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TRAINS
SPECIAL ISSUE

OF THE 1960s



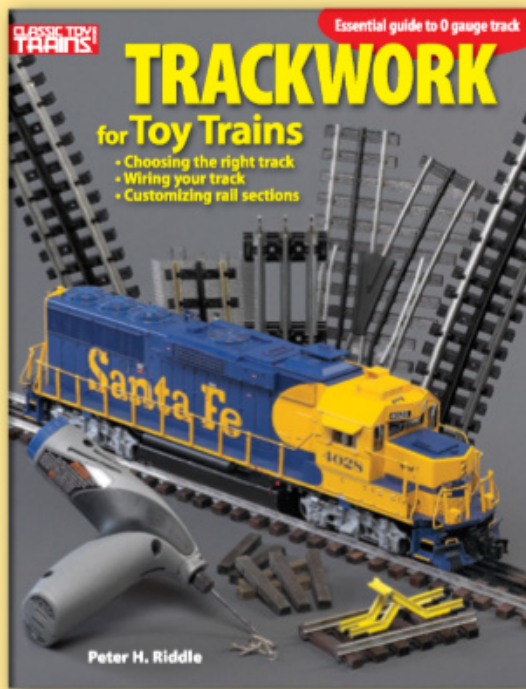
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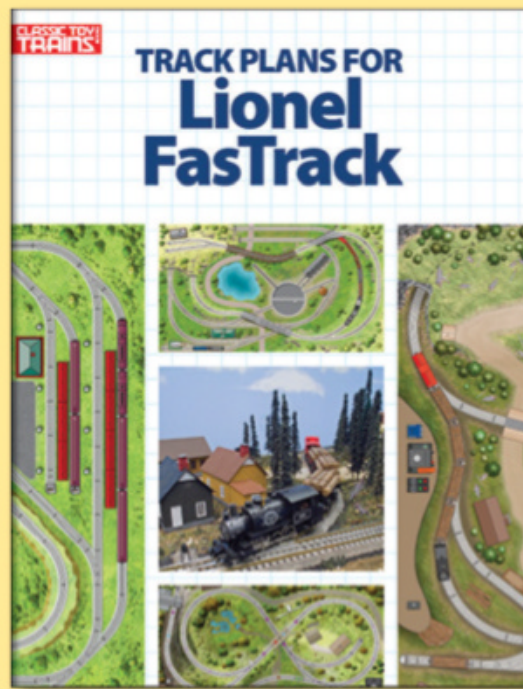
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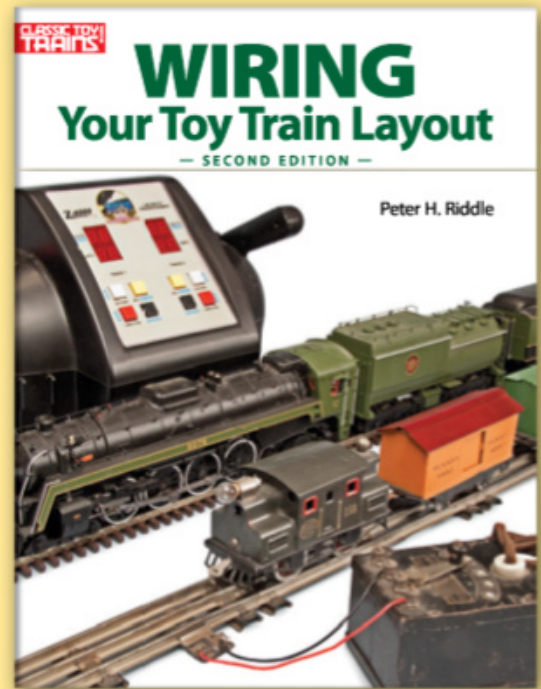
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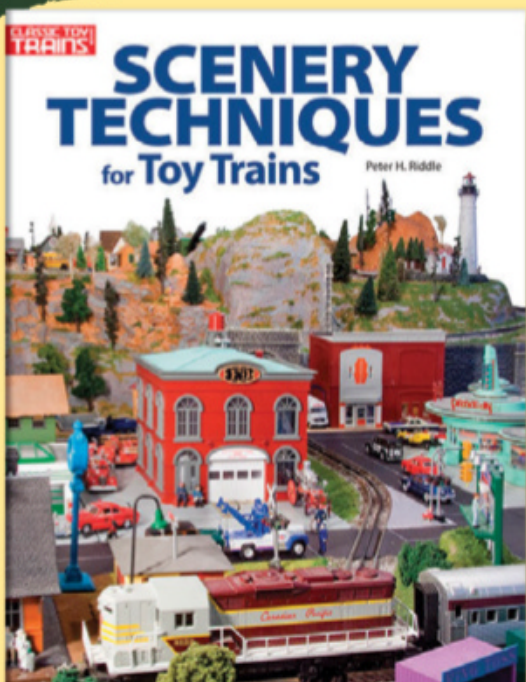
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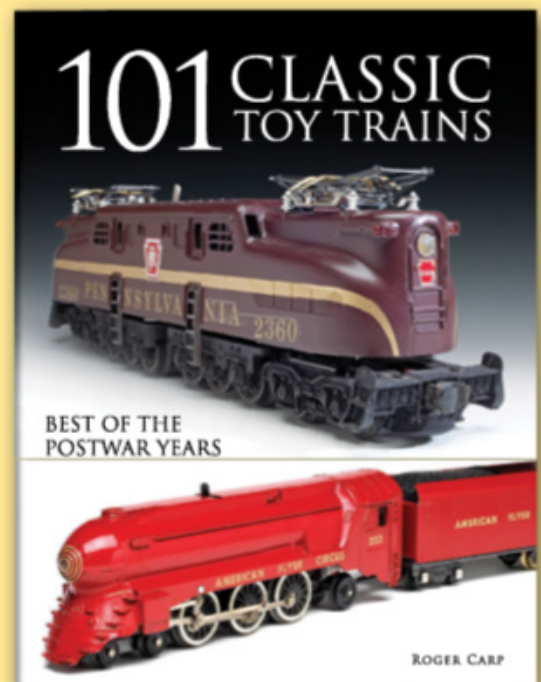
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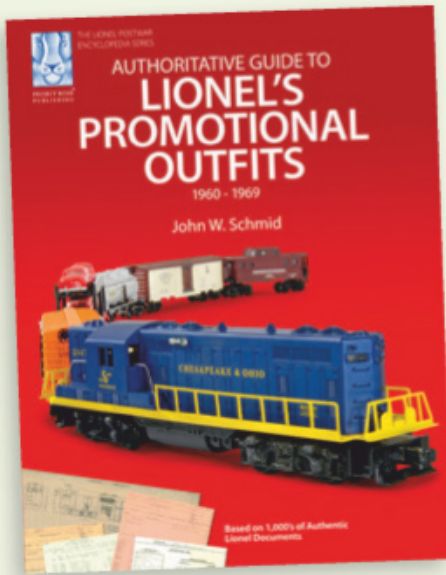


