

UMTRR

25 Years 1996-2021

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report

Issue #289 – January, 2021

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Hello again everyone! I'm sure I am not the only one hoping for a much better year than The Year That Will No

Longer Be Mentioned (if I can help it)! There is reason to celebrate here at UMTRR HQ: it's the start of **Year 25** of this modest endeavor. As those of you who have been with me since the beginning know, what's become the UMTRR started as simply a posting on the Prodigy Bulletin Board of the monthly Micro-Trains releases. From there, the posting moved to rec.models.railroad on Usenet, then to a dual posting there and via e-mail, and then exclusively via e-mail. In 2010 (eleven years ago now!) the format made a long-overdue switch from plain text to PDF, which allowed for the inclusion of MTL images and other things. And you know the rest...

No resting on laurels, though, as we start this Anniversary Year with the latest from behind the red and yellow sign... off we go...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



020 00 227, \$25.90.

Reporting Marks: TA&G 7037.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.

Blue with yellow lettering including large reporting marks on left and "TAG Route" herald on right. Approximate Time Period:

1965 (based on service date on car) to early 1970s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. This car is not on Micro-Trains dealer standing orders.

It appears that MTL has quietly returned to the "Regional Railroad Series" issues of releases with two for the "TAG" (the second coming up a bit later in these bytes). You might recall that there were a few sets of Regional Railroad Releases last year, the last of which was for the Central of Georgia (boxcars 031 00 28x and two-bay hopper 055 00 570, April). We continue in that same area of the country with the TAG Route.

The Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia actually served exactly all three of these states, though not in that order and clearly not with a completely straight line right of way as depicted in an **Official Guide of the Railways** map! The start of the line in terms of mileposts was in Chattanooga, Tennessee. From there the TAG headed south and west through Northwestern Georgia and into Alabama, where it terminated at Gasden, near Birmingham. The company was a 1911 reorganization of the Chattanooga Southern and went from Tennessee, Alabama

and Georgia Railroad to Railway in 1922. While it was a common carrier it was also a hauler of steel products between its two end points. Interestingly, all of its connections were also at its end points, and effectively with only three other railroads: The Southern Railway and the Louisville and Nashville at both Chattanooga and Gasden, and the Central of Georgia at Chattanooga.

The service date on the MTL artwork (which I used for this commentary) is in 1965, so we'll go to the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1967, the next chronologically in the Research Accumulation. There were just 131 cars in the entire TAG revenue service fleet, among which were 10 boxcars numbered 7031 to 7040. These were AAR Designation XM, with these dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 14 feet 6 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3686 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. By the October 1972 ORER there were seven of the ten cars remaining among a total of only 25 on the roster. The next Equipment Register on my shelf is from July 1974 and there are only nine TAG cars left, none of which were these boxcars.

Clues to why these cars had such a short Approximate Time Period can be found at the top left and bottom left hand corners of each boxcar, reproduced on the Micro-Trains model. The bottom left has the relatively well-known trademark of the United States Railway Equipment Company, and the top left (shown at right) has wording indicating the actual owner was that firm. The USRE was known for purchase, rebuilding and leaseback of, well, railway equipment, so the MTL car copy indicating that the 7037 was built in 1947 doesn't contradict the rest of the car's story. The ten car set for the TAG was a pretty small quantity for the USRE, but hey, lease payments are lease payments.



The TAG also rostered a few fifty foot round roof double door boxcars, which MTL modeled in December 2005 (Catalog Number 079 00 060, Road Number 7016). Meanwhile, we have a bingo on TA&G 7037 as found in May 1966 in an unknown location; that photo is on the Fallen Flags website looked after by George Elwood. The real 7037 was a riveted side car and between that and the build date given by Micro-Trains we know it wasn't a PS-1 which is the prototype for the MTL 020 body style. The side sills differ between model and prototype as well. That blue and yellow paint looks an awful lot like the shades used by the Louisville and Nashville, but in 1971, the TAG Route was purchased by the Southern Railway. We'll pick this up below.



024 00 450, \$25.80.

Reporting Marks: C&O 19335.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Chesapeake and Ohio/ Chessie System.

Dark blue with mostly yellow lettering including Chessie System roadname and

reporting marks on left and "Ches-C" herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label left of door. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s (1974

service date on car) to mid-1980s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Oh, dear! The three bingos for this car on the Fallen Flags site show it in increasingly dreadful shape, all after the Chessie System had been folded into CSX Transportation. First, we find it in 1988 in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, shunted onto a weed-grown siding. And is that a dreaded U-1 **white** “dot” stencil I see on the car, meaning that the wheels were no good and needed replacing? Or maybe the yellow has faded out, for we next find the 19935 some eleven years later, in Zanesville, Ohio, looking quite a bit more rusty. Advance to 2002 and the car appears to be in the same location, but in even worse shape. And yes, that really does look like a white U-1 dot, not a yellow one. So how did Chessie, oops, CSX, manage to get this car from Kentucky to Ohio? I’ll leave that question as a rhetorical one. RRPictureArchives has images of the same car as of late December 2005, one of which was captioned, “Aw, miss that kitty.”

The photo MTL might have sourced is also on RRPictureArchives, showing the 19335 in far better shape as of June 1975. It was only nine months out of the C&O’s Raceland, Kentucky shops at that point. Now here’s something interesting: this image clearly shows only a half-height ladder on the side of the car. The other, later photos show a full-height ladder on the side of the car. I am going to guess that the brake wheel wasn’t lowered when the running board (roofwalk) was removed, and therefore a full-height ladder was needed on that end. Without a view of the brake wheel end, I can’t verify this. What I can state is that we have a “door thing” with the MTL 024 body style carrying a six-foot door while the real car had a nine foot door.

The series C&O 19250 to 19499 enters the company’s roster sometime between the ORER of January 1955 and the ORER of January 1958. Yes, that is pre-Chessie System but it doesn’t look like these changed road numbers when repainted. I also found other images in that series which were not repainted out of the later “C&O for Progress” scheme. Anyway, the key dimensions were: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 9 feet, and capacity 3983 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. These were given AAR Designation XME at the time, plus an end note calling out DF Loaders.

Jumping to the April 1975 Equipment Register, there were 225 cars in the still technically C&O series, at least one of which was in Chessie System paint by then. (Other photos of cars on RRPictureArchives show them in the brown and white, except for two at Greenfield Village at the Henry Ford Museum, which were “faux” painted for the Cotton Belt and New Haven!) In the April 1981 ORER, there were 207 total cars in the group. That was down to 84 as of the January 1985 Equipment Register, 79 in the April 1985 issue. The series was completely off the revenue roster within the next year as it’s gone from the October 1986 ORER. That means the forlorn looking Ches-C kitty that was in Zanesville at least through 2005 was not officially part of the CSX roster, and was only around for company service, if that.



055 00 590, \$27.90.

Road Number: 106730 (will be "SOU 106730" in website listings).

33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Southern Railway.

Black with white lettering including large roadname and road number in center.

Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: 1948 (build date) to the early 1960s.

The 106730 was among the last set of two-bay hoppers purchased by the Southern Railway. The series 106500 to 107499 was built by American Car and Foundry in 1948 and delivered in black paint with Railroad Roman stenciling. According to Jim King, writing in the December 1991 issue of **Railroad Model Craftsman**, sometime after 1959 the lettering was changed to the block sans-serif style that we might be more familiar with, "and all revenue hoppers were painted Southern Freight Car Red instead of black as they were shipped." King also stated that "By the 1960s, it was obvious that the 55-tonners were living on borrowed time. A number were converted to articulated cars" (an example of which was done by Micro-Trains in June 2005, Catalog Number 056 00 370, Road Number 102077) "while many of the remainder were relegated to the Appalachia Division, where they finished their days hauling raw coal between local mines and the processing plant/transloader at Appalachia, Virginia."

The ORER for July 1950 shows the series with AAR Designation HM, no inside length given, outside length 34 feet, extreme height 10 feet 8 inches, and capacity 2124 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. All one thousand cars were in service at the time. That slipped to 978 cars in the January 1959 Equipment Register and 811 in the January 1964 Register, but just 49 as of April 1970. Despite the Southern Railway's general slowness to repaint things, I think that the white on black scheme would have been replaced with white on brown by then.



065 00 106, \$27.70.

Reporting Marks: NYC 16017.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, New York Central.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and "New York Central System" oval herald on right.

