



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report Issue #328 – April, 2024

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Hello again everyone! We have a fair amount of Pacific this month – Southern and Union, that is. We’ve also got the fifth in the Poultry Series and the first in the Ex-Per Diem Series. And where might you put that Poultry? A “Frigerator,” of course... April Fool! Let’s start our monthly look behind the red and yellow sign...

But wait! Has the regular lineup been “eclipsed”...??? Read on...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



020 00 397, \$28.90.

Reporting Marks: C&O 19022.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Chesapeake and Ohio.

Black with aluminum roof and yellow stripe along bottom of side. Yellow lettering including reporting marks

on left and herald on right. Lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period (ATP): 1957 (build date) to at least 1960.

I suppose that if I wanted to keep the Food Theme (Poultry, Refrigerator) from the introduction to these bytes going, I could mention that the C&O herald is sometimes referred to as “double donuts.” Nah, maybe I’ll skip that...

Anyway, the series C&O 19000 to 19499 was built by American Car and Foundry in 1957. According to the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, this was right around the time when the Chessie began to paint boxcars black if they were restricted or specialized service or specially equipped inside. From late 1956 to 1960, the C&O also used yellow lettering. This car has both features in its paint scheme as modeled, but as we’ll see shortly, that wasn’t necessarily for their entire service life.

The Official Railway Equipment Register for January 1958 has this 500 car group split right down the middle. Cars 19000 to 19249 were listed with AAR Designation XM and described as “Box, Steel.” Cars 19250 to 19499 had AAR Designation XME and an end note indicating “DF” loaders. The key dimensions were the same: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height

15 feet even, door opening 9 feet--yes, a “door thing” versus the MTL 020 body style which has a six foot door-- and capacity 3983 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

I can’t quite read the small lettering below the triangle to the left of the door, but both it and the rest of the yellow lettering can be found in a bingo photo for this car. It was taken in September 1957 and posted to George Elwood’s “Fallen Flags” website (www.rr-fallenflags.org). Besides the “door thing” there are riveted sides and a hefty lower sill, all differences between the prototype and model.

Given the information in the **Color Guide** about the end of the short-lived yellow paint in 1960, I’ll call the Approximate Time Period there and won’t venture further into the ORER stash. But I will note that RailcarPhotos.com and other online sources have cars in this series painted in the more common boxcar red with later C&O “For Progress” herald. And at least one of these cars made it all the way to Chessie System paint: C&O 19335, serviced in 1974, was found with the big “Ches-C” in 2006, shorn of its running board and with cut down end ladders and looking quite the worse for wear. That image is on RailcarPhotos.com.



049 00 981, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NADX 6283.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Fishbelly Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Bradbury Produce Company.

#5 in the Poultry and Eggs Series (pre-orders taken August 2023). Yellow sides, brown

roof and ends, black bottom door sill, hardware and bottom sill. Black lettering including “North American Despatch” and reporting marks on left and “Bradbury Produce / Carlot Shippers / Eggs-Poultry / Woodward, Oklahoma” on right, split by red and white “Sweet Heart Poultry” trademark. Approximate Time Period: 1928 (build date) to no later than 1938.

Just one page back from the bingo photo for last month’s Poultry and Egg Series car in the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars**, we have the bingo photo for this month’s Poultry and Egg Series car. Built in July 1928 for North American Car Company, the first lessor of NADX 6283 was Bradbury Produce. So what we have in the photo is possibly an “as delivered” paint scheme. This does not tell us how long Bradbury Produce leased this car, of course. We know that the Approximate Time Period won’t go past the end of the overall Billboard Refrigerator ATP, but we also don’t know whether this car lasted that long in this particular paint scheme. It’s noted in the book that many of North American’s cars constructed at the time were to Pressed Steel Car’s “standard design.” That appears to have included two hinges per door which differs from the MTL 049 and Z Scale 518 body styles.

The ORER for January 1931 has the series NADX 6000 to 6399, with all 400 cars present. The inside length was 33 feet 4 inches, but there’s no outside length given, and no other outside dimensions either for that matter. The lading capacity was 1938 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds, and the ice capacity was 246 cubic feet, enough for 9102 pounds of chunk ice.

As Micro-Trains notes in its car copy, Bradbury Produce was one of the businesses almost literally wiped out by the massive Glazier-Higgins-Woodward tornado outbreak in April 1947. The tornado was retroactively rated F-5 on the modern day Fujita Scale. There's a photo online of what was left of one of the Bradbury Produce buildings in Woodward, Oklahoma after the passage of that twister, which was estimated to be two miles wide. A graphic account of the storm, considered to be Oklahoma's deadliest, is available on Historynet.com (URL www.historynet.com/oklahomas-deadliest-tornado/).

One of the structures that did survive the Woodward Tornado is known as the Stine-Bradbury House. It's a brick Classical Revival residence that was ordered out of the Sears Catalog (yes, you could do that at one time!) and constructed in 1916. The original owner was Len L. Stine, owner of the First National Bank in Woodward. He made the ill-fated decision to purchase German war bonds, which didn't sit well with the population who then caused the bank to fail in 1932. The house was purchased in 1935 by Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Bradbury – of Bradbury Produce. It remained in the family until 1994 and is now owned by the Great Plains Preservation and Development Foundation. It's the only building in Woodward on the National Register of Historic Places.



071 00 140, \$37.95.

Reporting Marks: SP 901250.

89 Foot TOFC Flat Car, Southern Pacific.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and "Two 45s" in center. Yellow "Cushion Car" right of center. White on black double COTS panel on right. Approximate Time Period: 1984 (based on rebuild date in COTS panel) to late 1980s. This item is expected mid-month and is not on Micro-Trains dealer standing orders. (I've seen it available for sale in online listings.) Micro-Trains artwork shown; actual product may vary.

I'll let "The Railgoat," also known as Lee Gautreaux, deliver the not so good news for those of us researching the prototype series 901200 to 901277, which includes this month's release: "These 89 foot flats were rebuilt from various classes for TOFC/COFC service. From field observations, they appear to have kept their original class designations, but more information is certainly needed." The same comment was applied to all of the other cars in the 900000s, except for a set of former Providence and Worcester cars which became SP 900480 to 900579, and didn't those cars get around after a short stay on the P&W.

I thought that perhaps the bingo photo for this car would be in the book **Southern Pacific Freight Cars - Volume 3 - Automobile Cars and Flat Cars** by Anthony Thompson – not in the UMTRR Research Accumulation. (The aftermarket has this book for about \$250.) However, per UMTRR Gang Member Jeff Maurer, it's not. The closest I was able to get with the resources I do have available is an image of SP 900423 on Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery – which isn't really that close as it's not in the same prototype series. The paint scheme is quite similar, however. I should add that MTL states in its car copy that this car came from the Rio Grande.

But that's OK, since Jeff put a query in on the Espee list on Groups.io, and heard from another UMTRR Gang Member, James Costello, who pointed out that Page 79 of the **Piggyback Color Guide Volume 2** "has a bingo photo of SP 901250 taken in Mojave in May 1985 loaded with two 45 foot trailers."

And we get some help on the Approximate Time Period from ORERs. There are no cars in the 900000s at all in the SP entry in the April 1982 Equipment Register. Then in the April 1984 book, there is an entire page of listings of flat cars, all with AAR Designation FC, but the highest number is 901103. So close!

