

UMTRR

25 Years 1996-2021

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report

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Hello again everyone! The shortest month of the year does not mean the smallest quantity of Micro-Trains news. To those who were wondering if there would be an addition to the Presidential Car Series, the answer is Yes, but you do need to pre-order it this month. If you were interested in what the initial car in the “Sweet Liquid Series” would be, you’ll know. Had enough of wood ties and loaders already? Have we got a deal for you... well, I mean, MTL does. And if you thought that the Micro-Mouse was limited to Christmas Cars only, well, surprise! Off we go...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



020 00 277, \$26.40.

Reporting Marks: TP&W 1001.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Toledo, Peoria and Western.

Olive green with yellow lettering including large “T” “P” and stylized “W” at top left (with olive green ampersand “&” inside the peak of the “W” and reporting marks and small roadname at bottom right. Red and yellow diamond herald below stylized “W” on left. Approximate Time Period: 1961 (based on service date on car) to 1980 in revenue service, and to at least 1985 in company service after that. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. This car is not on Micro-Trains dealer standing orders.

Unlike the TAG Route cars last month, MTL has officially announced this as a “Regional Railroad” release (we’ll get to the other one in the Reprints section). The Toledo, Period and Western qualifies in my book as a regional railroad even though it was only somewhat over 200 route miles long. It’s where those miles were that made a difference: between Effner, Indiana on the east and Keokuk, Iowa and Warsaw, Illinois on the west, passing through Peoria, Illinois in the process and connecting with every line that crossed along the way... **and** the Federal Barge Lines in Peoria. In February 1963 according to the Official Guide of the Railways, those lines were the Santa Fe, Burlington, Rock Island, Chicago and Eastern Illinois, Chicago and Illinois Midland, Chicago and North Western (the former Minneapolis and St. Louis), Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, Illinois Central, Illinois Terminal, New York Central, Nickel Plate, Peoria Terminal, Peoria and Pekin Union, Pennsylvania, and Wabash. That made the TP&W a bridge route between east and west, skipping Chicagoland in favor of a much less congested Peoria.

The TP&W started with the same initials but a different name, the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw, in 1863, although there was a predecessor which started construction in 1855. The line was reorganized as the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad in 1880, was briefly leased to the Wabash, and in 1887 became the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railway. In 1918 the TP&W was affiliated with the Pennsylvania Railroad, effectively pushing the Pennsy across the Mississippi River into Keokuk, Iowa. A direct interchange with the Santa Fe at Lomax, Illinois was one advantage of this arrangement for the PRR. By the time the boxcar MTL modeled was serviced, the TP&W was half owned by each of the Pennsylvania and the Santa Fe, a transaction that took place in 1960.

Relatively speaking, the TP&W didn't have that much rolling stock, but they certainly experimented with paint schemes on what they did have. This is an almost unique example; according to Micro-Trains only two boxcars were done in this scheme. Does this make a bingo photo unlikely? Well, yes, but there are two! They were taken thirteen days apart in November 1985 and posted to RRPictureArchives.net. The car is no longer in interchange service and has an "M W X" stencil to the left of the door. So if you're modeling anything other than the line's East Peoria, Illinois yard, the Approximate Time Period ends before the photo date. I'll also note here that the real 1001 has a different side sill and different ends than the MTL 020 body style.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1962 is the closest I have to the January 1961 service date on the car. (It's the last line of the larger dimensional data set at the bottom right.) The TP&W listing there shows three cars numbered 1000 to 1002, listed simply as "Box, Steel" with these key dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 9 feet 11 inches, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening an unusual 7 feet 3 inches, and capacity 3705 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There is a bit of a "door thing" here with the MTL model having a six foot door opening. All three cars are listed in the April 1970 ORER and in July 1980 Register, however they're not in the April 1981 Register which is just three issues later. So we have a pretty tight end of the ATP for the cars being in revenue service. I also went backwards in the ORERs from the service date on the car. The next previous Equipment Register I have is from January 1959; the three cars aren't shown. So it looks like we have a pretty tight start to the ATP as well.

We'll continue the TP&W story below in the "N Scale Reprints" section.



065 00 126 and 065 00 127, \$27.70 each.

Reporting Marks: SP 62857 and 62903.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Cars, Southern Pacific.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, diamond S insignia on dome, and gothic roadname on right.

Approximate Time Period: late 1950s (renumbering, see text) or 1964 (service date on cars) into the 1980s.

According to the Railgoat website, cars with these road numbers were in the SP's Class O-50-13, built in 1942 and of 12,000 gallons capacity. (The MTL 065 body style represents a 10,000 gallon car.) They were initially numbered 58575 to 58774 then were renumbered 62798 to 62995. There are a few photos of the class on the Railgoat's page (www.railgoat.railfan.net) but no bingos. So... to figure out the ATP, all I need to do is check the ORER Stash to see when the renumbering started, right? It's possible since the SP did include their tank cars in ORER listings, and certainly would do so with these cars in revenue service hauling sugar. Hey, wait, shouldn't these be in the "Sweet Liquid Series" in that case? Never mind...

Anyway, the January 1953 Equipment Register has all 200 possible cars in the 58575 to 58774 series, so no ATP start there. And no renumbering yet in the January 1955 ORER either. By January 1958, however, there are just 30 cars left in the old series and 168 have been renumbered into the 62798 to 62995 set. In the January 1962 Register, five remain in the old series and 189 are in the new one. Close enough. I suppose I could have simply gone with the service date on the MTL models, which is August 1964, but what fun would that be?

Moving forward to the April 1970 Register, there were 167 total cars in service. Up to this point these cars were listed in a separate short table, but for this listing, a 42 foot 3 inch outside length and 14 foot 3 inch extreme height is given. It's back to a small table in the April 1975 ORER, where the main series is shown with 72 cars and 31 exceptions called out for liquid sugar service are listed. The 62857 and 62903 aren't in that set of exceptions, however, unless you've got friends with ORERs they won't be able to argue with you about keeping that "S" on the dome. In the July 1980 book, the count is down to 52 in the main series and 9 sugar service exceptions. It might be worth calling the ATP there as in January 1985 there is a group of 9000 gallon cars numbered 62246 to 62995, and only 29 of those to boot, down from 42 in the April 1984 Register. The latest photo of this class of cars on the Railgoat site is SP 62857 as of March 1992, and yes, it still has the "S" for Sugar Service. But we can easily beat that with a March 2010 bingo on SP 68257, and it also still has the "S" on the dome. But the hazardous materials placard has a UN code of 1993, which is definitely not liquid sugar! 1993 translates to "Flammable Liquids, N.O.S." and I presume "N.O.S." further translates to "Not Otherwise Specified." I don't think sugar syrup counts!

One final question: how different are these two cars from the previous release of SP "sugar syrup" tank cars? These were Catalog 65332, a three-pack from June 1992 with Road Numbers 62701, 62842 and 62902, then Catalog 065 00 331 and 332, Road Numbers 62670 and 62937, from March 2012 (MTL image at right). I think that there could be a difference in the size of the "S"

on the dome, and there is a difference in the dimensional data including the service date (none on the first three pack, July 1970 on the follow-on virtual two pack, and August 1964 on these two new releases. Also, the "For Liquid Sugar Loading" wording below the reporting marks is new to this pair. So, "Not A New Release?" We'll leave that up to the reader.





065 00 136, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: SLAX 49104.

39 Foot Tank Car, Bee Hive Corn Syrup / St. Lawrence Starch Company.

Car #1 in the "Sweet Liquid Series" (Pre-order announcement last September).

Yellow and blue tank, blue underframe, black

trucks. Blue lettering on yellow section of tank and yellow lettering on blue section of tank. Company name (blue) and reporting marks (yellow) on left. "Bee Hive" (blue) "Corn Syrup" (yellow) on right. Approximate Time Period: 1950 to 1987. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary.

Let's start with the bingo photo, which is not where you might expect it! Page 122 of the **Canadian Railways Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume One** is the place I found the image of the real SLAX 49104, taken in Smith's Falls, Ontario in the summer of 1970. The 49104 was one of just four cars built by Canadian Car and Foundry in 1949, each with a capacity of 8476 imperial gallons or 10,171 U.S. gallons, pretty close to the MTL 065 body style which is based on a General American 10,000 gallon car. The caption gives us as good of an Approximate Time Period as we are likely to get: 1950 to 1987. The end of that ATP is reinforced by a caption on another car in the employ of St. Lawrence Starch: "This company owned tank cars between 1936 and 1987." We'll take it, although that doesn't prove the blue and yellow paint scheme was on this car its entire service life. I'd invoke Rule #1 if necessary ("It's your railroad").

