



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #275 – November, 2019**

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Hello again everyone! Well, we are chock full of releases and pre-order announcements to tell you about. Perhaps the top story for the month is actually contained in one of those pre-order announcements. What is it? Read on...

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



**032 00 510, \$26.90.**

**Reporting Marks: WP 56057.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Plug Door, Western Pacific.**

Brown with yellow reporting marks on left and "Rides Like A Feather" slogan on right.

Orange roadname on left, "DF" on door

and large feather on right. Approximate Time Period: December 1957 (build date) to about 1970. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

I didn't know until reading through Jim Eager's **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** that canned goods were such a big slice of traffic for the WP. Some very familiar brand name companies of the time, including Gerber, Beech-Nut, Del Monte, and Stokley-Van Camp, had facilities located on the railroad. In 1961, Eager reported, canned goods were the number one commodity carried by the line, representing 13.7 percent of overall revenues. No surprise, then, that the Western Pacific went in big for fifty foot insulated specially equipped boxcars, including the set numbered 56001 to 56100 delivered from Pacific Car and Foundry in 1957.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1958 shows these hundred cars with AAR Designation RBL, description "Box, All Steel, Insulated" and end notes indicating roller bearing trucks (quite unusual at the time), DF loaders with eight belt loaders, and full insulation. It was also noted that there were restricted dimensions: width of 9 feet 1 inch to a height of 8 feet 9 inches and width of 9 feet to a height of 9 feet 1 inch. That was an important consideration for the dimensions of, say, Sacramento Tomato Juice cartons. (Another company that was served by the WP.) The usual dimensions I quote here were: inside length 50 feet even, inside width 9 feet 1 inch, inside height 9 feet 1 inch, outside length 52 feet 3 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 8 feet 2 inches, and capacity 4153 cubic feet or 97,000 pounds. That's a lot of Campbell Soup – another company found along the company's tracks.

There is a rather abrupt end to the Approximate Time Period for this set of boxcars. The 56001 to 56100 has a car count of 96 in the ORER for April 1970, but the entire series is off the roster no later than the next Equipment Register in the Research Accumulation, October 1972.

Let's go back to Page 45 of the **Color Guide** for the bingo on the 56057, taken in 1958 in San Bernardino, California. I note two deltas between model and prototype: first, the cars had riveted, not welded, sides; second, the cars had a straight bottom sill. That second item is mostly addressable with patience and the cutting tool of your choice, however note that the floor might not stay attached to the body after this modification. (And how would I know that...?) The door isn't quite identical to that used on the 032 body style, but it'll do.

If you think this car looks familiar, you'd be right. Micro-Trains has done a similar plug door boxcar with yellow and orange lettering and orange feather as Catalog 32180 three separate times, in November 1987, December 1993 and December 2004. The official picture of that most recent run is at right. The road numbers for those cars were 55943, 55935 and 55933, none of which fall into the same prototype series as this new release. So no ambiguity there.



**034 00 450, \$25.90**

**Reporting Marks: C&O 5916.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Doors, Chesapeake & Ohio.**

Dark blue (the C&O's "Enchantment Blue") with yellow doors. Yellow

lettering including "Cushion Underframe" and reporting marks on left and "C&O for Progress" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (rebuild date) into the 1970s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Page 33 of the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** provides the bingo and the backstory for this car. "C&O 5916 began life as a 40 foot PS-1 boxcar from the 22000 to 22249 series. In 1963 the Wyoming shops in Grand Rapids (Michigan) rebuilt 29 cars from this series, increasing their length by ten feet. Equipped with DF-9 loaders, sliding sill cushion underframes, and 15 foot door openings, capacity was increased to 70 tons with heavier trucks." These cars went into two groups, 5900 to 5918 and 5990 to 5999 based on the particular cushion underframe used. This covers the Z Scale versions of this car below, which is being made available in two road numbers, 5916 and 5918.

The prototype photo was taken in 1964 in Fort Worth, Texas. I'm not sure I'd call it graffiti but there are definitely a number of chalk marks on the car. There is a "double door thing"

here this time: the door opening is 15 feet, covered by a 7+8 arrangement; and in addition the doors shown are not Youngstown but six-panel Superior Type.

In the ORER for January 1964, the entry for C&O 5900 to 5918 is literally starred denoting an addition. End notes call out both the DF loaders and the cars being “specially equipped to carry automobile parts.” The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 51 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 15 as noted above, and capacity 4858 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. All 19 cars were in the count at that time. That was also true in the July 1974 Equipment Register, though running board removal would begin to be a consideration by then. Between the April 1981 and April 1984 ORERs, the car count dropped from all nineteen to just one, which was gone by the January 1985 Register.



**034 00 470, \$26.90**

**Reporting Marks: CNJ 3001.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Doors, Jersey Central Lines (Central Railroad of New Jersey).**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Large yellow-

orange Statue of Liberty “Jersey Central Lines” herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1956 (build date) or, strictly speaking, 1964 (service date), to mid-1970s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. This car is a “Special Offering / Regional Railroad” limited release per Micro-Trains, and is not included in dealer standing orders.

Well, how about, not a bingo photo, which we’ll come back to, but a bingo equipment diagram? It’s posted on George Elwood’s “Fallen Flags” website ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ). This AAR Designation XAP car was one of exactly two constructed in 1956 by American Car and Foundry. The cars were steel with wood lining, were equipped with nailable steel floors, and had Camel doors, a Miner hand brake, A-3 ride control trucks, a Murphy roof and a U.S. Gypsum running board. Also provided in a table on the site are dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 15 feet, and capacity 4878 cubic feet or 105,000 pounds. (And yes, the 15 feet opening is a “door thing” versus the 16 foot opening on the 034 body style.)

So, I don’t even need to look at the ORERs now, right? Yes, I still do, since I need to figure out the ATP. We already know the build date of 1956, and the first appearance I have among my Equipment Registers is in the January 1958. The January 1964 Equipment Register, closest to the service date on the model, confirms that this is not only a series of two cars, but they are the only two XAP cars on the entire CNJ roster, out of a total of 2,483 boxcars of all types. Interestingly, while the equipment diagram specifies the car numbers being 3001 and 3002, the ORER has them as 3000 and 3001. Great... only two cars and still conflicting official information!

Well, anyway, believe it or not, these two boxcars made it all the way to the initial Conrail listing of April 1976. I'd be thinking about running board removal by then. The 3001 was gone by the January 1978 ORER.

There are two additional features of this car which make it more unusual. The first is the use of yellow-orange paint for the Miss Liberty herald. I don't recall ever seeing this before on a prototype Jersey Central car. We'll come back to that. The second is the lettering to the right of the reporting marks: "Return to B&O CT Cicero Ill. Hotpoint Pool" –or translated, Baltimore and Ohio Chicago Terminal at Cicero, Illinois. The B&OCT was the, well, terminal railroad for the Baltimore and Ohio in Chicagoland. According to the "Lost Illinois Manufacturing" Facebook group, "In Cicero, Plant Number 2 located at 1543 South 54th Street made electric ranges. Plant Number 3 (Cicero) at 1916 South Laramie Avenue listed component parts as its output. Plant Number 8 (Cicero) at 1538 South 54th Avenue made refrigerators. So this car and its sister CNJ 3000, were Jersey Central's very minor contribution to a pool of cars from various railroads serving these plants. In theory, that could have meant the two cars traveled all over the country, or it could have meant dedicated service along one route.

Now to the bingo photo, on Page 37 of the **CNJ/LV Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. CNJ 3001 is shown at Elizabethport, New Jersey in February 1972; I'd say it's in the yard that my late dad and I visited from time to time. In this view, the Miss Liberty herald is so faded, with the base brown paint coming through, that it looks like it could have been yellow when first painted. However, as far as I know the herald was not painted in yellow on freight-carrying rolling stock. (There were Jersey Central passenger-express boxcars that were painted Pullman Green with Delux Gold lettering, but that's a different story.) The conflicting information on the two road numbers is resolved on this same page of the Color Guide, which also has a photo of CNJ 3000. That car didn't have a herald at all when found in 1971, far afield from Jersey Central rails in Dallas, Texas.



