



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

Issue #297 – September, 2021

(Not affiliated with Micro-Trains Line, Inc.)

Copyright ©2021, George J. Irwin. Reproduction prohibited.

Please see legal notice at the end of this document.

Hello again everyone! We return to the usual schedule with this month's news and views, including the September Weathered Releases. The Supplement I sent out following our trip to Mid-Coast Maine has been merged back into the "main column" for eventual posting in the Back Issues section of the UMTRR Website... and good thing, since I made a Rather Major Oops in the description of one of those Weathered Releases. Which, by the way, have all sold out, as have a bunch of N Scale items from last month! Score one for the UMTRR Spy Network, which called those quick trips to the bye-bye board. Back here in September, though, we span the continent from Alaska to Florida with N Scale Releases, and we have four virtual two-packs of boxcars in Z Scale. And do we have a stealth announcement of a new N Scale passenger car variation? Let's have a look...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



049 00 900, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: FEC 10055.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Florida East Coast.

Yellow sides and ends, black roof, trucks, fishbelly underframe, and details including end ladders. Black lettering including

roadname and road number on left and "Fruit and Vegetables / Ventilated & Insulated" on right. Arch bar trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1918 (build date given by MTL) to no later than 1924. *Note: This item is (unofficially) being reported as already sold out and discontinued.*

We begin this month with a real Oldie But Goodie, constructed more than one hundred years ago. The Florida East Coast name had been around since 1895, the company being a rename of the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Indian River Railroad. Besides being a lot longer name it also was only partially indicative of the company's reach, which by 1912 was all the way down, well, the Florida East Coast, and on to Key West. As I've noted before in these bytes, the FEC was largely the brainchild of Henry Flagler, a partner in Standard Oil and then a real estate tycoon. His building of the railroad opened up the, well, Florida East Coast. Miami had a population of all of fifty when the railroad arrived, for example. There are hundreds of photographs of the construction and operation of the "Overseas Railroad" available on the Florida Memory site: (<http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/> , then search for "Florida East Coast" with the quotes).

I suspect that a lot less has been written about FEC's refrigerator fleet than about the company at large. Certainly being located in Florida it would have made sense to have refrigerator cars for carriage of produce north and west. And it also made sense for the railroad to link up with a much larger company with the same purpose: Fruit Growers Express. The late Bill Welch noted in his timeline of the company that FEC joined FGE on October 1, 1923, "bringing 175 nearly new reefers with heavy fishbelly underframes under lease to FGEX's roster to be numbered as 11001-11175."

A trip to the Official Railroad Equipment Register (ORER) for October 1919 reveals something interesting: there are 175 cars in the series 10001 to 10175, which would have included the 10055, but they are described as boxcars with steel underframes, MCB Designation XV, not refrigerator cars. The "V" in the designation refers to Ventilated, so that's half right, anyway. The cars were a bit smaller than the MTL 049 body style, with inside length of 36 feet, outside length 37 feet 10 inches, extreme height 13 feet 11 inches, door opening 6 feet wide by 7 feet high, and capacity 2400 cubic feet or 60,000 pounds. There's no mention of ice capacity, but then again, the word "Refrigerator" isn't among the extensive lettering on the car, either. The cars are gone by the August 1924 ORER. So were these the 175 cars that moved to Fruit Growers Express?

No, they weren't. A check of the Fruit Growers Express entry in that same August 1924 ORER shows that the FGEX series 11001 to 11175, formerly FEC 11001 to 11175, were actual refrigerator cars with different dimensions and with ice capacity of 10,000 pounds. Further, the Florida East Coast registration also indicates the leasing of the 11001 to 11175 group to FGE. It's apparently just coincidental that the car counts of 175 were the same and that the number series were close to each other. This leads me to two questions, neither of which I can answer: First, what did the transfers to the Fruit Growers Express look like? Second, and more importantly for our purposes, where did the car the MTL models this month and its 174 siblings go?

Well, actually three questions, when you add, "Where's the bingo photo?" No luck on that either. While the stroll through the above mentioned Florida East Coast images on the Florida Memory site was interesting, it wasn't terribly productive. From the model we get what I believe is a reference to building by the Mount Vernon Car Company (the "Mt. V." next to the "New"), but no luck researching that angle either. I do know that Micro-Trains does not produce a car without images—how would they know to paint the end ladders?-- so they would have one even if I don't. Perhaps we'll get some Incremental Information on this.



054 00 290, \$29.95.

Road Number: 48253 (will be "SAL 48253" in website listings).

61 Foot Bulkhead Flat Car, Seaboard (Seaboard Air Line).

Brown with white lettering including roadname and road number in center. Simulated lumber load included. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (build date) through the 1980s.

Given the build date, I jumped over to the ORER for January 1967, since the January 1964 Register is just a bit too early. The series SAL 48125 to 48274, of 150 cars, is described as “Flat, Bulkhead” with an end note stating that they have permanently connected chains and winch type load binders. The inside length listed is 61 feet, outside length 71 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, and capacity 180,000 pounds.

Right after that ORER, we run smack into the “Seaboard Coast Line Protocol” for renumbering. Many of you already know that the SCL kept the listings of their predecessor railroads, but eliminated their car counts. The predecessor listings are not removed from the SCL registration until the entire series has been cut over to the new reporting marks. And it turns out that this protocol doesn’t matter, since once the SCL was succeeded by the Seaboard System, the car counts return to groups still in the original reporting marks. In January 1985, there are 88 cars remaining in SAL reporting marks of the original 150. Two of them make it to the CSX Transportation listing in the July 1992 ORER, which is where I stopped looking.

And thanks to bingo photos on George Elwood’s “Fallen Flags” site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) which document the 48253 quite thoroughly, we know that this specific car was in service, in the paint scheme used by Micro-Trains, in March 1985. It was found in Bound Brook, New Jersey, with a lumber load quite like what MTL is providing with the car. Not every car stayed in the “as delivered” paint; for example sister car SAL 48126 was clad in reporting marks only as early as July 1980 in a photo on RRPictureArchives. That car was unloaded which allows us to see that the inside of the bulkheads was smooth. There is one less side pocket on the MTL 054 body style than on the prototype: thirteen versus fourteen. I hesitate to call them “stake pockets” although that’s what they are on the MTL model. They could be chain anchors on the actual 48253 given the end note in the ORER.



065 00 196, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: GATX 30465.

39 Foot Tank Car, Imperial Sugar.

Car #7 in the “Sweet Liquid Series” (Pre-order announcement last September). Gray with black tank bottom, underframe and trucks. Blue with white outline “Imperial Sugar” across car, “Liquid Sugar Service”

below “Imperial” at left, and “Refined In Texas” below “Sugar” at right. Red and white “Pure Cane” in center below ladder. Black lettering otherwise including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1961 (build date on car) into the mid-1960s.

Well, I didn’t have to go very far for the bingo on this car: it was posted to Trainboard by Russell Straw, who modeled the Imperial Sugar plant in Sugar Land, Texas, on a set of N-Trak modules. And there’s the GATX 30465... so, bingo! Comparing model to prototype, the real car appears to have a tank that’s a bit smaller than the MTL 065 (and Z Scale 530) body style. But that’s an optical illusion: the end markings on the car show a capacity of what looks to me like 12,585 gallons, whereas the Micro-Trains car is a model of a 10,000 gallon car. There’s also a dome platform on the prototype 30465.

The ORER for January 1962 shows GATX 30465 as one of three exceptions to a larger series, 30000 to 30799. The main series is of AAR Designation TM, your basic tank car, while 30453, 30465, and 30496 are AAR Designation TL, or tank cars with lining other than glass. I could see how a car that carries liquid sugar could be lined. Those same three exceptions, plus 30524 and 30552, appear in the January 1964 Equipment Register, and the same five are also in the January 1967 ORER, but they're gone no later than the October 1969 Register. That would be a relatively short Approximate Time Period and might explain why there aren't more photos extant of this colorful car. We of course don't know how long the 30465 was actually painted for Imperial Sugar. Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") is going to be applied more often than not anyway, I'll wager.