The Approximate Service Area might be another handy place to invoke Rule #1. The plant from which the cars shipped corn syrup was in the village of Port Credit, Ontario, on the north shore of Lake Ontario. That locality is now part of the sprawling metropolitan suburb of Mississauga, which adjoins Toronto to the southwest. I don't know how far away from there the four cars ventured, perhaps to bakeries or other food manufacturers in the Greater Toronto Area, perhaps a bit more distant. At least once the 49104 made it to Smith's Falls, location of the bingo photo. That's a bit south of Ottawa, and some 350 kilometers west/northwest of Port Credit, but still North of the Border with the United States.

The "Heritage Mississauga" website provides a short history of The St. Lawrence Starch Company Limited. It was founded in 1890 by four partners, each with a specialty and experience that would be useful for running a starch concern. "Production focused on corn wet milling and processes consisted of grinding steeps of corn, drying the starch and transporting by horse and wagon. The location provided a close proximity to the main East West line of Grand Trunk Railway. Access to Lake Ontario also gave the company fresh and clean water resources." That gives me the impression that Bee Hive Corn Syrup was a by-product, not the main concern. Here's a fun fact: the company was the first entity to have telephone service in Port Credit. "For many years the phone number had simply been '1'." The operation shut down in 1990 and was demolished in 1993 for parkland and residences. A picture of the plant as it existed in 1952 shows a complex that would make for a nice industrial switching layout (URL heritagemississauga.com/business/st-lawrence-starch/, no "www").



099 00 250, \$29.90.

Reporting Marks: NSRX 307.

Three Bay Covered Hopper, Jack Frost Cane Sugar (National Sugar Refining).

Blue and white sides, blue ends, white roof.

Red "Jack Frost" across white part of side.

White lettering otherwise in blue part of side including reporting marks on left and "Cane Sugar" below "Jack" and "Frost" respectively. Multicolor ACI Label right of center. Approximate Time Period: sometime after 1956 (build date) or strictly speaking, after 1967 given ACI Label, to early 1980s.

Given this car, the first Sweet Liquid Series car and the two Southern Pacific tank cars in sugar service, it's a wonder that the folks behind the red and yellow sign aren't all lined up at their friendly neighborhood dentist by now. I'll lazily reprint myself here from the September 2019 UMTRR with respect to the company history: The National Sugar Refining Company was one part of the infamous "Sugar Trust," which had the market under virtually complete control in the late 1800s and the early part of the 1900s. Well after that trust was broken up, National Sugar Refining obtained the Jack Frost brand through its takeover of the Pennsylvania Sugar Company in 1941. National Sugar was taken private in 1975 and went bankrupt in 1984. The Philadelphia plant where Jack Frost Cane Sugar was manufactured is now the site of the Sugar House Casino. Meanwhile, the Jack Frost trademark is apparently owned by a small sugar company in Buffalo, New York.

I also noted that there have been plenty of depictions of the company's fifty covered hoppers... probably more than fifty different models across the various model railroading scales, now that I think about it. I already know that the National Sugar registration disappeared from the ORER between the April 1981 and April 1984 editions, which gives us the end of the Approximate Time Period. (The 307 is in the April 1981 registration, I checked.) The build date on the car, January 1954, should be the beginning of the widest ATP possible, but mind that ACI Label which gives us a "strictly speaking" ATP beginning no earlier than 1967 when that car identification plate was introduced.

In the January 1958 Equipment Register, the "block" listing for the National Sugar Refining Company—found way at the end of the private owner section of the book—has four sets of covered hoppers described, each in a paragraph as opposed to a row in a table. The set numbered 300 to 320 had an inside length of 41 feet $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, outside length 47 feet $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, height to top of running board 13 feet $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, and capacity 2442 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. These cars were insulated. Does sugar freeze? The home points for these cars were Butler, Johnstown, Milton, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; and Long Island City, New York.

A undated bingo photo of the 307 available on northeast.railfan.net (look under "Colorful Rolling Stock") illustrates what the dimensions reveal: the prototype was a fair bit less tall and less long than the MTL 099 body style. In fact, I'd be hard pressed to say whether any widely available model in any scale (including for example the Atlas First Generation N Scale release!)

is going to satisfy the more particular railroader. Meanwhile, here's something else I tripped over: Pullman-Standard delivered these covered hoppers and ones in the NSRX 330 to 339 series without any roof hatches! This information accompanies photos of NSRX 310 and 338 over on the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery, along with "Installed After Delivery." They were also painted in plain gray with simple black reporting marks, with nary a Jack Frost to be found. That probably impacts the start of the ATP so I added a "sometime after" the build date. Sister car NSRX 308, in blue and white with the "Jack Frost" character on the far right, was found in 1962 near Kent Avenue in Brooklyn; that photo is on RailcarPhotos.com. It looks like it has just six small hatches on the roof.



106 00 140, \$25.90.

Reporting Marks: NP 57515.

50 Foot 14 Panel Steel Gondola with Low Cover, Northern Pacific.

Black (including cover) with white lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname across center. Multicolor ACI Label on right. Approximate Time Period: 1965, or strictly speaking, after 1967 given ACI Label, into the 1990s.

"These big covered gondolas built in November, 1965 may have been the first NP cars to wear the large block lettering," reads the caption with the bingo photo for the 57515 on Page 82 of the **NP Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The image is from January 1977. It shows the ACI Label and instructions to return the car to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, obsolete but probably still useful after the CB&Q and NP both went into the Burlington Northern in 1970. Yes, it is a 14 panel steel gondola with cover, but given the end view it looks taller than the MTL 106 body style.

A check of the ORER for January 1967 shows how large this series of gondolas, numbered 57511 to 57530, actually were. I'll start with the inside height of 5 feet 6 inches, a fair bit more than most gondolas at the time. The inside length was 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 8 inches, outside length 60 feet 8 inches, extreme height 9 feet 4 inches (counting the cover), and capacity 2791 cubic feet or 185,000 pounds. All twenty of these cars went over to the Burlington Northern according to the April 1970 Equipment Register. Three of these, including the 57515, had the weight capacity reduced from 180,000 pounds to 175,000 pounds. In the April 1976 ORER we learn why this occurred: the three gondolas were fitted with movable wood bulkheads, which took away capacity. They were reclassified GBSR and placed in aluminum service. All twenty cars in the group were still in service at that time. The car count was down to nine including the 57515 in the April 1981 Equipment Register, and four in the July 1989 ORER. The 57515 wasn't among those four left, meaning the ATP was over no later for that particular car no later than then, and it's possible that the covers had been lifted as well (pun intended) since they're not mentioned in the description. For the record, though, two of the original twenty made it all the way to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe merger and are shown in the July 1998 ORER. That's where I stopped looking.



108 00 410, \$28.90.

Reporting Marks: CR 492182.

100 Ton Three Bay Open Hopper, Conrail.

Brown with mostly white lettering including small roadname and herald at top left and reporting marks on left. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel

on right. Gray "hopper topper" cover included. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date) to 1992 with the "hopper topper," otherwise into the early decade of the 2000s.

In June 2018, when Micro-Trains released the B&O/Chessie System three bay hopper with "Hopper Topper" (Catalog 108 00 240, Road Number 186675, at right) I noted that Conrail had tried a similar experiment. And here's an example. I'll quote directly



from the website of the Conrail Historical Society: "Conrail's H1G class was built by the Chessie at their Raceland, Kentucky shops. 130 H1Gs were equipped with the ill-fated Hopper Toppers and given the AAR designation HTR so they could alternate between coal and grain service as-needed. While the program was not a success, it is a testament to Conrail's resourcefulness." Roster shots of several of H1G cars equipped with Hopper Toppers are available on that site, but for the bingo we go to Page 82 of the **Conrail Color Guide to Freight Equipment**. The 492182 in its "Tupperware" version was found in March 1985. "As it turned out, the first time the roofs were removed was also the last. They were never reapplied." That was a consequence of grain service tailing off and coal service picking back up, "and the Tupperware lids met their demise." Can I find an ATP for these cars? I don't know when the roof was pulled or when it was applied, although the time with a roof clearly includes March 1985. The car has a New date of October 1979 which means it wouldn't be any earlier than that.

