



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

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

**Issue #250 – October, 2017**

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Hello again everyone... it looks like another milestone issue of these bytes has snuck up on us. This is the “official” 250<sup>th</sup> time that I’ve put fingers to keyboard with the news and views on the products of Micro-Trains. (What became the UMTRR dates back earlier than that; I started counting as of January 1997 and numbering began with Issue #67 in July 2002.) I’m happy and humbled to be able to bring this to you each month, and hoping to keep this going for many issues to come. Issue #500 might be a bit of a stretch, though...

Anyway, we have as usual a trainload of items to discuss, and the Discontinued Alert is back, with a biggie. Let’s kick things off this month with some Preserved Fruits...

### **N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:**



**058 00 270, \$28.95**

**Reporting Marks: HJHCo. 472.**

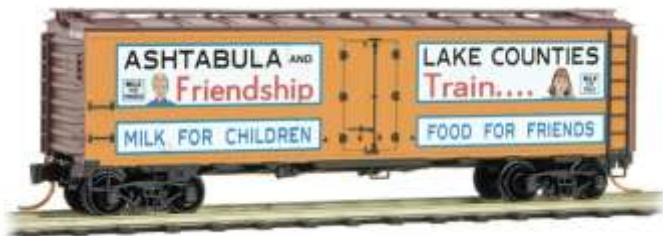
**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Vertical Brake Staff, Heinz.**

**#2 in the Heinz Series (pre-orders taken April 2017). Brown with black underframe and arch bar trucks. Green and white Heinz pickle trademark on left. Red with**

**white outline lettering including “57 Varieties” on left and “Preserved Fruits” and reporting marks on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1890s.**

Car #1 was a “double feature” advertising Apple Butter and Preserved Cherries. Car #2’s product is Preserved Fruits. As of a 1912 advertisement in **Good Housekeeping** Magazine, this included: Cherry, Damson Plum, Peach, Red Raspberry, Black Raspberry, Strawberry, Pineapple, and Blackberry. (Hey, that could be a category on **The \$100,000 Pyramid**. Never mind.) “We use a pound of sugar to a pound of fruit,” reads the advertisement. “We use as great care as the most exacting housewife; every berry is hand-picked and thoroughly washed. Our kitchens are models of cleanliness – as any one of our 40,000 annual visitors will tell you – and our cooks are experts, with years of experience.” Heinz offered a money-back guarantee on its products, including these: “If you think you have ever eaten better preserves, return them to your grocer, and he will refund your money.” This ad shows the Preserved Fruits in jars, but as early as 1908 according to a different advertisement, Heinz also offered these in “Something New-Enameled Tin Cans.” The company took out a two page ad in **The Saturday Evening Post** to announce that innovation.

We already know from last month's Heinz Car #1 that Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) lookups will be futile. A check of the Clover House catalog was also a strikeout, as they don't offer dry transfers for this particular scheme. So the ATP, is, well, Approximate, in the 1890s, based on the use of brown paint for the refrigerator body. The earliest advertisement I found for Heinz Preserved Fruits dates back to 1905, and I wasn't looking very diligently... otherwise I'd never get to the next car.



059 00 576, \$26.95

**Reporting Marks: PFE 66370.**

**40 Foot Steel Ice Refrigerator Car with Preco Fan, Friendship Train (Pacific Fruit Express).**

Car #9 in the Friendship Train Series.

Orange sides, brown ends and roof, black

underframe, trucks and details. Multicolor rectangles "Ashtabula and Lake Counties Friendship Train... Milk For Children / Food For Friends" across sides, covering all other markings. White reporting marks on ends. Approximate Time Period: 1947.

Ashtabula, Ohio, about sixty miles east-northeast of Cleveland, was a stop on the "Northern Branch" of the Friendship Train according to the Wikipedians. Based on the other stops along this route, I'll guess that it followed the New York Central's line from Chicago to New York. Ashtabula was also a terminus of a Pennsylvania Railroad line to Lake Erie. Its harbor remains a major lake port for loading coal from trains onto ships. There is an impressive looking – and steep!-- arch bridge which carries coal from one side of the Ashtabula River, where hoppers are dumped, to the other, where coal is stored for loading. The car reads "Lake Counties" (plural) and there is a Lake County, Ohio, between Cleveland and Ashtabula. Ashtabula itself is in Ashtabula County. At the time of the Friendship Train, milk production ran all along the Lake Erie belt, but it appears that today it's not quite the same size industry as it was then.

A very grainy snapshot of this car can be found on the "Friendship Train of 1947" website (URL [www.thefriendshiptrain1947.org](http://www.thefriendshiptrain1947.org) ). I had first thought that these were banners, but they're either placards fastened tightly to the car sides or actual painted rectangles. It's too hard for me to see enough detail to confirm more than this being an ice refrigerator car. I'm not even sure whether it's a steel car or a wood double sheathed car.

MTL used reporting marks PFE 66370 for this car; that lettering is visible only on the ends. The 59/059 series, both with and without the Preco fan, has as its prototype the Pacific Fruit Express R-40-10 class steel ice refrigerator cars. Micro-Trains has done this car in PFE paint before (of course!) but not in this number series. That makes sense since the 66370 wasn't an R-40-10 according to the book Pacific Fruit Express, which gives that class as being numbered from 40001 to 44700, with all 4700 possible numbers in use! The 66370 did belong to the series of refrigerator cars PFE 62501 to 69999, which numbered 529 total as of the January 1945 ORER. These cars had an outside length of 41 feet 8 ½ inches.



098 00 080, \$29.95

**Reporting Marks: BN 413315.**

**50 Foot Airslide Covered Hopper, Burlington Northern.**

Green with white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname across top from left to center and large herald

on right. White simulated reflective rectangles across bottom of side. ACI label right of herald. White on black COTS stencil at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1972 (build date) to early decade of the 2000s at most.

The **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has five photos of this specific type of car, including BN repaints of cars originally built for the CB&Q and the Great Northern. (MTL: Hint, hint.) However, the series of photos ends with a sample from the series which ends with the road number 413289. No, no, that's not how it's supposed to work! You needed to include a reference photo from this series!

OK, fine, so I have to work a little harder. The ORER for July 1974 has the group BN 413300 to 413334, described as "Covered Hopper, Airslide" with a capacity of 4180 cubic feet. That matches the MTL 098 body style. The other dimensions should be good also: inside length 48 feet 11 inches, outside length 54 feet 1 inch, extreme height 14 feet 6 inches, and weight capacity 193,000 pounds. All listed dimensions also align with the series BN 413225 to 413289, which does have that representative photo in the **Color Guide**, and is painted in exactly the same manner. So if you need a bunch of these cars, or, say, a Runner Pack (MTL: Another hint.) then you have more road numbers from which to choose.

Meanwhile, the bingo for the 413315 is online, specifically on RailcarPhotos.com. The car's photo was taken in June 1976. Other than some placard residue it looks as painted, including the October 1972 build date.

From the original full car count of 35, there were 34 in April 1984, 19 in October 1996, and... 59 in January 2000 in an expanded series from 413300 to 413384, this being under the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe registration. But just six of those were remained in the October 2004 Equipment Register, and none as of January 2006. That assumes that the cars remained in the as delivered decoration and not repainted into something much simpler, for example reporting marks only. I would not make that assumption. The eventual fate of this equipment could also have been repurposing to "buffer cars" by the BNSF, as we've already seen depicted in several Micro-Trains releases on this body style.

In 2005 back on the old and now closed Atlas Forum, there was a discussion of how these cars were used. Some commodities included flour and sugar; later, fly ash (a by-product of coal burning) was carried. One member remarked, "Most of the industry today is moving away from them. The company I work for still uses them and they are getting harder to come by in real life. We use them to haul in flour, I work for a foods company. Many of our suppliers want us to upgrade unloading systems so we can go Pneumatic Discharge, but it's costly."



**110 00 340, \$33.80**

**Reporting Marks: SDPX 97034.**

**54 Foot General Service Tank Car, South Dakota Soybean Processors.**

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and tank

qualification stencil on right. White, green and brown company logo on right. Six yellow vertical conspicuity stripes along entire side. Approximate Time Period: 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present.

Of all of the fifty United States in which I've set foot, South Dakota is the one in which I have spent the least amount of time: just a quick run over the border from Minnesota and over to Interstate 29, thence to North Dakota. On that route is a little town called Roshalt, which I once joked consisted of entirely of a grain elevator and a video rental store. (Hey, it was 1988.) Thanks to the Internet, I know it isn't quite that small. And it still has rail service, a former Soo Line branch now operated by the Canadian Pacific.

