



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #259 – July, 2018 (Website Version)

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Hello again everyone... The folks behind the red and yellow sign have made plenty of pre-order announcements this month including the second pair of 16-packs in N Scale, one “clean” and one “not so clean.” The Union Pacific is well represented this time around with four N Scale releases. And we have two new N Scale cars appropriate for the Fourth of July. There’s also news from the National N Scale Convention including a venture that’s a bit of a departure (pun not intended) for Micro-Trains. We’ll get to all that, starting now...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



058 00 360, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: HPFL 2061.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Heinz.

#11 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 “Relish / Sour Mixed Pickles” on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1890s into the 1920s, see text.

We go from sweet to sour on the pickles this month. Several citations to online purchase of the current version, “Heinz Premium Genuine Dills” were among the first in the list of search results for “Heinz Sour Pickles.” I can reach back to at least 1898 and an advertisement which promoted both the Sweet and Sour Pickles and Heinz’ agent in Montreal. The “Wonderopolis” website answers the question, “Why are pickles so sour?” with this: “The acetic acid in vinegar or the lactic acid produced by brine gives the pickle its salty, sour taste.”

Meanwhile, a photo and Incremental Information sent by Claus Schlund may call into question the Approximate Time Period that I have been citing for the Heinz Series. It’s an image of last months release (058 00 360/Z Scale 518 00 550) **and** this month’s which is captioned, “Pittsburgh, 1920.” I think this image has fallen into the Public Domain by now so I can

reproduce it here (below). The Clover House folks quote the 1890's for the brown Heinz refrigerator cars, and there's no Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) information from that period to substantiate anything. So it's possible that at least last month's car was around for longer than just a decade and also conceivable that the brown and yellow Heinz cars (the latter of which are forthcoming from MTL) co-existed.

Claus also notes a possible oops: "Note the photo seems to show the reporting marks as HFPL - at least to my eyes. The MTL car has HPFL as the reporting marks - the 'P' and 'F' are reversed!"



065 00 960, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: DODX 16414.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, United States Army (Department of Defense).

Aluminum tank with black underframe and trucks. Aluminum ladders, black details. Black lettering including "United

States Army" and reporting marks on left. White on black double panel COTS stencil and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" on right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1965, or strictly speaking, after 1978 (given U-1 "dot"), to no later than 1989.

The bingo (exact match) to this car can be found on Page 6 of **Tank Car Color Guide Volume 1**. DODX 16414 was photographed in 1978. **Color Guide** author James Kincaid shares that this car was part of a 25 car series built by General American in 1952 and initially numbered USAX 16414 to 16438. Starting in 1965, rolling stock of Department of Defense operations were consolidated into the DODX reporting marks – and yes, there are plenty of exceptions for cars that generally didn't leave military bases. The real 16414 was a welded tank, not a riveted one, and the underframe differs a bit from the MTL 065 body style, but overall, it's not bad.

Given the "strictly speaking" ATP for this car driven by the circa-1978 wheel inspection dot, I began my check of ORERs with the January 1978 issue. The car is part of a group of tank cars DODX 16414 to 16453 with ICC Class 103W (the "W" for "Welded") and 10,000 gallons or 100,000 pounds capacity. There were 38 cars in the series at the time. Incidentally, there's an end note discussing cars that were in intraplant service and were not relettered DODX. There were 34 cars shown in the July 1987 ORER but the entire series is out of the Equipment Register by the July 1989 issue. How's that for an abrupt end to the Approximate Time Period? Well, maybe. Could be that these were relegated from interchange service to on-base service, which means they weren't completely retired.

In the useless trivia department, it appears that the MTL 065 series may be the next one to cycle out of catalog numbers, with this ending in 960. That would make it the third body style to reach this milestone of at least 100 different releases, following the 020 and 025 body styles.



092 00 400 and 092 00 410, \$28.90 each.

Reporting Marks: BNSF 405364 and 405505.

Two Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

Both cars are gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left, white on black double panel COTS stencil on right, and yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes. The 400 release has a white on black BNSF circle cross herald and the 410 release has a red on white BNSF circle cross herald. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1996, or strictly speaking, 2005 given conspicuity stripes, to as late as the present.

Since my teeth are set on edge with the impersonal “BNSF” moniker, I’m pleased to use the full name – okay, the former full name – of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe here. The BNSF dates to 1996 but those post-2005 conspicuity stripes define the “strictly speaking” ATP.

I think the mineral red on white herald is the more unusual of the two on a gray covered hopper. (We’ll come back to that.) Of my usual go-to sites for photos, the “coverage” of the 405505 on RRPictureArchives starts with a photo from October 2006. In that view, the car does not yet have conspicuity stripes. They were added by no later than August 2009. The latest photo of this car on RRPictureArchives is from January 2010. On the other hand, a shot taken of the 405364 on the last day of April, 2013 is tagged as the “first photo of this hopper” on that site. It’s followed by four more, the latest of which is from April 2016.

RailcarPhotos and Fallen Flags have other BNSF cars in this series with the white on black circle cross, but no images of a car in gray with the mineral red on white herald. What there are plenty of, however, are pictures of mineral red cars with the mineral red on white herald. Micro-Trains did that more common car in November 2005 (Catalog Number 92190 / 092 00 190, Road Number 406031, at right). Cars from the group were also given the BNSF “swoosh” aka “wedge” herald and there are examples of those online as well. These were built by American Car & Foundry, Lot 11-01052, January and February 1975. A quick check of ORERs shows 126 in service as of April 2013 but just eight remaining in the January 2018. A “to present” ATP is probably too much of a stretch by my reckoning, but I’ll grant a “possible” here.



Just before “press time” I heard from “The Masked Railroader,” and I’m happy to welcome him back to the roster of UMTRR Contributors. “I’m pleased Micro-Trains is on the mark in their copy with their July announcement of the 092 00 400 and 092 00 410 BNSF 2-bay covered hoppers,” Masked reports. “Indeed, BNSF 405350-405575 came from the Frisco series SLSF 78500-78749 with an intermediate stop in BN series 419100-419349. I’m surprised that Micro-Trains hasn’t done the Frisco yet as they have done most of the predecessors to the Burlington Northern in 2-bay hoppers (or the Burlington Northern in grey which had several schemes and was much more prevalent than the green BN car MTL did earlier: 92080/092 00 080). Micro-Trains has done several different BNSF schemes previously which is fertile territory for the number of different colors and heralds on cars after the 1996 merger.”