We get some help from the ORER for July 1980. (The cars are not in the January 1978 Register.) The series 491890 to 492245 consists of 406 ordinary hoppers with AAR Designation HT, **plus** another 130 in a subset which are described as "Hopper, Steel, Self Clearing, Equipped With SFRP Covers (Grain), H1g" and have AAR Designation HTR. The 492182 is one of those 130 cars. The dimensions with and without the "SFRP Cover" are the same: inside length 45 feet, outside length 48 feet 9 inches, extreme height 12 feet 3 inches, and capacity 3432 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. I might take exception to the extreme height being identical for both sets since it's fairly clear that the "Hopper Topper" adds some height.

So, all I need to do now is follow along with the ORERs until I don't see any more exceptions with the covers. There were still 106 in the January 1986 Register, and the 492182 is one of them. By the way, I did catch that Conrail put covers on a few of their other hoppers as well, but not adding up nearly to this group. There were 89 hoppers with covers in July 1989, still including the 492182, plus 447 H1G open hoppers. Considering that it was "ill-fated" I really expected the covers to be all gone by 1989... but no. There are still 65 in October 1991 and

again in July 1992. Aha! Off the roster no later than the next ORER in the Research Accumulation, October 1993. Well, as long as I'm surrounded by Equipment Registers all over the floor, might as well see how the H1Gs without covers fared. There were 530 total in October 1993, 528 in April 1997 and 516 in April 1998. The April 1999 ORER shows the split between cars with CR reporting marks, which went to Norfolk Southern, and NYC reporting marks, which went to CSX. 398 cars were in the CR series 491890 to 492245, and 174 were in the NYC series 491890 to 492420, adding a few road numbers there. Kind of interesting that most of the cars built by the Chessie did not wind up on the CSX roster following the split of Conrail equipment between NS and CSX! It looks like Norfolk Southern put some effort into restenciling these H1Gs, as the car count of 377 in January 2000 was all the way down to 12 in October 2004.



111 00 420, \$56.90.

Reporting Marks: BNSF 300863.

Enclosed Auto Rack, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

Orange flat car and rack with white roof and aluminum panels. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Rack reporting marks (BNSF 28963) on left of rack. Red and black "wedge" or "swoosh" herald on right of racking. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along side of flat car. Black lettering on white top of ends. Approximate Time Period: 2017 (build date) to present.

The first ORER in the Research Accumulation in which I can see these cars is January 2018, given the 2015 build date (my next previous Register is April 2013). The 300863 was part of a set of 1200 cars numbered 300700 to 301899, the first half of which have AAR Car Type Code V918 and the second half code V915. The second translates to "Vehicular Flat Cars, Bi-level rack, single unit, fully enclosed with doors and roof, Low level, Extreme Height: 18 feet 10 inches to 19 feet 1 inch, Doors: Full height, Tri-Fold and the first, in which we're interested, is "Vehicular Flat Cars, Bi-level rack, single unit, fully enclosed with doors and roof, Low level, Extreme Height: 18 feet 10 inches to 19 feet 1 inch, Doors: Full height, Seal Safe Radial." The short version is a difference in the end doors. But the point is that the prototype is a bi-level car. Micro-Trains stopped calling the 111 body style a "tri-level" car years ago. I suppose I should update my table of body styles. I didn't come up with a bingo on RailcarPhotos, but I do see that the few cars in the 300800s are captioned as being built by TrinityRail as their Job F16059A from March to September 2017. The racks were Job F17008. Oh, wait, two of the three

cars are also described as tri-level cars, specifically, BNSF 300847 and 300876, and the 300863 is right in the middle of those two road numbers.

We get one number away with a tagged BNSF 300864 captured in May 2019 by our own Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe. That photo is on RRPictureArchives.net. One difference I'll note between all of these cars and the MTL model is the pattern in the vandal panels. The prototypes have, from top to bottom, four sets of four narrow corrugations and a single wide corrugation. The MTL 111 body style panel has... well, you can see from the product image above. Wrapping up this coverage, last October's ORER has 1164 of the possible 1200 cars in the series.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



147 00 390, \$29.95.

Road Number: 742 (will be "D&RGW 742" in website listings).

Heavyweight Baggage Car, 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, "Baggage" in center, "Railway Express Agency" on right, and road number at bottom left and bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1940s based on paint scheme to at least 1963 for this particular car.

Not every Rio Grande passenger car received the attractive gold and silver paint in a timely manner. Witness the 742, still painted in Pullman Green as of early 1963, as seen on Page 23 of the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. It was one of a group of five Baggage-Express cars numbered 740 to 744. According to the **Color Guide**, they were originally built for Western Pacific service back in 1910, as combination buffet-library cars (and that's a new configuration on me), then rebuilt into 70 foot baggage cars in 1920. A 1967 photo on the same page of the **Color Guide** shows sister car 743 in the later gold and silver paint scheme.

The use of four-wheel passenger trucks is correct: from the original five, the 740, 741 and 742 had their original trucks swapped out for hand-me-downs from circa-1910 coaches. The lettering on the MTL model aligns with the prototype as pictured. There are different width doors with differing window arrangements from the MTL 147 body style.



147 00 410, \$33.90.

Road Number: 307 (will be "C&O 307" in website listings).

Heavyweight Baggage Car, 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 and “Baggage” at bottom center in gray band. Small yellow star in center and small “C&O for Progress” herald at one end (see text). Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1950, or strictly speaking, 1954, to at least the early 1960s.

The bingo photo on Page 15 of the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** reveals an interesting detail similar to the “Fun With Multimarks” on certain CP Rail equipment. I’ve confirmed that this detail has been modeled on the MTL car. As usual, it’s a little hard to explain. The “C&O For Progress” herald appears on the right hand end of the side of the car in the MTL image. On the side we don’t see, the herald appears on the left hand end of the side of the car. Put another way, if you were looking down on the car, both heralds would be at the same end.

The 307 was part of the series C&O 306 to 317, built by Pullman-Standard in the 1920s according to the **Color Guide**. It was 73 feet 9 inches long over the buffers. While the car did have two different width baggage doors, those doors had one or two windows each as opposed to the four and five windows each on the model. The use of six-wheel trucks is appropriate. That little star just about dead center of the car meant that the car could accommodate a messenger, which is a nice way of saying it had toilet facilities. You’ll also note that this car has a balloon roof, unlike the Rio Grande baggage car pictured above which has the more traditional roof style. Nice catch by the folks in Talent as that balloon roof is a lot closer to the prototype car.

The photo in the **Color Guide** was taken in July 1961 so we know that the 307 lasted at least that long. As noted last month, the C&O’s “tri-color” paint scheme was introduced in 1950, and the “straight line” herald (meaning that the line over “For Progress” is straight and not wavy) was used beginning in 1954. So we have a rough guide to the ATP.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



020 00 717, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: TP&W 7049.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Toledo, Peoria & Western.

Green and yellow sides, green ends and roof. Yellow and green lettering including large “T.P.& W.” on left, reporting marks, small roadname and “The Progressive

Way” slogan on right. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (service date on car) to 1974. Previous Release (as Catalog Number 020 00 716): Road Number 7069, May 2005.

Although, as we’ll see, it’s not contemporaneous with the ATP of this car, let’s continue the story of the TP&W that I started in my coverage of the New Release boxcar above. We left off

with the Pennsylvania and Santa Fe taking joint control of the line in 1960. When the Pennsy yielded to Penn Central and then Conrail, the use for the TP&W diminished. In fact, the TP&W had to purchase the Effner to Logansport, Indiana branch of the former Pennsylvania Railroad to keep it from being abandoned. Conrail then closed the Logansport interchange anyway in 1981. By that time, however, the TP&W was a fully owned subsidiary of the Santa Fe, which officially merged the line on the last day of 1983.

