

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! It's that time of year again, and I've been waiting to see what this year's April Fool's offering might be from the folks behind the red and yellow sign. It's a good one—and it's also Weathered(!) but we're still going to follow the catalog number sequence until we get to it. As a certain Bugs Bunny would say, "Ain't I a stinker?" Without further ado, let's find out "What's Up..."

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



065 00 146, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NATX 18156.

39 Foot Tank Car, Hubinger.

Car #2 in the "Sweet Liquid Series" (Pre-order announcement last September). Black with white lettering on sides and ends, including "OK Brand Corn Syrup" and

reporting marks on left and "The Hubinger Company / Keokuk Iowa" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1957 to at least 1968, but possibly as late as the late 1980s.

Page 12 of **Tank Car Color Guide Volume One** includes the bingo (exact match) photo for this second entry in the Sweet Liquid Series. It's noted that the car was probably built in mid-1957 but was first listed in January 1958 as part of the series NATX 18151 to 18170 series of cars. That listing, we presume, is in the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER). I happen to have that very January 1958 issue in the Research Accumulation so I can have a look. And there they were, twenty exceptions with AAR Designation TL among the series NATX 18100 to 18252 which were AAR Designation TM. The TL code translates to "tank car equipped with container lined with any material other than glass."

The photo was taken in July 1968 so the Approximate Time Period lasts at least until then. It's noted in the **Color Guide** that the car was not insulated but had steam heater coils. I'm not sure how that reconciles with the TL designation. The car also had unusual end railings which extend past the edges of the tank. I don't recall seeing that before on a tank car of this type.

Going back to the ORERs we pick up at the October 1969 edition. The same twenty cars remain in the North American Car Corporation listing in that issue. Eleven of these cars remained in April 1985, but North American Car didn't, as by then it was part of General Electric Railcar Services. They were off the roster no later than July 1989. What we don't know, of course, is how long the car carried the Hubinger paint scheme. I dimly recall seeing photos of these cars

elsewhere, or maybe even in person when freight trains still ran on the Northeast Corridor. If the latter is accurate, that would bring the ATP into the early to mid-1970s.

From the January 30, 2009 edition of the newspaper **Daily Gate City**, we learn about a slide presentation about the industrialist and philanthropist J. C. Hubinger, of Keokuk, Iowa, presented by a former chairman of the board of the Hubinger Brothers Company. Hubinger went from his birthplace in New Orleans to Keokuk, but with little work there, he and his brothers went to the East Coast, where they made their fortunes manufacturing elastic starch. Hubinger returned to Keokuk in 1887 where he built a mansion. He also built an electric plant for the town and his residence, started a phone company, and purchased, revived and expanded Keokuk's streetcar line. He also constructed an amusement park in 1897. It wasn't until 1903 that the Hubinger Brothers Company began extracting some of the cornstarch for its elastic starch at a Keokuk factory... which burned down the same year. J.C. passed away in 1908 and his brothers bought out his share of the company. They sold it in 1925, well before this car ever carried their name. The presenter noted that the Hubinger Company had become Roquette America, Incorporated. I looked that up and found it's a division of a global wide-ranging maker of plant-based products... and it still has a location in Keokuk.

But perhaps a more interesting question is, what is Elastic Starch? Well, according to a description in a pamphlet published by the Hubinger Brothers Company itself, "Elastic Starch is only manufactured for use in the laundry to stiffen collars and cuffs." So corn syrup seems to be a by-product. As for, specifically, OK Corn Syrup, the best I could do was an image of the same NATX 18156, offered as an original slide.



065 00 266, \$26.90.

Reporting Marks: N&W 516420.

39 Foot Tank Car, Norfolk and Western.

Black with white lettering on sides and ends, including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Arch bar trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1927 to no later than 1963.

Those arch bar trucks mean two things: first, the car was **old**; second, it couldn't leave N&W property as that truck type was banned from interchange service in 1938. It likely wasn't going to stray off home rails anyway, as it was purchased used from the Mexican Petroleum Corporation in February 1927 for \$1,738.27, and immediately converted to waste water service by the railroad. This is according to a data sheet in the remarkable online archives of the Norfolk and Western Historical Society. Every few years following the car is shown in service until January 1, 1958. Sometime between then and August 1963, the 516420 was taken out of service. It was then sold to Virginia Scrap Iron and Metal in Roanoke. Lest there be any confusion, it was noted that this was a scrap yard. I think we know what happened next. Considering that ORER data is often non-existent, it's remarkable that I can nail down an Approximate Time Period this good for a company service car.

The archives of the N&WHS (through nwhs.org) also provide the bingo for this car; to find it currently, you'll need to search on record locator 02687. This looks like a "builder's photo" except it isn't of course since the car was bought second-hand. It certainly was in fresh paint. Although the reweigh dates would have been updated and dimensional data changed, it would not surprise me to know that this car kept the same basic paint scheme as depicted by Micro-Trains for its entire service life.



094 44 670, \$32.90.

Reporting Marks: SSW 73540.

Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper with Trough Hatches, Cotton Belt (St. Louis Southwestern).

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname in center. Roadname is correctly spelled on 'A' side and misspelled "OOTTON BEET" on 'B' side. Multicolor ACI Label and double COTS panel on far right. Light to moderate weathering including rust effects. Small white

and brown patch panels. Approximate Time Period: 1975, plus or minus (based on photo evidence). This item is not on MTL dealer standing orders.

My first question for the UMTRR Staff for this commentary was whether this car should stay in New Releases or go to Weathered Releases, since it is weathered (but not graffitied as Union Pacific doesn't allow that). Since it's been released on the regular schedule, I'll keep it here.

So, we have another entry in the You Had One Job Department, or, perhaps, the Let's See If Anyone Notices Department. The bingo for this blooper is on RRPictureArchives.net, found in August 2005. This gives us the starting point for a "plus or minus" Approximate Time Period. Is it possible that the lettering was "OOTTEN BEET" for the entire time this car was in SSW lettering, that is, from its build date of 1971 to retirement or repainting? Yes, absolutely, and let's not leave out Rule #1 ("It's Your Railroad") here either.

SSW 73540 belongs to the series 73500 to 73949, built by American Car and Foundry. This series started in Cotton Belt paint like that shown... except in most cases, spelled correctly. However, at least some of these cars became part of the Golden West Service sale/leaseback arrangement. When that ended, the cars went back to SSW reporting marks, often without removal of the Golden West paint. RailcarPhotos.com has a couple of these cars in the "heritage" paint scheme with the Cotton Belt "ginsaw" herald applied by successor Union Pacific, as part of its "protect our trademarks" program. As of the October 2004 ORER, 148 card from the original set of 450 were still in service. These were the CF4650 model of Center Flow, with trough hatches, which is a match to the MTL 094 body style. The ORER is silent on how the roadname is spelled, however.



101 00 150, \$31.90.

Reporting Marks: ICG 480069.

40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Single Door, Illinois Central Gulf.

Orange with mostly black lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left. Large white and black "solid rail" herald on right. White "Cushion Under Frame" at top

left. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black single COTS panel at bottom right. Yellow simulated reflective rectangles at far bottom left and right. Black lettering on white band at top of ends. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than August 1972 (merger date) or August 1973 (based on service date on car) through mid-1980s. *Note: This item is being reported as having been sold out and discontinued, but that's not confirmed at this writing.*

Sad to say, the folks behind the red and yellow sign are beginning to run out of roadnames for this particular body style. That can mean one of two things, or perhaps both of these things: First, time for the exterior post or "waffle side" variation or plug door version of these "mini hi-cubes"; second, and far more likely, more reprints of previous roadnames! This car sort of makes a trifecta when coupled (pun intended) with the two Weathered Releases on this body style mid-last-month.

Page 121 of the **IC/GM&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has the bingo for this car, as found in June 1982. (There are a few ICG cars covered at the end of this volume.) The 480069 was among the small group ICG 480050 to 480069, which were built by Pullman-Standard as Illinois Central 15450 to 15469 in October 1967. A second group, IC 15470 to 15479, became ICG 480070 to 480079. I bring this up because MTL did IC 15474 in November 2010 (official photo at right), and it looks like, from ORER data, that both cars co-existed for a time given time required to repaint from orange and black to, well, orange and black. I think we can tell whether the Illinois Central or the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio was the "surviving company" in this merger...