But we do have this, also from Russ Straw: a hand-written note dated June 9, 1961: "Loading the first of three new liquid sugar tank cars for trip to Imperial's North Texas installation in Arlington." There are three photos accompanying this note, two of which include the 30465. The third shows a different tank car, ISCX 102, in a similar paint scheme. As tempted as I was to look up the ISCX reporting marks, I didn't.

Imperial, which was founded in 1843 and gave the city of Sugar Land, Texas its name, was one of the largest processors, packagers and marketers of sugar in the United States. It was located exclusively in Sugar Land until 1988 when it acquired Holly Sugar and went public. The company markets its products under the names Imperial, Dixie Crystals and Holly. Imperial Sugar has faced financial problems and its presence in Sugar Land has greatly diminished since the refinery closed in 2003. An explosion at the former Dixie Crystals sugar plant in Port Wentworth, Georgia was another blow to the company. In 2012 it was purchased by Louis Dreyfus Commodities and taken private once again. The company's website is mostly devoted to recipes but also has a few vintage photos on the "Imperial Sugar Legacy" page.



065 00 256, \$27.70.

Reporting Marks: ARR 9024.

39 Foot Tank Car, Alaska Railroad.

Aluminum with black underframe and trucks. Mostly black lettering including roadname across car and reporting marks on left. White on black double COTS panel and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot"

on right. Approximate Time Period: around 1967, or strictly speaking, 1978 given U-1 "dot," to at least 1983. *Note: This is a Regional Release that is not included in dealer standing orders.*

The bingo for this car can be found on RRPictureArchives.net; the car was found in Anchorage, Alaska in July 1983 marked "Lubricating Oil Loading Only." The COTS panel looks a little different and it appears that the color of the U-1 "dot" has faded from yellow to white. Take that 1983 photo date and the "strictly speaking" 1978 date for the deployment of the wheel inspection "dots" and you have at least a five year Approximate Time Period, although I think it's longer than that.

At right is Micro-Trains' model of ARR 9008, the second run of a slightly different Alaska Railroad tank car (065 00 270, June 2005, first run was 65270, November 1990, Road Number 9004). It's not in exactly the same paint scheme but it is from the same prototype series. This would make this seem to me to be more like a "not a reprint" than a truly new release... ah, never mind.



I first see this group in the January 1967 ORER, where there are 19 cars numbered 9005 to 9026. The 100,000 pounds capacity is the only vital statistic listed, plus a note that these are ICC 103 cars with rated capacity of 10,000 gallons. It's unusual that there would be any ORER listing at all for company service tank cars, so I'm not complaining. There's also a series 9050 to 9059 of another 10 cars but I have no way of knowing from the Register whether they're similar.

By April 1976 there are 81 tank cars in the series 9005 to 9099. In the April 1981 Register there are 51 cars left in the group. By the next Register I have in the Research Accumulation, April 1982, they are out of the listing, but, given that they are company service cars, they may not have been off the property. For example, there is the 1983 bingo photo! I've added the "at least" to the ATP accordingly.



110 00 510, \$35.90.

Reporting Marks: SSW 55011.

54 Foot General Service Tank Car, Cotton Belt (St. Louis Southwestern).

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname on right, and "For Molten Sulfur Only" on far right. Multicolor ACI Label and yellow on black U-1 Wheel Inspection "dot" on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date), or strictly speaking, 1978 given U-1 "dot," to no later than 1990.

We go to Lee Gautreaux's "Railgoat" site (www.railgoat.railfan.net) for the scoop on these cars and three prototype photos of the car MTL offers here. A short series of five cars numbered 55007 to 55011 were built by General American in 1966. They were of 70 tons (140,000 pounds) or 20,000 gallon capacity. Although the prototype for the MTL 110 body style is an American Car and Foundry design, we're looking pretty close in the comparison between the real and the model here, save a couple of nitpicks. Photos of the car taken about a month apart in 1982 in San Luis Obispo, California show both sides and both ends of the car. But a shot taken in June 1990 shows the "as delivered" paint replaced with a "dip black" with reporting marks only scheme. So that's the end of the ATP for this particular car.

The January 1967 ORER is getting quite a workout this time around. The only key dimensions shown for these tank cars were the outside length of 55 feet 10 inches and extreme height of 12 feet 3 inches. Given the 1990 bingo photo, I jumped to the October 1991 Equipment Register,

where just two cars remain. It's noted that the cars were equipped with coils. There is just one left in the July 1992 ORER and it's gone by the October 1993 book.



181 00 190, \$27.90.

Reporting Marks: C&O 482497.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Chesapeake and Ohio / Chessie System.

Dark blue with mostly yellow lettering including Chessie System roadname and

C&O reporting marks on left and "Ches-C" herald on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1983 (service date on car) to no later than 1991.

No need to dither on the start of the Approximate Time Period for this car: the caption accompanying the bingo photo on Page 61 of the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment** notes that the car was six months out of the paint shop. And that paint date would be November 1983 at Chessie's Raceland, Kentucky shops. These cars were built in 1967 with low mounted brake wheels and were in the C&O series 482400 to 482599. The B-74A cars were distinct from the B-74 class with 10 foot 6 inch Superior plug doors – which are very close to those on the MTL 181 body style – and an extra inch in width, which I would hardly notice!

The ORER for April 1984 will do to begin lookups here given the documented repaint into Chessie colors. Of course, I can't guarantee, or even expect, that all of the 191 cars in the C&O series 482400 to 482599 carried the "Ches-C" at the time. But we can see the key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 57 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, and capacity 4970 cubic feet or 128,000 pounds. These cars had the AAR Designation XL and the description "Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe, DF Loaders, Plug Door, Partial Belts, 50K." Micro-Trains notes in its car copy that cars in this group were in service into the 1990s. I took the hint and jumped to the October 1991 ORER, which showed under the CSX Transportation listing a car count of... one. OK, well, that is still in the nineties!

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



146 00 410, \$33.90.

Car Name: Fraunces' Tavern.

Road Number: 968 (will be "C&O 968" in website listings).

Heavyweight Diner, Chesapeake and Ohio.

Yellow, dark blue and gray sides. Dark blue roof, ends, and underframe including six wheel trucks. Dark blue lettering including roadname in center of letterboard at top and road number at bottom center in gray band. Small yellow "C&O for Progress" herald at far right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1950, or strictly speaking, 1954, to at least 1960.

How did a famous tavern in Manhattan, New York City wind up as the name of a C&O passenger car? The **C&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 10, has the story for us as well as a bingo photo from 1960. This car was one of five “Tavern Cars” that were used on the C&O’s train “The George Washington.” In 1932, the first three were named for taverns that our First President frequented in Virginia: Michie’s Tavern, Raleigh Tavern, and Gadsby’s Tavern. Two more were added in 1935: City Tavern and Fraunces’ Tavern. The car was built in 1925 by Pullman-Standard. It’s probably fair to call the MTL model a stand-in for the prototype, as there are differences in the roof, underframe and windows. On the other hand, the C&O cars aren’t likely to be more closely modeled in a widely available commercial model either. The “Fraunces’ Tavern” remained on the roster after the C&O switched to a pair of two-car diner units converted from coaches for “The George Washington.” (Speaking of cars you won’t see in a widely available model!)

I was curious about the train to which the “Fraunces’ Tavern” was assigned so I took a look in my beat up February 1935 Official Guide to the Railways. (“The George Washington” began operation in 1932 and survived in one form or another into the Amtrak era.) Train #1 left Washington, D.C. at 6:01 PM, met a connector from Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia at Charlottesville, Virginia in the 1 AM hour the next day, and arrived in Cincinnati at 8:30 AM or Louisville via another section at 10:25 AM. The train in the opposite direction was the C&O’s #2, which left Louisville at 1:50 PM and Cincinnati at 8:45PM. These portions combined in Ashland, Kentucky at 8:00 PM and arrived in Washington at 8:30 the next morning or in Norfolk at 11:30 the next morning.