Approximate Time Period: 1952 (build date

on car) to no later than 1976.

It's rather unusual to be able to pull the start of the Approximate Time Period straight away by just looking at the car... but I'll take it! The car is stenciled as having been built by General American in 1952. The use of the New York Central System herald aligns with this date also as the "cigar band" wouldn't appear until a few years later. According to the **New York Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One), Page 105, this car was part of the group NYC 16000 to 16049, which is a pretty big lot of tank cars, even for a

railroad as large as the Central. The **Color Guide** has a shot of sister car NYC 16035 on that page; we'll have to take the author's word for it since it is so filthy that no lettering can be read. That car was found in January 1973, several years into the Penn Central merger. What we don't know is whether that lettering had been changed to the later NYC style – I mean, you cannot read anything on that car except that there's an ACI Label! – but we do know is that the prototype car is a bit larger than the MTL 065 body style at 12,000 gallons capacity.

We do have a bingo photo, however, posted to Terry Link's "Canada Southern" website. The direct URL is www.canadasouthern.com/caso/images/nyc-16017.jpg and could be a builder's photo. Link has the service period of these cars going out to 1976.

Surprisingly, to me, anyway, the NYC listing in the January 1953 ORER has this series included, albeit with no car count and a star denoting an addition, and with some dimensions: inside length 42 feet 4 inches, outside length 43 feet 2 inches, extreme height 14 feet 2 inches, and capacity 12,500 gallons or 100,000 pounds. Jumping to the January 1967 Register, there are 48 of the 50 possible cars listed, with an end note clarifying capacity of 12,168 gallons in the tank and another 332 gallons in the dome. That might make for an interesting math problem to determine whether the dome is the appropriate size on the Micro-Trains model, but I'll leave that to you. Meanwhile, those same 48 cars appear in the Penn Central listing in the October 1969 ORER, 47 in April 1970, and 40 in October 1972, but the series has been deleted by no later than the July 1974 Equipment Register.



065 00 116, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: CDLX 1076.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, Fruit Industries, Limited.

#12 and final release in the "Grape to Glass" Series (Pre-orders taken September 2019). Silver with red "Fruit Industries, Ltd. /

Quality Wines" in center. Black lettering otherwise including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1925 (build date given on car) into as late as the 1950s.

MTL returns to the lessor California Dispatch Line for their final entry in the Grape to Glass Series. So far we've seen the CDLX reporting marks on the Bear Creek Vineyard and Italian Swiss Colony "Tipo" refrigerator cars (Series Cars #4 and #7, respectively). For a little bit of variety, here's a tank car.

How's this source for a little bit of history on the subject of this final Grape to Glass entry: a first-person interview conducted in 1969 and published online as part of the Wine History Project of San Luis Obispo County, California. "Fruit Industries was born because of necessity, in trying to find a utilization for the wine grapes in the state of California rather than just let them hang on the vines with no use. Now the reason there was no use was that we had Prohibition and the wineries could not sell their products. The main thought behind this program was that the grapes could be made into concentrate and thereby kept in a fresh form, without fermentation taking place...It would be delivered to the consumer's home in the

concentrated form in a barrel, then the water added at the home and then inoculated with wine yeast, and fermentation would take place and develop the reconstituted grape juice into wine." Despite Prohibition, the Federal Government loaned the venture \$20 million to purchase the equipment needed. Each head of the family was allowed to "make" 200 gallons of wine. (I presume that's per year... cheers!) Photos of a can of "Vine-Glo" accompany this article. It's also noted that the company was affiliated with Garrett and Company, the subject of Grape to Glass Car #10, which also did alright for itself during Prohibition.

The build date on this car shows clearly to me as 1925. The ORER entry for April 1928 for California Dispatch Line does show tank cars, but the highest number is 1029. The next Equipment Register I have, February 1931, has the tank cars numbered up to 1072. In the July 1935 ORER there's the series 1001 to 1206, of MCB designation TM tank cars with a capacity of 10,000 gallons or 100,000 pounds each, with no car count, however. That's a lot of concentrate! There might not be a conflict between the build date on the MTL car and this ORER information, since we know that California Dispatch bought cars second hand. They were listed as the owner with offices on Pine Street in San Francisco.

The July 1950 Equipment Register specifically calls out CDLX 1076 as being a TM designation tank car, one of 20 exceptions in the series 1005 to 1199 that were otherwise TMI tank cars — that's a tank car with insulation, not "Too Much Information." (Well, maybe it's both.) What we don't know for sure is whether the 1076 was still painted in the silver and red depicted on the Micro-Trains model, or had been redone, like many tank cars by then, in plain old black with modest and minimally required lettering. On the other hand, the only images I could find of a tank car in this paint scheme were of other models, including one in HO Scale with a build date in 1949. Its road number was just one away, CDLX 1077. However, while the California Dispatch Line, and the 1076, remain in the January 1953 Equipment Register, by the January 1955 ORER the CDLX reporting marks were listed under General American Transportation and the 1076 was no longer shown in that transferred roster.



130 00 270, \$35.95.

Reporting Marks: TA&G X72.

Bay Window Caboose, Windowless Sides, without Battery Box, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.

Red sides, black roof and underframe, yellow bay window, and red and yellow end rails

and details. White lettering including "T.A.&G.Ry." and road number on left; small yellow "Plan each step with safety" slogan at bottom left and right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: early to mid-1970s at least. This car is not on Micro-Trains dealer standing orders.

We pick up the story of the TAG Route now, with its purchase by the Southern Railway in 1971. If the paint scheme on this caboose looks familiar, it should if you're familiar with how the Southern painted its bay window cabooses. Well-known writer and photographer Warren Calloway found the X72 in Chattanooga in April 1977, in a photo posted to RRPictureArchives.

The prototype had some windows plugged but two remain on the side we can see, so that's a delta to the MTL 130 body style. The end rails and steps are different as well, and as long as I'm nitpicking I'll point out that said steps were painted yellow on the real X72. (Use R/C car paint for this task as it's more likely to stick than ordinary model railroad paints.)

The main route—actually, the only route—of the TA&G between Chattanooga and Gasden was completely duplicated by its new owner's Alabama Great Southern division, so it's not surprising that little of the TAG remains today. Some 23 miles south from Chattanooga to Kensington, Georgia were operated by the Chattooga (not Chattanooga!) and Chickamauga Railway until the Dow Chemical plant in Kensington closed in September 2009. The C&C is still around operating a portion of the former Central of Georgia under the Genesee and Wyoming Industries umbrella, but the TAG Route is about as fallen a flag as you can get.



181 00 130, \$29.80.

Reporting Marks: SOO LINE 178260 (will be "SOO 178260" in website listings).

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Short Ladders, Soo Line.

White with black ends and red door. Black lettering including large roadname across car and reporting marks on left. Black and yellow "Soo Line Colormark Car" right of door. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1965 (build date), or strictly speaking, mid-1970s given COTS panel, through the 1990s.

In 1965, special equipment was still different enough that the Soo Line made a point of it (at right, close up from the model image). General American Transportation built these RBL type cars for the Soo. The series of thirty cars, which carried even numbers only from 178258 to 178316, was the last time that the railroad went outside its own shops for RBL cars. (The Soo already had its signature seven-post boxcars under development.) From Page 29 of the book **Soo Line Freight Equipment and Cabooses**, we learn the details of construction: 20 inch travel Keystone cushion underframes, Equipco two-piece loaders, adjustable side fillers, and insulation on the roof, sides, ends and floor. The bingo photo of the 178260 shows the car with no running board and cut-down ladders, but it's noted that the brake wheel remained in the high position and ladders on that end weren't reduced in height. This is a delta to the MTL 181 body style which has short ladders all around and a low brake wheel. That mixed set, if you will, is a challenge for any model railroad manufacturer.



The ORER for January 1967 shows 29 of the possible 30 cars in service. They are described as "Refrigerator, All Steel, Even Numbers" with an inside length of 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 9 feet 11 inches (given the insulation), outside length 55 feet 1 inch, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 4370 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. End notes have the same information as in the Soo Line book.

The service date on this car as modeled is July 1978, so we know we can skip a few ORERs in the Research Accumulation. The January 1978 Register shows the same 29 cars remaining, though in multiple subsets. They're all back together again in the April 1984 ORER. The car count is down to 18 as of July 1989 and 12 in October 1996, but just two in April 1999. Those two do make it to the January 2000 ORER, but that's it.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



145 00 390, \$29.95.