The next issue in the ORER stash, January 1985, does have the series SP 901200 to 901277, with 54 cars in the main series, described as "Flat, TOFC-COFC, 2 Hitch Collapsible Pedestal Assembly, 2 40 Foot - 45 Foot Containers/Dry Trailers" with inside length 89 feet 4 inches, outside length 93 feet 10 inches, and capacity 140,000 pounds. Another four cars are described as just "Flat." This aligns with the COTS panel on the Micro-Trains artwork, which fortunately is at 255 x 4630 pixels (!) and allows me to read it: the last line is "Blt 06-84 Reblt" in that stenciling. Seems to me that the rebuild took place in June 1984. We'll take it.

MTL also notes that this particular car was sold to the Soo Line in the late 1980s. And sure enough, by the October 1991 ORER the car count is down to just two. That's where I stopped looking. There's a shot of SOO 55041 on RRPictureArchives as of July 1994, in basically the SP scheme with the reporting marks changed; thanks to James Costello for that citation as well.



074 00 200, \$26.90.

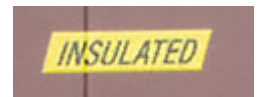
Reporting Marks: SSW 30005.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, High Brake Wheel, Full Side Ladders, Cotton Belt (St. Louis Southwestern).

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large

roadname on right. Small black "Insulated" on yellow parallelogram on left. Multicolor ACI label left of door. White on black double COTS panel and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" on right. Approximate Time Period: Early 1970s based on paint scheme, or 1978 given U-1 "dot," to early 1980s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

If I've ever used the word "parallelogram" before in these bytes, I don't remember it. But that's what the figure in which the word "Insulated" appears, and I apologize if I just caused you to experience a Bad Flashback to Geometry Class.



Page 97 of the **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** has a photo of the parallelogram, and the SSW 30005 on which it's painted, as it appeared in

March 1979. This car was part of the series SSW 30000 to 30024, built by Pacific Car and Foundry in January 1958.

Let me stop right there and mention that if this seems a bit familiar, it is: Micro-Trains did SSW 30015 from this same group of cars in October 2013, Catalog Number 021 00 500 (official image at right). This was the “as delivered” scheme. I mentioned in that coverage that there was a photo of this earlier car online and there’s another one in the **Color Guide**, on the same Page 97, in fact.



Comparing model to prototype, there are differences: riveted sides, a straight bottom sill and 3 / 4 ends on the real car, while there are welded sides, a non-straight sill and 4 / 4 ends on the MTL car. I’d expect deltas given the manufacturer was PC&F and not Pullman-Standard; the latter’s products are the original basis for these MTL models.

The ORER for January 1959 has information on these cars. There are two groups numbered 30000 to 30024 and 30025 to 30050, with the difference in the second group being the use of a Hydra-Cushion Underframe. (And two of those Hydra-Cushion cars were done by MTL in November 2016, Catalog 021 00 59x, road numbers 30032 and 30038.) We’ll focus on the first group of 25 which is where the road number MTL did lands. The full description is “Box, Insulated, Compartmentalizer” with AAR Classification RBL. The vital statistics: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 9 feet 1 inch, outside length 41 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet, and capacity 3372 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. The large difference between the inside height and extreme height is a hint about where the insulation went into these cars. An end note calls out the Pullman-Standard Compartmentizer gates and fixtures.

In the April 1970 ORER, 24 of the original 25 cars were still in service. The compartmentizers had been removed from 17 of these cars, including the 30005, and the description was reworded to “Refrigerator, All Steel, Plug Doors, Insulated.” Just three of the original 25 cars remain in April 1981, which are gone by April 1984.

Just two questions remain here, for me, anyway. First, we know from the presence of the U-1 “dot” that the Strictly Speaking Approximate Time Period would start no earlier than 1978, but what’s the less Strictly Speaking ATP? That depends on when the “Blue Streak” herald was dropped. And that’s **not** when the “Blue Streak” fast freight train was dropped – it ran in one form or another well past then. Another data point is that as early as 1959, the “Hydra-Cushion For Fragile Freight” slogan was appearing on Cotton Belt boxcars. I suppose I could take the easy way out and note the service date of August 1972 on this model, which certainly works for this specific car while I try to dig out some Incremental Information.

Second, can that “as delivered” car be run with this car? The answer to that is a qualified yes, even with the running board on the previous “Blue Streak” car. The photos of the two cars in

the **Color Guide** are from 1979 and 1978 respectively, and in the latter image, the “Blue Streak” boxcar still has its running board.



107 00 080, \$33.95.

Reporting Marks: SP 160550.

65 Foot Mill Gondola, Southern Pacific.

Brown with white lettering including roadname and road number on left.

White on black “Southern Pacific Lines” herald on right. Metal wheels and body mounted couplers. Simulated scrap metal load included. Approximate Time Period: 1953 (build date) to 1956. Micro-Trains recommends a minimum 15 inch curve radius for this item.

That “scrap metal” load looks like a set of seven cyclone fans to me, but I digress... Let’s start this relatively straightforward coverage with Page 202 of **Southern Pacific Freight Cars Volume One** with some roster information. The series SP 160550 to 160649, of 100 cars, was built in 1953 by Greenville Steel Car Company. They received the SP Class G-70-7 and had steel floors, drop ends, Ajax hand brakes and ASF A-3 Trucks. The Approximate Time Period comes to a screeching halt in 1956 when the series was renumbered to SP 340155 to 340254. (Of course, Rule #1 still applies: It’s your railroad.) There are two builder’s photos of this very car on Page 206 of the same book. The key spotting features of 20 panel sides and drop ends align between the MTL 107 body style and prototype, and the side mounted brake wheel is a match as well. And just to confirm, the model is painted as it was delivered to the Southern Pacific, with full roadname and road number.

We’ll grab the January 1955 ORER for a quick check of the key dimensions: inside length 65 feet 6 inches, inside width 7 feet 9 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, outside length 67 feet 11 inches, outside width 8 feet 7 inches, extreme height 7 feet even, and capacity 1778 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.



108 00 641 and 108 00 642, \$28.90 each.

Reporting Marks: BNSF 617893 and 617895. Three Bay Open Hoppers, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

Brown (“Mineral Red”) with white lettering including reporting marks on left and small circle cross herald on right. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s into the decade of the 2000s at least.



I found a bingo for the second of this virtual two-pack first, on RailcarPhotos.com: the 617895 was in Seattle, Washington in June 2009. It’s noted in the photo caption that the car is

from the series 617754 to 618005, from the Santa Fe series ATSF 179000 to 179299 built by the railroad at its Topeka Shops from December 1975 to February 1976, the Santa Fe's class GA-189. Then we find the 617893 as of May 2006 in Blue Island, Illinois over on RRPictureArchives.net, along with a bonus photo of the 617895 in Golden, Colorado in December 2008, taken from overhead and showing that the car is unloaded. I note that these are 17 panel cars, while the MTL 108 body style is a 14 panel car. There's a photo of an almost new ATSF 179016, from the original series, also on RailcarPhotos.com if you're interested.

The first ORER in which I pick up a BNSF series with these particular road numbers is April 1999, but don't get too excited: the group 617778 to 617945 has only thirteen cars in it. In January 2000 the series is 617757 to 617992 and the car count is twenty. It's the same in the January 2002 ORER. And the October 2004 ORER. And the January 2006 ORER. And so much for filling in the series, I suppose. Well, it does go up to a count of 24 in the July 2007 Register. Oops, I should provide the dimensional data: outside length 49 feet 9 inches, outside width 10 feet 7 inches, extreme height 12 feet 7 inches, capacity 3420 cubic feet or 199,000 pounds.

