



PFE R-40-25

## The State of Things

It's been a year since I started casting "operations" and that seems a fitting milestone to update what's happened. One thing I want to address is the state of the resin business, in general, and as it relates to Speedwitch, and that includes 3D printed resin. The market has definitely evolved and the change is only going to continue. I also want to share what's coming in the second half of this year.

Casting has been an interesting challenge. It's highly rewarding, but also subject to things that are seemingly out of one's control. I have previously related the unexpected challenges I encountered due to cold temperatures and their effect on the flow of resin. Just this week, the silicone in two molds took six days to cure (24 hours is normal.) There were no "adverse" conditions at the time I mixed and poured the silicone; in fact, they were ideal from an atmospheric perspective and the silicone had not been opened until I mixed for this pouring session. Casting is definitely part art even though it's mixed chemicals and it always keeps you on your toes. And the air bubbles never go away! However, I do have an operation set up that seems to work quite well so production moves forward.

Regarding the industry, it's a mixed bag. Given the recent shutterings of Westerfield and Yarmouth contrasted with the burgeoning 3D printing world, you could quote Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" mixed with Richard Hendrickson, "*these* are the good old days." I [shared my thoughts about the resin world](#), but it bears emphasizing that we are small manufacturers in a world of extremely demanding customers who obsess over details. You've seen the comments on lists and social media. Model railroaders are not an easy bunch to please. Resin casting is a rapidly shrinking market. I have no

doubt that 3D printing will be the solution for what we do and will not only absorb the resin casting side of the business, but will also absorb most of the injection molded side of the hobby, too. That said, most of the models that you get today are still "bleeding edge," to quote the tech world. Some 3D prints still warp and distort and the general decision to put every detail on the model means that many things like grabs and steps are too easily damaged. These are growing pains, though. I don't know if it's five years or ten years away, but the day is coming when your 3D printer (*your* printer, not 3D Central's) will print in perfect resolution, with different flexible resin for the fine details, in the appropriate color, with lettering already printed on, and you could even add weathering, if you choose, likely in several different options depending upon how weathered you want the car. If your jam is designing cars, then this is great. If you want to populate a layout, this is great. If your bag is modeling, though, you may be out of luck. Time will tell what it is we as "model" railroaders desire. I suspect that there will always be a tiny niche of people who want to build models. (I hope!) Exciting times, for sure.

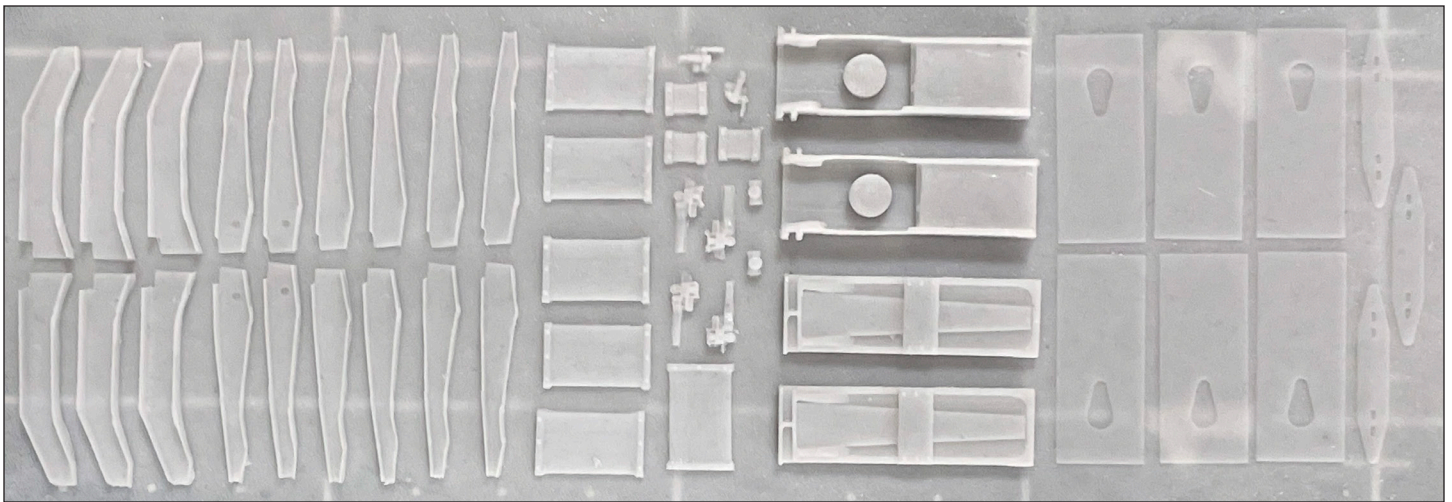
## What's Coming?