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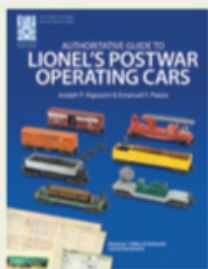
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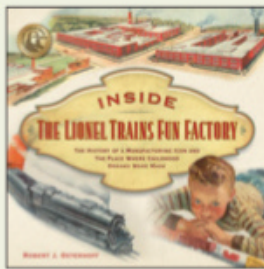
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★ Star of 1969

645 Union Pacific NW2 diesel switcher



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William Zuback Photography Supervisor
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Michael Soliday Director of Design and Production
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Kathy Steele Retention Manager
Kim Redmond Single Copy Specialist

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING

To contact our **editorial staff**, call us at 262-796-8776, fax us at 262-796-1142, or send an email to editor@ClassicToyTrains.com.

To contact our **advertising department**, call us at 888-558-1544, or send an email to adsales@ClassicToyTrains.com.

RETAIL QUESTIONS

Phone: 800-558-1544

Outside U.S. and Canada: 262-796-8776 Ext. 818

Fax: 262-798-6592

Email: tss@kalmbach.com

Web site: Retailers.Kalmbach.com

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An appreciation for an imperfect decade

LIONEL FACED COMMERCIAL AND INTERNAL CHALLENGES IN THE 1960S



There were many reasons to develop *Lionel Trains of the 1960s*, the latest special-interest publication from *Classic Toy Trains*. Readers enjoyed learning about the trains cataloged in the 1950s and asked for the story to be carried into the next decade. Also, much of the basic material had been explored in the magazine, so enhancing it with newly written articles was going to be fairly easy.

There were many reasons, but the most important justification for bringing out *Lionel Trains of the 1960s* rested on a desire to correct the overriding sentiment of the close of the post-World War II era. Namely, the criticism of Lionel's trains from that time.

"Cheap," "boring," "uninspired," "shabby," "embarrassing," "uncreative" – the list of pejoratives goes on and on. These unfair generalizations prevent us from seeing something vital about Lionel and its trains. What they overlook has nothing to do with which locomotives and rolling stock to buy. Folks need not be coaxed into modifying their purchasing habits and expanding what they own into the 1960s.

But what Lionel enthusiasts do need to consider is how the trains released during a decade fraught with anxiety and uncertainty reflected imaginative and even daring efforts by decision makers and designers to stay profitable and relevant. Faced with an array of challenges, they forged ahead, aiming to create a product line more diverse, entertaining, and innovative than any ever offered.

Lionel Trains of the 1960s offers a critical look at what took place and was manufactured and marketed during a crucial decade in the long history of the world's greatest toy train maker. Further, reappraisal will lead to renewed appreciation

of what was happening there and how it was leading to better times.

The approach here to achieving this enhanced look at Lionel takes two paths.

First, surveys of the cataloged and promotional outfits available in each year dominate this publication. Postwar expert Joe Algozzini deserves credit for the extensive research on which these well-photographed overviews stand.

Second, brief articles on individual cars, locomotives, and sets will deepen understanding of what Lionel did in individual years. More information lies behind the articles on how understanding of promotional sets has mushroomed and why viewers loved watching Lionel trains on the great television series, *The Addams Family*. In fact, the track plan is ripe to be imitated.

We invite you to explore a chapter in the long history of Lionel often neglected or ignored. We thank Joe Algozzini, Larry Osterhoudt, John Schmid, and Jack Sommerfeld for their contributions. Seeing the problems facing Lionel and the solutions executed should broaden the ways you evaluate the firm and its trains and help you respect the men calling the shots.



Roger Carp
 Roger Carp, Editor



The 1960s – a decade of hope and uncertainty

STRUGGLES TO SUCCEED IN AN UNPREDICTABLE MARKET



What a difference a decade made! So much that had characterized the mood and expectations of Lionel's leadership at the dawn of the 1950s had changed by the early years of the 1960s. Hope about the future and determination to dominate the domestic market were evaporating. Replacing those emotions were worry and a powerful sense of uncertainty about how to continue to survive, let alone thrive.

■ **Worrisome trends in 1959**

The turmoil and uncertainty associated with Lionel's prospects in the 1960s had their roots in earth-shattering events that took place in the second half of 1959. Stability and assurance had been broken. Recovery from what had happened would require years if Lionel hoped to regain direction.

Members of the board of directors, like executives overseeing day-to-day operations, were aware of how the financial status had suffered during the recession of 1958. For the fiscal year ending early the next year, a net loss of almost half a million dollars

had been reported. Dividends had fallen by more than 50 percent until they amounted to only 60 cents a share. Stockholders wondered about the value of their investment.

Lionel had endured its worst year since the Great Depression. Nothing was improving as 1959 progressed, with sluggish sales failing to cover rising costs of materials and labor at the factory. Shareholders pointed their fingers at Lawrence Cowen, son of the co-founder and president since 1945.

