



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report Issue #327 – March, 2024

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Hello again everyone! Let's get right to the news and views...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



046 00 490, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: N&W 311326.

50 Foot Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Norfolk and Western.

Black with white lettering including round “hamburger” herald and reporting marks

on left and roadname in center. Return instructions on far left. Extended sides and simulated smashed car load included (multimedia kit to be assembled by modeler). Approximate Time Period: 1965 (service date on car) to early 1980s.

There's a reference to this series of cars in the Research Accumulation, but not in an N&W book. Instead, there is Page 24 of the **Wabash/Nickel Plate/DT&I Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, which has a photo of Wabash gondola 11649, part of the series WAB 11300 to 11999 built in 1944. An example from that series was released by MTL in December 2008 (Catalog 046 00 270, Road Number 11615, at right). Drop a “3” in front of the road number and change the reporting marks and you've got N&W Series 311300 to 311999, the Norfolk and Western's Class G56. The date given on the car might be when it was repainted from Wabash to N&W, complete with the then-in-use “Hamburger” herald which was adopted by the N&W in 1964. It's noted in the **Color Guide** that three cars in Wabash paint made it out to October 1979, so running this car with the Wabash car isn't out of the question.



RailcarPhotos has the bingo for the 311326, photographed in October 1967 complete with the “smashed auto” load that was clearly the inspiration for what is included by MTL with this gondola! And here's a surprise: according to the caption, the Wabash wasn't the original owner of this gondola either. When built in 1944 by Bethlehem Steel, these cars were originally assigned to the Central Railroad of Pennsylvania, the Central Railroad of New Jersey's attempted tax dodge that, let us say, didn't work. The series CRP 1001 to 2000 became the series CNJ 1001 to 2000. MTL has done a model of one of the cars in CNJ paint too (Catalog

105 00 301, Road Number 1521, March 2020, at right) although it's on a 14 panel fixed end gondola whereas the entire series did have drop ends.



But just a second here: the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1967 has the series N&W 311300 to 311999 listed as “Gondola, All Steel, **Fixed Ends**” (emphasis mine). That might simply mean that the drop ends were permanently welded shut. The inside length was listed at 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 7 inches, and capacity 1745 cubic feet or either 140,000 pounds or 154,000 pounds. Another illustration of the N&W’s “slow to repaint” protocol is here: the total car count was 22 while the Wabash series still held 671 gondolas. Five and one-half years later in the October 1972 ORER, the N&W series car count was actually down to fourteen, of which two were refitted for containers, while the Wabash series stood at... hmm, only 31. Perhaps there was yet another selloff of these cars! And no wonder I couldn’t find any other images online of the N&W series. I note that the N&W ended up selling or leasing gondolas back to the Central Railroad of New Jersey, but I don’t know if any from this particular set were included. Stranger things have happened, though... At any rate, the car count of the N&W series is down to a mere four in April 1976 – at which point the description once again includes “drop ends” -- and then inches back up to five in the January 1978 Register. They’re all gone no later than the April 1984 ORER. I doubt that they were ever repainted into anything newer than how Micro-Trains depicts them here, though, strictly speaking, the addition of an ACI Label and COTS panels would be in order for later in this Approximate Time Period.



046 00 500, \$28.90.

Reporting Marks: C&O 950516.

50 Foot Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Chesapeake and Ohio / Chessie System.

Company service scheme: Red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left, small “Ches-C” herald in center, “Wheel Loading Only” right of center, and Chessie System roadname on right. White on black COTS panel left of roadname. Includes simulated wheel load and modified ends (to be assembled by modeler, see text). Approximate Time Period: 1985 (based on photo evidence) and later.

The bingo photo for this car, found on George Elwood’s “Fallen Flags” site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) clearly shows the December 1985 service date, but the image itself doesn’t have a location other than on a bridge somewhere, and is not dated, which doesn’t help us with extending the Approximate Time Period past that December 1985 date by any specific amount. So “and later” it is; and certainly it could be “and before” also, going back as far as the start of the Chessie System in 1972, if you ignore or change the service date. Feel free to invoke Rule #1 (“It’s your railroad”) here.

In the photo, we see the right hand drop end, which by the way has a lever brake, not a full brake wheel, has been pushed in or perhaps omitted entirely, which allows us to see just a

small portion of a single railroad wheel. “Wheel Loading Only” it is! The car is a 14 panel fishbelly side model, which matches the MTL 046 body style.

From the UMTRR Spy Network we learn that this release emulates that configuration. The usual drop ends are not supplied with this car; instead there are laser-cut and painted ends which are attached to the ends. These ends have the reporting marks on them so be sure to add them to the car right-side out!

In its car copy, MTL says that this car was built in 1941 and converted to wheel car service in 1969. That was sufficiently intriguing information for me to try to identify the original series for this car, without spending the entire amount of time I have available for these bytes on this one item, that is! From Page 97 of the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** we have a wheel car, WH-198, in red with white C&O lettering, but it’s a 15 panel, not a 14 panel, gondola. It’s noted in the caption that the C&O converted cars from the 218000, 29900, 30000, and 31000 series of gondolas into wheel cars in 1968 and 1969—but those groups, including the 218000s which were former Pere Marquette cars, were either not 14 panel cars or were not built in 1941 as far as I can tell. A **possible** donor series for this month’s release is mentioned on Page 72 of the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**: The Baltimore and Ohio had gondolas built for them in 1937, 1940 and 1941 by Bethlehem Steel and American Car and Foundry. The C&O rebuilt them at its Raceland, Kentucky shops. A photo of C&O 39275 is on that page in the **Color Guide**; it’s a 14 panel 54 foot 6 inch gondola, so... maybe it or another in the C&O series 39000 to 39499 became C&O 950916. It’s just a guess, folks...



049 00 680, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NNRX 1005.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Fishbelly Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Nye-Nissen Refrigerator Line (Nye and Nissen).

#4 in the Poultry and Eggs Series (pre-orders taken August 2023). Yellow sides, brown roof, ends, and bottom door sill; black hardware and bottom sill. Black lettering including “Nye-Nissen Refrigerator Line / Affiliated with Baum and Moncarsch New York N.Y.” and reporting marks on left and “Nye and Nissen’s Hennerly Whites” trademark on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: mid-1930s to no later than 1938.

Page 67 of the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** gives us the bingo for this car and some of the story: NNRX 1000 to 1019 were built by Pressed Steel Car Company in 1928, and while owned and operated by North American Despatch, they had the Nye and Nissen reporting marks. While affiliated with Baum and Moncharsch of New York, Nye and Nissen was based in San Francisco. (Hmm, bicoastal, reminds me of my first marriage... never mind.) The bingo photo shows a car with the doors having only two hinges each, while the MTL 049 body style (and the Z Scale 518 body style) has three hinges per side. Well, this **was** noted as a “distinctive door” elsewhere in **Billboard Refrigerator Cars**...