With that sobering view of the resin casting business, where am I headed right now? I have had numerous projects in various states of completion that piled up over the years. Those have been trickling out over the past year and there are still many of those in the pipeline. I now have a much better sense of the lead times associated with the various elements of the kits and which parts are critical path items. That helps shrink time-to-market. I am targeting a velocity of one release per month by this autumn.

First up this summer are a few projects that have been shared previously. The first is the PRR X43A ([now available!](#)) a welded box car based upon the AAR postwar design, including



PRR photo, Hagley Museum and Library



PRR X43A parts/details and underframe castings and Plate C National C-1 trucks



PRR X43A one-piece body casting



Lumberton, North Carolina, September 9, 1951, Col. Chet McCoid photo, Bob's Photo





PRR photo, Hagley Museum and Library





Ron Christensen collection

National C-1 trucks from Plate C. I am extremely pleased with the sides of this model and their "oil canning" effect; it's present, but not a caricature of the prototype. It will eventually be offered in all PRR schemes plus Penn Central. After that, I will have the Central of Georgia (and perhaps at the same time) the Birmingham Southern Pullman-Standard Emergency box cars, with board-by-board patterns and some fantastic etchings to capture the nuances of these interesting cars. I am also doing a re-run of the CNW's riveted PS-1 auto cars, including 60s repainted version (you can place a no money down reservation for either version from [this link](#).) Last of the "summer" releases is the PRR X45, a proprietary fifty-foot welded box car. These were a unique design and the model captures all of the nuance, including the "oil canning" and the unusual "double" side sill support. Like the X43A, it will come in all PRR schemes plus Penn Central.

In the autumn, I should have a few things to dovetail with the Chicagoland RPM ("Naperville") and its Midwestern roots. The URTX reefers [that I posted about](#) will be part of the autumn lineup, in two versions, including Duryea underframe. I also have a Northern Pacific Emergency box car with exquisite board-by-board patterns by George Toman; it'll be a showstopper. I am also going to push to get the CNW

stock cars over the line, including both door arrangements and a board-by-board wood roof.

After that batch are a few others that are in various stages of development. The Louisville & Nashville's 8000-8999, 10000-10999 and 11000-11999 series of thirty-six foot double sheathed box cars with indented Murphy ends are in the queue with 3D printed masters for the ends and cast jacking pads. Another project with 3D printed ends is the New York Central's rebuilt automobile cars in Lots 652-B and 663-B. They were 10'4" inside height cars with 4/7/7 indented Murphy ends and a nicely complex recessed side sill, typical of rebuilds. Also using 3D printed end masters are the BREX reefers with "bifurcated" ends, both as-delivered and with air circulating fans.

