



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #279 – March, 2020

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Hello again everyone! As I write this, the entire UMTRR staff (me!) is pretty much “confined to quarters.” I suspect as we go “to press” this month, many of you are as well, hopefully only by informed choice and not because of actual illness, in order to address the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak. Let’s all be careful and stay safe out there, including for the sake of those who are older (like my mom) or more vulnerable (like my wife).

At any rate, after leading off with the N Scale Single Window Passenger Car last month, we return to our usual sequence of coverage this month, with plenty to report on... including a septet (!) of pre-order announcements in Z Scale. Let’s start our look behind the red and yellow sign with a Very Large Roadname...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



055 00 570, \$25.80

Road Number: 21643 (will be “CG 21643” in website listings).

33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Central of Georgia.

Brown (including truck frames) with white lettering including large roadname and

road number across most of car. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s to early 1980s. This car is a “Special Offering / Regional Railroad” limited release per Micro-Trains and is not on dealer standing orders.

The late Jerry Laboda didn’t focus exclusively on passenger cars, although we are all grateful for the amount of work he put into his “Passenger Car Photo Index.” In October 1972, he snapped a bingo photo of this car, sandwiched in between two Southern Railway open hoppers. The lettering aligns with the MTL model, except for an added ACI Label below the second “G” in “Georgia” – easily addressed if that is one’s inclination. Also, add some dents and weathering.

I think the billboard sized lettering is suggestive of the Southern’s equally large roadname on hoppers. The Southern took over the Central of Georgia in June 1963. As late as 1956 the CofG was using their “The Right Way” paint scheme on hoppers (this data point from an Accurail HO Scale triple hopper). This tells me that the billboard lettering dates to after the Southern’s assumption of control of the Central of Georgia. There’s a parallel to the Interstate Railroad, which was sold to the Southern in 1960 and also had hoppers with large roadnames after that.

With that presumption, let's go the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1964. The series CG 21500 to 21699, described as "Coal, Steel, Double Hopper" had these dimensions: inside length 34 feet, inside width 10 feet 1 inch, outside length 35 feet, extreme height 10 feet 8 inches, and capacity 2180 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 172 cars in service out of a possible 200 at that time. As of the October 1972 ORER that was down to 88 cars. By the October 1976 Register that car count had dropped to 20, in January 1978 it was 13, and in July 1980 it was nine. They were all off the roster no later than the ORER of April 1984.



065 00 026, \$28.70

Reporting Marks: DRX 6516.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, Deep-Rock.

Black underframe with large yellow "Deep-Rock" across most of side. White lettering include reporting marks on left

and "Cushing, Okla" at bottom center. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: early 1930s to mid-1940s.

This car has "10-19" on it, which could represent the build date, however the registration for the Deep Rock Oil Corporation doesn't appear in my ORER library until the February 1931 issue. By that time, car counts from individual groups are gone from the listing, although the total number of tank cars, 818, is given. Among these are the series 6199 to 6589, which includes the 6516. These were 8000 gallon or 80,000 pound capacity cars. (The MTL 065 series represents a 10,000 gallon car.) Perhaps more interesting is the header for this listing: "The tank cars of this company are marked "Shaffer Oil and Refining Company, Cushing, Okla.," "S.O.R.X." or "Deep Rock Oil Corporation," "D.R.X." That leads me back as far as the October 1919 Equipment Register which has what might be a new listing for Shaffer Oil and Refining, reporting marks CRNX, with a total of 583 cars.

I think we need to take a little detour here for a bit of history of the company, which for me starts from an unlikely place: a compendium of gas station road maps at www.jonroma.net. (That site also has some Chicago area railroad company track diagrams, and yes, I was distracted from these bytes by those files!) A 1928 map labeled for Shaffer Oil and Refining Company also features the Deep-Rock trademarks. A 1935 map is captioned with the information that Shaffer went through receivership and emerged as the Deep Rock Oil Company. That's somewhat true; Shaffer became Deep Rock in 1931, but what happened next culminated in an important case which resulted in the "Deep Rock doctrine." Standard Gas and Electric, what might have been called a conglomerate some decades later, bought Shaffer and proceeded to severely undercapitalize it. Although Deep Rock paid dividends to its shareholders, including Standard Gas, it was "two jumps ahead of the wolf" otherwise. Deep Rock was pushed into bankruptcy, and guess which creditor claimed the largest amount of money owed? Deep Rock's own parent company, Standard Gas! Other creditors cried foul, and the subsequent lawsuit went all the way to the Supreme Court in 1939. The ruling, quoting the Wikipedians who read the entire ruling for us: "Claims, as creditors, upon an insolvent subsidiary company by controlling shareholders or other insiders, like managers or directors,

will be subordinated to the claims of all other creditors.” In other words, you can’t intentionally tank (no pun intended) your own wholly-owned subsidiary and expect everyone else to get behind you in line to get paid off.

Returning to the ORERs now, in the July 1935 edition the series 6500 to 6639 remains, again with no car count, and the total across Deep Rock and Ozark Car Corporation is 580 tank cars. In the January 1943 Register, Deep Rock has moved from the alphabetically arranged “rectangle box” listing at the end of the private owners and lessors section to a more typical full registration, but still with not much information. The series DRX 6040 to 6640 would include the 6516, but was also a mix of 60,000, 80,000 and 100,000 pound capacity cars, all of which were 8000 gallons except for a set that was 6000 gallons. It’s the same situation in the January 1945 ORER. However, some time between then and the July 1950 Register the Deep Rock registration disappears completely. I can only speculate on this but my best guess is that the cars were sold off to a lessor. The DRX reporting marks do not appear in the index. At any rate, Deep Rock was purchased in 1955 by Kerr-McGee. This was part of Kerr-McGee’s strategy to expand from oil exploration and production to “downstream” operations.

The somewhat defined Approximate Time Period of early 1930s to mid-1940s probably needs to be tempered further by the paint scheme, as in, was it used for that entire length of time. My sense is that it wasn’t, but with no photo evidence either way, and in fact, no bingo photo at all available to me (other than other models of this car with different road numbers), I can’t be sure. An application of Rule #1 (“It’s your railroad”) might be handy here.



066 00 110, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: GATX 1112.

Three Dome (Three Compartment) Tank Car, L. Foppiano Wine Company.

#2 in the “Grape to Glass” Series (Pre-orders taken September 2019). Aluminum with black underframe. Black lettering including reporting marks on

left and company name center. Red “Healdsburg / Sonoma County California” on right. Black end lettering. Approximate Time Period: at least the 1940s (a guess).

Last month there was a Grape to Glass single dome tank car and a refiner three dome (more correctly, three-compartment) tank car. This month there’s a flip in body styles, if you will. But could it be that the prototype could have started as a single dome tank car?

We get another unlikely place for evidence: a bingo photo of GATX 1112 on the Lionel Trains website, “harvested” by my search engine of choice. (Which does not begin with “G” and end with “oogle,” by the way.) The real car has a large center dome and two smaller domes. This sometimes means that the car has been reconfigured from a single compartment car to a three compartment car, by adding partitions inside the tank. In the photo, all three dome covers are up and the left most dome has a hose in it, leading down to a platform. It’s not hard to guess what’s being loaded! A man is standing on the platform next to the “G” in “Healdsburg” with

his right arm resting comfortably on the handrail which surrounds the tank. This gives us a little help with size comparison to the MTL 066 body style; I'd say the prototype is a bit larger. Based on the very front end of a truck at the far left of the image, I think it was taken in the 1930s or 1940s.

Prohibition in the United States ended in 1933 so we're probably good with an ATP that starts no earlier than that year. (The winery, which is still in business, was founded in 1896 and made it through Prohibition... by selling home winemaking kits. I did not know that was legal at the time!) That having been said, the ORER for January 1940 shows a group insulated tank cars, GATX 1077 to 1112, with 80,000 pounds capacity and no car count. There is a count of 26 in the January 1943 ORER, 34 in the April 1952 issue and 33 in the January 1958 Register. None of these entries have any mention of "compartment cars" which is ORER-speak for cars that aren't single dome. That leaves us, once again, with a guess as to the Approximate Time Period. Just readable under the "F" in "Foppiano" in the official MTL image is what could be a service date in 1939, somewhat reinforcing my guess.



**098 00 101 and 098 00 102, \$31.80 each.
Reporting Marks: ADMX 53152 and 53185.**

**50 Foot Airslide Covered Hoppers,
ADM (Archer-Daniels-Midland).**

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Blue, white and green ADM logo in center. Yellow vertical conspicuity stripes at points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present.

After a bunch of releases between the introduction of this body style in September 2016 through the end of 2017, this tooling has had a bit of a rest. Until now, that is, with this virtual two-pack that's right up to date.

According to RailcarPhotos.com, the series ADMX 53100 to 53199 was built by General American between November 1983 and April 1984. These are the lowered brake wheel version that aligns with the MTL 098 body style. A bingo photo of the 53152 as of June 2006 also appears on RailcarPhotos.com. It looks freshly painted and has zero, ahem, "extra lettering." I did not find an exact match photo of the 53185 in my usual go-to places, but I will point out that RRPictureArchives has 84 (!) photos of cars in this series, and Fallen Flags has citations to several dozen car images as well.