Road Number: 980 (will be "D&RGW 980" in website listings). Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Rio Grande (Denver & Rio Grande Western).

Pullman Green with black roof, ends, and underframe including four wheel trucks. Gold lettering including roadname across letterboard at top, Rio Grande "speed lettering" herald at bottom center, and road number at bottom left and bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1940s to mid-1950s based on paint scheme.

In January 1951, there were two photos taken at the same location on the Rio Grande. In both photos, the 980 is the main subject of the image but there's also a narrow gauge coach, the Rio Grande's 323, next to the 980. In the second shot, a steam powered passenger train identified as "115-116" is arriving at the station which is also in the picture. Plenty of dual gauge track can be seen at this location. However, I don't know where this is. Both photos were cited in the late Jerry Laboda's Passenger Car Photo Index (passcarphotos.rypn.org) and are actually hosted on the Denver Public Library's Digital Collection Site.

The MTL 145 body style differs a bit from the prototype. The first thing that caught my eye was the use of arched windows at each end, at least on the side we can see. I suspect these were lavatory windows. I don't recall previously seeing the speed lettering roadname, which was introduced in 1939, on a Pullman Green passenger car. It was during the 1950s that Aspen Gold and Aluminum replaced this paint decoration. Those two data points taken together give us the Approximate Time Period.

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE) for January 1953 shows on the Rio Grande's roster an eight car series 971 to 981. There's an eighty percent chance that the 980 is still in service, right? These were 57 seat steel coaches with ice-cooled air conditioning and a length over the buffers of 78 feet 5 inches.

I was curious about exactly where the two photos of the 980 were taken (The direct URL for the first is digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/11129 and the second is digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/11130). In the December 1951 Official Guide of the Railways I found a passenger train "1-15" that went from Denver and Pueblo to Alamosa. Not quite "115" but perhaps that's still it. Although that doesn't narrow things down much... pun not intended.



145 00 410, \$33.90.

Road Number: 604 (will be "C&O 604" in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Chesapeake & Ohio.

Yellow, dark blue and gray sides.

Dark blue roof, ends, and underframe including six wheel trucks. Dark blue lettering including roadname in center of letterboard at top and road number at bottom center in gray band. Small yellow "C&O for Progress" herald at far right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1950, or strictly speaking, 1954, to at least the mid-1950s.

While the Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society has announced a Second Run (!) of the MTL-produced "George Washington" passenger train (see "Special Run News" below), here's a single that is the first for the C&O among Micro-Trains regular release passenger cars. The key driver of the ATP for this and any other passenger car in the "tri-color" paint scheme is the year 1950. According to documents I found online, that's the earliest any cars appeared in the gray, "enchantment blue" and "Federal yellow."

A check of the C&O Historical Society archives online revealed that there is a photo of the "modified" 604 which has not yet been scanned. There is a shot of the 605 still in green and gold as of 1957. No worries, though, as both images are in the January/February 2002 issue of **C&O History**, the C&OHS magazine. What luck! I don't have many issues of that publication, but I do have that one. The images are part of an article on the series of coaches 600 to 624. Even magnified, I can't tell whether the "C&O for Progress" herald has the squiggly or straight line above the "for Progress." The former was introduced in 1951 and the latter in 1954. The caption accompanying the photo of the 604 indicates that it's the later "straight line" herald. It's also noted that of the 25 cars, the 600, 601, 604, 605 and 606 were on the roster at least until the mid-1950s. The C&O had been aggressive about replacing their heavyweight equipment with streamliners so my sense is that these cars didn't stay around any longer than necessary.

These cars were added to the Chessie's roster to handle an expected increase of traffic prior to World War II. The 25 cars were former Pullman parlor cars built between 1910 and 1916 and converted to high-capacity coaches in 1941 and 1942. The typical C&O coach carried just 48 passengers in the 1930s, but these had either 78, 82 or 84 seats—kind of like the difference between First Class and Economy in air travel these days. Of these, the first seven including the 604 were the densest of sardine cans, with 84 seats and two restrooms. Most of these cars were sold off between 1948 and 1949 and never saw the tri-color paint.

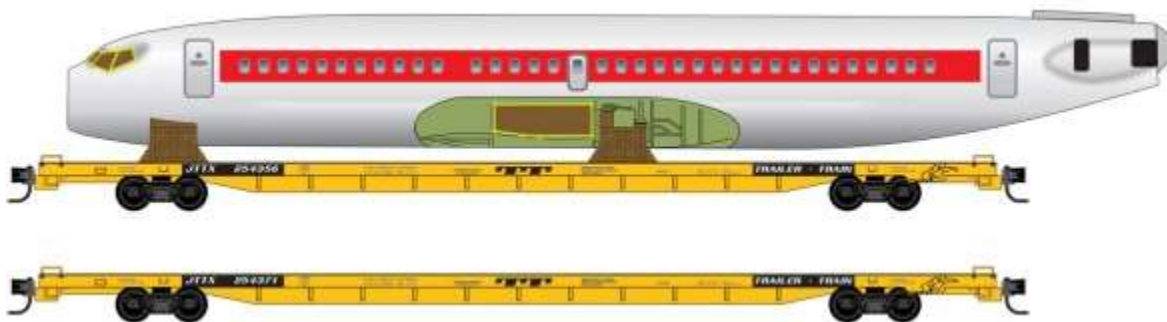
N SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: All of the following have been announced by Micro-Trains as being available mid-month and should be at (or near, given nationwide delivery delays which continue) MTL dealers as you read this. I have pre-production artwork which I will replace with actual product images on the UMTRR website should they become available.

Runner Pack #173 (993 00 173, \$109.95), of four CSX Transportation gondolas with coil covers. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2020 edition. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 105 51 810, 475235; 105 52 810, 475239; 105 53 810, 475274; and 105 54 810, 475275. These are the first through fourth releases of this item, which hasn't been previously issued.



Runner Pack #174 (993 00 174, \$84.95), of four New York Central despatch stock cars. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2020 edition. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 035 51 040, 28059; 035 52 040, 28133; 035 53 040, 28152; and 035 54 040, 28369. These are the fifth through eighth releases of this item, not counting the green painted version which isn't prototypical.



The TTX Fuselage Two Pack (993 02 120, \$99.95) of a pair of 89 foot flat cars with a plastic injection molded aircraft fuselage. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2020 edition. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 071 51 880, JTTX 254356; 071 52 880, JTTX 254371. These are the first and second releases of this item, which hasn't been previously issued.

There are updates to the delivery estimates for other multi-packs. The CSX TBOX (60 Foot Rib Side, Double Plug Door High-Cube) Three Pack (993 01 860), mid-February; TBOX Version 2 Three Pack (993 01 850), mid-March; CN TBOX Three Pack (993 01 870), mid-April; Atlantic Coast Line Heavyweight Five Pack (993 02 080), mid-February; and the Desert Camo and Woodland Camo Hummer Two Packs (499 45 953 and 499 45 954, respectively), February.

*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 **January 31**.*



Projected Delivery June 2021:

993 00 179, \$114.95.

Reporting Marks: WFEX 68112, 68174, 68270, 68349.

Runner Pack #179, quantity four of MTL 059 Series 40 Foot Steel Ice Refrigerator Cars, Western Fruit Express.

Yellow with brown ends and aluminum roof. Black lettering including Great Northern road name, Western Fruit Express company name and reporting marks on left, and large Great Northern outline goat herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label at center left. Approximate Time Period: 1968 (based on

paint scheme and service date) to mid-1980s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

We go to Page 43 of the **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** for a bingo on the first of this scheduled quartet, and a bonus of sorts: it's pictured with a Burlington Refrigerator Express plug door car and a Northern Pacific refrigerator car. That's three of the four components of the Burlington Northern right there (the fourth road, the Spokane, Portland and Seattle didn't have any revenue service refrigerator cars as far as I know). And the photo was taken in April 1970, the second official month of the BN's existence. How's that for a family portrait?

The 68112 was part of the series 68000 to 68399, built by American Car and Foundry in 1948. The paint scheme with the large "outline goat" dates only to 1967, however, and the service date suggests a 1968 repaint into this scheme. I don't need to spike out a timeframe for the ACI Label here since they appeared around the same time as the outline goat. I also don't think the previous paint scheme disappeared overnight – we're talking the BN here.