130 00 250, \$37.95

Reporting Marks: SP 1776.

Bay Window Caboose, Windowless Sides, with Battery Box, Southern Pacific.

White sides, gold roof, underframe, trucks (but not wheels) and couplers. Red and blue stripes. Red, white and blue

roadname and blue roadnumber on left. Red and blue “Buy US Savings Bond” device on right. Blue “Spirit of 1776” in center below bay window. Approximate Time Period: 1975 to at least 1980, but no later than 1983.

Here’s a car that will probably sell itself (and quickly, I would think; you’ve been cautioned) given the theme and the colorful paint scheme, and the fact that there are already N Scale models of the corresponding locomotives. The prototype for the MTL 130 body style is the somewhat newer SP Class C-50-9, which was built in 1980, or four years after the American Bicentennial. The rebuilding work on the prototype SP 1776, which was a C-40-7 initially built in 1967, puts it close to but not exactly the same as the MTL 130 body style. Probably the biggest delta is that there’s a side window left of and slightly below the roadname.

Richard Percy’s “My Espee Modeler’s Archive” site (espee.railfan.net) has a photo of the 1776 plus information on the SP and Cotton Belt’s three (!) bicentennial locomotives. (For the record: Cotton Belt SD45 #9389, SP GP40P-2 #3197 and SP U25BE #6500.) These paint schemes were designed by the late Mr. Chester Mack, who also did the 1947 Freedom Train paint schemes.

It’s not hard to locate other photos of the caboose online, including the car with a non-trivial amount of road grime and the circa-1978 U-1 wheel inspection “dot” (place it at the lower right if so inclined). RRPictureArchives has the caboose looking rather faded in November 1980. By 1983 it had been repainted into the standard brown and orange scheme with white lettering.

As of 2009, the 1776 in “not exactly” SP lettering was on display at the Railroad Depot / Hudspeth County Museum in Sierra Blanca, Texas. I checked; that’s in far west Texas between Van Horn and El Paso along Interstate 10.



182 00 070, \$25.70

Reporting Marks: B&O 475514.

50 Foot Double Door Boxcar, No Running Board, Short Ladders, Baltimore & Ohio / Chessie System.

Dark blue with mostly white lettering including Chessie System roadname and reporting marks on left and "Ches-C" herald on right. Double panel COTS stencil right of door. Simulated interior crate load included. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s (1974 service date on car) to no later than 1981.

MTL's car copy hints at the long history for this boxcar. The caption that goes along with the bingo on Page 47 of the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment** is the likely source for Micro-Trains' description. These, the B&O's B-10 class, were among early builds of fifty foot boxcars, having been constructed by Greenville Steel Car in 1945. (This pre-dates the introduction of the PS-1 on which the MTL 182 body style is likely based.) In 1952, the B&O's Dubois, Pennsylvania shops modified the cars, adding Evans DF-2 loaders to cars 475500 to 475559 and Transco SL-2 loaders to 475560 to 475624. Some of these cars had their loaders removed later, though that doesn't appear to be the case with the 475514 as it's got the "DF-2-19" markings just to the right of the reporting marks. The service date in 1974 is probably the repaint date as well.

Chessie kept the original B&O roadnumbers when repainting these cars in dark blue and yellow. The bingo photo is from 1978, just as those U-1 wheel inspection "dots" were appearing. (Looks like Micro-Scale decal set 60-5012 is what you need to add them.) The running board was probably removed at that time as well. I can only see the non-brake wheel end of the car in the photo and the ladders were shortened at that end.

Checking the ORER for January 1978, there were 23 cars in the main series 475500 to 475624, shown with Evans loaders, then three more with Evans loaders and cushioning devices, twelve with Transco loaders, another two with Transco loaders and pallets, and sixteen more with no loaders. Too much information, I suppose, but I think the 475514 is in the main series since it is not called out in any of the subsets. There's not much of an ATP here, as all but a single unequipped car are gone from the B&O roster as of the April 1981 Equipment Register.



469 00 121 and 469 00 122, \$16.95 each

Reporting Marks: APDU 5353785 and 5356378.

53 Foot Corrugated Containers, APL Logistics.

Blue with white lettering including company logo and reporting marks on sides and ends. Alternating red and white simulated reflective stripes across bottom of sides. Approximate Time Period: at least 2011 to present. The 121 is shown at left.

The website for APL Logistics is not terribly helpful in terms of figuring out the Approximate Time Period for these containers. "Officially

incorporated in 1977, APL Logistics is a US\$1.6 billion global supply chain services provider. APL Logistics designs and operates smart globally integrated supply chains. We combine origin and destination logistics solutions with transportation services across all modes and regions of the world.” Well, that’s fine, but 1977 pre-dates the introduction of the 53 foot container, and, in fact, the concept of double stack well cars. A posting on Trainboard pegs the introduction of blue APL – not APL Logistics – containers at about 1995, still before the 1989 introduction of 53 foot containers. The APL Logistics brand wasn’t introduced until 1999, a renaming of APL’s American Consolidation Services. APL itself is the former American President Lines.

“Matt’s Intermodal Page” has images of five APL Logistics containers, none dated but all constructed by CIMC. Not much help there. Fortunately, RRPictureArchives has 29 more images of APL Logistics containers in well cars, and each photo is dated.

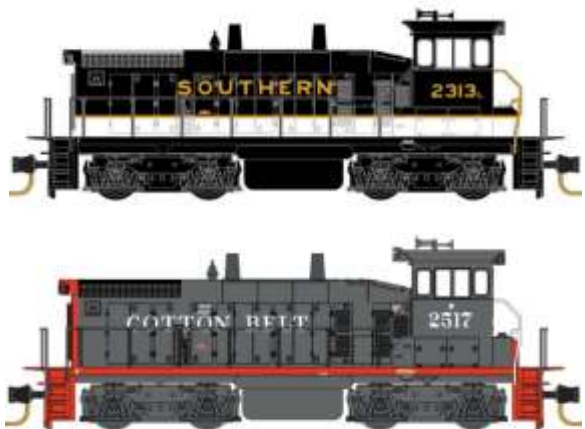
Am I crazy enough to check all of these for the earliest date?