Over to the ORER of January 2006 for the registration of ADM Transportation Company, the subsidiary of ADM that actually owns or leases these cars. Of the original 100 cars, 95 were in service at the time, described as, well, "Covered Hopper, Airslide," with an outside length of

54 feet 1 inch, capacity of 4566 cubic feet and gross rail weight of 263,000 pounds. As of the January 2018 Equipment Register, there were 73 cars still in service.

Now, about that “right up to date” part. That won’t be for much longer, perhaps. On January 7, 2020, ADM unveiled a new logo (at right), a variation of the trademark that’s on these models, a logo which has been in use since 2001. (In terms of the ATP, the conspicuity stripes are newer so that feature “wins.”)



The previous “molecule” logo had been introduced in March 1962, replacing the figure of an archer. The company also has a new tagline: “Unlocking Nature. Enriching Life.” It replaces, “The Nature of What’s to Come,” which also dated back to 2001. How fast we’ll see the new logo on ADM’s substantial freight car fleet, and in turn how fast we’ll see it on MTL models, is up for grabs. I’m sure Micro-Trains would appreciate photos!



105 00 301, \$26.90.

Reporting Marks: CNJ 1521.

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

Black 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 item was pre-ordered during December 2019 and is likely to be in limited quantities.

As noted back in November 2019, the initial run of this car, which was incorrectly brown instead of black, was voluntarily recalled by Micro-Trains to be replaced with this run. They’re calling this a New Release, not a Reprint and so it’s in this section. I speculated that I’d be repeating myself from the November 2019 commentary for this release... and so I will, in a condensed version.

One thousand gondolas, numbered 1001 to 2000, were built in 1944 for the Jersey Central Lines, but 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. 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 1960 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.

A bit of wondering about before closing this out: how many, if any, brown CNJ gondolas made it out of the factory? So far, I’ve not sighted any, including on that well-known Internet Auction Community, although I rarely spend time there these days.



111 00 370, \$55.90.

Reporting Marks: ETTX 909471.

89 Foot Enclosed Autorack, Trailer Train/Santa Fe.

Flat car is yellow with black lettering, white reporting

marks on black panel on left, black “TT” symbol in center and white Trailer Train name on black panel on right. Racking is red with aluminum roof, red and white ends, and aluminum panels. White Cooper Black style Santa Fe roadname right of center. White circle cross Santa Fe heralds at left and right. Black end markings at top of ends. Approximate Time Period: 1984 (service date on rack) to mid-1990s.

Micro-Trains tags the beginning of the ATP as the mid-1980s, citing the replacement of the previous racking with this fully enclosed version from Whitehead and Kales. That makes sense to me, but we can do better. First, there is a service date on the left side in 1984. Second, there’s a listing of all racks purchased or built by the Santa Fe in **Freight Cars Journal** Issue 51, indicating that TL-10 racks were installed on ETTX cars in May 1984. TL-10 is the lettering at the bottom of the last post on right side of the racking... and yes, I needed my magnifying glass to read it.

Not a bingo to the car but to the paint scheme is a shot of TTGX 965720, a bi-level autorack, as of April 1983, posted to the QStation website. Not fully enclosed but in the same paint scheme is CTTX 852838, in a 1979 image on the Southwest Rails blog (swrails.com). Here’s a fun fact comment on that photo from freight car historian Jim Eager: the initial enclosed racks didn’t have a roof because with one they would not meet clearances on, for example, Conrail’s former New York Central “Water Level Route” (which runs not far from UMTRR HQ). So “topless” cars were common in the late 1970s to early 1980s until these clearance issues were addressed. This also impacted double-stack trains.

We have two data points from which to estimate the end of the Approximate Time Period. The “TT” logo and Trailer Train Corporation name were changed to “TTX” and, well, TTX, in 1991, which would eventually affect the paint scheme for the flat car. The Santa Fe paint scheme on

the racking would also change to the white on brown “Q” scheme and then yield to BNSF paint at some point after that. We know that the latter point was no later than April 2011, since the very same car ETTX 909471 has both the TTX logo and a yellow BNSF rack with their early circle cross herald at each end, based on a photo on RRPictureArchives.net.

A quick check of January 1985 ORER shows that the 909471 was one of 42 exceptions to the series ETTX 909147 to 909487. The main difference is the pounds capacity, namely 67,000 instead of the 78,000 for the main series. The key dimensions are the same: inside length 89 feet 4 inches, outside length 93 feet 8 inches, and extreme height 18 feet 10 inches.



182 00 120, \$26.70

Reporting Marks: CR 173334.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Doors, No Running Board, Short Ladders, Conrail.

Brown with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large “wheel on rail” herald on right.

Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1976 to late 1980s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Page 52 of the **Conrail Color Guide to Freight Equipment** shows two “radically different early Conrail paint schemes,” one of which is a bingo to this month’s release – and does, in fact, have two different type doors. The 173334 is a former New York Central boxcar; the lot number, 862-B, carried over from the NYC to the Penn Central and right into Conrail. A service date of July 1976, below the triple “3”s in the road number, confirms that the beginning of the ATP is within a few months of the startup of the Consolidated Rail Corporation. This is about as large a “wheel on rail” logo as you’ll see on a car of this size.

The 862-B cars were built in 1957 by the New York Central at its Despatch Shops in East Rochester, New York, the site of which isn’t far from UMTRR HQ. 1900 cars in all were built, numbered 45000 to 46900. At the time, of course, running boards were still standard equipment. And look here... Micro-Trains has done the 862B in the New York Central “Earlybird” scheme (Catalog 34220, April 1996 and October 2002, the latter shown above). When moved to the Penn Central, these cars were renumbered into the 172981 to 174047 series. They kept those numbers in Conrail.



The ORER for October 1976 shows only 23 cars in this series had been lettered for Conrail, but that’s enough for a check of the dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, capacity 4929 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds, and door opening 15 feet. Yes, that is a “door thing” as the MTL 182 body style cars have two eight foot doors while the prototype had a 7+8 foot door arrangement. If you’re keeping score, there were 475 of these cars still with Penn

Central reporting marks, and, believe it or not, 259 cars remaining in New York Central paint. I can't confirm whether any of those were still "Early Birds" however.

In April 1981's Equipment Register there were 236 cars in the Conrail series, plus 125 Penn Central and still 64 New York Central 862Bs in service. Staying with only the Conrail cars after that (well, that is what this commentary is about!) the car count was down to 39 in October 1986 and 15 in July 1989, which were all gone no later than the October 1991 Register.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



160 00 020, \$29.95

Road Number: 969 (will be "GN 969" in website listings).

Heavyweight Single Window Coach, Great Northern.

Pullman green with black roof, underframe and six-wheel trucks. Gold lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: late 1920s to no later than 1967.

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE) for March 1943 shows a short set of 85 seat coaches numbered 967 to 973. These were 81 feet 7 inches long and had ice-based air conditioning. In the ORPTE for January 1953 six of the seven were still on the roster, with just the 973 missing. The 81 foot 7 inch length is clarified to over the buffers, with inside length of 72 feet 5 inches.

But the 973 actually still existed past its being removed from the ORPTE. While not in great shape as of 2003, it was pictured on RRPictureArchives and the Great Northern Empire websites. It's noted that the 973 was renumbered in 1927. Presuming that the rest of the series was also, this makes the 1920s cited in MTL's car copy reasonable as the start of the ATP. According to the ORER for April 1928, which does list passenger equipment, the new numbers for coaches from 600 to 979 replaced the old numbers 3500 to 4529. Those numbers weren't consecutive as there were only 271 cars involved.

There is sort of a bingo on the 969, on Page 20 of the **GN Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. It's the right car alright, but it's not painted Pullman Green. Instead, it's in Empire Builder colors as of August 1967. The car actually was in Empire Builder service until 1937 according to the caption accompanying the photo. However, the orange and green Empire Builder colors weren't adopted until 1947. So we can't be sure when the 969 was painted the way it appears in the **Color Guide** image. We're stuck with a "no later than" ATP here based on the photo date. A mix of Pullman Green and Empire Builder passenger equipment is in evidence in a 1955 photo on Page 19 of the **Color Guide**, taken at the GN's passenger car yard in St. Paul, Minnesota, so there is no doubt that the two schemes co-existed.

As pictured in the **Color Guide**, there are 23 (!) windows in the side we can see, counting two that had been plated over. That's actually one more than on the MTL 160 body style, a bit of a

difference to the New York Central coach that is the prototype for the Micro-Trains car. I will resist the temptation to call a “window thing”... maybe...



160 00 080, \$29.95

Road Number: 1853 (will be “CP 1853” in website listings).

Heavyweight Single Window Coach, Canadian Pacific.

Maroon with black roof, underframe and six-wheel trucks. Gold lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1920s into at least the late 1950s.