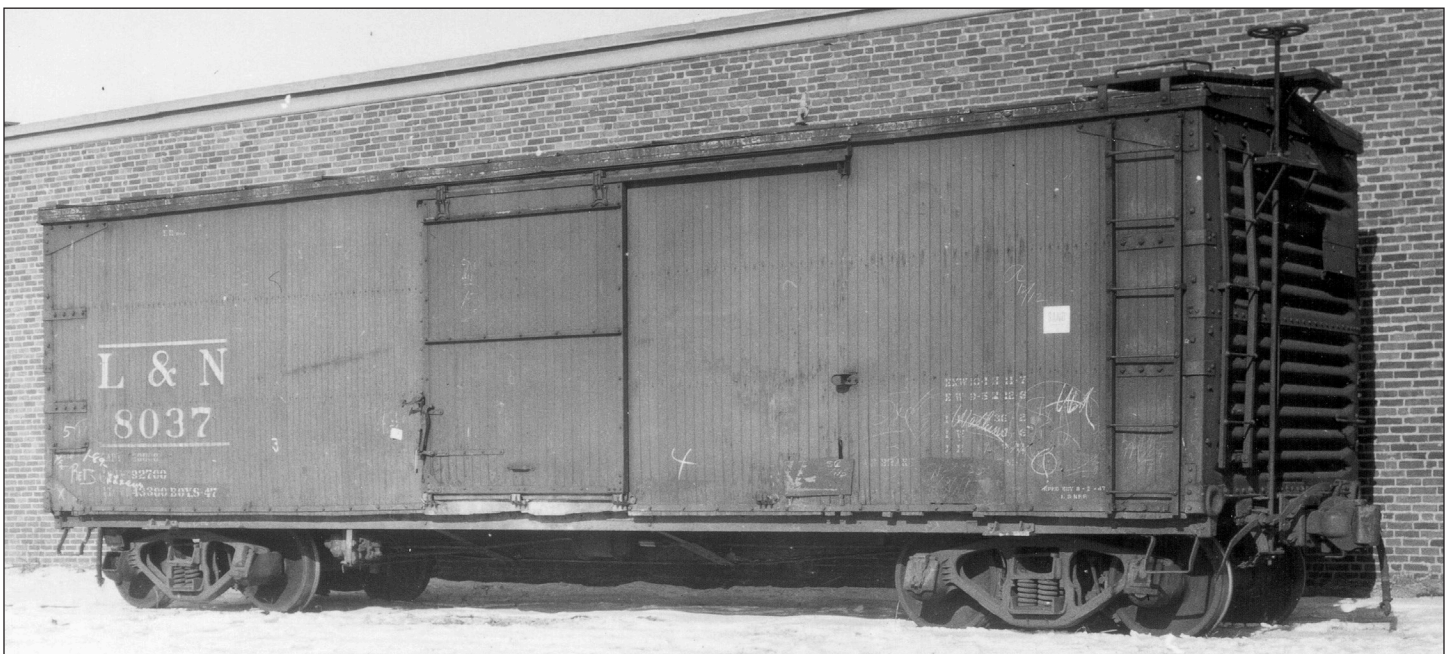
The last "current" projects I will mention are two from the late Bill Welch. One is a reissue of the FGEX/WFEX/BREX Emergency reefers (previously from Sunshine.) I have Bill's parts and am working to turn them into a one-piece body offering. The other project is one that Bill invested a lot of time on that has gorgeous patterns: the Denver & Rio Grande Western fifty-foot double sheathed automobile cars. I don't yet know where I will slot these in, but I am working on that...



Vancouver, British Columbia, September 16, 1949, Walter E. Frost, City of Vancouver Public Library

#### What's Available?

Everything released over the past year is still available. That includes the Santa Fe Bx-34 Modified 1937 AAR box cars with Duryea underframe, the PRR X32A parts to turn the Bowser car into a showstopper, the Milwaukee 50' single sheathed auto car (with Dalman one-level trucks,) the PRR G28 gondola, and the PFE R-40-25 parts. All can be found via the link to the [Speedwitch Models page](#).



Reading siding near Chestnut, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, February 8, 1948, Bob Charles Collection, Kalmbach Memorial Library, NMRA



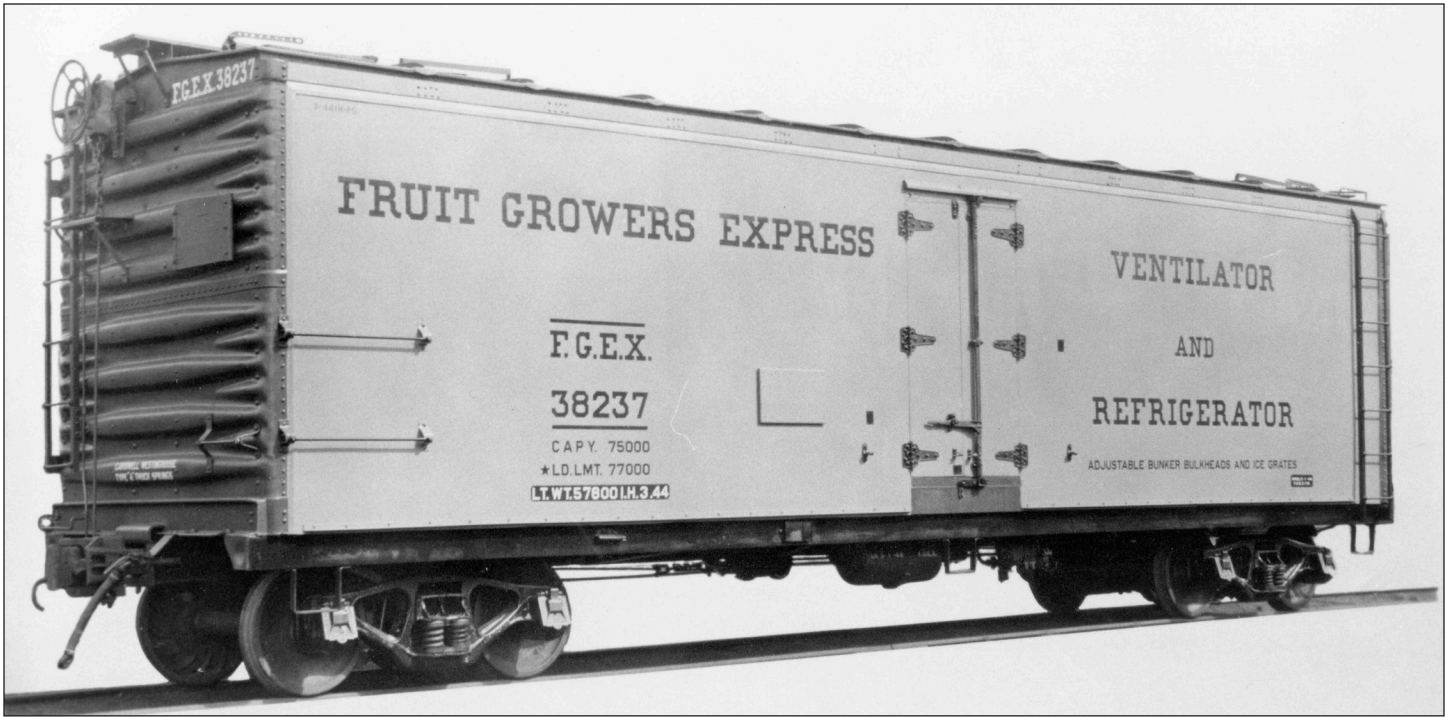
Haskel & Barker Collection, NMAH Neg. no. 4318, Smithsonian Institution