The ORERs in the Research Accumulation for April 1928 and February 1931 don't have the NNRX reporting marks. They do show in the July 1935 ORER, which is pretty close to the end of the Billboard Refrigerator Car time period. Dimensional data is less than usual: inside length 33 feet 4 inches, inside width 8 feet 3 ¾ inches, inside height 7 feet 1 inch, no outside dimensions or door size, ice capacity if crushed, 10,800 pounds, if chunk ice, 8800 pounds or so (the figure is blurry on my electronic copy), and lading capacity 1988 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. There's no car count in the ORER entry, but we know from **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** that there were 20 cars, the maximum possible. With no outside dimensions given, I can't confirm that the 049 (and 518) body style is the right choice, but the bingo photo certainly suggests it's a better choice than the 36 foot car.

Since I have no Equipment Registers available between 1931 and 1935, I'll hedge on the Approximate Time Period to "mid-1930s." Consistent with the outlawing of such cars, the series and the reporting marks are gone in the January 1940 ORER, the next one on my shelf.

With three names on the car, I have three chances to find something about the businesses listed on it. The only relevant reference to Nye-Nissen Refrigerator Line, if you call another model relevant, is to a 36 foot O Scale Three Rail Refrigerator released by MTH. The only thing I got on "Baum and Moncharsh" were complaints that I'd misspelled "Moncharsh." And that brings us to Nye and Nissen, where a search resulted in those ever-popular citations of... court cases.

And, wow, one went all the way to the Supreme Court, namely, an appeal of a conviction on fraudulent practices in the sale of eggs and cheese to the Army, Navy, and other government agencies. Nye and Nissen were among the defendants in the original case, which consisted of six counts of filing false invoices with an agency of the United States.

"Nye & Nissen is a corporation which, during the years covered by the indictment, was engaged in the business of purchasing and selling eggs, butter, and cheese in San Francisco. Throughout this period, Moncharsh was president of the corporation, one of its directors, and the owner of one-third of the stock of the holding company which had sole ownership of Nye & Nissen. Moncharsh's mother owned a one-third interest in the holding company, while the other third was owned by one Baum, who lived in New York. Berman and Goddard were brothers-in-law of Moncharsh -- the former being city sales manager of Nye & Nissen in charge of the company's retail salesmen, the latter being shipping and receiving clerk. Menges was another employee." It goes on from there, for a while... but we do see the "affiliation" here between Nye, Nissen, and Moncharsh that's referenced on the refrigerator car, I guess. Intricate corporate structures are not exactly a new invention, nor is trying to get out of a conviction by arguing about the finer points of the law. At any rate, they didn't win their case. And if you liked that one, be sure to check out the riveting drama of *Olwell vs. Nye & Nissen*, which has been called "one of the legends of the law of restitution" by no less than Cambridge University Press. Spoiler alert: it involves an egg-washing machine. Perhaps I'll stop right there.



107 00 070, \$35.95.

Reporting Marks: CNW 134006.

65 Foot Mill Gondola, Chicago and North Western.

Green with mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left, advisory “For Loading Crushed Automobile Bodies Only” left of center, and “PRIDE” in center. Black and yellow ball and bar “Chicago and North Western Railway” herald on far right. White on black COTS panel and multicolor ACI Label on right. Black and yellow CNW herald on outside of bulkheads. Black on yellow sideboard with routing instructions “When empty return do not reload / Return to CNW RR Via Reverse Route” right of reporting marks. Metal wheels and body mounted couplers. Smashed auto load and bulkheads (replacing drop ends) included (multi-media kit to be assembled by modeler). Approximate Time Period: 1972 (service date on car) to at least 1974. Micro-Trains recommends a minimum 15 inch curve radius for this item.

The magazine **Chicago & North Western Historical Society Modeler**, Volume 10, Number 2 has an article called “Chicago & North Western Pride Gondolas.” This issue is not in the Research Accumulation—well, none of the issues of this publication are, for that matter. (UMTRR HQ is only so big.) But a synopsis of the article posted on the site “Peter’s Model Railroading,” looked after by Peter A. Vanvliet, is available. The “PRIDE” prominently painted on these cars stood for, in one interpretation, “PRogress In Defending the Environment.”

This particular issue of the magazine is available online via Docplayer.net (URL docplayer.net/64734993-Chicago-north-western-historical-society-modeler.html). And yes, PRIDE did include “smashed autos”! Specifically, “The Pride program started in 1972, when C&NW and the state of South Dakota started a program to remove junked automobiles that were scattered around the state. An estimated 10,000 tons of junk cars were smashed and loaded into gondolas for the trip to a scrap shredder in Argo, Illinois.” “PRIDE” is also translated to “PRomote Involvement to Defend the Environment.”

The heritage of these cars, numbered CNW 134000 to 134030 inclusive, varied across the products of four different builders, but the 134006 in which we’re most interested was originally CNW 95036, built by Pullman-Standard in 1958 as part of the series 95000 to 95199. There is a photo of sister car 134007 fresh from the paint shop in April 1972, accompanying this article. It’s also noted that the herald is the “Railway” version. Something I hope I remember for future UMTRRs—or at least remember where to look-- is that the “Railway” was switched

to “Railroad” within the C&NW herald from August to November 1972 and then switched again to the “Employee Owned” version of the herald in November 1972.

Meanwhile, the bingo photo for the 134006 is on Page 99 of the **Chicago and North Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. That image was captured in October, 1974, so we know the “PRIDE” program lasted at least that long. It’s noted in the article in **Chicago & North Western Historical Society Modeler** that after the program ended, the cars were repainted in basic black. I don’t have a date for that but I do see a photo date of February 1978 for CNW 134003 in the PRIDE scheme over on RRPictureArchives.

An ORER lookup from the confirmed time period for these cars will do. The October 1972 issue has the series described as “Gondola, Odd and Even Numbers, Mill Type, Fixed Ends, Solid Bottom, Steel Floor” with these dimensions: inside length 65 feet 4 inches, inside width 7 feet 9 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, outside length 70 feet even, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, and capacity 1777 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. An end note states that the cars were “equipped with bulkheads, tie-down devices and steel side stakes for handling shipments of compressed scrap automobile bodies.” Note that I’ve given the dimensions matching the 134006 here; the exceptions from other donor gondola groups are shown in the listing as well with some different dimensions. Not in the ORER is that the 134006 had a lever brake and not a brake wheel, a delta to the MTL 107 body style, but the key spotting feature of 20 panel fishbelly sides is common between model and prototype.



110 00 641 and 110 00 642, \$35.95 each.

Reporting Marks: CBTX 738152 and 738159.

54 Foot General Service Tank Cars, Capital Finance.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and tank qualification stencil on right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes at six points along middle of side. Approximate Time Period: 2016 (build date) to as late as the present.

Here are two more contemporary General Service Tank Cars for your consideration. I know that, ahem, “additional decoration” is the norm these days—cars without it are the scarce exception—so it’s nice to see “clean” cars. The bingo photo of the 738159, taken in August 2022 and posted to RRPictureArchives, shows it with nary an, ahem, “extra marking”... well, at least on the side and end that we can see. A shot of sister car 738162 from October 2017 gives us a little better look at a car in this series. Overall, I think the MTL 110 body style has the “look and feel” of the prototype, including staying within Plate C dimensions, though there are some detail differences.

