to the BNSF Airslide Covered Hoppers released this month, we're pleased to more from "The Masked Railroader" who knows quite a bit about these cars, start quote:

“When Micro-Trains first announced their 50 Foot Airslide Hoppers in the first two GACX numbers (UMTRR Issue 237, September 2016), I thought those cars would have been perfect to run on my crude oil and ethanol trains, as I had personally run several trains with similar but larger GACX Airslides in the same paint scheme in buffer service (e.g., GACX 57071 which is 4900 cubic feet vs 4180 cubic feet for the MTL GACX numbers). The MTL cars just lacked the ‘BUFFER SERVICE ONLY’ stencil.

“Imagine my shock and pleasure when Micro-Trains announced the BNSF Airslides MTL 098 00 011 and 098 00 012 stenciled for ‘BUFFER SVC ONLY.’ I just had to look at some of my wheel reports to see if I had run any of those cars, and voilà, when I checked for BNSF 808015 I found it on quite a few crude oil trains paired with BNSF 808122 (**almost** a perfect match for the second MTL car number) in buffer service out of the Three Forks and Bakken Formations, and a couple years later on ethanol trains heading to Fort Worth, Texas. I also found BNSF 808022 in buffer service on crude oil trains.

“The practice at the time had three locomotives on each crude oil or ethanol train running 2x1 (one locomotive DPU). One buffer car was used on the head and rear to separate the flammable cars from the locomotives. If the train ran with all three locomotives on the head end, the rear buffer car was either left on the rear (and hung with an end of train device) or paired up front with the leading buffer car. From what I can tell, these cars stayed with their set of flammable cars for at least several months and were mostly in crude or ethanol unit-train service. I found the M LAUDIC (Laurel to Dickinson manifest) dropping off a block of seven BNSF 8080xx series cars at Dickinson just before the Bakken Oil Express started shipping crude oil trains out of their new Eland, ND terminal in late 2011.

“The earliest crude oil trains out of the Bakken used a motley assortment of 4427, 4460, and 4750 cubic foot three-bay covered hoppers in buffer service and there are still a lot in that service today. I didn't start seeing these specific renumbered (8080xx) BNSF Airslides until 2011. Although incomplete, my records show BNSF used three-bay hoppers in 2009-2010 before they started adding the Airslides in 2011.

“Burlington Northern (and predecessors) and Santa Fe rostered a large number of 4180 cubic foot Airslide Hoppers in 24 series built between 1964 and 1979. While Micro-Trains says these cars ‘were removed from revenue service and re-stenciled for use as a buffer car in the late 1990s,’ that likely represents the date these cars were repainted from legacy BN and ATSF series into mineral brown and given their BNSF 400254-401110 numbers. I don't have any ORERs later than 2008 immediately handy and the series BNSF 808000-808099 does not appear yet. And since I personally ran the BNSF 808122, the series has grown since. With several hundred cars built post-1974, there are many candidates for renumbering into buffer service and they could run on trains through 2029.”

Further to the set of prototype 50 foot x-post boxcars that have gone from Boston and Maine to Guilford to Pan Am Railways: they are very much still around. On December 13, I observed one of these cars in the original B&M paint scheme (blue with large roadname) two cars away

from another of these cars in the current Pan Am scheme. Obviously repainting might not be top of mind for The Powers That Be at Pan Am...

OOPS PATROL: No updates from last time.

FREIGHT CARS JOURNAL TEMPORARILY UNAVAILABLE: I certainly hope I didn't jinx things when I closed the September 2016 UMTRR with information on Freight Cars Journal, the scholarly magazine / monograph led by historian David Casdorph. Just a few days later, Casdorph announced that the website housing the FCJ back issues was being "parked" and the content would no longer be available there after October 2. And there's another important lesson about grabbing online material one wants to keep – which, fortunately, I did this time!

DISCONTINUED ALERT: IT IS BACK! And oh, my, is the bye-bye board back. There were no official sold out lists distributed for October or November by Micro-Trains. There also wasn't one with the Micro-News for December that receives wide circulation, including, for example, to me. However, Authorized Micro-Trains Dealers received a supplement which did include a discontinued list... which included forty-three N Scale items and nineteen Z Scale items. I cannot come up with enough clichés for a total of sixty-two catalog numbers that have left the building, and I'd rather get these bytes to you sooner than later. So for one more month, the Discontinued Alert is outta here – except that as I mentioned at the top of the column, I've already updated the website tables. Assuming that the January 2017 list is reasonably short, I'll return to the usual format, with the usual clichés.

FINALLY: THAT WRAPS YEAR TWENTY... and with that, this column has run as long or longer than all American scripted television series except one – and I doubt that I'll catch **The Simpsons**, which is at 28 years and still counting. No big celebrations of the milestone are planned – no "special runs" for example. There's just not enough time in the day... Although I do intend to take the rest of the year off.

Have a happy and safe holiday season, and until next time, do the best you can.

Cheers,
George

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