That didn't last long: in February 1989 the Santa Fe sold the Lomax, Illinois to Logansport, Indiana line to a group of investors, who revived the TP&W name. Control then went to an unlikely suitor: the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway, through its Delaware Otsego Corporation. RailAmerica purchased it in 1999, and Genesee and Wyoming got it when it bought RailAmerica in 2012. The familiar orange and black diesels of the G&W "system" operate over the part of the TP&W that isn't "and Western," as the Keokuk Junction had picked up the Keokuk to Peoria portion of the company's mainline.

Now, back to this month's reprint, which is actually a very minor "not a reprint" from the May 2005 release (MTL official image at right). The differences are the use of yellow stirrups and the inclusion of the "fine print" at the top left of the side, showing that the cars are owned by the Continental Illinois National Bank (speaking of "fallen flags"- when it went under in 1984, it was the largest bank failure in United States history!). Present on both versions at the bottom right is the logo of United States Railroad Equipment, indicating a likely sale, refurbish and leaseback.



I'm able to more precisely start the Approximate Time Period with the addition of the January 1967 ORER to the Research Accumulation since the first run of this car was released. The series 7000 to 7099 is simply "Box, All Steel" with AAR Classification XM and these vital statistics: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, height from rail 14 feet 5 inches (for some reason, the extreme height isn't given), door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3898 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were all 100 cars in the group as of that listing. Through additional ORERs added to my pile, I can also more precisely end the ATP: 95 cars in the July 1974 and zero in April 1975. I suspect this is a "return to lessor" situation.

The bingo photo for the 7049 is an "in-motion" view over on the Fallen Flags website, taken in Sterling, Ohio on the Baltimore and Ohio in June 1966. The car certainly looks freshly painted! Also on Fallen Flags is a straight on shot of sister car TP&W 7088, in glorious black and white. As I noted in the May 2005 coverage of the first run of this car, there are cars from other series painted like this one, but with an addition that would certainly be considered insensitive today: a caricature of a Native American smoking a peace pipe. A photo on RRPictureArchives has a closeup of that logo as shown on boxcar TP&W 5067; see if you agree with me on the lack of political correctness. It's not surprising, then, that MTL would select a boxcar that doesn't have this particular feature.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #175 (993 00 175, \$114.95), of four Pacific Fruit Express 40 foot steel ice refrigerator cars with Preco Fans, is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in last September's UMTRR. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 059 51 586, 20043; 059 52 586, 20047; 059 53 586, 20051; and 059 54 586, 20056. These are the first through fourth releases of this item, which hasn't been previously released.

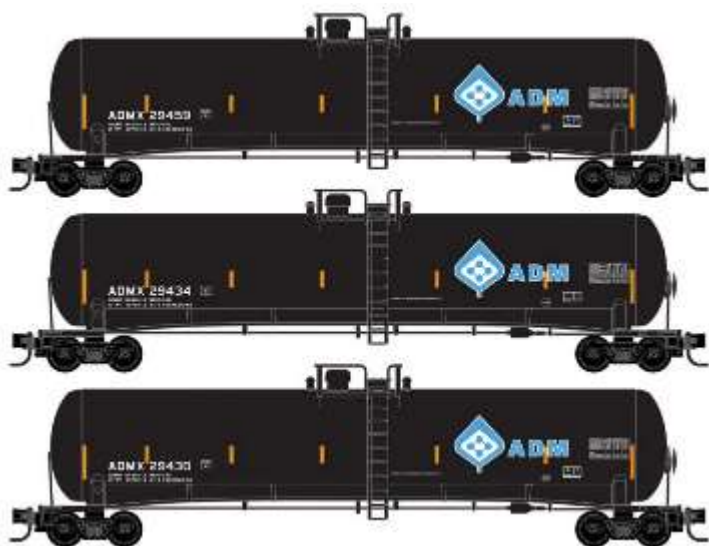


Also, the **CSXT Three Pack of "TBOX" cars** (993 01 860, \$119.95) is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the April 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 123 51 030, 173565; 123 52 030, 173572; and 123 53 030, 173576. These are the first through third releases for this car. "TBOX" is so much shorter than "60 Foot Exterior Post High Cube Boxcar with Double Plug Doors." Remember, these sets are already completely spoken for so you will need to "Contact Dealer." The note MTL issued with respect to the TTX TBOX cars being made to pre-orders applies here as well, as well as to the next two scheduled (CN and TTX Version 2).



Meanwhile, Runner Pack #173, the four CSXT gondolas with coil covers (993 00 163, \$109.95), was shifted from last month's delivery schedule to next month's, based on an update on the MTL website. And the Great Northern Eight Pack of 40 foot boxcars (993 00 820, \$219.95) has moved out from January to April, also according to the MTL website. Also, the Atlantic Coast Line Heavyweight Passenger Five Pack (993 02 080, \$149.95) has also shifted out to April and has the "Contact Dealer" banner too, meaning all of those sets are already committed.

*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 **February 28**.*



Projected Delivery July 2021:

993 00 180, \$109.95.

Reporting Marks: ADMX 29430, 29434, 29459.

Runner Pack #180, quantity three of MTL 110 Series 54 Foot General Service Tank Cars, ADM (Archer-Daniels-Midland).

Black with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and tank qualification stencil on right. Blue and white "Molecule" logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on right. Yellow vertical conspicuity stripes at points along tank. Approximate Time

Period: 2005 (based on conspicuity stripes) to mid-decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release.

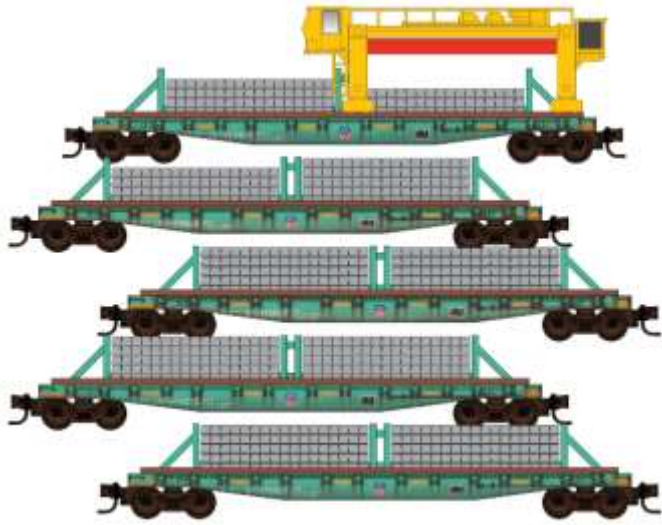
The Molecule is back! It was previously seen on MTL tank cars on only the second release on this body style, back in October 2001 (Catalog 110020, Road Number 29866, at right) and then reprinted in May 2009 (Catalog 110 00 020, Road Number 29867, yes, the next road number in sequence). The details will be different on these "Molecule" tank cars; for one thing, the use of conspicuity stripes wasn't yet required in 2001. And it really has been almost twenty years since the initial release of this car. The quantities of tank cars Micro-Trains has been releasing lately shows that the market is hardly saturated for this body style.



But I digress. Runner Pack #137, released three years ago, consisted of a trio of ADM tank cars with the later "Leaf" logo, which was introduced in 2001. Versions of the "Molecule" logo go back as far as 1962, which these tank cars do not. However, the road numbers for these forthcoming cars, 29430, 29434, and 29459, mesh nicely with the three ADMX cars in Runner Pack #137, which carried road numbers 29453, 29455, and 29456. Same prototype series? Yep!

And as with Runner Pack #137, given conspicuity stripes, the first stop is the January 2006 ORER to find the series ADMX 29051 to 29900 in the registry of ADM Transportation Company. Information is sparse: 263,000 pounds Gross Rail Weight (that's car plus lading), description "Tank," AAR Type Code "T103" and car count 808. Perhaps the most interesting item in the overall listing is that TTX Company served as the agent for repair billing for ADM's fleet, which was over fourteen thousand cars at the time. That was still true in the October 2014 Equipment Register, when 763 cars were in service.

But then... screeching halt. The January 2018 ORER shows this series completely out of the ADM registration. Not what I would have expected! So “to present” is **not** where we are going with this Approximate Time Period. Although not a statistically valid sample, all of the photos of cars in this series posted to RailcarPhotos.com date to 2016 or before. Most of these have the “Molecule” as well.



Projected Delivery July 2021:

993 02 170, \$169.95.

Reporting Marks: UP 915645, 915649, 915657, 915675, 915697.