As for Fraunces’ Tavern—the real one, not the C&O diner—it’s been “Revolutionary Since 1762” at 54 Pearl Street. It’s operated by the Sons of the Revolution—hmm, by now it should be more like great-great-great-great-grandsons, no?—and is the oldest standing structure in New York City. And yes, you can still have lunch or dinner there, and perhaps a hearty adult beverage as well. I’ve been there exactly once, with my parents and brother, likely in the 1970s.



146 00 430, \$34.90.

Road Number: 543 (will be “C&NW 543” in website listings).

Heavyweight Diner, Chicago and North Western.

Yellow sides with green letterboard at top, green roof, black underframe and six-wheel trucks. Aluminum lettering including roadname in center of letterboard, small CStPM&O reporting marks at top left and right in letterboard, and road number (with black shadowing) at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1954 or before (see text) to 1958.

You’ll have to look carefully to find the bingo photo for this car in the **C&NW Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume One**. It’s back on Page 78, in the section of the **Color Guide** which covers the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha. Contemporary railfans might wonder why some Union Pacific rolling stock carries the reporting marks “CMO”; that’s a throwback to this line. The “Omaha Road” served three of the four cities in

its official name, not getting to Chicago unless you count the Chicago and North Western, which bought only enough of the company's stock in 1882 to hold a majority. While technically independent, the CStPM&O was effectively under the control of the C&NW. The North Western finally leased the Omaha Road in 1957 and it existed on paper until 1972. Portions of the line remain under the Union Pacific, and so do the CMO reporting marks.

Color Guide author James Kincaid lamented that there is not much documentation of the C&NW's passenger equipment, and close to zero of its subsidiaries. We do know that two diners, numbers 543 and 544, were built in June 1910 by Pullman. The bingo photo for the 543, which shows that silver lettering, is from October 1954. The photo shows a window arrangement that differs a fair amount from the MTL 146 body style, but the chances of complete model fidelity to a lot of exactly two cars is rather low. Author Kincaid notes that when the Omaha Road's roster was pulled into the North Western's in the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment in 1959, the two diners weren't included. That is probably an indication of the end of the Approximate Time Period.

OK, then, how about the possible start of the Approximate Time Period? That would have to be when the car was painted in yellow and green. Looking through an FAQ on the website of the Chicago and North Western Historical Society, I see that "the order for painting all passenger equipment Pullman Green came through in April of 1928." Apparently cars were—wait for it—yellow and green before that! Another answer has the yellow and green out in 1929 and then back in 1939 with the introduction of the C&NW's streamlined "400" trains. But it's obvious from other photos in the **Color Guide** that the Pullman Green was nowhere near immediately repainted. So, strictly speaking, we can't do any better than the 1954 bingo photo here. Feel free to invoke Rule #1 ("It's your railroad"). And here's a fun fact: the yellow used by Penske leasing on its rental trucks is apparently a very close match to the yellow on the North Western's "400" trains.

N SCALE REPRINTS: One this month and one pre-order...



109 00 011, \$27.90.

Road Number: 470019 (will be "PRR 470019" in website listings).

Heavyweight Depressed Center Flat Car, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Oxide red with white lettering including roadname and road number in center of depressed section. Simulated machine load with bracing. Approximate Time Period: early 1940s (1940 built date) to early 1970s, but see text. Previous Releases: Road Number 470011, February 2001; Road Number 470016, January 2002; Road Number 470017, November 2011. *Note: Micro-Trains has announced that this item will be available mid-month.*

Combine this rerun with the previous three releases and you've got a virtual Runner Pack! And "virtual" is the operative term here since it's been almost ten years since the previous run.

In past commentaries on this car I've noted that the MTL 109 body style is actually a better match for a different series of PRR cars of this type... and I think I've confused everyone including myself. Let's try the usual "see text" approach here.

The 470019 is the last of ten cars numbered 470010 to 470019, Pennsylvania Railroad Class F35. They were built in 1940. The January 1943 ORER shows inside length of 53 feet 2 inches, outside length of 54 feet 4 inches, depressed platform length of 22 feet and area of 443 square feet, and capacity of 250,000 pounds. There are two builder's photos of PRR 470011, the first MTL release (in fact, the first release on this body style) on Rob's Pennsy Page (prr.railfan.net, no "www"). Rob also has this information: Width of end section 8 feet 4 inches; dimensions at base of depression: 22 feet by 8 feet 4 inches; height from rail to floor of depression at center 2 feet 6 inches and at ends 4 feet 7 inches; Two, six wheel trucks with 40 feet 6 inch truck centers. The ten cars lasted into at least 1968 and four of these cars made it all the way to the Penn Central listing in the April 1970 Equipment Register. Comparing model to prototype, we do have a reasonable match at least.

But there's a better choice: the PRR Class F43. These were six cars numbered 470271 to 470276, built sometime between 1955 and 1958 based on the ORERs. This class closely resembles a car produced by Commonwealth Steel Casting for the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, which is the exact basis for the MTL 109 body style as noted by Micro-Trains. The Pennsy, Erie Lackawanna, New York Central, GM&O, and Lehigh Valley were mentioned as all having owned cars of a type similar to the 109000 body style, but MTL notes that the decking was customized for each road. A drawing of the F43 is on Rob's Pennsy Page and there's a 1970 photo of the 470275 in the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1), Page 40. All six were in place as of April 1968. These cars all went to the Penn Central and became Conrail's Class F43, numbered 766145 to 766150 for both PC and CR.

*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 **September 30**.*



Targeted Delivery March 2022:

051 00 011, \$44.95.

Road Number: 435076 (will be "CP 435076" in website listings).

34 Foot Wood Sheathed Caboose with Straight Side Cupola, Canadian Pacific.

Brown sides, red ends (including cupola) black roof, trucks and underframe, white

details. White lettering including script roadname below cupola and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1959 into as late as the 1970s. Previous Releases: As Catalog 51010, Road Number 435503, November 1989 (brown body); then as Catalog 051 00 010, Road Number 435053, August 1998 (brown with red ends).

One of these model cabooses, or vans, as they were called on the CP, is not like the other... actually, none of them are like the others. The first run of this car in 1989 was in plain brown with a small script roadname; the “not a reprint” of 1998 had a larger script roadname and red ends; and this “not a reprint” has yellow details and an even larger script roadname which is centered below the cupola. None of these should be confused with the January 2005 release of another CP caboose, this one red with yellow ends (Catalog 051 00 240, Road Number 437211).

We go to the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One) for the bingo on this car. Page 107 shows the image of CP 435076 at Windsor, Ontario in 1965. According to author John Riddell, this was one of 502 steel underframe 30 ton cabooses in service as of 1965. As is typical of CP cars, the cupola is taller than most and there are fewer windows than on the Micro-Trains model; two per side to be specific. (Broken record alert: the MTL 051 body style is based on the Union Pacific/Southern Pacific “Harriman Common Standard Design” CA-1 prototype.) You might consider painting the end railings yellow to match the side grab irons (use an R/C car paint for this as it will stick to the “slippery engineering plastic” from which the end details are made).

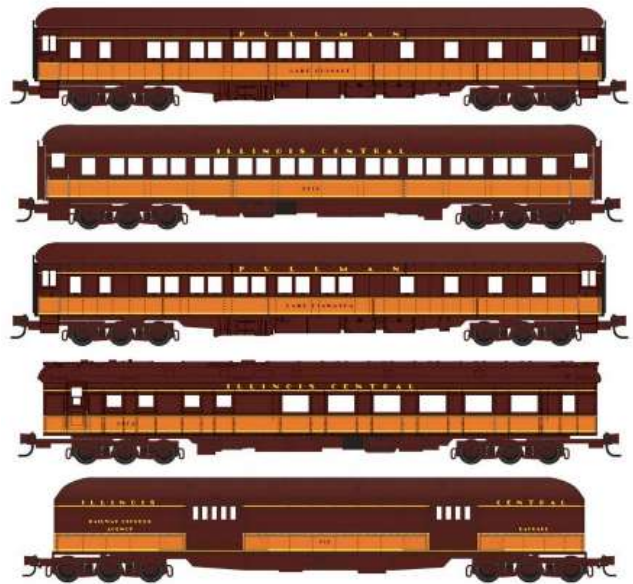
The script lettering is what provides the “no earlier than” start of the Approximate Time Period for this pre-order: it was first used in 1959. But it would take a while to paint all of the cabooses across the CP system, so mixing the script lettering roadname with the previous block lettering would be fine. Well, first you need a car with the block lettering!