Page 7 of the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One) has the bingo for the 1853 as of 1957. According to the text accompanying the photo, the car was built between 1926 and 1930 and was used system-wide. The 88 seat car was a first class car with a smoking compartment and ice-activated air conditioning. I don’t know, 88 seats in a 74 foot car doesn’t seem all that first class to me. Well, at least every row of seats could have had a window. There were 23 on the side of the car we can see (versus 22 per side on the MTL 160 body style) leaving one to spare. The 1853 was in the CP’s PB class which included but was not limited to the group of ten numbered from 1850 to 1859. The use of six wheel trucks are correct for the MTL model per the prototype picture.

The ORPTE for January 1953 has all ten in the group split into three pieces: 1850 to 1852 and 1857 to 1859 had electro-mechanical air conditioning and a per diem rate of 35 dollars 15 cents, and 1853 to 1856 had ice-cooled air conditioning and a lower per diem rate of 29.95. (I don’t know if that’s in Canadian dollars.) All ten cars had an inside length of 74 feet 8 inches and a length over the buffers of 84 feet 6 inches.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



031 00 281 and 031 00 282, \$27.80 each.

Reporting Marks: CG 1574 and 1579.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Central of Georgia.

Black with aluminum oval “football” pattern on sides. Black roof and ends. Black lettering including “The Right Way” slogan and reporting marks on left. Black on yellow rectangular herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1956 (build date) through the decade of the 1970s. Previous Releases: Catalog 31280, Road Number 1570,

September 1997; Road Number 1572, September 2000. These items have a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. These are a “Special Offering / Regional Railroad” limited release per Micro-Trains and are not on dealer standing orders.

We go “back to the future” with this virtual two-pack. Last month I covered what happened to these cars, namely, they went to parent Southern Railway, which took over the C of G in 1963. Page 46 of the **Southern Railway Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** had the bingo of last month’s Catalog Number 180 00 110 (at right) and that “In 1956 Pullman-Standard delivered 500 of these boxcars to the Central of Georgia as their number series 1500 to 1999. They would be sent to the Southern proper and renumbered to the 520100 to 520599 series.” Besides the distinctive “football” (oops, “American Football”) or “blimp” design, these cars are also notable for being the first freight equipment to wear the Central of Georgia’s slogan “The Right Way.” (Some locomotives and cabooses had the slogan earlier than that.)



The ORER for January 1958 is the closest I have to the build date of these cars. The car count was at 498 out of the original 500, and had these dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet even, outside length 51 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, capacity 4849 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, and door opening 9 feet. Yes, sharp-eyed readers, that’s a “door thing” as the MTL 034 body style has an eight foot door. (But, as I mentioned last month, the MTL 180 body style on which the successor scheme was done has a ten foot door, so on average we’re OK, right?)

As of the July 1974 Equipment Register, the Southern Railway absorption was well underway, with only 122 of the original 500 cars remaining in this lettering. As of April 1981 that was down to a mere four cars, which I suspect would have had their running boards removed. By October 1986 or sooner, all of the “footballs” were off the revenue roster.

There is no Morning Sun Color Guide for the Central of Georgia but this colorful scheme certainly attracted photographers, my dad being one of them. A few photos are online though not as many as I thought. We have two examples from Fallen Flags: CG 1886 nearly new in May 1956, and CG 1504 in September 1973, showing what seventeen years of road grime and rust does to mostly aluminum-painted sides. A future Weathered Release, perhaps?



105 00 191, \$27.80

Reporting Marks: ONT 5061.

50 Foot Steel 14 Panel Gondola, Fixed Ends, Ontario Northland.

Dark blue with yellow ends, stirrups and grab irons. White lettering including reporting marks on left. Yellow roadname left of center and “triple lightning” herald right of center. Yellow Government of Ontario symbol at far left of side with white legend “Rail Services / Ferroviaires.” Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s to mid-2000s at least. Previous Release: Road Number 5019, September 2010.

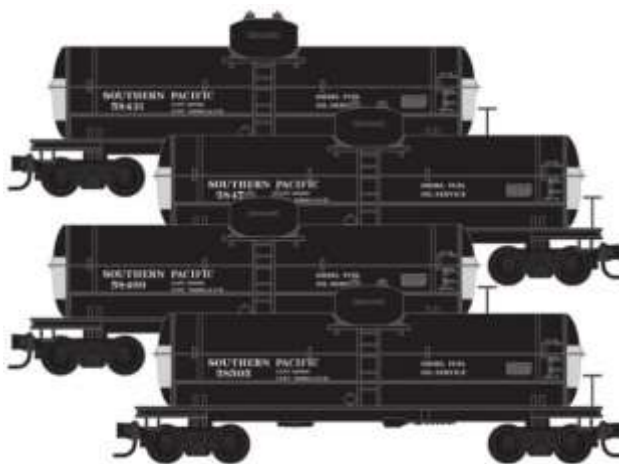
Ian Cranstone’s “Canadian Freight Cars” site (<http://www.nakina.net>) gives 1967 as the build date for the gondola series 5000 to 5099, and notes that these cars are still in service, but we can’t just go with that for the Approximate Time Period. The **CDS Railway Equipment Diagrams** book gives 1975 as the earliest appropriate year for lettering of this style, so we can

go with mid-1970s as the start of the ATP. Previously to that, this car would have worn green paint with white lettering and the “O inside N” (or is it “N inside O”?) symbol. While I’m discussing paint, I will point out a minor “not a reprint” in that the COTS panel differs between this release and the previous one. Yes, that surely is a nitpick, eh? (It’s a Canadian Railroad, so I couldn’t resist “eh”, eh?)

A shot of what was a sister car for the original release, and is a bingo now, appears on “The Unofficial Ontario Northland Railfan Site” (<http://onr.stabler.org> , no “www” and yes, of course I like the website name!). The image is as of 1998. The fixed ends of the real ONT 5061 look quite a bit different from the model. If I’m counting correctly, the real gondola is 16 panels, not 14 panel. There’s also a full side view shot of ONT 5025 from 2000 at the same site, and it shows the gondola as just looking “bigger” than the model. The previous release, ONT 5019, is at the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery website (<http://canadianfreightcargallery.ca> , no “www”) as of 2003.

We can check out my impression of “bigger” in the ORER for April 1981: the inside length is 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet 2 inches, outside length 57 feet 6 inches, extreme height 8 feet, capacity 2078 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. I note that the first ten cars in the series had drop ends and the rest, solid ends. (This is important for this month’s Z Scale releases of the same car.) MTL picked a correct road number here to correspond with the fixed ends even if they don’t look the same as the prototype’s. Knowing that there was a photo from 2000 available, I skipped to the January 2000 ORER where there are 88 fixed end cars out of the original 90 still in service along with all ten drop end gondolas. I jumped again to the October 2007 Equipment Register to find the count of fixed end gondolas down just one to 87 and all ten drop end cars still on the roster. Jumping again to the October 2014 ORER, there are nine drop end and 82 fixed end cars listed. However, they are all gone by no later than the January 2018 Register, so we do not make it to the present. It’s possible that some of these cars could have been moved to company service.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #163 (993 00 163, \$114.95), of four Southern Pacific 39 foot single dome tank cars, is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the October 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 065 51 006, 58431; 065 52 006, 58478; 065 53 006, 58799; and 065 54 006, 58505. These are the first through fourth releases for this item.





The **Baltimore and Ohio Hopper Eight Pack (993 00 818, \$174.95)** should be available mid-month as well. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the October 2019 issue. There are two body styles each with a different paint scheme in this set. The

individual catalog and road numbers are: 055 51 580, 826682; 055 52 580, 826745; 055 53 580, 826765; 055 54 580, 826768; 056 55 460, 327441; 056 56 460, 327454; 056 57 460, 327512; and 056 58 460, 327537. For each of the two cars this is the first through fourth release (previous cars were close but not the same decoration, as noted in the October 2019 UMTRR).

The **Civil War Era US Military Railroad Armored Four Pack (993 01 980, \$99.95)** is now available. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the November 2019 issue. The individual cars are as follows: 152 51 100, Conductor's Car 1607; 153 52 120, Flat Car with partial armor, Road Number 165; 153 53 120, Flat Car with two mortars, Road Number 35; and 153 54 120, Flat Car with full armor, Car Name "Vicksburg."



The **NdeM Heavyweight Five Pack (993 01 990, \$139.95)** is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the November 2019 issue, when I was excited about the inclusion of the single window coach! The individual items in this set are: 147 51 370, Baggage Car, Road Number 2267; 145 52 370, Paired Window Coach, Road Number 465; 160 53 370, Single Window Coach, Road Number 4981; 142 54 370, 12-1 Sleeper, Road Number 222; 144 55 370, 3-2 Observation; Car Name Huamanti.

Also, the **Canadian National Expo Two Pack (993 01 960, \$69.95)** of 50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single 10 Foot Door, No Running Board, Short Ladders, was initially expected to be available mid-February but should now be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the September 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 180 51 120, CNIS 417093 and 180 52 130, CNIS 417225. These are the first releases for each car. Both cars have lowered underframes and body mounted couplers.