058 00 490, \$27.95

Road Number: 2930 (will be "NRC 2930" in website listings).

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Vertical Brake Staff, Truss Rod Underframe, Zion Fig Bars.

#10 in the Farm-to-Table Series (Pre-orders taken in September 2018). Yellow

sides, brown roof, ends, top sills and door sill. Black door hardware and simulated corner braces. Black lettering including large "Northern Refrigerator Car Company" and road number on left, and "Zion Fig Bars" with company name on right. Small black and white North Western Line herald at top left. Red and white depiction of fig bars on a plate. White end lettering. Arch bar trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1927 to only as early as 1928.

So, fig bars are not in my Top Ten. Ok, not my Top 100 either. But never mind that. According to a video posted on YouTube ( [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAQpCS6ZxpM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAQpCS6ZxpM) )



Zion Industries and Institutions, the maker of Zion Fig Bars among other things, was based in Zion, Illinois, a Christian community north of Chicago. (For more on Zion, search on its leaders, John Alexander Dowie and Wilbur Glenn Voliva.) Fig bars that emulated, or just plain imitated, Nabisco's Fig Newtons were all the rage at one time, and the Zion Fig Bar was one of those copies. Following the demise of Zion Industries and Institutions, Zion Fig Bars are now made by Matt's Cookies, based in Wheeling, Illinois about a half hour away but still in Chicagoland. They are available at this writing, in four different varieties in fact. I'll stick with their chocolate chip cookies.

This car holds the second to last spot in the index to the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** (the city of Zion, Illinois is last). Page 96 includes the prototype photo of this car and this interesting item: "Note that this car's strap door hinges, diamond arch-bar trucks, and outside-hung brake beams all date it as having been built before the turn of the century; it may also have lacked steel draft sills, as wood underframes were not banned from interchange until around 1928." If the real car did have a wood underframe, that results in an awfully short Approximate Time Period since the car wasn't leased to Zion Institutions and Industries until June 1927. Also noted in the book is that Northern Refrigerator Car acquired its series 2800 to 2999 second-hand. The April 1928 ORER shows that despite there being two thousand possible cars in that group, there were in fact only 98. These cars had a 29 foot 5 inch inside length, 36 foot outside length, height to top of running board of 12 feet 2 inches, and extreme height (counting the vertically mounted brake wheel) of 14 feet 4 inches. Lading capacity was 45,000 pounds, which is a lot of fig bars.



094 00 590, \$29.95.

**Reporting Marks: PC 888242.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, Penn Central.**

Green with white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname across center and small PC herald on right.

White on black double COTS panel and multicolor ACI Label at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1968, or 1973 for this specific car, to mid-1980s.

The Car Class H45 for these Center Flows came forward from the Pennsylvania Railroad, but the road numbers did not. Rob's Pennsy Page ( [pr.railfan.net](http://pr.railfan.net) ) has several series of H45 and H45a cars, all delivered by American Car and Foundry in during 1965. The H45a cars were lined for foodstuff service while the H45 cars were not lined. There was also a combination of round hatches and "continuous" or trough hatches across the five separate groups of cars. And finally, the H45s had gravity outlets and the H45a cars had pneumatic outlets. The main dimensions were the same across all sets of cars.

That brings us to the **Penn Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 105, and the bingo for this release. Found in 1979, the car was formerly PRR 259995 and was repainted in 1973. The green paint signified grain, feed or malt service; if gray, the Center

Flows and other PC covered hoppers carried other commodities. This car is a CF4600 design, just a shade off the CF4650 prototype on which the MTL 094 body style is based.

There were only six cars repainted to the Penn Central series 888000 to 888340 in the ORER for October 1969, so the general ATP I've noted is probably a long shot. (And that doesn't consider quick restencils.) The service date on the car and the copy in the Color Guide point to a "strictly speaking" ATP for this particular car. The next Equipment Register I have after that is July 1974, which shows 63 cars in the set. By the start of Conrail in April 1976, that count was up to 92 total cars. That was back down to 34 total as of April 1981 and 11 in April 1985. They're all gone by October 1986, however at least some were repainted into Conrail colors.



**096 00 211 and 096 00 212, \$28.40 each.**

**Reporting Marks: ATSF 307881 and 307889.**

**Three-Bay High Side Covered Hoppers, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Brown (mineral red) including trucks. White lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and white circle cross in square herald. Multicolor ACI Label on far right. White and black simulated reflective circle crosses across bottom of side.

Approximate Time Period: 1964 (build

date) or, strictly speaking, after 1967 (given ACI Label) to at least the mid-1980s based on paint scheme.

Ah, it's the classic "as delivered" Santa Fe paint scheme from the early 1960s. Well, there's that ACI Label which pushes the Strictly Speaking ATP out a few years. The GA-161 class of cars spanned the road numbers 307500 to 309999 according to a document stored at the Kansas Historical Society. Except they didn't, as of the January 1967 ORER anyway, where that series had "only" 817 cars out of a possible 2500. While we're here, the dimensions were: inside length 49 feet 6 inches, outside length 57 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet even, and capacity 4427 cubic feet or 190,000 pounds. The roller bearing trucks are called out specifically so MTL has that detail correct.

The October 1969 Equipment Register shows the car count for the series up to 2455 cars. I can explain this via information on RailcarPhotos.com: the group 307500 to 308749 was built by Pullman-Standard between September and November 1966, as Lot 9162. The set number from 308500 to 309999 was built in November and December 1966, as Lot 9162A. That second set didn't make it into the January 1967 ORER, but was added, likely sometime before the October 1969 ORER which is the next one chronologically in my Equipment Register accumulation.

As you probably know, there were several paint schemes which followed this “as delivered” version, and they certainly co-existed. For example, on the website “Golden State Railfan” (located at [goldenstaterailfan.qstation.org](http://goldenstaterailfan.qstation.org) ) there’s ATSF 312379, from a different set of GA-161s, still in its original paint as of 1986, so we’re good at least that long. Again Strictly Speaking, add a COTS panel, fade out the ACI Label, possibly augment with the remains of a U-1 “dot” – and don’t forget plenty of weathering. Invoke “Rule #1” and go out a bit farther. Meanwhile, there’s a bingo dated August 1975 of the 307889, which could be the inspiration for the MTL rendition as it has the ACI Label, in the same placement as on the model in fact.



**105 00 300, \$26.90**

**Reporting Marks: CNJ 1521.**

**50 Foot 14 Panel Steel Gondola, Jersey Central Lines (Central Railroad of New Jersey).**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and Statue of Liberty “Jersey Central Lines” herald on right. Simulated scrap load included. Approximate Time Period: 1952 (service date, see text) to no later than 1967. This car is a “Special Offering / Regional Railroad” limited release per Micro-Trains, and is not included in dealer standing orders. Also please see Voluntary Recall Notice at the end of this commentary.

With the second “Regional Railroad” release for the CNJ, MTL has referenced... an accounting trick that didn’t work. How’s that again?

One thousand gondolas, numbered 1001 to 2000, were built in 1944 for the Jersey Central Lines, but not for the Central Railroad of New Jersey. Instead, they were lettered for the Central Railroad of Pennsylvania, which was created that same year by the CNJ in attempt to avoid New Jersey taxes on its lease of the Lehigh and Susquehanna. The L&S was the CNJ’s route out of New Jersey to Scranton and the coal fields in that area. By the January 1945 ORER, the thousand gondolas, five hundred hoppers and one hundred flat cars were wearing CRP reporting marks. In the January 1950 the roster of the CRP had ballooned to 7,878 cars, versus 10,784 for the parent CNJ.

However, the State of New Jersey didn’t take this accounting maneuver lying down. Courts took the State’s side and struck down the CRP. By 1952, the CRP was gone and its cars, including the gondolas, were moved over to the CNJ, keeping the same numbers. One vestige of this arrangement remained: the use of “Jersey Central Lines” in the herald, which was introduced in 1943 replacing the “Central Railroad of New Jersey” lettering. (That lettering would come back in 1965.)