The ORER for January 1967 is just a bit too early for said outline goat, but it'll do. Western Fruit Express still had its own registration, in the "Private Car Owners" section of the book. The series was described as "Refrigerator, All Steel" with AAR Designation RS. The inside length was 33 feet 3 inches, inside width 8 feet 3 inches, inside height 7 feet 3 inches, outside length 44 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 4 feet wide by 6 feet high,

and capacity 1987 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds of lading, plus ice. There were 369 cars in the main series plus six exceptions which had stage icing and 100,000 pounds capacity. The April 1970 Equipment Register was the first for the Burlington Northern but the WFE listing remained separate. Capacity of the main series of cars, of which 348 remained, had been raised to 84,000 pounds. In the April 1975 ORER the car count was down to 73 cars. Only seven were left in the January 1978 Equipment Register, which is where I stopped looking.



Projected Delivery June 2021:

993 01 791, \$149.95.

Illinois Central Heavyweight Five Pack #2.

Scheduled to consist of the following: Two 141 Series 10-1-2 Sleepers, "Lake Quinalt" and "Lake Hiawatha"; 146 Series Diner, Road Number 2817; 145 Series Paired Window Coach, Road Number 3974; 147 Series Baggage Car, Road Number 792. Each car will be brown and orange with gold striping, gold roadname (or "Pullman" for the 10-1-2 Sleepers) in center of letterboard ("Illinois" on far left and "Central" on far right on baggage car) and additional brown lettering on the orange bands. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. Approximate

Time Period: 1940s to late 1960s (varies by car). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

In November 2018, I provided a pre-review of what I guess we can now call "Illinois Central Heavyweight Five Pack #1," which was released in April 2019 (MTL photo at right). Combine that set with this one and you've got a nice looking long train. The cars in this forthcoming quintet complement those in the initial set, which consisted of a Railway Post Office, Baggage Car, Two Paired Window Coaches, and a Modified Observation Car. I was able to use the **IC/GM&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** for a roll call of this first run as there were bingo photos of each car type. I also had help from Tom Davis on the ATP, which is from about the 1940s to the 1960s but varied by individual car. I'll assume that the same varying ATP is true for this set.



I can begin with the baggage car, since its apparent road number 792 puts it in the same short series 790 to 794 that was represented in Set #1 with the 794. That car was on Page 7 of the **Color Guide**. It was built by American Car and Foundry in 1926. Perhaps the key delta to the MTL 147 body style is the presence of two different width doors, one eight feet wide and one four feet ten inches wide. All of these cars were off the IC roster by 1968. The placement of the roadname, widely split, is accurate, if a bit strange.

I confirmed with MTL that the road number on the forthcoming paired window coach is 2817, which would put it between the 2813 and 2819 that appeared in Set #1 and on Page 13 of the **Color Guide**. The window arrangements on these cars are just slightly different than the MTL 145 body style. I note that the 2813 and 2819 differed from each other as photographed in 1970 and 1969 respectively. I found the 2817 on Northeast Rails (via the Passenger Car Photo Index) in an undated photo. The six wheel trucks are appropriate for this car.

So those are the easy ones. Next, we have 10-1-2 sleepers in the “Lake” series. The “Lake Hiawatha” has a very definite end to the ATP; according to the “Pullman Project” database this Plan 3585A (later 3585G) car was destroyed in a wreck on the SL-SF (Frisco) at Menfro, Missouri on July 25, 1953. Ouch! It was built in September 1926 and received air conditioning in May 1932. The “Lake Quinalt” was built in October 1924, received air conditioning in May 1935, and like many Pullman selloffs, went to the IC on the last day of 1948. It was withdrawn from service in January 1960. I don’t have road number translations for either of these cars and there are no photos of 10-1-2s in the **Color Guide**.

That leaves the diner (incorrectly captioned “Parlor” in the Micro-News but correct on the MTL website). The 3974 shows up in the Official Registers of Passenger Train Equipment for March 1943 and January 1953 – both of the issues I have. It seated 36 people, had an inside length 66 feet 3 inches and length of 79 feet 1 inch over the buffers, and had electro-mechanical air conditioning. It was in a “series” with the 3973. In an otherwise fruitless search for a bingo photo for this diner I was reminded that the “Panama Limited” was a train not quite as famous as the Illinois Central’s iconic “City of New Orleans” but did operate from 1942 to 1967. That train also operated between Chicago and New Orleans. According to the Official Guide of the Railways of May 1957, that train was already streamlined. Perhaps the heavyweight equipment had been bumped to “The Louisiane” (yes, it’s spelled with an “e” at the end) which also connected those same two cities.



Projected Delivery July 2021:

993 01 841, \$134.95.

Reporting Marks: TBOX 6651113, 665130, 665148.

TTX Version 1 Three Pack #2.

Consists of three MTL 125 series 60 Foot Exterior Post High Cube Boxcars with Double Plug Doors, Railbox (TBOX). Yellow with aluminum roof and black doors. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Red, blue and black “Next Load/ Any Road” logo on left. White on black TTX logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes across car. Tops of ends are white (denoting excess height car) with

black reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: 2003 (built date) or no earlier than 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present. Preliminary MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only one car is shown above; this is a three pack.

I think it's fair to cover this reprint of a sellout with a reprint of the initial coverage from back in April 2019. This examples of what have commonly become known as TBOX cars were built in 2003 by National Steel Car Company of Hamilton, Ontario, as their Job 5115, road numbers 665000 to 665499. They carry TTX class XHN60. While not quite in the class of the 86 foot auto parts boxcars of the 1970s, these cars are still big, with a light weight of 78,400 pounds and capacity of 7528 cubic feet. To illustrate how railroads have changed with the times, this big a car now fits into the Plate F dimensional specifications. In my modeling Approximate Time Period of 1963, it would have exceeded every specification in existence at the time.

There are plenty of photos of these cars on my usual go-to sites. RRPictureArchives, which now has over 6500 (!) images of TBOX cars (that's up from more than 5,000 last time), includes all of the road numbers MTL selected for this trio. The 665113 was found in Elkhart, Indiana in October 2007. The 665130 was in Golden, Colorado in November 2009. I don't know whether it was stocked with a certain beer brewed there. And to illustrate how these cars really did go "Next Load/Any Road," the 665148 was in Wellsboro, Indiana in March, 2009 and on the BNSF "Joint Line" in Denver, Colorado two months later.

I noted with the initial announcement of these cars that I would be **really** impressed if the National Steel Car logo was reproduced on the MTL model. Well, George, prepare to be impressed: the NSC trademark is right there on the car. And have I mentioned that it's between the first and second rungs of the short side ladder... on both ends of the car?

One research item that I didn't have last time, namely, because it didn't yet exist last time, is the October 2020 ORER. Within the TTX listing we have the series 665000 to 665499, with 482 cars in service of the possible 500. That's just two less than in the January 2018 Equipment Register. Let's get the usual dimensions: inside length, 60 feet 9 inches, inside width, 9 feet 6 inches, inside height, 13 feet, outside length, 67 feet 2 inches (clearly extended couplers, here!), extreme height, 17 feet, door opening, 16 feet wide by 12 feet 4 inches high. As an aside, all TBOX cars have the 16 foot door opening, and that's a lot of boxcars. How many? Uh, maybe I'll wait until the next reprint for that math exercise.

Speaking of "a lot," it seems that a lot of modelers may have missed out on the first run of this set, based on activity on that well-known Internet Auction Community. Members of the UMTRR Spy Network who visit there note that "Buy It Now" listings are, well, Bought Now rather quickly, while I've seen straight auctions end right around the MSRP for the set. In last month's UMTRR I directly reprinted the Micro-Trains message about the preorders for the set... which I'll interpret as a call to make sure that you preorder this trio if you want it. They said so themselves: "We produced this [previous] 3-Pack based on pre-orders received." And possibly not one set more. You've been cautioned...

N SCALE WEATHERED/GRAFFITI RELEASES: *The following was announced on the Micro-Trains website on January 15.*



032 44 530, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NYC 78988.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Plug Door, New York Central.