Do you even need to ask?

That would be 2011, so we’ll go with an “at least” ATP start along with a “to present” as I also see photos into 2015. These containers also have a minimum of graffiti, unlike other “boxes” I’ve been seeing around UMTRR HQ.

About that seven digit “road number”: it’s actually six digits plus a check digit according to the Wikipedians. Also from them: “A check digit is used to detect errors in an intermodal shipping container number. The seventh digit of the container number also known as the check digit, is calculated off of the four letters and six digits of the container number.” Probably more than you wanted to know...

In addition to the above items, the Southern Railway SW1500 diesel locomotives (986 00 121, Road Number 1502 and 986 00 122, Road Number 1503, \$194.95 each) and Cotton Belt SW1500s (986 00 581, Road Number 2585 and 986 00 582, Road Number 2589, \$184.95 each) are scheduled to be released mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2017 (Part 2) edition. Yes, that is a different road number (2517) on the Cotton Belt SW1500 artwork than what MTL is releasing. No, I don’t know why either...



In addition, 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 July 31.



Scheduled Delivery December 2018:

071 00 570, \$74.95 and

071 00 580, \$79.95.

Reporting Marks: QUAX 261102 and 281102.

89 Foot TOFC Flat Cars, QUAX Salvage Flat Packs.

Each base car is red with white lettering including reporting

marks on left and yellow conspicuity stripes across car. The 570 car is unweathered and will include a wrecked weathered MTL 110 series shell (54 foot general service tank car) painted for CTCX. The 580 car is weathered with restenciled reporting marks on a black patch panel and will include a wrecked MTL 025 series shell (50 foot exterior post boxcar, single door) painted for Railbox. There will also be appropriate trucks (but not couplers) included with each car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present.

Redstreak Specialized Railcar Services is one of the companies that has benefited from the continued outsourcing of operations by railroads to specialty firms. Company-owned wreck trains, maintenance crews and even tracklaying gangs are becoming a thing of the past, if they're not completely gone. According to its website, "Redstreak rents a fleet of 89-foot flat cars, commonly called Hospital Cars, with features to allow safe loading and unloading of a damaged railcar and its trucks in 20 minutes. For customers needing more than equipment to move wrecked railcars, Redstreak offers a complete railcar salvage service." Unfortunately, Redstreak is also a firm that does not list its cars in the Official Railway Equipment Register, and so much for that source. We know from the company's website that it's been around since 1999, but conspicuity stripes have only been around since 2005, so that's the start of our ATP.

We have kind of a Backwards Bingo on the announced Weathered Version of this car, QUAX 281102: it's certainly dirty alright and has the restenciled reporting marks, but in a June 2015 photo, available on RRPictureArchives, it's carrying... a damaged tank car! True, TILX 304797 isn't a match to the MTL 110 body style, but I did find this a bit amusing. As in the MTL artwork, the trucks but not the couplers are mounted next to the car. The couplers are, of course, body mounted and won't come off that easily. The mounting platforms for the carbody and trucks appear to match well between model and prototype. What I think will be interesting is whether Micro-Trains will model the actual tie-down cables that secure the wrecked car and its trucks to the flat car.

The QUAX 261102 also has a bingo on RRPictureArchives from February 2018, which I think will back us into the "The Present" part of the ATP. It's also carrying a tank car, VMSX 310834, which is similar to the CTCX general service tank cars which Micro-Trains has been pumping

out. (The answer to why MTL would use a CTCX tank car and Railbox boxcar for these wreck loads is "Economies of Scale," as any economist would tell you.)

Scanning the remainder of the QUAX roster on RRPictureArchives, I note that many are captioned as being former Santa Fe flat cars, for example QUAX 88918 is former ATSF 88918. Given that these cars were red when on the Santa Fe roster, I wonder if that is the origin of the company name "Redstreak"?

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



142 00 190, \$34.90

Car Name "Multnomah" (will be "UP 4302" in website listings).

Heavyweight 12-1 Sleeping Car, Union Pacific.

Two-tone gray sides with white striping. White lettering, including "Pullman" in center of letterboard, roadname at far right of letterboard, and road number at bottom center. Black roof, underframe and trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1946 to early 1950s in general, but just March 1951 to July 1952 for this particular car.

Thanks to Don Strack's "Utah Rails" site, we have an **Exact** Time Period for this particular car: it was painted in the two-tone gray scheme MTL models here on 28 March 1951, and repainted into the yellow, gray and red scheme on 2 July 1952. And that second date was a month after it was withdrawn from the Pullman lease, on 1 June 1952. You can't get much more "specific" than that. (Sorry.)

This 12-1 was among twenty cars that were built by Pullman in 1929 and went to the UP in 1948, one of 55 cars which were part of the divestiture of the Pullman Company from its passenger car roster. The "Multnomah" became part of the UP's "Roadway" series in January 1964, receiving road number 906035.

Strack reports that these cars did not show up in the Official Register of Passenger Equipment until the January 1950 issue. That saves me one lookup and sends us to the January 1953 edition. All twenty of the 12-1 sleepers are mentioned by name. They had an inside length of 73 feet 10 inches and an outside length of 83 feet.

The Multnomah in its later yellow and gray scheme can be found as of 1956 on Page 81 of the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. The key delta between it and the MTL 142 body style is the roof, which is more of a true clerestory style on the prototype. On the same page is sister car Edgewood as of 1962. Both cars were already out of service when their photographs were taken.

One more thing: if that name Multnomah seems familiar, you've got a great memory: Micro-Trains issued the car in April 2011 (Catalog Number 142 00 090, at right) in the



later UP scheme with that very same car name. The ATP for that release can be revised from 2 July 1952 to January 1964 based on the research for the two-tone gray version released this month. Sometimes this byte-slinger catches a break!



144 00 191, \$34.90

Road Number: 101 (will be "UP 101" in website listings.

Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Union Pacific.

Two-tone gray sides with white striping. White lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Black roof, underframe and trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1946 (repaint date given by MTL) to 1952. Note: Micro-Trains has announced that this item is not on dealer standing orders.