No bingo photos of either of the virtual two pack but some information on RailcarPhotos.com: the CBTX series 737725 to 738224 was built by TrinityRail as its File T16015 in May and June of 2016. As such the conspicuity stripes and tank qualification stencils would have been applied straight away. Both RailcarPhotos and RRPictureArchives have examples of cars from the overall series. I didn't check all of them but the latest photo I did see was from 2023 so I don't think "to present" is an issue here in terms of Approximate Time Period.

As is typically the case, ORER information on modern tank cars is just about nil. All we have under the listing in the October 2020 ORER for The CIT Group/Equipment Financing Inc. is the much larger series CBTX 736186 to 742240 with 2347 cars in the main series with AAR Type Code T178, plus some subsets with other AAR Type Codes T108, T109 and T209 adding up to another 2406 cars. That's 4753 cars in this series alone, out of 93,952 cars in the entire listing. That's a lot of Equipment Financing! The two cars released here are in the T109 subset. All of the cars have a Gross Rail Weight (car plus lading) of 286,000 pounds.



451 00 351 and 451 00 352, \$27.95 each.

Reporting Marks: SFTZ 257766 and 257777. 45 Foot Trailers, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

White with aluminum trim. Blue lettering including reporting marks and circle cross herald on nose, reporting marks at nose end of side and circle cross herald at tail end of side, and stylized roadname across side. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s to at least the mid-1980s. These items are not on Micro-Trains Dealer Standing Orders.

Before I forget this: We can't see the back of this model, but I'm thinking there's lettering on it as well. It would probably consist of at least the reporting marks but may also have

a Santa Fe circle cross herald like the ones on the sides and the nose (front). Incremental information would be welcome here...

Anyway, MTL has in its car copy that these trailers were "stretched" from forty to forty-five feet some time after they were built. That's the first time I've heard of this for trailers, but if you can do so with boxcars, why not?

All we get from the **ATSF Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** is that what MTL modeled is "one of the later paint schemes used on 'piggyback' equipment," as the caption to an undated photo of a Santa Fe 89 foot flat car upon which SFTZ 700420, which is not even remotely close to the road numbers here, sits. (Sidebar: A previous paint scheme had a placard with the Santa Fe circle cross and four "tails" which had the words "Truck Rail Service," "Highway," "Piggy-Back," and "Container" in each of these respectively from top to bottom.

That scheme was done by MTL in 1987 and 1988, Catalog 67010/451 00 010. It's noted in the **Color Guide** that this previous scheme was the standard in 1972.)

Of more assistance is the compendium of Santa Fe dates assembled by Terry Taylor. Taylor gives the date of May 1977 for this item: "Trailer Stenciling with advent of fuel-foiler spine cars with Santa Fe... painted in blue stylized script with two blue stripes on white trailer body." Hey, that'll work!

There is a small photo album of ATSF Trailers by Gregg Fuhrman hosted on the "QStation" website (direct URL www.qstation.org/Intermodal_ATSF/TOFC_Trailers/) which includes several examples of this paint scheme. While there are no bingos for the 257766 and 257777, images of other trailers in this scheme are dated in the early and mid 1980s, so we have an ATP up to at least then. There is an April 1987 image of an SFTZ trailer with only a circle cross on the nose and only the reporting marks on the sides, a substantial simplification of the trailer paint scheme.



In addition to the above, the virtual two pack of **Union Pacific Bay Window Cabooses, 130 00 291, Road Number 24552, and 130 00 292, Road Number 24592, \$39.95 each**, are now available. UMTRR pre-coverage was in the October 2023 issue.

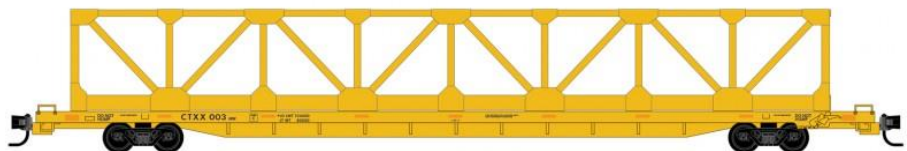
*In addition to the above, the following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **February 29**.*

Targeted Delivery August 2024:

**071 00 930 and 071 00 931,
\$39.95 each.**

**Reporting Marks: CTXX
003 and 005.**

**89 Foot Track Panel Flat
Car, CTXX (Cleveland Track Material).**



Yellow with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Includes track panel racking (multi-media kit to be assembled by the modeler). Approximate Time Period: sometime in the decade of the 2010s to as late as the present. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 003 is shown above.

The website “Steel Wheels Train Photos” (URL www.steelwheelstrainphotos.com , which certainly makes sense) provides a choice of bingo photos for CTXX 003, one of the two cars offered here on pre-order: loaded or unloaded. Loaded, we’ve got a pair of switch components-- yes, I know modelers call them “turnouts,” but the real railroads don’t. These are definitely not in the Number 4, Number 6 or Number 8 diverging size; the one we can see is almost the entire length of the flat car and the rails do not yet get to the frog. What is that, about a Number 100? (I’m kidding... mostly.) Unloaded, we see the limitations of the MTL preliminary artwork; while the drawing shows what looks like a single girder-like piece, the actual track panel holder is a triangular structure. I’d describe it as nine shallow A-frames connected top and bottom and braced diagonally from one A-frame to the next. Oh, and painted the same yellow as the car. What I find really interesting about this car is that the couplers are mounted atop the deck, not below it. I can’t say I have ever seen this arrangement before. That puts the deck below coupler level – yes, the couplers line up just fine with the cars to which they are, well, coupled – which I suppose would allow just that additional clearance for track panels. There are also three photos of CTXX 008, presumably from the same prototype series, available for viewing. None of these photos are dated and the location isn’t given.

RailcarPhotos has images of CTXX 004 and CTXX 010, both taken in October 2021 at Pico Rivera, California. We learn two things from these photos: first, the name connected with the CTXX reporting marks, second, that these are former Trailer Train/TTX cars that were rebuilt by Transco Railway Products sometime in the 2010s for use in carrying track panels. When their photos were taken, these two were deployed with loads for a UP/BNSF crossing project.

The company to which these reporting marks are assigned, CTXX, is Cleveland Track Materials. It was founded in 1983, became a subsidiary of Vossloh North America from 2007 to 2019, at which point it was sold to Progress Rail. The company, as you might have guessed, is “a manufacturer of special track material, including AREMA turnouts and crossings.” Wait, what was that about the real railroad industry not using the term “turnout”? At the time of its purchase by Progress Rail, CTM had facilities in Cleveland, Ohio; Reading, Pennsylvania; and Memphis, Tennessee. It’s served as a supplier of special trackwork to Class I and transit railroads.

N SCALE REPRINTS: One this month...



064 00 011, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 293246.

57 Foot TOFC Flat Car, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

White with mostly black lettering

including reporting marks on left and “Super Shock Control” in center. White on black COTS panel on right. Approximate Time Period: 1983 to no later than 1989. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 293131, 293133, 293134, as 3-pack, July 1987; Road Numbers 293238, 293241, 293261, as 3-pack, October 1987; Road Numbers 293274, 293284, 293294, as 3-pack, March 1988, then Road Number 293304, June 2000. All three of the three packs came with trailers for each of the three flat cars.