The dire circumstances affected most seriously Joshua Lionel Cowen (who held close to 7 percent of all the stock) and his

daughter, Isabel Brandaleone (who with her two adult children held another 10 percent). The two of them depended on their thousands of shares holding value and expected dividends to accrue regularly. They feared trends at the business would make it impossible to maintain their standard of living.

■ **Sparks fly**

Smoldering resentments and uneasiness about the bottom line erupted in September 1959. The elderly Cowen and his wife had been selling their portfolio with more than 55,000 shares of Lionel stock. Purchasers included his grand-nephew Roy Cohn, who had been grabbing headlines as a corporate attorney in New York City. He had gained notoriety before turning 30 by serving as counsel for U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy.

The abrupt shift in control took Lawrence Cowen by surprise. Initially inclined to fight the move, he reversed course in a matter of days. Resigned to his fate, he chose to sell his stock and surrender his influence.



DESPITE TUMULTUOUS changes in top management, Lionel assembled an exciting group of outfits every year in the early 1960s. Trains promised plenty of play value, thanks to new animated cars, slick flatcar loads, and colorful reissues.

Only Isabel Brandaleone among all the members of the extended clan retained any measure of control. She, along with Cohn, had been part of the group sweeping up stock until they had about 200,000 of the 700,000 shares. Her motivation for cooperating with Cohn might have been a wish to help her son-in-law, Ronald Saypol, rise higher at Lionel.

By October, other members of the inner circle had received pink slips. Controller Edward Zier and National Sales Manager Samuel Belser were among those asked to vacate their offices. Among the key people based in New Jersey forced out were Plant Superintendent Charles Giaimo and his chief aides, John Giampolo and Thomas Pagano; Vice President for Industrial Relations Philip Marfuggi; and Development Engineer Frank Pettit, all longtime employees.

■ Streaks of continuity

Outlining the seismic changes at Lionel in 1959 leaves the impression that the 1960s opened with the company lacking direction or leadership. The withdrawal of Joshua Cowen and dismissal of his son and other insiders would appear to have stripped it of the collective knowledge and experience essential for regaining a sense of balance.

This picture of aimlessness and anxiety suggests with some accuracy what was

occurring in the corporate headquarters in Manhattan and the factory in Hillside, N.J. But such a negative account captures only a part of the truth. Certain marketing and advertising executives as well as plant managers and production supervisors remained. They would strive to keep the ship afloat.

Three individuals stood out among those surviving the purge. Each would shape the immediate destiny of the corporation and provide needed direction.

The most important of them was the man with more than 30 years at Lionel – Joseph Bonanno. As head of the engineering department, he had jockeyed with Marfuggi and Giaimo for control at the factory. Authority that had been up for grabs seemed

at last to belong to Bonanno, and he aimed to exercise it for his benefit and the firm's.

Meanwhile in New York, Executive Vice President Alan Ginsburg and Advertising Manager Jacques Zuccaire prepared to exert greater influence. They believed it necessary to exploit everything they'd learned over the past decade to pave the way for Lionel to grow stronger and more financially fit. Both had watched prospects dim and were convinced they understood how to reverse the trends hurting the firm.

So even with Cohn assuming the helm while unfamiliar with the toy industry, there were individuals capable of handling

the rudder. Ginsburg, assisted by Saypol, had supervised the development of a more diverse product line and was eager to share his expertise with Cohn. And Zuccaire had managed to promote that line in novel ways while carefully watching his budget.

Glimmers of hope illuminated the headquarters in 1960. Cohn brought with him ambitious plans for broadening what Lionel made, thus modernizing the brand. Trains would be central to his vision, yet they would be different from what the Cowens had imagined. Bonanno and his staff would play crucial roles in turning Cohn's ideas into realities Ginsburg could sell.

■ What Lionel was

Lionel's identity had scarcely been questioned since Joshua Cowen and Harry Grant had established the business in 1900. To be sure, they had originally seen themselves more as producers of retail store displays utilizing moving miniature versions of railcars than purveyors of toy trains. But few years had to pass before they grasped what the market really wanted.

Lionel had responded to skyrocketing demands for the models it had first pitched to shopkeepers. Youngsters and families dreamed of playing with replicas of the trolleys and streetcars they rode and the locomotives and freight cars they observed daily. With haste, Lionel entered the toy industry, offering sophisticated and expensive playthings powered by electricity.

In the six decades that had followed, the emphasis on miniature trains had never been challenged. That wasn't to say Lionel



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The train that's making news! In the lead is the "king" of the Lionel steamers... the "Berkshire". As she races down the line bellowing smoke from her stack and sounding her whistle at crossings...news is being made. On board is a TV Monitor Unit with a rotating cameraman...ready to televise the news as it happens. It's Super "O" at its best. Train measures 6 ft., 1/2" long.

- ★ Die-Cast Steam Loco
- ★ Whistle and Smoke
- ★ Headlight and Magne-Traction
- ★ New Operating TV Monitor Car
- ★ New Four Boat Transport Car
- ★ New Piggyback Van Transport Car

Lionel's No. 2573 Train Set includes:

No. 73615 "Berkshire" Steam Loco and Whistle Tender	No. 6307 Illuminated Caboose
No. 3543 New Operating TV Monitor Car	No. 31 Super "O" Curved Track
No. 6416 New Four Boat Transport Car	No. 32 Super "O" Straight Track
No. 6475 Pickle Car	No. 38-25 Complete Operating Set for unloading and operating cars
No. 6440 New Twin Piggyback Van Transport Car	Lubricant, Oil, Wires and Instruction Sheet

THE CRACK SANTA FE SUPER CHIEF ...WITH A CARAVAN OF FIGHTING CARS

No. 2574 SUPER "O" 5-CAR "DEFENDER" DIESEL FREIGHT...\$89.95

The Santa Fe that packs a wallop! All may look serene from the outside...but should there be a call for action...this Santa Fe will be ready to serve. Hidden in a box car is a mighty Minuteman Missile that will fire at the press of a button. In addition to its land punch there is a Launching Helicopter and an Operating Submarine. With the sleek two motor Santa Fe diesel out in front...top speed is assured. Train measures 6 ft., 6 1/2" long.