There's a good reason why this car isn't on standing orders: it's the replacement for the incorrectly painted UP Observation which was released in March (at right). MTL graciously offered a recall period – send yours back and they'll give you a new one.



The prototype story of the 101, such as I could find, is also in the March UMTRR. To summarize, all I could count on was the general Approximate Time Period of 1946 to 1952 for this car in this paint scheme, since the UP has had several cars numbered 101 during their history.

N SCALE REPRINTS: One this month, although it's really a "not a reprint."



023 00 270, \$29.70

Reporting Marks: UP 9218.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Doors, Union Pacific (Express Service).

Two-tone gray sides with white striping. Black roof; gray running board. White lettering including roadname at top left, reporting marks center left and "Express

Service" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1946 to 1952. Previous Releases: Road Number 9213, January 2002 (as Catalog 23270); then Road Numbers 9205 and 9209, August 2014 (as Catalog 023 00 27x), although these are painted in different shades of gray, see text.

I suppose I could have placed this car up with the New Releases. The previous iterations of this car (at right) are in different shades of gray than this release, making it a “not a reprint” by my criteria. (Please note that the official MTL images appear to show that the first and second runs also appear to be different from each other; that’s not the case. I have examples of both runs in my accumulation.)



As with the previous coverage, let’s start with the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**, Page 62. It’s noted there that the series UP 9200 to 9229 was built by the UP at its shops in 1940 and 1941. The cars were initially given the UP class B-50-31 which was changed in 1946 to BX-50-31, a “Box-Express” class. The several type of trucks which were originally used, including the Allied Full Cushion type seen on the MTL cars, were replaced with either A-3 or Symington-Gould trucks. Allied trucks were banned from interchange service in 1955.

Things get a little tricky after that. The previous series of Box-Express cars, UP 9100 to 9199, is reporting as having been repainted in 1946 from the attractive “Challenger” Express Service paint scheme (done by MTL as their catalog 23230 in 1996) to “passenger train colors” of yellow, gray and red. On the other hand, the first volume of the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** gives 1952 as that date—and remember, that’s for the previous series of 100 cars, not this one of 30 cars. We do have a 1959 photo of UP 9228 from the series in which we’re interested, in which the car is in the passenger scheme.

The UtahRails site saves the day... again. According to a timeline posted there, in July 1946 the two-tone gray was introduced, and in December 1952 the yellow and gray scheme replaced it. That aligns with tone gray being used on some of the UP’s passenger cars between 1946 and 1952, including the series of cars MTL is releasing at the present time. The change of class to BX-50-31 was in 1946 as well. These cars would be most at home on the UP itself however there are enough photos of other railroads’ express cars found on other than their home roads to suggest that this would not necessarily be exclusive.

Next, we’ll check the two editions of the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment. In the March 1943 issue the 130 cars numbered from 9100 to 9229 are shown in one entry, and described only with a length of under 60 feet. Per diem was five dollars with a mileage charge of 2½ cents. In the January 1953 ORPTE there are 126 cars remaining in service; the Per Diem is up to 9.50 and the mileage charge is at 4.8 cents.

This doesn’t give us any help with dimensions. However, the full-on shot of sister car UP 9228 does: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height just 8 feet 6 inches, extreme height 12 feet 4 inches, and capacity just 50,000 pounds with a light weight (weight of the actual car) at 42,000 pounds. I’ll add to that the length over the coupler pulling faces of 44 feet 3 inches, which is available on that same webpage on UtahRails.net. It also provides a car by car listing of all of

the UP's express boxcars (!). These dimensions are important because they indicate a bit of an optical illusion. Because the cars are relatively less tall than typical, they appear to be more long than the nominal forty foot boxcar. Though the scale height of the MTL 023 body style is not right versus the prototype, the scale length is more or less appropriate.

After Express Service ended, many of these cars went into company service for the UP. The 9200 series cars went to series UP 912077 to 912106 in 1975. All were retired by mid-1980.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #141 (993 00 141, \$79.95), **four Missouri Pacific Despatch Stock Cars**, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2018 issue. This Runner Pack was delayed from last month. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 035 51 260, 54116; 035 52 260, 54130; 035 53 260, 54133; 035 54 260, 54145. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released.



Also, the **DRGW (Denver and Rio Grande Western) Heavyweight Five-Pack** (993 01 730, **\$159.95**) is scheduled to be released mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. The pack consists of the following cars:

- 141 51 160, 10-1-2 Sleeper, Car Name "Lake Earnest." Note that this car has "Pullman" on the letterboard instead of the roadname.

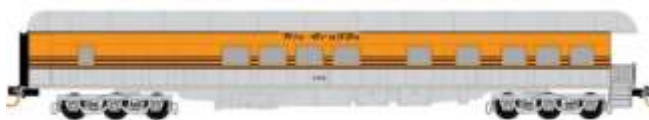


- 147 52 160, Baggage Car, Road Number 741.



- 145 53 160 and 145 54 160, Paired Window Coaches, Road Numbers 985 and 980.

- 144 51 802, Modified Business Car with Balloon Roof, Road Number 102.



I'll post images of the actual cars to the UMTRR Website should they become available.

The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close July 31.



Scheduled Delivery December 2018:

993 00 148, \$99.95.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 12920, 12956, 12973, 12979.

Runner Pack #148, Quantity Four of 50 Foot Steel Boxcars with Single Youngstown Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Red sides, black roof, ends and tack boards on door. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large "DF with

Shock Control" across car (including "with" on door). Black and white early circle cross herald in black square. Black lettering "Floating Underframe Gives Freight A Smoother Ride" across lower part of sides. White simulated reflective circle crosses across bottom of side. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (build date) into the 1970s. Previous Release: Catalog Number 31340, Road Number 10001, May 2002, but see text.

At right is the May 2002 release of this car in N Scale; it was also done in Z Scale in July 2009. The ATSF 10001 had the distinction of being the **only** car in its class, namely, Bx-77. So how could it be reprinted, and with different road numbers?