Specifically, the ORER for April 1975 shows only two cars in the ICG series 480050 to 480069 and zero cars in the "coming soon" group ICG 480070 to 480079. The counterpart IC groups have 17 and 10 cars respectively. Both sets of cars had cushion underframes and Damage Free equipment, the first set including the new ICG release with seven DF-2 belt rails and the second including the previous IC release with thirteen DF-2 rails. To simulate the Cushion Underframe, it's possible to body mount the couplers somewhat outboard of the underframe though the real cars had narrower draft gear – a compromise when coming down to 1/160th actual size. Overall, it appears that we have good alignment between prototype and model, with the caveat that the bingo photo does not allow us to have a look at the roof.

Going back to the April 1975 ORER, we see that roof was 16 feet 9 inches high. The rest of the usual information is as follows: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 12 feet 9 inches, door opening 10 feet, capacity 4900 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds, and outside length 40 feet 8 inches. I left that for last because I think it's incorrect based on what I see in the bingo photo. Only four inches between the inside and outside lengths, split between ends of the car, when there's a cushion underframe? Doesn't seem right to me.

The closest ORER I have to the June 1982 bingo photo is from April 1982 – hey, not bad! At that time there were still just four and two cars in the ICG groups in which we're interested, while ten and eight remained in the original IC groups. And so much for rapid repainting. It's possible that no more than the four and two cars ever received Illinois Central Gulf paint, as in April 1985 the count of ICG cars remains four and two and the IC cars have dropped to nine and seven. In the July 1989 Equipment Register, just two "mini hi-cubes" were left in the ICG listing... and both of those still had IC reporting marks.



105 00 350, \$24.90.

Reporting Marks: PC 515321.

50 Foot Steel 14 Panel Fixed End Gondola, Penn Central.

Green with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel left of herald; yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" right of herald. Approximate Time Period: as early as the early 1970s to the early 1980s.

The car class G31K at the bottom right of the side of this car points us back to its Pennsylvania Railroad heritage. A look at "Rob's Pennsy Page" (pr.railfan.net) shows that the G31k (the small "k" is more correct) were rebuilt from G31a cars in 1967 and 1968. (The difference between the G31 class with no suffix and the G31a class was steel flooring on the former and wood flooring on the latter. The circled "W" on the ninth panel from the left indicates this on the model.) There were a total of 888 G31k's listed in the Pennsy's roster in the ORER for April 1968.

Now, let's put these cars into Penn Central "Deepwater Green" as the paint shade was officially known. The Pennsylvania had two groups of G31k's, in "way bigger series than needed to hold this many cars" numbered PRR 373950 to 375749 and PRR 612000 to 614999. Um, there were only 2900 G31 cars of all classes built, folks? The Penn Central took that second group of cars into its own oversize number series 511164 to 515499. Among them is the subject of this month's new release, the bingo for which is on Page 76 of the **Penn Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. PC 515321 carries the PC style reporting marks but PRR style numbers, a practice that started with the Penn Central's inception on February 1, 1968 and lasted for a while according to a timeline in the **Color Guide**. Perhaps more interesting is that the roadname was painted under the "friendly worms" herald until January 1970, so at least in theory, this car was painted **after** that date. The actual repaint date might have coincided with the service date of January 1975 that's on the sixth panel from the left. Whatever

date it was repainted, it was still in that paint on Valentine's Day 1981, almost five years after the PC was folded into Conrail.

Let's head to the ORERs. As of the April 1970 issue there were 134 total cars in the PC 511164 to 515499 group, described as being in Class G31a or G31b, not G31k, and having drop ends, which the 515321 certainly did not in the **Color Guide** photo. I validated this with Rob's Pennsy Page; all subclasses G31d and later had fixed ends. This would validate the painting of this car into PC colors after 1970. In the debut issue for Conrail, April 1976, there were 123 G31k class cars mixed in with 1879 G31a cars in that same series. The 515321 is called out in the individual car listing of G31k's. In the April 1981 Equipment Register, the closest I have to the date of the bingo photo, the car was among just 35 in the G31k group, but the G31a set had dropped all the way to 151 cars. Only 29 cars remained in the overall series as of April 1985, and the 515321 was not one of these. However, by then 63 G31k gondolas had been moved to Conrail reporting marks and the same number series, along with 871 G31a class cars.



181 00 150, \$29.80.

Reporting Marks: D&RGW 60844.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Rio Grande (D&RGW).

Orange ("Grande Gold") sides, black ends, silver roof. Mostly black lettering including large reporting marks on left and speed lettering roadname on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s into the 1990s.

The series D&RGW 60820 to 60869 were purchased by the Rio Grande from Pacific Car and Foundry in 1964. This was after the railroad had picked up 115 other plug door boxcars from PC&F in 1960; four numbers from that series have been modeled by Micro-Trains (Catalog Number 32220/032 00 22x, Road Numbers 60810, 60812, 60727 and 60809, July 1998, July 1988 and May 2014 respectively). When delivered the cars carried the attractive gold, silver and black paint scheme with the familiar "speed lettering" or "flying" roadname... and they had running boards, full ladders and the high-mounted brake wheel.

Sometime between then and 1977, the service date shown on the model, the 60844 and probably others got "the treatment": running board pulled, brake wheel lowered and ladders shortened. It was also repainted into "solid Grande gold" – the sides, anyway, as the ends remained black and the roof silver. A photo of the car is on Page 51 of the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, as found in July 1985. The draft gear on the car extends a fair amount from the body. Also, there are ladders and not grab irons on the left side of the car, a minor difference from the MTL 181 body style.

I'll jump into the 1970s for the first ORER lookup. The October 1976 edition gets us close to the service date on the MTL model and the bingo photo. The series D&RGW 60820 to 60869 had 48 cars at the time. Catch the last two words in the parenthesis in the description: "Refrigerator, Steel, Insulated, Cushion Underframe, 9-Belt Load Restraining Devices, Plug Doors (Coil

Steel).” Coil steel, in a plug door “refrigerator” car? Okay... The inside length was 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 9 feet 10 inches, outside length 55 feet 1 inch, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 4644 cubic feet or 180,000 pounds. That’s a bit unusual also: a 90 ton plug door boxcar. Ten years later in the October 1986 ORER, the description had been cut back to just “Refrigerator, Belt Rails” with 43 of the original 50 cars remaining in service. Can we get another ten years out, to October 1996? Yes, with 15 cars listed in that Equipment Register. And a single car is shown under the Union Pacific listing in the January 2000 ORER, though I can just imagine what it looked like by then. I think we’ll keep the ATP end in the nineties.

If you don’t have the **Color Guide**, what looks like exactly the same photo is online on George Elwood’s Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org). From that site we also learn that not all the cars in the series were repainted from the “as delivered” scheme when their hardware was altered. For example, there’s the 60850 found in 1995 in Michigan; found with a whole lot of heavy duty weathering, that is.



181 00 180, \$25.90.

Reporting Marks: SL-SF 8410.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Frisco (St. Louis-San Francisco).

Yellow with mostly black lettering including herald and large reporting marks on left and slogan “Ship it on the Frisco!” on right. White on black double COTS panel and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection “dot” on far right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s (1977 service date and 1978 U-1 “dot”) to early 1980s.

Whoa, what’s this? That don’t look good...

I refer to the bingo photo on RRPictureArchives for SL-SF 8410, found in Poughkeepsie, New York in February 1980. The plug door is most definitely **not** flush with the side of the car! It looks like something tried to get out and pushed really hard against the door, breaking the seal at the top and both sides. It appears that a resourceful railroad worker shoved two wedges of wood between the bottom of the door and the bottom of the side. I’m not sure how effective that would be at track speed, but you’ve got to give credit for creativity.

The 8410 was among 100 cars numbered 8325 to 8424 built by General American Transportation Company for the Frisco in 1965. According to the **Frisco/Katy Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, the cars had 10 foot Youngstown plug doors, Miner hand brakes, a 20 inch “Hydra-Cushion” underframe, DF-2 loaders, Durawood floors and lading strap anchors. Paper was a typical load for these cars given that equipment. Page 67 of the book has a 1968 image of SL-SF 8383 from the same series, however it’s in the “as delivered” paint with smaller Railroad Roman reporting marks and the traditionally white-on-black accented “it” in the “Ship it on the Frisco” slogan. The yellow paint was used by the Frisco on its cushioned underframe boxcars.

The 8410 represents a later paint scheme, dating to around the later 1970s. The Frisco herald had become only an outline, the reporting marks were changed to sans-serif and were a fair amount larger than before, and the slogan was all in one color, black in this case on the yellow car. (It was all white on brown cars.) While the running board has been removed and most of the ladders shortened, the brake wheel wasn't lowered, resulting in a bit of a split personality car with one set of high ladders... certainly maddening to the creators of the MTL 181 body style which has all shortened ladders.