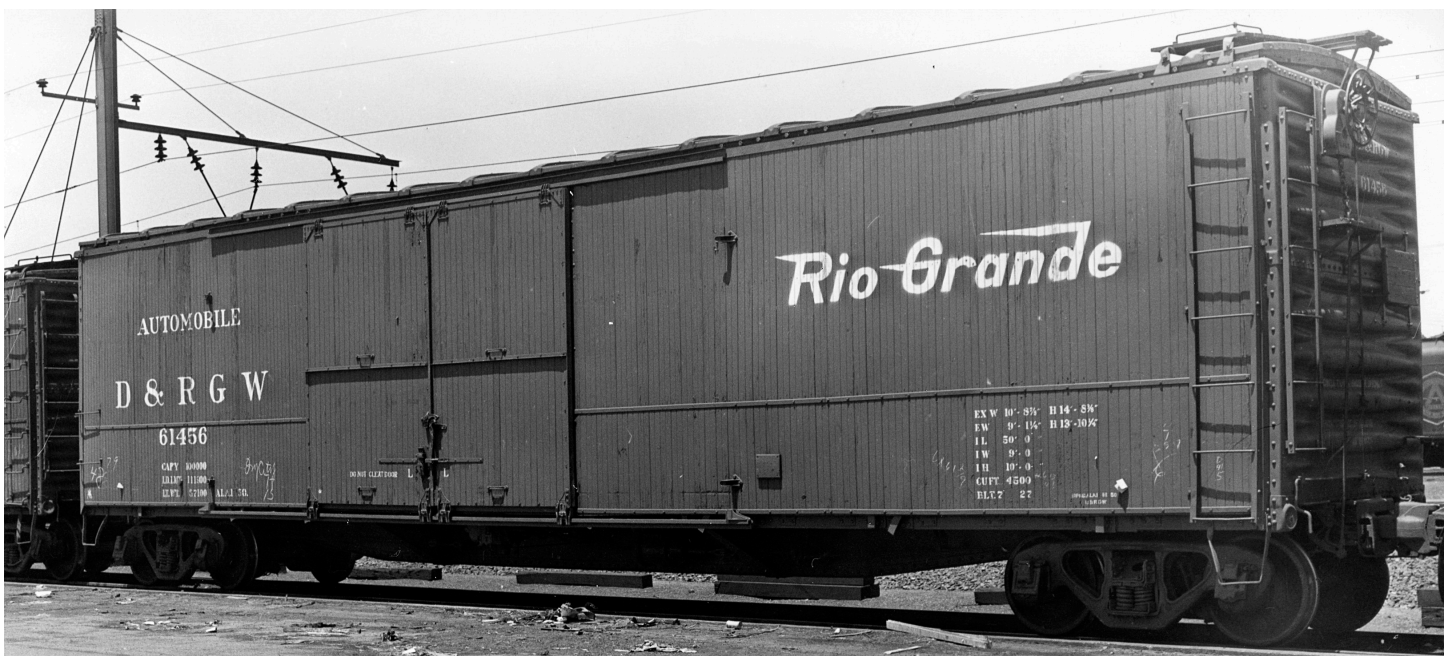
Denver, Colorado, August 8, 1948, Otto Perry photo, Denver Public Library