About two hours south of there is the community of Volga, South Dakota, headquarters of South Dakota Soybean Processors, LLC. MTL borrowed a few words from the firm's website ([www.sdsbp.com](http://www.sdsbp.com)) for its car copy. Here's a little more: "During the later part of 1993, a group of soybean producers, acting as the incorporators under the South Dakota Cooperative Association Act, established South Dakota Soybean Processors. [Its] purpose is to keep more bushels of South Dakota soybeans in the state for both processing and sale, allowing farmers to purchase soybean meal without the cost of added freight. Ultimately, SDSP's goal of providing high quality meal and oil at a competitive price to producers will be rewarded with value-added payments to our farmer members. Currently, there are about 2,200 farmer members who have invested their money in South Dakota Soybean Processors, LLC."

We go back to RailcarPhotos.com to find two cars in the prototype series: SDPX 97038 and 97046 are part of the group 97005 to 97054. They were built by Trinity in 2002 for South Dakota Soybean Processors. The conspicuity stripes kick the start of the ATP up to 2005, but note that the 97046's photo was taken in 2009 and it still doesn't have the stripes. Conspicuity doesn't mean consistency, either: the 97038 has nine vertical yellow stripes while the 97034 which MTL modeled only has six. Yes, that means I landed a bingo: over on RRPictureArchives there are May 2013 and November 2015 views of this car.

In between those dates, more or less, is the October 2014 ORER, which has the usual minimal information on these tank cars. South Dakota Soybean Processors has 88 of them, numbered from 97001 to 97100, and all we get is the AAR Car Type Code T108 and the Gross Rail Weight of 286,000 pounds. The former translates to a steel, non-pressure tank car with capacity from 27,500 to 31,499 gallons. It's noted on RailcarPhotos that the cars have a capacity of 29,260 gallons and a load limit of 207,000 pounds. They also have an external length of 60 feet 8 inches. That's about four and one-half inches when reduced to N Scale, which is just a little longer than the MTL 110 body style. The prototype valve and platform arrangement atop the tank is a little different from the model as well.





180 00 020, \$25.90

**Reporting Marks: CN 415009.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Sliding Superior Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Canadian National.**

Brown with white lettering including roadname (English one side, French other

side) and reporting marks on left, and small “wet noodle” herald with website address on right. Yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom of car. White on black double panel COTS stencil on right. Approximate Time Period: 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to at least 2014.

Is it the yellow stripes or the “www.cn.ca” that drives the beginning of the Approximate Time Period for this car? It’s a bit of a guess, but based on what I found online—which is surprisingly sparse for a railroad of this size—it appears that the website lettering pre-dates the conspicuity stripes by a couple of years.

Stripes and web addresses were certainly not among the features of the “as delivered” decoration of these cars. According to Ian Cranstone, via his “Canadian Freight Cars site (URL [www.nakina.net](http://www.nakina.net) ), the series CN 415000 to 415049 was built in 1973 by National Steel Car Company, and were still in service when last he checked. The cars had “steel spark shields for handling explosive materials.” Some of the cars were renumbered into the 417300s between 1994 and 1997.

As of September 2013, though, the 415009 was in its original series, and it was found in Sarnia, Ontario, in the paint scheme reproduced by Micro-Trains. The car has unusual looking ends, almost as if most of a second end from a newer-design exterior post boxcar were attached to the outside of a more standard end for these type of cars. One net effect is a slope to the ends of the sides. Have a look at the photo on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net) and you’ll see what I mean. Perhaps this is extra material on the ends just in case there is an impact, so as to lessen the possibility of a large explosion! It doesn’t look like the car has sustained any damage from explosives, but it’s certainly got its share of door scrapings.

The October 2014 ORER gives no hint of anything special about these cars, however. Nineteen of them were still in service as of that edition. The dimensions indicate a car that’s a fair bit larger than the MTL 180 body style: inside length 52 feet 8 inches, inside height 10 feet 11 inches, outside length 57 feet 8 inches, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, capacity 5300 cubic feet. That last number is the real giveaway: for example, some later x-post boxcars are actually smaller, at 5077 cubic feet.

Turn back the calendar to 1989, and have a look at CN 415010, also on [RRPictureArchives](http://RRPictureArchives.net). This car is wearing the typical CN paint for the time: roadname with T-table dimensional data on the left and large CN “wet noodle” on the right. This car appears to have much more typical ends as well, and a “Youngstown” style ten foot door. Go up another road number to CN 415011, and find another scheme minus the roadname, on a car that is captioned as having been “deleted in May 2015.” Maybe the ATP isn’t quite to The Present.



**180 00 040, \$31.80**

**Reporting Marks: UP 500200.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Sliding Youngstown Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Union Pacific.**

Yellow sides, aluminum roof, ends, side sill and trucks (including draft gear and

couplers). Black lettering including reporting marks on left. Large red, white and blue shield monogram on left. Multicolor "Automated Rail Way" logo on right. Black "DF" with red dot on door. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s (1968 service date on car) to early 1980s.

The Fallen Flags site ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ) has a 1968 photo from Jim Sands of UP 500390. It's also a Class B-50-56 boxcar, part of the same series as the 500200. The MTL paint is a dead-on match for the prototype, including the aluminum colored trucks, couplers and draft gear, with the exception of a "return to" sideboard just to the left of the door. Not all cars in a series might have had this. The 500200 didn't when its photo was taken in Omaha in February 1968. That photo appears on Page 34 of the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1). As MTL notes in its car copy, UP's Omaha shops constructed 1250 of these cars in total. As built, these cars did not have a running board and did have short ladders. I'll also note that the precise meaning of the red dot on the door has been a subject of some considerable online debate!

The ORER for October 1969 includes the series UP 500200 to 500449, of 248 of the possible 250 cars. They were described as "UP Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe" and an end note called out 9 Belt DF-2 Loaders. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 58 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5042 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. Keeping in mind that there may have been repainting out of the "Automated Railway" scheme, the last ORER in which I have any of these cars is January 1985, where just five cars were shown. I also have the very next edition of the Equipment Register in the Research Accumulation, April 1985, and the series is gone completely from there.



**469 00 070, \$16.95**

**Reporting Marks: STXU 930107.**

**53 Foot Corrugated Container, STAX.**

Maroon with yellow "STAX" plus "moving boxes" logo on sides, nose and tail. White lettering otherwise including reporting marks at top right of sides. Approximate Time Period: 2003 to mid-decade

of the 2000s. Micro-Trains has announced that this item is not on dealer standing orders.

Another container, another headache for this byte-slinger. Finding a couple of photos of similar containers wasn't that hard: I headed over to "Matt's Intermodal Page" for shots of 939067 and 939429, which are both Jindo-produced high cube 53 foot containers (see the direct URL [www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part3/53foot.htm](http://www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part3/53foot.htm) for the table that includes these).

RRPictureArchives has photos of other STAX containers as well. That's usually the easy part, with the harder part being deciphering an Approximate Time Period.

Fortunately for us, there is an archived article on the **Progressive Railroading** website which announced the end of the STAX program as of August 1, 2006. It had been launched only back in May 2003. "Through STAX, CSXI and UP had been offering domestic intermodal shippers 53-foot high-cube containers and coast-to-coast logistics services. The railroads are suspending the program to improve the utilization of 53-foot containers currently assigned to STAX." A thread on the TrainOrders discussion group from early 2010 discussed a then new venture formed by UP and CSX called UMAX, announced in February 2010.

About that artwork: at least one photographer referred to it as the "Windows 98" logo, and when looked at a certain way, there does seem to be a more than passing resemblance to the trademark for that particular version of the PC Operating System. However, viewing from RRPictureArchives, STXU 939190 atop spine car TTRX 550217, in the snow in January 2006, it does look a little more like three pairs of stacked containers curving off into the distance.



*In addition to the above, the NASA Railroad SW1500 which was pre-ordered in January and February 2017 is now available. (986 00 08032, Road Number 3, \$194.95). MTL had only the artwork available at "press time" which I'll replace on the UMTRR website once a*

photo becomes available. In case I haven't mentioned this before, MTL quotes 2008 as the repaint date from red and silver to this scheme, so the ATP would start from that year.

## N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



**144 00 160, \$34.90**

**Car Number: 101 (will be "D&RGW 101" in website listings).**

**Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Denver & Rio Grande Western.**

Silver and gold sides with black striping. Silver roof, underframe and trucks (including couplers). Gray ends. Black lettering including Rio Grande "speed lettering" roadname in center of letterboard and car number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950s (based on paint scheme) into the 1960s.