*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 **March 31**.*



Scheduled Delivery August 2020:

993 00 169, \$99.95

Reporting Marks: NS 145444, 145495, 145550, 145551.

Runner Pack #169, quantity four of 100 Ton Three Bay Open Hoppers, Norfolk Southern.

Black with mostly white lettering including "horsehead" herald and reporting marks on left. White on black COTS panel on right. Yellow conspicuity stripes across bottom of sides. Simulated coal loads included with each car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 given conspicuity stripes to

present. Previous Releases: Technically none, but see text. Catalog numbers (in the 108 series) and reporting marks will be confirmed upon release. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

While Eight Pack #6 released in November 2014 was of a set of NS hoppers (individual catalog numbers 108 5x 270), those had the "speed lettering" not the "horsehead" herald, and did not have conspicuity stripes while this forthcoming set does. However, the virtual two pack 108 00 28x from January 2016 (the 281 shown above) looks awfully close, including the high set reporting marks that are, let us say, more difficult to reach and cover with, let us say, additional decoration. I'll go with the MTL artwork showing orange, not yellow, conspicuity stripes and call it a new release... for now, anyway. Insert "confirmation on release" disclaimer here!



However, NS 144974 and 145093, the road numbers of that January 2016 release, were in the prototype series 144800 to 145249. The four road numbers announced for this Runner Pack, 145444, 145495, 154550, and 154551, are in the adjacent series, NS 145250 to 146449. In the January 2018 ORER this group had a car count of 1090. Only the outside dimensions are given: length 51 feet, width 10 feet 7 inches and height 12 feet 7 inches, along with the capacity of 3737 cubic feet and gross rail weight (car plus lading) of 286,000 pounds. Tracking backwards from there, the earliest Equipment Register in which I see these cars is actually the previous one, October 2014. They're not in the April 2013 edition so that narrows down the start of the ATP pretty tightly.

There are a few photos of hoppers from this series on RailcarPhotos. It's noted in several captions that these are rebuilds of former Conrail cars, performed by FreightCar America in 2013. Both the MTL 108 body style and the prototype are 14 panel nominal 50 foot cars, so the general look is there. If you're literally counting rivets, though, there is a horizontal row of them that lands just below the reporting marks and goes across all but the left and right end panels. Those end panels do have a different shape and different ladder and grab iron arrangement than the Micro-Trains model. Meanwhile, RRPictureArchives has images of the 145444 in October 2017 (ex-CR (ex-CR 496815) and 145495 from March 2017 (ex-CR 497068). Two for four isn't bad.

Fun fact: NS 146313, the "50 Year Anniversary of Pier 6" hopper, in yellow and black, is in this series. It was done by MTL as a Special Run for the N Scale Enthusiast.



Scheduled Release August 2020:

993 02 080, \$149.95

Atlantic Coast Line Heavyweight Five Pack.

Scheduled to consist of two MTL 141 Series 10-1-2 Sleepers, Car Names West Tower and Arsenal Tower; two MTL 142 Series 12-1 Sleepers, Car Names Poplar Terrace and Poplar Valley; and one MTL 160 Series Single Window Coach, Road Number 1058.

Each car has purple sides with aluminum band and yellow stripes, black ends, roof and underframe. White lettering in purple rectangles on letterboard: roadname in center and "Pullman" at left and right of sleeping cars. White car name or road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: In general, no earlier than 1950 into the 1960s; individual cars vary around that span. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: In general, no earlier than 1950 into the 1960s; individual cars vary around that span. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

The **Atlantic Coast Line Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** discusses the various paint scheme for ACL passenger cars. There were many, not least because the ACL contributed cars to “name trains” operated in conjunction with other railroads. The most famous scheme is the one MTL has announced, which was introduced in 1950. Before that purple and aluminum, the standard was basic Pullman Green. The **Color Guide** has a number of photos of cars in Pullman Green so the schemes co-existed. What the **Color Guide** doesn’t have is any bingo photos of the particular cars in the forthcoming five-pack.

So let’s see what we can find out. Tom Madden’s “Pullman Project” database has the “West Tower” rebuilt in 1941 from the “Samuel Spencer.” It received the “ACL Exterior” paint in June 1955 and was withdrawn from lease in February 1964. The “Arsenal Tower” was rebuilt in May 1942 from the “McPhail,” was repainted in July 1957 and also withdrawn from lease in February 1964.

In both cases, the plan was changed to something other than a Pullman 3410A 12-1 sleeper which is how they were originally built. At least as of 2007 the “Arsenal Tower” was part of the Steamtown Collection. A photo of it is on RRPictureArchives. It wasn’t in good shape but at least it existed. The window arrangement doesn’t look to be the same as the MTL 142 body style, with respect to the side we can see.

RRPictureArchives also has a photo of “Poplar Terrace.” It was converted from a 12-1 sleeper in June 1939 to a 6 section 6 double bedroom car. It was painted ACL purple and aluminum in June 1954, withdrawn from lease in February 1964 and scrapped. It was originally the “McCoysburg,” built in February 1925. Similarly, the “Poplar Valley” was a rebuild, also in June 1939. However, instead of being scrapped it was sold to the Nacionales de Mexico in 1961, where it became the NdeM’s “Buenos Aires.” Data points for both of these cars also come from the Pullman Project.

The fifth car in the expected quintet, single-window coach 1058, has its undated photo on Northeast Rails. It’s sitting in front of the Orlando, Florida train station, probably well before Disney World. (The structure was built in 1926 by the ACL and is still in use.) The real car had 26 windows, the farthest left and right of which were rounded at the top.

In summary, then, this is an attractive paint scheme that didn’t last all that long. Before even the takeover of intercity passenger service by Amtrak, there was the 1967 merger of the ACL with the Seaboard to form the Seaboard Coast Line, and the subsequent relettering or repainting. That’s presuming there were any heavyweight cars left on the roster at the time of the SCL merger.



Scheduled Release July 2020:

993 02 090, \$99.95

Canadian Pacific Weathered Tie Loader Three Pack.

Scheduled to consist of three MTL 046 series 50 Foot Steel Gondolas with fishbelly sides and drop ends:

CP 428021, Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname in center. Moderate weathering.

CP 428064, Action red with white lettering including reporting marks left of center and CP Rail roadname on right. Black and white multimark on left. Heavy weathering and rust effects.

CP 428017, black with white lettering including CP Rail roadname reporting marks off center; in each case at the end opposite the brake wheel. Moderate weathering.

Each car also has white on black double COTS panel on right and white simulated reflective diamonds along bottom of side. All three cars will include a simulated crosstie load. Pack also includes a tie loader kit (assembly and painting required). Approximate Time Period: 1990s to 2010s, plus or minus. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Let's start with the 428017 since it's first numerically. We have views of both sides of the car, both taken in October 2012 and posted to RRPictureArchives. They show that this gondola has the hard to explain "Fun With Multimarks" feature of CP Rail lettering even though the car does not actually have a multimark. That is, the "CP Rail" roadname appears on the end opposite the side-mounted brake wheel on both sides. Another way of explaining it: it's on the left when looking at the side of the car that has the brake wheel, and on the right on the other side of the car. Clear as the mud that often weathers cars? Yes. But I've also confirmed this using photos of other tie gondolas over on the Canadian Freight Car Gallery website. I should also note that the MTL 046 body style has fourteen panels and thirteen posts ("ribs"), however on the 428017, those posts extend all the way to the bottom of the sides.

The CP 428064, also found in October 2012 and posted to RRPictureArchives, does have a multimark. Since I do not have views of both sides of this car I can't be sure that we have a "Fun With Multimarks" situation here. However, I do have a three-quarter end view which shows on the opposite side the side-mounted brake wheel. The multimark on the side we can see has the multimark on the left, that is, the same end as the brake wheel. Therefore, I am thinking that both sides of the car are painted the same way: multimark on the left, roadname on the right. The same caveat applies with respect to the thirteen posts on the car extending to the bottom of the sides.

None of these concerns exist with respect to the CP 428021, since it is painted in the pre-CP Rail scheme and no multimarks are involved. There is a “Tie Service Only” advisory posted at the far left of this car. It also has drop ends, though the one we can see in this three-quarter view doesn’t look like anything I’ve seen attached to a gondola before. It looks more like a small version of a flat car bulkhead (as used in the MTL 054 series) than anything else I can think of at the moment. The same comment about the posts applies here as well.

The bingo photo here is from 2006 and is also on RRPictureArchives. On that same site, there’s a second “across the yard” shot from 2012 of three CP tie service gondolas, all in CP Rail paint. The 428021 is supposed to be one of these, but I can’t confirm that... which is good because it might disturb the overlap of the ATP for these three different paint schemes. On the other hand, I just don’t see CP repainting gondolas dedicated to company service. They’d probably have just scrapped it instead. Since there is no detailed ORER data for these cars, the use of Rule #1 (“It’s Your Railroad”) seems appropriate to me.