The service date on the MTL model is March 1952, however the January 1953 ORER hasn’t caught up with the change from CRP to CNJ – in fact, there were 8174 cars listed for the CRP and only 1,960 for the CNJ! Next up in the Research Accumulation is the January 1955 Register. With the caveat that “Cars are marked ‘CNJ’ or ‘CRP’” we see the series 1001 to 2000 with 995 cars. They are AAR Designation GB with description “Gondola, All Steel,

Drop Ends, Wood Floor” – and that immediately brings up a delta to the MTL 105 body style, which has fixed ends. The inside length was listed at 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 7 inches, and capacity 1745 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. Only 128 of these cars remained as of the January 1964 ORER, and they were all gone no later than the January 1967 Equipment Register. The 1000s series was reused in the 1970s for covered hoppers.

In the “It’s Hard To Prove The Absence Of Something” Department, I have never seen a CNJ prototype gondola painted brown. Black was definitely the standard color for Jersey Central gondolas until some were painted in the “Coast Guard” scheme of red with white lettering in the 1970s. The only online photo I could find of one of these cars is an image of CNJ 1036, in black and white, which just happened to be elsewhere in a shot of the tail end of a B&O excursion train traveling out of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in October 1953.

And this just in: MTL has issued a Voluntary Recall Notice for this item, noting that it is supposed to be painted black. If you’ve already purchased this car, you can send it to MTL in exchange for a black car with the same road number 1521. And incremental orders for the black version will be accepted as well. The replacement car (artwork at right) will have Catalog Number 105 00 301 and will ship in March or April 2020. The car’s story will of course be the same, which probably means I’ll be reprinting myself early next year. Kudos to Micro-Trains for offering to remedy this situation.



**111 00 340, \$51.90**

**Reporting Marks: NKCR 9193.**

**89 Foot Tri-Level Closed Autorack, Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado Railroad/ Canadian National.**

Flat car is white with brown underframe and black trucks and couplers. Black lettering including reporting marks on left, and orange horizontal conspicuity stripes along sides. Rack is white with aluminum panels. Third panel from left has red CN herald and black website. Black lettering on far left and far right of racking including rack reporting marks NKCR 9493. Top of ends are yellow with black lettering including reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: July 2017 (build date) to present.

The Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado Railroad certainly seems like an ambitious roadname. And in fact it does operate over 500 miles of trackage in all three states, comprised of three disconnected lines. What looks like the longest from the map stretches from Sterling, Colorado to Holdredge, Nebraska. There’s another section from Imperial to McCook, both in Nebraska. And the Kansas part of the lines is from St. Francis to Franklin, with a branch up to Oxford Junction enabling interchange and a branch down and west to Oberlin which requires some trackage rights. The company is owned by Omnitrac, probably the largest



shortline operator in the country that isn't named Genesee and Wyoming. All four of its interchanges are with BNSF. It's mostly a grain hauler but also serves a coal-fired generating plant near Sutherland, Nebraska. I did some research and it appears that a fair amount of the NKCR routes are of Burlington Route (CB&Q) heritage.

For a little extra revenue, the NKCR has some freight cars on its roster as well. Some of these are recycled equipment from other roads, including 50 foot x-post boxcars that date back to the 1970s. There are also a fair amount of well cars. And then there's the series numbered 9152 to 9451, built only in July 2017 by Trinity Rail. That information and several example photos come from RailcarPhotos.com, but the bingo to NKCR 9193, from May 2018, is over on RRPictureArchives.net. From that shot we can confirm the rack number NKCR 9493 and note that the doors are generally similar but have a few detail differences. I would expect this given that the prototype manufacturer is different.

An ORER lookup is largely unnecessary here, since RailcarPhotos also supplies dimensions that I'd be looking for: outside length 93 feet 10 inches, light weight 99,600 pounds, gross rail weight 185,000 pounds, clearance Plate J. In other words, like other contemporary autoracks, these are **big**.

### **N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:**



**145 00 110, \$29.95**

**Car Number: 943 (will be "NYC 943" in website listings).**

**Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, New York Central.**

**Pullman Green with black roof,**

**underframe and trucks. Imitation gold lettering including roadname top center and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: early 1940s to at least late 1950s.**

Let's start with the bingo photo for this car. Turning to Page 12 of the **New York Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One), we see NYC 943 as the last car in a commuter train on the West Shore Line in Bogota, New Jersey in April 1957. According to the caption, it was rebuilt by American Car and Foundry in 1929. The six-wheel trucks are accurate for this car, which did not have air conditioning. From the angle of the photograph it's not possible to count windows against the MTL 145 body style, but the roofline is different.

The 943 is wearing the commuter scheme of "Pacemaker Green" (essentially Pullman Green) and imitation gold which was introduced by the New York Central in the late 1940s; that data point sets the start of the Approximate Time Period. The end of the ATP is a bit harder to place but I think it's an "at least" situation based on the photo date.

The ATP for the commuter service on the West Shore Line, in which the 943 is pictured in the **Color Guide**, is a little easier to fix. The Central discontinued the ferry service from the West Shore's terminal at Weehawken across the Hudson River to Manhattan in September 1958, leaving patrons stranded at the base of the Palisades, about as close to the middle of nowhere as one could get and still be in a densely populated area of New Jersey. As the Central no doubt intended, patronage of the commuter service plummeted, making it easy to justify the cancellation of train service in 1959. Today this site is hardly the middle of nowhere and other than the Bergen-Hudson Light Rail, which uses the old West Shore Tunnel under the Palisades, you'd never know that there was once a sprawling freight yard where expensive high-rises are now in place.

The Official Register of Passenger Equipment for January 1953 shows the 943 as one of the overall series numbered 802 to 972, which had an inside length of 69 feet 1 inch and length over the buffers of 78 feet 10 inches. The car seated 96 passengers. That must have been fun during the summer with no air conditioning and business dress a lot more formal than it is today.



145 00 360, \$32.90

Car Number: 3616 (will be "PRR 3616" in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Tuscan Red with black roof, underframe and trucks. Yellow (buff) stripes above and below windows. Red and white keystone heralds at far left and far right. Approximate Time Period: 1966 and the late 1960s at least for this specific car.

The Class P70 coach was by far the single largest type of passenger car in the Pennsylvania Railroad's fleet. Numbering over one thousand—that's more any many railroads' entire revenue roster!—these cars were built between 1907 and 1929. Jerry Britton has an overview of this plentiful group of cars on his site ([jbritton.pennsyrr.com/index.php/tpm/68-the-p70-in-the-pennsy-coach-fleet](http://jbritton.pennsyrr.com/index.php/tpm/68-the-p70-in-the-pennsy-coach-fleet)).

This car has been released by another manufacturer in what I will call the "standard" configuration and paint scheme, although followers of the Pennsy know that despite its self-description as "The Standard Railroad of the World" that was not exactly so. The MTL model represents a late in life example of one of these cars.

Then it gets complicated.

I have two bingos on the 3616. The first I found is posted to [northeast.railfan.net](http://northeast.railfan.net) and the second is in the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 13. In the Color Guide it's noted that PRR 3601 to 3621, including the 3616 were converted in 1966 to PRR Class P70FB coaches to P70FBA coaches. They had reclining seats for intercity service. Among the external results of the evolution of the 3616 which don't align with the 145 body

style were porthole windows at both ends, immediately adjacent to the keystones, and a clerestory roof. P70s had four-wheel, not six-wheel trucks. The “spartan” paint scheme probably also dates to that time—those heralds are Scotchlite, you might even say 1:1 scale decals. The PRR already knew at that point that merger with the New York Central was coming, and spared themselves the expense of a full letterboard roadname.

I don’t know how many P70s survived long enough to be included in the Penn Central merger of 1968. With intercity passenger service well along in its decline, and plenty of other equipment available, I doubt that the Pennsy needed over a thousand coaches. However, there was still plenty of commuter service to provide, and it’s noted online that at least one P70 made in into green PC paint.