MTL's car copy for this release includes that the prototype was rebuilt into a business car from a paired-window coach in the Rio Grande's 900 to 950 series (I'll keep that fact for Micro-Trains' release of that car!). This and the fact that the car received six-wheel trucks are on Page 28 of the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Those trucks came from a baggage-express car in the 740 to 744 group. **Color Guide** author Jim Eager notes that although it was "extensively modified, the windows still followed the original arrangement for the most part and the other side was a mirror image." That means, as expected, a delta to the window placement of the MTL 144 body style. It appears from the photo of the car at the Rio Grande's Burnham Yard that 1962 might have already been past the service life of the 101; Eager describes it as "forlorn." I'm taking the start of the ATP from the paint scheme estimate I've already mentioned.



**145 00 180, \$32.90**

**Car Number: 755 (will be "N&W 755" in website listings).**

**Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Norfolk and Western.**

Maroon (Tuscan Red) sides; black ends, roof, underframe and details. Gold striping. Gold lettering including roadname offset left in letterboard and "Railway Express Agency" with car number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950's to the early 1960s (a guess).

In the March 1943 Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE), the N&W had 35 passenger cars, numbered 750 to 784. They were 81 feet long and had a seating capacity of 86. While described as just that: "Passenger," I think it's safe to assume that these were coaches. That same group was listed in the March 1953 ORPTE, but with just six remaining.

There are no cars of this type at all in the **Norfolk and Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. No worries, though, as there is a bingo to the 755 cited by Jerry Laboda in his "Passenger Car Photo Index" ([passcarphotos.info](http://passcarphotos.info)). The actual image, in glorious black and white, is stored on the archives of the Virginia Technical Institute. Jerry notes that this car was rebuilt from the Pullman Parlor car "Allegra." The "Pullman Project" database gives a sale date of the car of February 1941. The window spacing is a bit different than on the MTL 145 body style. I also note that the use of the ampersand ("&") instead of the full word "and" between "Norfolk" and "Western" does align with the prototype photo. Most of the equipment in the **Color Guide** shows the "and" and not the "&." Meanwhile, the ATP remains an exercise in guesswork, since I'm not sure of either the paint date into maroon or the retirement date of the 755 and its sisters. The N&W picked up plenty of lightweight equipment from the Wabash and the Nickel Plate when it merged both in 1964, which I think limited the time remaining for heavyweight passenger cars.



## N SCALE REPRINTS:



**120 00 261 and 120 00 262, \$23.90 each**  
**Road Numbers: 2140 and 2148 (will be preceded with "PRR" in website listings).**  
**40 Foot Box Car, Single Door, ARA/USRA Style, Plate Ends, Overlapping Flat Panel Roof, Horizontal Brake Wheel, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Oxide red (the PRR's "sesqui-oxide red") with white lettering including roadname and road number on left, and small circle keystone herald with "Railway Express Agency" legend on right. Approximate Time Period: 1930 through at least the early 1960s. Previous Release: Road Number 2145, August 2006.

I called my commentary on the first run of this paint scheme "an exercise in frustration." Well, let's see what has been brought to light in the eleven (!) years since that first run.

First, I can confirm that the series to which these cars belong is listed in the ORPTE of March 1943. They are described as "Express (Box)" with road numbers 2000 to 2499 and a length of "under 60 feet." All 500 possible cars were in the group at that time. In the March 1953 ORPTE there are 493 cars in service. This time the inside length of 40 feet 6 inches and the outside length (over the couplers) of 45 feet 3 inches is shown. This removes the issue of these cars not being in ORERs; they are considered passenger equipment, as I had surmised back in August 2006. Add to those, however, three groups of Class X29 boxcars listed in the January 1953 ORER as "Passenger Train Equipment Cars" in the three series 49314 to 57641, 97949 to 103323, and 566091 to 574090.

The **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1), Page 74, has a bingo to the previous release, road number 2145, as of Christmas Day 1961. That car has Dreadnaught, not flat panel, ends. But it's in the same paint scheme. While 1961 seems rather late for a car with a Circle Keystone to be in service, it's not, really, as the Shadow Keystone wasn't adopted until early 1954. So give the ATP an "at least early 1960s." With the Pennsy's red ink flowing freely in the rest of the decade, I doubt that repainting these cars was a priority. I do note that the Keystone Crossings website pegs the "Railway Express Agency" scheme as beginning in 1930, but you will need to invoke Rule #1 to ignore the service date of March 1942 for this pair of reprints.

Now, about those ends. Also on Page 74 of the **Color Guide** is a 1962 photo of PRR 2185, in the same paint scheme, with the flat ends, and on Page 75 is PRR 2412 with flat ends in a later paint job circa 1968. So the inaccuracy cannot be called across the board. I checked Volumes 2 and 3 of the **PRR Color Guide** but there were no other REA-scheme X29s to be found.

*In addition to the above, the Southern Pacific SW1500s which were pre-ordered in January and February 2017 are now available (986 00 513, Road Number 2621, 986 00 514, Road Number 2632, and 986 00 515, Road Number 515, \$184.95 each). MTL had only the artwork available at “press time” which I’ll replace on the UMTRR website once photos become available.*

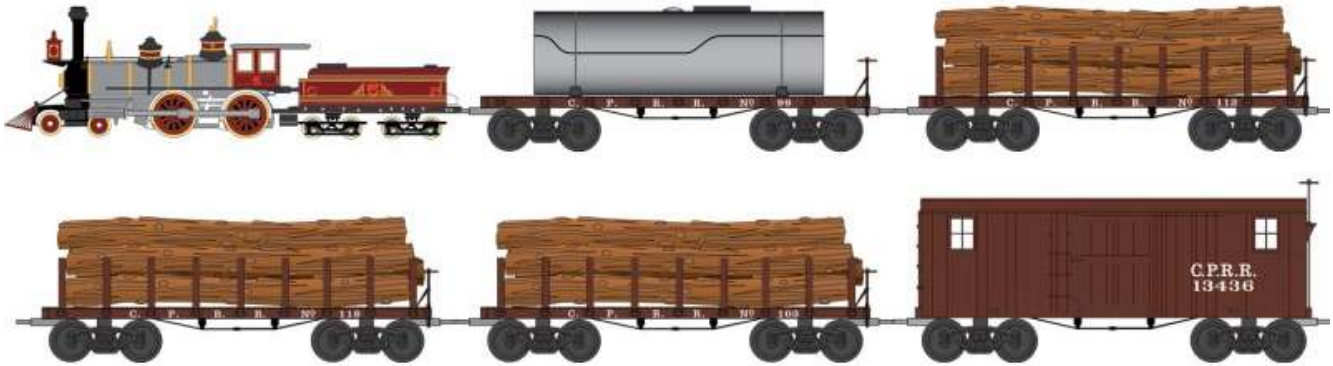


#### **N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner**

**Pack #133 (993 00 133, \$89.95)**, three TTX well cars, has been released. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2017 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 135 51 060, 56811; 135 52 060, 56812; 135 53 060, 56816. These are the first through third road numbers for this car, which hasn’t been previously released. I think will get us back on track next month (pun intended) with respect to the sequence of Runner Packs; if you weren’t keeping score (and who was?) the order of release since May when the out-of-sequence, uh, sequence, began, was 131, 128, 130, 131, 134, and 133. But wait, where’s Runner Pack #129? Time to check my records...



Also, **Eight Pack #14 (993 00 812, \$184.95)** of Union Pacific 100 Ton Three-Bay Open Hoppers with loads has been released. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2017 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 108 51 360, 18405; 108 52 360, 18412; 108 53 360, 18418; 108 54 360, 18420; 108 55 360, 18432; 108 56 360, 18456; 108 57 360, 18487; 108 58 360, 18493. These are the first through eighth road numbers for this car, which hasn’t been previously released. (The previous UP hoppers, Catalog Number 108 00 100, had yellow lettering.)



And **The Civil War Era Train Set (993 01 510, \$224.95)** which was originally scheduled for last month is now scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2017 issue. Only the artwork was available at “press time” which I will replace when available. I’ll have the individual catalog and road numbers on the UMTRR Website when I receive them.

*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 October 31.*



***Scheduled Delivery March 2018:***

**993 00 138, \$109.95.**

**Reporting Marks: SP 481364, 481381, 481393, 481398.**

**Quantity four of Ortner Hoppers, Southern Pacific.**

Light brown (oxide red) including trucks and couplers. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname across center. Two white on black COTS stencils at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: early 1980s (1981 build date given by MTL) into the decade of the 2000s. Previous

Releases: Road Number 481388, November 2004, as Catalog 125010; Road Number 481396, February 2013, as Catalog 125 00 010. Individual catalog numbers are expected to be 125 5x 010 which will be confirmed upon release. Loads will not be included with these cars.