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 March 12.*



025 45 010, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: RBOX 43210.

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

#3 in the “Year in Railbox 2020” series, “National Alien Abduction Day.” Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and “The nationwide boxcar pool” on right. Black, red and blue original version “Next Load/Any Road” logo on right.

White on black double COTS panel on far right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along sides. Featured side of the car has mostly black and white “Alien Abduction” graffiti across the bottom half of the side. Opposite side of the car has multicolored graffiti including animal caricatures also across the bottom half of the side. Approximate Time Period: 2019, plus or minus (using both sides of the car). This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe is the direct source for the bingo photos of both sides of this car, taken in June 2019 in Denver, Colorado. Based on other photos also on the RRPictureArchives site, I can tell you that the “plus or minus” part of the ATP is also sometime after July 2013.

From RailcarPhotos.com we learn that the 43210 is part of the series of Class XCF20A boxcars built by Pacific Car and Foundry from August to October 1980, numbered RBOX 42750 to

43349. This means a not complete match between the prototype and the MTL 025 body style, for example in the capacity; 5277 cubic feet for the real car versus the model's 5077 cubic feet. The roof is also a bit different than the MTL 025 body style; the prototype has x-panels all the way to the ends of the car while the model, based on the FMC car, has one blank panel at each end of the roof.

The June 2019 photo date is past the January 2018 date of my newest ORER but it will have to do. (Yes, I know, buy a more recent Equipment Register, George.) As of that Equipment Register, there were 532 cars with 5277 cubic foot capacity in the number series RBOX 40750 to 44089, mixed in with another 148 cars with 5275 cubic foot capacity.



110 44 480, \$36.90

Reporting Marks: UTLX 676018.

54 Foot General Service Tank Car, Union Tank Car Line.

Base car is black with dark gray panel in center, orange lettering including reporting marks on left, white tank qualification stencil on right, white COTS panel at lower right, black on yellow emergency information right of center, and orange vertical conspicuity stripes at points along car. Featured side of the car has a green graffiti four-leaf clover

with white "Irish" legend right of center. Other side of the car does not have graffiti. No weathering. Approximate Time Period: 2018, plus or minus. Previous Releases: None; Runner Pack #121 (October 2016) is close but does not have the dark gray center panel.

And it's David Grothe again with the bingo photo, this time in Sedalia, Colorado as of August 2018. It's also on RRPictureArchives. Based on random checks of nearby car numbers, the dark gray panel in the center may be covering previous, ahem, decoration. Checking the January 2018 ORER, the 676018 is part of the ridiculously large series UTLX 673740 to 805117. No, that "8" in the second number is not a typo. I am far too lazy to add up all of the subsets within that group, but I can tell you it's nowhere near 131 thousand cars.

The, ahem, additional decoration, on this car is easy enough to discuss: it's a four-leaf clover, which isn't the same as your ordinary shamrock or three-leaf clover. Estimates vary on how many four-leaf clovers there are versus three-leaf clovers; it's somewhere between one in five thousand and one in ten thousand. It's a sign of good luck if you find one. The fact that there are more of them in Ireland than anywhere else gave rise to the concept of "the luck of the Irish." This doesn't count... wait for it... genetically engineered four-leaf clovers. It's possible but extremely unlikely that a single clover stem will have more than four leaves; the record according to the Wikipedians is fifty-six.



111 44 360, \$59.95.

Reporting Marks: TTGX 996637.

89 Foot Enclosed Autorack, TTX/Norfolk Southern.

Base flat car is yellow with white reporting marks on black panel on left, post-2008 TTX logo on right, and mostly black lettering otherwise. Base rack is yellow with aluminum roof and panels and black Norfolk Southern speed lettering herald on aluminum anti-vandal panel on left. Featured side of the car has a depiction of a phoenix covering most of the right half of the car. Opposite side of the car (not shown) has no graffiti or weathering. Approximate Time Period: 2019, plus or minus. Previous Releases: None.

My wife Colleen, who is generally even less enamored of graffiti than I am, looked over my shoulder as I pulled the official MTL graphic for this car and immediately said, “Wow, that’s nice!” Given that, I’m declaring a “pick to click” for this release—I would not be surprised to see this car hit the Discontinued Alert before you read these bytes. (I’ve already purchased my copy... or maybe I should say Colleen’s copy.)

The Wikipedians point out that the phoenix lives in multiple mythologies. Some stories have the bird simply dying and regenerating while there is the more common story of it bursting into flame, burning and then rising from its own ashes. Each of its lifespans is up to five hundred years. It’s most frequently associated with Ancient Greece but also is present in Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese and other cultures. I can’t leave out the Russian “firebird” though, and if you’re familiar with either the orchestral piece composed by Igor Stravinsky or its use in the film **Fantasia 2000**, you might have thought of the firebird as well.

The bingo photo on this car, complete with the phoenix rising, was taken in May 2009. RailcarPhotos, where that shot appears, has it captioned as part of the series TTGX 996500 to 997524. This is in the TTX Class GSH80, built by Greenbrier in the year 2000 and equipped with a Thrall autorack. David Grothe picked out “Punch” as one of the names on the car.

A May 2012 shot of the car on RRPictureArchives has a different set of graffiti. I’m wondering whether that graffiti was covered over with the almost full-car phoenix depiction or whether it should appear on the side of the car that Micro-Trains has modeled as “clean” — which would uncommon but not unheard of. I still scratch my head at how an autorack could stay still long enough to have almost all of its 89 foot length covered, but this time, it does seem more like artwork than graffiti.



994 05 660, \$109.95

Reporting Marks: GONX 310501, 310538, 310637, and 310673.

Railgon Weathered Four Pack.

Consists of four 1057 series 14 panel steel gondolas with straight sides and fixed ends. Each base car is black with yellow corners and bottom sills, yellow lettering including “Railgon” logo right of center and “Nationwide Gondola Pool” on right, and white on black double COTS panel below the word “gondola” on right. All cars have white restenciled reporting marks on different color patch panels. GONX 310501 (Catalog Number 105 51 790) has mostly pink and green graffiti on one side and

weathering only on the other side. GONX 310538 (Catalog Number 105 52 790) has weathering only on both sides. GONX 310637 (Catalog Number 105 53 790) has mostly black, green and blue graffiti on one side and weathering only on the other side. GONX 310673 (Catalog Number 105 54 790) has weathering only on both sides. Approximate Time Period: at least the late decade of the 2000s to the early decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: None.

Similar to what occurred to lead to the founding of Railbox by Trailer Train (now TTX) – a shortage of equipment – the Railgon pool of gondolas was established in 1979, also by Trailer Train. Never as large as Railbox, cars in the fleet were still ubiquitous enough to be seen, well, just about anywhere at one time or another. The ORER for January 2018 showed a total of 1153 cars with GONX reporting marks, including 376 in the series numbered 310001 to 310994 in which the four road numbers chosen by Micro-Trains lie. All of the cars had an inside length of 52 feet 6 inches, inside height 5 feet, outside length 57 feet plus an inch or two, and capacity of 2494 cubic feet with a gross rail weight of 263,000 pounds. That 1153 total compares to 1192 in January 2000, including 384 in the series in which we’re interested.

RailcarPhotos.com has the series 310000 to 310999 built by Thrall from July 1980 to March 1981. Given the 1979 founding date of the company, these were among the first if not the first Railgons placed in service. Berwick Forge and Fabricating starting building a set of Railgons in September 1980; I bring this up because RailcarPhotos has what looks like a builder’s photo of GONX 320105 so you can see what a factory fresh car looked like. There are 38 photos of Railgons in the 310000 series on RailcarPhotos. However, for bingo photos, we go instead to RRPictureArchives. The 310501 was spotted in Altoona, Pennsylvania in August 2011, with the hot pink and lime green graffiti MTL depicts. The 310538 was in Elkhart, Indiana in August 2013. The 310637 was also in Elkhart, in March 2013, complete with the “I have no idea what this says” graffiti. And the 310673 was also in Elkhart in October 2010 and Summerhill, Pennsylvania in October 2011, with basic spray-painted white “S M O R E 1” scribble on one side, not depicted by Micro-Trains. These cars all had the restenciled reporting marks by the

time of their photographs. They are also all larger than the MTL 1057 body style and have a reinforcing plate on their fixed ends, which also differ otherwise from the MTL model.

I am diverging from the usual “plus or minus” on the ATP and giving a larger “at least” range since there are multiple cars with multiple photo dates. Left to the modeler is a task that would make these cars more realistic: dings, dents, and bulges. Gondolas could be the car type that gets most beaten up in regular service. The shot of the 310538 shows this most clearly in my opinion. Methods abound for simulating this damage; the one which with I’m most familiar, but have never tried, is the use of a soldering iron. Be careful, work from photos, and don’t overdo it.