### N SCALE REPRINTS:



145 00 321, \$34.90

Road Number: 1352 (will be “NP 1352” in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Northern Pacific.

Two-tone green with white stripes, black roof, ends and underframe. White lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom left and right. Red, black and white monad herald (without roadname) at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1952 to the early 1960s. Previous Release: Road Number 1359, November 2018.

The first run of this car was the initial MTL N Scale entry for this paint scheme. NP cars must be very popular since there’s not only been plenty of single releases in the past thirteen months but there’s the five-pack as well coming in January 2020. All in all, that’s a prototype length train!

I’ll mostly reprint myself from the first run. Todd Sullivan wrote in the **NP Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, “In addition to all this sleek lightweight equipment, the Northern Pacific had a delightful assemblage of older heavyweight cars. The 1350 series of coaches were built by Pullman-Standard in 1915 with such touches of elegance as arched windows and doors. The 1350 to 1359 were rebuilt by the NP in 1935, treated to air conditioning, and sent out to serve on the North Coast Limited.”

The bingo photo of the previous run, NP 1359, accompanied the caption on Page 24 of the **Color Guide**. It clearly shows the outline of the arched windows, so we have a delta here to the MTL 145 body style. The vestibule door openings are still arched as well. It’s also noted in the Color Guide that the cars were painted in what’s called the “Loewy Scheme” toward the end of their service lives. The 1359 is shown as of 1962 in that scheme, and sister car 1366 is shown in the same paint as of 1964. That scheme, developed by designer Raymond Loewy (of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s GG-1) was introduced in 1952, which gives us the earliest possible start of the ATP.

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

**Pack #159 (993 00 159, \$99.95)**, of four Norfolk and Western 50 foot flat cars with loads, is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows:

045 51 480, 300207; 045 52 480, 300211; 045 53 480, 300222; 045 54 480, 300230. These are the first through fourth releases for this item.

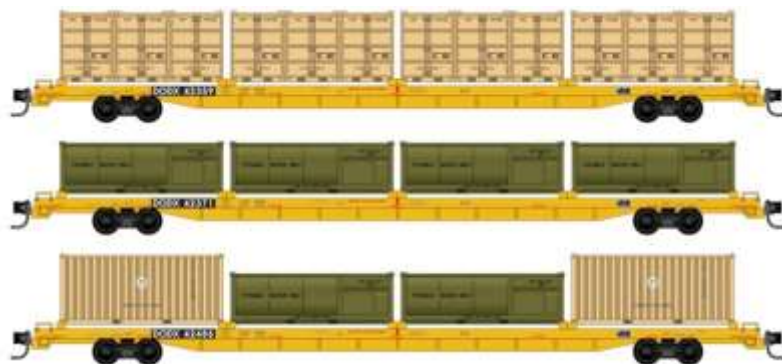


The **Union Pacific Tie Loader Three-Pack (993 01 890, \$99.95)** is expected to be available mid-month and should be at Micro-Trains dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the May 2019 issue. The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks are as follows: 105 51 270, UP 30139; 105 52 280, UP 30428; 105 53 280, SP 323014. That's from bottom to top in the Micro-Trains image. These are the first releases for each paint scheme. The tie loader is made of resin and 3-D printed parts with etched metal for the claw. Assembly and painting of the tie loader is required.



And the **DODX COFC Three-Pack #2 (993 01 910, \$139.95)** is also expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 071 51 870, 42359; 071 52 870, 42371; 071 53 870, 42486. These are the first through third road numbers for this release. The

set includes four conex containers, six water containers and two tall containers, all of which are twenty feet long. These and the load pedestals are resin and are painted but not lettered; decals from Cartograf are included. As usual, I'll replace the MTL rendering with the actual product photo on the UMTRR website once it becomes available. (Although I'm still waiting for the image of Three-Pack #1...)





*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 November 30.*



***Scheduled Delivery April 2020:***

**993 00 164, \$119.95.**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 203005, 203011, 203015, 203016.**

**Runner Pack #164, Quantity Four of 70 Foot Well Cars, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.**

Red with aluminum details. White lettering including reporting marks on left and Burlington Northern (not BNSF)

herald on right. White on black double-panel consolidated stencils on far right. Horizontal conspicuity stripes across car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1998, but more likely 2005, to as late as the present. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 203017 and 203024, March 2017.

When I checked on bingo photos for the March 2017 virtual two-pack, I noted that in addition to the 203017, RRPictureArchives also had images of the 203003 through 203006, 203008 through 203012, 203015 and 203016. That covers the four road numbers in this forthcoming Runner Pack. Also, RailcarPhotos.com had the group as the former BN 64003 to 64018.

And then I brought in "The Masked Railroader," who confirms that "From several records, the original series was BN 64003 to 64018 becoming BNSF 203003 to 203018. Earlier series cars were '5-unit articulated' and later series cars were '3-unit drawbar connected.' From BNSF's car index, this series BN 64003 to 64018 Standalone Husky Stacks, built 1991, was one of two standalone series of well cars. (The other was BN 61000 to 61009, All Purpose Standalone Husky Stack, built 1993). The remainder of BN/BNSF's 48 foot well cars were articulated or drawbar sets. BNSF 203003 to 203018 remain on the roster today. I have found no evidence of BNSF 203019 to 203099." The cars I viewed all have the white BN herald on the right so this does appear to be just a restencil of the reporting marks.

If those yellow rectangles are Conspicuity Stripes then the start of the ATP is no earlier than 2005. The actual series first appears in my ORER Accumulation with the single car 203003 in July 1998. Twelve cars were shown in the January 2018 ORER.



***Scheduled Delivery March 2020:***

**993 01 980, \$99.95.**

**Road Numbers/Name: 1607, 165, 35, and "Vicksburg."**

**Civil War Era United States Military Armored Four-Pack.**

**Scheduled to consist of:**

- One 152 series Civil War Era Conductor's Car (converted boxcar). Brown with white lettering including "U.S.M.R.R." on left and "No. 1607" on right.
- Three 153 series Civil War Era flat cars. Each is brown with white lettering "USMRR" plus road number in center. The 165 has a load of partial armor, the 35 has a load of two mortars, and the "Vicksburg" has a load of full ironclad.

Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

I haven't opened my copy of the book **Civil War Railroads** in quite a while. (Well, *which* copy is a question; I somehow have three! So much for inventory control.) The conductor's car is an easy to verify piece of equipment; though there were variants of the design, they definitely existed. In fact, there's a very close match to the MTL 152 body style on Page 118 of **Civil War Railroads**, though lettered for the Atlantic and North Carolina, not the United States Military Railroad, it is marked "Conductor's Car."

On Page 106 of **Civil War Railroads** is a photo of a car called "The Dictator" by Union forces. It was a short flat car with a single mortar that resembles the one in the Micro-Trains artwork. This weapon could fire a 200 pound exploding shell for a range of two miles. It's noted that with each firing, the mortar slid backwards on the car two feet while the entire car rolled backward twelve feet from the weapon recoil. Don't stand too close! "The Dictator" was used in the Union siege of Petersburg, Virginia, and was an example of rail-mounted artillery used by both sides in the war. Certainly it's not the only example. Those mortars had to get to where they would have been used, so as long as they didn't exceed the rather light capacity of a flat car, a load of two makes sense.

As for the ironclad car, we turn to Bernard Kempinski, proprietor of Alkem Scale Models and modeler of the Civil War in 1:48 Scale. He has a lengthy page on his "United States Military Railroads" blog ([usmrr.blogspot.com/search/label/Ironclad](http://usmrr.blogspot.com/search/label/Ironclad) should work for a direct link). Kempinski notes that information about this full height car is scarce and contradictory, and furthermore no images have survived. With scholarly assistance he's built several of these cars, one of which went to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum. The MTL artwork closely resembles the model and Kempinski's artwork includes the car name "Vicksburg." A wheel mounted gun was enclosed inside the iron, which was likely mounted to an ordinary flat car. Fun fact: Code 55 rail was used to build up the "ironclad" for the model, as it scales to 2.6 inches in 1:48.