Considering that, relatively speaking, this car hasn’t been issued in that many paint schemes, it’s been involved in a disproportionate number of Runner Packs: Four, counting this one. (The other three: Conrail, Amtrak and Florida East Coast.) The SP’s roster of these cars appears to be limited to the number series 481150 to 481399, which numbered 248 out of the possible 250 cars in the January 1985 ORER. The inside length was 29 feet 8 inches, outside length, 43 feet 10 inches, extreme height 12 feet 10 inches, and capacity 2300 cubic feet or 199,000 pounds. The lading carried in these cars tended to be heavier than that typically carried in hoppers. There were 246 cars listed in October 1996, and 140 still in place in the SP series under the Union Pacific in January 2002. Only seven remained as of the January 2011 ORER though. We know



that these very cars could have gone over to Trinity Rail Management with reporting marks SPTX in the same number series, also in the January 2011 ORER.

Lee Gautreaux's site ( [www.railgoat.railfan.net](http://www.railgoat.railfan.net) ) has a shot of SP 481356 in the MTL-depicted decoration as of 1984, an image that Gautreaux himself took of SP 481363, and shots of two other Espee Ortners as well. Gautreaux notes that "these cars were very common in Texas and Louisiana hauling sand, gravel and aggregates." Photos on [espee.railfan.net](http://espee.railfan.net) and [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net) have two of these cars in a reporting marks only decoration. The 481215 was found in Albany, Oregon in 2009 for example. I still wouldn't expect a depiction of that scheme anytime soon from MTL.

### ***Scheduled Delivery February 2018:***

**993 01 670, \$89.95.**

**Friendship Train Three-Pack.** Scheduled to consist of the following items, all with an Approximate Time Period of 1947. Artwork is preliminary and actual items may differ.



- **Catalog Number TBD (020 Series):**  
**Reporting Marks DL&W 51974**, 40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, Lackawanna (Delaware, Lackawanna and Western). Brown with white lettering including reporting marks (covered by "banner") and road number on left and

roadname and "The Route of Phoebe Snow" on right. Red, black and blue on simulated banner on left "'Friendship Train' Hoboken's Food Car."

Anyone want to go thirdsies on a pack of these with me? If there is one Friendship Train car that must go into my accumulation, it's this one. Not only is my father from Hoboken, and not only did my grandfather live in Hoboken for most of his life, but my great-grandfather actually worked for the Lackawanna Railroad. I wrote about him recently, in a piece that's on the Irwin's Journal Online side of my website ( [www.irwinsjournal.com/ijonline/ijdodger.htm](http://www.irwinsjournal.com/ijonline/ijdodger.htm) ) called "Dodger."

While Hoboken has had a past reputation as being a rough and tumble city--the film **On The Waterfront** was shot there, and for good reason-- there is no question that the "Mile Square City" would have reached into its collective pockets to fill a boxcar for the Friendship Train. That car wouldn't have had to travel very far, at most to the docks on the other side of the Hudson River to be unloaded for transshipment of cargo to Europe via steamship. Hoboken had plenty of its own docks at the time, however they were being used mostly for military purposes. Following the two World Wars, the city went into a gradual decline, hastened by the exodus of industry and the change from break-bulk to container shipping. When I visited my relatives who lived there in the 1970s and 1980s, Hoboken was in trouble. It slowly became gentrified beginning in the 1980s, a development that I have mixed feelings about given that I doubt my aunts, uncles and grandparents, had they lived, would have been able to afford to stay there. On the other hand, much of the Hoboken I remember is still there, structurally



speaking. You might not be able to smell the aroma of Maxwell House Coffee from their factory any more, but you can live in the building where it was once roasted. Or you can take up residence in the ornate building in which my favorite uncle worked for Keuffel and Esser, the precision instrument company that once manufactured these fancy mathematical devices called “slide rules.” I still have one here someplace, and so does the “Slide Rule Museum,” again proving you can find anything online: [www.sliderulemuseum.com/KE\\_Standard.htm](http://www.sliderulemuseum.com/KE_Standard.htm) .

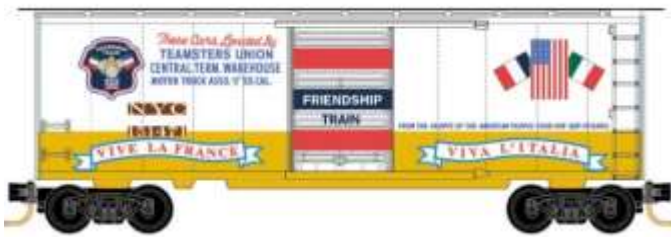
I suppose I can't mention Hoboken without a reference to its most famous native: Frank Sinatra. While many people claim to have met him while he was a resident and an up-and-coming singer, I suspect that the total number who state they knew him when far exceeds the actual population of Hoboken! Returning for a moment to **On The Waterfront**, Sinatra was originally going to play the part given to Marlon Brando. While on location, my father's high school newspaper actually interviewed Brando — how's that for a scoop?

An image of the actual boxcar in which Hoboken collected its contributions can be found on the website [hoboken.pastperfectonline.com](http://hoboken.pastperfectonline.com) . DL&W 51974 is parked at the end of a siding adjacent to the Maxwell House Coffee plant (the reverse side of its large sign, which faced out across the Hudson to Manhattan, is visible in the top left of the photo). The staged shot shows children helping to load the car. The inside of the boxcar can be seen, including what appears to be wood lining. Although it's a Lackawanna car, technically it's not on the Lackawanna Railroad, but the Hoboken Manufacturer's Railroad, later called the Hoboken Shore Line. That industrial switching operation connected with the national network up at the north end of town, including with the DL&W at Eleventh Street. In this photo, there are banners attached to both the side and end of the car that we can see. The image is credited to the Hoboken Historical Museum, which reminds me that I still need to visit there someday.

The 51974 belonged to the series DL&W 51750 to 51999, which was a registration with no car count as of the January 1945 ORER. These cars were described as “Box, All-Steel, W-Section.” They had identical dimensions to the adjacent series 51000 to 51749, namely, inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, and capacity 3712 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

Here's some useless trivia: The “Phoebe Snow” paint scheme has been done by MTL before, back in November 2003 (image at right). It's not from the same prototype series, having road number 52831. (It's also not a PS-1 boxcar.) The catalog number for that release was 20667. At that time the catalog numbers were ending in “6,” but this one didn't, presumably to avoid the dreaded “666” (and Happy Halloween, by the way!). Given the difference of the “banners” on the car this would technically be a “not a reprint,” so perhaps the TBD on the catalog number is appropriate for now. (“668” is available, by the way, since this car was never released in kit form.) Hey, I said it was useless trivia...





- **Preliminary Catalog Number 020 52 077, Reporting Marks NYC 151471**, 40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, New York Central. White and yellow sides, white roof and ends (a guess on this from the artwork). Red, white and blue doors with “Friendship Train” in white and blue. Multicolor “Vive

La France” and “Viva L’Italia” to left and right of door in yellow band. Multicolor insignia at top left with wording “These cars loaded by Teamsters Union Central Term. Warehouse Motor Truck Assco. Of So. Cal.” Multicolor flags of France, the USA and Italy at top right. White reporting marks on left on brown (boxcar red) rectangles. White phrase “From the hearts of the American people – food for our friends” above the “Viva L’Italia” banner on the right.

MTL describes this car as being in “formal Friendship Train colors” and that’s a good point, although there certainly seem to have been many different versions of formal colors. I wonder how long it took for these cars to be painted back into their standard paint schemes, for example this one back to the basic brown with the usual New York Central oval herald. I suppose we will never know...

Anyway, this car, like the Seaboard boxcar (Catalog Number 120 00 280, Friendship Train Series #5, June) was also loaded at the Central Terminal Warehouse in Los Angeles, and also like the Seaboard car, it was a long way from home when placed into that service. Unlike the SAL car, though, it was sent back in the right direction, to New York. The wording reads “**These** cars loaded...” so there were probably more than two. In fact, much of the original consist of the Friendship Train could have been captioned in this manner.

NYC 151741 is listed in the January 1945 ORER as part of the series 151000 to 151999, which consisted of 995 all steel boxcars. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 42 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3719 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. This was the Central’s Lot 654-B, converted from several previous series of steel underframe cars by Despatch Shops in 1936. Terry Link’s “Canada Southern” site has a basic drawing of this car with dimensions.