- ★ Headlight
- ★ Twin Units and Two Motors
- ★ Magne-Traction and Horn
- ★ New Fighting Equipment
- ★ Trestle Set and Missile Firing Range

Lionel's No. 2574 Train Set includes:

No. 2383 Santa Fe Twin "A" Unit Diesel	12 Sections	No. 31 Super "O" Curved Track
No. 3865 New Minuteman Missile Launching Car	3 Sections	No. 32 Super "O" Straight Track
No. 3419 Automatic Helicopter Launching Car	1 Section	No. 38 Ball Straight Track
No. 448 New Missile Firing Range Set with Camouflage and Exploding Target Range Car	No. 109 12 Piece Trestle Set	No. 38-25 Complete Operating Set for unloading and operating cars
No. 2830 Operating Submarine Car	No. 342 Exploding Mines Dump	Lubricant, Oil, Wires and Instruction Sheet
No. 6427 Illuminated Capable Caboose		

THROUGHOUT THE first half of the 1960s, Lionel offered steam and diesel outfits with traditional rolling stock as well as inventive models promising unprecedented rail action. Military-themed and space-oriented items tended to prevail, as seen here.

had never considered other fields. During both world wars and the Korean Conflict, its leaders had secured contracts from the federal government to produce precision instruments for all branches of the American military. That connection had been carried on even after the cease-fire in 1953.

Lionel's brain trust had sought to diversify the line in smaller yet profitable ways from the 1930s on. It had fostered the assembly of chemistry kits before World War II and construction toy sets after. More significant was the acquisition in 1947 of the Airex Co., which made fishing gear.

Leaders felt compelled out of concern for corporate ledger books and their egos to broaden what they sold. Yet regardless of how lucrative military jobs might be or how weak the performance of the other ventures might turn out, no one at the top denied the centrality of electric trains. Lionel had been and, in their estimation, would continue to be synonymous with electric trains.

Roy Cohn and John Medaris, the retired army general selected as the new president of Lionel in 1960, accepted that inherited

wisdom – to a point. They believed the firm could and ought to expand its holdings and thus revamp its corporate identity. Efforts to achieve those goals were soon launched.

■ What it should be

Over the months and years that followed Cohn's ascension, he set forth a vision of Lionel that in some ways was the logical and prudent extension of where a few others, notably Bonanno, had thought it ought to go. They wanted to build on their reputation in the fields of electronics and precision engineering to break into new areas.

Above all, the burgeoning realm of aerospace and weapons technology struck Cohn and Medaris as potentially right. They believed Lionel possessed the expertise and physical resources to capitalize on the growing focus on exploring space and developing sophisticated defensive systems.

Consequently, Lionel began to acquire controlling interest in a host of small businesses already making headway in those areas. References to various subsidiaries cropped up in internal memoranda and

annual reports. What had been peripheral was rapidly assuming importance amid the production of toy trains.

Not that Cohn and his associates debated seriously abandoning the niche on which Lionel had erected its national reputation. To the contrary – they wanted to widen the firm's involvement in the toy industry, although in a narrow manner reminiscent of what the A.C. Gilbert Co., the longtime competitor of Lionel, had adhered to. Unfortunately, the limitations of such an approach weren't apparent.

With plenty of determination and a nice dose of arrogance, Lionel pressed ahead with the acquisition of the Porter Chemical Co. to vault back into the juvenile chemistry set market. Thanks to Porter, Lionel would eventually be marketing educational toys related to biology, meteorology, electronics, and physics. There would also be woodworking outfits, similar to what Gilbert had offered in previous years.

Later, Lionel gained controlling interest in the Spear Phonograph Co., a Connecticut firm that made electric record players

for kids. It wasn't the kind of acquisition stockholders might have approved of at first, but they went along with what Cohn proposed out of hope it could revive Lionel.

■ Shifting views of trains

No matter how tempting it was for the men at the top to emphasize military contracts or aerospace production or to promote chemistry sets or phonographs, they knew the name of the game for Lionel remained electric trains. Ginsburg, Bonanno, and everyone in between got the picture: They had to figure out how to bring out a group of outfits and accessories certain to entice youngsters and their parents.

Such a challenge, while not out of the ordinary for Lionel's key people, had taken on greater urgency as society changed outside the firm's headquarters. Never since the first half of the 19th century had boys and girls, the primary audience for miniature trains, been so divorced from their full-time prototypes. Plain and simple, fewer and fewer Americans were traveling on trains or even seeing them.

If anything, railroading was increasingly perceived as old-fashioned and monotonous. Jet airplanes had snagged the attention of children. Even more compelling to kids in the early 1960s were rockets, satellites, and other spacecraft.

With the public's experiences and opinions turning away from railroads, it came as no surprise that model trains were losing their appeal. Somehow, Lionel was going to have to develop a grand strategy for overcoming a worrisome trend.

■ Seeking new balance

Who knows whether Bonanno and his fellow engineers could in 1960 have articulated what they intended to do. It hardly mattered. What did take on importance was their recognition of how they had shrewdly solved similar problems before. They had innovated when the market demanded it.

To put the issue in perspective, Lionel had aimed during the first half of the 1950s to upgrade its motive power and rolling stock with items representative of what was run on postwar railroads. Replicas of diesel locomotives, streamlined passenger cars, and modern freight cars became the rule on the Lionel Lines.

Consumers had responded positively to the newcomers. They especially had liked how the latest models boasted greater detail, near-scale dimensions, and more

complex paint schemes. A delicate yet meaningful balance between realism and whimsy had been achieved by 1954 with a full roster of traditional trains.

■ Changing balance on trains

Once Lionel could offer model railroaders outstanding replicas of boxcars, gondolas, tank cars, and cabooses, the chief concern for sales personnel and engineers boiled down to where to go next. How might they continue to bring out new and exciting trains, thereby retaining and even expanding the customer base?