Century green with black ends and roof. White lettering including "Cushion Underframe" and large reporting marks on

left. Large black, white and red "cigar band" herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label left of door. Heavily weathered reporting marks and dimensional data, plus dirt and rust effects. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s (given ACI Label) or 1973 (photo date) to mid-1980s. Previous Releases: None, though there have been similar NYC cars released. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

We go to Page 79 of the **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1) for the bingo on this car... complete with weathering treatment as depicted by MTL. It was found in December 1973 and yes, it looked this bad. The series NYC 78950 to 78999 was the Central's Lot 922B, built by General American in December 1962. The Cushion Underframe advertised right on the car was the 20 inch version. The car also had two-piece movable bulkheads. The Color Guide states that the 78988 was in "high class use in General Foods service." Well, the car didn't quite look high class at that point in its life. I don't know what General Foods was shipping for the reporting marks to look that poor, either. Hopefully that had nothing to do with the car's appearance... I consumed a lot of General Foods products growing up!

Given the photo date, I started the ORER lookups with the Penn Central listing from July 1974. There were 41 cars from the original fifty in service in the NYC series. The inside length was 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 9 feet 10 inches, outside length 57 feet 8 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet 6 inches (a little wider than the MTL 032 body style), and capacity 4548 cubic feet of 138,000 pounds. Thirty-five cars were conveyed to Conrail according to the April 1976 Equipment Register. Of those, seventeen remained as of July 1980. Just three were left in the April 1984 ORER.



054 44 280, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: WP 1454.

54 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, Western Pacific.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks only on far left. White on black double COTS panel right of center.

Light weathering. Simulated plywood load included. Approximate Time Period: 1978 (build date) to late 1980s. Previous Releases: None.

It appears that a funny thing happened on the way to the release schedule for this car. A column in the latest **N Scale Enthusiast** magazine (not mine—I wrote the "Micro-Trains Year

in Review” article) previewed this month’s offerings, including a Western Pacific bulkhead flat car... but an **unweathered** version. Perhaps it was meant to be offered that way originally, and then it was decided that a little “dirt” wouldn’t hurt. If true, this would be a rare glimpse into the goings on behind the red and yellow sign... and one with very likely no meaning whatsoever, except in Micro-Trains Trivia Board Games. What do you mean, there’s never been one of those? Can you say, “Market Opportunity”?

Anyway, we’ve got a representative sample photo from the series on Page 68 of the **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. WP 1483 was found with a load of lumber in Portola, California in 1981. It was also part of the series 1451 to 1490, built by Thrall in 1978. This followed an order for ten Centerbeam flat cars in 1977 also from Thrall (and modeled by MTL, Catalog Number 053 00 06x, Road Numbers 1401 and 1403, September 2006).

The ORER for July 1980 is the closest I have to the build date. The beginning of the description, “Flat, Steel, Permanent Bulkheads” aligns but someone wasn’t paying attention to the “(Wallboard)” end of the description when they loaded the lumber onto the 1483! The inside length was 61 feet 1 inch, inside height 11 feet, outside length 70 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 9 inches, and capacity 186,000 pounds.

These cars didn’t last as long as I thought they would. There was still a solid car count of 40 in the April 1985 Equipment Register, but that was down to 15 in the July 1987 book. The series was gone by the time the Western Pacific was absorbed into the Union Pacific, as seen by the UP’s listing of WP cars in the July 1989 ORER.



993 05 770, \$119.95.

Reporting Marks: CTCX 727248, 731702 and 731825.

CTCX Weathered/Graffiti Three Pack.

Consists of three 110 series General Service Tank Cars. Individual catalog numbers are 110 51 500, 110 52 322, and 110 53 322 respectively. Base cars are black with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and tank qualification stencil on right. The 727248 only has white ends. All cars have yellow vertical conspicuity stripes at points along car. The 727748 has multicolored tagging and white scrawl graffiti on featured side, additional green and white scrawl graffiti on other side (not shown) and black “clock” graffiti on one

end. The 731702 has rust effects on both sides. The UMTRR Spy Network informs me that the 731825 has graffiti on the side of the car that’s not in the image. Approximate Time Period: mid-decade of the 2010s to present. Previous Releases: None for the 727248; for the other cars, the CTCX 16-Pack (14 of which were this car) with Road Numbers 730843, 730847, 730849,

730850, 730852, 730859, 730862, 730868, 730876, 730882, 730883, 730895, 730897, 730900 , August 2017; then Runner Pack #147 with Road Numbers 730833, 730848 and 730872, November 2018.

The first time we saw CTCX cars, there were fourteen of them in a 16-pack which also included two BNSF “buffer cars” from the MTL 094 Airslide Covered Hopper Series. Then we got three more in a Runner Pack. On both occasions I quoted from our friend “The Masked Railroader” who did some extensive research on the CTCX 16-Pack. His information is in Part Two of the January 2017 UMTRR, which is available on the Back Issues page of the UMTRR Website.

However, the cars in that set don’t fit the second and third road numbers in this Three Pack. “Masked” did note that the series CTCX 731640 to 732464, which does include the 731702 and 731825, was in the July 2018 ORER. I checked my copy of the October 2014 Equipment Register and the group is not in that issue, but is in the January 2018 edition, so they appeared sometime in between. The CTCX reporting marks belong to the lessor CIT Rail Group.

“Masked” believes that this set was “cobbled together from different original owners.” He added that “these cars started in ethanol service before moving to crude oil service.” Current regulations prohibit DOT-111 tank cars from being used for either commodity, and the MTL 110 body style appears more like a 111 type than later models, giving rise to “Masked” calling an Approximate Time Period ending about 2016 for that purpose. Other types of lading are fine, though. In fact, the October 2020 ORER shows CTCX 731640 to 736140 with 1507 cars of 263,000 pounds Gross Rail Weight and another 1295 with 286,000 pounds Gross Rail Weight.

Meanwhile, the One Of These Cars That Is Not Like The Others is the first car, CTCX 727248. While I’m in the October 2020 ORER, I’ll note that road number falls into the series 727104 to 727282 which has a car count of 178. Working backwards, that car also first appeared on the roster between the October 2014 and January 2018 ORERs. Phew, a consistent ATP for this trio, more or less.

Here’s something interesting, well, to me, anyway. It’s obvious that the first car isn’t the same as the other two, but the second and third cars are not identical to each other either! The 731702 has a builder’s mark from what looks like National Steel Car, and the 731825 has the logo of what looks like American Railcar Industries. Look below the second conspicuity stripe from the right for this distinction between cars. If the one CTCX car from the 16-Pack for which we have an official photo is accurate for the other thirteen in that set, there is no builder’s mark in that location; and the one CTCX car we can see in the official portrait of Runner Pack #147 (at right) doesn’t have a builder’s mark either. So, at the most nitpicky of levels, we have “not a reprint” times two. Your mileage may vary...



N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: Car #8 in the **Solar System Series**, for the planet Uranus, has been released in both pre-ordered varieties. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2018 issue.



Catalog 102 00 837, \$36.95 (at left) has the interior light.

Catalog 102 02 837, \$27.95 (at right) does not have the interior light.



Z SCALE NEW RELEASES: The four pair of gondolas which were announced for pre-orders in June of last year (Which Shall Not Be Named—I mean it!) have arrived. We also now know what loads will be included – and they’re **not** tie loads as previously stated. Only the MTL artwork is available at present. Let’s have a look:



522 00 361 and 522 00 362, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: WP 6051 and 6055.

50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Western Pacific.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Yellow roadname in center split by red feather. Black on

yellow “when empty” instructions sideboard on far left. Simulated steel slab load included (not shown in artwork). Approximate Time Period: early 1960s (1962 rebuild date given by MTL) to late 1970s.



522 00 371 and 522 00 372, \$24.95 each.

Road Numbers: 60065 and 60143 (will be preceded by “SOU” in website listings).

50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Southern Railway.

Brown with white lettering including large roadname and road number in center,

accented by green dot inside the “O” in “SOUTHERN.” Simulated blower housing load included (not shown in artwork). Approximate Time Period: late 1960s (based on paint scheme) into the decade of the 2000s.



522 00 381 and 522 00 382, \$24.95 each.

**Reporting Marks: UP 229786 and 229791.
50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides,
Drop Ends, Union Pacific.**

Brown (including trucks and couplers but not wheels) with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and

large roadname in center. White on black double COTS panel and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" on right. Simulated junk container load included (not shown in artwork). Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s or, strictly speaking, 1979, to early 1980s.



522 00 391 and 522 00 392, \$25.95 each.