In the January 2011 Equipment Register, the car count of this series has moved up to 45, in the April 2013 ORER, it's 50, and in the October 2014 Register, it's 51, and no, I wasn't expecting to do this many lookups. The car count may have peaked by then, as in the January 2018 ORER it's back to 45, and in the October 2020 edition, the latest issue I have, it's down to 35. I'm not thinking "to present" is an appropriate end to the Approximate Time Period. And of course we also don't know whether the cars were painted as MTL has modeled them for that entire period of time either. For one thing, they don't have conspicuity stripes, which could have appeared as early as 2005. The bingo photos I found of both the 617893 and 617895 show the cars without the stripes. So my ATP estimate includes an "at least" at the end.



180 00 420, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: D&H 27078.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Lowered Brake Wheel, Delaware and Hudson.

Red with yellow lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left and large "Laurentian Shield" herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1977 (paint date) to about 1987. This item has a cushion underframe and body mounted couplers.

If you count canals, the history of the Delaware and Hudson goes all the way back to March 1823, when the Pennsylvania State Legislature authorized the "canalizing" of the Lackawaxen River. Not be confused with the Lackawanna River, which flows southwesterly to the Susquehanna, the Lackawaxen flows more or less southeasterly to the Delaware River. The "canalizing" was chartered from Honesdale to the Delaware. In April 1823, New York State issued a charter for the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company. It was only a bit more than

four years later that the Stourbridge Lion was the first locomotive to run on rails in the United States – but oops, it was too heavy for the rails on which it was tried.

Like many other railroads, the D&H grew through mergers and acquisitions, for example the Albany and Susquehanna, the Adirondack, and the Napierville Junction. The canal wasn't abandoned until 1899. The D&H's last few decades were, let us say, challenging; although it drew lots of publicity for the Sharknose and PA diesels on its roster, that didn't pay the bills. In 1984 it was purchased by Guilford Industries. That didn't go well. Six years later it became part of CP Rail, and faded from there into Fallen Flag status.

For a relatively small railroad, the Delaware and Hudson sure had a lot of paint schemes. This particular one is documented on Page 54 of the **D&H Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, along with a bingo photo of the 27078 taken in March 1978. Built in 1964, the car received this paint scheme of yellow on red in April 1977 according to the book's authors (who worked in collaboration with The Bridge Line Historical Society to produce this volume). They also note that the 27078 was a "singleton," or the only car to ever receive this particular decoration. (Although D&H 22010, also a 50 foot single door boxcar, carried a rather similar paint scheme from April 1975 to at least February 1980 when it was caught for a photo that also appears in the **Color Guide**.) There is also a photo of the 27078 as of December 1977 is on RRPictureArchives if you don't have the **Color Guide**.

This 27078 belonged to the series D&H 27076 to 27110. The ORER for January 1967 has all 35 cars listed, of which 21 including the 27078 had a capacity of 140,000 pounds, and 14 had a capacity of 150,000 pounds. The other key dimensions were the same: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 58 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 4932 cubic feet. The cars were described as "Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe."

Given the bingo photo dates, we can advance to the January 1978 ORER. The 27078 is part of a subset of 9 cars reclassified XL and equipped with "two non-swivel load dividers" within the overall set of 33 cars. That's down two cars from the original 35. In the April 1984 Register, the 27078 is one of only two cars with the load dividers while the overall car count is down to 28. The July 1987 ORER is the last one in which I see the 27078. Two other cars from the main series hang on into the mid-1990s.

The 27076 to 27110 series was roughly contemporary with the 27001 to 27075, and other than outside length had the same dimensions. It was the 27001 group of 75 cars that appears to have received more coverage from the railfan community. For example, the **Pullman-Standard Color Guide to Freight Equipment**, Page 33, has a shot of D&H 27027 in its as-delivered yellow with black ends and blue lettering that was similar to what we see on the 27078 this month. I can't say for certain that the as delivered scheme of the 27078 was the same yellow and blue, but it wouldn't surprise me.



451 00 361 and 451 00 362, \$27.95 each.

Reporting Marks: UPZ 530259 and 530293.

45 Foot Trailers, Union Pacific.

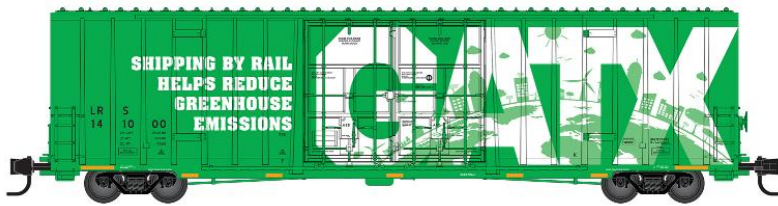
White with aluminum roof and trim and blue stripe across most of sides. Red italic roadname and blue reporting marks on nose end of sides. Red, white and blue shield herald and blue "We Can Handle It" slogan on tail end of sides. Red roadname and blue reporting marks on nose. Not shown in MTL images: blue reporting marks, red roadname, and "Freuhauf Z-Van" logo on tail, which also has silver door hardware. Approximate Time Period: early 1980s through late 1990s. These items are not on Micro-Trains dealer standing orders. (I've seen them available for sale in online listings.)

As usual, my knowledge of trailers is, let us say, limited. So we'll start with a bingo photo for the second of this virtual two-pack on

RRPictureArchives. UPZ 530293 was atop a TTX "Twin 45" flat car in Cajon, California in December 1992. The lettering was looking a bit worn, with a piece of the stripe near the slogan missing along with bits of the "U" and "P" in the reporting marks. From the image, which shows the opposite side of the trailer, we can confirm that the lettering is a typical mirror image pattern. By that I mean that the roadname and reporting marks are at the nose (front) end and the slogan and herald are at the tail (back) end. Meanwhile, an online sale posting of one of these trailers helped me avoid some dangerous speculation about how the back doors are decorated on the MTL model. I've added this information to the description above.

UMTRR Gang Member James Costello, who also helped out with this month's SP Flat Car, checks in here. James notes that the last two pages of the Union Pacific section of the **Piggyback Color Guide Volume 2** have shots of UPZ 202269 and UPZ 202242, which were "supplied" to the UP in 1976 and either 1979 or 1980 respectively. They're not in this prototype series, but they do carry the scheme shown on the Micro-Trains models, which means it was probably in place when the trailers MTL did model were "supplied" to the UP.

James also has copies of The Official Intermodal Equipment Register, which show 100 units in the series 530151 to 530400 as of September 1994. That drops off quickly to only sixteen in August 1996 and June 1998, and the series isn't listed in the March 2000 edition. So we've got an end to the ATP here. The start of the ATP is less clear, although it was in the early 1980s when the use of 45 foot trailers became legal. Based on that, I'm thinking these probably carried the modeled paint scheme when delivered.



In addition to the above, two TBOX cars—OK, 60 Foot High-Cube Exterior Post Double Plug Door Boxcars—are expected to be available mid-month. First is the GATX/Laurinburg and Southern (123 00 080, \$51.98); UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the September 2023 issue. Second is the first of two releases of the Union Pacific boxcar with spartan high-set lettering (123 00 101, \$51.98); UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the December 2023 issue.

N SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS: No releases this month.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:



025 44 141, \$30.95.

Reporting Marks: SRN 3714.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Sabine River and Northern/ ex-Corinth and Counce.