Union Pacific Weathered Concrete Tie Five Pack.

Consists of five MTL 045 series 50 Foot Flat Cars with Fishbelly Sides. Each car is green with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Small red, white and blue UP Shield herald in center. White on black double COTS panel on right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along cars. Light to moderate weathering. Directly

from Micro-Trains is the load description: “Concrete tie loads will be resin cast. Loader will be a combination of 3D printed and laser board parts and will come painted with decals for cab windows and exhaust vent, but not assembled. Loader rail will be painted laserboard and load supports will be painted 3D parts. Connecting crossover rail pieces will be included for static display use.” Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present. Previous Releases: None. Preliminary MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary.

Tired of those same old wood tie loader packs? Looking for something more modern and up to date? Well, have we got a deal for you: a concrete tie loader pack. These are way out of my model railroad’s time period... or are they? According to the Wikipedians, the concrete “sleeper” was patented in England in 1877, was first used on the Alford and Sutton Tramway in 1884, and was first used in the United States on the Reading Railroad... in 1896! There are advantages and disadvantages of concrete versus wooden ties. They need less maintenance and are fire proof, but they also weigh a lot more and therefore require more ballast, and they don’t absorb train vibrations which can lead to cracking and failure. The L. B. Foster company has a brochure describing its line of CXT (not “CSXT”!) concrete ties, including those available for turnouts, at www.lbfoster.com/perch/resources/cxttiesbrochurelowres.pdf.

Prototype photos of Union Pacific flat cars in this general number series on Fallen Flags show them with and without the concrete tie payloads. The cars have end, not side, brake wheels and also appear to be longer than the MTL 045 body style. The latest of these photos is from 2014 so we know we’re good at least that long. I also get all around but not to the exact car numbers Micro-Trains chose over on RailcarPhotos, but I do see that UP 915676, one number away, is described as having an outside length of 67 feet. The two concrete tie stacks are five high by twenty wide, if you’re keeping score.

And then there are another 38 photos of cars in the number group UP 915600 to 915699 on RRPictureArchives. Obviously I again started with the wrong prototype photo website since there is a bingo for the 915645 from June 2003, and two for the 915675 from July and December 2012 and from Alorton, Illinois and Dallas, Texas respectively. So these cars do, or did, get around the UP system. And finally there's a shot of UP 915697 as of the last day of 2012, also in Dallas. No luck on photos of the actual concrete tie loader, however. While searching on the phrase "Union Pacific concrete tie loader," I did come across a February 2014 video of Union Pacific train 4226 West which consisted exclusively of flat cars loaded with concrete ties. The three minute clip is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=qL0b8RNYWbE. No loader, though. There was no loader in the consist of the two other video clips I came across, either.

Finally, I found this: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW8NwJwzEWI, a twelve minute video which shows actual tie unloading. The unloader, built by HARSCO and looking quite like the MTL rendering, traveled the length of the train and brought one set of ties at a time into position for a crane to work with. That crane grabbed and dropped three ties at a time trackside. A diesel pushed the entire train along to enable the placement of ties along the track. Gee, I don't know how this video hasn't gone viral with the general public...

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



993 05 800, \$57.95.

Reporting Marks: BNSF 935017 and 935020. BNSF Buffer Car Two Pack.

Consists of two 51 Foot Rivet Side Mechanical Refrigerator cars (Individual Catalog Numbers 069 51 260 and 069 52 260). Each car's base colors are orange with aluminum roof and blue door. Black lettering including large circle cross on left and either large roadname on left (one side of the 935017) or "Ship and Travel" slogan on right (other side of the 935017 and both sides

of the 935020). Black restenciled reporting marks on aluminum patch panel on left. The 935017 has heavy dirt effects and orange patch panels. The 935020 has extensive weathering obscuring most of the lettering. Approximate Time Period: Decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: None.

Runner Pack #167 (example car at right), released in June 2020, was **not** the source for these cars. Yes, the "Ship and Travel" paint scheme has been done on an MTL mechanical refrigerator, but the ribside version.





However, take a look at the opposite side of the 935017 (at left). Did someone get really mixed up at the Santa Fe's paint shop? I did not find a bingo photo to confirm this side, but Trainweb.org does have a image of the other side of the prototype 935017. More specifically, it's on "Tom Fassett's

MOW Equipment Page" (www.trainweb.org/tomfassett/pics2/mow_spec.html). It was found in Goffs, California, circa June 2000. The car is, or was, clearly a mechanical refrigerator, though I'd peg the MTL 069 body style more towards a "stand in" for it. Its car class had been changed to Bx-204, the result of a 1979 rebuild of 34 RR-61 refrigerator cars into boxcars. These cars were used in grain service. When rebuilt in 1979 these cars received Santa Fe road numbers 280148 to 280181. The book **Santa Fe Freight Cars In Color Volume One** has images of 280160 and 280158, taken in 1979 and 1980 respectively. At that time the cars were already missing their running boards, so that's a delta to the MTL 069 body style. Removing them, plugging the holes in the roof, and touching up the weathering would be relatively simple.

The same Trainweb page also has a picture of BNSF 935020 from June 2000. Meanwhile, there is a shot of that same car, looking quite forlorn in Saginaw, Texas in October 2008, posted to RRPictureArchives. It looks every bit as bad as the MTL depiction, and possibly worse with what looks like a partial cave-in of the side near the door. This car is so worn out that I can't tell whether the ends were ever black, as they were on cars of this type when new. This car can be found again on RailcarPhotos.com. As of September 2009, it was in a cut of cars in Kansas City. Its reporting marks had been crossed out, meaning that it was stricken from the roster, as even a buffer car. Next stop: likely the scrapper. I wonder if BNSF removed the conspicuity stripes first? Ah, they probably don't peel off easily.

Though not one of these two cars, also on RRPictureArchives there is also a shot of BNSF 935015, on which the original Santa Fe paint scheme can be discerned. There and on RailcarPhotos are other former Santa Fe and Burlington Northern revenue freight cars of other styles pressed into service as "rail train buffer cars." It didn't immediately occur to me that I needed to take this description literally: these are cars at the ends of welded rail trains. I would imagine they are there as, well, buffers, to keep stray rails from poking into locomotives or off the end of the train.



993 05 810, \$57.95.

Reporting Marks: ACL 35687 and 38690.

Atlantic Coast Line Two Pack.

Consists of two 180 series 50 foot boxcars with 10 foot Youngstown doors, no running board and short side ladders (Individual Catalog Numbers 180 51 250 and 180 52 260).

ACL 35687 is black with yellow door on one side. Yellow lettering including reporting marks, large stepped "Another Cushioned

Load" and "DF" symbol on left and herald on right. White restenciled dimensional data on left below reporting marks. Heavy weathering and rust effects on sides and weathering on roof. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s (1978 service date on car) to late 1980s. Previous Releases: None.

ACL 38690 is brown with white lettering including reporting marks, stepped "Thanks For Using Coast Line" slogan and "DF" symbol on left and herald on right. White on black double COTS panel and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" on right below herald. Heavy weathering and rust effects. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s, or strictly speaking, 1978 given U-1 "dot," to late 1980s. Previous Releases: None.

Those of you who've been reading these bytes for a while know that we are going to hit an obstacle with respect to calling the end of the Approximate Time Period for these cars. So let's start with what we do know, and for that we'll go to the **Atlantic Coast Line Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. ACL 35687 was built by Pullman-Standard in 1963, part of the railroad's Class O-35 of boxcars. This particular series was numbered 35414 to 35713. Sister car ACL 35543, which included pallets considered part of the car, was found in Hamlet, North Carolina in September 1985. That photo is on Page 55 of the **Color Guide**. There's also a June 1963 shot of ACL 35684 from the same series, looking almost brand new... as well it should at that point. These cars had 9 foot Youngstown doors (yes, a "door thing" versus the MTL 180 body style which has a ten foot door), seven belt DF-2 loaders, and Hydroframe-60 cushioning devices, the latter of which meant extended draft gear. Meanwhile, the 38690 was part of the series ACL 38350 to 38789, the last of four groups of boxcars assigned Class O-38. These cars, built in 1965 by Pullman-Standard, had DF-2 belts but did not have cushion underframes. "They were, for all intents and purposes, the standard fifty foot boxcar on the ACL," according to **Color Guide** author Paul Faulk. An example photo of a new looking car from the series is on Page 57 of the book, specifically ACL 38788, as of January 1964. Although from the previous group of O-38 cars, there is a shot of ACL 37687 taken in December 1985 that shows roughly the same amount of wear and dirt as the MTL model.