I suspect that the 8410 might not have lasted much longer than its 1980 photo date given the condition of the plug door, but it also could have been repaired as well and given more service life. No matter; we'll check the ORER for July 1980. The SL-SF had already been officially merged into the Burlington Northern – that was on April 17, 1980 – but the company kept its independent listing in the Equipment Register, probably more a commentary on lead times for the ORER than anything else. The series SL-SF 8325 to 8422 stood at 88 cars at the time, with inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 57 feet 9 inches (cushion underframe!), extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet and capacity 4926 cubic feet or 148,000 pounds. The cars carried the AAR Designation XL and the description covers most of the equipment I've named above.

The next Register I have, April 1981, has the SL-SF roster in the BN listing, and the same car count of 88 is present. However, that's down to just two in the April 1985 ORER and even those are gone by October 1986. Some Frisco cars including plug door boxcars were repainted into Burlington Northern Cascade Green but I couldn't validate whether this series was... or if the plug door on the 8410 was ever fixed. Please consider the ATP to be in general for the entire series.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



140 00 390, \$29.95.

Road Number: 632 (will be "DRGW 632" in website listings).

Heavyweight Railway Post Office Car, Denver and Rio Grande Western.

Pullman Green with black roof, ends, and underframe including four wheel trucks. Gold lettering including roadname across letterboard at top, "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" left of center, "Baggage / Railway Express Agency" at far right, and road number at bottom left and bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1948 (based on paint scheme) to at least 1964 based on photo evidence.

We get a bingo for the 632 on Page 22 of the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The car is a former Denver and Salt Lake RPO constructed in 1913 and brought into the Rio Grande fold when the latter merged in the former in 1947. The use of four wheel trucks on the model is correct, but the roof was a Harriman type, not the clerestory version

that's part of the MTL 140 body style. It probably would be a modest effort to grab a spare roof from one of the other Micro-Trains cars and cut it down to fit this car.

When photographed, the 632 was found as painted by MTL in February, 1964 on the "Yampa Valley Mail" train. That data point sent me over to the Official Guide of the Railways for June 1960, a bit early for 1964, but the best I can do in the Research Accumulation. Oops, that train isn't mentioned specifically! Ok, then, let's do the 21st Century version of lookups and quote a page from the Denver Public Library's website: "The Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) Yampa Valley, normally a two-car local passenger train that ran between Denver and the northwestern Colorado town of Craig, ceased operation on April 7, 1968. This train also served Steamboat Springs and other northwestern Colorado towns. Originally called the *Yampa Valley Mail*, the train became the *Yampa Valley* when the Post Office terminated its mail contract in 1963."

That helps! Back to the Official Guide: Train Number 9 left Denver at 9:05 AM, and took until 4:20 PM to travel the 231 railroad miles to Craig. Train Number 10 left Craig at 8:05AM and arrived at Denver at 3:20PM. The route included passage through the Moffat Tunnel and Byers Canyon and included a stop at Steamboat Springs. Despite the 632 having the word "Baggage" among its lettering, only the stations at Denver, Hayden and Craig handled checked baggage. On top of that, fourteen stations along the way were listed as "flag stops," that is, only stopping there if a passenger was present to come aboard or there was a passenger on the train that requested a stop there. And three more stations had their arrival times missing from the timetable, which I interpret as "we don't stop here at all anymore." I suppose I'm not surprised that the title of the article I found was "The Little Train That Couldn't"! A photo accompanying the article showed a single PA diesel pulling an RPO and a streamliner of some sort in 1962, in rugged mountain scenery near Cliff, Colorado. Meanwhile, the Craig Branch lived on for coal service under successor Union Pacific, although apparently it's largely dormant at present.



149 00 410, \$33.90.

Road Number: 109 (will be "C&O 190" in website listings).

Heavyweight Railway Post Office 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 "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" and road number at bottom center in gray band. 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 1967 based on photo evidence.

Page 14 of the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has the bingo on the 109. It and C&O 108 were built by Pullman-Standard back in 1908. It had a 38 foot post office in the center, bookended by two storage areas each 8 feet 3 inches wide and accessed by the side doors. The side we can see retained five windows, which is unusual since the Post Office usually required fewer windows than that for security purposes. The MTL 140

body style has a 3/3 window set on one side and a 2/4 set on the other side. The use of six wheel trucks is accurate; according to the **Color Guide**, the prototype 109 got its trucks from C&O 277 in 1939. I don't know what kind of car that was, but that's a Fun Fact, isn't it?

When photographed in May 10, 1967, the 109 was part of the C&O's Fast Flying Virginian or F.F.V. which was discontinued by the line one year and two days later on May 12, 1968. The RPO on the F.F.V. was dropped one day before that, the last such service on the entire railroad.

As with the last two cars released, there's a "mirror image" for the "C&O For Progress" herald. Unlike the last two cars, though, it appears on the left hand end of the side of the car in the MTL image. On the side we don't see, the herald appears on the right 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. That herald was introduced in 1948, two year before the "tri-color" paint scheme, but again, the "straight line" version of the herald used beginning in 1954 is the one on the car here, giving the start to the Approximate Time Period.

N SCALE REPRINTS: One this month...



105 00 541, \$24.90.

Reporting Marks: GN 72878.

50 Foot Steel 15 Panel Fixed End Gondola, Great Northern.

Red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname across center. Small black and white side facing goat herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) into the 1990s (though a few were in service past the year 2000, see text). Previous Release (as Catalog Number 105540): Road Number 72839, March 2000.

Let's begin this coverage with a look at the official Micro-Trains image of the previous release from just over twenty-one (!) years ago. It's so much fun to be able to reach into the archives for these photos.

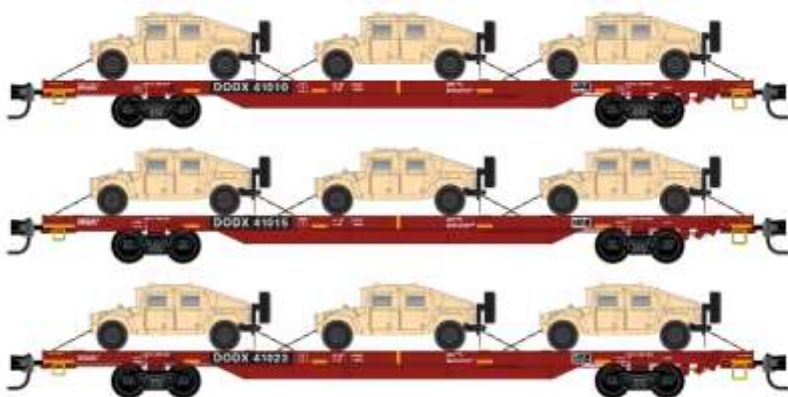


If only my own UMTRR coverage archive was as good. Well... we do know that the first run was part of the 23252 Burlington Northern Fallen Flags Four Pack, which marked the 30th Anniversary of the BN's formation. And we also know from the **GN Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** that the prototype was part of the series GN 72800 to 72999. The cars, built by Pullman-Standard in 1957, were the first mill gondolas for the railroad. The paint scheme chosen by MTL is the "as delivered" version. The bingo photo for the previous release, GN 72839, was taken in March 1959 and is on Page 87 of the **Color Guide**. That herald seems small but it's actually a prototype two feet in diameter. These were 70 ton cars "intended to haul fabricated steel and other specialized shipments." Twenty-four cars were pulled from this group and fitted with removable covers, becoming GN 73800 to 73824. (I know that

number sequence holds 25 cars. Counting error?) There is a small nitpick of the use of four grab irons instead of a ladder on the car sides.

The January 1959 ORER shows all 200 cars present in the series 72800 to 72999. The inside length was 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet, outside length 54 feet 6 inches, extreme height 7 feet 7 inches, and capacity 1995 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. The car count declined to 147 cars in the January 1964 ORER, reflecting the pull of the set for covers and perhaps other moves. But there were only two fewer, 145, in the first BN entry from April 1970. Eleven years later, 110 cars remained in GN reporting marks. Back in March 2000, UMTRR Special Correspondent Keith Albrant checked his July 1998 Equipment Register and found seven cars remaining in the original series, under Burlington Northern Santa Fe. That made me wonder whether any of these cars survived to what was “the present” in my original coverage. Possibly! There were still five cars listed in the January 2000 ORER. Add plenty of weathering, rust, dents, scratches and who knows what else. Gondolas have a tough life. Although there were yet three in the series left in the January 2002 Register, which were all gone by October 2004, I think it’s a little more realistic to call the Approximate Time Period in the 1990s.