How about the partially ironclad car? Well, the best I could do there was a pointer to a dissertation called "Ironclads on rails: American Civil War rail road weapons, 1861-1865" by Alan Robin Koenig of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Only the abstract is available online; within that it's stated that "'Monitor Fever,' the craze for ironclad vessels, transformed trains into viable armored fighting vehicles. Furthermore, [the dissertation] analyzes the missions and evolution of railroad monitors and rifle cars, and how the two formed fast and powerful armored trains."



*Scheduled Delivery March 2020:*  
**993 01 990, \$139.95.**

**NdeM (Nacionales de Mexico)  
 Heavyweight Five-Pack.**

Scheduled to consist of:

- One 147 series Heavyweight Baggage Car, Road Number 2267. Dark green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Red horizontal stripe about one-third of the way up the side. Gold lettering including roadname at top center, "Express" between doors and road number at bottom left and bottom right.
- One 145 series Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Road Number 465. Dark green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Red

horizontal stripe below windows. Gold lettering including roadname at top center, car name "Primera" at bottom left and bottom right, and road number at bottom center.

- One TBD series Heavyweight Single Window Coach, Road Number 4891. Dark green with gray roof, dark gray (color to be confirmed) underframe and four wheel trucks. Red horizontal stripe below windows. Gold lettering including roadname at top center, car name "Segunda" at bottom center, and road number at bottom left and bottom right.
- One 142 series Heavyweight 12-1 Sleeping Car, Road Number 222. Dark green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Red horizontal stripe below windows. Gold lettering including roadname at top center, "Dormitorio" at top left and top right, car name "Ozuluama" at bottom center, and road number at bottom left and bottom right.
- One 144 series Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car. Dark green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Red horizontal stripe below windows. Gold lettering including roadname at top center and car name "Huamantla" at bottom center.

Approximate Time Period: 1950s to 1990s (general for entire set). MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

Well, there goes my automatic spell check again. As I type this, I have a fair number of red underlines I need to ignore since my copy of Word doesn't speak Spanish. The Nacionales de Mexico, in English, the National Railroads of Mexico, is the subject of this five-pack. MTL R&D guru Joe D'Amato has an interest in the NdeM, so I'll wager that the folks in Talent did not have to twist Joe's arm very much for help with this set.

I have a general, well, maybe more like a vague, understanding that as passenger service declined across United States railroads, some of the equipment went South of the Border to Mexico. For example, a bingo photo on Flickr of NdeM 222 includes a quick history: It was

built by Pullman in 1925 for general service. It was sold to the New York Central on the last day of 1948 and became its number 10820 (car name “McGrave” according to the Canada Southern website) and leased back to Pullman. It was then withdrawn from lease in 1956 and sold to a car broker and then the NdeM. It was named “Ozuluama” in December 1957, and returned to Pullman lease. The photo was taken in December 2016 so we know the car existed at least that long, even though passenger service in Mexico was suspended in 1997 according to the Wikipedians as a prelude to privatization of Mexican railroads by the federal government.

A bingo photo of paired window coach NdeM 465, also taken in December 2016 and also posted on Flickr, certainly has the appearance of being in service. It seems to be part of a train, going somewhere on a main line, but we know it isn’t. There’s no other information accompanying the photo, such as the car’s heritage.

The bingo on the baggage car, NdeM 2267, goes back more than fifty (!) years from there , to August 1966. In that image, posted to the Fallen Flags site, the stripe across the car is yellow, not red. The car also has four-wheel, not six-wheel, trucks and a somewhat different door configuration, however one door is wider than the other as is true of the MTL 147 body style.

And finally we have NdeM 4891 which was also found in August 1966, under catenary (!) in Orizaba, Mexico. If I knew that any Mexican railway ran electric locomotives, I’ve certainly forgotten that fact. It’s true, though; the former FCM part of the NdeM electrified the steepest part of its route in the 1920s; that didn’t end until 1974. Anyway, the car was formerly owned by the Erie Railroad and overhead wires or not, is certainly a long way from home.

**Let’s stop right there though...** the 4891 is a single window coach, with a total of 22 windows on the side we can see. Does that mean... yes, the long-awaited body style from Micro-Trains will be arriving soon! And will we see releases of any other roadnames before this five-pack debuts in March?

We’ll need to wait for the answer to that question (although see below in MTL Announcements), but let’s wrap up this five pack with the observation car. All five of the reference photos were located via the late Jerry Laboda’s “Passenger Car Photo Index” (now preserved at [passcarphotos.rypn.org](http://passcarphotos.rypn.org)). The “Huamantla” takes a little more looking though, as it’s on the Business Car page under the FCM reporting marks which belonged to. The actual image is a scan of an undated photo in glorious black and white, over on [RRPictureArchives](http://RRPictureArchives). There is a road number below the car name that I cannot make out, other than that it’s four digits.

I was curious and checked on “Huamantla” in Wikipedia. It’s a small city located in the eastern half of the Mexican state of Tlaxcala. The area has a long indigenous history, but the city itself was not founded until the early colonial period, in the 1530s. The takeaway here is that as the NdeM picked up equipment from its northern neighbors, it kept the tradition of naming passenger equipment using place names.





***Scheduled Delivery March 2020:***  
**993 02 010, \$139.95.**

**Amtrak Weathered Four-Pack.**

Scheduled to consist of:

- Two 125 series Ortner Rapid Discharge Hoppers, Road Numbers 11508 and 11524. Orange with black lettering including reporting marks on left and “Amtrak” on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Light weathering. Simulated aggregate loads to be included.
- Two 105 series 14 Panel Steel Gondola with Fixed Ends, Road Numbers 13263 and 13274. Orange with black lettering including reporting marks on left and “Amtrak” on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Light

weathering. Simulated tie loads to be included. Approximate Time Period: 1977 to as late as the present for the Ortner Hoppers; 1978 to present for the gondolas. Previous Releases: for the Ortner Hoppers, Runner Pack #9 (993 00 009) with road numbers 11501, 11513, 11525, and 11553, August 2009; no previous releases for the 105 series gondolas. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

Add these four cars to Runner Pack #9 of four Amtrak Ortner Hoppers released in August 2009 and you’re starting to get to a genuine MOW train here. The most likely place you would see these in my estimation is the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, which Amtrak owns outright. But there are other places where Amtrak has enough of a presence that they need to keep the right of way up to speed. I noted photos taken in Michigan City, Indiana and San Diego, for example.

For the coverage of Runner Pack #9 I noted that there were three bingo photos of AMTK 11501 on RRPictureArchives. There are several other Ortner hoppers in Amtrak paint on that site. From RailcarPhotos.com we learn that the series AMTK 11500 to 11581 was from the WMJX series 71001 to 71082, rebuilt into ballast cars by Fruit Growers Express Company in 1977. No luck finding bingos for the two forthcoming road numbers in the usual places, but I did see over on Fallen Flags a shot of freshly painted AMTK 11580 from the same series as of September 1978.

Back in 2009 I had no ORERs between 1976 and 1981, but with the addition of my late father’s collection I can see that the series AMTK 11500 to 11581 was a “change from previous issue” in the January 1978 edition. The inside length was listed at 31 feet 3 inches, outside length 41 feet 2 inches, extreme height 11 feet 7 inches, and capacity 1902 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. All 82 cars were in service. The October 2007 ORER had 67 of these cars listed. Jumping to the January 2018 ORER I see that there are just eight left, so we’d better tack on an “as late as”

to the “the present” ATP here. By the way, if you’re checking Equipment Registers, don’t forget that Amtrak is listed under its official name, National Railroad Passenger Corporation. I suppose you already know how I know that...