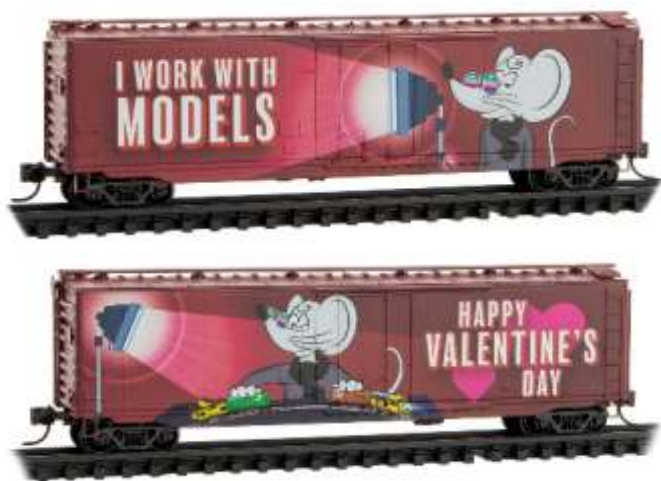
On to bingo photos: on RRPictureArchives.net we have the 35687, complete with replacement door, as of May 1980 in Devore, California. The cushioning is obvious from the very extended draft gear. I haven't quite figured out yet how to model this on the 180, 181 or 182 body styles which have body mounted couplers, but then again, all of the releases on these cars have been out of my model pike's Approximate Time Period anyway. Anyway, the orange of the door matches the shade to which the formerly yellow lettering has faded, or it's close, to my eyes. (A good time to note, "We don't see colors as they are, we see them as **we** are.") The running board is long gone and the side ladders we can see are half height. But the brake wheel wasn't lowered.

The same is true of ACL 38690. It was pictured at an unknown date and location, however the service information looks like "SCL 3-81" which the car was photographed on or after March 1981. In violation of "close door before moving car," the door in view is wide open and the opposite door is at least partially open since we can see daylight behind the car. We can also see the COTS panel and U-1 "dot" as modeled by MTL.

The ORER for January 1967 shows 793 cars in the series 35100 to 35899, which takes in both deliveries of the O-35 class and the 35687. These were described as “Box, Cushion Underframe” with AAR Designation XML. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 60 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 9 feet, and capacity 4923 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. There were a bunch of end notes: X, JJ(2), LL, NN, BBB(2), CCC, DDD and FFF(2) to be specific. Note X described the partial DF-2 loaders near the doors, which applies to all of the cars. The other end notes refer to specific cars with pallets or fiberglass-coated doorway members and assigned service. The 35687 had 60 pallets and was in assigned service. ACL 38690 was among the series 38305 to 38804, again with AAR Designation XML but with the description “Box, All Steel” since there weren’t cushion underframes on these cars. The key dimensions were almost the same as the above group, with the exception of the outside length which was 54 feet 4 inches. There were 483 cars in the main series and another 15 which were converted to AAR Designation LC type cars with the addition of roof hatches. There’s only one end note this time, calling out “minimum ‘DF’ equipment, which consists of four belts per side, from door post to end post.” That’s pretty specific!

Then the fun starts. When the ACL and Seaboard merged into the Seaboard Coast Line, the original series of ACL and Seaboard cars remained listed but with no car counts. We know that the SCL didn’t remove the previous series until all cars in it were either restenciled for the SCL or otherwise removed from the roster. However, that practice was reversed with the coming of the Seaboard System and car counts returned to the ORER for the ACL groups. So, in the January 1985 Equipment Register, there are just 20 cars left in the 35100 to 35899 group, and 150 in the 38075 to 38304 group, or the black and brown cars respectively. By July 1987, Seaboard System had yielded to CSX Transportation in the ORER—although without the Chessie System Railroads which were still listed separately. Just three cars were left in the 35100 to 35899 group and the 38075 to 38304 set was all the way down to 11 cars. Seems like a good enough place to stop looking.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



032 00 540, \$27.95.

Micro-Mouse Valentine’s Car.

Maroon with multicolor artwork featuring Micro-Mouse (the MTL “Mascot”) on both sides of the car. One side has the lettering “I Work With Models” on left and Micro-Mouse facing left with a photography floodlight. Other side has the lettering “Happy Valentine’s Day” on right and a winking Micro-Mouse working with a train set, illuminated by the floodlight. Approximate Time Period: Every February 14.

So you thought that the Micro-Mouse was restricted to Christmas cars, and then only some of them? Well, it looks like his contract has been renegotiated to include other holidays. I can't wait to see if he and the family show up next Halloween. Also, National Cheese Day is June 4, so make a note of that...

I thought I'd written about Valentine's Day before in the context of Weathered/Graffiti cars, but given the context of previous issuances... "Tell-Tale Heart"? "I Only Love You 'Cuz I Hate You"? I didn't. So a quick recap here about the day with help from the Wikipedians. It started as the Christian Feast of Saint Valentine, or Saint Valentine's Day. Valentine was martyred back in the Year 269 and was added to the saint's calendar in the Year 496, well before Hallmark could help you send the Very Best. In 1382, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote about the first anniversary of King Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia (they were each fifteen at the time), which happened to be on Saint Valentine's Day... or not, but that's another story. This is considered to be perhaps the earliest connection of romantic love to February 14. In 1797, the printing of **The Young Man's Valentine Writer** in England led to the sending of Valentines to prospective matches, and the reduction of postage rates to "Penny Black" caused an explosion of mailed Valentines. You've probably heard of Cadbury; they started making "Fancy Boxes" of chocolates for the occasion in 1868. Counting valentines exchanged in school (well, except maybe this year), over 1 billion change hands. The leading recipient: teachers.

Also, Car #9 in the **Solar System Series**, for the planet Neptune, has been released in both pre-ordered varieties. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2018 issue.

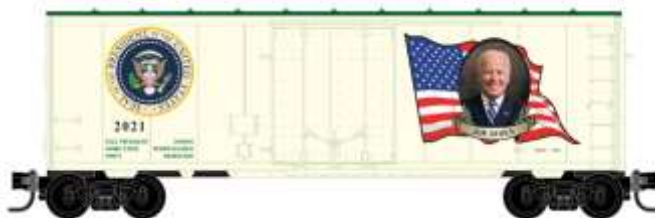


Catalog 102 00 838, \$36.95 (at left) has the interior light.



Catalog 102 02 838, \$27.95 (at right) does not have the interior light. This is the final release in the original Solar System Series (sorry, Pluto) but additional cars which were announced for pre-order last October are scheduled to be available later this year.

*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 **February 28**.*



Expected Delivery June 2021:

074 00 146, \$25.95.

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #46: Joe Biden.

Cream sides and ends with green roof and black lettering. Multicolor rendition of the Seal of the President of the United States and dates

in office on left. Name of Vice President, home state of president and party affiliation at bottom left. Multicolor portrait of president in front of red, white and blue rendition of American flag in service during presidency on right. Micro-Trains has announced that there will be presidential button included with this car (like the first 44 releases but not the previous 45th release). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

“Hey, George,” a reader asked me, “Where is the next Presidential Car?” Well, here it is... a bit late, to be sure, but well within the four year term of our 46th President. As noted previously, I find it premature to discuss at any length the legacy of recent presidents (“Current politics makes my trains nervous,” I remarked privately to a reader when I was asked about this back in around 2010), so I trust that you’ll forgive me if I don’t say anything about the incoming President. And yes, I’d do this regardless of who won. As noted in November 2016 when Car #45 was announced, the UMTRR is decidedly, and officially, non-partisan.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES: The following is expected to be available mid-month per Micro-Trains and should be at dealers as you read this.



530 00 490, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: SLAX 49104.