MTL notes that the cars are the result of a program to rebuild bulkhead flat cars in 1982 and 1983; this is the same thing they said when the previous release was done, almost 24 (!) years ago. And why not, it's still accurate! That release, with the then-new 66100 trailer in the Santa Fe "Bicentennial" scheme of sorts, is at right.



The November 1984 issue of **Model Railroader** magazine has an article by the late Andy Sperandio on these specific cars, confirming that they were converted from four classes of bulkhead flat cars, specifically, FT-28, FT-32, FT-33, and FT-45. It's interesting, to me, anyway, that it looks like the original Santa Fe classes were retained. Sperandio noted that while there were differences across the classes, the railroad treated them as one series of cars. The article includes drawings of the prototype, as well as a photo of ATSF 293241 fresh from the Santa Fe's Topeka, Kansas shop, and an image of ATSF 293133 with a 45 foot Transamerica Trailer riding atop it. Both of these road numbers were used in previous releases of this car. I didn't have a copy of the November 1984 MR available at the time of the last release; if I had, I would have noted that the MTL 064/64000 series appears to be based on this prototype. UMTRR Body Style Table update made!

The ORER for January 1985 has the series ATSF 293239 to 293333, which includes this run and previous Micro-Trains releases except the first three-pack and the first car of the second three-pack. The group is described as "Flat, TOFC, Shock Control, Axle Spacing 5 feet 8 inches, Truck Centers 47 feet 8 inches." The population for this group is 94 cars. There are two other series, 293095 to 293238, and also 293336 to 293433 which are listed with the same general dimensions, which add another 240 cars to this group. The 57 foot 6 inch inside length is what's quoted for the prototype and model, and over the couplers the length is 64 feet 8 inches. The AAR Designation is FC. There's about the same quantity of cars in the October 1996 Register.

However... in the July 1987 ORER, the series car count is down to 139 in a consolidated listing 293095 to 293414. And in the ORER for July 1989, these cars are **gone**! The entire 293000 series has been wiped out. So it appears to be a very short lived ATP for this group, even while cars of a similar construction rolled on for a while in Norfolk Southern, Chicago and North Western, and CP Rail paint. (Back in 2000 I saw all three of these in one train.) I never did find out what happened, but it seems to me that the Santa Fe put a lot of effort in rebuilding cars that then lasted less than a decade.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS: No single cars to tell you about this month, but see N Scale Multi-Packs below for a new three pack pre-order announcement.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:



108 44 540, \$32.95.

Reporting Marks: NS 145808.

Three Bay Open Hopper, Norfolk Southern. #11 and final release in the Norfolk Southern Family Tree Series (pre-orders taken December 2022). Black with mostly white lettering including "Horsehead" Norfolk Southern herald and reporting marks at top left. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at six or seven points along bottom of side (varies by side). Black patch panels and simulated rusty areas on both sides; light

weathering. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: 2014 to as late as the present. Previous Releases: Technically none given the catalog number, but Runner Pack #169 (993 00 169, Individual Items 108 5x 280), September 2020, Road Numbers 145444, 145495, 144550, and 144551 is close, see below.

The "really close" Runner Pack from September 2020 (official MTL image at right) carries the Class HP28R and is in the same number series as this final release in the NS Family Tree Series, namely, NS 145250 to 146449. In the October 2020 ORER this group had a car count of 1088. Only the outside dimensions are given: length 51 feet, width 10 feet 7 inches and height 12 feet 7 inches, along with the capacity of 3737 cubic feet and gross rail weight (car plus lading) of 286,000 pounds. Tracking backwards from there, the earliest Equipment Register in which I see these cars is October 2014. They're not in the April 2013 edition so that narrows down the start of the ATP pretty tightly.



There are a few photos of hoppers from this series on RailcarPhotos. It's noted in several captions that these are rebuilds of former Conrail cars, performed by FreightCar America in 2013. Both the MTL 108 body style and the prototype are 14 panel nominal 50 foot cars, so the general look is there. If you're literally counting rivets, though, there is a horizontal row of them that lands just below the reporting marks and goes across all but the left and right end panels. Those end panels do have a different shape and different ladder and grab iron arrangement than the Micro-Trains model. Meanwhile, there are three bingo photos for this car, NS 145808, on RRPictureArchives. The latest one, from April 2019, appears to be the reference image for this release. It's noted that this car is the former Conrail 497723 and that it was "re-bodied" in August 2013, which fits with the ORER data I found.

In addition to the above, the following was announced on the Micro-Trains website and via the "E-Line" newsletter on March 13.



095 44 100, \$49.95.

Reporting Marks: PC 74216.

Two Bay PS-2 Covered Hopper, Penn Central.

Green (the PC's "Deepwater Green") with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black

COTS panels on right. Moderate weathering and rust effects. Body mounted couplers and metal wheels (wheels weathered). Approximate Time Period: 1993, plus or minus, or more broadly, mid-1970s to mid-1990s at least. Previous Releases: None.

This car was already in Maintenance of Way service when its photo was taken in July 1993, according to the caption accompanying the image on RRPictureArchives. This Class H43 car was the former Pennsylvania Railroad 256139, and was sitting at Conrail's Hawthorne Yard in Indianapolis, Indiana.

An older photo of a different car helps us with the Approximate Time Period... somewhat. Page 120 of the **Penn Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has an image of PC 74204, twelve numbers away from the MTL model, with the heading "Sand Car." It was painted in a similar scheme with a yellow letter "S" in a rectangle above the reporting marks. (No worries: the 74216 does not have the "S.") Here's our clue for the ATP: "Repainted in October 1974, when it probably was assigned to sand service..." That "S," by the way, most likely stands for "Supply" not "Sand" if the PC carried on the practice from predecessor Pennsylvania Railroad.

The ORERs don't help us here: the first PC road number listed is in the 100000s. Taking the photo in the Color Guide and the bingo photo on RRPictureArchives, we can probably justify an ATP of mid-1970s to mid-1990s, perhaps a little longer. But more strictly speaking, the ATP is a "plus or minus" from the photo date of the 74216. Adding to the narrower ATP is that the road number isn't in the standard Penn Central typeface – well, as standard as the PC got, anyway. It suggests to me a restencil at some point after its repainting, which, as noted on the model, was in 1976, although it's also possible that it simply suggests a sloppy lettering job.



095 44 110, \$49.95.

Reporting Marks: NW 514372.

Two Bay PS-2 Covered Hopper, Norfolk and Western.

Green with mostly white lettering including large "NW" and road number on left, and "Sand Loading Only" to right of road number. Black return instructions on

yellow panel left of center. White on black COTS panels on right. Moderate weathering and rust effects. Body mounted couplers and metal wheels (wheels weathered) in Roller Bearing Trucks. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1971 to around 2005, or add conspicuity stripes and go to at least 2012. Previous Releases: None.