**Reporting Marks: PRR 374256 and 374779.
50 Foot Steel Gondolas, Fishbelly Sides,
Drop Ends, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Brown (the PRR's "Freight Car Color") with white lettering including reporting marks on left and plain keystone on right.

Simulated wood tie load included. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1961 (based on paint scheme) or 1962 (based on paint date on cars) through the decade of the 1970s. Previous Releases: None.

And on to the next pre-order announcement. Perhaps the worst kept secret of last year is that the Z Scale pre-order books were open for two months per announcement. For this set of fifty foot single door boxcars, the opportunity is officially available for two months. Of course, you could still get those pre-orders in right away. Let's see what the folks behind the red and yellow sign have to tempt Z Scalpers... including this casual one (surprised?)...

*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 **February 28**.*



Projected Delivery June/July 2021:

505 00 431 and 505 00 432, \$29.95 each.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 15527 and 15542.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks and large circle cross on left. White and yellow "Shock Control / A Smoother Ride" on right. Yellow "DF" in circle at top left. Multicolor ACI Label left of door. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. White simulated reflective rectangles at points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1975 to late 1980s. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 431 release is shown.

The “Priest Book,” or **Santa Fe Freight Cars In Color Volume 1** by Stephen Priest and Thomas Chenoweth, shows no less than six different paint schemes on the Santa Fe’s Bx-79 box car series. This MTL release is one of the later versions. Page 51 of the book has ATSF 15537, in between the projected road numbers of this pair, 15527 and 15542. The paint scheme on the car, less than two months old when the photo was taken in April 1975, is a match however the presence of a running board (roofwalk) on the MTL 505 series is not. (Micro-Trains doesn’t make this body style in Z Scale without one, at least not yet.) Making things more complicated, the Bx-79s are in several different number series. This one is 15500 to 15584. It’s noted in the “Priest Book” that the original series was ATSF 11900 to 12187.

It does look like the ATP for these two cars begins in 1975. The series is not listed in the July 1974 ORER. It’s part of a “coming soon” group ATSF 15500 to 15584 in the April 1975 Equipment Register – the group and its information are there but there’s no car count. OK, then, let’s convey the information: the series was described as “Box, DF-2 Rails, Shock Control” with AAR Designation XL. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 56 feet 2 inches, extreme height 14 feet 9 inches, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4900 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. By the next ORER in my accumulation, April 1976, there is a car count: 56. Two issues later, in October 1976, the count is up to all 85 possible cars. It’s down two to 85 in the April 1981 ORER, then a total of 27 in October 1986, 16 in July 1989 and zero in October 1991.



Projected Delivery June/July 2021:

505 00 441 and 505 00 442, \$26.80 each.

Reporting Marks: P&E 4301 and 4348.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Peoria and Eastern (New York Central).

Century green with white lettering including “Cushion Underframe,” small roadname and large reporting marks at left. White, black and red New York Central “cigar band” on right. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (build date on car) into the 1970s. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 441 release is shown.

The Peoria and Eastern was the successor to a combination of lines which stretched from just outside Peoria southeasterly to Indianapolis. The road came under the control of the “Big Four” in 1890. The Big Four was part of the New York Central System which directly assumed the P&E’s lease in the 1920s. A key use of the line was a bypass of the congested Chicago area via interchanges at Peoria and Pekin with several connections west. The line went to the Penn Central and then Conrail. Following the 1999 split of Conrail between CSX and NS, the NS ceased operations of the Illinois portion. Some of the trackage in Indiana remains in operation.

MTL specifically thanks the New York Central System Historical Society for help with this car. Meanwhile, the 4348 can be found on Page 51 of the **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. The series 4300 to 4349 was built by Despatch Shops in East Rochester in May 1964. This group had a Keystone cushion underframe, as noted right on the car. The large NYC cigar band herald was already on the way out by this time but was

used on these boxcars. There is a nitpicky delta between the prototype and the MTL 505 body style: the use of a short ladder at the left of the side instead of grab irons.

In the ORER for January 1967, the Peoria and Eastern's 404 pieces of revenue rolling stock are under the main New York Central listing but in their own table. The series P&E 4300 to 4349 was described simple as "Box" with AAR Designation XM. This inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 10 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet (a "door thing") and capacity 4929 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. All fifty cars were in service at the time.

The fifty cars were transferred intact to the Penn Central although the entire P&E roster was down to 325 cars as of October 1969. Fourteen of these cars made it to Conrail according to the April 1976 ORER. All Peoria and Eastern cars were gone no later than the July 1980 Equipment Register. I should note that some P&E cars did receive Penn Central paint which might or might not shorten the Approximate Time Period. You might also have to think about running board removal.



Projected Delivery June/July 2021:

505 00 451 and 505 00 452, \$26.80 each.

Reporting Marks: NP 1130 and 1168.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Northern Pacific.

Green with white stripe. White lettering including arched roadname and reporting marks on left. Black, red and white monad herald on right with white slogan "Scenic Route of the Vista Dome North Coast Limited" on right. White and red "DF" insignia on door. Approximate Time Period: 1955 (service date) into the 1960s. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 451 release is shown.

Wait a minute, hasn't Micro-Trains done this car in N Scale already? Yes, they have, but not with the same road numbers. The 1:160 entries were NP 1260 and 1265, released in March 1994 and April 2008 respectively. And last year MTL did a car from the same prototype series without a running board and with a later simpler paint scheme missing the "Scenic Route..." slogan and with the last version of the famous monad herald.

The Northern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Page 53, has a shot of the prototype car NP 1168. The image shows riveted sides and a straight bottom sill, details that differ from the 505 body style. The August 1955 photo was taken just a few months after the car was converted from an unequipped boxcar in the NP's 31000 series (a series also depicted by Micro-Trains). The use of the monad with simply "Northern Pacific" and not "Northern Pacific Railway" dates the MTL car's rebuilding and repainting to prior to 1955, but of course the Approximate Time Period doesn't necessarily end there.

The ORER for January 1955 shows just 10 cars in the group numbered 1100 to 1109, so once again we see that the Equipment Register hasn't necessarily kept up with the real rosters. (And why I call it the "Approximate" Time Period...) The January 1959 ORER shows 195 cars

numbered 1100 to 1295, with a notation indicating the DF loaders that are advertised on the car's doors. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4807 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. 191 cars made it to the Burlington Northern merger and the ORER listing for April 1970, but as I've noted above, I think we're past the ATP at that point given the changes illustrated in the **Color Guide**. An example of what the cars looked like after around 1968 is on Page 54 of that book.



Projected Delivery June/July 2021:

505 00 461 and 505 00 462, \$27.95 each.

Reporting Marks: RDG 19312 and 19320.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Reading.

Green with yellow band inside of which is large green roadname across car. Yellow lettering including reporting marks on left. Green and yellow "DF" circle insignia left of door. Multicolor ACI Label below "G" in roadname. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1962 (based on paint scheme), or more likely mid-1960s, to early 1980s. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 461 release is shown.

A quick question to the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society group on that prominent social media application provided the date of the initial introduction of this "billboard" scheme on the Reading Railroad: September 1962, when boxcar 115406 was outshopped. Bob Gottschall, who provided a photo of the car to the group in a reply to my query, noted that there were "touch ups as this was not an easy paint scheme to spray."

Page 82 of the **Reading Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has a bingo photo of RDG 19312, as of March 1971. This car was in the railroad's class XMLc, which was combined with class XMLb in ORER listings. The 19312 and its brethren were "stretched" from 40 foot boxcars, something the Reading did quite a bit. I needed a really good magnifying glass to pick up the service date on the car, which appears to be in 1965, leading to my "more likely" start of the ATP.

The ORER for January 1967 has 49 cars in the Reading series 19276 to 19325, described as "Box, Steel" with an XML designation. The inside length was 50 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 9 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 54 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4865 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. An end note shows the apparent split between the XMLb and XMLc boxcars: "Cars numbered 19276 to 19300 have DF-2 equipment and 9 Belt Rails. Cars numbered 19301 to 19325 have DF-2 equipment and 19 Belt Rails."

There were 46 cars shown in the October 1972 Equipment Register. According to the April 1976 ORER, 45 of these were conveyed to Conrail, and this time they are split up into the groups 19276 to 19300 with 21 cars and 19301 to 19325 with 24 cars. By this time you'd have to be thinking about running board removal and possibly ladder shortening as well. Seven cars

were left in the 19301 to 19325 group in the July 1980 ORER. That was down to three in the April 1981 book, two in the April 1984 book, and one in the January 1985 Register.