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It's a relatively simple answer but one that would require a change from what the folks in Talent have mocked up for this Runner Pack announcement. (The N and Z Scale images are the same, by the way.) The 10001 was an experimental rebuild of an older car to determine the validity of "Shock Control"—and we know that turned out very well. That led to construction from the ground up of a set of one hundred boxcars in Santa Fe class Bx-76 in 1958 and 1959. Yes, I know that 76 comes before 77, but I wasn't around to argue about that. These cars, in the group ATSF 12900 to 12999 which includes the four numbers in this Runner Pack, were painted almost the same as the prototype ATSF 10001. There were two differences: first, the word "with" in "DF with Shock Control" was on a panel welded to the door, not on the door itself. I think that's not a worry at 1/160th or 1/220th actual size. More noticeable, however, is the use of the "modern" circle cross with the Santa Fe roadname in Cooper Black, which is what most of us are used to seeing. That should be a relatively simple fix to the paint masking, or programming, or whatever it is MTL uses these days, prior to production. Page 47 of the book **Santa Fe Freight in Color... the Series, Volume One - Boxcars** which I know is in the MTL Research Library (namely, because I sent them a copy!) provides a bingo photo of ATSF 12793 as delivered with the then new Santa Fe herald. (The photo of the 10001 is on Page 48 of the same book.)

The ORER for July 1963 shows the series ATSF 12900 to 12999 with 99 cars. The description is "Box, Shock Control, DF Loader" and an end note calls out nailable steel flooring. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 53 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4995 cubic feet or 130,000 pounds. Ten years later in July 1974, 85 of the original 100 cars remained, but with a split between 54 that still had nailable steel floors and another 31 which apparently did not. (A detail not visible in N or Z Scale... well, not without some exceptional modeling!)

While 71 of these cars were listed in the April 1984 Equipment Register, I'm calling the ATP at the 1970s for two reasons: first, running board removal; second, repainting into the more typical Santa Fe "Shock Control" scheme. Page 48 of the **Santa Fe Freight...** book provides the 12994, captured in 1986, as an example of both reasons. There's also quite the oddball in the form of ATSF 12901 as of August 1975, with the circle cross replaced with the "Ship and Travel" slogan. Who let that one out of the paint shop? Note that even then, the running board was gone.



Scheduled Delivery January 2019:

993 01 760, \$399.95 and 993 01 765, \$449.95

TTX Well Car 16-Packs, "Clean" (the 760) and Weathered (the 765).

Each car is yellow with silver details and mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and TTX symbol on right. The 765 pack will have cars with considerable weathering and some graffiti. Approximate Time Period: early 1990s (1992 build date previously given by MTL) through decade of the 2000s. Individual catalog numbers (probably 135 xx 060 and 135 xx 065) will be confirmed upon release. Previous Release: Runner Pack #133 (993 00 133, October 2017, UMTRR coverage in May 2017) with Road Numbers 56811, 56812 and 56816. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may differ.

My disclaimer about the preliminary artwork differing from the actual product probably isn't that important this time, as the "clean" car shown fits right into the same series as the previous Runner Pack, namely, DTTX 56775 to 56873. The TTX logo was introduced in 1991 so this would be the "as delivered" scheme.

As noted with in the prior coverage of the Runner Pack (and the 2004 release of the Z Scale version), the ORER for October 1996 shows the series with AAR Classification FC and description "Flat." The AAR Car Type Code S312 translates to Stack Car, 48 foot well, single well (or FC again), and the load type, which can consist of two 20 foot or one 40, 45 or 48 foot container in the well and one 40, 45 or 48 foot container stacked above. The inside length is, as you'd probably guess, 48 feet, the outside length 71 feet 8 inches and the capacity is 164,000 pounds. There were 98 cars in the group in October 1996 and 95 in the January 2006 ORER. However, given the movement toward a 53 foot standard for domestic service, the 48 foot containers were on their way out by the start of the present decade, and so were these cars. In the October 2014 Equipment Register just 13 were left. With the January 2018 ORER in house

I can confirm just two cars remaining... not quite enough for a "to present" ATP end. Add the 2008 change in the TTX logo and I think the decade of the 2000s is a reasonable ending of the ATP.

I'll speculate that as with the Pacific Fruit Express 16-packs just released, each of the "clean" and Weathered sets will carry different road numbers, causing a huge leap up the "number of releases" chart for this particular car. The road numbers on the artwork are 56814 and 56818, which weren't among the Runner Pack choices.

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 after July 16.*



025 44 014, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: RBOX 34856.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Railbox.

Car #7 in the "A Year of Railbox" series. Base car is yellow with black door and aluminum roof. Black lettering including reporting marks (with patched road number) and large "Railbox" name on left. Black slogan "The nationwide boxcar pool" and large "Next Load/Any Road" symbol and slogan on

right. Extensive graffiti across both sides of car. A side has caricatures of two cowboys aiming at each other, in between which is "SKUTE." B side has "KING" across car, the "I" represented by a young woman wearing a hat captioned "157." Approximate Time Period: 2016, plus or minus. Previous Releases: A six-pack (Catalog Number 25012) with Road Numbers 17715, 17723, 17771, 17783 and 17792, February 1981; then Road Number 17787, December 2004 (this car with an aluminum roof); then "A Year of Railbox" #6, June 2018.

"Yay!" reports our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe, "The reverse side of the MTL model that says King 157 is the actual, real life reverse side to the 'cowboy' image on the other side. No 2 for 1 different cars on one release with confusing ATPs and road numbers this month. A bingo photo taken in Jacksonville, IL (with a sign in the photo to prove it) on rrpicturearchives.net is dated July 2017."

We know the ATP for the "Cowboy" side starts no earlier than September 2012, as there is an image on RRPictureArchives with the car relatively clean. David continues, "Fellow N scaler and friend Collin Reinhart gets credit for spotting this month's Railbox car. He posted a link to the bingo photo on Flickr on Micro-Trains Facebook page. That photo is dated February 2016. I found another bingo photo of Skute's artwork on this car on Flickr dated February 2017." To Present seems to be a completely reasonable Approximate Time Period. We already know from last month that the January 2018 ORER shows plenty of cars in the series RBOX 30000 to 37749, so no worries there.



047 44 145, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: PFE 65125.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Ice Refrigerator Car, Horizontal Brake Staff, Pacific Fruit Express.

Base car has orange sides, brown ends, roof and side sills, black details and black

lettering including "Pacific Fruit Express" and reporting marks on left. Black and white Southern Pacific and red, white and blue Union Pacific heralds on right. Moderate weathering similar to that in the 16-car set released in mid-May (993 01 715). Approximate Time Period (based on paint scheme): mid-1940s to early 1950s.