The answer from around 1955 to 1958 was for designers to investigate what changes were being made on American railroads and try to replicate them. They studied railroad journals to find pictures of new locomotives. In addition, they hunted for the novel pieces of rolling stock being put into service. The goal was to offer ingenious, thrilling, and exotic models to kids demanding novelty.

The only way to fulfill that corporate goal was to reconfigure the balance of realism and whimsy so the latter gained weight. In other words, Lionel's new trains took on more of the characteristics of toys and fewer of the qualities of scale replicas. Interestingly, they started to depart further from what Gilbert was doing to its American Flyer brand of S gauge trains, which were prized as true scale models.

Once Lionel had altered its direction and cast its lot with fanciful and exciting toys, the need to keep innovating to come up with still more colorful and captivating

hundreds of miles to the south of where Bonanno and his crew labored. Kusan, a toy manufacturer based in Nashville, Tenn., had entered the crowded field of electric trains at the end of 1954, when it had purchased the assets of Auburn Model Trains. From then on, it was bent on winning a big hunk of the pie.

Seizing on the fascination of youngsters with military-oriented and space-themed playthings, the men in charge at Kusan prodded their chief engineer to think anew about model railroading. Out came fanciful rolling stock capable of transporting rockets, hovering spacecraft, and anti-aircraft guns. Flashing lights enhanced the so-called play value of Kusan's satellite and atomic train sets.

"Anything you can do I can do better" – the boast sung by the principal actors in the popular Broadway musical *Annie Get Your Gun* – encapsulated the sentiments at Lionel after executives saw what Kusan was putting on the market. Pushed to surpass what the upstart firm was doing, Lionel jumped into the lead.

Between 1959 and 1963, Lionel introduced some of the most ingenious and exciting trains in its long history. Virtually every newcomer had been designed to do more than simply riding along a network of 3-rail track. The days when a train had only to ignite a child's imagination and let him or her pretend freight was being loaded and unpacked and fictitious travelers were moving was truly over.

Instead, motorized units fired missiles and slick replicas of satellites could by



BETWEEN 1959 AND 1963, LIONEL INTRODUCED SOME OF THE MOST INGENUOUS AND EXCITING TRAINS IN ITS LONG HISTORY.

models would merely gain momentum. The future had been set forth.

■ Trains as exceptional toys


Engineering personnel, aware of how contemporary railroading was evolving in the U.S., finalized rolling stock and motorized units unlike anything ever seen in Lionel's catalog. Elongated flatcars and covered gondolas began to arrive. So did self-propelled models of specialized maintenance-of-way equipment.

In honesty, however, the most ingenious novelties on O gauge track were originating

remote control be sent aloft from flatcars. Boxcars might house mechanisms able to launch helicopters or lob missiles at enemy targets. Or they might be the target that when hit by a flying projectile collapsed into a heap of plastic pieces.

The list of innovations dating from the first few years of the 1960s never fails to impress. Outfits featured cool assortments of operating cars pulled by an array of diesel locomotives ranging from cab units to road switchers. All but banished from the train line were models, such as tank cars and hoppers, lacking any animation and

ACTION FROM STEM TO STERN...A SUPER "O" DIESEL FREIGHTER WITH LAND, SEA AND AIR OPERATING CARS



- ★ Horn and Headlight
- ★ Magne-Traction
- ★ New Aerial Target Launching Car
- ★ New Turbo Missile Firing Car
- ★ Operating "Minuteman" and Submarine Cars


No. 13028 SUPER "O" 6-UNIT "DEFENDER" DIESEL FREIGHT...\$59.95

This freighter is designed to protect America's frontiers with land, sea and air defensive units! Hidden in a box car is a mighty Minuteman Missile Launching unit that fires a missile by remote control. At the press of a button a high-powered "whirling" Turbo Missile can be launched into space. For target practice, this freighter features the Aerial Target Car with a balloon kept aloft as the train moves. Seapower is supplied by a Submarine that cruises, dives and resurfaces when placed in water. The Boston and Maine GP-9 diesel supplies the pulling power for this freighter and comes equipped with headlight, horn and Magne-Traction. Train measures 5 ft., 4" long.

Lionel's No. 13028 Train Set includes:

- No. 2359 Boston and Maine GP-9 Diesel
- No. 3655 Minuteman Missile Launching Car
- No. 3349 New Turbo Missile Firing Car
- No. 3822 U.S. M.C. Operating Submarine Car
- No. 3470 New Aerial Target Launching Car
- No. 6017-100 Boston and Maine Caboose
- No. 31 Super "O" Curved Track
- No. 22 Super "O" Straight Track
- No. 34 Super "O" Half Straight Track
- No. 943 Exploding Atomic Dump
- No. 39-23 Complete Operating Set for whirling and operating cars
- Oil, Wires and Lead-in Wire

THE FINEST OF THE OLD TIMERS...FEATURING A THRILLING SHERIFF AND OUTLAW "GUN BATTLE"



No. 13036 SUPER "O" 6-UNIT "PLAINSMAN" STEAM OUTFIT...\$59.95

Right from the pages of history! The "General" is racing east with a valuable load of gold stored in the specially designed Gold Bullion Car. Outlaws have attempted to hold up the train and an exciting gun battle is raging between a lawman and one of the outlaws. The two passenger cars are exact 1/2" reproductions of the coaches used during the era. The famous "General" loco is an accurate model of the famous Civil War woodburner and comes equipped with headlight, smoke and Magne-Traction. A super Super "O" treat. Train measures 5 ft., 1/2" long.