Projected Delivery June/July 2021:

505 00 471 and 505 00 472, \$26.80 each.

Reporting Marks: SP 653261 and 653263.

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

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and gothic style roadname on right. Black on yellow "wing" device with "CP / Car-Pac Loader / Fixed Side Filler" on left. White on black double COTS panel on right. Approximate Time Period: 1972 to no later than 1980. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 471 release is shown.

Good luck tracing the history of these cars, George? "The Railgoat" Lee Gatreaux's description of the road numbers SP 653075 to 653979 is as follows: "These 50 foot, 50 ton box cars were renumbered from a variety of classes into this series for specially equipped service hauling auto parts. These cars were renumbered between their general service numbers and these specially equipped numbers sometimes multiple times." On his site (www.railgoat.railfan.net) are several photos in this largish number series, all of which show cars without their running boards and none of which are bingos to the two projected road numbers. In addition, the added equipment labels vary across the cars in the photos, in both size and placement.

Fortunately, however, we have a bingo for the SP 653261 on Page 30 of the **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. It was found in August 1980 in San Luis Obispo, California on its home rails. **Color Guide** author James Kincaid writes, "It is yet another renumbering from Class B-50-30... [built] from September 1952 to February 1953." The initial car numbers were 109100 to 110099. Kincaid also notes that the first appearance of the number series 653075 to 653279 was in the ORER for July 1972, but with no cars. In the October 1972 Register the car count was 205. How about that?

In the prototype photo, this car also has no running board and sports a warning to that effect, though the brake wheel was in the high position and the full ladders were at least on that side. So a question I won't be able to answer is whether the cars had their running boards pulled when renumbered or not. Oh, well, Rule #1 could apply here ("It's your railroad") although I will call the ATP at "no later than 1980" given the lack of running board in the bingo photo. For the record, the series was down to a single car, SP 653145, in the April 1985 Equipment Register.



Projected Delivery June/July 2021:

505 00 481 and 505 00 482, \$31.95 each.

Reporting Marks: WP 3019 and 3026.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Western Pacific.

Orange with black ends. Large aluminum feather with black roadname across car. Black lettering including reporting marks on left and "DF + CU" at top right. Approximate Time Period: 1955 (build date) into the 1960s. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 481 release is shown.

Micro-Trains has done this car twice in N Scale. The more recent release was in January 2006 (at right). I made the point in my commentary then that I did not own the **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, though a car in that paint scheme was on the dust jacket cover. Since then, I've



not only acquired that book but I've met its author Jim Eager. (He gave a fascinating two-part presentation on the railroads and industries of Toronto Harbor — oops, Harbour.)

So I can now reference Eager's caption accompanying the photo on Page 27 of the **Color Guide**: This was one of forty cars built by Pullman-Standard in February 1955. They had cushion underframes, Evans DF loaders, nailable steel floors and single eight foot doors. WP 3019 from the series 3011 to 3050 was found in November 1955 in this flashy paint scheme.

Garth Groff, another freight car scholar, pointed out on his website that the ends might have been black from not paint but from black car cement, "a thick sealant similar to automobile rust proofing." Groff reports, "This gunk was difficult to remove, and it was often left in place during repainting. It is also hard to tell from photos whether a car with dark ends was treated, or if that was just road grunge."

The January 1958 ORER is the closest I have to the build date. The cars had the AAR Designation XME and deceptively simple description of "Box, All Steel." The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 53 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet and capacity 4975 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. The simple description is augmented by an end note: "Cars in series... are equipped with DF Loaders having 9 belt rails. Cars numbered 3011 to 3050 have Nailable Steel Flooring."

In the N Scale release's car copy, MTL has these cars losing the orange and silver feather by around 1970, which I wouldn't doubt given the expense in maintaining the paint scheme. The cars were also renumbered at that time; I suppose I could guess to which series they went, but I won't.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.



Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #110 (993 00 110, \$84.95), of four New York Central despatch stock cars. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2020 edition. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 520 51 060, 28059; 520 52 060, 28133; 520 53 060, 28152; and 520 54 060, 28369. These are the second through fifth releases of this item, not counting the green painted version which isn't prototypical.

There are no multi-pack pre-order announcements this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:
No releases this month.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS: No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Two N Scale unpainted and one painted / undecorated body styles are available, all in limited quantities as usual. They are the 40 foot single door boxcar (020 00 000, \$14.70), 33 foot offset side hopper with flat ends (055 00 000, \$17.90) and the heavyweight paired window coach with green sides and black roof and underframe (145 00 001, \$21.25). Just the thing for your "UMTRR 25 Years" Commemorative Car...?!? All of these are unassembled, handy for painting.

I had been wondering what happened to the Z Scale Chesapeake and Ohio 40 foot boxcars (MTL artwork at right) that had been announced for pre-orders in May of last year. Well... they were cancelled, presumably due to a low quantity of those pre-orders. So, yes, it does happen, and I assume will continue to happen if pre-orders don't justify a decision to move forward.



DISCONTINUED ALERT: We're back with a full Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board this month, starting with last year's items. From March, the second number of the ADM Airslide Hopper has rolled away (098 00 102). The Celanese three compartment (three dome) tank car has emptied out (066 00 140, December). Both the "Santa Fe Santa" and Burlington Northern cabooses from last month are gone (100 00 490 and 100 00 061). Two Rio Grande items have left the building: the Scale Test Car (121 00 170, August) and the Heavyweight Diner (146 00 390, December). From November, the unlit Solar System Car for Saturn has left orbit (102 02 836) and the companion FT-A Diesel is sold out (987 01 810, December) and that means all Solar System items from last year are outta here. The BNSF Eight Pack of Center Flows is gone (993 00 819, December), as are Runner Pack #169 of four Norfolk Southern hoppers (993 00 169,

September) and the OTDX Gondola Two Pack (993 01 970, February). With respect to last year's Weathered/Graffiti items, it would be easier to tell you what's left: the Seaboard Air Line caboose (051 44 020), the Chessie Boxcar Two Pack (993 05 740), and the Swift Weathered 16 Pack (993 01 925). The "Santa's Off The Rails" train set is, well, off the rails (993 21 340, October). Finally, the BNSF/Hub containers (468 00 17x, April) are not showing on the MTL website but are advertised as still available in the January Micro-News. Do I add the Dreaded "D" or not? Decisions, decisions... Meanwhile, in Z Scale, these are sold out: both numbers of the Burlington Northern boxcar (503 00 20x, December), the 35th Anniversary Boxcar (507 00 520, March), and the 2020 Christmas Car (507 00 530, October).

From 2019 N Scale items, the Wisconsin Canned Peas refrigerator car, also known as Farm to Table #5 (049 00 840, June) is off the shelves. So is the Midwest Catsup car, Farm to Table #8 (058 00 480, September) and the second number of the Santa Fe Covered Hopper (096 00 212, November). Painter of Light series cars #3 (102 00 803, June, "Golden Gate Bridge") and #8 (102 00 808, November, "Holiday Gathering") have dried up. The Northern Pacific Heavyweight Observation (144 00 320, February) and Paired-Window Coach (145 00 321, November) have left the station. The Swift "Clean" Sixteen Pack has been packed off (993 01 920, December). In Z Scale, the NATX Weathered Tank Car Two Pack, the TTX Weathered Two Pack (994 05 230, October) and the Railbox Weathered Two Pack (994 05 240, December) are all gone, and so is the Northern Pacific Passenger Car Four Pack (994 01 250, December). Single cars which have exited include the second number of the Southern Pacific 50 foot single door boxcar (505 00 392, May), the 2019 Christmas Car (507 00 670, October) the HS Weathered/Graffiti Boxcar (510 44 440, May) and the "Halloween" ABOX Boxcar (512 44 040, September). Also, all SD40-2 locomotives are now discontinued except for the Union Pacific "Camo" Scheme (970 01 300).

The SD40-2 outs extend back into 2018, so let's start with the Z Scale items. Only two to add: the Year in Railbox Cars #10 and #11 (510 44 227 and 228, November and December) are both gone. Moving back to N Scale, there's nothing new to report.