The first of three photos on RRPictureArchives which include this particular car is captioned, "Rolling Antiques." As of October 2009 in Atlanta, Georgia, the 514372 was in a line with four other cars: two similarly painted NWs and two Southern Railway two bay covered hoppers that were probably from American Car and Foundry, not Pullman-Standard. The paint scheme of the 514372 looks like what Micro-Trains used, but the car has conspicuity stripes so the "strictly speaking" ATP would end sometime between 2005 and the photo date. The car was photographed again in March 2012 so we know that adding those conspicuity stripes will get you to at least then. More importantly, RailcarPhotos.com has a bingo photo from February 2006. When caught, again in Atlanta, the car didn't have conspicuity stripes. I think this is the reference photo used by the folks in Talent. It's noted that this car, the N&W's Class HC-7, was among the series 71300 to 71349 built by Pullman-Standard in 1957.

As with the Penn Central PS-2, an older photo of a different car helps. This time, it's on Page 116 of the **Norfolk and Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Car NW 514426 was originally built by Greenville in 1959 and had a relatively quick transition to company service. It was found in 1985, "still in its 1971 scheme lettering." Aha! That's basically the paint scheme that the 514372 is in. As modeled by MTL, the car does have a restenciled service date of February 1987.

And also as with the Penn Central PS-2, the ORERs don't help. Using the July 1987 Register as an example, which fits right in with the February 1987 restencil date, the Norfolk and Western listing skips right from the 400000s to the 600000s, missing all of the 500000s road numbers completely. We know that 514372 was a PS-2 hopper with 2003 cubic foot capacity, so we should be good against the MTL 095 body style.



123 44 015, \$49.95.

Reporting Marks: TBOX 665898.

60 Foot High-Cube Exterior Post Double Plug Door Boxcars With Modified Door Hardware, TTX.

Yellow with aluminum roof and black doors. Mostly black lettering

including reporting marks on left. Red, blue and black "Next Load/Any Road" logo on left. White on black TTX logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes across car. Tops of ends are white (denoting excess height car) with black reporting marks. Body mounted couplers and metal wheels (wheels weathered). Approximate Time Period: 2018, plus or minus. Previous Releases (Unweathered): TTX Three Pack with Road Numbers 665118, 665138, and 665141, November 2020; then single releases as follows: Road Number 665113, July 2022; Road Number 665130, August 2022; Road Number 665148, September 2022, then Weathered Release with Road Number 665822, January 2024.

Well, this is mostly a “gimme,” assuming I don’t Cut and Paste Something Incorrectly from the January bytes. This car, like the previous Weathered Release, is part of the series 665500 to 665999, built between July and October 2003 by National Steel Car Company of Hamilton, Ontario, as their Job 5165. They carry TTX class XHN60, as did the 665000 to 665499 from which all the previous road numbers were taken by MTL.

As noted in January, the ORER for October 2020 shows that out of the original 500, 482 are still on the rails. Let’s get the usual dimensions: inside length, 60 feet 9 inches, inside width, 9 feet 6 inches, inside height, 13 feet, outside length, 67 feet 2 inches (clearly extended couplers, here!), extreme height, 17 feet, door opening, 16 feet wide by 12 feet 4 inches high. How many of them still have the previous TTX logo? I would say, plenty... And how many are still looking like they just came from the factory? I would say, zero...

I suppose this is a bit of an Oops: the previous Weathered Release of this car also had weathered wheels. That sent me back to the Canadian Pacific TBOX cars and they, too, had weathered wheels. Nice touch!



N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #221, also known as the Santa Fe Four Car Runner Pack (983 00 221, \$129.95, with Jewel Cases; 993 00 221, \$114.95, with Foam Nest Packaging) is now available, confirmed via online listings. UMTRR Pre-Order Coverage was in the October 2023 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 049 51 751, 14931; 049 52 751, 14968; 049 53 751, 15246; 049 54 751, 15263. The hatch covers are multimedia kits requiring some assembly. We have an Oops to correct here: these are actually the second through fifth road numbers for this item; there was a release without hatch covers with road number 14799, Catalog 049 00 750 in October 2016.

The other two multi-packs were expected to be available mid-month:

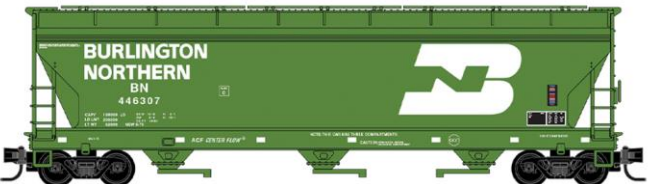
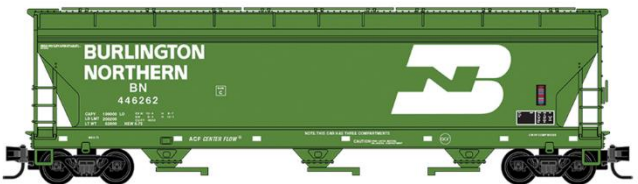
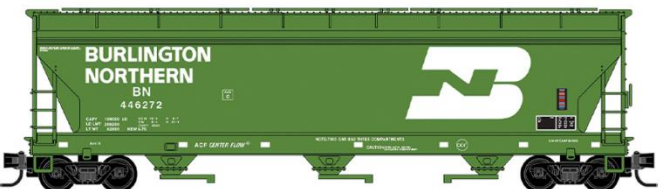
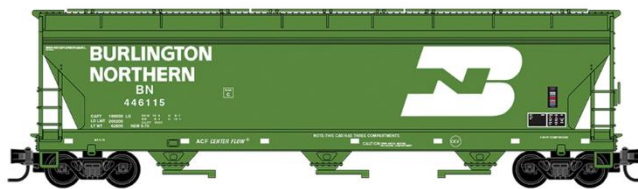


The **Santa Fe with Car Frame Load Three Pack** (983 02 242, \$106.95, with Jewel Boxes; 993 02 242, \$94.95, with Foam Nest Packaging). UMTRR coverage was in the October 2023 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 062 51 031, 176652; 062 52 031, 176676; 062 53 031, 176693. The car frame load is an undecorated multimedia kit.



The **Denver and Rio Grande Western with Tunnel Loads Three Pack** (983 02 244, \$96.95, with Jewel Boxes; 993 02 244, \$84.95, with Foam Nest Packaging). UMTRR coverage was in the October 2023 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 083 44 180, 72628; 083 45 180, 72681; 083 46 180, 72692.

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **March 31**.*



Targeted Delivery August 2024:

983 00 226, \$149.95, with Jewel Box Packaging; 993 00 226, \$134.95, with Foam Nest Packaging. Reporting Marks: BN 446115, 446262, 446272, and 446307.

Burlington Northern Center Flow Runner Pack (Runner Pack #226).