- **Preliminary Catalog Number 031 53 480, Road Number 118503 (will be “PRR 118503” in website listings)**, 50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Pennsylvania Railroad. Red oxide with silver band offset with white stripes across car side including

door, inside of which is red “Merchandise Service” lettering on left. Red and white keystone herald on far right. White lettering otherwise including roadname and road number on left. Simulated banner “This carload of food donated to the Friendship Train by Employees [sic] & the Pennsylvania Railroad.”

I still have the January 1945 ORER files open, so let's go there first... and, it's not listed. That's OK, as it is in the July 1950 Equipment Register. The 118503 was part of a group of PRR Class X41b boxcars numbered 118491 to 119990, inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet 2 inches, outside length 51 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, door opening 7 feet (versus 8 feet on the MTL 031 body style, so a minor Door Thing), capacity 4959 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

Robert Schoenberg, the curator of "Rob's Pennsy Page" ( [pr.railfan.net](http://pr.railfan.net) ), has these cars in the October 1948 ORER but not the October 1944 book, and I don't have them in the January 1945 book, so they had to have been built between 1944 and 1948. Which means that the car would have been new or almost new when added to the Friendship Train in 1947.

And so would have been this particular Merchandise Service paint scheme. According to the "Keystone Crossings" website, it was applied to 300 X41a boxcars starting in August 1947. I think it's possible that the PRR "Employees" (and it was spelled with just one "e" before the "s" back then) finished painting it, added the banner, and filled it with donations. It would not surprise me to know that this took place at Altoona, or even at Harrisburg. Which leads me to a fun fact: the Freedom Train and the Friendship Train crossed paths at Harrisburg, the only time that occurred. Read more about that and the Friendship Train's southern section passing through the State of Pennsylvania here: [thefriendshiptrain1947.org/5812/18612.html](http://thefriendshiptrain1947.org/5812/18612.html) .

**N SCALE WEATHERED/GRAFFITI RELEASES:** *The following was announced via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about October 13.*

**025 44 008, \$64.95**

**"Birds of a Feather" Two-Pack.**

Consists of two 50 foot steel exterior post boxcars with single doors:



• **025 51 008, Reporting Marks EEC 8331, East Erie Commercial Railroad.** Base car is brown with aluminum roof. Graffiti on both sides (shown) and weathering on roof (also shown). This car has a Superior type door. Approximate Time Period: at least 2014 to 2017. Previous Releases: Technically none, though the base EEC car has been used for other Weathered/Graffiti releases.



UMTRR Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe was on the case almost immediately upon this release, and here's his report: "Starting with the EEC car, I was able to find a slightly out of focus bingo photo of the turkey side of the 8331 on [rrpicturearchives.net](http://rrpicturearchives.net). More photos of this car can be found on Flickr by searching for 'Galaxe/Tawl' as these are the two names on the turkey side of the car.

"A bingo photo for the graffiti on the other side of the car with the names Bones and Gooz can also be found on Flickr by searching for 'Bones & Gooz.' What's most interesting about this piece of graffiti is that it is painted on a retaining wall. The prototype photo of this piece of suburban art it is dated 2016 so that gives us a nice ATP for the retaining wall. Not sure how that transfers over to the boxcar?"

Well, I'm not sure about transferring an ATP of a Retaining Wall to a boxcar (!), but the photo of the 8331 on RRPictureArchives has a date of January 2017. The provenance of this car is noted in the caption: it was ICG 531901, then Golden Triangle GTRA 1225 and then HS Railroad (the former Hartford and Slocumb) 3705. The Flickr citation David provided is a photo from 2014, so we have at least three years' worth of ATP for the turkey side of the car. The ORER for October 2014 has EEC 8331 in the group 8325 to 8335, which has only two cars in it, which doesn't really make sense. (Neither does having a large number of East Erie Commercial cars in their own individual series, but that's another story.) The 8331 is a 5347 cubic foot car, a bit larger than the MTL 025 body style. The general "look and feel" is OK.

Getting back to that retaining wall, there's not only an Approximate Time Period, but also an Pretty Definite Continent! I noticed with the Flickr photo David cited that it was in an album called "Stencils, Street Art and Graffiti in Australia," which made me curious. Another album called "Not So Legal" in which this shot also appears includes a photo of graffiti along another retaining wall... behind which is a commuter train lettered "Sydney Metro"! That's one bit of artwork I wouldn't mind seeing in person. I sure miss that "Coat Hanger" aka the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Meanwhile, it appears that Bones and Gooz may be the first graffiti practitioners from Down Under who have appeared on an MTL release.



• **025 52 076, Reporting Marks WRWK 88072, Warwick Railroad.** Base car is brown with aluminum roof and white lettering including reporting marks on left. Graffiti on both sides (shown) and weathering on roof (not shown). This car has a Youngstown type door. Approximate Time Period: at least 2014. Previous Releases: None.

David Grothe continues his comments on this half of the two-pack: "Looking at the WRWK boxcar, a bingo photo of the side that says Galaxe can be found on RRPictureArchives and on



Flickr by searching for Galaxe. The fastest way I found to see a prototype photo of the side of the car that has a rooster holding a duck as an egg shooter is by searching for Sangre graffiti on Flickr. Searching for Sangre Tawl will also yield a couple photos of this side of the car but I had to scroll through many more photos using those search keywords. The best news is that both sides of the MTL model are accurately modeled from the same boxcar which makes the ATP easier.”

And in addition, both photos David noted to me are dated in 2014 so there’s our “at least ATP” again. (As with any of the modern graffiti cars, it’s debatable whether they were repainted since the, ahem, artwork was added.) The photo on RRPictureArchives is from May 2015, still shows the “Galaxe/Tawl” side in place and is a nice top-down view. Most of the brown paint is intact on this car, including the roof. The two still-visible conspicuity stripes on one side are reproduced by MTL – nice touch.

As I’ve noted before, the Warwick Railway is a tiny, and now “on paper only,” subsidiary of the larger Providence and Worcester Railroad, itself now a property of Genesee and Wyoming Industries. So it’s the P&W listing for October 2014 in which we find WRWK 88072, mixed up with a headache-inducing number of subsets of the general series 88000 to 88221. The car in question is a 5295 cubic foot model with AAR Designation XP. Again, that’s a little bigger than the MTL 025 body style, but of the same general design per the proto photo.



**093 44 120, \$33.90**

**Reporting Marks: GSVR 528813.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Round Hatches, Golden West Service (Galveston Railroad).**

Base car is blue with mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on left. Red and yellow blocks (“herald”) to right of roadname. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes along bottom sill. Light to moderate weathering; patch panels and graffiti on both sides of car (shown).

Approximate Time Period: at least 2006 to no later than 2011. Previous Releases: None.

I almost committed an “oops” here: while there have been plenty of Golden West Service center flows issued by MTL, including a Weathered Four Pack, these were all on the MTL 094 body style with trough (long) hatches. This is the first Golden West car with round hatches.

We get a bingo on the “B” side of the car on RRPictureArchives.net, in the form of a photo from January 2006. There is one edit to the graffiti made by MTL: “I can’t dance” is followed by “but you’re ugly” on the prototype car. MTL has also added patch panels to its depiction of the car, which were not present on the prototype at the time its photo was taken. There are photos of other Golden West cars close to that road number on RRPictureArchives and RailcarPhotos,

and what do you know, they all have graffiti of some sort. This car does fall into the timeframe of required conspicuity stripes, so that's correct. They were on the prototype as well.

Checking the January 2006 ORER, we find the subject of this Weathered Release as the first car in the short series GVSR 528813 to 528824. It is, however, among a list of small groups of Covered Hoppers with either a 54 foot 7 inch or 54 foot 9 inch outside length and 4650 cubic foot capacity. As you might recall, following the merger of the Southern Pacific and Cotton Belt into the Union Pacific, the Golden West cars were reclaimed by those roads. The ATP thus ends by the end of the decade of the 2000s, if not sooner. The series is completely gone by the January 2011 Equipment Register.



**180 44 010, \$27.90**

**Reporting Marks: GM&O 57915.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single 10 Foot Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Gulf, Mobile and Ohio.**

Green with white lettering including semi-circle roadname, reporting marks, and large "DF" on left. Legend "Cushioned for a soft ride ....inside" on right. Extensive weathering and rust effects on both sides and roof (all shown). White road number and dimensional data restencil on brown patch panel. Approximate Time Period: 1977 (service date) to mid-1980s. Previous Release (unweathered): Road Number 58108, July 2017.

I covered this car with a fair amount of commentary in July when it, the first on this new body style, was released. However, the patch road number for this Weathered Release is not part of the GM&O series 58000 to 58199, the source for the first run, so it's back to the ORERs.