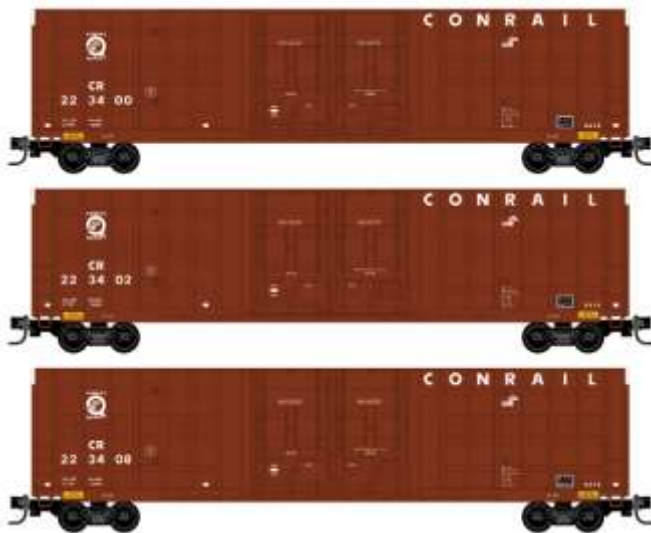
N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Scheduled for mid-month release is the **DODX Flat Car “Red” Three Pack with Humvees (993 01 621, \$134.95)**. UMTRR coverage was in last September’s issue. The individual catalog and road numbers for these items are: 137 51 041, 41010; 137 52 041, 41015; 137 53 041, 41023. These are the fourth through sixth releases of this item; the first three were in a Three Pack with M1 Abrams tanks (993 01 620, September 2018).



Also coming mid-month is the **Great Northern Eight Pack of 40 Foot Single Door Boxcars (993 00 820, \$219.95)**. UMTRR coverage was in last August’s issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 020 51 237, 44414; 020 52 237, 44416; 020 53 237, 44419; 020 54 237, 44422; 020 55 237, 44427; 020 56 237, 44429; 020 57 237, 44432; 020 58 237, 44439. These are the first through eighth numbers for this item, which hasn’t been previously released.



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 April 30.



Targeted Release September 2021:

993 00 181, \$104.95.

Reporting Marks: CR 223400, 223402, 223408.

Runner Pack #181, Quantity three of MTL 103 Series 60 Foot Excess Height Boxcars, Double Doors, Waffle Sides, Conrail.

Brown with mostly white lettering including small "Conrail Quality" logo and reporting marks on left and roadname with extra small "wheel on rail" herald on right. White on black single COTS panel at bottom right, black on yellow "Keep Off Roof / No Running Board" warnings at bottom left and

right. Approximate Time Period: based on paint scheme, no earlier than 1991, but more likely mid to late 1990s, to around 2005, or add conspicuity stripes to as late as the present. These will be the first to third numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

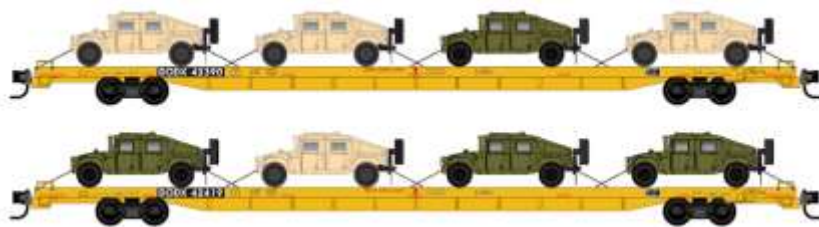
There were 162 cars built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating in 1978, as Conrail's B63B class. Of these, the first 132, CR 223301 to 223432, had bulkheads, and the last 30, CR 223433 to 223462, didn't have bulkheads. There's no difference from the outside, of course, but the three road numbers MTL selected fit into that first group so I'll try to keep my focus there.

The ORER from April 1980 describes this first group as "Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe, Plug Doors, Rub Rails, Ceiling Tracks, Fixed End Bulkheads, Assigned Service B63B." The inside length was 59 feet 4 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 12 feet 9 inches, outside length 67 feet 9 inches, extreme height 17 feet, door opening 16 feet, and capacity 7167 cubic feet or 165,000 pounds. The cars are shown as exceeding Plate F dimensions. In the October 1996 Equipment Register there were 127 remaining of the original 132 built. In 1999 Conrail was split up between Norfolk Southern and CSX. The January 2000 ORER shows under the NS listing a total of 87 cars in the CR 223301 to 223432 group. Can we get all the way to The Present? Well, last October's Register shows 35 cars left in the group with CR reporting marks. Norfolk Southern's boxcars are in the 400000s otherwise, but I did not see a matching cubic footage on a quick look through that part of the listing, so I can't tell whether any of these cars were restenciled for the NS.

What is arguably the dominant paint scheme for this group of cars has already been done by Micro-Trains, Catalog Number 103030/103 00 030, Road Numbers 223435 and 223434, June 1998 and January 2011 respectively, the latter at right. And so much for staying “on topic” because these cars were in the last thirty B63Bs, not the first 132 with bulkheads! This also means that you can refer to the January 2011 UMTRR for coverage of those cars (see the “Back Issues” page on the UMTRR website). Remember, though, they don’t look any different from the outside.



In 1991, the “Conrail Quality” logo was introduced, but I can’t be sure that any of these cars received it that early. Actually, I doubt it, so a “no earlier than” is appropriate. Searching the usual go to sites, I found a bingo only for CR 234000 on RRPictureArchives, but with photos from 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2013, all in these scheme. By the 2007 image the car had received horizontal conspicuity stripes at eight points along the bottom of the side. There was an inconsistency in the way the roadname and the “can it be any smaller” herald were applied; the 234001 has them farther down the side, as if the paint shop didn’t have a tall enough ladder, while the 234003 and 234009 are painted like the 234000 with the lettering starting at the top. So while I didn’t locate photos of the 234002 or 234008 I don’t doubt that they match the 234000. Meanwhile, the 234004 which I saw on RailcarPhotos retained its “as delivered” paint in 2012. So go ahead and run this forthcoming three-pack with the two cars MTL has previously done.



Targeted Release September 2021:

993 02 180, \$119.95.

Reporting Marks: DODX 42390 and 42419.

89 Foot DODX Flat Car Two Pack with Humvees.

Will consist of two MTL 071 series flat cars and eight Humvee vehicles (unassembled and unpainted) with tie down chains. Flat cars are yellow with white reporting marks on black panel and mostly black lettering otherwise. Small red “United States Army” left of center. White on black double COTS panel on right. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at seven points along car. Approximate Time Period: 2002, or after 2005 given conspicuity stripes, to present. Previous Releases: TBD, since the DODX COFC Three Packs #1 and #2 (October and November 2019) used the same basic paint scheme. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

If “Not Casey Kasem” were to include motor vehicles in the Year End Survey for 2021, there’s a good chance that Humvees would appear in the Top Five at this rate. Certainly they have the Number One position on the “Runs On Tires” Chart already locked up by now.

I have a “TBD” under Previous Releases because there is a “could go either way” element this time. The DODX COFC Three Packs #1 and #2 (993 01 900 and 993 01 910) which were

announced in June 2019 and released in October and November 2019 ended up with two different sets of catalog numbers, 071 5x 860 and 071 5x 870, even though the paint scheme on the sets was basically the same. And it also appears to be the same as with this forthcoming pair of cars, **and** the same as the virtual two-pack of COFC cars Micro-Trains did in October 2013, Catalog Numbers 072 00 01x, with road numbers 42031 and 42085, which wasn't even given the same body style code as the two COFC Three Packs. Yikes, maybe I should just stick to the Humvees...

What's less complicated this time is the road numbers modeled. As I described in the June 2019 UMTRR, the April 1995 ORER is where I start seeing cars of this type, as the groups 42000 to 42093 and 42094 to 42187 are in place by then. In the next ORER I have, October 1996, cars numbered 42188 to 42256 are listed. Then by the April 1997 Equipment Register, the series 42258 to 42333 is added. It's not until January 2002 that I see the series 42334 to 42535, which includes the two cars in this pack. These cars are largely described as "Flat, Chain Tiedown, COFC" with some exceptions just called "Flat" cars. The "inside length" of these cars is 89 feet and "outside length" 93 feet 6 inches. Gross Rail Weight is 286,000 pounds for these cars.

The January 2018 ORER has a change in the descriptions: they are either "Flat, Chain Tiedown, COFC (Condense/Collapse)" or just "Flat, COFC (Condense/Collapse)." The 42334 to 42535 group has all 202 possible cars. Inching up to last October's Register, there's the same car count. So "To Present" seems like a sure thing here.