39 Foot Tank Car, Bee Hive Corn Syrup / St. Lawrence Starch Company.

Car #1 in the “Sweet Liquid Series” (Pre-order announcement last September). Yellow and blue tank, blue underframe,

black trucks. Blue lettering on yellow section of tank and yellow lettering on blue section of tank. Company name (blue) and reporting marks (yellow) on left. “Bee Hive” (blue) “Corn Syrup” (yellow) on right. Approximate Time Period: 1950 to 1987. N Scale artwork shown for representation; actual Z Scale product will vary.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale version of this car (065 00 136) above.

In addition to the above, three virtual two-packs of PS-2 Covered Hoppers which were open for pre-orders in September and October of last year (still not naming it!) are expected to be available mid-month. They are:



531 00 073 and 531 00 074, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 82657 and 82864.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Santa Fe (AT&SF)

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and white square circle cross herald at top left. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) into the 1990s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 82515 and 82526, November 2007 (as Catalog Number 531 00 07x). MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 074 item is shown here.



531 00 321 and 531 00 322, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: PRR 257912 and 257971.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Gray with black lettering including shadow keystone herald and roadname at top left across to center and reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1954 to early 1980s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 321 item is shown here.



531 00 331 and 531 00 332, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: CSXT 226539 and 226482.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, CSX Transportation/Chessie System Restencil.

Yellow with blue lettering including "Ches-C" herald in center and "Chessie System" roadname at top right. Black restenciled reporting marks in lighter yellow patch panel on left. White on black double COTS panel on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s into the decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. Only the 331 item is shown here.

Also, the following MTL 505 series single door boxcars remain in pre-order status this month with the books closing on *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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



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.

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

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: Surprise! Two more stock cars this month...



520 44 050, \$23.90.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 50652.

40 Foot Despatch Stock Car, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Light weathering.

Approximate Time Period: 1938 (based on

reporting marks having periods) through at least the decade of the 1940s. Previous Release: As Catalog 13805 and 13805-2, Road Number 50682, June 1988.

You have to go back to July 2001 for the last release of a Santa Fe stock car from MTL, and it was in N Scale. But it did have the same road number as this new Z Scale item. At that time I knew a lot less about the Santa Fe than I do now and I went with a very wide Approximate Time Period for this paint scheme. In 1938, the ampersand was dropped from the reporting marks, turning "A.T. & S. F." to "A.T.S.F." as it is depicted on the model. In 1944, the periods were dropped from the reporting marks. So the 1928 build date for the 500 cars in the series 50500 to 50999 is **not** the start of the ATP, as I'd previously reported. (And one wonders why the older UMTRRs aren't available online any more...)

The series of single deck stock cars appears in the January 1945 ORER with 497 of the possible 500 cars in service. The inside length was 40 feet even, inside width 8 feet 8 inches, inside height 8 feet even, outside length 41 feet 2 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 5 feet 1 inch, and capacity 2774 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. And here's something a little different: an end door, 1 foot 9 inches wide by 2 feet high. No worries about that, as... broken record alert... the prototype for the 520 body style is the New York Central stock car, namely the one in last month's Runner Pack #110.

According to an article in, of all places, the **Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Magazine**, December 2000 issue, with the onset of World War II, the Interstate Commerce Commission was looking to gain more efficiency with fewer actual cars. It therefore ordered a number of railroads to convert single deck stock cars to double deck. It doesn't look like that happened to these cars, as the April 1952 ORER still has these described as single deck.

I would think that the Santa Fe wasn't so slow to repaint that the 412 cars remaining as of the January 1964 ORER still had periods in the reporting marks. (Of course, Rule #1 still applies.)

Periods or not, the dropoff is steep after 1964: only 161 cars remained in April 1970 and zero in April 1976, mirroring the drop in livestock carriage by the railroads.



520 44 250, \$23.90.

Reporting Marks: RI 75015.

40 Foot Despatch Stock Car, Rock Island (CRI&P).

Brown with white lettering including roadname on left and reporting marks at bottom left. Light weathering. Approximate

Time Period: 1930 (build date) through the decade of the 1960s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 75010 and 75015, June 2019. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that either of the previous road numbers were used for this release.

I'll reprint myself from the June 2019 UMTRR coverage of the "clean" releases. I have bingo photos for you of both road numbers released here on Page 56 of the **Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The authors trace the decline of livestock cars on the Rock Island in the captions for these photos: eight percent of the road's total fleet when these cars were built in 1930, five percent of the total in 1940 and less than one percent of the overall roster in 1967. The images of the 75010 and 75015 were captured in 1967 and 1966 respectively, when they were among just 311 stock cars left in the Rock Island's stable.

The reporting marks way, way down on the car are indicative of the prototype, although the real cars had straight sills, not what MTL has on the 520 body style. It's the roadname that's less than optimally placed on the Z Scale depictions; they were at the very top of the side on the prototype instead of in the center. Broken record alert: stock cars differed quite a bit from one railroad to the next. The 520 body style is based, and accurately so, on a New York Central prototype. The Rock Island's cars were constructed by the Ryan Car Company, a firm I had not heard of until now. (The closest match I can think of offhand to a widely available model are the old Varney/Life-Like HO Scale offerings from the 1950s through the 1970s, and even those aren't that close.) These cars were also the last livestock carriers built new for the railroad; after that, the RI rebuilt additional stock cars from boxcars.

The ORER for February 1931 showed all 250 possible cars in the series 75000 to 75249. These were MCB Designation SM with a description "Stock, Steel Underframe." The inside length was 40 feet even, inside width 8 feet 5 1/2 inches, inside height 8 feet and 3/4 inch, outside length 40 feet 3 1/2 inches (which seems kind of short compared to the inside length, but that's what it says), extreme height 15 feet, door opening 6 feet wide by 7 feet 4 1/4 inches high, and capacity 2717 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. Given that the two cars MTL selected were still around in 1966 and 1967, I jumped all the way to the ORER for January 1967 to find 86 cars left in the series. That's more than I expected. They were out of the Equipment Register no later than October 1972 after 60 were left in April 1970. I am presuming with this rather lengthy ATP that the cars were never repainted into anything beyond the "as delivered" scheme. Looking at the photos in the **Color Guide**, that may very well be the case.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS:



507 00 690, \$27.95.

Micro-Mouse Valentine's Car.

Maroon with multicolor artwork featuring Micro-Mouse (the MTL "Mascot") on both sides of the car. One side has the lettering "I Work With Models" on left and Micro-Mouse facing left with a photography floodlight. Other side has the lettering "Happy Valentine's Day" on right and a winking Micro-Mouse working with a train set, illuminated by the floodlight. Approximate Time Period: Every February 14.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale version of this release above (032 00 540).

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Micro-Trains' licensing for sale of the Thomas Kinkadee and Thomas Kinkadee Studios Special Editions expires at the end of March, so MTL has issued a "last call" for the remaining items in this series. That would be all three of the Christmas cars from last year (101 00 831, 832 and 833) and Numbers 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in the Painter of Light Series (102 00 806, 809, 810, 811 and 812), as well as the companion locomotive (987 01 808).



The several-times-delayed **Desert Camo Humvee Two Pack (499 45 953, \$34.95)** is now slated for mid-month release. There's a photo on the MTL site and in the Micro-News, so that's a good sign! There's also

new packaging (at right). For me this is not only a nice way to see the product up close, but it also looks like the kind of enclosure in which gaming and military miniatures are sold at such stores. The one near me also has a good selection of paints useful with model railroading.



I was wondering about the single release 020 series boxcars with hatches which had originally been pre-ordered last September for January delivery. The MTL website now has them slated for March. These are the Southern Pacific (020 00 247) and Southern Railway (020 00 257) cars (at right). Yes, MTL is slowly catching up on their release schedule. They'll get there. A promising sign is that at "press time" they were looking for people to join their production line.