No worries, though. The Equipment Register for October 1969 shows the series GM&O 57800 to 57999 described as "Box, All Steel, Cushion Underframe" with AAR Designation XL. The dimensions differ only slightly from the 58108, the largest distinction being an outside length of 58 feet 1 inch, or five inches less than the other group of cars. Jumping to the closest edition I have to the August 1977 service date patched on this car, namely, that of January 1978, I see 150 of the possible 200 cars still in GM&O paint under the Illinois Central Gulf listing. That was down to 52 in October 1986 and three cars in October 1991, by which point the ICG had already reverted to its previous name of simply "Illinois Central."

Going back over to the **IC/GM&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 96, there is a much cleaner looking sister car GM&O 57850 photographed in 1974. There is a key item here, though. The builder of this set of cars was General American, not Pullman-Standard. As such I'd expect a few deltas between the prototype and the MTL 180 body style,

though I suspect they may be hard to find under all that rust. I do note that the “DF” on the bottom left of the side would have been a post-delivery addition to these boxcars.

While not directly related to this car, I did come across, on the Fallen Flags site, a black and white shot of GM&O 57912 from the same series. Someone redid the lettering on the left side with a very different, and let’s be kind and say non-standard, version of the arched roadname. Also on that site is a shot of an almost brand new GM&O 57816.

## N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



102 00 130, \$27.95

Road Number: 2017.

**60 Foot Excess Height Double Plug Door Boxcar, Rivet Sides, 2017 Christmas Car.**

Base color is blue with black ends and roof. Each side has a different full side multicolor scene. Side A shows Micro-Mouse, Mrs. Micro-Mouse and Micro-Mouse Junior locating a Christmas Tree made of cheese. Side B shows the Micro-Mouse returning to their house with the tree and includes the words “Merry Christmas from Micro-

Trains” in the center. This car does not have end markings.

Well, I suppose that if you’re a mouse, a Christmas tree made out of cheese is the ideal decoration... although I’m not sure how well it would stand the heat of a warm cozy den with a fireplace. At least it doesn’t shed needles all over the place. (As noted in the film **A Christmas Story**: “Nah, that’s those balsams.”)

I guess my next question is, how to go from cheese back to Christmas? I’ve already discussed the tradition of the Christmas tree in these bytes. As a fan of the stop-motion animation films starring Wallace and Gromit, my brain is stuck on “Wensleydale” when I see the cheese tree. (That series saved the Wensleydale Creamery, which had fallen on hard times before Wallace noted that it was a favorite of his.)

Well, cheese is no doubt a tradition at both the homes of Wallace and Gromit and at the residence of the Micro-Mice, so perhaps a look at other Christmas traditions around the world is in order. So here are a few examples...

- Just northwest of UMTRR HQ in Toronto, there is the Cavalcade of Lights. This year it begins on November 25, the Saturday after American Thanksgiving. (Canadian Thanksgiving was on October 9.) There are skating parties, live music, fireworks, and the lighting of the city’s official Christmas Tree. (It’s not made of cheese.) The party takes place at Nathan Phillips Square.

- Lights of a different kind are featured at the Giant Lantern Festival which takes place in the city of San Fernando, the Philippines. Some of these lanterns are more than twenty feet in size. While once lit by candles, they are illuminated with colorful electric bulbs now. This tradition began in 1931. Bamboo frames for the lanterns have been replaced with steel.

- Austria gives a more literal meaning to “naughty or nice” with the appearance of Krampus, St. Nicholas’ evil accomplice. Krampus does not give out gifts, let’s put it that way! He, or rather, young men, dress as this demonic looking character during the first week of December.

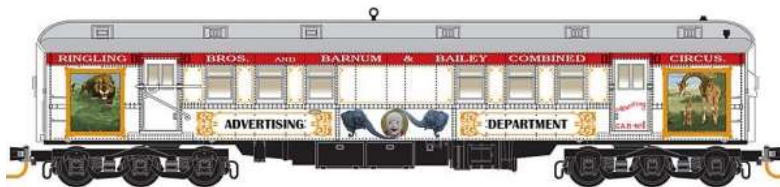
- In Norway, it was believed that witches come out on Christmas Eve to find and steal brooms. So Norwegians hide them. No word on what the Ikeans do, however. (Attention witches: Try the cleaning accessories section, it’s “Skvalpa” and comes with a dustpan.)

- Yes, I know that IKEA was founded in Sweden, not Norway. St. Lucia’s Day is celebrated on December 13, which used to be the date of the Winter Solstice when we followed the Julian Calendar. St. Lucia was martyred circa 304. It’s told that she brought food to Christians hiding in Rome, wearing candles on her head so that she had both hands free. Sweden has a long Christmas season which doesn’t traditionally end until January 13 when trees are taken down.

- A “shrimp on the barbie” is certainly not out of place for Christmas in Australia. It’s right around the beginning of Summer in the Southern Hemisphere, so December 25 is often a beach day, and cookouts are common. Try that in the Great White North!

- And finally, back here in the United States, it’s said that eggnog was first made and served here back in 1607. At least that’s what Jamestown settler John Smith recorded. The exact lineage isn’t completely known, but it’s thought to have originated in medieval England. Eggnog is particularly popular here and in Canada, but not at UMTRR HQ. It is now primarily a dairy product, and that cycles back to not far from where we started with the cheese tree.

*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 October 31.*



*Scheduled Delivery March 2018:*

**140 00 210, \$33.95**

**Reporting Marks: None.**

**Heavyweight Railway Post Office Car, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.**

#4 in the Ringling Brothers Advertising Car series. White sides and ends, gray (or silver) roof, black underframe, trucks and details. Red letterboard with yellow lettering “Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Combined Circus” across top. Black “Advertising Department” inside yellow scrollwork left and right, bracketing multicolor clown and elephant design. Multicolor wild animal artwork at far left and right. MTL preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.



A March 1995 **New York Times** article about advertising the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus sheds a little insight into what was happening in far earlier days: “For generations, before the advent of radio and television, Ringling’s advertising focused on the spectacle of the circus itself, which was both attention-getting and cheap. A visiting show’s parades, elephant walks and even the raising of the circus tent were all calculated elements in Ringling’s pied-piper strategy to draw the citizenry into the tent.”

We have examples of the “spectacle itself” on this latest Advertising Car. The preliminary artwork shows perhaps the two most famous features of the show at the bottom center: clowns and elephants. Lions and giraffes are illustrated on the ends of the sides, including a baby giraffe (aww!). So just seeing the car rolling by, or parked on a siding somewhere, is advertising in and of itself.

In 1995, then Marketing and Sales Director Allen J. Bloom noted in the **Times** piece that the company wanted to “affix its brand on everything from video games and television programs to movies, snack foods and baby products.” I wonder if he had thought of model railroad equipment, or had any idea (22 years ago!) that the MTL Ringling Brothers series would continue after the circus itself had played its final performance?

And one other note: Just about visible on the RPO’s right hand door is the legend, “Advertising Car No. 1.” Just how many “Advertising Car Number Ones” did the circus have? My guess is... all of them. It’s just another marketing tactic to call every Advertising Car “Number One,” thus implying that the location being visited is of utmost priority to the Circus. We sent Car Number One, because You’re Number One.

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

### **Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



500 00 970, \$25.95

**Reporting Marks:** GN 19038.

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Doors Great Northern.**

#9 in the MTL Z Scale Great Northern Circus Car Series (pre-orders taken in October 2016). Orange with dark green lettering including large roadname across car and small goat

herald without roadname on right. White reporting marks on left. White simulated reflective dots along bottom of side. Brown trucks and couplers. Green end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1956 into at least the 1960s.

For the third consecutive month, this Circus Car was part of the group GN 18500 to 19499, which as listed in the January 1958 ORER had 986 of the possible 1000 cars. The dimensions included inside length of 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 2 inches, outside length 41 feet

10 inches, extreme height 14 feet 8 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3775 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Yes, copy and paste here, hopefully correctly!

And speaking of reruns, it's back to Lindsay Korst's Circus Cars page (Direct URL [www.gngoat.org/circus\\_boxcars.htm](http://www.gngoat.org/circus_boxcars.htm) ). Korst also notes that the only white lettering (reflective "dots" notwithstanding) is the reporting marks. Everything else, including the lines above and below "GN 19038" is in Pullman Green, which is not easy to tell from black in the prototype photo. Also apparent in the photo is that the couplers were the same shade of orange as the car. I'm sure that didn't last long after the car entered service.