First release in the ex-Per Diem series (pre-orders were not taken for this series). Blue with aluminum roof. White SRN reporting marks on black patch panel. Faded "Corinth and Counce Railroad Company" on left and C&C herald on right. Moderate to heavy weathering; multicolor graffiti on both

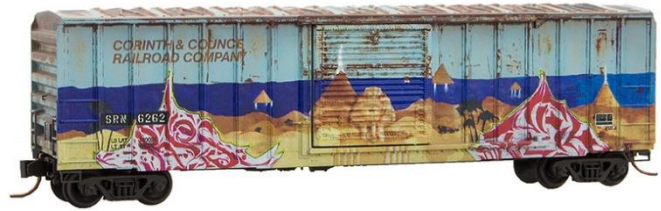
sides. Approximate Time Period: 2006, plus or minus. Previous Releases (Unweathered): Road Number 6402, April 1983; Road Number 6407, September 2004, both as Catalog Number 25140; then 025 52 140, SRN 6262. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Here's the official MTL image of the second of the two previous unweathered release of the base car (at right). The catalog number aligns with these two, although obviously it's a "not a reprint" and would be anyway given the lowered underframe and body mounted couplers on this Weathered Release.



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This also isn't the first Corinth and Counce boxcar that's been restenciled for the Sabine River and Northern. Catalog 025 52 140, part of the "Spaceship Graffiti" two pack (993 05 460) issued in July 2018 (at right).



The site RRPictureArchives.net has the bingo photo for SRN 3714, taken in April 2006 as it rolled through Fairport, New York, not far from UMTRR HQ and the current site of a railfan viewing area. It's noted that this car was previously CCR 6523 and was a New Orleans Public Belt and a Providence and Worcester car before that. It would be unusual in that it was actually fully repainted as it was transferred from one railroad to another. Obviously that wasn't the case when it went from the Corinth and Counce to the Sabine River and Northern. It's also noted that the car became HS 3828; the HS being the H and S Railroad Company, the former Hartford and Slocumb but now mostly a set of reporting marks to hold leasing company cars — and listed under the Chattahoochee Bay Railroad listing. RRPictureArchives has a shot of the car as HS 3828 from May 2011, at which point it was still in what was left of the Corinth and Counce paint.

While I'm officially giving the ATP as being a "plus or minus" from the bingo photo date of April 2006, some ORER checks revealed that SRN 3714 first appeared in the January 2002 issue, with that exact road number as a subset of the series 3701 to 3999. The HS 3828 first appeared in the July 2007 Equipment Register — so your "or plus" ends then or before. Here are the key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet 2 inches, outside length 57 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5347 cubic feet with a gross rail weight of 220,000 pounds. The MTL 025 body style is based on the FMC 5077 cubic foot car, which is 5 inches less tall than the 5347.

In addition to the above, the following was announced on the Micro-Trains website and via the "E-Line" newsletter on April 15.



123 44 016, \$52.95.

Reporting Marks: TBOX 665919.

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. One side of car has restenciled road

number on yellow patch panel. Light to moderate weathering; extensive graffiti along bottom of both sides of car. 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 Releases: Road Number 665822, January 2024, Road Number 665898, March 2024.

Hey, there's an echo in here! This makes three TBOX weathered/graffiti cars in four months. Like the previous two, the 665919 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.

There's a bingo photo of the 665919 taken by Collin Reinhart in October 2022, showing the side with the restenciled road number. Special Correspondent David Grothe noted a rather unusual view of the car on RRPictureArchives: being pulled out of a warehouse in Akron, Ohio in March 2016. You can only see the end of the car, and not even all of that since it's mostly obscured by a switch engine.



983 05 071, \$145.95, with Jewel Cases (only, no Foam Nest version).

Reporting Marks: CSXT 247307 (094 44 800), 247177 (094 45 800), 247555 (094 46 800), and 247490 (094 47 800). CSX/ex-Family Lines Weathered Four Pack.

Consists of four MTL 094 series Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers with trough hatches. Base car is gray or beige with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left ("ghosted" on the 247490). Varying weathering, fading and rust effects on each car, see below. Approximate

Time Period: early 1990s to around 2005, or add conspicuity stripes and go into the decade of the 2010s at least.

We have four cars in three different prototype series in this Weathered Pack, although they all have the same general story. In fact, CSX put a whole lot of covered hoppers of several different capacities into one large group, CSXT 246165 to 248384, which is already quite present in the July 1989 ORER. (The CSX Transportation listing in the July 1987 Equipment Register, the previous one in the Research Accumulation, doesn't have any cars with CSXT reporting marks.) There were 163 cars in the nominal main series, which was of 4600 cubic foot cars. But

then there is more than an entire page of subseries ranging from a single car in size to 138 cars. The 247307 is already in that listing in one of the subsets. The 247490 shows up in the October 1991 ORER. The 247555 is added in the July 1992 Equipment Register. And the 247177 is in the series in the October 1993 ORER. All of these are 4600 cubic foot cars, different from the 4650 cubic foot car that's the prototype for the MTL 094 body style. Given the eyestrain resulting from checking all those individual number groups (example at left), I'm quite happy that it only took four ORER issues to catch all four cars. This does answer the question of whether all four cars can be run together, a question I ask myself with most Weathered Packs. And yes, they can.

And should you have the **first** CSXT ex-Family Lines Weathered Pack (993 05 610, January 2020 MTL image at right), you could reasonably add those three cars to the train as well. I noted in the commentary for that set that the Family Lines paint scheme dates to approximately 1974 ("Family Lines" was not ever an official corporate entity) and was succeeded by Seaboard System in 1982, then absorbed into CSX Transportation in 1986. So for those cars, we're looking at about ten years of dirt, grime, cargo spillage and rust between the Family Lines paint and the CSXT restencil. That's something to keep in mind with these cars as well; they, too, were likely already pretty dirty when the restencils were applied.



To finish the ORER review, I'm going to give myself a break by simply noting that the 246165 to 248384 series still had a total of 151 cars in the October 2020 Register, down from 471 in October 2014. Whether any of these cars were still part of that set by the 2020s is unlikely, but theoretically possible.

I'll continue with these cars in numerical order. We'll start with CSXT 247177, which doesn't really show any trace of its previous lettering. According to RailcarPhotos, it was built by American Car and Foundry in March 1973 for the Louisville and Nashville as part of the series L&N 241250 to 241499. That group went into the Seaboard System under the series SBD 247036 to 247215, and kept those numbers when conveyed to CSX Transportation.

The bingo photo for this car is on George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" website (URL www.rr-fallenflags.org). It was taken in Nashville, Tennessee, in May 2004. Here's something interesting: while most of the body is gray, the ends are beige. Micro-Trains has done a nice job of depicting this; see photo of the "right hand" side of the car at right, which aligns with the image on Fallen Flags. (The "right hand" side of the car is what you see when the brake wheel is on your left.)



CSXT 247307 was also found in Nashville, this time in April 2023, and that image is also posted to Fallen Flags. This time, most of the stylized "Double-S" and the "System" in "Seaboard System" remain visible. The "right hand" side of the car (at left) seems to

be a bit better match to the bingo on RRPictureArchives, which dates to May 2009, but also shows the car with conspicuity stripes at seven points along the bottom of the side of the car. There's also a bit of, ahem, "additional decoration," but CSX doesn't allow graffiti on models so you'll need to add that yourself. This car was in the series 247216 to 247415, previously SBD series 247216 to 247415 and built as the L&N series 241450 to 241649 by American Car & Foundry in October and November 1975.

The 247490 and 247555 were part of the series CSXT 247419 to 247566. This was the Seaboard System series with the same numbers and came from the L&N series 241650 to 241799 built by American Car & Foundry in October and November 1976. We go to RailcarPhotos.com for the bingo on the 247490, which as of May 2005 had the ghosted CSXT reporting marks as depicted on the model, and previous Family Lines lettering that held up better than the restencil (see "right side" of model at right). That black panel near the bottom of the car contains the instructions, "For Grain Loading Only / Return Empty To L&N RR." Good luck with that in 2005! The L&N had already been officially gone for some twenty-three years by then, having been absorbed into the Seaboard Coast Line in 1982.