Note that in 1956 there were 1135 wood cabooses according to the **Color Guide** which were numbered 435018 to 437264 (not all numbers used). Compare that with the 502 in service in 1965 and you can see the car count is trending down. Even so, at least two wood cabooses survived to receive CP Rail paint, so I’m comfortable pushing the ATP at least into the 1970s.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: We’re a bit out of sequence this month. While we await Runner Pack #180 of three ADM tank cars, **Runner Pack #181 (993 00 181, \$104.95)** of three Conrail 60 Foot Excess Height Double Door Waffle Side boxcars is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the April 2021 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 103 51 160, 223400; 103 52 160, 223402; 103 53 160, 223405. These are the first through third road numbers for this item, which hasn’t been previously released. I’ll replace the MTL artwork with the product photo on the UMTRR website, should that image become available.



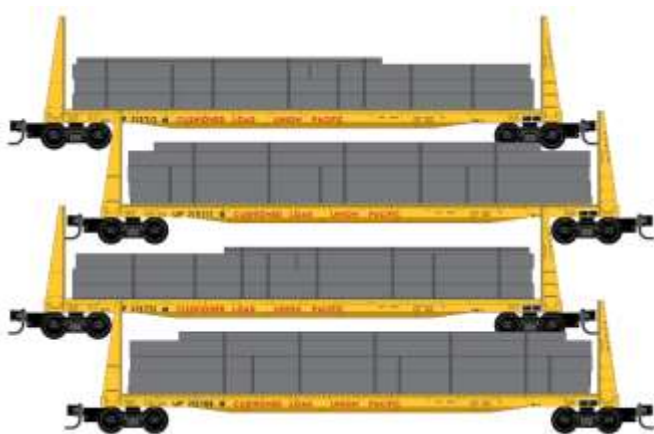
Ditto on the photo of the **Illinois Central Heavyweight Five Pack #2 (993 01 791, \$149.95)**, which is also expected mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2021 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers or car names are: 147 51 350, Baggage Car, 792; 146 52 350, Diner, 3974; 141 53 350 and 141 54 350, 10-1-2 Sleepers, Lake Quinalt and Lake Hiawatha; and 145 55 350, Paired Window Coach, 2817. This is the second number for the baggage car, third for the coach, first for the diner and first and second for the 10-1-2 sleeper. If you're keeping score, the first Illinois Central Heavyweight Five Pack was released in April 2019 with one RPO, a baggage car, two paired window coaches, and a modified observation.



Finally, the fourth of the four TBOX Three Packs that was announced back in April 2019, specifically the **TTX Version 2 set (993 01 850, \$119.95)**, has left the factory; in fact, it's pre-sold out at the factory. I can confirm that these are, or perhaps were, on dealer shelves this month. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 123 51 020, 667101; 123 52 020, 667188; 125 53 020, 667833.



*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 **September 30**.*



Targeted Release March 2022:

993 00 185, \$114.95.

Reporting Marks UP 215712, 215717, 215731, and 215788.

Runner Pack #185, Quantity Four of 61 Foot Bulkhead Flat Cars, Union Pacific.

Yellow with black lettering including reporting marks on left, and red lettering including "Cushioned Load" off center left and roadname in center. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Simulated loads included. Approximate Time Period:

1980 (build date) to mid-decade of the 2000s, or add conspicuity stripes and go as late as the present. This will be the first through fourth numbers for this item which hasn't been previously released. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The Union Pacific class code on the MTL artwork is F-100-14 which is where we'll start things off. According to RailcarPhotos.com, this group, numbered 215700 to 215799, was constructed by Portec in 1980 as their Lot 1945. There are twenty-four photos of cars in this series, taken from 2006 to 2021, including a bingo on the 215717 as found in October 2018. That photo is taken looking down on the car, showing how weathered and faded it's become since the build date. Important for the Approximate Time Period is that the red lettering is gone and only the black reporting marks are present. The wood boards on both the floor and the inside of the ends ranges from relatively new to quite beaten up. Since it's well past 2005, conspicuity stripes are present on the 215717. The appearance of that detail is how I'll call the "strictly speaking" Approximate Time Period. Meanwhile, a bingo to UP 251731 was taken in September 2006; no conspicuity stripes there yet but no red roadname either. Several cars were repainted into the UP's "Synthetic Red" shade of brown. A shot of heavily scrawled over sister car UP 215768 from just this past April indicates that we might be able to go to "the present" but there's the matter of the missing roadname. And at least the 215739 had been flipped to company service as of April 2021, complete with small solar panels (?) on the top of one of the bulkheads.

On Fallen Flags we have the roadname faded, but intact on UP 215717 as of February 2007 — and yes, that's another bingo. The "Union Pacific" is also still visible on UP 215780 as of August 2001. The oldest photo from this group available on Fallen Flags is of UP 215784, caught in April 1986. Over on RRPictureArchives are another 31 photos which also show a mix of yellow and repainted brown cars. The 215739 was still in yellow with the roadname visible — just barely — as of February 2006. On a few cars, the wood on the inside of the bulkheads has been replaced with steel. While I'm here, I'll note that the overall appearance of the car is close to the MTL 054 body style, though some details likely differ.

The ORER for October 1991 shows 97 total cars in the group UP 215700 to 215799, of which 97 are described as "Flat, Cushion Underframe, Bulkheads, Load Binders, Stake Pockets (Packaged Lumber)" and two exceptions are just "Flat." The key dimensions were: inside length 61 feet, outside length 70 feet 6 inches, extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, and capacity 181,000 pounds. The difference between inside and outside length is notable from the couplers, which stick out a fair amount past the body. That can be somewhat simulated with mounting the model couplers outboard of the ends. Last October's Equipment Register had 65 cars remaining on the roster, not bad for forty year old equipment.



Targeted Release February 2022:

993 01 792, \$159.95.

Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Heavyweight Five Pack.

Scheduled to consist of the following: 140 series Railway Post Office, Road Number 30; three of 145 series Paired Window Coach, Road Numbers 3096, 3098, and 3099; and Observation Car with Enclosed Platform, Road Number 3096. Each car is maroon with red center band and gold striping, black roof and underframe including six-wheel trucks, and gold lettering including roadname in center of letterboard, and road numbers at bottom left and right. RPO has "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" at left;

Observation has car name "Chicago" at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: after 1947 to 1969 (mass retirement, see text). All items have not been previously released. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

With the apparent popularity of Illinois Central Heavyweight Passenger Cars – why would MTL do two sets if they weren't popular? – here's a set from their smaller competitor, the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio. The GM&O was formed in 1938 through the merger of the Mobile and Ohio with the Gulf, Mobile and Northern. In 1947 the GM&O merged in the Alton Railroad, formerly the Chicago and Alton, and thus picked up four of the set of five cars modeled here... plus their paint scheme.

With that hint, let's start there. The **IC/GM&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 82, has a shot of GM&O 3099, part of the series 3096 to 3099. These 84 seat coaches were built for the Chicago and Alton by Pullman in 1924 and were chair cars on the Alton's "Alton Limited." The 3099 was photographed in Chicago in 1967, in the paint scheme that MTL will be offering. Other than having the single window on the far right blanked out, the window arrangement matches the MTL 145 body style.

Also coming over from the Alton was GM&O 4000, named "Chicago." This was the Chicago and Alton's 680, also built by Pullman in 1924 as a more traditional observation. Sometime between the merger and 1953 when the photo that is on Page 85 of the **Color Guide** was taken, the observation platform was enclosed and a door and diaphragm added to that end, enabling mid-train use. So, does this model represent a new body style from MTL? A modification to the existing body style? No! Actually, Micro-Trains seems to be planning to use their diner as a stand-in, based on the filename of the artwork, and how's that for a roundabout way to discern this? From a window arrangement standpoint, it works pretty well, at least on the side we can see in the photo. The last four windows on the right are paired on the prototype and single on the model; the count and placement otherwise align.