**518 00 451 and 518 00 452, \$25.95 each.**

**Reporting Marks: SFRD 14776 and 14799.**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Ice Refrigerator Cars, Vertical Brake Staff, Santa Fe Refrigerator Department.**

Orange sides, brown ends, roof and below floor grab irons, black ladders, side grab irons and door hardware. Black lettering including reporting marks on left and "Ventilator and Refrigerator" on right. Black and white early circle cross herald in black square above reporting marks on left. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1920 (build date) to early 1930s.

Well, we're not going to find this one in a Color Guide. But I can start with the October 2016 release of this car in N Scale (049 00 750, Road Number 14799). It looks like MTL updated its car copy for this 1:220 run, so I'll refresh mine as well. A chart on the website of the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society ( [www.atsfrr.com](http://www.atsfrr.com) ) confirms that Haskell and Barker constructed the prototype series SFRD 14201 to 15450, the Santa Fe's Class RR-W. That was the year before Haskell and Barker was bought by Pullman in 1921. Even without a photo, there's enough information to point out two differences between the MTL 518 body style and the prototype: a USRA Fishbelly underframe and an outside flexible metal roof. A photo of a Westerfield HO Scale model of an RR-W shows "odd ventilators" (not my description!) atop the roof. "Santa Fe used the USRA reefer design, stretched to 41 feet 3 inches, as its standard for the decade of the 1920s. The first delivery was 2,500 cars, half from American Car & Foundry and half from Haskell & Barker. The cars kept the odd ventilators used on previous truss rod classes." A thumbnail photo shows the model in decoration similar to if not exactly what Micro-Trains used; this is probably the "as delivered" scheme which was later simplified to a herald-only version.

The definitive source for information on these cars is the **Santa Fe Railway Rolling Stock Reference Series, Volume Two, Refrigerator Cars: Ice Bunker Cars 1884-1979**. It's available in digital form from the SFRH&MS, but it's not in the UMTRR Research Accumulation. However, from the Steam Era Freight Cars site we learn this: "Between 1935 and 1950, the

Santa Fe rebuilt its large fleet of USRA type refrigerator cars. While retaining the signature fishbelly center sills of the originals, the rebuilds were otherwise state-of-the-art in all other respects. The original classes Rr-W, -X, -Y, -2, -3, -4 were rebuilt into classes Rr-16, -18, -19, -23, -25, -27, -28, -32, -33, -34, -35, -36, -39, -40, -43, -45, -46, -48. A total of 10,246 cars were rebuilt." The Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association has a USRA rebuild in its collection in its final form as a Santa Fe company service car.

Those 47 (!) boxes of Haskell and Barker Company material I mentioned with the N Scale release of this car are still in the archives of the National Museum of American History, and there might be a bingo photo in there – in fact, there are two numbers this time, doubling the chances for someone brave enough.



**518 00 470, \$28.95**

**Reporting Marks: HJHCo. 472.**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Vertical Brake Staff, Heinz.**

#2 in the Heinz Series. Brown with black underframe and arch bar trucks. Green and white Heinz pickle

trademark on left. Red with white outline lettering including "57 Varieties" on left and "Preserved Fruits" and reporting marks on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: circa 1895.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Release above (058 00 270), with the caveat that the Z Scale release is on a 40 foot car while the N Scale run is on a 36 foot car.



**548 00 101 and 548 00 102, \$31.80 each**  
**Reporting Marks: PFE 300535 and 300562.**

**50 Foot Steel Mechanical Refrigerator Cars, Rivet Sides, Pacific Fruit Express.**

Orange with black roof and ends. Mostly black lettering including Union Pacific and Southern Pacific heralds and reporting marks on left, and stepped roadname on right, with first letter (P F E) in white with black outline. White on black single panel

COTS stencil on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s as painted.

When the Southern Pacific Equipment Company, a subsidiary of Southern Pacific, constructed these two cars, they wore the then-standard railroad roman lettering with black and white medallions of the UP and SP. The history of the PFE's paint schemes is somewhat complex.

Fortunately, the UMTRR Research Accumulation includes the second edition of **Pacific Fruit Express** by Anthony W. Thompson, Robert J. Church and Bruce H. Jones. And Page 201 of that volume includes a bingo on the 300562. The photo dates to 1975 and is captioned as being in the 1970 scheme. Spotting features of this particular variant include the “outline” roadname with the P, F and E starting each word in white outlined in black, and the positioning of the SP medallion toward the “B” or brake wheel end on each side. Another way to describe the latter feature is that the UP and SP heralds are reversed on one side versus the other. The use of the gothic style SP inside the circle dates to 1961 and the black-only version of both heralds goes back to the 1950s. The actual car does differ from the MTL 548 body style on some items including that the prototype door went all the way to the top of the car.

The roof of the 300562 isn’t visible in the black and white photo in the Pacific Fruit Express book. Elsewhere in that volume, references are made to white, aluminum and specially coated rooves, but not black. So I went to the source and asked author Tony Thompson, who kindly replied that the roof should be aluminum, not black. The black ends are fine.

The ORER for April 1970 shows the series PFE 300513 to 300712 with 192 of the possible 200 cars in service. The description is, as you’d expect, “Mechanical Refrigerator” with AAR Designation RP. The difference between the inside length of 44 feet 7 inches and outside length of 55 feet 5 inches is accounted for by the mechanical refrigeration equipment and some insulation. The inside width was 8 feet 6 inches and outside width 9 feet 10 inches, and the inside height was 8 feet 1 inch versus an extreme height of 15 feet—insulation taking up some of that difference again. The door opening was six feet wide and capacity was 3085 cubic feet or 130,000 pounds. The Pacific Fruit Express was split between the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific in 1978, but none of these cars made it that far. Only seven of these cars remained as of the July 1974 ORER and they were all gone by 1976.

**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 October 13.*

**510 44 245, \$64.95 - “Birds of a Feather” Two-Pack.** Consists of two 50 foot steel exterior post boxcars with single Youngstown doors:



- **510 51 245, Reporting Marks EEC 8331, East Erie Commercial Railroad.** Base car is brown with aluminum roof. Graffiti on both sides and weathering on roof. Approximate Time Period: at least 2014 to 2017. Previous Releases: Technically none,

though the base EEC car has been used for other Weathered/Graffiti releases.





• **510 52 420, Reporting Marks WRWK 88072, Warwick Railroad.** Base car is brown with aluminum roof and white lettering including reporting marks on left. Graffiti on both sides and weathering on roof (not shown). Approximate Time

Period: at least 2014. Previous Releases: None.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Release above (025 44 008).

**Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS:** No releases this month, but there is a pre-order announcement:

*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 October 31.*



**994 00 105, \$119.95**

**Reporting Marks: SP 9151, 9156, 9160, 9162.**

**Quantity Four of Lightweight Sleepers, Southern Pacific.**

Silver with red band. Silver roadname inside red band. Small "winged circle" device and reporting marks (SP 9155) at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1958 to early 1970s.

Previous Release: Road Number 9155, July 2009. Individual catalog numbers are expected to be 550 5x 070.

As I noted back in 2009, there's a rundown of the SP's paint schemes for passenger cars on Richard Percy's "My Espee Modeler's" site ([URL.espee.railfan.net](http://URL.espee.railfan.net), no "www"). I'll quote Jim Lancaster, who provided the content to Richard: "In 1950 the streamlined Sunset Limited went into service between Los Angeles and New Orleans. The cars were stainless steel with a red letterboard. This was known as the Sunset color scheme. It lasted until 1958... In 1958 the SP adopted a simplified Sunset color scheme as their standard for all passenger cars."

It's the simplified Sunset scheme that's depicted on this car. With some exceptions, this was the SP's paint scheme until the coming of Amtrak in 1971. Once again, I didn't locate any photos of any of these cars despite the UMTRR Research Accumulation and online photo collections having expanded since 2009. I've been told that the series for these cars was 9150 to 9165. There is a five part article in **Mainline Modeler** on painting SP Passenger Cars that ran from April to September 1995 - magazines I don't have. The only hit I got on line referred to the SP 9155 as a 6-6-4 sleeper that was part of the Union Pacific's "City of San Francisco" consist in 1950. I also noted that some of the SP's Pullman-Standard 10-6 sleepers were "blunt end" and were used on the end of the train; not exactly observation cars, these!

## Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



548 00 090, \$27.95

Road Number: 2017.