Finally, we have bingo photos for the 247555 on RRPictureArchives as of February 2006 and the last day of 2007. There are two contrasts between the two images: the 2006 shot shows the car looking very beige and without conspicuity stripes, while the 2007 shot shows the car

looking quite gray and with conspicuity stripes. If I need a reason to seem confused about what color these cars actually were painted, there it is right there! MTL went with the beige look here. The rusty treatment as seen in the single car image above is, well, spot on. (Sorry.)



N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #222, also known as the GE Rail Services-NATX Runner Pack (983 00 221, \$119.95, Jewel Case packaging only; no Foam Nest Packaging version) is now available, confirmed via online listings. UMTRR Pre-Order Coverage was in the November 2023 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 110 51 630, 253013; 110 52 630, 252278; 110 53 630, 252281. Yes, the first road number is “higher” than the second and third, I checked against the official MTL photo.



Also now available, confirmed via online listings, is the B&O and Southern Weathered Gondola Three Pack with Hay Load (983 02 243, \$96.95, with Jewel Boxes; 993 02 243, \$84.95, with Foam Nest Packaging). UMTRR coverage was in the November 2023 issue. The individual catalog and reporting marks are as follows: 105 44 006, B&O 354178; 105 45 006, B&O 354820; 105 46 016, Southern 314008. From the official MTL image I can see a service date of April 1962 on the Southern gondola

and a service date of June 1965 on the B&O 354820, which would narrow down the Strictly Speaking Approximate Time Period. Also note that the catalog numbers seem to “start over” with a six in the last position, which is what happens when the folks in Talent “run out” of catalog numbers ending in zero. Complicating this is that the “105” body style also has two variations that carry 1055/105 00 5xx and 1057 / 105 00 7xx catalog numbers (15 panel fishbelly side gondolas and 14 panel straight side gondolas, both with fixed ends). Well, I only try to track catalog numbers, I don’t create them...

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **April 30**.*



Targeted Delivery September 2024:

983 00 227, \$119.95, with Jewel Box Packaging (no Foam Nest version).

Reporting Marks: NS 440219, 440229, 440307, and 440341.

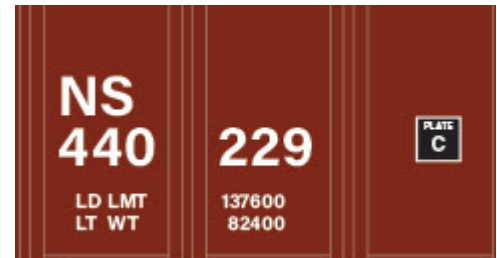
Norfolk Southern Boxcar Runner Pack (Runner Pack #227).

Scheduled to consist of four 027 series 50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcars with Plug Doors. Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black COTS panel on far right. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at six points along car. Cushion underframe and body mounted couplers.

Approximate Time Period: after 2005

given conspicuity stripes into the decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

So this is about as “spartan” as it gets in terms of lettering... reporting marks, minimal data, and that’s about it. That’s not how this series of cars started their service life, after being built in 1979 by Fruit Growers Express. Instead, they were adorned with the large Southern roadname along with the “Gives a Green Light to Innovations” slogan below that roadname and a large road number, and the “Southern Serves The South” slogan as well. These cars were numbered from 100 to 299 and became the Norfolk Southern series 440200 to 440399, the NS class BS-1.



A bingo photo of how these cars looked when delivered is on Page 40 of the **Southern Railway Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. It’s noted that the cars had a 20 inch Freightmaster cushioning system, which justifies Micro-Trains’ use of their cushion underframe with extended couplers. The car design differs from the MTL 027 body style, perhaps most notably in that the side exterior posts (ribs) don’t extend all the way to the roofline. The prototype looks to me more like a mechanical refrigerator car, without the refrigeration equipment, than a standard x-post boxcar. And these cars were insulated, carrying the rather uncommon AAR Designation XPI.

Images on RailcarPhotos.com show that in between the large Southern and the just reporting marks scheme, at least some of these cars carried the “Claytor” scheme and some the Norfolk Southern “speed lettering” herald. Examples of the “Claytor” lettering is SOU 154, found in

September 2006, and SOU 155, caught in April 2007. Of the NS herald version, NS 440249 is an example, photographed in November 2009. More to the point, though, there was the 440316, found in June 2008, and the 440357, found in May 2007, both with the spartan scheme. We have a bingo on Fallen Flags for NS 440219, taken in February 2012 by Fallen Flags proprietor George Elwood himself. The 440219, also in a bingo photo on RRPictureArchives, this time from January 2012, was the former SOU 186. The 440229, caught in March 2009, was previously SOU 225. The 440307 was SOU 283, which as of May 2006 still had the NS speed lettering, but by June 2007 was in the plain brown with reporting marks only. Finally among the bingo photos on RRPictureArchives is the 440341, also photographed in June 2007, then again in December 2009, December 2016, and June 2018, the latter two while it carried some, ahem, additional decoration. The 440341 was previously SOU 128, showing that there was no particular rhyme or reason to how the NS renumbered this series. According to a caption, it was “deleted” on February 7, 2019. And add to all of this a survivor in the as delivered paint scheme, SOU 257, as of April 2007. How about that!

I’ll grab a sample ORER. From January 2006, we’ve got: inside length 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 61 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, door opening 12 feet (a rare “door thing” with respect to a plug door), capacity 5145 cubic feet, and gross rail weight 220,000 pounds.

Given the conspicuity stripes, 2005 and later is the appropriate Approximate Time Period, although that does assume that the NS started repainting these cars as early as 2005. How much later? Well, we don’t know that, but we do know that after a car count of 53 in the October 2018 ORER, the entire entry is gone from the October 2020 Register. One of these cars didn’t meet the fate of the others: NS 440217 was turned into a “bunk car” for the Engineering Department. It was found painted in gray – including the couplers! – in February 2021.

By the way, if you’re not keen on the degree to which this car is a “stand in” for this series, there’s another possibility. How easy is it to simply remove or patch over the reporting marks and replace them with something of your own choosing, including any number of shortline railroads that serve as fronts for leasing companies? You’ve already got the extended draft gear and cushion underframe. A little research should provide some suitable candidates. The history of my own Wilmington and New York (Reporting Marks: WNY) could certainly be tweaked to allow for a few on the contemporary roster. What do you mean, I’m ruining a perfectly good Runner Pack?



Targeted Delivery September 2024:

983 02 252, \$104.95, with Jewel Box Packaging (no Foam Nest version).

Reporting Marks: BNSF 617442, 617462, and 617477.

BNSF Hoppers with Tarp Covers Weathered Three Pack.

Scheduled to consist of four 108 series Three Bay Open Hoppers. Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left (except the 617442, which has black spray painted reporting marks on green

patch panel) and BNSF “wedge” roadname/herald on right. White on black COTS panel and white class GA-206 at bottom right. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at five points on car. Light weathering, patch panel on the 617477, and scrawl and multicolor graffiti on the 617442 and 617477. Includes multimedia tarp covers (modeler assembly required). Approximate Time Period: 2005 and later given conspicuity stripes to y. Previous Releases: Maybe; Catalog 108 00 371 and 108 00 372, Road Numbers 615546 and 615587, released December 2017, are in about the same paint scheme. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The coming of the “wedge” or “swoosh” or as we call it here at UMTRR HQ, “the circle-cross herald killer” just slightly predated the start of conspicuity stripes according to my research online. It coincided with the official name change of the railroad from Burlington Northern Santa Fe to BNSF, which wiped out two of the cities still in place within Class One railroad names in one stroke. As with the NS spartan scheme boxcars above, whether the Approximate Time Period actually starts in 2005 depends on how fast BNSF repainted these cars.