Between the "clean" and the Weathered version of these cars, and not counting 22 other wood refrigerator releases with a slightly different "double herald" paint scheme, we're up to 33 cars now under this pair of catalog numbers ("clean," 047 xx 140 and Weathered, 047 xx 145). Is that a record? For the moment, I think it is, though the lack of consolidation between clean and dirty runs of the same car does cloud things a bit (pun intended).

I'll repeat myself from the December 2016 pre-review of the two 16-packs. PFE had a variety of paint schemes over the years, some subtly different from each other. Anthony Thompson is the "go to" expert and via the book **Pacific Fruit Express** he co-wrote we already know that the "dual herald" scheme was introduced in 1946. In 1949, the company stopped painting the door hardware black, and starting in 1950, the Union Pacific shield was rendered in black and white, not red, white and blue. Add to that the PFE practice of frequent repainting and the result is a relatively short Approximate Time Period. I suspect that there will be a liberal application of Rule #1 to get around this. There is also the matter of the prototype PFE's R-30-12 and R-30-13 classes with wood ends and wood running board being a closer match to the MTL 047 body style overall. The actual number series into which this car, and the other 32, fall, that is, PFE 62501 to 69999, had steel ends and running boards. Based on the popularity of the set implied here by a quick follow on single release, I'd say this hasn't mattered much to N Scalers.

993 05 460, \$59.95, Spaceship Graffiti Two-Pack. Consists of the following two cars:



093 51 130, Reporting Marks ACFX 27264, Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Round Hatches, ACF. Base car is gray with

mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Extensive graffiti on A side depicting cartoonish "alien landing." Weathering, rust effects and weathered graffiti on B side. Rust effects on roof. Approximate Time Period: 2013, plus or minus. Previous Releases: None.



025 52 140, Reporting Marks SRN 6262, 50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Sabine River and Northern (Corinth and Counce Restencil). Base car is blue with aluminum roof and yellow lettering including roadname at top left and herald on right. White restenciled reporting marks on black patch panel on left. B side has yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes along bottom of side. Moderate weathering and heavy lettering fading. Extensive graffiti across A side depicting alien landscape.

Approximate Time Period: 2013 to as late as the present. Previous Releases (unweathered): CCR 6402, April 1983; CCR 6407, September 2004 (both with Corinth and Counce reporting marks).

In order to stay in sync with MTL's sequencing of multi-packs by the middle digits, the higher catalog number, 093 **51** 130, comes before the lower one, 025 **52** 140. Okay, we'll go with that, and we'll go back to David Grothe:

"The three bay covered hopper was done by graffiti artist D30. That's what is spelled out in the three triangles or pyramids on the side of the car. For prototype photos of this side of the car, I found one on Flickr dated January 2016 by searching for 'Your Planets Nekst':

www.flickr.com/photos/jaroh/24325830839/in/photolist-D4Af1x-DaY3jh

"On the prototype photo you will notice the road number of the car is UP 79028. Since the UP licensing agreement doesn't allow graffiti on its models, ACFX is a stand in for UP. A photo of UP 79028 on rrpicturearchives.net with this graffiti is dated November 2013 so our ATP is at least 2013.

"Looking at the reverse side of the model, a bingo photo of ACFX 27264 can be found on rrpicturearchives.net dated May 25th, 2014. The graffiti artists on this side of the car are Morse and Grone.

"I didn't have to search far for a prototype photo of the SRN (former Corinth and Counce) boxcar. Yours truly spotted this car in May of 2018 and I posted a photo of it on rrpicturearchives.net and on Flickr. The photo on Flickr can be found by searching for 'SRN 6262.' I don't believe that MTL used my photo as its inspiration for this release as that would be less than a two-month turnaround. More likely is a bingo photo on railcarphotos.com from October of 2014. On the bottom right corner of the car the numbers 2013 appear. Possibly the year the mural was painted on the car? We do know it has lasted until May of 2018.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION

RELEASES: Car #7 in the Union Pacific World War II Poster Series (118 00 170, \$25.95) has been released. Reporting Marks for this Troop Sleeper are USAX 19417. UMTRR coverage was in the September 2017 issue.



*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 **July 31**.*



Scheduled Delivery December 2018:

987 00 805, \$109.95

Reporting Marks: USAX 1941.

FT-A Powered Diesel Locomotive, Union Pacific.

Olive Green with white reporting marks at rear. Red roadname with white outline across side. Red, white and blue shield herald next to roadname. White road number on black numberboards. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

and



Scheduled Delivery January 2019:

100 00 159, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: USAX 1945.

34 Foot Steel Caboose with Offset Cupola, Union Pacific.

Olive Green with white reporting marks on end opposite cupola. Red, white and blue shield herald below cupola, red with white outline wording "Keep 'Em Rolling!" (in all capital letters) below herald. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

I hope no one minds my going out of the usual catalog number order here. It doesn't make much sense to split these two announcements, which is what I would have to do following strict catalog number order. And putting a pair of Ambulance Wagons between them? No, not a good idea...

Anyway, these companion releases to the Union Pacific World War II Poster Series would certainly be considered "Special Editions" (or, let us say, less kind descriptions). The closest UP came to having a caboose of this design was that the MTL 100 body style is based upon a Missouri Pacific / Texas and Pacific prototype; both railroads did go into the UP well after the Second World War. Steel cabooses were in general still quite scarce on American railroads at the time, and with steel almost completely reserved for the War Effort, I doubt that any steel

cabooses were built between the years 1941 and 1945. (Which reminds me, notice the road numbers of these items?) Meanwhile, despite its relatively early adoption of diesel power, the Union Pacific did not own a single FT diesel. F3s, F9s, E2s, E3s and E8s, yes, but no FTs. That hardly matters for a Special Edition set, although it's interesting that the UP didn't join the parade of original owners of "the diesel that did it."



Scheduled Delivery December 2018:

470 00 299, \$34.95.

Ambulance Wagon Two-Pack.

First wagon (No. 1) is off-white with black lettering and red crosses at left and right. Second wagon (No. 2) is green with yellow lettering and scrollwork, and red crosses on white circles at left and right.