**50 Foot Steel Mechanical Refrigerator Cars, Rivet Sides, 2017 Christmas Car.**

Base color is blue with black ends and roof. Each side has a different full side multicolor scene. Side A shows Micro-Mouse, Mrs. Micro-Mouse and Micro-Mouse Junior locating a Christmas Tree made of cheese. Side B shows the Micro-Mouse returning to their house with the tree and includes the words "Merry Christmas from Micro-

Trains" in the center. This car does not have end markings.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (102 00 130), with the note that the Z Scale release is on a mechanical refrigerator car while the N Scale release is on a 60 foot boxcar.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There's now a brown undecorated 53 foot corrugated container in N Scale (469 00 002, \$8.75). Meanwhile, MTL has confirmed a December release date for the first of its Z Scale Heavyweight Modernized Business Cars, although not the first roadname or the MSRP.

Something unofficial: The UMTRR Spy Network has informed me of a planned celebration of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Micro-Trains N Scale Freight Car release. I'm told it will be one of the new body style boxcars with a special paint scheme. Stay tuned...

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** George Hollwedel did some additional checking on the SP Friendship Train boxcar from last month (020 00 027) and determined that the road number 97994 is appropriate for the spelled out roadname. You might recall that there were several variations of the "Overnights" boxcars including versions with the roadname spelled out and with only the SP reporting marks. Thanks, George!

I don't know how I forgot this when reviewing last month's N Scale Soo Line Weathered Train Set (993 01 660), but I did. The Fall 2017 issue of the magazine **Classic Trains** has as its "Fallen Flags Remembered" feature a piece on the Soo Line. This includes a thumbnail history of the carrier, for example the creation of the "New Soo" on the last day of 1960. That issue is on newsstands until the end of November so there's still time to check it out... unlike, perhaps, the Soo Line set itself which has already sold out.

Want to see the roof of an Airslide Covered Hopper? How about while the car is on its side? Here you go... I forgot all about this snapshot I took along the CSX "Water Level Route" mainline (former New York Central/Penn Central/Conrail) just west of Rochester. I don't recall when I took it, but it was before I had a digital camera. I guess someone had a bad day down at the yard...



**OOPS PATROL:** There were two typos that crept into the coverage of the Z Scale B&O "Comet" boxcars (500 00 03x). First, the photo of one of these cars I noted was taken in 1955, not 1965. Second, the repaint of car 467**109** was reported as 467**019**.

My copy and paste of the Heinz Series #1 from N to Z Scale neglected changing the body style from a 36 foot truss rod refrigerator car to a 40 foot wood double sheathed refrigerator car.

Also, I'm not sure if this is an Oops, but it's certainly a bit confusing. While the N and Z Scale Weathered/Graffiti Release well cars were described by MTL as being for Coe Rail (CRLE), the catalog numbers actually line up with their Northwestern Oklahoma (NOKL) "clean" releases. The reporting marks are completely obscured in both cases on the Weathered/Graffiti cars, and the base white on brown scheme is the same on both the CRLE and the NOKL cars, so this is just an "accounting" issue.

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** I've already mentioned that the N Scale Soo Line Weathered Train Set (993 01 660) is outta here; that's the only one of last month's Weathered/Graffiti Releases to hit the bye-bye board so far. But quite a few other "dirty" items in 1:160 have left the building. In catalog number order, we have the Cotton Belt red and gray plug door boxcar (021 44 590, June), the Erie Lackawanna express scheme boxcar (024 44 390, February 2016), NASA Series #9 bulkhead flat car (054 00 220, May), the SP Weathered hopper two-pack (056 44 341, July), the Conrail/ex-Erie Lackawanna weathered/faded Center Flow (094 44 490, May), the Golden West "Turkey" graffiti gondola (105 44 131, October 2016), the CIGX graffitied gondola (105 44 750, June 2016), and the Union Pacific gray tank car (110 44 250, June).

There are enough "boxes" gone this month to give them a separate paragraph: both variants of the JB Hunt 53 foot containers (469 00 510 and 520, August), the second number of the Santa Fe 48 foot container (468 00 082, May), and both the 40 foot and the pair of 20 foot containers to complement the NASA Series (461 00 090 and 460 00 030, both August).

And rounding out – almost-- the N Scale Discontinued Alert are these items: Per Diem Series #12 Port Huron and Detroit x-post boxcar (025 00 970, January), the x-post boxcar with plug door for the Burlington Northern (027 00 430, August), the second number of the Southern Pacific single release stock car (wait, what?) (035 00 252, July 2016, first number already gone), the Pennsylvania Railroad wood caboose (051 00 300, June), the Norfolk Southern bulkhead

flat car (054 00 230, July), the reprint PRR round-roof boxcar (079 00 010, March), both numbers of the Santa Fe “Q” Scheme Center Flow (094 00 48x, April), the CSX Operation Lifesaver Caboose Two-Pack (130 00 210, August), the second number of the BNSF well car (135 00 022, March, first number already sold out), the Rio Grande/Pullman 10-1-2 Sleeper (141 00 160, July), the Baltimore and Ohio Heavyweight Baggage Car (147 00 090, June), and the first release, in July, on each of the three new boxcar body styles: single door Gulf, Mobile and Ohio (180 00 010), Santa Fe (181 00 010), and Rio Grande (182 00 010).

In Z Scale there are four x-post boxcars gone: both numbers of the Frisco (510 00 06x, September 2016), the KCS Weathered “July 4” car (511 44 072, July), and the Per Diem Series #11 East Camden and Highland (511 00 230, December 2016). The Cudahy “Sunlight” version refrigerator car has run out of stock (518 00 440, August). The Canadian National (551 00 140, April 2016) has rolled out of the station. Finally, the tent has folded on the Great Northern Circus Car #1 (501 00 930, February).

And then there’s the Solar Eclipse Car (038 00 550 and 550-r), which apparently lasted not much longer on factory shelves in Talent as the actual eclipse lasted! Yes, the demand easily eclipsed the supply (sorry, I couldn’t resist what may be my only chance at this pun). MTL went as far as to issue a statement on its website explaining that despite an about typical production run, the car was gone faster than you can say “sold out.” Micro-Trains further apologized for this and noted that the only way to guarantee an exact match of supply and demand was through — you guessed it — a 100 percent pre-order model. As for the flare-up (sorry again) in aftermarket prices, MTL correctly noted that they don’t control that, but don’t condone authorized dealers charging above MSRP. All I can say, as someone who also did not get this item, is “Remember The Illinois... state car.” And the N Scale Great Northern Circus Cars, and the first run of the Sclair Center Flow... and, I suspect, the Canada 150 Car (059 00 566, June) which I also missed out on, eh? (I have a lead on one... and a nice looking hoodie with that same cool maple leaf.)

**THE ORER SEARCH IS ON AGAIN:** As I’ve remarked previously here, it’s time to update the UMTRR Research Accumulation with a fresher copy of the Official Railway Equipment Register than the October 2014 edition, which is now three years old. These do occasionally pop up on that Internet Auction Community, and unfortunately for the Research Budget (i.e., zero) command eye-popping prices — sometimes more than what it would cost to simply telephone the ORER folks and order a copy directly. I’m going to start looking more in earnest again. Meanwhile, if anyone sees or hears of an available copy, preferably from this year of 2017, please let me know.

**FINALLY, THE AUTHOR CAR:** The 2017 N Scale Enthusiast Author Car goes nicely with the current Heinz series, so I thought I’d share an image. As many of you know, this very limited run goes each year to those who contribute articles to the NSE’s





magazine. This item, presented as a gift by Micro-Trains (and thank you again), is not a rerun of the Roco/Atlas "First Generation" Vinegar / Water Car. Instead, it consists of a new resin tank atop the usual MTL 045 body style flat car. I have a complete set of these NSC/NSE Author Cars, going back to the first "unofficial" one (more about that some other time). Which reminds me.. perhaps this year I'll get started early on that "Micro-Trains-The Year in Review" article instead of rushing through it just before deadline! On the other hand, why break a nineteen-year streak now...

You'll notice that unlike most MTL releases, this one comes in black "bubble" foam packaging instead of the usual hard plastic nest. I suspect this means that we won't see a regular run car of this type in the Heinz series. That would be fun, though, as the last we saw of the "Heinz 57" scheme on this body style was a short-time release commissioned to Roco by E-R Models from here in Western New York. That car had quite the limited production run. Before that, you've got to go back to the actual A1G release, which is now around fifty years old. Yikes.

Oh, and did I ruin the collectable value of this car by opening the box? Did I forever besmirch the pristine condition of this rare item by releasing the "factory air"? Well, has anyone else noticed that there are small holes in the bottom of every Micro-Trains plastic box? Yes, friends, the "factory air" leaves the box as soon as the box leaves the factory! But you knew that... right?

And with that, I'll wish everyone a great rest of the month. Until next time, do the best you can...

Cheers,  
George

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