Scheduled to consist of three 094 series Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers with Trough Hatches. Green with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black COTS panel on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1975 into at least the 1990s. Previous Releases: Catalog Number 094 00 310, Road Number 446219, September 2010, then Weathered Release, Catalog Number 094 44 310, Road Number 446227, February 2011, but see text. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Page 48 of the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** shows what

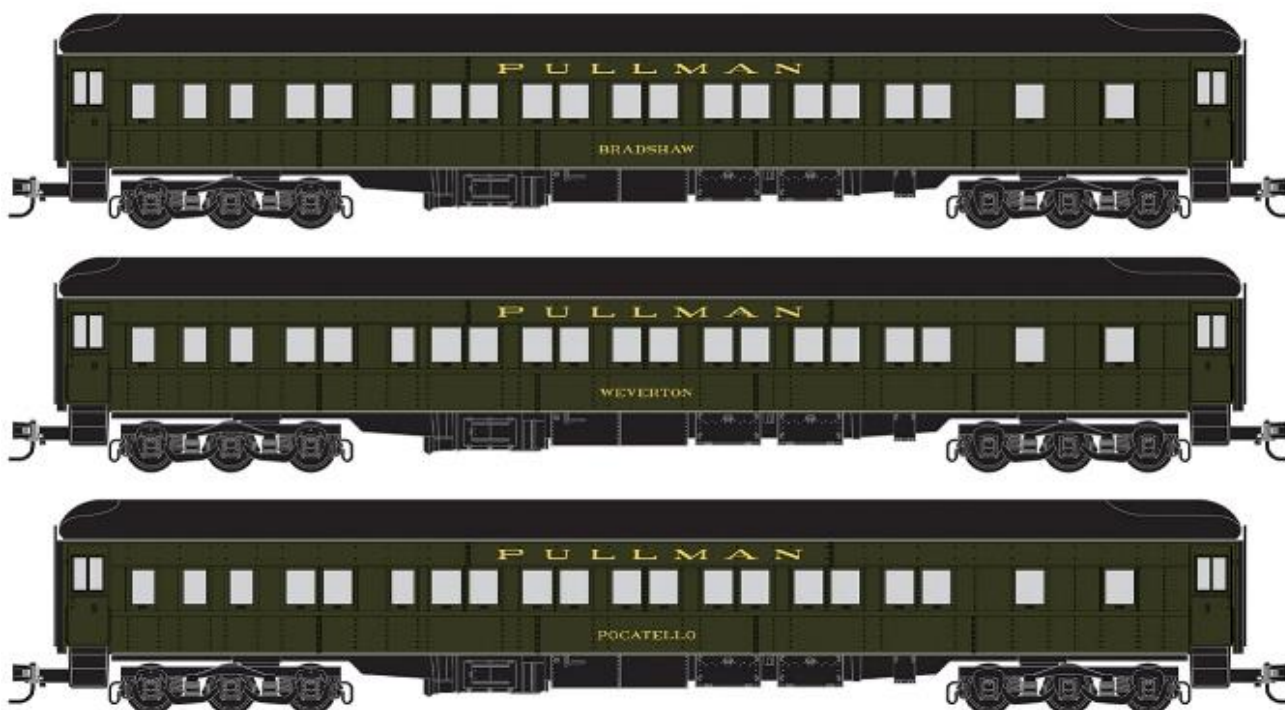
I am assuming to be the previous release of this car, BN 446219 as of May 1977 (at right). It's painted as MTL has rendered it, in the "classic" BN



decoration of two line roadname over centered reporting marks with large herald. However, that assumption about a previous release may or may not be correct based on what MTL has been doing lately. The preliminary artwork shows a somewhat larger herald than what's on the "previous" MTL car, and the addition of an ACI Label makes it at least a nominal "not a reprint." In any case, the prototype was the American Car and Foundry CF4650, which is the overall basis for the MTL 094 body style. One detail that differs is near the roofline, a pair of ribs extending across the car. When reviewing the bingo photo back in September 2010, I noticed a few tiny bits of lettering that don't appear on the model, my favorite of which is painted upside down on the edge of the roof: "Caution No Side Ladders." Obviously it's meant to be read by the person up on the roofwalk... watch that first step!

It's noted in the Color Guide that AC&F built these cars in 1975. The ORER for April 1976 has this car among a group of 500 numbered 446000 to 446499, described simply as "Covered Hopper" with AAR Designation "LO." The inside length was 49 feet 9 inches, outside length 54 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, and capacity 4650 cubic feet or 193,000 pounds.

Twenty years later in the October 1996 Equipment Register the description had been changed to "Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, Three Gravity Outlets" and the group was down to 421 from the original 500. The July 1998 ORER listing for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe showed 339 cars with the original BN numbers. That was down to 271 in the January 2000 ORER and 145 in October 2004. There were just eleven cars left in the October 2007 ORER, which is where I stopped looking. However, well before that there were other BN paint schemes in place, including the herald with reporting marks only version and the "logoless" (reporting marks only) version. The degree to which this group of cars was redecorated is of course an open question, but I think we can make it into the 1990s "at least" with the as delivered paint. Feel free, as usual, to invoke Rule #1 ("It's your railroad").



Targeted Delivery August 2024:

983 02 251, \$101.95, with Jewel Box Packaging; 993 02 251, \$89.95, with Foam Nest Packaging.

Car Names: Bradshaw, Weverton, and Pocatello.

Union Pacific Heavyweight Three Pack.

Scheduled to consist of three 142 Series Pullman 12-1 Heavyweight Sleeping Cars. Pullman Green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Delux Gold lettering including "Pullman" in center of letterboard and car name at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: see below for individual cars (the ATPs are that different). Previous Releases: TBD, see text. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

In June 2021, MTL released a 3-2 Observation car with the name "Streator" and "credited" it, if you will, to the Union Pacific although the car was lettered "Pullman" and not for the UP directly. Then, in August 2021, MTL released a 12-1 Heavyweight with the car name "Newton Hook" (at right) and similarly credited it to the Union Pacific. Well, here we are again! Note my "TBD" with respect to Previous Releases; previously I would have gone right ahead and tagged the August 2021 car as just that. I think I'll wait for the arrival of this forthcoming three pack before declaring release numbers.



Tom Madden's "Pullman Project" database has these three coming cars pretty close to each other. The "Bradshaw", "Weverton", and "Pocatello" were all built to Plan 3410B as part of Pullman's Lot 6360, all in 1930 if I am reading the data correctly. That and the 3410 are the plans used as the basis for the MTL 142 body style, though modifications to cars were made over time. When built these wore the standard Pullman Green that we see in the preliminary

artwork. Then there's a fair amount of divergence with respect to the Approximate Time Periods. The "Bradshaw" was the first out of that paint scheme: it went to "B&O Streamline" colors in October 1938. The "Weverton" was redone in "B&O Special" decoration in January 1949. And, in a bit of a connection to the Union Pacific, the "Pocatello" was changed over to the UP's yellow in April 1952. The ATP for the full set of three is relatively short, ranging from 1930 to 1938.

I did a relatively shallow search for online photos of these cars but didn't come up with anything. I suspect that like the previous two "Union Pacific" Pullmans, the bingo photos are in print in a book that is not in the UMTRR Research Accumulation. The use of Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") will allow the modeler and operator to use these cars on other than the Union Pacific, of course. With the help of Tom Davis, we learned that the previously released "Streator" was a "rotational spare" that operated on the Santa Fe and the Florida East Coast as well as the Union Pacific.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



101 00 895, \$28.95

Reporting Marks: None.