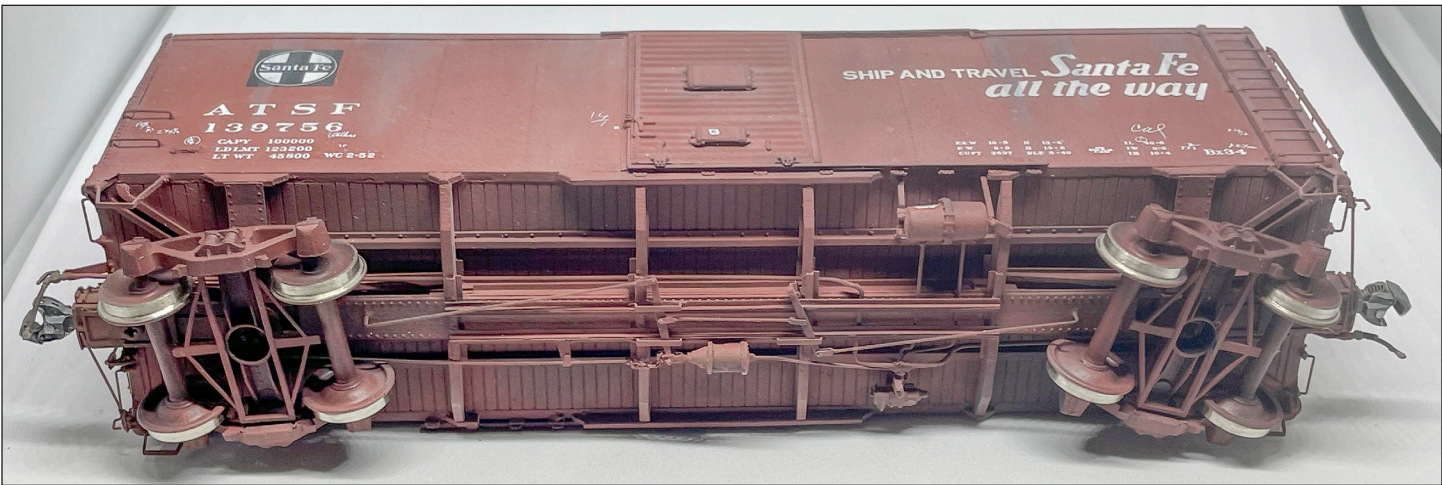
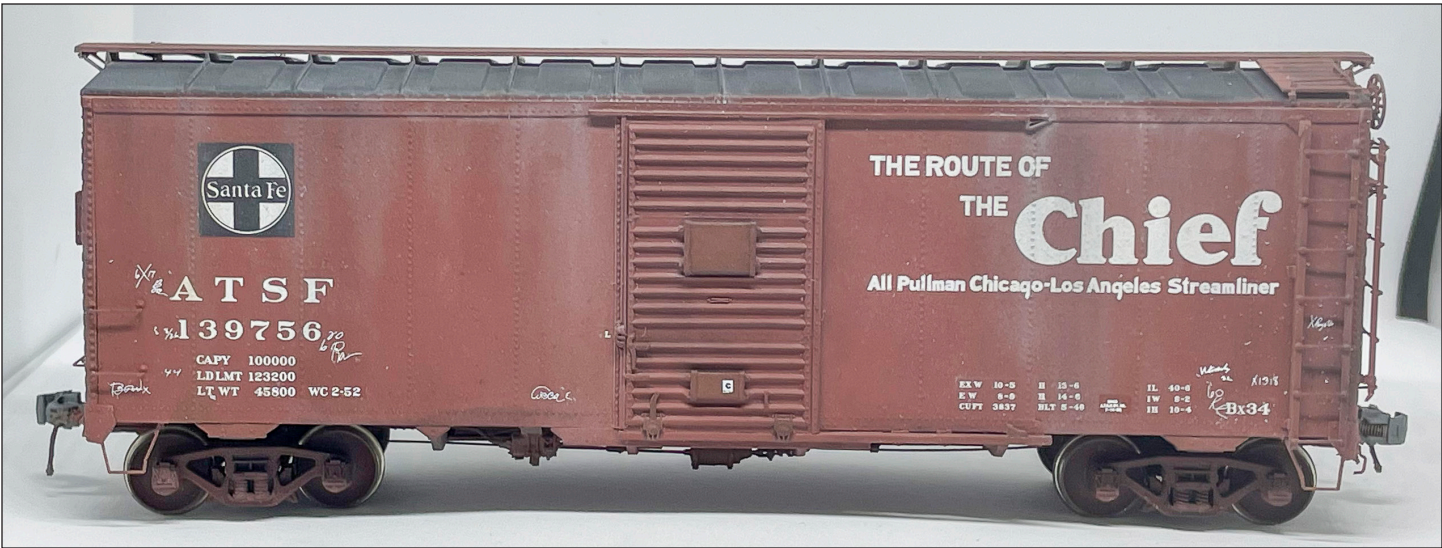
New York Central System Historical Society