Besides examples of these DODX cars, RailcarPhotos.com has the builder for them: DODX 42354 to 42535 were built by Thrall in December 2000 and January 2001, after the previous groups were constructed by AMF Technotransport of Montreal, Canada. RRPictureArchives has six bingos for the 42390 ranging in dates from April 2006 to October 2017. Each time the flat car is carrying something different. There are also two shots of the 42419 as of November 2010... and can you guess what it's carrying? Starts with "H", ends with "ummers"... or at least that's what the photographer wrote.

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



100 44 530, \$36.90.

Reporting Marks: FXE 410025.

65 Foot General Service Tank Car, Ferromex (former National Railways of Mexico).

Base car is white with heavily faded lettering "NdeM" on left and "Unir Servir" on right. Black Ferromex roadname and reporting marks on gray patch panel on left; black tank qualification stencil on gray patch panel on far right. Yellow vertical conspicuity stripes at five points along side. Heavy rusting and

fading effects including on detail parts. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1998, or after 2005, given conspicuity stripes, to as late as the present. Previous Releases: None, although unweathered versions of the NdeM base car were released in February of last year (110 00 47x).

Believe me, at one point this car **was** white: witness one of the “clean” releases from last February (at right). I’ll borrow once again from the MTL Dealer Car Copy for this release: “Built in August 1977, this DOT 111A100-class tank car was used exclusively for vegetable oil unit train service by the National Railroad of Mexico. With a 20,905-gallon capacity, it belonged to series 54200-54312.” Who knows what happened to this car after that, other than the fact that it transferred to Ferromex in 1998 as a result of the de-nationalization of the Mexican Railways. Assuming that this car was one of those vegetable oil cars, and further assuming that the car is working in the same capacity as other cars with similar road numbers, it’s now exclusively hauling diesel fuel. RRPictureArchives has photos all around the 411025, and a Tripod site is hosting an undated shot of FXE 411020 with an extended platform and a top-mounted pump and hose... kind of a self-contained refueling point for locomotives. I did not get a bingo on the specific car but I’m sure MTL has one from which they worked.



Given the conspicuity stripes I went to the January 2006 ORER. There are a total of 338 tank cars in the Ferromex listing, including a total of 50 in the group FXE 411001 to 411062. Of these, 47 remained in October of last year’s Equipment Register, so “To Present” could work. If the 411025 is in company service for diesel fuel, that’s very likely.



993 05 830, \$109.95.

Reporting Marks: SOU 90313, 90360 and 90394.

Norfolk Southern / ex-Southern Weathered Three Pack.

Consists of three 50 Foot Airslide Covered Hoppers (Individual Catalog Numbers 098 51 151, 098 52 152 and 098 53 160, in that order). Base color of all three cars is gray with mostly black lettering. First two cars have Norfolk Southern “speed” herald and Southern reporting marks on left. Third car has faded out Southern roadname (twice, see text) and road number in center and black Southern reporting marks on left. First and second cars have moderate weathering and rust effects; second car has black “scrawl”

graffiti along points on bottom of both sides. Third car has extensive rusting and fading effects including along outline of internal hoppers. Approximate Time Period: first two cars, 2005, plus or minus; third car, 2011, plus or minus, see text. Previous Releases: None.

I'm going to start with the third of the three cars in this Weathered Pack, SOU 90394. It's actually a "double fade" as evidenced by a 2011 photo of the real thing over at RRPictureArchives. The original large roadname was painted over and replaced with the smaller "Claytor" version of the roadname, but both are almost gone with a "ghosting" effect on the larger roadname as seen on the model. The side we can see in the photo has scrawl graffiti, the nature of which was not reproduced on the MTL car, and is not suitable for a family model railroad! I'm going to leave that right there. What is very well and appropriately reproduced is the rusting along the lines of the interior twin hoppers. That's a great effect, another bar raising from the folks in Talent. As of the photo date, there were no conspicuity stripes on the car; that's six years after the requirement for the same began. I'll note that as early as 2004, the rusting along the hopper lines was visible, but the lettering wasn't nearly in as bad shape as it was in the photo MTL used for the car.

The May 2007 shot of SOU 90313 also on RRPictureArchives reveals the class code, HCS35, and conspicuity stripes, so unless Rule #1 ("It's Your Railroad") is invoked, we have a split ATP here. Finally from RRPictureArchives is an April 2006 image of SOU 90360, without conspicuity stripes.

What looks like the exact same photo of SOU 90313 is also on RailcarPhotos.com, with the added information that it is from the series numbered 90304 to 90353 built by General American in May and June of 1975. The next series of cars, 90354 to 90403, was built in January 1978 with the class HCS36, and takes in the other two cars in this trio. In a 2004 photo of sister car SOU 90397, you can already see some discoloration along the hopper lines, but it's not yet rust.

The only question I have left in terms of this set is whether there were any material differences between the HCS35 and HCS36 classes of cars as built for the Southern Railway. A quick look at the ORER for April 1981 indicates that the answer is Probably Not, since the two groups are, well, grouped together in one line in the Southern's registration. With one exception, the cars are described as "Covered Hopper, Air Slide, Gravity Unloading System." (The exception, SOU 90339, is shown with a Pneumatic Unloading System.) The key dimensions were: inside length 48 feet 11 inches, inside width 9 feet 11 inches, outside length 54 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 5 inches, and capacity 4180 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. Jumping to the January 2011 Equipment Register, since that's the photo date of the really messed up looking SOU 90394, we find just six cars remaining on the Norfolk Southern's roster.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: A pair of cars in the "supplemental" **Solar System Series**, which were among the pre-orders covered in last October's UMTRR, are scheduled for release. First, Pluto gets its due, sort of, via the Dwarf Planets car:



Catalog 102 00 839, \$36.95 (at left) has the interior light.



Catalog 102 02 839, \$27.95 (at right) does not have the interior light.

Yes, these catalog numbers are out of sequence, as last month's cars for The Moon were 102 0x 840. I also note that these cars are already marked "Contact Dealer" on the MTL website, which means they are all spoken for. Looks like these were made in the precise pre-order quantities and little if any extra. Or maybe it was only a Pluto-sized run? Never mind...

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



530 00 500, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NATX 18156.

39 Foot Tank Car, Hubinger.

Car #2 in the "Sweet Liquid Series" (Pre-order announcement last September). Black with white lettering on sides and ends, including "OK Brand Corn Syrup" and reporting marks on left and "The Hubinger

Company / Keokuk Iowa" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1957 to at least 1968, but possibly as late as the late 1980s.

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above (065 00 146).

In addition to the above, MTL catches up with the three 531 series covered hopper pairs announced in September of last year: Frisco, Penn Central and Milwaukee Road, after the Santa Fe, Pennsylvania, and Chessie/CSXT cars were released in February. Here they are, with official MTL images:



531 00 341 and 531 00 342, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: SL-SF 85238 and 85266.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Frisco (St. Louis-San Francisco).

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and large "FRISCO" in center. White on black COTS panel on right." Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) or, strictly speaking, mid 1970s given COTS panel, to early 1990s. Previous Releases: None.



531 00 351 and 531 00 352, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: PC 877145 and 877242.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Penn Central. Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and herald with roadname in center. White on black double COTS panel at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: late 1968 to at least 1980. Previous Releases: None.

531 00 361 and 531 00 362, \$25.95 each.

Reporting Marks: MILW 99619 and 99633.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Milwaukee Road.

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname across top. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1958 (based on paint scheme) but more likely mid-1960s, to late 1980s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Z SCALE PRE-ORDERS OPEN: *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 **April 30**. (Note that this is a change back from a two month to an official one month pre-order window for Z Scale single cars.)*



Targeted Release August/September 2021:

527 00 083 and 527 00 084, \$24.90 each.

Reporting Marks: TTPX 806212 and 806217.

60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, TTX (White on Black Logo).

Yellow with white reporting marks on black panel on left and white on black TTX logo on right. Black lettering otherwise and three white simulated reflective rectangles at points along sides. White on black double COTS panel at far right. Approximate Time Period: 2001 (build date) to as late as the present. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 804610 and 804645, February 2011; Road Numbers 804605 and 804630, March 2016. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 083 release is shown here for illustration purposes.

While we officially have only artwork to look at for this pre-order announcement, the image archives go back far enough to show the previous four releases under this catalog number. At right is the virtual two-pack from February 2011, which came with simulated lumber loads.