Nothing to report with respect to N Scale 2017 items, but there are a few Z Scale releases that have sold out. Great Northern Circus Cars #6 and #10 have rolled away (501 00 260, July and 510 00 270, November). The "Birds of a Feather" Weathered Two Pack has flown off (510 44 245 and so has the BNSF Weathered x-post boxcar (511 44 192, September). The Pacific Fruit Express Refrigerator Four Pack (994 05 180, November) has also left the building. Same pattern for 2016: Just Z Scale sellouts, and make that a singular: the Chesapeake and Ohio "hobo tagged" boxcar (500 44 760, September), which closes the book on 1:220 rolling stock for the year.

Speaking of closing the books... The Liberty Railroad Train Set (993 21 030) has finally sold out. It was by far the oldest MTL item still available, going back to July 2005!

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: The N and Z Scale versions of last month's Weathered/Graffiti CP Rail boxcar with icebreaker (024 44 460 and 503 44 260) do, in fact, have graffiti on the side MTL didn't show. I'd mentioned a prototype image of the car on the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery that includes the tag "Freezer Burn!" and it's on the reverse, or should I say the featured, side of the car. The faded out Canadian Pacific Railway stepped roadname is also visible on that side, faithful to the photo of the actual car. I've also been told that **both** sides of the Canadian National Three Pack boxcars (993 05 760) have graffiti.

Our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe doesn't miss much: he noted that starting with last month's Weathered Releases, MTL began using a "weathered" piece of track under the N Scale and Z Scale single cars in their official photographs. I'm repeating the N Scale Chessie System boxcar image to illustrate this.



I knew that the Santa Fe "Santa for Safety" caboose (100 00 490) had a prototype, but I didn't have a citation. Long time UMTRR Gang Member Randy Gustafson does: it's in the Steven Priest Book **Santa Fe Waycars**. "Which has to be the most exhaustive caboose book of all time," Randy reports. "There's a color shot of it in there. All the oddballs are in there."

OOPS PATROL: The MSRP for last month's Canadian National Weathered Three-Pack (993 05 770) is \$94.95, not \$99.95.

25 YEAR LOOKBACK SPECIAL #1: In honor of 25 years of the UMTRR, this year I'm going to take a brief look back at twelve of my personal favorite releases from the past quarter-century. There's no particular rhyme or reason to these selections, other than "I liked it."

And first up is a car I've always liked. In fact, I liked it so much that I not only suggested it to Micro-Trains for a release, but I sent in material to helped them produce it. From back in March 1999, this is Micro-Trains' Catalog Number 49500, the Pacific Fruit Express wood double sheathed refrigerator car with the one-of-a-kind "coved corner" paint scheme including script lettering.



Yes, there was a prototype for this car, PFE 14760, but this decoration was deemed too complex and too expensive, and the car was soon afterwards redone into "ordinary" PFE paint. The car belonged to series 13200 to 18919, which accounted for a mere 2,973 of the total 38,296 PFE cars on the roster as of April 1928. The bingo photo for this car is on Page 137 of the book **Pacific Fruit Express**, still the definitive history of the company and its extensive roster.

SPECIAL RUN NEWS: The Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society has announced a second run of the C&O "George Washington" passenger train, again commissioned from Micro-

Trains. The paint scheme is Pullman Green with gold lettering. Included are a mail/baggage car, baggage car, paired window coach, 10-1-2 sleeper, 12-1 sleeper, diner and 3-2 observation. For more information head to chessieshop.com.

What I would call a significantly upgraded version of the CB&Q / Burlington Route unique boxcar #37000 is available from the Burlington Route Historical Society. This 40 foot steel single door boxcar was originally done as Kadee Micro-Trains Catalog Number 20130 back in January 1977. It marked the 100,000th freight car equipped with unit trucks. (That was a product of the Unit Truck Company, see their ad at right.) The HS has commissioned a Special Run of this same car. Since it's unique, it's the same

road number of course. MTL's much enhanced painting process, coupled (pun not intended) with the new lowered underframe on this car really does make this run an improvement over the initial release from 44 (!) years ago. For ordering information go to www.burlingtonroute.org/store/index.php and select "models." Their reference number is Proj-031-N. The Approximate Time Period for this car starts in July 1948 when it was painted by the Havelock Shops.



Meanwhile, the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society still has a pair of Soo Line 40 foot single door boxcars available in the 1951 scheme with large "Soo" and "Line" nearer the ends of the cars. There's a choice of Soo Line 45492, a Soo numbering series, and 137186, a Wisconsin Central numbering series, or both. (This is the previous Wisconsin Central, not the "spinoff" from 1987.) The direct URL to see these cars is store.sooline.org/catalog/index.php?cPath=46. These cars were produced in 2017 for the Trainfest show so they have the older underframes.

FINALLY, THE YEAR-END SURVEY: Hi, I'm not Casey Kasem, and here is our look back at the top quantities of releases in each of Z and N Scales for the year just past – which Shall Not Be Named. This has become an annual countdown due to popular demand. Our basis for this ranking is counting each road number as a separate release, and also each component of a train set, multi-pack or Weathered Item separately as well, including the Cyber Specials. However, I do combine subsidiary body styles together, which as we'll see is important this time around. And here we go...

In Z Scale, it's easy to generate a Top Ten because there were only ten body styles offered in the year just past! And dropping all the way from Number One last year to Number Ten is the 518 body style, the 40 foot wood refrigerator car, with just one release, which was the final entry in the Farm to Table series. Now let's get to the Top Three: At number three, with eight total releases, is the 535 series cupola caboose. It broke a tie with the 522 body style 50 foot drop end gondola when the "Cyber Special" Maintenance of Way weathered release was

issued. At Number Two, taking a long jump into the runner-up spot, is the 503 body style, the 40 foot boxcar without running board. Some people call them roofwalks... And the Number One Body Style is probably not a surprise to anyone who's followed The Year In Railbox Part Two, but let's not leave out eight **other** releases on this car type! It's the 50 foot exterior post single door boxcar, MTL body style 510.

How did the companion body style in N Scale do this year? We'll find out after recapping the Top Three in 1:160 from 2019. At Number Three was the 045 body style 50 foot fishbelly side flat car, in the Number Two slot, helped along by a sixteen-pack at the end of the year, was the 058 body style 36 foot wood sheathed refrigerator car, and the Number One entry was the Husky Stack Well car, body style 135.

Now, let's check out the top five body styles in N Scale...

Vocal up: "Number Five!"

At Number Five we have a veteran at the MTL factory, first released back in 1994. Three Bay Center Flows with trough hatches were big again, with that 094 body style coming in with a total of sixteen releases.

2019's Number Two body style hit that chart on the strength of a sixteen pack. Well, the 518 body style, the 36 foot wood refrigerator car, does it again, again with a sixteen pack of Swift cars that debuted in January, weathered this time. Add a "Grape to Glass" car and you've got seventeen in all, good enough for a tie at Number Four. Also with seventeen releases is the body style that was Number One on the Z Scale Chart, the fifty foot exterior post boxcar with single door. In N, it's the 025 body style.

And now an MT40 Extra: A song that captures the reason why the 102 body style, in its different forms, is all alone at Number Three. From the **Trouble In Shangri-la** album, here's Stevie Nicks with "Planets of the Universe." The 102 sixty foot excess height boxcar had 22 releases, of which sixteen were in the Solar System Series under the 1028 subseries.

At Number Two we have the 110 series fifty-four foot general service tank cars, led by the two big DPRX eight packs released in October. There were sixteen cars right there, plus another seven during the rest of the year for a total of twenty-three.

Before we get to the pinnacle position of the countdown, let's check the tops of the other charts. Number One on the Passenger Car Chart is the new 160 single window coach, with eleven different releases. Number One on the Locomotive Chart is the 987 series of FT-A Powered Diesels. And Number One on the Container Chart is the 468 body style, 48 foot "ribside" container. (And yes, there **is** only one position on those last two charts!)

And that brings us to the top of the N Scale release chart, and it's quite a surprise. Not a box car, tank car, or even a Center Flow. At Number One for the year whose name we still shall not mention...

(Drum roll...)

With twenty-four releases, it's the 105 series fifty foot gondola! Multi-packs and tie loaders helped break the tie with the 110 series tank cars. It's the first time that a basic gondola has topped the chart.

And there you have it... the top releases for the past year. Join me next time when we count down the big body styles for 2021. Will the Solar System take control, will TBOX cars rule the day, or will something else jump into the top of the chart? We'll all find out together. Until then, we'll have our regular rundown of the releases next month. Do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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