Four out of five from the **Color Guide** is pretty good; we round out the quintet with a bingo on Railway Post Office #30 as of 1953 on RRPictureArchives. It was from the collection of the late Jerry Laboda, who brought us the Passenger Car Photo Index. The underframe is in the shade so I can't confirm the use of six-wheel trucks, however that was the practice on the GM&O, and that included lightweight cars (!) as the three axles were thought to provide a smoother ride. There are only three windows on the side we can see whereas there are six on the MTL 140 body style. It was the Post Office that mandated fewer windows on RPOs after they were initially built with as many as six per side.

The end of the ATP is likely to be the September 1969 "mass retirement" of GM&O passenger equipment noted in several places in the **Color Guide**. The modified observation was definitely among the cars impacted; the RPO probably went then if not before. It's possible that the coaches survived a bit longer, as the line did have a bit of commuter service out of Chicago. However, no GM&O equipment was taken into Amtrak.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following was announced on the Micro-Trains website on September 17.*



993 05 950, \$124.95.

Reporting Marks: BKTY 150997, 151081, 151103, and 151173.

Four 50 Foot Boxcars, Exterior Post, Single Door, BKTY Weathered Four Pack.

Each car is a restencil of over a previous paint scheme, with light to heavy weathering, some graffiti on three of the cars, and conspicuity stripes. Approximate Time Period for the cars varies, but in general is from 2015 to present, plus or minus.

I've mentioned before that "BKTY" is a reporting mark that used to denote cars which were leased to the Katy (MKT) from Bankers Leasing Company. The BKTY markings were revived and can be found in recent ORERs under the Union Pacific registration. And last October's ORER shows a "main series," if you can call it that, stretching from 150000 to 154341, which has 365 cars. That's followed by **over nine pages** of subset listings! Is this some sort of a joke? No, it's called "we really don't care how we number them, as long as they're fifty foot six inch inside length boxcars." And how

they're painted, or repainted, doesn't seem to matter much either. Let's get to that...



BKTY 150997 (Catalog Number 02551216) has as its base the green sides and ends and aluminum roof of the Marionette, Tomahawk and Western. According to the bingo photo on RRPictureArchives, it was first MTW 4031, then the Mid-Louisiana

Railroad's MDR 8035 (the former North Louisiana and Gulf), then the Sabine River and Northern SRN 3781. In other words, like many former Incentive Per Diem boxcars, it got around. And, as you can see from the "B" side of the car, it also got pretty dirty. The manner in which it was restenciled also didn't seem to be standard either. Hey, what paint do we have around here to cover up the old reporting marks? Black? OK! The bingo photo is from April 2021. Can't get much more "to present" than that.

On RailcarPhotos.com you can see an example from the original series MTW 4000 to 4199 which included this car... at one time, anyway. The prototype was built by FMC in May 1976. It looks like a good match to the MTL 025 body style, but it is a little larger than the model at 5335 cubic feet.



BKTY 151081 (Catalog Number 025 52 126) is painted, under that wear and tear, in Corinth and Counce blue, according to the caption accompanying the October 2015 bingo photo on RRPictureArchives. However, it started on the Providence and

Worcester after being built in 1977, then went to the New Orleans Public Belt, then to the Corinth and Counce, then to the HS Railway. RailcarPhotos adds that the original series was Providence and Worcester PW 101 to 250, and was built by FMC. This is a 5347 cubic foot car, again a little bigger than the MTL 025 body style but of the same general construction. Hey, what color this time to paint over the old reporting marks... boxcar red? That'll do...



BKTY 151103 (Catalog Number 025 53 216) has a previous owner that's pretty easy to identify: CSX Transportation. This one also started in the Marionette, Tomahawk and Western's roster as its MTL 4231, not the same series as the BKTY 150997 above, but

also built by FMC. From there it went to the Atlantic and Western, the Iowa Terminal, CSX, and then the HS Railway. Photos of the car in BKTY reporting marks on RRPictureArchives are from October 2018, September 2019, and March 2021. The prototype is again a 5355 cubic foot car.

And finally, **BKTY 151173 (Catalog Number 025 54 216)** was "bingoed" over on RailcarPhotos.com in a March 2015 view. It was built in October 1977 and was part of the Sabine River and Northern, SRN 5284, in the series 5200 to 5299. It's noted that the car has



rebuilt ends but they do look like those on the MTL 025 body style. The real car is just a little bigger at 5295 cubic feet. At 1:160 proportions, these size differences from the 5077 cubic foot car that the Micro-Trains model represents are pretty negligible.

What is interesting, though, is that out of all of the BKTU cars that could have been selected, the folks at the red and yellow sign went with all FMC prototypes. That puts the models as close as possible to the actual cars. I think these can all be run in the same train from 2015 on, although I will admit that I did not sift through nine pages of nearly individual car listings to confirm that all four road numbers were in last October's ORER.



993 05 960, \$59.95.

**Reporting Marks: B&O 362503 and 362515.
B&O Weathered Gondola Two Pack.**

Consists of two 105 series 50 foot 14 panel steel gondolas with fixed ends. Each car is black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and Capitol Dome herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label on fourth panel from right. The 362503 has a white single COTS panel to the left of the ACI Label. The

362515 has brown patch panels with white restenciling. Both cars have moderate weathering and fading effects. Each car has a simulated scrap load. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date), or late 1960s given ACI Label, or early 1970s for the 326503 given COTS panel, through the 1980s. Previous Releases: Individual catalog numbers are 105 51 390 (the 362503) and 105 52 390 (the 362515).

Do these cars look just a little familiar? Well, they might. Among some of the earliest official images I have of Micro-Trains cars are these two, from December 1998 and September 2000 respectively, of cars from the same prototype series as this Weathered Two Pack... except with low covers. The series 362500 to 362599 was built for the B&O in 1966 by Bethlehem Steel. That's well into the time of the simplified lettering scheme including the small Capital Dome, and strictly speaking, sets the start of the Approximate Time Period for this new pair. I note this, but the condition of these cars as modeled suggests later than that, and don't leave the ACI Label and COTS stencil out of consideration.



©2000 Micro-Trains® Line Co.

If you look at the ORERs, there's no mention of covers... even though there is a photo of B&O 362506, the road number of the first covered gondola release, on Page 37 of the **Baltimore and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. And that image is from September 1986. Perhaps the covers were not "considered part of car" and as such weren't listed in Equipment Registers, although I find that rather curious.

Let's get to the gondolas at hand, though. The first ORER I own in which this series shows up is January 1967, where the group 362500 to 362599, of all 100 cars, is listed. The inside length was 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet even, outside length 54 feet 5 inches, extreme height 8 feet, and capacity 1995 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. The description was "Gondola, Wood-Steel Floor", but the AAR designation was GBSR, designating "specially modified or equipped to provide for loading of a particular commodity." Later, that commodity is called out: "Round Bar Steel." Should that not indicate the use of a cover? If so, it's never mentioned. In the January 1985 ORER there remain 35 total cars, with the capacity down to 175,000 pounds but up to 2240 cubic feet. There were only seven cars left in the CSX Transportation listing in the July 1989 ORER and three in the October 1991 Register, which is where I stopped looking. It's possible but I don't think it's likely that the paint scheme was changed from "as delivered" to the Chessie System decoration for these cars.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: Trick or Treat!



102 00 160, \$27.95

60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Double Plug Doors, 2021 Halloween Car.