And at left is the virtual two-pack from March 2016, which came with simulated wrapped lumber loads. I'm not trying to slight the first release here by giving it less space; that's just the way the MTL photos looked "back then." Anyway, all four have the same general lettering layout including the TTX logo which replaced the full "Trailer Train" in 1991. However!!! These previous four cars were in the series 804000 to 804699,

and these forthcoming cars are not in that series. Almost got me! Well, if you have any of those earlier cars, last October's ORER has the car count for that series at 291, so "To Present" remains good... if not for the logo change to the Tuscan Red version which took place in 2008. The group of cars from which the coming models are coming is TTPX 806000 to 806499, built between November 2004 and April 2005 by Greenbrier's Trenton Works. TTX's class for these cars is GSH72A.

The ORER for July 2007 shows the series TTPX 806000 to 806499 with 498, described simply as "Flat" with AAR Mechanical Designation FB and a Gross Rail Weight of 286,000 pounds. The inside length is 62 feet, a bit more than the MTL model but closer than I thought it would be (ouch). The outside length is 73 feet 6 inches; that counts the bulkheads and the distance over the couplers, which are extended on the prototype. The model does fall a bit short on that dimension. The extreme height is 15 feet 5 inches. Last October's Equipment Register has this car count at 483, so, again, "To Present" would be good... again, not counting the logo change to the Tuscan Red version. Have all of the cars in the series received this update at this writing? I'll let you decide, but consider that the TTX Company has over 170,000 cars.

And speaking of the updated logo...



Targeted Release August/September 2021:
527 00 191 and 527 00 192, \$24.90 each.
Reporting Marks: TTJX 80529 and 80597.
60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, TTX (Tuscan Red Logo).

Yellow with white reporting marks on black panel on left and tuscan red post-2008 TTX logo on right. Black lettering otherwise. White on black double COTS panel at far right. Six varying length orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along side. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2008 to late decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is

preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 191 release is shown here for illustration purposes.

For this pair, we not only change the logo, but the reporting marks. From RailcarPhotos we learn that the series TTPX 80520 to 80624 became the series TTJX 80520 to 80624. The cars were built by Bethlehem Steel in 1970 in what was then Trailer Train's class 68ABH. A bingo for the 80529 as of October 2012 is also on RailcarPhotos. The road number stayed the same when the reporting marks were changed so this may have been a simple crossover. I have two observations about this image. First, the conspicuity stripes are almost the same shade of yellow as the car itself, while on the MTL artwork they're more orange. I think that is simply for illustration purposes since it would be impossible to see on the artwork if they were the "right" shade of yellow... yikes! Second, there are what look like crossties attached to the floor of the car. I wouldn't expect the model to come with these but it would be an interesting modification. The current TTX tuscan red logo was in place on the car at the time its photo was taken. I'll also note that other cars in the series have had their bulkheads cut down and the wood planking removed from them. For example, there's TTJX 80599 as found in October 2008.

Given the post-2008 logo, let's skip over the earlier history of the car and hit the ORER for October 2007, the closest I have to this change. By this time the original group has become a mess of headache-inducing entries ranging from one to five cars each, starting with 80525 and ending with 80264, but adding up to only 35 total cars. The extreme height of these cars is either 15 feet or 8 feet 11 inches, the former being what we're interested and the latter the ones with the cut down bulkheads. The remaining key dimensions are about the same: inside length 62 feet, outside length 73 feet 4 inches or 73 feet 5 inches, and gross rail weight 263,000 pounds. The 80529 and 80597 are both represented here, admittedly, the 80597 in a group of five cars which don't cover all possible numbers- but I'll take it. They're also in the January 2011, October 2014, and January 2018 Registers in the same manner. However, all cars from the group are out of last October's ORER, so we do not get "To Present" this time.



Targeted Release August/September 2021:
527 00 201 and 527 00 202, \$24.90 each.
Reporting Marks: CP 304903 and 304907.
60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, Canadian Pacific.

White with red CP Rail roadname left of center and black lettering including reporting marks in center. White on black double COTS panel right of center. Six yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along side. Approximate Time Period: 1996, or strictly speaking, after 2005 given conspicuity stripes, to at least 2017. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 201 release is shown here for illustration purposes.

The following is mostly reprinted from last June's coverage of the N Scale release of this item (054 00 270).

Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" site (www.nakina.net) has forty cars in the series CP 304900 to 304939, starting with the January 1996 Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER). He notes that these could be former Milwaukee Road cars. That would be a two-step process: what was left of the Milwaukee Road was absorbed by CP subsidiary Soo Line on January 1, 1996, and the Soo Line has been gradually subsumed into its parent ever since, though there remains some equipment in SOO reporting marks for financial purposes.

There are three bingo photos of the first scheduled road number, CP 304903, on the website RRPictureArchives.net; in fact it's the only car in the prototype series available there. The earliest photo was taken in July 2012 in Streetsville, Ontario. That white paint is looking surprisingly good considering the general wear and tear freight cars take. The second photo was provided by our friend and long-time UMTRR Gang Member Ed Weisensel, who caught it in September 2017 in Dubuque, Iowa. He remarked, "Surprising color on this CP bulkhead." I agree! It is looking more gray than white by this time, and since there is a limited "canvas" on which to operate on the sides, taggers went for the inside of the bulkheads instead. I guess that's creative... Finally, the third photo is from about a month later with the car in Saint Paul, Minnesota. We've got an ATP out at least that far.

The ORER for January 2018 shows just five cars remaining of the original group of forty, but one of them is the 304903. While we're here, I'll note that the car has an inside length of 56 feet 8 inches and an outside length of 68 feet 4 inches. That outside length is over the couplers so the car might not be that far off the MTL 054 body style. However, the extreme height is 16 feet 9 inches which is taller than the Micro-Trains model. The general arrangement of the bulkheads is relatively close but not exact in my opinion.

I was curious about the car's origin so I checked further. Ian Cranstone believed that this CP series was originally the Milwaukee Road 67200 series. A check of the ORER for January 1985 does in fact show a series 67200 to 67249 of flat cars with "permanent end bulkheads" and the same dimensions. There were 49 cars in that group at that time. There's a shot of MILW 67237 from that group on George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (www.rr-fallenflags.org).



Targeted Release August/September 2021:
527 00 211 and 527 00 212, \$24.90 each.
Reporting Marks: ICG 978688 and 978907.
60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, Illinois Central Gulf.

Orange with black lettering including reporting marks in center. White on black double COTS panel at far right. White simulated reflective dots at points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1982 (build date) to, strictly speaking, no later than 2006 for this specific car, or as late as the present otherwise. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 211 release is shown here for illustration purposes.

The following is mostly reprinted from last April's coverage of the N Scale release of this item (054 00 260).

The bingo for the first of these two cars comes up on RailcarPhotos.com. The car was found in December 2006 carrying a load similar to what Micro-Trains included with N Scale version of this car. The white dots also on the model are accompanied by conspicuity stripes, so there is a “strictly speaking” ATP in effect here. It’s noted with the photo that the 978688 was among the group ICG 978650 to 978749 built by Portec in the later part of 1980. The prototype car is slightly longer than the MTL 527 body style, however the general arrangement of the car is about the same. There’s a fair amount of rust on the flat car and on the inside of the bulkheads, as well as what looks like some paint patching along the sides.

It’s noted with the photo that the 978688 was among the group ICG 978650 to 978749 built by Portec in the later part of 1980. However, I don’t see that series in the April 1981 ORER, while it is present in the April 1984 Register, so I will concur with MTL’s car copy on the N Scale release that these cars were built in 1982. The series is split into main groups 978650 to 978674, 978675 to 978699 and 978700 to 978749, which differ only by capacity: 183, 184 or 185 thousand pounds. The key dimensions are all the same: inside length 66 feet, inside width 9 feet, outside length 77 feet, and extreme height 14 feet 10 inches. The total car count is right at 100.

Given the 2006 bingo photo, I jumped to the ORER for January of that year. Illinois Central Gulf had reverted to its original Illinois Central name by this time. The total car count was 58 across the same three main sets of flat cars. In the January 2011 Register, there were 48 cars with ICG reporting marks, but there were also more than twenty cars restenciled to IC reporting marks or perhaps repainted entirely. But that change from ICG back to IC wasn’t yet done as of the January 2018 ORER, with 44 cars still in their as delivered reporting marks. With the addition of last October’s Register to the files, only 14 cars were left in ICG reporting marks. That makes a “To Present” Approximate Time Period *possible*... at this writing, but not much farther.



Targeted Release August/September 2021:

527 00 221 and 527 00 222, \$24.90 each.