40 Foot Modified Hy-Cube Boxcar, St. Patrick's Day Car.

Green ends and roof, multicolor sides with "Happy St. Patrick's Day!" in white with green outline in center. Micro-Mouse character as a leprechaun on right looking at

a rainbow across car ending in a mill gondola with a load of cheese on the left.

We have a bit of a clever twist on the theme of the Pot of Gold at the end of the rainbow here... It looks like Mr. Micro-O'Mouse (sorry) is more than happy to discover a mill gondola full of cheese instead!

Which leads me to a question that I didn't realize I had: What does a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow have to do with Saint Patrick's Day anyway?

An answer to that question is available on the parade.com website, and it's a mix of real life and legend. The article's author, Laurie Farmer, spoke to Dr. Patrick O'Neill, who studies Irish History. He related that there Gaelic invaders found relatively short people living in Ireland in the fifth century BC. These "little people" —later called "leprechauns"—were buried with their valuables, which were probably quite ordinary but were believed to be gold. And they used clay pots... thus the "pot of gold." According to Paul Draper, who studies why people believe strange things and was also interviewed for the **Parade** article, the "end of the rainbow" part came later, and since scientifically there really is no end to a rainbow, the story was a reference to "just out of reach." (In a related story, I really should stop playing PowerBall.)

The full article is at parade.com/270758/lauriefarmer/what-do-rainbows-have-to-do-with-st-patricks-day/ for your perusal.

Saint Patrick wasn't a leprechaun, of course, and he was a real person who sought to convert Ireland to Christianity in the fifth century. There is not that much known about him although there are two works that are generally attributed to him. As with many current holidays, there is a combination of traditions, which despite the efforts of evangelists and other religious figures never completely went away, and the rainbow with the gondola of cheese...oops, I mean the pot of gold... is one of them.



Also, the Medford, Talent and Lakecreek 30s-50s Dinner Car Four Pack (983 02 237, \$144.95, with Jewel Boxes; 993 02 237, \$129.95, with Foam Nest Packaging) is scheduled for delivery mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2023 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 144 51 550, Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Road Number 152, Car Name "Rogue Valley"; 146 52 550, Heavyweight Diner, Road Number 129, Car Name "Upper Table Rock"; 160 53 550 and 160 55 560, Heavyweight Single Window Coaches, Road Numbers 278 and 263, Car Names "Roxy Ann" and "Crater Lake."

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **March 31**.*



Targeted Delivery August 2024:
102 00 844, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: UP 6224.
Modified 60 Foot Excess Height
Boxcar, Union Pacific "Honoring
Class 1 Railroads."

Yellow sides with gray bands set off by red stripes. Gray ends and roof. Red lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Red, white and blue shield herald on left. Red, white, blue waving American Flag and black "Building America" slogan on right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at six points along bottom of side. Simulated granite plaque with UP shield herald engraving in door opening. Pre-production model shown; actual product may vary.



Targeted Delivery July 2024:

102 00 845, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NS 659624.

Modified 60 Foot Excess Height

Boxcar, Norfolk Southern

"Honoring Class 1 Railroads."

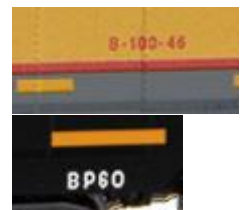
Black with mostly white lettering including NS "Horsehead" logo and roadname at top left and reporting marks at lower left. Red, white and blue American Flag in upper right corner. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at nine points along bottom of side. Simulated granite plaque with NS logo engraving in door opening. Pre-production model shown; actual product may vary.

I'm taking these two cars together and speculating that these are only the first two in a series "Honoring Class 1 Railroads." Whether this will include Class Ones of the past is to be determined, but it would certainly make for a much longer train. As of 2023 there were six Class Ones: UP, NS, CSXT, BNSF, CN and CPKC; technically Amtrak counts as a Class One also.

The designation of railroads as Class 1, 2 or 3 (sometimes using Roman Numerals) according to annual revenue criteria was established by the Interstate Commerce Commission back in 1910 or 1911, depending on what source (in this case, which Wikipedia page one references). Since then, the general idea hasn't changed, but the revenue thresholds have. In 2012, the Surface Transportation Board set the minimum revenue to be a Class 1 at 250 million dollars with periodic adjustments for inflation. In 2023 that adjusted threshold was 289.4 million dollars.

The Wikipedians have a neat set of pages with a timeline of Class 1 railroads, beginning in 1910; go to [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Class_I_railroads_\(1910%E2%80%931929\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Class_I_railroads_(1910%E2%80%931929)) for the first page in that timeline.

Meanwhile, I did notice something interesting on each of these forthcoming cars (besides that there are already photos available as opposed to artwork!). At the bottom right of the Union Pacific car is a Class: B-100-46, and at the bottom right of the Norfolk Southern boxcar is BP60. (Snippets at right.) I'll need to leave further research on this to the reader.



Z SCALE:



518 00 680, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NNRX 1005.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Fishbelly Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Nye-Nissen Refrigerator Line (Nye and Nissen).

#4 in the Poultry and Eggs Series (pre-orders taken August 2023). Yellow sides, brown roof, ends, and bottom door sill; black hardware and

bottom sill. Black lettering including “Nye-Nissen Refrigerator Line / Affiliated with Baum and Moncarsh New York N.Y.” and reporting marks on left and “Nye and Nissen’s Hennerly Whites” trademark on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: mid-1930s to no later than 1938.

Please see the commentary above on the N Scale release (049 00 680).



This is more like Incremental Information: There are official MTL photos of the virtual two pack on Union Pacific x-post boxcars released, or perhaps re-released, last month (511 00 16x). These were originally noted as released in mid-December 2022, after pre-orders were taken in August 2022. I have both dates in my UMTRR Release Tables just in case.

Following up on the Z Scale Well Cars I discussed last issue, straight from MTL we’ve learned that the Santa Fe/SFLC virtual two pack was released in January (540 00 143 and 154, Road Numbers 254245 A and B, \$29.90 each). Going back a ways, the TTX virtual two pack was released in October 2022 (540 00 015 and 016, DTTX 56786 and 56799, also \$29.90 each). Pre-orders were in June 2021.



HO SCALE: *The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **March 31**.*



Targeted Delivery August 2024:

2220-004, \$49.95.

Reporting Marks: CSXT 226699.

Two Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper Kit, CSX Transportation/ex-Western Maryland.

Fourth “Grit and Grime” release. Base car is gray with black lettering including Western Maryland speed lettering roadname across car. Black CSXT reporting marks partially on patch panel on left. Light to moderate and

heavy rust effects on top of sides. Approximate Time Period: at least 2006 to 2008.

This car was #2 in the N Scale CSXT Family Tree Series, released in November 2021, and I’ll leverage the commentary from that release for this one.