Multicolored sides, orange ends and roof. Full color depiction of the Micro-Mouse

Family in "costume" as a tank steam locomotive, boxcar and caboose, trick-or-treating on Halloween Night. Approximate Time Period: Every October 31. MTL artwork and actual product may vary. *Micro-Trains has announced that this item will be available mid-month; it's at MTL dealers at "press time."*

Here's a more family friendly alternative to the "Hobo Spider Express" set that is also coming mid-month (see below). In fact, the whole Micro-Mouse Family is in costume and ready to Trick-Or-Treat. Their costumes are quite innocuous compared to what used to be worn, say, two thousand years ago. Back then, the Celts marked Samhain (pronounced "sow-win"), a festival which marked the end of harvest season and also marked the start of the "dark half" of the year (as in, much less daylight, although technically that begins with the Autumn Equinox). It was believed that it was easier to cross over from the spirit world to the earth plane, and that meant they could have been taken by evil spirits. Rut-roh! Better dress up sufficiently to throw those baddies off the trail. The tradition of dressing up was brought over to the then British Colonies. Costumes then were still homemade and for some mischief-makers it was all about identity concealment. It wasn't until the 1950s that store-bought costumes became popular, and relatively inexpensive. We're not talking about full cosplay

here, though the notion of dressing up like a favorite movie or television character as opposed to the generic ghost or goblin has been around at least since I went trick-or-treating.

Speaking of which, that tradition has been around for a lot shorter time period. Merriam-Webster reports on its site that the actual term did not come into any use at all until the 1920s. An etymologist named Barry Popik identified early mentions of the phrase—sort of—in newspaper articles in... Western Canada, eh?

Hallowe'en passed off very quietly here. 'Treats' not 'tricks' were the order of the evening.
— The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan), 2 November 1923

But was it “trick or treat” or “tricks or treats”? **Peanuts** cartoonist Charles Schulz used the latter in 1965, as “spoken” by that legendary fussbudget Lucy Van Pelt. Merriam-Webster also noted that in 1972, they changed the description from “**the** Halloween practice” to “**a** Halloween practice” since some American neighborhoods have never participated! It seems that there is less of the “traditional” going door to door these days—and of course there was almost zero in the Year That Shall Not Be Named, given... well, you know. Here at UMTRR HQ, though, the 2018 turnout was more than all of my previous Halloweens here in Western New York... put together! The 2019 showing was not bad either, although it rained. Good thing I had that Micro-Trains glow-in-the-dark “Booville and Beyond” train set running on an oval of track in the garage! Even so, Colleen and I will be sticking to the guiding principle of “we only buy candy that we like.”

In addition to the above, the **Hobo Spider Express Train Set (993 21 350, \$239.95)** should be available mid-month. Yikes! That set still sends shivers up my spine. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2021 issue. The individual catalog numbers (no reporting marks or road numbers) for this set are as follows: 987 51 811, FT-A Powered Diesel (spider comes uninstalled... don't get any ideas about leaving it somewhere!); 065 52 246, 39 Foot Tank Car; 105 53 596, 50 Foot 15-Panel Steel Gondola with Fixed Ends; 053 54 090, 60 Foot Centerbeam Flat Car; and 100 55 530, 36 Foot Steel Cupola Caboose.



Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



below "Imperial" at left, and "Refined In Texas" below "Sugar" at right. Red and white "Pure Cane" in center below ladder. Black lettering otherwise including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1961 (build date on car) into the mid-1960s.

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above (065 00 196).

In addition to the above, four of the six virtual two packs of 50 foot boxcars which were announced for pre-orders in January and were covered in that issue of the UMTRR. Here they are:



rectangles at points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1975 to late 1980s.



530 00 550, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: GATX 30465.

39 Foot Tank Car, Imperial Sugar.

Car #7 in the "Sweet Liquid Series" (Pre-order announcement last September). Gray with black tank bottom, underframe and trucks. Blue with white outline "Imperial Sugar" across car, "Liquid Sugar Service"

below "Imperial" at left, and "Refined In Texas" below "Sugar" at right. Red and white "Pure Cane" in center below ladder. Black lettering otherwise including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1961 (build date on car) into the mid-1960s.

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above (065 00 196).

In addition to the above, four of the six virtual two packs of 50 foot boxcars which were announced for pre-orders in January and were covered in that issue of the UMTRR. Here they are:

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.

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.



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.



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.

Z SCALE PRE-ORDERS: Nothing new to report here, but I will note that the six pair of 530 series stock cars were only open for pre-orders last month instead of the "hard" or "soft" two months that MTL has been keeping the pre-order window open. See last month's issue for further information.

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

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following was announced on the Micro-Trains website on September 17.*



506 44 230, \$28.40.

Reporting Marks: WP 3006.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Door, Western Pacific.

Base car is brown with silver lettering including reporting marks on left. Silver and black "Feather River Route" herald on left. Large silver feather device with yellow "DF" on right. Light to moderate weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1954 to late 1960s or early 1970s, see text.

Previous Releases: Road Numbers 3004 and 3008, June 2008; then Road Numbers 3003 and 3006, January 2018. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that either of the previous January 2018 road numbers could have been used for this Weathered Release.

The following is largely reprinted from the January 2018 UMTRR coverage of the previous release.

Micro-Trains has produced fully forty percent of the prototype series in 1:220 proportion. The series 3001 to 3010 showed in the January 1955 ORER with AAR Classification XME and description "Box, Steel" with inside length 50 feet 5 inches, inside width 9 feet, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening... wait, seven feet six inches? Yes, as the end note indicates: "Cars... are equipped with DF Loaders and have auxiliary side doors permanently closed leaving available door opening 7 feet 6 inches wide." OK, so that second door is just a decoration, interesting considering that these cars were built just the year before, in 1954. Anyway, the capacity was 4770 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

The **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 28, has one of these rare birds, but not in the original road number. The 3001 to 3010 was part of a one hundred car order from Pullman-Standard, the first ninety of which were numbered 35001 to 35090. However, these ten were the only ones equipped with DF loaders and cross bars and were in assigned service. So they received different road numbers and the distinctive silver feather with stacked DF. Sometime before 1978, one of these cars lost its running board, picked up consolidated stencils, an ACI Label and a U-1 wheel inspection "dot" and had the road number 35092. I'll also note that unusually for Pullman-Standard, these cars had riveted, not welded, sides. Not like I'm counting rivets...

While the same ten remained in the January 1959 ORER, there were just four left in the January 1964 Register, numbered 3004 to 3009. And the series is gone completely from the April 1970 ORER. A quick patch of the number and the application of plenty of weathering would allow the modeler to extend the ATP to at least the early 1970s.



506 44 370, \$26.90.

Reporting Marks: CN 598412.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Door, Canadian National.

Base car is brown with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. White and green "maple leaf"

herald with "Serves All Canada" slogan on right. White stripe on right hand door. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) to no later than 1970. Light to moderate weathering. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 598035 and 598412, July 2018. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that either previous road number could have been used for this Weathered Release.

The following is largely reprinted from the July 2018 UMTRR coverage of the previous release.

Ian Cranstone, on his “Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net), notes that the series CN 598000 to 598499 was built by Canadian Car and Foundry in late 1957 for service in the auto industry. The white stripe on the door denoted auto loading devices and the “Automobile” legend, well, confirmed that.

The January 1958 ORER has these dimensions for this group of cars: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches with loading devices engaged and 9 feet 5 inches with them folded up against the roof, outside length 51 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 15 feet 1 inch (a slight “door thing”) and capacity 4360 or 4860 cubic feet depending on the position of the loading devices, and 110,000 pounds either way. What this ORER entry doesn’t yet have is the number of cars! That’s fixed by the January 1959 Register, with the 500 cars you’d expect.

Between 1965 and 1967, the group was reworked and renumbered to the CN series 551000 to 551405, that in several groups. An example of this is the N Scale release from last month. A few of these were flipped to the number series 796200 to 796223 around 1969 but were returned to the 551000 group in 1981. However, the original 598000 series was off the roster by the July 1970 ORER. Those road numbers were reused by the CN starting in 1984 for a set of 60 foot exterior post combination door boxcars, of which Cranstone has a photo. I mention this just to avoid confusion, including my own.

Page 31 of the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** has CN 598035 as of July 1965, in other words, a bingo to the second number of the unweathered virtual two pack. Again, we see that the maple leaf and the “wet noodle” introduced in 1960 co-existed. It’s at least implied in the **Color Guide** that the switch in numbers took place when the cars use as automobile boxcars ended and the specialty equipment was removed.