Reporting Marks: NOKL 725254 and 725258.

60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, Northwest Oklahoma Railroad.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black double COTS panel at far right. Seven horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 2010 (based on photo evidence) to present. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 221 release is shown here for illustration purposes.

After being able to reprint myself for the previous two pre-order announcements, it’s back to original research for the final two of the six bulkhead flat car pairs. We’ll start with a bingo on NOKL 725254 on RailcarPhotos.com, dated September 2010. This car was originally part of a group lettered for the Longview, Portland and Northern, reporting marks LPN 61000 to 61099 built by Evans/SIECO in June and July 1981. The individual timbers which make up the floor look somewhat beaten up, with a few loose and perhaps about to fall off the car. The

conspicuity stripes are yellow, not orange as shown in the MTL artwork. Complementing that are two images of NOKL 725258 from in April 2010, with the car being interchanged from CSX to Norfolk Southern at Shenandoah Junction, West Virginia. How many big power diesels does it take to pick up one car? Three... Anyway, the car is described as being the former HLSC 1008 after being LPN 61010. While I'm at it, the other car NOKL 725254 was HLSC 1004, previously LPN 61004. Photos starting in 2010 on RRPictureArchives show that the car was an international traveler, spotted in the USA, Streetsville, Ontario and Queretaro, Mexico. HLSC is the reporting marks for Hampton Railway, Incorporated, a shortline that owns about five miles of former Willamina and Grande Ronde Railroad in Oregon. (Long time Micro-Trains followers may recall that there was an N Scale six pack of bulkhead flat cars done for that railroad.) The line is a subsidiary of Hampton Lumber Sales Company (HLSC, get it, George?) and is serviced by the Portland and Western Railroad, which is part of the Genesee and Wyoming family.

All we need for the ATP is, well, approximately, when these cars were transferred from Hampton to the NOKL. That's sometime between the October 2007 and January 2011 ORERs. In the latter book, we have a mess: a large series NOKL 701250 to 739999 – yeah, that would be 38,750 cars if full – with a maddening number of subsets. Fortunately, the 725254 and 725258 are in a smaller group starting with road number 725250 and ending with 725347, but with enough numbers missing that the car count is 84. The inside length given is 61 feet, outside length 72 feet 4 inches, inside height 9 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet and gross rail weight 284,000 pounds. Fortunately, by the time we get to last October's ORER, someone has had the good sense to split up the absurd main series, and so we get NOKL 725250 to 725347 by itself with 87 cars of 268,000 pounds gross rail weight and seven others with 263,000 pounds gross rail weight. And, perhaps more importantly, a "to present" Approximate Time Period.



Targeted Release August/September 2021:

527 00 231 and 527 00 232, \$24.90 each.

Reporting Marks: UP 215731 and 215733.

60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, Union Pacific.

Yellow with black reporting marks on left.

White on black double COTS panel at far right. Seven orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: after 2005, given conspicuity stripes, to present. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 231 release is shown here for illustration purposes.

Since I had last October's ORER out anyway, I thought I'd begin at the end of the ATP by noting that 66 total cars are in the UP series 215700 to 215799. They are described as "Flat, Cushion Underframe, Bulkheads, Load Binders, Stake Pockets (Packaged Lumber) with AAR Designation FB. The dimensions: inside length 61 feet, outside length 70 feet 6 inches, extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, and gross rail weight 263,000 pounds. There were 86 of these cars shown as in service in the October 2004 Equipment Register, meaning that they pre-dated the need for conspicuity stripes. I can also add the inside height, 11 feet 6 inches.

From RailcarPhotos.com we learn that these cars actually go back to June 1980, when they were built by Portec at its plant in Winder, Georgia. These are the UP's F-100-14 class, indicating 100 tons capacity (the "100" in the class code). While the Union Pacific typically painted cars with cushion underframes yellow, some are painted in the UP's "synthetic red" shade of brown. They also may have been designated for Packaged Lumber service, but that's not all they carried. In a bingo, the 275731 was found in 2006 in New Jersey carrying steel; and in the other bingo, the 275733 was found in California in 2014 carrying nothing and showing that the wood lining one inside end was pretty beaten up. The paint scheme on both matches the MTL artwork, and is about as plain as it gets.

Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS: A pre-order announcement this month...

*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 **April 30**.*



Targeted Release August 2021:

994 01 270, \$124.95.

Road Numbers: 1006, 1801, 8602 and 2234 (will be preceded with "AMTK" in website listings).

Amtrak Phase III Four Pack.

Scheduled to consist of two MTL 553 series streamlined baggage cars, one MTL 552 series streamlined coach, and one MTL 550 series streamlined coach. General paint scheme for all cars is platinum mist with red, white and blue horizontal stripes across middle of sides. Black lettering as follows: road number and "Baggage" at left and right on the 1006; "Amtrak" at left and road number at right on the 1801; road number and "Table" at left and right and "Amtrak" off center on the 8602; and road number and "Sleeper" at left and right on the 2234 plus white "Star Scene" car name on blue panel at bottom center. The 1801 also has multicolor "The Vermonter" art between the baggage doors. Approximate Time Period: after 1976 but varies by car, see text. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

at left and right on the 1006; "Amtrak" at left and road number at right on the 1801; road number and "Table" at left and right and "Amtrak" off center on the 8602; and road number and "Sleeper" at left and right on the 2234 plus white "Star Scene" car name on blue panel at bottom center. The 1801 also has multicolor "The Vermonter" art between the baggage doors. Approximate Time Period: after 1976 but varies by car, see text. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

A photo accompanying the Wikipedia article on "The Vermonter" train shows an Amtrak diesel at Brattleboro, Vermont in 1996 followed with a baggage car sporting the artwork depicted on the MTL artwork and a set of Amfleet cars. The article itself traces at a fairly detailed level the twists and turns that this service has taken since it replaced "The Montrealer" on April 1, 1995. Generally speaking, the train runs from Washington, DC through New York to St. Albans, Vermont. The routing, train makeup and service times have changed from then until now, including a suspension of service last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Phase III paint scheme was introduced in 1976 and is still in use on some equipment, so that doesn't help much with our Approximate Time Period. The streamlined cars in this forthcoming pack are more like the "Heritage Fleet," inherited by Amtrak upon its start of service in 1971, as opposed to what Amtrak is likely to be currently running. So I wouldn't put a "to present" on this quartet—though of course Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") always applies!

That having been said, let's hunt for some bingo photos. The 1006 appears twice on RRPictureArchives.net, once at the end of a train heading through Westerly, Rhode Island in 1998 and once in South Station in Boston in 1999, yielding an "at least" ATP for that car. It's a former Canadian National and VIA car built by National Steel Car in 1958 (and as such, won't be an exact match to the MTL 553 body style), then was put into service on the Ethan Allen Express in the year 2000 with road number 1854. (The Ethan Allen Express is also Amtrak service, from New York City to Rutland, Vermont, which began in 1996 and was the first passenger train to Rutland since 1953.)

The 1801, sporting "The Vermonter" banner, is also on RRPictureArchives as of July 2001 and July 2003. Unfortunately, there are also "End of the Line" photos of it being scrapped in January 2012 in Morristown, New Jersey, and so much for that Approximate Time Period. Yikes, it still carried "The Vermonter" artwork! (Don't get any ideas...)

"Table Car" 8602 was part of Amtrak's AutoTrain in that service's northern terminal of Lorton, Virginia in July 1995. It was originally the Union Pacific's 44 seat coach, built in 1960 by Saint Louis Car Company. The 8602 was also caught in Birmingham, Alabama in October 1983. The paint scheme matches the MTL artwork. Both of those images are also on RRPictureArchives. How a car goes from AutoTrain to The Vermonter... well, I'll leave that up to the reader except to say we have another "until at least" ATP here.

Well, three out of four from the same site ain't bad, but there aren't any photos of the sleeper as Amtrak 2234 on RRPictureArchives. However, there is a mislead of sorts, centered around a car named "Tallahassee" built for the Seaboard Air Line in 1956, in service for Amtrak from 1971 to 1975 and then becoming "private varnish." However that is **not** the Amtrak 2234 being offered by Micro-Trains! Instead, it's the former Union Pacific "North Platte" sleeper, also road number UP 1705, and then Amtrak 2254 before becoming Amtrak 2234, the "Star Scene." Its photo is on Fallen Flags, quite a ways from Vermont in Sanford, Florida in February 1992, and thus we have another "at least" ATP. We don't know why there were two passenger cars with the same road number on the Amtrak roster, but there were.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: None this month.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: The Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board begins with all remaining Thomas Kinkade and Kinkade Studios items. As MTL has noted the past two months, the limited license the company had to sell these has now expired. I'm not sure what happens now to any unsold cars... hopefully it does not involve a grinder.