It’s not terribly common to see a Santa Fe class painted on a BNSF freight car, but this time, it’s there. Noted on RailcarPhotos.com is that the series BNSF series 617309 to 617751 was ATSF series 178550 to 178999. These were built by Greenville Steel Car from January to April 1980. The Santa Fe class GA-206 carried through to the cars when repainted. The prototypes were 14 panel three bay hoppers, as is the MTL 108 body style.

RailcarPhotos also has a bingo on the 617442, found in January 2018 complete with tarp and spray-repainted reporting marks as on the MTL artwork. I wonder if the green patch panel covered some particularly objectionable, ahem, other artwork? I had no luck locating bingos for the other two road numbers.

The group noted in RailcarPhotos is shown within a larger series, BNSF 616848 to 617599, in the January 2006 ORER. There’s a car count of just 27. They are described as “Hopper, Triple Cross, Axle Spacing 5 Feet 10 Inches, Truck Centers 36 Feet 2 Inches.” The outside length is 48 feet 9 inches, extreme height 12 feet 2 inches, capacity 3420 cubic feet, and gross rail weight 220,000 pounds. Jumping to the October 2020 Equipment Register, the car count is at 79, but that still leaves a lot of open road numbers.

Here's the "maybe a previous release," one of the virtual two pack released in December 2017.



While confirming the Approximate Start Date of the "wedge," I came across a history of the BNSF, a free PDF available on the company site, or here: www.bnsf.com/bnsf-resources/pdf/about-bnsf/History_and_Legacy.pdf. A free PDF? Hmm, that seems familiar...



Targeted Delivery September 2024:

983 02 253, \$95.95, with Jewel Box Packaging (no Foam Nest version).

Reporting Marks: C&O 305005, 305012, and 305054.

C&O Gondolas with Coil Loads Weathered Three Pack.

Scheduled to consist of four 105 series 50 Foot 14 Panel Gondolas with Fishbelly Sides and Fixed Ends. Cars are dark blue with the middle two panels in yellow. Mostly yellow

lettering including reporting marks on left, "Ches-C" herald right of center, and Chessie System roadname on second panel from right. Blue "Coils Only" on center panels. White on black double COTS panel on rightmost panel. Moderate weathering and rust effects. The 305012 has graffiti on the Ches-C herald; the 305054 has graffiti depicting the Ches-C as part of a full cat. Multi-media coil loads included. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s to early 1990s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Page 81 of the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment** has a bingo photo of C&O 305012, without a load but with the addition of a face to the "Ches-C," as of sometime in 1984. In 1976 and 1978 these gondolas resulted from conversion of C&O and B&O general service gondolas and were reclassified to CS-16. They also had cushion underframes and steel troughs added. They were intended for heavy steel and stainless steel coils, which unlike other steel coil loads, didn't need protection from the elements. These were 14 Panel fishbelly side gondolas with fixed ends, aligning with the MTL 105 body style. A bit of a nitpick is that the 305012 had grab irons instead of full side ladders. According to the **Color Guide**, the full set of CS-16s included B&O 305060 to 305083, C&O 305000 to 305059, 305084 and 305085, 368915 to 368949, and 368950 to 368974.

The January 1978 ORER is the first in the Research Accumulation that has these, but in a series that doesn't exactly match any of what I just transcribed: 305000 to 305081. That does include the three cars in this forthcoming pack so we'll go with it. They were described as "Gondola, Cradles (Coil Steel)" with AAR Designation GBS and these dimensions: inside length 52 feet 5 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet 6 inches, outside length 61 feet 7 inches,

extreme height 8 feet 4 inches, and capacity 2246 cubic feet or 180,000 pounds. The car count was 82, the full quantity possible. In the January 1985 Register the car count is 62. In the CSX Transportation entry in the October 1991 ORER, 19 cars remain lettered for the C&O. That's down to just four in the October 1993 ORER, and it appears unlikely that the road numbers coming here are among them, so that's where I stopped looking.

An undated bingo photo of an empty C&O 305005 posted to the Fallen Flags site shows that the car had a yellow interior. Some of the interior bracing for the coils is visible from this oblique overhead shot. Reproducing it looks like a Modeling Challenge to me. I didn't find an image of the 305054, which per the MTL artwork "improves upon" just the cat face being drawn into the Ches-C—this time, it's a whole cat! What would Chessie and Peake, the mascots of the Chesapeake and Ohio, have to say about that...

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: *April Fool...*



042 00 160, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: None.

40 Foot Double Sheathed Boxcar, Double Refrigerator Door (ha!), "Frigerator."

Silver with mostly turquoise sides with simulated wood panel band at top, silver stripes across side and white open simulated refrigerator doors. White script "Frigerator" lettering outlined in black with silver and black chevron on left. White "Specific Electric" lettering split by SE logo on right. Approximate Time Period: 1950s to however long you kept your old turquoise refrigerator before you replaced it (but see below).

From Micro-Trains: "A refrigerator car, otherwise known as a reefer, is an ice or mechanically cooled and insulated car that carries perishable products from manufacturers to distributors for market. A refrigerator also means a household device that has cold cuts for tasty sandwiches. Please pass the Dijon. Any questions?"

Yes, I have a question: Where on earth did you find the cartoon that clearly inspired this year's April Fool's Car? Which, by the way, is reprinted on the car's insert label, nice touch there, folks in Talent.

The history of home refrigerators—you knew I was going to go there, didn't you?—is inconsistently told from website to website. One particularly badly worded page was estimated to be 81 percent AI-generated(!). Generally speaking, though, refrigerators began to replace iceboxes after an initial version of the appliance was developed in 1913 and the first mass produced version was introduced in 1918. The use of a self-contained compressor was pivotal to enabling refrigerators in the home. In the late 1920s, Freon was developed, at the time a safer alternative to the toxic materials previously used as refrigerants. We learned later what it does to the ozone layer. The apparatus that used Freon was patented by a researcher

at General Motors, which then assigned it to its Frigidaire subsidiary. (The “Frigerator” lettering on this car is a riff on a Frigidaire trademark used from 2000 to 2009.) Frigidaire was a brand name so far ahead of the others in terms of recognition that many Americans, including my late father and his father, called any brand name refrigerator a “Frigidaire.” Not bad for a company that started as the Guardian Frigerator Company in 1918.

Like most home appliances, refrigerators were relatively expensive; that made it a luxury item and less than ten percent of American households had one in the 1930s. Besides Frigidaire, there were other players, not least of which was General Electric (not to be confused with Specific Electric!), as well as Kelvinator, RCA Whirlpool, and Westinghouse. Advertising for these appliances was common; one famous, or perhaps infamous, live television commercial featured a Westinghouse refrigerator with a door that couldn’t be opened by the spokeswoman! While trying, and failing, to avoid the Rabbit Hole of Excessive Research, I came upon an advertisement shown in movie theatres in Pittsburgh which encouraged the purchase of one at “The Refrigerator Show” where “all makes” would be displayed. It was from 1926!

Again, depending on which website you check, the introduction of various colors including turquoise occurred sometime in the 1950s. I used that as the start of the “Approximate Time Period.” I’m a lot less sure about the wood trim, though I did come across a sixties era promotional film advertising Westinghouse refrigerators on which the entire front could be decorated to match patterns, kitchen paint, mood, whatever!