Lionel's No. 13036 Train Set includes:

- No. 1872-L "General" Loco and Tender
- No. 4445 Ft. Knox Gold Bullion Transport Car
- No. 3370 Armored Sheriff and Outlaw Car
- No. 1876 Illuminated Mail-Express Car
- No. 1873W Illuminated Passenger Car
- 12 Sections No. 31 Super "O" Curved Track
- 1 Section No. 22 Super "O" Straight Track
- 1 Section No. 34 Super "O" Half Straight Track
- No. 39-23 Complete Operating Set for whirling and operating cars

THE INVENTIVE minds working under Chief Engineer Joseph Bonanno widened the product line significantly during the early 1960s. Their different contributions ranged from an Old West train to operating models ready to help win the Space Race.

excitement. Kids were demanding action, so Lionel aimed to respond.

■ More toy than train

Admittedly, newly created motorized units, rolling stock, and accessories strayed farther and farther from reality. Lionel, desperate to maintain its base of customers, scarcely considered whether its trains replicated what was still seen on full-size railroads. If youngsters wanted fun and destruction, it had to follow suit.

If older boys and lifelong hobbyists looked down their noses at the flatcars carrying rockets and the stockcars carrying giraffes, well, at least Lionel offered them a growing lineup of HO scale trains. Indeed, offering something for every niche in the model railroading field became the primary aim of executives.

Bonanno collaborated with insiders at the factory, such as Dorland Crosman and Ted Stawski, as well as outsiders, notably Kenneth Van Dyck. Together, they stretched their imaginations until they could envision an incredible variety of new items conceived

more as toys affixed to trains than as small railroad equipment.

■ Expanded marketing

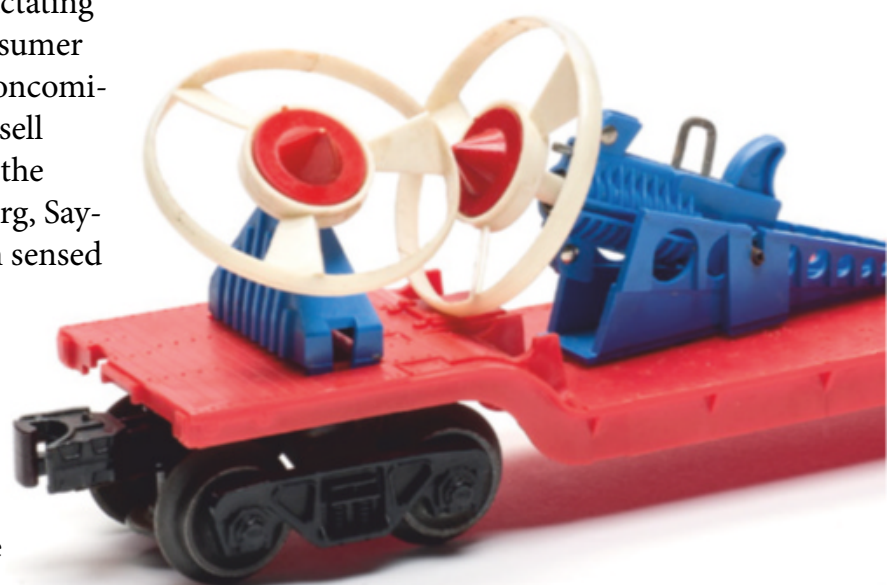
While engineers reporting directly to Bonanno or designers contracted to assist him perceived novel additions to the line, clever marketing personnel found different markets for Lionel trains. They reached out to both trusted clients and unexpected sources, tempting them to weigh the benefits of new Lionel sets.

The demise of Fair Trade Laws dictating uniformity in the retail prices of consumer goods including toy trains and the concomitant rise of discount houses eager to sell those goods at lower prices changed the marketing strategy at Lionel. Ginsburg, Saypol, and the men working with them sensed a new day had dawned.

The consequence was the explosion in the early and middle 1960s of what were referred to as promotional outfits (collectors usually speak of them as uncataloged sets). Hundreds of outfits were

put together at the factory whose contents differed from what was appearing at the same time in the annual consumer catalog. One item might have been substituted for a similar one in a cataloged set. Or several pieces, including some no longer available in the cataloged line, could have been combined to create something entirely new meant to get rid of deleted inventory.

Then Lionel salesmen and marketing representatives would reach out to a broad range of customers to entice them with a



promotional set unlike anything found in the cataloged line. As an aside, some outfits did duplicate what was cataloged, although the price might have been reduced or the overall packaging altered.

Wholesale houses, national and regional chain stores, manufacturers, major and tiny department stores, civic organizations, premium businesses, and trading stamp firms wished to deal with Lionel. Their representatives submitted orders for sets whose quantities might spiral up from a dozen to a few thousand items.

The result was an extraordinary assortment of O-27, O gauge, and Super O sets, many of them modest and a few unbelievable in the number and quality of pieces used. A handful of locomotives and freight cars ended up being exclusive additions to promotional outfits. So also did special structures, signs, and figures printed on sheets of cardstock. What Lionel was doing was undoubtedly amazing.

■ More cuts

The dependence on promotional outfits to toughen up Lionel's finances was only one noteworthy way in which circumstances at the company underwent significant changes after 1963. There were others, all of which both reflected and contributed to the shift from a big and diverse train line to a modest one.

To start, budget considerations forced the men at the helm to shut down the Engineering Department. Cohn and the businessmen replacing him after he left in 1964 no longer saw a purpose in maintaining a stable of inventors, model makers, and draftsmen. This monumental change spelled the end for the rest of the postwar era of the brilliant additions that had transformed Lionel's roster.

Letting Joseph Bonanno and his creative staff leave translated into a line of trains significantly different from what Lionel had been offering since 1946. Rather than

tempting consumers with new models, the company would seek to win sales from older locomotives and

railcars, some wholly reissued and others slightly altered.

When decision makers had to designate

the contents of sets and pick items for separate sale, they would choose from among items consumers already knew about. For all intents and purposes, the train line merchandised from 1964 through 1969 amounted to nothing more than oldies – some goodies, but many not.

Another change in marketing strategy gave further proof of how Lionel was retrenching in hopes of curtailing excessive spending. The final few weeks of 1963 witnessed the decision to close the magnificent corporate office in midtown Manhattan and to shutter the regional sales offices in downtown Chicago and San Francisco.