531 44 260, \$26.90.

Reporting Marks: BNSF 407130.

Two Bay PS-2 Covered Hopper, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

Base car is Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and BNSF circle cross herald on right.

Double-panel consolidated stencils on right. Yellow simulated reflective stripes along bottom of side. Moderate to heavy weathering. Approximate Time Period: around 1998 into the decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 407130 and 407172, September 2016. Note: It’s possible but not confirmed that either previous road number could have been used for this Weathered Release.

The following is mostly reprinted from the September 2016 UMTRR coverage of the previous release.

There’s a bingo to this car on the “Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery” (freight.railfan.ca), sort of. BNSF 407130 was caught as the first car behind an unknown locomotive in Sarnia, Ontario

in May 2011. The reporting marks had been restenciled, an action made necessary by the appearance of a fair amount of graffiti. We also pick up on a delta: the car has eight roof hatches but the middle two are spaced substantially farther apart than on the MTL 531 body style. This month's Weathered Release didn't use this photo for the model, by the way.

MTL's car copy has the series for these cars as being BNSF 407053 to 407208. There are plenty of other examples of this group of cars on RRPictureArchives, including several repainted into gray with the "swoosh" herald. Apparently something as small as a 3002 cubic foot hopper painted for a contemporary railroad is worthy of a lot of attention from railfan photographers! But let's note that the 3002 cubic feet is a lot more than the early versions of this car, which were more like 2003 cubic feet.

But wait, there's more... photos, that is, on RailcarPhotos.com, including another bingo on the 407130 without graffiti this time. Captions with these photos indicate that this series was built for the Burlington Northern by Pullman-Standard in 1971, the series BN 440150 to 407220. That would make these cars among the latest of the two-bay PS-2 cars and would also explain why there are as many still extant as there are. According to the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, these "cement cars" were also used in sand loading.

So, "all" we need to do to determine a reasonable start to the ATP is cross reference the BN series against the BNSF series in the ORER accumulation, to see when the renumbering, and, we presume, the repainting, began. In theory, that's as early as the July 1998 Equipment Register, the first in which I have a BNSF listing, in which nine cars have already been moved into the BNSF series. That's already up to 47 cars in the January 2000 ORER. In the October 2014 ORER, 120 cars out of a possible 155 remain. I can bring that almost up to date with last October's Register, however just two cars remain. Not quite "to present" I would think.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS:



507 00 700, \$27.95.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, 2021 Halloween Car.

Multicolored sides, orange ends and roof. Full color depiction of the Micro-Mouse Family in "costume" as a tank steam

locomotive, boxcar and caboose, trick-or-treating on Halloween Night. Approximate Time Period: Every October 31. MTL artwork and actual product may vary. *Micro-Trains has announced that this item will be available mid-month; it's at MTL dealers at "press time."*

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above (102 00 160), although the body style is different for the Z Scale release.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Nothing official from behind the red and yellow sign this time around.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: The Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board starts off with another parade of Here Last Month, Gone This Month releases. That includes all three of the Weathered Items: the Railbox/ABOX four pack (993 05 910) and both Iowa, Chicago and Eastern covered hoppers (099 44 160 and 099 44 210). Also gone from last month are both Burlington Northern covered hoppers (099 00 31x), the BNSF 25th Anniversary Boxcar (104 00 080), the Santa Fe boxcar (073 00 560), the Great Northern boxcar (074 00 037), and the Illinois Central boxcar (180 00 280).

In fact, before going on, I'll point out that the number of available N Scale single freight car releases, not counting this month's, is the lowest I ever recall seeing since MTL put up its website. How many is that? Would you believe less than thirty?

Anyway, as for other N Scale singles from this year that have left the building, there are the Domino Sugar tank car (065 00 186, July) and the Northern Pacific covered gondola (106 00 140, February). Moving to multi-packs, say goodbye to Runner Pack #173 of four New York Central stock cars (993 00 173, January) and the Farmrail Covered Hopper Five Pack (993 02 140, June). We clean out four Weathered Sets as well: put the Dreaded "D" on the Rio Grande Weathered Four Pack (993 05 850, May) and the Reading/Conrail Weathered Two Pack (993 05 860, June); and the Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific Hopper Three Packs (993 05 520 and 993 05 530, both July). If you're keeping score, the only Weathered Release from earlier this year that's still available is the Union Pacific Gondola Three Pack (993 05 870, June). Meanwhile, in Z Scale, the Domino Sugar tank car has emptied out (530 00 530, July) as have the first number of the Milwaukee Road covered hopper (531 00 361, April), the second number of the Pennsylvania Railroad open hopper (534 00 112, May), both of the Southern Pacific open hoppers (534 00 12x, also May), and the Norfolk and Western Weathered boxcar (500 44 066, July).

Staying with Z Scale and going back to last year, the second number of the Southern Pacific boxcar is outta here (503 00 242, November) and so is the second number of the CSX gondola (522 00 242, March). The largest outage in N Scale for last year is the Swift 16 Car Weathered Set (993 01 925, January). The F. Pirrone's tank car has gone bottoms up (065 00 066, July), and the Union Pacific scale test car has rolled out (121 00 160, August). Among 2019's N Scale items, only the New York Central baggage car in Pullman Green has left the station (147 00 110, December), and among 2019 Z Scale items, the BNSF covered hopper is gone (531 00 301, December)... hmm, maybe they did only use this one for this month's Weathered Release. From 2018, the N Scale Burlington baggage car (147 00 200, February) and both Z Scale Western Fruit Express refrigerator cars (518 00 59x, June) are gone. That's it for the discontinued cars, but how about a pair of un-discontinued cars? The PRR/Fruit Growers Express plug door boxcars (507 00 50x, August 2015) have **reappeared** on the Z Scale Freight Cars page. Was someone at MTL cleaning out closets?

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Our B&O Special Correspondent Brian DeVries has more for us with respect to the Baltimore and Ohio Z Scale stock cars announced for pre-order last month, and, for that matter, the previously issued B&O stock cars in Z and Z

Scales. First, a caution: "In this case, I entirely agree that the MC is for Michigan City but, should you see an MC on anything that the B&O built for itself, it would represent Mount Clare (Baltimore, Maryland), the railroad's mother shop. For virtually anything that the B&O built for itself, the prototype (at least) was built at Mount Clare. Once the details were worked out, the rest of the production might be shipped off to one of the system shops that could handle it. Similarly, any new B&O paint scheme was first perfected at Mount Clare. In one case of the latter (the blue and orange "comet" paint scheme, promoting Time-Saver Service in the 1950's - MTL 020 00 266, 020 00 267), there was only one set of stencils and all of the nine cars (that we've so far been able to identify - a couple of them re-painted one or more times) were done at Mt. Clare over a five year span."

I asked Brian if he had anything handy to explain why the stock cars depicted and to be depicted by MTL quickly disappeared. I wrote last month that the cars, built in 1915, were completely gone by the 1935 ORER. He replied (start quote):

"In regard to your question concerning the B&O stock car fleet, I reviewed two B&O RR Historical Society publications: one a summary, year-by-year, of freight car equipment 1928 to 1944, the second one covering 1945 to 1960) and was surprised by the B&O's stock car fleet. The group that you identified (B&O 11000-11499) numbered 496 cars from 1928-1931. It dropped to 180 in 1932. In 1933-34 there were still 96 cars. By 1935 they were gone. However these cars were part of a bigger all-Mather stock car fleet with the following totals:

1928: 2,188 cars
1929: 2,139 cars
1930: 1,974 cars
1931: 2,023 cars
1932: 1,701 cars
1933: 1,495 cars
1934: 1,421 cars
1935: 1,439 cars
1944 thru 1954: 1,198 cars
1955-56: 900 cars
1957: 1,100 cars
1958: 1,060 cars
1960: 953 cars

"In studying the various B&O groupings, I see a mass exodus of all-wood stock cars (989 remaining in 1928, 779 in 1930, 353 in 1931, zero in 1932) and a sharp reduction in 35 foot 10 inch cars (including the 11000 series) - 918 remaining in 1931, 602 in 1932, 387 in 1933, 319 in 1934, 223 from 1935-36, 180 in 1937, 101 in 1938, 37 in 1939, 36 in 1940-41, finally ending at zero in 1942 (and most of those cars weren't twenty years old when they fell off the roster). Perhaps the wear and tear caught up with them quickly or, perhaps, it was Depression economics. Along the way, however, the B&O added more (40 foot 3 inch and 40 foot 4 inch) Mather cars, keeping the fleet level - for a long time - at nearly 1,200 cars." End quote. Thanks, Brian!