As long as I have the January 2018 ORER open I can report that the series AMTK 13200 to 13400, listed mostly as “Gondola, Fixed End, Steel” with a few exceptions described as “Maintenance Of Way,” has a total of 136 cars out of a possible 201. There are no inside dimensions listed, just an outside length of 55 feet 5 inches, extreme height of 8 feet 8 inches and gross rail weight of 263,000 pounds. Going back to RailcarPhotos, it’s noted that this group was built by Evans-SEICO between April and June 1978. These cars have thirteen panels versus fourteen on the MTL 105 body style. The example photo on RailcarPhotos was of AMTK 13382, carrying a set of concrete ties as of August 2008. That orange paint has faded quite a bit on this car. I have a bingo for you on RRPictureArchives of the 12263, found in April 2014 in Hamilton Township, New Jersey “resting on a Conrail Shared Assets siding that no longer receives freight business.” Plenty of those kind of sidings around in my home state, to be sure. A rather graffitied-up AMTK 13274 was found during April 2009 along the Northeast Corridor in North Elizabeth, New Jersey. From that view we can see differences in the ends between prototype and model.

**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 November 13.*



**093 44 150, \$33.95**

**Reporting Marks: AC FX 27280.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Round Hatches, AC FX (General Electric Railcar Services).**

Base car is gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and orange vertical conspicuity stripes at far left and far right of sides. “A” or featured side of the car has extensive “Seasons Greetings” graffiti with depictions of a sunny beach, a winter scene with Santa and Mrs. Claus and a snowman, and a large city, covering most of the side. “B” side of the car has multicolor graffiti “Bernd.”

Approximate Time Period: at least 2005 through 2013 based on the “A” or featured side of the car, but see text.

As of the last day of 2016 according to an image on RRPictureArchives, the real AC FX 27280 did not have Christmas-themed graffiti on it. Thanks to some help from our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe, we’ve pieced this together for you.

The “A” side of the MTL replicates graffiti found on four-bay Center Flow ELTX 7132. It is long-lived, having been photographed in 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2013; the images are all on

RRPictureArchives. I think the depiction is a sunny Southern California beach on the left and New York City on the right with Chrysler Building and 30 Rockefeller Center complete with Christmas tree on the right. With lots of snow at the North Pole in between. (Or at UMTRR HQ, which had over ten inches of snow between the afternoon of November 11 and the early morning of November 12... which, by the way, was not a "snow day" ... sorry, kids.)

The "B" side of the car can be found on a BNSF center flow, the 450486, which according to RailcarPhotos.com is in the series 450350 to 450649 built by Trinity at its Fort Worth plant between November 2000 and May 2001. "Bernd" is a rather prolific, and sophisticated, tagger. The work on this car can be found in the first image on the left in the second row at this URL: [hiveminer.com/Tags/bernd%2Cgraffiti/Recent](http://hiveminer.com/Tags/bernd%2Cgraffiti/Recent) . Meanwhile, David Grothe found another shot on Flickr, pointing out that MTL didn't include the blue accents above the name.

So the ATP is sort of, kind of, 2005 to 2013, plus or minus. The transfer of graffiti from two different cars to this, well, stand in, results in a see text. But I doubt that will impact sales a whole lot. Season's Greetings!



993 05 570, \$59.95.

**Road Numbers: 3004 and K-3013 (will be preceded with "WM" in website listings). Western Maryland Weathered Two-Pack.**

Consists of one troop sleeper (Catalog Number 116 51 040) and one troop kitchen car (Catalog Number 118 52 030). Both cars are oxide red with white lettering including "speed lettering" roadname across top and road number at bottom left. Light weathering and fading effects on roadname.

Approximate Time Period: mid-1950s into

the 1970s. Previous Releases (unweathered): Troop Sleeper, Road Number 3018, February 2005; Troop Kitchen Car, Road Number 3015, also February 2005.

Let's take what we know from the February 2005 release of "clean" versions of these cars. The Western Maryland acquired a number of surplus troop cars in 1947 and 1948 and placed them in a variety of services according to a posting by Don Smith on the WMRY mailing list. At first these cars would have been in pullman green, but Smith says that "when the first batch was put in service as cabooses they were painted caboose red. Later in MOW or camp car service, some of them acquired white or light gray stripes in the window area, and later became overall gray." On the RPI site it was noted that the WM "speed lettering" roadname was first used in 1952 and more formally adopted in 1953.

Smith added that "there are a lot of color photos of these cars in Dwight Jones' caboose book and the **Western Maryland Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**" and also cites Railway Prototype Cyclopedia Number 5. At that time I owned zero of those three references, but since then I've added the **Color Guide** to the Research Accumulation.



And Page 91 of the **Color Guide** has a bingo photo of the troop sleeper as of September 1973. The “truncated stripe” version used on the MTL car is present; it followed the “full stripe” version where the four lines to the left and right of the roadname go all the way to the ends of the sides. And that different roadname treatment makes this car a “not a reprint.” See the original run at right which has the full stripes. On the other hand, the kitchen car, on which I did not find a bingo, is painted with the full stripes as was the first run (at left).



The 1973 photo date is important here to help set the ATP, at least for the troop sleeper. Later, the full roadname would be replaced with a small “WM” as evidenced by kitchen car K-3009 which is coupled to the 3004 in the photo, and still later there would be cars with just reporting marks, as also shown in the **Color Guide** and online (for example, road numbers 3017 and 3019 on Fallen Flags and elsewhere). Some of these cars lasted long enough to get Chessie System paint and new road numbers.



993 05 580, \$84.95.

**Reporting Marks: PFE 301339, 302091, and 302201.**

**Pacific Fruit Express Weathered Three Pack.**

Consists of three 070 series 51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerators with Rib Sides. Base car is orange with black ends and aluminum roof; black lettering including Union Pacific and Southern Pacific heralds and reporting marks on left and stepped Pacific Fruit Express on right. Moderate to heavy weathering. The 302201 has white restenciled reporting marks on black patch panel. Approximate Time Period: 1960 (build date) to early 1970s. Previous Releases: A six pack, Catalog 70012

(individual catalog number 70010) of Road Numbers 301213, 301231, 301312, 302011, 302210, and 302322, December 1988; then as Catalog 70010, Road Number 302212, July 1993 and Road Number 302113, August 2003; then Eight Pack #2 (993 00 802) with Road Numbers 301901, 301998, 302003, 302111, 302120, 302186, 302200, and 302208, May 2013. These will be the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> releases for this item. Note that the 2003 reprint and Eight Pack #2 have cars with the aluminum roof and the UP and SP heralds in opposite positions on each side of the car, making them “not a reprints.”



This R-70-12 refrigerator car counts among the first large contingent of mechanical reefers put into service by the PFE, and marked the beginning of the end of the ice reefer era. They were state of the art for the time and included such niceties as load dividers. Built in 1960, the paint scheme used by MTL is the “as delivered” version... well, under all that grime, that is. The cleanliness of PFE refrigerator cars earlier in the company’s history did not carry forward into the later years of the company. Even so, cars this weathered would probably best fit some years after being put into service.

The ORER for July 1963 shows 991 cars of the original one thousand built in the series numbered from 301213 to 302212. The inside length was 44 feet 10 inches (allowing for mechanical refrigeration equipment), inside height 8 feet 2 inches, outside length 53 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch and capacity 3174 cubic feet or 120,000 pounds. There was an eight foot door opening; the MTL model looks to be a nitpicky width off that, not enough to declare a “door thing.” The book **Pacific Fruit Express** notes that the R-70-12s had their load dividers removed starting in 1968. The cars thus de-equipped were renumbered into the 305000s. By the April 1975 ORER there was just a single car left of the original series.

I’m a bit surprised that there haven’t been any more images of these cars posted online beyond the one I previously noted on Ken Harstine’s “Boxcars and Freight Cars of North America” site ( [www.boxcars.us](http://www.boxcars.us) ). PFE 301979 as of March 1962 is shown in glorious black and white. A delta I previously picked up between model and prototype is that the real car had five ribs on one side of the door and four on the other side of the door (not counting the diagonals), whereas the 070 body style has six ribs and five ribs respectively. Note that which side of the, er, side, is which depends on the placement of the mechanical refrigeration unit from your perspective.