I also found that side by side refrigerators were not introduced until the 1970s—the “bottom freezer” model, one of which is in use here at UMTRR HQ, actually preceded this. Does that mean that this car has a “door thing”? Speaking of which, the reason that Micro-Trains used an 042 series car instead of one of their actual wood or steel refrigerator car models (047, 049, 058, 059) is that it’s a lot easier to replace a sliding door than to cut out the door on one of those cars! A secondary April Fool from the folks in Talent?

Well, perhaps the joke’s on all of us, because the website of one certain Big Box Store has available a “classic retro” bottom freezer refrigerator in almost exactly the same color as the Frigerator car. Except they call it “Ocean Mist,” well, excuse me. It may look like a 1950s item but it’s right up to date with a digital control panel and Energy Star specifications. No endless scraping of ice out of the freezer compartment on this one! (You can imagine how I know about refrigerators that were not “Frost Free.” Actually, in the case of my parents’ RCA Whirlpool brand device, it was Frost Free, meaning that you didn’t have to pay for it.) Regrettably, this modern throwback was not made by Specific Electric.

The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close April 30.



Targeted Delivery Mid-May 2024:

038 00 551, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: MTLX 4824.

2024 Total Solar Eclipse Car.

Black with white lettering including “Total Solar Eclipse” across top and reporting marks at bottom left. Multicolor depiction of images of the eclipse in progress and waning across car. Map of the Continental United States with path of eclipse totality on right. Approximate Time Period: April 8, 2024. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

I had been wondering whether there would be a follow-up to the very popular (and quite scarce) 2017 Total Eclipse Car. When I didn’t see one in the April lineup, I figured, well, the path of totality doesn’t cross the Micro-Trains factory, so although it did cross UMTRR HQ, well, I guess I was out of luck.

Not true, obviously! They were just waiting to capture actual images of the eclipse which will appear on this car, according to the car copy. Good thing Micro-Trains set up shop in Cleveland and not here at UMTRR HQ for the photo shoot: if they had come here, the car would be a depiction of overcast skies. At the time of totality, it simply got dark and cooler, stayed that way for about three minutes, and then light was restored from west to east — unusual, to say the least! I commented to Colleen and a few neighbors who gathered briefly to witness this probable once in a lifetime experience: “I want my money back.”

One estimate I saw pegged the proportion of people who could view the total eclipse at 0.55 percent of the world population — that’s just over one half of one percent. I suppose I should stop whining. This number doesn’t count tourists. I read an account on Railroad.net of visitors to the path who rode Amtrak (!) to points along the former Delaware and Hudson line into Northern New York. Now that beats the traffic!

As for pre-orders, I would expect them to be brisk even with the short window available. The 2017 Eclipse Cars (038 00 550, September 2017), which were not pre-ordered and according to a statement from MTL were produced in a quantity just below their average, shot up in value and have remained well above MSRP in the aftermarket. (And there are actually two versions of the car: one with a running board and one without.) With pre-orders, I would expect anyone who wants one to queue up for one — or more. So I think it’s fair to say that the number of 2024 Eclipse Cars produced will, well, eclipse the quantity made for the 2017 Eclipse.





Targeted Delivery June 2024:

045 00 780 and 045 00 781, \$31.95 each.

Reporting Marks: None.

50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Cars, 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

Cars are dark green with no lettering. Each car includes a multimedia load depicting a beach landing with either an American (the 780 release) or British (the 781 release) landing craft, atop a black platform with lettering commemorating the D-Day landing of June 6, 1944. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

There has been so much written and filmed about D-Day that it's hard to select from the various sources. On the other hand, it's been almost eighty years since then and there are few remaining who remember it directly, or were actually there. As of the 75th Anniversary of D-Day in 2019, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that fewer than 3 percent of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II were still living. Anyone who stormed the beaches of Normandy on that fateful day would be approaching no less than one hundred years old now.

One short description of what was officially called "Operation Overlord" is on the site of the National D-Day Memorial (at www.dday.org/learn/) and is well worth a look. Just for a sense of magnitude, consider this quote from that site: "The final plan called for some 156,000 men to land on five beaches on the coast of Normandy: the Americans at Utah and Omaha in the west, and the British and Canadians at Gold, Juno, and Sword. They would be bolstered by parachute and glider landings and supported by some 5,000 ships and 11,000 airplanes."

There are multiple events already scheduled to mark the event, including at The National World War II Museum in New Orleans. There is a large commemoration already in progress in the Normandy Region of France, where D-Day occurred, and a combination of public and private events leading up to the precise anniversary date of June 6, 2024.

From the official Normandy Tourism website, we have this: "Normandy will forever be marked by the D-Day Landings and the Battle of Normandy that led to the liberation of France and Europe. 2024 will mark the 80th Anniversary of this historic event, and with it, a momentous occasion to celebrate peace, liberty and reconciliation. A rich and unprecedented program of events will be put together to bring the memory of this tragic period of world history to life, all while emphasizing the spirit of hope."

Something I didn't know when I started this commentary: Initially, there was no particular significance to the "D-Day" name. "D, which merely stands for day, is the designation used to

indicate the start date of any American military operation,” as noted on the National D-Day Memorial Site. There may have been many other D-Days before, and there may have been following, but this is the D-Day that has gone down in history.

Z SCALE:



518 00 864, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NADX 6283.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Fishbelly Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Bradbury Produce Company.

#5 in the Poultry and Eggs Series (pre-orders taken August 2023). Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black bottom door sill, hardware and bottom sill. Black lettering including “North American Despatch” and reporting marks on left and “Bradbury Produce / Carlot Shippers / Eggs-Poultry / Woodward, Oklahoma” on right, split by red and white “Sweet Heart Poultry” trademark. Approximate Time Period: 1928 (build date) to no later than 1938.

Please see the commentary above on the N Scale release (049 00 981).

In addition, MTL has completed the release of the Z Scale Well Cars which were pre-ordered in June 2021, either last month or this month as follows. All of these releases are reprints; I’ve indicated the previous releases here. Each car has an MSRP of \$29.90:



March: Southern Pacific, 540 00 043 and 540 00 044, Road Numbers 513400 A and B. Previous Releases: Road Number 513419, May 2005 (with painted undecorated containers), then Road Numbers 513414A and 513414B, May 2010 (with decorated containers). These are the fourth and fifth releases of this item. (Note that Runner Pack

#97, while also SP well cars, has the later “speed lettering” version of the roadname and isn’t in this release count.)

March: Burlington Northern Santa Fe, 540 00 061 and 540 00 062, Road Numbers 240709 A and B. Previous Releases: Road Number 240497, November 2006 (with containers); then Runner Pack #43 (994 00 043) with Road Numbers 240620A, 240620B, 240620C, and 240620D, July 2012. These are the sixth and seventh road numbers for this item.





Numbers 64094C and 64094D, May 2015. These are the eighth and ninth releases for this item.

April: CSX Intermodal 540 00 113 and 540 00 114, Road Numbers 620316 A and B. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 620315 A and B, January 2001 (with containers). These are the third and fourth releases for this item. (Note that Runner Pack #7, while similarly painted, is lettered "CS Intermodal" not "CSX Intermodal.")



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 April 30.*



Targeted Delivery September 2024:
2500-001, \$49.95.

Reporting Marks: N&W 125134.

Two Bay Open Hopper, Rib Sides, Flat Ends, Norfolk and Western/ex-Virginian.

Fifth "Grit and Grime" release. Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and small roadname with large "N&W" in center. "Bleed-through" of previous Virginian round herald at top left

and roadname in center. Light to moderate weathering including rust effects. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: early to mid 1960s at least. Previous Releases: None.

This car is an "upsizing" of the N Scale release, Catalog 056 44 480, from September 2023, also #5 in the Norfolk Southern Family Tree Series. Most of what follows is a reprint of that coverage.