While updating the release tables with last month's releases, it occurred to me to check the Joe Biden Presidential Car to see if it had the lowered underframe and body mount couplers, as do other 40 foot boxcars. And... it does not. It's consistent with the previous forty-five cars with truck mounted couplers. That's attention to detail!

Ever wanted to peek inside an MTL covered hopper? Well, here you go... first, from the side and then from the top. The weights inside this one came loose and I needed to put them back in their place, a simple enough task. As always, be careful when separating the bottom from the body shell. A bit of coaxing with a hobby knife did the trick for me.



This is "multi-incremental": a treasure trove of photos in glorious black and white includes a number of bingos for cars which already been offered by Micro-Trains. The Lake States Archive is hosting this set of hundreds of images... which will provide another checkpoint for me: www.lakestatesarchive.org/Ed-Wilkommen-BW-Collection/Freight-Cars/ .

The October 2021 issue of **Railroad Model Craftsman** has a really nice two-page review of the N Scale Reading/Conrail Weathered Two Pack. Reviewer Harry K. Wong summarized his findings: "All said, these boxcars from Micro-Trains are exquisitely weathered, smooth-running models that deliver an extremely realistic appearance... The mere presence of these models can elevate most any model railroad scene to a higher level of prototypical fidelity and realism." High praise!



Unfortunately, one of the drawbacks of print magazine lead times (and sometimes this byte-based report also!) is that the product being reviewed is already sold out and discontinued before the review hits the magazine shelf. Such is the case here... so let the hunting begin...

OOPS PATROL: Yes, George, MTL **has** done the Soo Line covered hopper in the green "Colormark" scheme that was the basis for the IC&E Weathered Release last month... except it was in Runner Pack #116 (993 00 116, May 2016, pre-orders December 2015)—and the catalog numbers were 099 5x 160. The road numbers were 72423, 72555, 72639, and 72755, and the prototype from which the Weathered Release was taken was originally SOO 72565 which fits right into that group. I'm planning to merge the Supplement back into the main column for posting in the Back Issues section



of the website, so that will be fixed. Meanwhile, here is the official photo of Runner Pack #116 (at right) as yet another reminder to myself that I have to check all of the Micro-Trains datasets at my disposal before declaring “Previous Releases: None.” You’ll also note that the base color of the cars in the Runner Pack is definitely white – which I can confirm visually as I got a look at the actual models. That means that at least in theory, so is the base color for last month’s Weathered Release – although it’s really hard to tell.

25 YEAR LOOKBACK SPECIAL #9: 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.”

An entire category of “I liked it” is the Billboard Refrigerator Car. This affection pre-dates my first N Scale, in fact, as my late father accumulated a large number of these cars in HO Scale, chiefly from Train-Miniature in the late 1960s through the early 1980s. Many of the cars T-M did were done later in N Scale, and I’m pretty sure I have all of the ones that have been made available.

I’m not alone in this choice. MTL CEO Eric Smith didn’t hesitate to name the Billboard Refrigerator his favorite car either, back when I first interviewed him for the then **N Scale Collector** magazine. The initial Kadее Micro-Trains car in this category was the Union Refrigerator Transit/ Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company wood double sheathed car, introduced as the first release of that body style in September 1976 (Catalog 47010). The double sheathed car with vertical brake staff followed in July 1982, and the first 36 foot car debuted in September 1995. All of these were before the official start of the UMTRR. But there have been dozens of billboard cars since then. How do I select just one?



Well, how about **this** one?

OK, I know it’s a Special Edition, and it was an April Fool’s Release during the time that the UMTRR has been “in print” – this “not a reprint” version is from April 2015 to be exact (Catalog 047 00 100). The first release was in November 1976, or not long after the A&P car. But Burp-oh Beer, and its “cousin” Guzlit Beer, dates back well before Kadее ever thought about N Scale rolling stock.

Let’s reach back to my April 2015 coverage of this car. The December 2010 issue of the “Nor-Cal Express” newsletter of the Northern California Division of the Train Collectors Association included a photo of assembled Red Ball kit number 187 released in the 1950s, a 36 foot truss rod refrigerator car lettered for a fictional product known as “Guzlit Beer.” It’s noted that these kits “were manufactured in the 40’s thru the 60’s by M. Dale Newton Company, of Medford, Oregon.” (Aha!) “A typical kit consisted of wood parts for the body, ‘type-metal’ castings for various body parts– ends, underframes, boxcar doors, etc., and in some cases, the sides. For refrigerator and boxcars, cardstock printed sides were provided. With care, a very nice car could be constructed.” Unlike Burp-Oh Beer, Guzlit was allegedly made by the Pirie, McNab

& Simon Brewing Company, but the graphics are much the same otherwise. When MTL decided to issue its own version of the whimsical car, it chose to change the name of the product for reasons which will probably remain unknown.

In 1993, The N Scale Collector commissioned from Micro-Trains its "Collector Series #1," a special run reaching back to the Guzlit Beer origins. That car had the original Red Ball decoration and lettering, and reporting marks GBX 392, and if I recall correctly, was the reason I joined the N Scale Collector in the first place (!). (And you thought it was just for scholarly reasons...) Guzlit Beer returned in a second NSC Special Run in 1998, as part of a three-pack which included Elwood's Root Beer and Bright's Wines reruns, which, come to think of it, haven't been redone by MTL. But as an April Fool, Burp-Oh was back directly from MTL, and with extra detail printing went beyond the 1976 release. Images of the past Guzlit and Burp-Oh releases are available online without too much searching effort.

FINALLY, RULE #1, WELL, RULES: I haven't checked, but I'm pretty sure that I use the phrase "Rule #1" at least once per issue of this treatise. You've probably seen it elsewhere among model railroaders as well. Rule #1 is, of course, "It's Your Railroad."

There are any number of modelers who stick quite strictly to their interpretation of Rule #1, with respect to time and place and rolling stock, and I appreciate and admire their discipline about such things... which I certainly don't have! One of the most precise examples is Jack Burgess's Yosemite Valley Railroad, which operates in exactly the month of August 1939.

But the reverse appears to be more true than it isn't. During the Lockdown Period caused by you-know-what, I had a chance to peruse magazines, websites, and online videos of model railroads. When things eased up a bit this year, I visited a couple of live train shows. And what I largely found is that People Run What They Want... billboard reefers and TBOX cars, early "hi-rail" N Scale from the 1960s with the latest and greatest—in the same train. And this is not limited to N and Z Scales... both actual and virtual tours of HO layouts, reveal the same thing. Should I mention the complete Monopoly game train spotted on an O Gauge club layout? And why not run what you want? After all, Rule #1, well... rules...

Until next time, do the best you can... and run what you want!

Cheers, George

[Legalese: You've received this because you've requested a UMTRR e-mail subscription. If there's been some mistake, please let me know via e-mail at umtrr@irwinsjournal.com, including "UMTRR" in the subject line. You may also reply to this e-mail, but PLEASE delete attachments and other text first. All information contained herein is supplied "as is" and no warranties are express or implied. Trademarks are the property of their respective owners and are used for product identification only. Images of releases provided through courtesy of Micro-Trains Line, Inc. The Federal Trade Commission considers this effort to be an "endorsement." I assume readers can make up their own minds. **The UMTRR is copyrighted and all reprinting, reposting and other transmission is expressly prohibited, except for "Fair Use" quotes, unless prior permission has been obtained from me.**]