A bit of a moot point with respect to these cars, but an interesting item nonetheless from over on the Trainorders discussion group. Pacific Fruit Express was officially divided between its owners UP and SP in 1978. However, reporting marks were changed and ownership transferred before that. “What happened was that, once the PFE Company stopped making money, they could not use the investment tax credit on the R70 cars that were not written off yet. But the parent railroads made money and could use the credit. So ownership of the cars was transferred back to the railroads, and that way the railroads got the tax write-off.”

*In addition to the above, the following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **November 30**.*



**Scheduled Delivery Starting Mid-January 2020:**

**Catalog Numbers TBD, \$29.95 each.**

**025 Series Exterior Post Boxcars, Single Door, A Year in Railbox 2020.**

Each car of an expected twelve, one per month in 2020, will have a Railbox paint

scheme (TBD which one) as the base with prototypical graffiti on one or both sides. Example artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary. While these cars are officially a pre-order item, Micro-Trains has announced that these will also be on standing orders which are scheduled to ship mid-month. I interpret that to mean that MTL dealers only have to order a quantity once and receive that quantity of each monthly car – but check your dealer for more information.

Well, I said at the start of the Year in Railbox in 2018 that MTL would easily have enough examples of graffiti on RBOX cars to have several more years of this series... and there you go. Note that I am making the “2020” distinction here, not Micro-Trains, mostly to keep my head straight on which is which.

I guess we will be keeping our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe busy in the coming year as well. (David’s taken and posted enough photos of cars that MTL could do the whole year with just his images!) I have no good idea what it is that the, ahem, additional painters, are attempting to depict on the MTL sample, RBOX 37227. However, I already know from the bingo photo of the car I found on RRPictureArchives that its Approximate Time Period will be 2014, plus or minus. Stay tuned...



**N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** Car #8 in the **Thomas Kinkadee Painter of Light Series** has been released (102 00 808, \$31.95). UMTRR coverage was in the December 2018 issue. This release features the 1998 work

“Holiday Gathering.” View a larger version of this painting at <https://thomaskinkadee.com/art/a-holiday-gathering/> along with notes on it. Fun fact: Norman Rockwell appears in the bottom left-hand corner of the illustration. Note that the page on my website which shows the annual MTL Christmas Car releases is also called “A Holiday Gathering” is a coincidence, of course.

## **Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



518 00 800, \$27.95.

**Road Number: 2930 (will be “NRC 2930” in website listings).**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Vertical Brake Staff, Zion Fig Bars.**

#10 in the Farm-to-Table Series (Pre-orders taken in September 2018). Yellow sides, brown roof, ends, top sills and door sill. Black door hardware and simulated corner braces. Black lettering including large “Northern Refrigerator Car Company” and road number on left, and “Zion Fig Bars” with company name on right. Small black and white North Western Line herald at top left. Red and white

depiction of fig bars on a plate. White end lettering. Arch bar trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1927 to only as early as 1928.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (049 00 860). Note, however, that this release is on a 40 foot car while the N Scale release is on a 36 foot truss rod underframe car.



506 00 290, \$24.90.

**Reporting Marks: UP 155000.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Double Youngstown Doors, Union Pacific.**

Brown (the UP's "Synthetic Red") including trucks and couplers. including "Automobile" legend, roadname and

reporting marks on left. Yellow slogan "Serves all the West" (in all caps) on right on both sides of car. Approximate Time Period: 1944 (service date) through no later than 1950, see text.

The N Scale version of this car was released in July 2013 (Catalog 034 00 350) so I can reprint myself. We start off with a bingo on this car in Morning Sun's **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One) by Lloyd Stagner. The company photo of the 155000 was taken in July 1944 in Omaha, with the grass so high that it's hard to see the track on which the boxcar was sitting! The car was built by the UP at its Grand Island shops in 1937—so, clearly, we won't have an exact match to the MTL 034 body style—but shopped just before its picture was taken. The "OM 7-44" (Omaha, July 1944) lettering, faithfully reproduced by Micro-Trains, is visible to the right of the capacity information. The car itself is among the UP's class A-50-14, with the "A" standing for Automobile in this case. Besides the Color Guide photo, a conveniently timed eBay listing showed that the 155000 is also on the cover of the book **Union Pacific Freight Cars 1936-51** by Terry Metcalfe.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1945 shows quite the surprise: the 155000 is a one car series! The dimensions were as follows: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 53 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, capacity 4906 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds... and door opening, 7 feet? That has to be a mistake: not only are there double doors on the car, but as an automobile carrying car, there would be no reasonable way to squeeze in a motor vehicle into a space only seven feet wide. (OK, a typical motor vehicle.) And here's another surprise: by the next ORER in the UMTRR Research Accumulation, July 1950, the 155000 is gone. There are in fact no cars in the 150000s at all; there's a skip in the numbering from 152500 to 160001. So much for running through the various changes to the UP paint scheme for fifty-foot boxcars after 1944... it doesn't seem to apply. MTL has, perhaps inadvertently, provided a release that appears to be of a one of a kind car. And note that unlike the N Scale release, this time the headline in the car copy in the Micro-News announces that this is a one of a kind car.



506 00 391 and 506 00 392, \$25.90 each.

**Reporting Marks:** C&O 5916 and 5918.

**50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Double Youngstown Doors, Chesapeake and Ohio.**

Dark blue (the C&O's "Enchantment Blue") with yellow doors. Yellow lettering including "Cushion Underframe" and reporting marks on left and "C&O for Progress" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (rebuild date) into the 1970s.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (034 00 450). The commentary covers both road numbers.

Meanwhile, the **Union Pacific "Desert Victory" SD40-2 (970 01 300, Road Number 3593, \$249.95)** is now scheduled for a December release.



**Z SCALE REPRINTS:** No releases this month.

**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 **November 30**.*



**Scheduled Delivery April 2020:**

994 00 109, \$84.95.

**Reporting Marks:** D&RGW 68257, 68261, 68285, and 68324.

**Runner Pack #109, Quantity Four of 40 Foot Steel Boxcars with Single Youngstown Doors, Rio Grande (Denver and Rio Grande Western).**

Brown with white lettering including large reporting marks on left and flying Rio Grande roadname on right. 1939 (build date) or 1958 (based on service date given by MTL) to possibly as late as the mid-1980s. Previous Release: Road Number 68222, May 2011.

Back when this car was first run, the boxcar roster on the website of the Rio Grande Modeling and Historical Society confirmed Micro-Trains' car copy that the series 68000 to 68399 was



built in 1939 by Pressed Steel Car Company. (Those tables are now members-only.) These cars had 12 panel riveted sides, 4/5 Dreadnaught ends, a Duryea underframe, and a six foot Youngstown door. So we don't have a match to the MTL body style on those details, other than the door.

The **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 34, offers some additional deltas to the model: a Murphy roof and straight side sills. There are photos of sister cars 68337 and 68375, taken in 1985 and 1991 respectively. Both cars are in the same paint scheme as the MTL model, which I believe was the as delivered decoration. These were the first steel boxcars for the Rio Grande, in fact the first 40 foot general service boxcars purchased by the line after 1916 (!) and were also the first to get the "speed lettering." Incredibly, the 68337 also had a wood roofwalk when photographed, long after that method of construction had been outlawed.

What the two cars pictured in the Color Guide also have is "AX" before the road number, which was the Rio Grande's way of denoting company service. (Which might have allowed them to get away with the wooden running board.) MTL didn't use the "AX" which enables a more general use for the boxcar. But they also omitted digits from the load limit and light weight stencils, in the same positions as on the cars in the MSCG. I don't think that these cars could hold only 1200 pounds, and they certainly didn't weigh only 400 pounds! On the other hand, I am simply amazed that the folks in Talent were able to get the words "Work Safely" in between rungs of the side ladders. That's accurate to the prototype cars, and are the size of dimensional data. So that's how tall when reduced to Z Scale? Where's my micrometer...