In-person train shows continue to be replaced with Virtual Venues; the Amherst Railway Society event (known here at UMTRR HQ as “The Springfield Show” given its location near downtown Springfield, Massachusetts) was no exception. MTL CEO Eric Smith gave a brief presentation, which I did not see when it originally “aired” but was related to me via the UMTRR Spy Network. Eric discussed the N Scale TBOX cars. He revealed all twelve roadnames in the Sweet Liquid Series. This is what I transcribed, which might not be completely accurate: Bee Hive (this month’s), Hubinger, Flo-Sweet, Miranda Sugar, Domino Sugar, Molasses Gilbert, Ariel Sugar, Sweet Pure Molasses, Union Starch, Sugar Refining Company, Mangel’s King Syrup, and Pennick and Forge. And there was also an update on the forthcoming MTL 095 Series N Scale PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper along with some planned releases (Baltimore and Ohio, Chicago and North Western, Milwaukee Road, Great Northern, Central of Georgia, Soo Line, and Union Pacific). These cars are in tooling now. They will have cored-through roofwalks, separate roof hatches, body mounted couplers and 33 inch metal wheels. Eric also passed along the very good news that several MTL employees who lost their homes in the Alameda Fire last September now have permanent residences again.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: It’s that time of the year... I’m still behind on the 2021 Release Table and the 2021 Month by Month table, among other UMTRR website updates, but at least I’m staying current with the Do-It-Yourself Bye-Bye Board. There are a lot of Dreaded “D”s among last month’s releases already: the TA&G boxcar (020 00 227), the Chessie System boxcar (024 00 450), the Soo Line boxcar (181 00 130), the New York Central weathered boxcar (032 44 530), and the CTCX tank car weathered/graffiti three pack (993 05 770).

Back to last year: The B&O “Sentinel Service” 40 foot boxcar is outta here (023 00 410, April), as are 50 foot boxcars for the Pennsylvania Railroad (034 00 440, April) and New Haven (034 00 460, January). Grape to Glass Cars #2 and #5, for the L. Foppiano and Ambrose Wine Companies, have been drained (066 00 110 and 120, February and June). The one-of-a-kind Penn Central 60 foot boxcar (104 00 060, November) is done “Serving the Appliance Industry.” Both numbers of the Southern Pacific “DF” boxcars have left the building (180 00 17x, June). The Golden West “Happy Holidays” gondola is gone (105 44 132, November), and the UTLX tank car with clover is also (110 44 480, March), as is the Norfolk Southern Halloween themed auto rack (111 44 400, October) and the Easter themed Florida East Coast Ortner Hopper (125 44 140, April). No specific holiday marked (pun intended) on the Santa Fe weathered boxcar (180 44 140, January), but it’s still gone. The Pennsylvania Heavyweight Mail/Baggage Car has left the station (148 00 360, January), as have the PRR and New Haven Single Window Coaches (160 00 360 and 380, February and June). The UP/SP Cracking Tower Flat Car Two Pack is gone (993 05 640, February), and the Union Pacific Civil War Era Log Car Five Pack has split (also pun intended) (993 02 070, July). Z Scale items from last year which are sold out include the Southern Pacific weathered boxcar (500 44 990, March), the CP Rail boxcar with icebreaker (503 44 260, December), the second number of the Union Pacific double door boxcar (501 00 302, February), Chesapeake and Ohio Cameo Car #6 (505 00 426, August), the second number of the Santa Fe x-post boxcar (511 00 272, June), and the only 1:220 out that isn’t a boxcar, the Santa Fe caboose (535 00 430, August).

From 2019, we have these sellouts in N Scale: the second number of the Hammermill Paper log car (115 00 062, June), the plug door boxcars for the Canadian National (181 00 090, October) and Chicago and North Western (181 00 100, December), and the Civil War Era Red Line Four Pack (993 01 770, January). The Z Scale Log Car #16 (538 00 180, April) is the only 1:220 discontinued item among 2019 releases.

The Canadian National boxcar with Maple Leaf was the last N Scale freight car released in 2018 that was still available (182 00 050, June)... not any more. Also from 2018 in Z Scale, the first number of the Swift "Premium Hams" refrigerator is sold out (518 00 581, May). From 2017, the second number of the Z Scale Kansas City Southern boxcar is gone (505 00 372, July), as is the first number of the Norfolk Southern bulkhead flat car (527 00 161, also July). Finally, from 2015, the N Scale Great Northern Diner's plate has been cleaned (146 00 020, December).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: In my coverage of the Rio Grande Heavyweight Coach last month, I wondered what the location of the two prototype photos might be. (URLs: First, digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/11129 and second, digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/11130). Long time UMTRR Gang Member Michal Basta checks in all the way from Prague in the Czech Republic with the answer: "I'm 100% sure both photos of the D&RGW 3-rail dual gauge you mentioned in the recent UMTRR were taken in Alamosa, Colorado." From the other side of the world, Hiroshi Nakanishi agreed and sent a map link: goo.gl/maps/sR6s1XEqrKvd5PE6. At the time the Street View was taken, September 2012, there were other passenger cars there... painted mostly in Illinois Central colors! Thank you to both Hiroshi and Michal.

For those of you, like me, who are just getting around to attaching the "chimney" smokestack to the Santa Fe "Santa Fe's Santa for Safety" caboose (100 00 490), note that the chimney is slanted at the bottom for a better fit on the sloped roof. And I suppose you can guess how I know this. Nice touch from the folks in Talent, even if certain column authors didn't get it right away...

OOPS PATROL: What's a UMTRR without catalog number mistakes? (Rare.) Fixing January's oopses: The New York Central tank car's is 065 00 106, not 066 00 106, and the TA&G caboose is 130 00 **270**, not 130 00 **041**.

25 YEAR LOOKBACK SPECIAL #2: 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."

The selection for February is a car that Micro-Trains did in Z Scale in August 2008, Catalog Numbers 531 00 091 and 092. With the PS-2 Covered Hopper scheduled to be released in N Scale in 2021, hopefully I'll have a chance to pick up the "larger" version as well. When our family relocated from the city to the suburbs, the closest railroad went from being the Harismus Cove Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad to the Elizabethport and Perth Amboy Branch of the Central Railroad of New Jersey – the latter still in service as the "Chemical Coast Line" of Conrail Shared Assets. In addition, there was plenty of Jersey Central industrial trackage at the time, though still down from its peak. Among the cars we might have seen are this one, the prototype for which actually had a small stencil for return to Carteret! The MTL cars actually have instructions for return to the Lehigh Valley in Perth Amboy for aragonite loading (that's a common carbonite mineral). The "red baron" scheme in which these cars were painted was adopted around the same time we moved, so I'm sure I saw these cars while roaming around on my bike or on excursions trackside with my late father.



FINALLY, O R E RARE!!! I've mentioned before that it is much more difficult to find and obtain at a reasonable price more recent copies of the Official Railway Equipment Register. It's relatively easy to find ones dated in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and even those from the 1960's and the decade of the 2000s are not that hard to come by. I lucked out at a train show just "north of the border" in Southern Ontario a few years ago when I grabbed a whole box of ORERs that pushed the Research Accumulation out to October 2014. (Crossing back into the United States with them, the customs agent was probably not terribly interested in my explanation of what ORERs are... but he did ask what I was bringing back with me!) On those rare occasions when issues from the 2010s come up on eBay, they sell for a pretty penny.

And I now think I know why, courtesy of an unnumbered page towards the back of the January 2018 issue. That's the one on which I bit the bullet and paid full price directly from the ORER folks. On that page is reprinted the United States Postal Service "Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (All Periodicals Except Requester Publications)." You've probably seen this annually in magazines including those related to model and real trains. And how about this: the total average press run for the previous year, 2017, was just 617 issues, and the latest issue reported, October 2017, had only 575 copies printed. Of that October 2017 edition, 203 copies were not distributed... meaning that 372 ORERs made it out to the public, including those that went to railroads! No wonder they don't show up on eBay, or anywhere else. I'm not privy to MTL production numbers but I think it's safe to assume that the folks in Oregon make more copies of their freight cars than there are copies of the October 2017 ORER.

So how is the company still in business? Well, first, I believe it's still a Surface Transportation Board requirement to provide and publish this information (despite the increasing number of private owners who've "opted out") and so the ORER is a "must do." Second, like so much else, the ORER has gone into digital editions, offered at the same price (\$379 per year) as the

print version. The good news is that print versions are still available, with last October's issue now gracing my shelf courtesy of a UMTRR Gang Member. I believe this latest ORER for the Research Accumulation was a "print on demand" copy. For one thing, it uses ordinary white paper instead of the thin yellow paper which was how the Register was done at least as far back as August 1924, my oldest copy, and probably before that. It's just another mark of progress that what used to be made available to a non-trivial number of railroad employees, with "hand me down" lists from headquarters to the hinterlands, is now printed in a very small number of hard copies. Needless to say, if you should come across one, let me know!

Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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