Sales teams were immediately reduced, and careers extinguished.

■ Restricted lineups

Little wonder the annual cataloged lines assembled between 1964 and '66 featured virtually nothing new. Rather, their highlights boiled down to revivals of postwar classics, above all, the New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson steam engine and tender and the Virginian Train Master diesel. Luckily, there was still life in two other stalwarts: the Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric and the Santa Fe F3 diesel.

Before long, unfortunately, all of those outstanding locomotives had been retired. The big stable of entertaining accessories was also banished after 1966.

About all enthusiasts could chase after were the few slightly upgraded or revived near-scale boxcars, quad hoppers, search-light cars, and porthole cabooses. In particular, the series of no. 6464 boxcars grew slightly, thanks to a new paint schemes. A handful of classics returned in 1966 and then in 1969 after absences.

Even so, the cataloged line took away no one's breath, especially after it was reduced drastically for 1967 and '68. There seemed fewer and fewer ways for Lionel to make its trains attractive to a kids enthralled with slot cars and GI Joe.

■ Closing the chapter

The spirited revival of the train line in 1966 – ample supplies of both cataloged and promotional outfits plus some top-of-the-line

locomotives and rolling stock – fell short of corporate goals. It felt all but impossible to defeat the social and demographic trends buffeting Lionel and the entire toy train hobby. Solutions eluded everyone.

The powers that be, exasperated and frustrated by the fickle market, went about preparing for a different kind of future. Cutbacks and constrictions seemed inevitable. Positions were eliminated, belts were tightened, and manufacturing was slowed. An auction held in 1967 raised money by selling off machinery and other assets at the plant that had once deemed essential to the company's success.



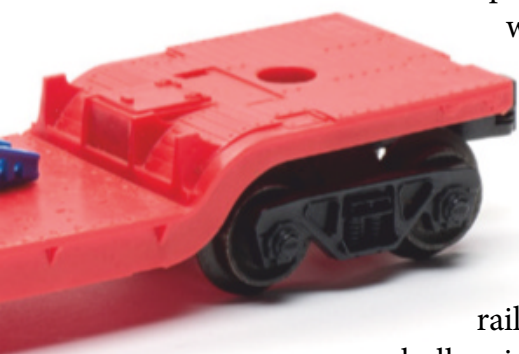
THE TOY TRAINS FROM THE CLOSE OF THE POSTWAR ERA DESERVE OUR RESPECT AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE COLLECTED, ANALYZED, AND PRIZED.

More drastic yet, leaders weighed the merits of continuing to handle all aspects of producing and marketing electric trains. The absence of any cataloged set in 1967 and the increase to only one the next year suggested decision makers were assessing the financial benefits of holding their spot in the O gauge arena.

By 1968, Ronald Saypol (who had returned after being gone for six years) and a few others in control were negotiating a deal with General Mills whereby that conglomerate would lease the rights to manufacture and market Lionel trains. Final details were hammered out over several months. Early the next year, the stunning announcement was released to the business world. An era had ended.

Yet as the articles in *Lionel Trains of the 1960s* reveal, what hobbyists have designated the postwar era did not conclude on a note of resignation or complacency. Financial executives and product managers put in long hours, determined to offer an impressive and profitable line in 1969. They intended to show General Mills the market for toy trains retained lots of vitality.

Their efforts, reflected in the outfits and individual models showcased in the last consumer catalog of the period, show how so many of the positive traits characterizing Lionel, its people and products, remained strong till the very end. For that reason among many others, the toy trains from the close of the postwar era deserve our respect and should continue to be collected, analyzed, and prized.



Incredible diversity in great sets

QUANTITY AND QUALITY
WERE STILL THERE EVEN
AFTER MR. COWEN LEFT



For New Yorkers, the 1960s began just as the 1950s had, with the Yankees in the World Series. The results were different, however. Instead of a 4-game sweep, as occurred when the Bronx Bombers played the Philadelphia Phillies in 1950, Manager Casey Stengel's club lost to the Pittsburgh Pirates in seven games.

Another constant in New York City was the Lionel Corp. But changes were afoot there. The company still maintained its headquarters at 15 E. 26th St. in midtown Manhattan, but a new leader was at the helm as the 1960s dawned. Joshua Lionel Cowen had sold his controlling interest in 1959 to his grandnephew Roy Cohn.

For many Lionel enthusiasts, the change in ownership is reason enough to minimize the overall value of Lionel's electric trains for 1960. A closer look at the outfits – promotional and cataloged – belies that viewpoint. Lionel continued to develop and market outstanding O-27 and Super O sets that deserve praise.

■ New marketing strategy

Lionel adopted a sales strategy that reflected a wish to reach as many segments of the market as possible. What could be called a multi-faceted approach had its roots in plans made five years earlier, when Lionel, freed from the restrictions of Fair Trade Laws, sought to use promotional and uncataloged sets to reach customers who might otherwise hesitate to buy its trains.

According to *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969*, Lionel planned and packed promotional sets early in the production year. By contrast, other sets not listed in the consumer catalog were developed as soon as executives could set up new retail accounts for the rest of the year.

Lionel executives must have been satisfied with the results because they continued



SO MANY TRULY outstanding Lionel outfits cataloged for 1960, and few surpassed the no. 2551W, a 6-car freight train led by the classic no. 2358 Great Northern EP-5 electric-profile locomotive. The great rolling stock in this set included nos. 6828 flatcar with Harnischfeger truck crane, 3512 fireman and ladder car, 6736 Detroit & Mackinac quad hopper, 6827 flatcar with Harnischfeger power shovel, 6812 track maintenance car, and 6427 Lionel Lines illuminated porthole caboose.

this approach for the rest of the 1950s. In 1959, they issued a better-looking advance catalog that could appeal to their prospective dealers and naturally generate much higher sales in the months that followed.