N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: Car #11 in the **Thomas Kinkadee Painter of Light Series** has been released (102 00 811, \$31.95). UMTRR coverage was in the December 2018 issue. This release features the 2009 work

“Homecoming Hero.” View a larger version of this painting along with notes on it at <https://thomaskinkadee.com/art/homecoming-hero/>. Kinkadee said that he was inspired to paint this by Norman Rockwell’s “The Homecoming Marine” which he said was the most-collected cover of all those which Rockwell painted for **The Saturday Evening Post**.

There are no Special Edition pre-orders this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



522 00 351 and 522 00 352, \$27.80 each
Reporting Marks: ONT 5051 and 5061.
50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Ontario Northland.

Dark blue with yellow ends. White lettering including reporting marks on left. Yellow roadname left of center and “triple lightning” herald right of center. Yellow Government of Ontario symbol at far left of side with white legend “Rail Services /

Ferroviaires.” Simulated “mixed pipe load” included. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s to mid-2000s at least.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Reprint above (105 00 091). Note, however, that this car has drop ends. The prototype road numbers 5000 to 5009 in this series had drop ends but the two numbers MTL selected did not.



522 00 241 and 522 00 242, \$27.80 each
Reporting Marks: CSXT 704786 and 704793.
50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides,
Drop Ends, CSX Transportation.
 Black with mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and CSX herald on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Yellow simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side. Simulated spool load included. Approximate Time Period: 1990s to late decade of the 2010s.

When Micro-Trains released these cars in N Scale in November 2010, it was on their 1055 body style, which is a 15 panel gondola with fixed ends. The MTL 522 body style is of a 14 panel gondola with drop ends. So we have a delta there. A bingo photo for the 704786, from February 2007 and found on RRPictureArchives, confirms that the real car was a 15 panel fishbelly side fixed end gondola. Micro-Trains doesn't make a fixed end gondola in Z Scale--at least not now. So the 522 series will have to do.

The ORER lookup exercise was a mess when the N Scale cars were done. I could trace a group of gondolas, CSXT 704580 to 705738, which would have included the two numbers here, as far back as July 1989 in the ORER accumulation. I hit the January 2006 ORER to find a whole bunch of series and subseries of gondolas in this number range. They are all nominal 52 foot 5 inch inside length cars, mostly with a 57 feet 5 inch outside length. Some carried AAR Designation GB, others GBS. The inside height of these cars was listed at 4 feet 6 inches and extreme height at 8 feet 5 inches, with gross rail weight of 263,000 pounds and capacity usually, but not always, at 2246 cubic feet.

Going forward from there, the January 2011 Equipment Register has 171 cars in the main series, still 704580 to 705738, plus 65 more cars in one subset of 59 cars and six subsets of one car each. Yikes. The 704786 is in the 59 car subgroup described as simply "Gondola," while the 704793, assuming it is still on the roster (which we will do) is part of the main series described as "Gondola, Mill Type, Lading Strap Anchors, Steel Floor." In the October 2014 ORER, all of the cars including the 704786 have the long description, but the total car count is down to 53. That count is down to 19 total in the January 2018 ORER, although the 704786 is still called out. I don't think that's quite good enough to take us all the way to The Present.

The same bingo on the 704786 is still there on RRPictureArchives, but there are no additional shots of that car on that site. The other half of this virtual two-pack, CSXT 704793, was found in 2008 in rough shape and restenciled reporting marks, in other words, not as nicely painted as on the Micro-Trains release. Meanwhile, RailcarPhotos.com has other cars in the series, mostly in, let us say, well-used condition. The most interesting of these shots is of CSXT 705546, which as of September 2006 had reporting marks and the "CSX" at right redone with white spray paint. Whatever works, I guess.



In addition to the above, Car #2 in the **Chessie Cameo Car Series (505 00 422, \$34.95, Reporting Marks C&O 21299)** is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the October 2019 issue.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE SINGLE RELEASE PREORDERS: Holy end of train, Batman, there are *seven* pre-order announcements for cabooses this month. I thought this pre-order protocol was going to be easier on this byte-slinger... well, it's not about you, George. There is my general caveat before I begin this bit of a marathon: the MTL 535 body style, which has been around since Kadee starting making Z Scale items in 1985 (see Special Editions below!) is a model of the "northeastern" prototype first built for the Reading Railroad and adopted by some other railroads. For the majority of North American railroads, however, this design is a stand in to one extent or another. There, now I don't have to say that seven times... and we're off...



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:

535 00 420, \$32.95

Reporting Marks: CSXT 903180.

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, CSX Transportation.

Lilac one side, green other side (see text) with aluminum roof, black underframe and yellow details. Black reporting marks directly below cupola. Black CSX herald at lower left. Blue and yellow Chesapeake and Ohio safety herald at lower right. Black lettering on white band at top "At Work And Play / Be Safe Every Day." Black lettering in white rectangle outlined in red: "Safety Caboose 20th Anniversary 1973-1993." White on black double COTS panel at far right. Approximate Time Period: 1993 to at least 2010. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The site RRPictureArchives.net has a bingo for the 903180 as of 2007. MTL has captured the decoration nicely, including the C&O herald. But... the real car was an extended vision caboose, not a "northeastern" style caboose. The 903180 was painted in 1993 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the first safety caboose. The Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society was involved in this project. I'm a bit confused by the online citations for this, since they seem to misalign with the N Scale model of this car (from another manufacturer) that's in my accumulation. The car I have has C&O reporting marks and the Chessie System herald. If I'm following what I'm reading, that was the original paint scheme for the 903180, but the Chessie System logo was quickly replaced by the CSX monogram after the 1993 C&OHS Conference — keeping the ATP starting at 1993. The latest photo I found online shows the car in service as a "shoving platform" in 2010, looking a bit beaten up but still in the Safety Paint Scheme.

And here's the kicker: the prototype car was also lilac-colored on one side and teal green on the other side... and when was the last time you saw a caboose, or any other piece of rolling stock, intentionally in two different colors like that? I confirmed with Micro-Trains that they will be doing the different color sides for this car, so no worries there.



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:

535 00 430, \$24.80.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 1735.

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Red with black underframe and smokejack, and white grab irons. Small white circle cross herald off-center left below cupola. Multicolor ACI

Label off-center right below cupola. White COTS panel on right. White simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The MTL artwork for this car has it classed CE-5. From the "Santa Fe Subjects" website (at atsf.railfan.net) we have this: "The CE-5 class cars were refurbished but not significantly upgraded from standard all-steel cabooses. They were intended for transfer service in Kansas City and elsewhere. The work was done at Topeka and Kansas City in the early 1970's. The cars retained their original 4-digit numbers initially, but in 1976, they and the surviving unrebuilt standard cabooses were renumbered into the 999900-999979 series. The CE's and CE-5's were finally purged from the roster in 1982." So that would give us a relatively short ATP anyway—I'm calling it "early 1970s" except that the prototype cars were longer and had offset cupolas, much more similar to the MTL 100 series in N Scale. According to online information I found, the 1735 was part of the group ATSF 1660 to 1749 built back in 1928 by American Car and Foundry, and yes, that is relatively early for steel cabooses (or waycars as the Santa Fe called them). The 1970s rebuild, paint scheme and the presence of the ACI Label all point to the 1970s for the ATP, however.

This is the lowest priced of the seven pre-order cabooses and it's the least lettered as well, so it's a good choice for redecorating out of the Santa Fe scheme into, say, something for a shortline or freelanced Z Scale layout.



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:

535 00 440, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NS 555006.

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Norfolk Southern.

Red with aluminum roof, black underframe and smokejack, and orange side grab irons. White lettering including "horsehead" herald and

roadname below cupola and reporting marks at bottom center. Yellow and blue heritage circa 1964 circular Norfolk and Western herald right of reporting marks. White on black double

COTS panel at bottom right. Orange conspicuity stripes along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: As painted, 2014 through at least 2018. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

A rather unusual place to find a bingo is "The Tunnel Diaries," a blog by photographer Bob Lawrence. He photographed two "N&S" [sic] locomotives and the very caboose in which we're interested, down in Kingsport, Tennessee, the home of Eastman Chemical's large plant. He'd wondered why those units were deep into CSX territory; it turns out that Eastman wanted NS to also serve their plant. NS obliged and provided a coal shipment once daily to the facility. The blog post (<https://thetunneldiaries.com/tag/ns-caboose-555006/>) is dated March 2018 so I don't know if that arrangement is still in place, but it certainly gives us an "at least" ATP.

Meanwhile, there are four photos of NS 555006 available for viewing on RRPictureArchives.net and a more important image on RailcarPhotos.com which gives us the start of quite the modern Approximate Time Period. That shot, from June 2014, is a full view of the former Norfolk & Western car as refurbished by FreightCar America in the former N&W Roanoke Shops. This doesn't look like just a "shoving platform" to me, and I find it remarkable that in the 2010s there would be any work on cabooses other than taking them out of service or permanently closing them up for shoving platform use only. The base model, if you will, for this car was an International Car Company "Standard" Steel Caboose, built in the 1960s and 1970s for numerous railroads including the Norfolk and Western.