First, let me apologize for the black background on the artwork: I'm just not that adept at applications that can switch it and that's the way it downloaded from the MTL website.

With that out of the way, I must say that I've certainly learned a few things developing pre-reviews of the Micro-Trains wagons. This isn't an exception: what I knew about ambulance wagons would fit comfortably in a thimble – an N Scale thimble.

The website mcculloughsaga.com looked after by author Janet M. Kovarik was my first stop. Although they didn't look as MTL has depicted them, a first significant use of ambulance wagons was during the American Civil War. Kovarik writes that although the United States Government had authorized the development of these vehicles back in 1777 (!) nothing really happened then, or during the War of 1812, to provide such items. In 1858, a clever design was put forth which allowed the wounded to sit up or lay down, but that wasn't built either. Kovarik reports that "[e]ventually an ambulance wagon was designed (along with one by U.S. General W. S. Rosecrans) that was equipped with springs and lined with mattresses. There were a number of designs, many of which were manufactured and distributed to the U.S. Army Medical Corps. The Confederate Medical Department most likely 'borrowed' these designs to build their own wagons."

In 1865, the first hospital-based ambulance service was started in Cincinnati; this was quickly followed in Manhattan. Innovations in how horses were hitched to ambulance wagons there cut the cycle time for the wagon being ready to go to less than thirty seconds – which would be lickety-split even today. The use of wagons jumped to England and then Australia by the 1890s. The city of Bahia, Brazil (which I've been to!) dedicated a tram car to ambulance service and St. Louis did the same with a trolley. Eventually, motor vehicles assumed the role of ambulance service.

A cursory search on the term "ambulance wagon" didn't return any images similar to MTL's preliminary artwork; that may say more about my diligence than anything else, however.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



506 00 371 and 506 00 372, \$25.90 each.

Reporting Marks: CN 598035 and 598412.

50 Foot Double Door Boxcar, Canadian National.

Brown with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. White and green “maple leaf” herald with “Serves All Canada” slogan on right. White stripe on right hand door. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) to no later than 1970.

Please see last month’s N Scale release... actually, no.

Last month’s N Scale release (182 00 050, at right) has the same paint scheme, but it’s a later version of the double door boxcar, with the running board gone as the key difference. There is more than a family resemblance, however.



We did kind of get the story of this virtual two-pack last month. Ian Cranstone, on his “Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net), notes that the series CN 598000 to 598499 was built by Canadian Car and Foundry in late 1957 for service in the auto industry. The white stripe on the door denoted auto loading devices and the “Automobile” legend, well, confirmed that.

The January 1958 ORER has these dimensions for this group of cars: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches with loading devices engaged and 9 feet 5 inches with them folded up against the roof, outside length 51 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 15 feet 1 inch (a slight “door thing”) and capacity 4360 or 4860 cubic feet depending on the position of the loading devices, and 110,000 pounds either way. What this ORER entry doesn’t yet have is the number of cars! That’s fixed by the January 1959 Register, with the 500 cars you’d expect.

Between 1965 and 1967, the group was reworked and renumbered to the CN series 551000 to 551405, that in several groups. An example of this is the N Scale release from last month. A few of these were flipped to the number series 796200 to 796223 around 1969 but were returned to the 551000 group in 1981. However, the original 598000 series was off the roster by the July 1970 ORER. Those road numbers were reused by the CN starting in 1984 for a set of 60 foot exterior post combination door boxcars, of which Cranstone has a photo. I mention this just to avoid confusion, including my own.

Page 31 of the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** has CN 598035 as of July 1965, in other words, a bingo. Again, we see that the maple leaf and the “wet noodle” introduced in 1960 co-existed. It’s at least implied in the **Color Guide** that the switch in numbers took place when the cars use as automobile boxcars ended and the specialty equipment was removed.



518 00 560, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: HPFL 2061.

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

#11 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 “Sweet Mixed Pickles” on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1890s into the 1920s.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Release above (058 00 360), 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.



556 00 140, \$29.95

Road Number: 95 (will be “CN 95” in website listings).

Modernized Heavyweight Business Car, Canadian National.

Post-1960 scheme of gray sides with black band, black roof, underbody and trucks, and red CN “noodle” herald. Approximate Time Period: at least 1970, plus or minus.

Here’s something to go with the April 2016 releases of four other CN passenger cars in the 1960’s scheme (Sleeper, Dome, Coach and Baggage Car). The Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 1 does not have a bingo photo. However, it does show a business car, the 21 “Grand Trunk” in this paint scheme, which is important to establish that the road did in fact use this scheme. Most other cars of this type remained in the classic green and gold, and a few were painted in VIA colors. It also shows that cars were renumbered and renamed frequently, as we’ve already discussed in coverage of N Scale CN passenger equipment. For example, there were eight different cars named “Bonaventure.”

With Jerry Laboda’s passing a few months ago, unfortunately his “Passenger Car Photo Index” site appears to have dropped out. Fortunately I was able to go directly to the cnrphotos.com site for a bingo on the 95 – previously the 101 and 104. (See what I mean about renumbering?) It was originally built by the Grand Trunk (not the Grand Trunk Western) at the Point St. Charles shops, back in 1908. It was photographed in Edmonton, Alberta in August 1970. The window arrangement is different on the prototype, which also does not have the modernized roof. Given the lack of other photo evidence I’m going to take a very conservative view of the ATP. The Internet Archive version of the Passenger Car Photo Index cites another photo of the

95 “in private ownership” but I could not reach that image. Since then I’ve learned that the site was backed up to passcarphotos.rypn.org , however not all links may work.



In addition to the above, the VIA Rail F7A Powered Locomotive (980 01 450, \$129.95, Road Number 6569) is scheduled to be released mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the February 2018 issue.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS: The VIA Rail Four-Pack (994 01 210, \$119.95) is scheduled to be released mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the February 2018 issue. The individual items are as follows: 552 51 200, 552 52 200, and 552 53 200, Lightweight Coaches, Road Numbers 5519, 5648 and 5649; 556 54 200, Heavyweight Business Car, Car Name “Burrard.”



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 July 31.



Scheduled Delivery December 2018:
994 00 107, \$99.95.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 12920, 12956, 12973, 12979.