“Hard to believe this is still in this condition” reads the caption to this August 2006 bingo photo of the car, the former Western Maryland 604977. Well, if you ignore the “ROME” graffiti on the side. (MTL did; it’s my understanding that CSX does not allow graffiti on models released in their current and former roadnames.) That image and photos extending out to November 2009 are on RRPictureArchives. A shot from January 2008 shows the car from track level looking up, and reveals that the COTS panels are on the diagonal bracing at the end of the car, not on the sides. I wouldn’t expect that to be reproduced; I’m not sure how I would squeeze a decal in there either! We also see that the Western Maryland car class was C-19. These were 2970 cubic foot cars, matching the MTL 092 body style on that attribute. While the January 2008 shot shows the car without conspicuity stripes, an image from February 2009 shows them applied to the car.

That brings us to Page 47 of the **Western Maryland Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, which has an as-delivered shot of WM 604692 as of May 1970, the year it was built by American Car and Foundry. This was in the series 604950 to 604999. It’s noted that these cars were “purchased primarily for cement service from Lehigh Portland Cement Company at Union Bridge, Maryland.” I suspect that the very high number series by Western Maryland standards – six digit road numbers! – facilitated the move directly into Chessie System’s roster. Indeed, also on Page 47 there’s a shot of sister car 604999 with the Ches-C... which has been given an “aftermarket” eyes, nose and mouth!

The Approximate Time Period for this car as produced by Micro-Trains is an “at least” defined by the range of the photos I found online. Less strictly speaking, the CSXT series 226673 to 226720, the group into which these former WM Center Flows were placed, shows up all the way back in the April 1989 ORER, the first in the Research Accumulation in which the CSXT reporting marks appear. No “to present” here however, as just two remained in the January 2018 Equipment Register and they’re gone after that.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Nothing official... or unofficial, for that matter... this month.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: The 2024 Release Table is not yet posted to the UMTRR website, but it’s getting closer, and when it is posted, it will have these items marked with the “Dreaded D”: The reprinted SP&S caboose (051 00 061), the N Scale Kansas Egg and Poultry Refrigerator (058 00 602), the Penn Central boxcar (074 00 090), both versions of Runner Pack #220 of four CSX boxcars (993/983 00 220), both versions of the SP Supply Car Three Pack (993/983 02 235), both versions of the MT&L 70s-80s Heavyweight Four Pack (993/983 02 236), and both versions of the Northern Pacific Log and Flat Car Three Pack (993/983 02 240), all from just last month. There weren’t any incremental outs from the January 2024 releases. If you’re keeping score, most of the multi-packs from thus far in 2024 have hit the bye-bye board in the month they were released. In Z Scale, the War of the Worlds F7A Locomotive (980 01 550) was shown as available last month and is now reported as having left the building. Also gone is last month’s Weathered Release, the Conrail/New York Central boxcar (507 44 750). I’ll update the release tables with the older items which are outta here, as time permits here at UMTRR HQ.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:

Last month's N Scale Seaboard boxcar (020 00 387) bears a resemblance to the Seaboard boxcar released in October 2002, Catalog 20616, Reporting Marks SAL 25196 (at right). Fortunately, it's only a passing resemblance, as last month's release had black lettering where this one has red lettering, as does the Weathered Release that I did mention in last month's coverage. That car, Catalog 020 52 616, one half of the Seaboard Weathered Two Pack (993 05 630), is a direct "not a reprint" of the October 2002 "clean" release.



Here's the answer to my question about what's under the tarps of the cars in the CP/ex-Soo Line Hopper Four Pack (993/983 02 239): not much lettering! Courtesy of our UMTRR Special Correspondent David Grothe, here's a shot of two of the cars, and as you can see, there's just a bit of dimensional data. My first thought was, hey, get a set of these and letter them for one's own railroad, but then, one might miss the point of the tarp loads. The photo of the set that David sent along included a view of the instructions, and I must give — uh, what do they call them these days? — uh, right, props, to MTL for the idea and how to execute it.



As I was starting work on the UMTRR Release Tables for 2024, I came across the data point that the drop bottom gondola in the N Scale Southern Pacific Supply Car Three Pack (9x3 02 235) looks an awful lot like the previous SP Drop Bottom Gondolas that carry 083 00 080 catalog numbers... even though this new car has the Catalog Number 083 00 170 and fits into the same prototype number series, SP 151000 to 152649 (specifically, that part of the series built in 1949). I've made that note in the 2024 Release Table. While I'm on the subject of the SP Supply Car Three Pack, I note that in addition to the doors usually included with 028 Body Style cars, there is also a modeler-installed alternate door that probably fits better with the cars' role in the Supply Department. Cool!

It's so hard to keep up with Special Runs... looking after just the regular releases from the folks in Talent gets more challenging each year as the list grows! And of course, that does need to be my focus. Anyway, the Pacific Fruit Express Express Refrigerator Scheme coming in Runner Pack #225 (993/983 00 225) and previously released as a single in August 1996 was also done as a Special Run by Prototype N Scale in 2012 and 2017 with four and three packs respectively, none of which have numbers repeated in this forthcoming Regular Release. And the "Soy Power" tank car was done as a four pack for PWRS in 2016 (NSE Number 16-94 for the set; Road Numbers 30830, 30831, 30887, 30868). MTL's Special Run agreements allow them to reproduce a Special Run car as a Regular Run release after six months after the Special Run is shipped. I don't think they'll be doing their own version of the UMTRR 25th Anniversary Car, though...

Our B&O Special Correspondent Brian DeVries offers some final thoughts on the B&O Weathered Two Pack from last month (993 / 983 05 069). He cites B&O expert Mike Shylanski

who located a photo of B&O covered gondola 362026, from the same prototype series. Mike estimates that the photo is from sometime after 1967. It shows the cover as having rectangular lifts welded on, and the running board removed. Mike notes: “by the time a gondola got as grungy as the top one you showed me, it should not have a full running board--**nor should it have an unreadable car number** (as I'm sure you know, various clerks had to read the car numbers in the 1960s).” That unreadability (hmm, I guess Microsoft thinks that **is** a word!) references the difficulty of making out what I think—hope—is 362023 on the first of the Weathered Two Pack. So the Modeling Challenge I noted in my commentary last month might, or might not, be a little easier than first reported.

OOPS PATROL: No, NS Family Tree Series Car #10 is **not** another Center Flow Covered Hopper! It's a 50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar with Single Superior Door. How many times did you proofread last month's column, George?

FINALLY, A SHOUT OUT TO 'SPOOKSHOW': The April 2024 issue of **Model Railroader** contains a very nice, and well deserved, appreciation of Mark Peterson, better known as “Spookshow” after the URL for his extensive N Scale Locomotive Encyclopedia. Mark has examine, tested, and frequently disassembled (!) **just about every locomotive ever offered in N**, going back to the earliest Arnold and Lone Star releases in 1962. Mark obtains these locomotives largely if not completely at his own expense and posts his findings for all of us. And he's now been doing this for **twenty-five years**. I make frequent reference to the site (at www.spookshow.net) and it's saved me from what would have been several suboptimal purchases. I'm sure many of us UMTRR Gang Members have made use of Mark's selfless efforts as well. If you have not visited, I can't recommend a trip to the site heartily enough.

Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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