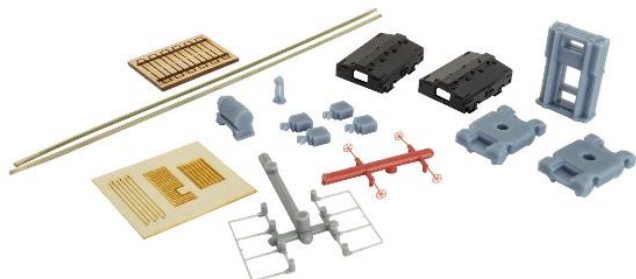
Page 59 of the **Norfolk and Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has an example of the N&Ws Class H33 cars, the series N&W 125000 to 125999. That class was an amalgamation of Virginian's hopper classes H13 to H13D. That's a lot of coal cars! This particular set was the former Virginian 25000 to 25999 according to the Norfolk and Western

Historical Society. Essentially the N&W dropped a “1” in front of the road number, though we wouldn’t know with complete certainty whether N&W 125134 was the VGN 25134. These cars were built by Pressed Steel Car Company in 1947 and 1948 for the Virginian. They were eight panel two bay hoppers with flat ends, matching the key attributes of the Accurail 2500 series kit. The ORER for July 1963 has an even larger series, N&W 123000 to 129999, with 2207 cars. The key dimensions were: inside length 33 feet, outside length 34 feet, extreme height 10 feet 9 inches, and capacity 2041 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Importantly for our story here, the series had a car count of 2455 in the April 1970 Equipment Register, in other words, there were still plenty of these cars in service.

I didn’t find a bingo photo for this specific car, but I did find something more interesting, also on the N&W Historical Society website. There is an undated image (direct URL to this photo is www.nwhs.org/archivesdb/detail.php?ID=33712) of N&W 129652, one of three cars in the photo. While the paint looks fresh, the Virginian herald and roadname is already showing through the N&W lettering! And while we don’t know the date or location of these shot, we do know that the three hoppers are being pulled by a Trainmaster Locomotive that is still in Virginian paint. This suggests to me that the Approximate Time Period begins earlier than I would have expected, perhaps not long after the N&W merged in the Virginian in 1959. That aligns with the service date of September 1962 on the car, which also carries the pre-1964 N&W paint scheme which doesn’t include the N&W “hamburger” herald. In addition, there is no ACI Label on the MTL model; those were introduced starting circa 1967. So what we have here is a Weathered Release that fits nicely into the early to mid 1960s timeframe, which is unusual – but welcome – from the folks in Talent. I can even somewhat plausibly operate this on my model pike, which is nominally set in 1963, and point to the image of a newly painted N&W hopper on which the former railroad was already peeking through.

Also of note: It’s stated in the April 2024 Micro-News that pre-ordering is still available for the previous four “Grit and Grime” series cars.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: File this under “I’m not sure where to put it”: The N Scale Scale Test Car Load Kit (499 45 012, \$29.95) is expected to be available mid-month. Here are two official MTL images of the kit: first, when assembled but not painted (flat car not included)...



...and second, the kit components as the buyer will receive them, although neatly arranged for this photo. The pre-order window for this kit was in October 2023.

At the Rocky Mountain Train Show earlier this month, MTL had a display of the already announced forthcoming HO Scale “Grit and Grime” cars... and one more. The UMTRR Spy Network obtained a photo of this car, a three bay Center Flow with CSXT restenciling over a Family Lines paint scheme. It's CSXT 247177, also one of the four cars in the above N Scale CSXT ex-Family Lines Weathered Pack. Well, I know where I will get the commentary for that pre-order announcement...



DISCONTINUED ALERT: The 2024 Release Table has finally been posted to the UMTRR Website and we get to add more Dreaded Ds to it. The Great Northern reprint boxcar with double doors and end doors is sold out (078 00 021, January). Last month's Chicago and North Western “PRIDE” mill gondola has rolled away (107 00 070). While the third Weathered TBOX boxcar debuts this month, the first one which was released in January takes a final bow (123 44 015). I'm not surprised to see both numbers of last month's Union Pacific Bay Window Cabooses are outta here (130 00 29x), which were pre-order only. Last month's Santa Fe trailers (451 00 35x) aren't shown where they should be on the MTL website, so I think they may be gone as well. These trailers weren't on standing orders. Also from last month, both versions of Runner Pack #221 of four Santa Fe wood refrigerator cars have left the building (993/983 00 221). Also gone from last month is the Santa Fe Three Pack of gondolas with auto frames, both versions (993/983 02 242). The TTX Weathered Three Pack of Center Beams from February is outta here (983 05 056, Jewel Cases only). But wait a second, both versions of January's Runner Pack #219 of four Pacific Fruit Express wood refrigerator cars (993 / 983 00 219) aren't showing the “Contact Dealer” banner at this time when they previously had. It's the same for the Northern Pacific Log Three Pack (993/983 02 240). To remove from the bye-bye board or not remove from the bye-bye board, that is the question...

Among Z Scale 2024 items, Poultry Series #2 and #3, from January and February, are missing from the “Freight Cars” page **and** the “Series” page, so I'm presuming they are sold out (518 00 861 and 862, Reister and Sons and Kansas Egg and Poultry). The pair of Union Pacific x-post boxcars (511 00 16x) from February are also missing from MTL web pages. But both Medford, Talent and Lakecreek Open Hoppers (533 00 19x) from January are showing on the “Series” page—however, with the “Contact Dealer” banner. Both numbers of the Santa Fe/SFLC well car are emptied out (540 00 14x, January). The War of the Worlds Caboose (535 00 510) has been discharged, joining the F-7A Diesel (980 01 550). I'll further note that the “Z Scale Freight Cars” web page is a lot shorter than it used to be, indicating that a large number of cars have been discontinued. I will catch up with those on my UMTRR Release Pages as time permits, as well as with N Scale outs from 2023 and before.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: From long time UMTRR Gang Member Brad Scherer we have the answer to a question... "Here is a photo of the end of one of the ATSF trailers in the March MTL releases (451 00 351 and 451 00 352). I think this is much as you described in your article today. It also includes both blue stripes. I'll note that MTL has upped their game since older times. To wit, they now have rear tail lights printed red, hinges and door latches painted silver. Now... I'd we can only get them to start painting the wheel hubs..." Thanks, Brad! Note to MTL: If the tails of the trailers look this nice, show them off in Official Photos!



Just in time for the start of the Ex-Per Diem Weathered Boxcar Series, the Spring 2024 issue of **Classic Trains** magazine has an article on Incentive Per Diem Boxcars of the 1970s. Other than a former Ashley, Drew and Northern car restenciled for Seaboard System, the photos in the piece are all of cars in their original colorful paint schemes.

James Kincaid is the author of numerous books and articles, and through the STFMC discussion list on Groups.io, I've also found that he's posted online collection of Pullman-Standard builders photos... which includes three of the four "milestone" cars that Micro-Trains has done. Here's the top level URL: pullman-lib.smugmug.com/Jim-Kinkaid-Freight-Car-Builders-Photo-Collection . You'll want the N-Q folder for the Pullman cars. Don't say I didn't warn you if you're in that site for a while...

OOPS PATROL: Last month's Z Scale Car #4 in the Poultry and Egg Series has Catalog Number 518 00 **863**, not 518 00 **680**. Also, the Heavyweight Diner in the N Scale Medford, Talent and Lakecreek 30s-50s Dinner Car Four Pack (9x3 02 237) has Road Number **128**, not **129**. Darn copy and paste...

THAT WRAPS UP APRIL. Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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