Runner Pack #107, Quantity Four of 50 Foot Steel Boxcars with Single Youngstown Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Red sides, black roof, ends and tack boards on door. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large “DF with Shock Control” across car (including “with”

on door). Black and white early circle cross herald in black square. Black lettering “Floating Underframe Gives Freight A Smoother Ride” across lower part of sides. White simulated reflective circle crosses across bottom of side. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (build date) into the 1970s. Previous Release: Catalog Number 505 00 240, Road Number 10001, July 2009, but see text.

Please see the coverage of N Scale Runner Pack #148 (993 00 148) above.

Z SCALE WEATHERED 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 after July 16.*



510 44 014, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: RBOX 34856.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Railbox.

Car #7 in the "A Year of Railbox" series. Base car is yellow with black door and aluminum roof. Black lettering including reporting marks (with patched road number) and large "Railbox" name on left. Black slogan "The nationwide boxcar pool" and large "Next Load/Any Road" symbol and slogan on right. Extensive graffiti across both sides of

car. A side has caricatures of two cowboys aiming at each other, in between which is "SKUTE." B side has "KING" across car, the "I" represented by a young woman wearing a hat captioned "157." Approximate Time Period: 2016, plus or minus. Previous Releases: Road Number 17834, Mar 1985 (Marklin Couplers) and March 1987 (Magne-Matic Couplers); Road Number 17700, September 1988 (both coupler types), then Runner Pack #1 with Road Numbers 17728, 17746, 17785 and 17818, January 2009, then Weathered Releases 510 44 011 and 012, May 2010 (multiple road numbers), then "A Year of Railbox" #6, June 2018.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (025 44 014). Please note that I've added more Previous Releases—I missed the Runner Pack and the 2010 Weathered Releases which probably used "leftovers" from that Runner Pack in my coverage last month.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No releases or pre-order announcements this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: The National N Scale Convention in late June in Salt Lake City brought a few announcements from the folks at the red and yellow sign. First, it looks like I'm going to have to read up on Thomas Kinkade, the "Painter of Light," as MTL will start pre-orders for a series of lighted (!) boxcars featuring his works. That pre-order window starts in August, so stay tuned. It's now "Early 2019" for the 78 Foot Heavyweight Single Window Coach, which will be based on a New York Central prototype. We know from postings by MTL R&D Guru Joe D'Amato that tooling this up has been a challenge—there's just not that much space between the windows, making tolerances tight reduced to 1/160 Scale. The Micro-Trains booth at the N-Con was otherwise information we already know... as per the UMTRR Spy Network, which thoughtfully slipped me photos of the booth, possibly while CEO Eric Smith wasn't looking. 😊

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Yes, we are still talking about the N Scale Southern Pacific “Clean” and Weathered Cabooses released mid-May (051 00 310 and 051 44 310). This time, it’s long time UMTRR Gang Member Jeff Maurer checking in: “I was really hoping that the ends weren’t orange (you couldn’t tell from the side view drawings that they originally released and barely can tell from the photographs). As already pointed out, if you have the spelled out name you must have to have the 1 inch stripes above the name and below the number. In 1953 when the stripes were dropped, Southern Pacific also changed to just putting their initials on the cabooses (SP), but the bigger issue is that the orange ends didn’t appear until 1955 and **came with** the billboard lettering. In other words, if you have orange ends, you **MUST** also have the billboard lettering. I just can’t believe that there would ever have been a caboose with pre 1953 lineless lettering and a post 1955 orange end, but no billboard lettering. While I love MTL, unless they have a color photo showing this ‘variant,’ this one never happened, especially on not one, but two cabooses.”

DISCONTINUED ALERT: It’s July and there should be an official bye-bye board – but there isn’t. Instead, the July Micro-News contains only a list of “Soon To Be Out” items, which, while interesting, is not what we’re looking for here! Wading through the MTL web pages for the “Contact Dealer” banner to determine what’s outta here isn’t possible right now. However, I can report that all three of the N Scale Weathered Releases from June have left the building, namely, the KCS “Butterfly” boxcar, the heavily faded Missouri Pacific Center Flow, and the “Year in Railbox” boxcar noting World Oceans Day.

OOPS PATROL: In my hastily prepared coverage of the N Scale Boston & Maine Weathered Two-Pack which was among the May Weathered Releases, I completely missed a previous release for the 40 foot boxcar: It was Runner Pack #103, issued in April 2015 with Road Numbers 76029, 76038, 76047 and 76156.

FINALLY, TRAINS OF TIME: A new venture, formally announced by MTL at the National N Scale Convention is called “Trains of Time.” This is not aimed at the usual demographic for Micro-Trains products! Instead, it’s... well, let’s just quote the ad copy posted at the Convention: “This all-new product line features a multi-media train set ideal for kids 8-12 years old. Each train set and adventure story is based on a real life historical railroad event and is an ideal way to introduce kids to the magic of model railroading! Kids will enjoy the interactive train with many track layout options and accessory pieces, while learning about real historical events and developing their creativity.” The first out will be called “The Wreck of the Big Top Train” and is due in the fall, just in time for the Holiday Season.

You’ve got to like the name of the character who will travel through time to experience these events: Chance Ryder. (Hopefully it won’t be a “wibbly-wobbly” trip. Sorry, couldn’t resist.) The track which will come with this isn’t just a simple loop: 28 pieces including four turnouts and new rerailers. The train will include magnetic couplers. There was a poster advertising the debut of the set at the MTL booth at the National N Scale Convention, which I imagine we’ll see soon in print and online media. I wonder if MTL has plans to take their marketing

campaign outside the traditional venues for model trains? Take it to “the enemy,” I often said while an ambassador for the World’s Greatest Hobby.

I’m sure the boo-birds are already lining up to take the usual pot-shots at this venture: it takes away from the core mission, it’s a toy, the ride height is too big, bla bla bla, yadda yadda yadda. But take note: Trains of Time is a new **division** of the main company. My understanding is that these sets will be imported and as such won’t infringe on the production line capacity in downtown Talent, Oregon. As such, it’s also really not in the purview of these bytes. I’ll probably mention new sets as they’re offered but not provide full coverage as I do for the mainline (pun not intended) offerings from MTL. Unless there’s an historical event that Chance Ryder visits which I just can’t resist commenting on, that is...

Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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