By the way, if you're curious, there's a Southern Railway "Heritage" Caboose also: it's NS 555761, a bay window type wearing the famous "Southern Serves The South" herald. Find that car on RailcarPhotos as well.



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:
535 00 450, \$29.95.

Road Number: X66 (will be "GN X66" in website listings).

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Great Northern.

Red with black roof, underframe, end railings and smokejack, and red and white striped side grab

irons. White lettering including road number at bottom left and right, "Radio Equipped" at left center, and slogan "Taking Chances Takes Lives" at bottom center. Black and white side facing goat herald below cupola. White simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (build date) to 1971 (relettering date). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Page 121 of the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** shows GN X66, a November 1963 product of International Car Company, in the as delivered paint scheme including the Safety Slogan that was normally placed on cars with road numbers ending in "6." It's noted in the Color Guide that this car was relettered to BN 10226 in April, 1971. I suspect that the rest of the paint scheme wasn't altered, at least not right away, but that's

enough to close out a pretty well-defined Approximate Time Period. Burlington Northern sold it and for a time the X66, restored to GN paint, was at the Point Defiance, Quinault & Klickitat RR, Camp 6 Museum, but it's now listed as "missing" on the Great Northern Empire website.



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:

535 00 460, \$29.95.

Road Number: 90020 (will be "C&O 90020" in website listings).

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Chesapeake and Ohio.

Yellow with gray roof, end railings and smokejack, and black underframe. White striped side grab irons. Blue lettering including "C&O for Progress" herald and road number below cupola. Red stripe along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1956 to no later than 1968 for this particular car, but 1970s in general. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 113, has a July 1962 shot of this car as it appeared in Marion, Ohio, trailing a coal train. This car was in the C-15 class of C&O cabooses, numbered 90000 to 90049 and built in 1937 by Magor. The Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society's augmented reprint of the "Freight Car Equipment of the Chesapeake & Ohio August 1, 1937" informs us that these were the C&O's first steel cabooses. "They were also the first cabooses to be equipped with Duryea Cushion Underframes." I'm sure that made crews happy! This general design was used for a number of additional steel caboose orders until 1949. The actual car, and many other C&O cabooses, followed a general center cupola layout, however they had two windows per side, not four as on the MTL 535 body style. The cupola itself differs as well.

The introduction of the yellow scheme for cabooses, replacing the previous red, was in 1956 according to the **Color Guide**, setting up the start of the ATP. It's also noted that the 90020 was retired in August 1970 and rebuilt to C&O 3676. Before that, though, it lost its red stripe, as evidenced by another bingo photo from February 1968 posted to the Fallen Flags website. A somewhat blurry photo of sister car 90021 also on Fallen Flags shows the paint scheme MTL has in its artwork.



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:

535 00 470, \$32.95.

Reporting Marks: NP 10401.

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Northern Pacific.

Green sides with yellow stripe and triangle. Aluminum roof and smokejack. Black underframe. Yellow end railings and side grab irons. White reporting marks at bottom left. Black, red and white monad herald centered below cupola.

Multicolor ACI label off-center below cupola. Approximate Time Period: 1969 to early 1970s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The last page of the **Northern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**—okay, it's Page 128-- contains photos of two sister cars to the road number MTL has selected here. The series 10400 to 10424 was built by International Car Company in 1969. "This was the last group of NP steel cabooses. The 10400s introduced the snappy green scheme with yellow ends and "racing stripes" on the NP... [They] had cushion underframes, roller bearing trucks, 'wide-vision' cupolas and electrical lights." The 10420 was photographed in 1971 and the 10418 likely brand-new in August 1969.

Given that the NP would go into the Burlington Northern less than a year after taking delivery of these cabooses, it's not surprising that this was the first **and** last use of the "racing stripes" scheme. In fact, starting in 1968, the NP started renumbering cabooses into what would become their BN numbers. So the 10400s kept their numbers and just needed a switch from "NP" to "BN" lettering. Full repaints would come later. I'm thinking "early 1970s" for that relettering to take place.



Targeted Delivery August/September 2020:

535 00 480, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: UP 25411.

30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Union Pacific.

Yellow sides, red roof, end details, smokejack and side grab irons. Black underframe. Yellow end railings and side grab irons. Red roadname directly under cupola and reporting marks bottom center. Black safety slogan "Everyone Gains Where Courtesy Reigns" on white rectangle between roadname and reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: 1959 to 1970 (based on time period for these safety slogan version). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

This isn't the first offering from Micro-Trains to feature a Union Pacific Slogan. Going back to August 2010, there's the 535 00 300 from August 2010, with "There's No Romance In Taking A Chance." There's "What Do We Do? / We Work For You" on the June 2006 and April 2014 releases with Catalog Number 535 00 180. And there's the 14716/535 00 160 from June 2001 reading "The Great American Car Pull." And let's not forget "Go Big Train" on the 14714/535 00 140 released in June 1997 and April 2012. All of these cars sported the second version of the safety slogan concept, with changeable signs attached to a frame. The UP called this a "slogan board." This second version of safety slogans has an ATP of about 1955 to about 1970. Before that, slogans were painted across almost the entire car, and afterwards, they were painted on the car within a rectangle.

These various previous runs have road numbers that align with different but similar looking UP caboose classes, all of basically the same design and none of them all that close to the MTL 535 body style. This particular car, UP 25411, was among 100 cars built by the Union Pacific

as their class CA-7 in 1959. They received five digit road numbers, 25400 to 25499, right off the bat, the first UP cabooses for which this was true. They likely also received the safety slogans immediately as well. All 100 cars were still in service as of July 1979; the last CA-7 was retired in July 1991. My source for all of this is the book **Cabooses of the Union Pacific Railroad**.

Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS: No releases or pre-order announcements this month.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS: Happy Anniversary!



507 00 520, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: MTLX 2020.

**50 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Micro-Trains
35th Anniversary of Z Scale.**

Base color is blue with white lettering including reporting marks on left. "MTL 35

Years of Z Scale" graffiti-like artwork across entire side. Approximate Time Period (so to speak): 1985 to present. This item is not on Micro-Trains standing dealer orders.

Well, here's a surprise! Using the same general design as the November 2017 "45 Years of N Scale" boxcar (180 00 030), but this time on both sides of the car (the N Scale car had a different reverse), Micro-Trains celebrates the 35th Anniversary—to the month—of their first Z Scale release. Referring back to the Z Scale database MTL has online, there wasn't just one release, nor was there just one body style. Pop quiz! What were they?

No, just kidding.

Page 8 of the March 1985 issue of **Model Railroader** magazine had a nearly full page advertisement from Micro-Trains Line, a division of Kadee Quality Products Company. The headline was, "48 Grams of Z Scale Brute Force" and featured a 225 percent of actual size view of a Pennsylvania Railroad F7A diesel. Also shown were a Conrail x-post boxcar and caboose, each at actual size. "'Z' Americans Are Here! Kadee Z Gauge has arrived!" Body styles noted were the F7, "Ribside" boxcars, gondolas, tankers, flat cars, bulkhead flat cars, and cabooses. Roadnames available were Union Pacific, Pennsylvania, New York Central, Southern Pacific, Lehigh Valley, MKT, Santa Fe, Reading, Railbox, Route Rock, Conrail, Frisco, UTLX, GATX, Penn Central, "and more." These releases were all the result of Kadee's purchase of tooling from Nelson Gray, who had initially developed and manufactured these products out of a small shop in New York State. (Gray made Nn3 Scale as well, and that tooling was also sold to Kadee Micro-Trains.) Kadee made some changes to the tooling before its official entry into the market.

According to the official MTL database file on their website, the March 1985 lineup included nineteen freight cars: six 39 foot tank cars (Pennsylvania, Santa Fe, Union Tank Car, General American, Union Pacific, and Baltimore & Ohio); three 40 foot flat cars (MKT/Katy, Santa Fe and Reading); three 40 foot flat cars with bulkheads (Southern Pacific, Pennsylvania, Union

Pacific), three 50 foot x-post boxcars (Railbox, Family Lines, and Southern Pacific); two cabooses (Pennsylvania and Reading); and two 40 foot gondolas (CB&Q/Burlington and Great Northern). Of those, only the 40 foot gondola isn't made any more, while the 50 foot x-post boxcar has been retooled. In a nod to the dominance of the first entrant into Z Scale, all of these cars were equipped with Marklin, not MTL's Magne-Matic, couplers when initially released.

Interestingly, **Model Railroader** reviewed Kadee's set of Z Scale items in the **previous** issue, including a lengthy commentary on the Pennsylvania Railroad F7. Reviewer Jim Kelly, who still writes for **MR**, found the 30 foot caboose to be "a beautifully done model with almost unbelievably fine end railings." Kelly also wrote that the models "look good in every way except for those humongous Marklin-style couplers... According to Kadee's Keith Edwards a Kadee-style coupler will soon be available."

Checking the official MTL database files back here in the present, there are more than 1900 rows of unweathered freight car releases; while that does include multi-packs and their components, it doesn't include Weathered Releases (another 181 items) or locomotives (close to 300 more items). Conservatively, that's more than fifty releases a year... pretty impressive.