With that noted, let's return to our chronological listing. I don't know why I didn't just slap a Dreaded D on the NP Weathered Stock Car Two Pack (993 05 820) from last month, since I figured it would be here and gone. Same for the Southern Pacific Weathered Hi-Cube Boxcar (101 44 060) but surprisingly, **not** for the Burlington version of that car (101 44 140). I did go straight to the "D" for the CSX Transportation TBOX Three Pack (993 01 860), and while I'm on the subject of CSX, Runner Pack #173 (993 00 173) of four gondolas with coil covers, is also outta here. And while I'm on the subject of Runner Packs, #176 (993 00 176) of four Southern Railway gondolas is also gone. And while I'm on the subject of the Southern Railway, the boxcar with hatches (020 00 257) has left the building, and while I'm on the subject of boxcars with hatches, so has the Southern Pacific version (020 00 247). How much longer can I keep this up? Just one more: While I'm on the subject of March releases that have sold out, add the two mid-month Union Pacific boxcar releases (181 00 14x), the single Santa Fe boxcar (180 00 240), the B&O/Chessie System Center Flow (094 00 660), the Bee Hive Corn Syrup tank car which opens the Sweet Liquid Series (065 00 136), both versions of the Solar System Supplemental boxcar for The Moon (102 0x 840), the Milky Way Caboose (100 00 810), the Chicago and North Western Caboose (130 00 280), the TTX Wreck Recovery Two Pack (993 02 130), and the Southern Railway horse car (149 00 330) – and that last one is a surprise. This is almost a clean sweep of all March cars out of the factory! Can I stop now?

No, I can't... there's still the first two months of 2021 to look at, but just one incremental N Scale sellout: From February, the Rio Grande baggage car is unloaded (147 00 390). In Z Scale, the New York Central Runner Pack of stock cars has hit the last roundup (994 00 110, February), as have both Weathered Stock Cars from last month: the Santa Fe (520 44 050) and Rock Island (520 44 250). Both numbers of the Western Pacific gondola are gone (522 00 36x, January), as is the Bee Hive Corn Syrup tank car (530 00 490, March).

Backing up to last year and staying with Z Scale, the Rio Grande boxcar Runner Pack (994 00 109, March) has rolled on. Bouncing back to N Scale, the Mexene refrigerator car has sold out (047 00 430, May), and you can't wash that down with Our Mother's Cocoa because that refrigerator car is gone too (049 00 880, January). The second number of the American Refrigerator mechanical refrigerator car is out as well (069 00 232, January), and so are both numbers of the UP/Cotton Belt "Heritage" Center Flow (094 00 62x, April), the Burlington boxcar (180 00 210, December), the Weathered Seaboard caboose (051 44 020, February), the Rio Grande diner (144 00 810, August), and the Canadian Pacific single-window coach (160 00 080, March).

From 2019, we have these N Scale outs: the Horvitz Brothers refrigerator car (049 00 870, December) the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio hopper (055 00 540, May), the second number of the Norfolk Southern log car (115 00 072, September); and these Z Scale outs: the first number of the C&O double door boxcar (506 00 391, November) and the first number of the Cotton Belt covered hopper (531 00 291, July). Getting the Dreaded D from before 2019 are the N Scale Southern 12-1 sleeper (142 00 330, December 2018), the second number of the Z Scale Swift Livestock stock car (520 00 262, October 2018), the N Scale Chicago and North Western "Friendship Train" flat car (045 00 460, August 2017), the N Scale Seaboard "Friendship Train"

boxcar (120 00 280, July 2017), and the second number of the Z Scale Southern Pacific covered hopper (531 00 272, December 2017).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Kind of a two-for-one special here from Michael Bishop. I mentioned in my coverage last month of the Northern Pacific Weathered Stock Car Two Pack (993 05 820) that when N Scalers think of “Pig Palace” it might be the Atlas First Generation 85 foot stock car, not the “regular size” cars that the Northern Pacific also had. Michael sent over a PDF of the NP’s internal magazine **Telltale** for November 1964. It’s more useful overall with respect to the A1G stock car, but that car’s origin is what fits into these bytes: “The double deck car was fabricated from two [of] the NP’s 40 foot ‘Pig Palace’ cars.” The work was done at the company’s Como Shops in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Hmm, wait, that’s a second meaning to “two for one special,” isn’t it?



And that’s not all... if you happened to purchase a Pig Palace Two Pack, you might already know that it came with a bonus: a laserboard-based “second deck kit” that is installed inside each car. It will show very well when the door is opened. If you don’t yet know... maybe you haven’t opened the box yet. I resemble that remark...

Meanwhile, while looking for OK Corn Syrup for this month’s Hubinger tank car, I came across an image of an actual package of Bee Hive Corn Syrup for last month’s tank car. It’s new enough to have a bilingual label – that would be “Sirop de Maïs” in French-Canadian. And it’s also new enough to be in a plastic bottle.

OOPS PATROL: After taking pains to place the New Releases in Catalog Number Order in last month’s issue, I then blow it by incorrectly flipping the sequence of the Southern Pacific (101 44 060) and Burlington/CB&Q (101 44 140) Weathered Boxcars. That’s been fixed for the version that will eventually hit the website as a Back Issue. Perhaps more importantly in the Weathered Category, the Northern Pacific “Pig Palace” Stock Car Two Pack (993 05 820) has an MSRP of \$69.95, not \$59.95. (And it’s sold out anyway.)

25 YEAR LOOKBACK SPECIAL #4: 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.”

It’s hard to believe that it’s already been eight years since the Number One reader of the UMTRR, my dad, passed away. Although he had HO Scale trains longer than he had kids,

having started back before either my brother or I was born, he had some favorite cars in the Micro-Trains lineup. And you certainly couldn't go wrong with the April 1998 release of the Pennsylvania Railroad "Jersey City Ice Car." This steel ice refrigerator car (059 00 040, at right)



was in more or less permanent service in, of course, Jersey City. At the time it was released, I insisted that "no begging, pleading, cajoling, or assorted other shenanigans were utilized by this author to have this car produced." In fact, I'd never heard of the car or seen it or even a photo of it. I also couldn't tell my readers back then where in the huge expanse of the "P" Company's Jersey City facilities it was stationed.

I have that bingo photo now, from Page 68 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. PRR 498350 was apparently a converted boxcar which was placed in the Pennsy's class RB23. It was stationed at Exchange Place in November 1960, "assigned as an ice car" according to the **Color Guide**. "Ice was commonly used around major terminals for air conditioning some coaches and for freight crews." Exchange Place had been relegated to a commuter-only station by then. It was closed in 1961 and torn down by 1963. I never saw it in person. Photos of it and the surrounding area are not frequently seen. I couldn't tell you where exactly the refrigerator car was in the Exchange Place complex, but that hardly matters... it was in my home town, and that's enough! Back in the April 1998 UMTRR, I did get the Approximate Time Period roughly right at the 1960s. A more appropriate one probably would be 1960, plus or minus. There was no useful ORER information on the car as it was lumped into the PRR's single line for all company service equipment. Interestingly, the build date on this car is August 1935, just about three months before my father's birthday.

Over Easter Weekend, Colleen and I visited Jersey City so that I could show her where I was born, and that included a drive around the Exchange Place area. It certainly doesn't look anything like it did back when I was a kid, or when my mom and dad were either.



FINALLY, MY APRIL FOOL?

Well, look what I found while roaming around trackside... a car sitting conveniently on a quiet siding just outside of the City of Canandaigua, New York.

There was a paint store nearby, and an artist's colony just across the road, and so...

OK, not really. The above freight car image is actually the product of a very good quality digital camera (thank you, Colleen) and my beat up long-obsolete photo image editor, the same one that I use for these bytes. In other words, don't go looking for this car at a plastics facility near you, as you won't find one looking like this. I don't have the ability, the time, or the inclination to get myself prosecuted, to pull off something like this, even if it is the 25th Year of

this modest enterprise. Although I have to admit that when I saw this car I wondered whether I would be caught just putting a **little** tag on it... you know, just a small "UMTRR"... but no.

Although that really doesn't explain **this** little, and rather amateurish experiment, does it? (Note: It was done on a spare shell.) If that's the best I can do in 1/160th proportion, I guess I'd better leave graffiti to the professionals. Which, I will note, is something I'm considering... and isn't that a tantalizing hint for what might just happen before we get to the end of Year 25?



Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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