The ORER for January 1943 shows the series with 399 of the possible 400 cars numbered 68000 to 68399, listed as "Box, Steel" with these key dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 4 inches, outside length 42 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3840 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. (I've rounded a few of these to the nearest inch.) Jumping to the January 1964 ORER which is after the rebuilding date of 1958 given by MTL, we find an amalgamation of groups of cars into a larger series, 67500 to 69899, with 1973 cars. The dimensions are the same as in 1943 except for extreme height, listed an inch more at 15 feet even. By April 1970 that collection was down to 241 cars and 153 in April 1981. January 1985 is the last Equipment Register in which I see any cars in this group, other than the company service boxcars of course. I think roofwalk removal would have occurred by then so mid-1980s is probably somewhat of a stretch.

**Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS:** No releases this month.

**Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced via the Micro-Trains website and the MTL Facebook page on November 13:*



**507 44 510, \$28.95**

**Reporting Marks: BREX (road number obscured)**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Burlington Refrigerator Express.**

Base car is green with remains of white "BREX" lettering on left. "A" or featured side of the car has extensive "Seasons Greetings" graffiti with depictions of a sunny beach, a winter scene with Santa and Mrs. Claus and a snowman, and a large city, covering most of the side. "B" side of the car has multicolor graffiti

"Bernd." Approximate Time Period: at least 2005 through 2013 based on the "A" or featured side of the car, but see text. Previous Releases: technically none, though Micro-Trains did release an unweathered BREX plug door boxcar in March 1988 (Catalog 13606/13602-2, Road Number 79597).

Please refer to the N Scale release 093 44 150 above, as the graffiti used is the same as on that car. The "see text" applies here as well since the graffiti is from two different prototype cars.

*In addition to the above, the following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **November 30**.*



**Scheduled Delivery Starting Mid-January 2020:**

**Catalog Numbers TBD, \$29.95 each.**

**510 Series Exterior Post Boxcars, Single Door, A Year in Railbox 2020.**

Each car of an expected twelve, one per month in 2020, will have a Railbox paint

scheme (TBD which one) as the base with prototypical graffiti on one or both sides. Example artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary. While these cars are officially a pre-order item, Micro-Trains has announced that these will also be on standing orders which are scheduled to ship mid-month. I interpret that to mean that MTL dealers only have to order a quantity once and receive that quantity of each monthly car – but check your dealer for more information.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale announcement of this series above.



**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** It's hard for me to wrap my head around the idea that we are less than two months away from the '20s – the 2020s – as I type this. But yes, there is a new body style coming from Micro-Trains in N Scale in the new decade, specifically, 2021. While PS-2 covered hoppers have been around in N Scale since well before the turn of the century – the 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Century, that

is – MTL is going to raise the bar with its model, which will include separate roof hatches, a fine-scale etched metal walkway, 33" factory-installed metal wheels, proper ride height, body mounted Magne-Matic couplers with blackened trip pins. There are dozens of roadnames and paint schemes that can be used for this model; for example MTL, has done twenty-eight already in Z Scale, not counting Weathered Releases. That could easily keep the folks in Talent busy until the 30's – the 2030s.

Meanwhile, that long-awaited single window coach that is slated to appear in the NdeM Heavyweight Five-Pack in March? Word from the UMTRR Spy Network is that you won't need to wait that long to see an example. In fact, it could be as early as next month for the release of this new body style. Bonus points for guessing the first roadname – and no, I don't know what it will be.

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** None received or located this month.

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** Of the three Weathered Releases from last month, only the N Scale TTX Weathered Three-Pack (993 05 560) is outta here. Also from last month, both BNSF tank cars have left the building (110 00 45x) as has the Pennsylvania Railroad "plain keystone" boxcar (180 00 080) and the Conrail Tie Loader Three Pack (993 01 880). Runner Pack #154 of three GATX tank cars has been drained (993 00 154, July). Wave goodbye to the "Ship with Susie-Q" Susquehanna Weathered Boxcar (020 44 670, August). Moving to 2019 Z Scale releases, both numbers of the Santa Fe "Shock Control" boxcar are gone (500 00 04x, January). The second number of the C&O open hopper has emptied out (534 00 102, January). The C&NW Passenger Car Four-Pack (994 01 240, September) has left the station.

Backwards to 2018 for two N Scale goners: the UP Poster Series #2 (118 00 120, March), and the NACS container (468 00 120, October). For 2017 in N Scale, Friendship Series Car #6, the UP "Arkansas Rice" boxcar (020 00 017, July), is missing from the MTL website listing so I am assuming it's sold out. The second number of the CP Rail tank car (110 00 312, July) does have the "Contact Dealer" banner so there's no doubt it's sold out. But then the New Haven 12-1 Sleeper (142 00 100, May) isn't listed so again, the assumption of a sellout. There were no items discontinued in Z Scale for 2017 or 2018, but the only item that is gone from 2016 is Z Scale: the Delta Valley and Southern Per Diem Series #1 Boxcar (510 00 300, February). The only one gone from 2015 is the N Scale Postcard Series Boxcar #4 (100 00 814, October). The only item sold out from 2014 is the Z Scale Seaboard System F7B Diesel (980 02 320,

March). And for this month's Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board, that is as far back as we need to go. (And here you thought I'd forget to use "Bye-Bye Board.")

**OOPS PATROL:** I misstated the price of the Z Scale TTX Weathered Two-Pack (994 05 230); it's \$64.95, not \$99.95.

**SPECIAL RUN NEWS:** This one really ought to be in Oops Patrol... back in March, TexNRails announced that they'd commissioned a three-pack of SL-SF/Frisco 50 foot boxcars, painted in as delivered scheme from 1954. I ran into TNR's Brad Herz at a train show last month and he asked why I hadn't mentioned this before. My response: "Oops?" See what I mean? There are a very few of these sets left so if you'd like to "Ship it on the Frisco!" there's still time. Contact Brad at [sales@texnrails.com](mailto:sales@texnrails.com).



And remember, if you are a subscriber to the UMTRR and you have a Special Run, you are more than welcome to send along information on that. Yes, my readers get special privileges...

**REMEMBER BLACK FRIDAY:** I don't have any official word on this, but if this year follows the past few years, there will be a "Black Friday Special" on the MTL website over Thanksgiving Weekend (make that "American Thanksgiving"). Spend enough money with the folks from Talent and get a Weathered car in N or Z Scale that isn't available anywhere else. I'll leave it to you to check on this, although should this special take place, I'll have a recap of it next month.

**FINALLY... THIS PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT.** A few of you who follow me as a "private citizen" on Facebook or who know me in real life are aware that the past few years have been turbulent. Since 2013 when my dad passed away, I was separated from my wife of some 25 years, then divorced, losing my layout in the process; moved twice; and had my son finish community college and my daughter go off to university. In 2018 I married Colleen, whom I've known since before my first marriage. And just when we thought things were settling down, Colleen received word that she had the BRCA2 gene mutation in February of this year, and a particularly, let us say, interesting mutation at that. For those of you who don't know, the BRCA2 mutation is a marker for a dramatically increased risk of breast cancer—in women **and in men**, as well as a highly elevated risk of ovarian cancer, for which the current diagnosis is often "sorry, too late." Colleen made the difficult decision to undergo three separate proactive surgeries during this year, the last of which took place earlier this month and from which she's recovering. The very good news is that she is cancer-free, for which all of us are more than grateful.



Now, all this is not normally something I would share here in these bytes – the closest I get is the review of the MTL models of prototype “fight cancer” freight cars. But Colleen has been sharing her “previvor” story on her blog [www.talkwithcolleen.com](http://www.talkwithcolleen.com) and has been completely open and public about her journey. I think it’s important to share this information here as well. Even though the overwhelming majority of my readers are male, the BRCA2 and its perhaps more dangerous companion BRCA1 can be passed down to children. So it’s our duty, we think, to tell you about this and suggest that if there is a history of cancer in your family you think about being tested. We are not physicians (and I don’t play one on TV, either) so a check in with your providers is a good first step. There is plenty of material online and in print for further information.

And that concludes our Public Service Announcement. Until next time, do the best you can.

Cheers,  
George

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