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 March 12.*



500 44 990, \$26.80

Reporting Marks: SP 606106.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Southern Pacific.

Brown including trucks and couplers. White lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname on right. Black "C" inside yellow circle on door.

Black lettering on yellow panel left of door. Light to moderate weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (service date on car) through early 1970s. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Numbers 606101 and 606106, August 2017. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that both unweathered road numbers were used for this Weathered Release.

The following is reprinted from the August 2017 coverage of this release.

Just for a little variety, I'll begin with the end note for these cars from the January 1967 ORER: "Cars in series 606100 to 606299 have partial plywood side lining for copper loading." The special service is noted in the description: "Box, All Steel, Copper Bar Loading" though the AAR Designation remains the "standard" XM. While I'm here: inside length 40 feet 7 inches, inside height 9 feet 11 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, capacity 3993 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, and door opening 10 feet 3 inches. Which means, yes, a "door thing," even in Z Scale. There were 198 cars in the group at that time. The lesser inside height is probably the result of the reinforced flooring MTL calls out in its car copy.

Before I forget, I'll note that this series does not appear in the January 1964 Equipment Register, so the later 1964 service date (I think it's August) makes sense for the start of the Approximate Time Period. Just two cars hang on in the July 1974 and April 1975 ORERs before being gone from the April 1976 ORER. That's a pretty short ATP for these cars.

Page 27 of the **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** has a "close enough" photo of car 606467, from the next series of modified boxcars SP 606300 to 606499. These cars have an identical paint scheme and were also reinforced for copper bar service and received ten foot doors, up from the previous seven foot doors. The Espee liked to fit ten foot wide doors to forty foot boxcars, more than any other railroad I can think of.



510 45 010, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: RBOX 43210.

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

#3 in the "Year in Railbox 2020" series, "National Alien Abduction Day." Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and "The nationwide boxcar pool" on right. Black, red and blue original version "Next Load/Any Road" logo on right. White on

black double COTS panel on far right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along sides. Featured side of the car has mostly black and white "Alien Abduction" graffiti across the bottom half of the side. Opposite side of the car has multicolored graffiti including animal caricatures also across the bottom half of the side. Approximate Time Period: 2019, plus or minus (using both sides of the car).

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release (025 44 010) above.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: First and foremost among this month's news from Micro-Trains would be the communication they released with respect to the COVID-19 situation. Quoting a bit from the short letter: "We are fortunate to be able to produce our models start-to-finish at our factory here in Oregon, so we will continue to conduct business as usual... as long as the State of Oregon allows us to operate. We also intend to maintain our regular monthly and mid-monthly release schedules, however we may experience some delays given these unusual circumstances. We will appreciate your understanding and patience if this occurs."

Meanwhile, MTL has become a distributor for the Labelle line of model railroad lubrication products. There are Micro-Trains catalog numbers assigned to Labelle items. See the MTL website for details.

There are two new passenger trucks that are meant for use **only with the new single window coach**. These have centered bolster holes; other MTL heavyweight passenger cars require the

offset bolster hole. Catalog 003 02 185 (\$6.55) is the six-wheel version and Catalog 003 02 250 (also \$6.55) is the four-wheel version.

Finally, three new undecorated releases are in stock at the moment: First, there's the painted



unlettered pullman green heavyweight paired-window coach (145 00 001, \$21.25).



Also, there are the Civil War Era Conductor's Car (152 00 000, \$16.80) and the Civil War Era flat car without stakes (153 00 000, \$13.50).



I presume quantities are limited on these as is typical for these releases.

What might be the last large public event MTL, or anyone else, can attend for a while was the Rocky Mountain Train Show earlier this month. The UMTRR Spy Network was there and did not have any news to report.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Starting off the Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board with 2020 N Scale releases, we have a bit of a surprise: the Santa Fe composite gondola (062 00 080, February). Also apparently gone based on its absence from the MTL freight cars page is the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac gondola (105 00 770, January). The "contact dealer" banner is out for both numbers of the NdeM tank car (110 00 47x, February) and the Norfolk Southern auto rack (110 00 360, February). Weathered releases which have left the building include the Seaboard boxcar two pack (993 05 630, February) and the Midwest Railcar and Conrail/NYC excess height boxcars (102 44 200 and 103 44 150, also both February). No 2020 Z Scale items sold out since last month's check.

Backward to 2019 we go, and we have the same news in Z Scale, which is to say no news of sellouts. In N Scale, the second number of the Genesee and Wyoming 40 foot boxcar is gone (073 00 202, December). So is the Rio Grande covered hopper (096 00 071, October). Runner Pack #157 of four BNSF bulkhead flat cars has been unloaded (993 00 157, September). The weathered CSX ex-UP container has been packed off (468 44 150, September), and the Santa Fe weathered four pack of Center Flows has left the building (993 05 550, August).

From 2018 releases, the N Scale Conrail open hopper (055 00 530, August), the second number of the Southern Pacific well car (135 00 132, September), the Union Pacific two-tone gray mail-baggage car, (148 00 190, October), and the first number of the Canadian Pacific container (469

00 131, December) have all sold out. In Z Scale, three weathered/graffiti Railbox cars are gone: "Happy New Year" (510 44 010, January), "Mardi Gras" (510 44 222, February), and "Easter Bunny" (510 44 223, April).

There are two Z Scale outs from 2017: the second number of the Rio Grande gondola (522 00 312, May), and the Pennsylvania Railroad powered F7B unit (980 02 020, September). There are no newly discontinued N Scale items from 2017. There's one N Scale sellout from 2016, the second number of the Ringling Brothers circus flat car (139 00 022, December) which was the last of that body style to have been available. Quadruple that quantity for Z Scale items: both numbers of the Southern Pacific double door boxcar (506 00 32x, April), and both numbers of the Frisco x-post boxcar (510 00 06x, September). There's nothing on the DIY BBB among 2015 releases. From 2014, the first number of the Soo Line Z Scale F7A is sold out (970 01 361, December). And finally, from back in 2011, the Z Scale Amtrak F7A has left the station (970 01 180, April).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: How about, for a little variety, some additional data on the loads MTL will include with pending releases?

First, Thomas Knapp, whom you might know from his extensive work in Nn3 including articles in **N-Scale Magazine**, checked in with some great detail on part of the forthcoming Union Pacific Log Car Five Pack (993 02 070). "In the Civil War Era set you show in your latest newsletter, you refer to the one load as a 'steam donkey.' As you note, that is a generic term for this type of equipment. If the artist's illustration you used is correct, this is a particular type of 'donkey' - a 'Dolbeer.' It is unique because it uses a horizontal capstan. Significant here is this was not invented until 1881, long after the Civil War (www.historylink.org/File/5331). In use, a horse would drag the line out into the woods where it was attached to a string of logs. The steam engine would drag them out of the woods, then the line would be disconnected and the horse would again drag the line out to the woods to where the trees were being felled. Later donkeys - such as those manufactured by Willamette Iron & Steel Works - used horizontal drums - sometimes multiple drums depending on whether it was a 'yarder,' a 'loader' or a 'skidder.' Typically a block would be anchored to a stump out in the woods where the trees were being cut allowing a line to be run out and back again using steam power instead of the horse."

Second, the "Masked Railroader" knows military equipment as well as freight cars. Referencing the bingo photo I cited of DODX 40083, part of the 993 01 613 Cascade Green set as having "two different model tanks atop it." "Masked" set me straight here: "That may look like a tank to you, but even this former Air Force flyboy can tell the difference between a tank and an armoured recovery vehicle. Specifically, the picture of DODX 40083 has an M88A2 ARV on the left and an M88A1 ARV on the right. If those behind the red and yellow sign will do some of those in the future, that would be great! And those two 'armored personnel carriers,' pretty close. Those are Cougar Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles. APCs just don't cut it anymore."

OOPS PATROL: I don't think I had any last month... hurray...

FINALLY, STILL N SCALE RAILROADING: Kirk Reddie is best known as the founder of **N Scale Railroading** magazine, but he's also a long-time UMTRR Gang Member. In fact, an article on the Southern Pacific "Overnights" boxcars in that publication has been go-to source material for these bytes. I've also contributed a couple of short pieces to NSR along the way. It's been tough all over for magazines, and "niche" magazines in particular, so I can't say I was surprised when Kirk announced that after 117 print-based issues NSR would be making the change to digital "publication." That's happened; Issue #118 was made available for free download this month. For those of you that have outstanding balances on existing subscriptions, Kirk told me and has also stated publicly that he's working on it. Like me, though, he's now a one-man show. Meanwhile, check nscalerrailroadingmagazine.com for how to add yourself to the subscriber list. I like to say that the UMTRR is "free and worth at least that much" but I think NSR, also now free to subscribers, is worth more than that. Let me hasten to add that **N-Scale Magazine** remains in print and I count a number of contributors among my subscribers as well.

Until next month, stay safe, and do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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