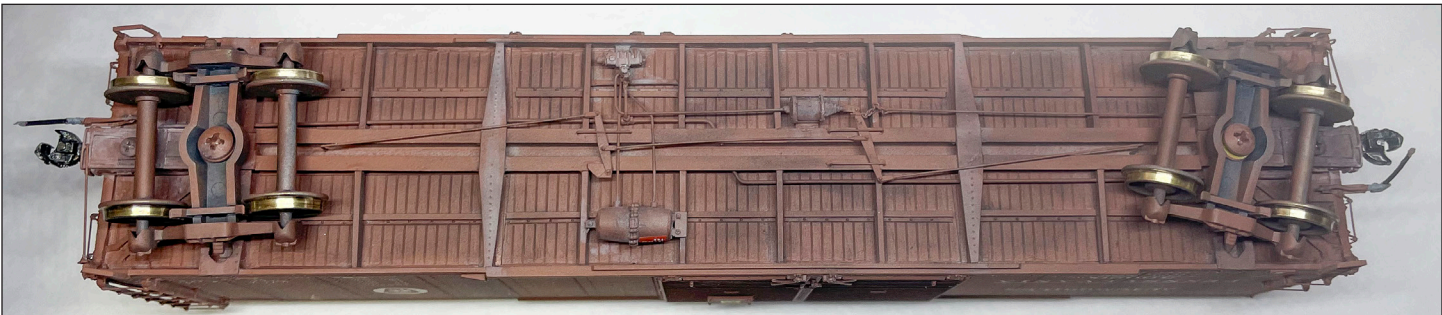
above - Bill Welch Collection, below - Collection of Bat Masterson



Bill Welch Collection



Santa Fe Bx-34

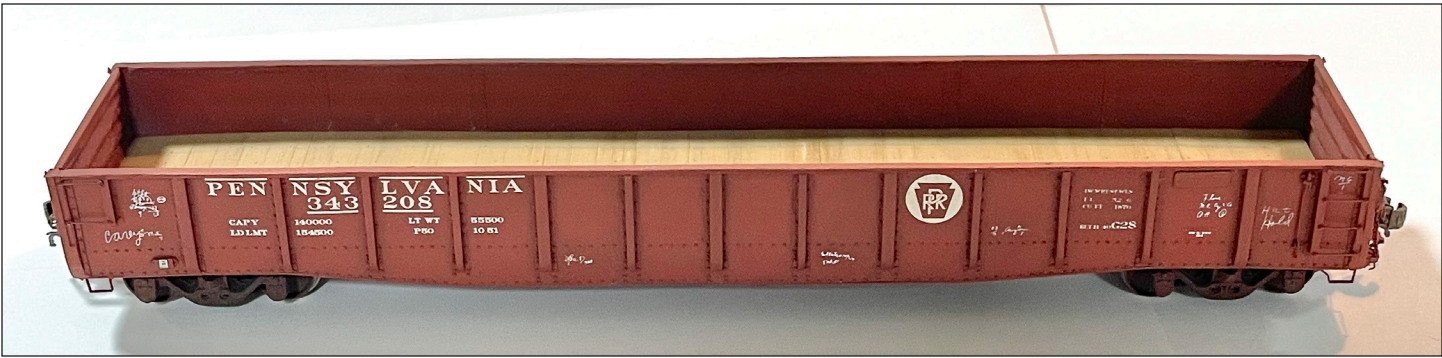


PRR X32A





Milwaukee single sheathed automobile car



PRR G28 gondola