■ Advance catalog sets

For 1960, Lionel doubled the number of sets illustrated exclusively in the advance catalog, which the firm distributed to the retail trade in the spring. It introduced two sets aimed, the catalog noted, to “meet the needs of the low-priced mass toy market.”

Outfit no. 1107, dubbed “The Sportsman,” included a reissued no. 1055 *Texas Special* Alco diesel and three freight cars. The inexpensive rolling stock consisted of nos. 6044 Airex boxcar, 6112 gondola with two unmarked red plastic canisters, and a 6047 Southern Pacific-type caboose molded in several shades of red plastic.

Lionel modified the inside of the shell used for its Airex boxcars. It also produced a rare and highly desirable brown-painted version of the 6047 caboose; however, that model was not packaged with the 1107.

Outfit no. 1109, which was known as “The Huntsman,” was a 3-car freight set with a new no. 1060 plastic steam locomotive and tender in the lead. Like its no. 1050

cousin (introduced in 1959), the 1060 was equipped with a plastic motor lacking a reversing mechanism. As a result, it could operate only in the forward position.

The 6047 caboose had been introduced in 1959, but the other cars in the 1109 were new. The no. 6404 was a flatcar with an automobile that had new gray-plastic bumpers. According to the *Lionel Service Manual*, the auto was only a 6404-30 maroon (red). This should set the record straight regarding claims that a brown, green, or yellow auto can come in this set.

The no. 3386 operating giraffe car differed from the 3376 model Lionel also introduced in the advance catalog. It had two non-operating couplers; the 3376 giraffe car had two operating ones. Either way, the firm envisioned strong sales of the car and highlighted it on *The Wonderful World of Trains*, an 18-minute motion picture Lionel produced for the holidays.

■ Promotional sets

Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969 documents 106 promotional sets, plus the two in the advance catalog. Lionel focused on being able to provide a host of customers with a broad assortment of inexpensive and high-quality sets.

Every major retailer and plenty of minor ones bought special outfits: Sears, Roebuck & Co.; Montgomery Ward; May Co.; Allied Stores; S&H Green Stamps; Madison Hardware Co.; and Macy's, to name just a few.

Perhaps the best-known of all the promotional outfits released in 1960 was the no. X-507NA. The “Halloween General,” as collectors have nicknamed that set, was offered as a prize by pharmacies affiliated with the Druggists' Service Council through its Gifts Galore catalog.

Another highly celebrated promotional set from 1960 is the no. X-573NA from Channel Master. It included the rare Channel Master billboard.

Lionel set no. 1115 was sold exclusively in Canada. This 4-car freight outfit was led by the new no. 227 Canadian National diesel, which had forward direction only.

Another exclusive north of the border was the no. X-533NA, a four-car freight with the new no. 228 Canadian National Alco that had forward and reverse.

Lionel helped customers who wanted an accessory. These top outfits included the nos. X-537NA with a no. 264 operating fork lift, X-565NA with a no. 128 animated newsstand and a no. 334 dispatching board, and X-569NA with a no. 175 rocket

ONE OF THE TRUE stars of Lionel's O-27 roster of outfits for 1960 was the no. 1633 "Land-Sea-Air" set. The brand-new nos. 224P/224C U.S. Navy Alco A-B diesel units pulled four additions to the line: nos. 6544 missile firing car, 6830 submarine car, 6820 aerial missile transport car, and 6017-200 U.S. Navy SP-type caboose.



launcher. Set no. X-568NA included a new no. 902 elevated trestle set while the no. X-568NA had two of them, (along with the new no. 220 Santa Fe Alco A-A units).

■ Low-end O-27 outfits return

Now let's look at the full-color consumer catalog that Lionel handed out or mailed to hundreds of thousands of modelers and their families in 1960. Follow along as we look at the 10 O-27 sets.

For the second consecutive year, the no. 1609 Pacesetter, a 3-car train, was offered at \$19.95. Lionel was targeting the mass market with this low-priced outfit, which included a no. 6162 blue gondola that carried three removable canisters, a no. 6476 Lehigh Valley hopper, and a no. 6057 Southern Pacific-type caboose.

The version for 1960 was not identical to its predecessor. The yellow set box had been reduced. Also, the casting and motor housing for the no. 246 steamer had been modified, though this low-end locomotive still featured a working headlight. Outfits like

this paved the way for consumers buying additional track, another car or two, and even an operating accessory.

Lionel also brought back set no. 1612, known as "The General." Interest in the Old West remained high, so executives again cataloged this outfit at \$29.95.

The General outfit came with a no. 1862 engine and tender pulling nos. 1865 passenger car and 1866 mail-baggage car. (All of those items had been modified after their introduction in 1959.

■ Low-end sets

Motivating customers to make more purchases in the coming years was Lionel's main plan, then steam freight set no. 1627S was a step in the right direction. This O-27 outfit, priced at \$25, featured a brand-new no. 244 engine (equipped with a working headlight and smoking mechanism) and a no. 244T slope-back tender.

The 244 steam engine pulled two cars and a no. 6017 SP-type caboose. The no. 6062 gondola had three removable cable

reels; the no. 6825 flatcar came with a black plastic arch trestle bridge (Lionel reserved the gray bridge for its line of HO trains).

Lionel had made the creation of sets with new locomotives and rolling stock a theme for 1960, and no. 1629 exemplified what it hoped to achieve.

This four-car train with a military flavor had a new no. 225 Chesapeake & Ohio Alco A unit and a matching no. 6219 C&O work caboose. Included were two action cars: nos. 6650 missile launching car and 6470 exploding boxcar. A no. 6819 flatcar with a non-operating Navy helicopter rounded out this starter set, which retailed for \$29.95.

Prices then jumped to \$39.95 with the no. 1631WS 4-car "Industrial" freight set. The new no. 243 steamer with an operating headlight and smoke did the heavy lifting, bolstered by a new no. 243W whistle tender. The sole new piece of rolling stock was the no. 6465 Cities Service two-dome tanker with detailed markings.

Although the nos. 6519 Allis Chalmers car and 6812 track maintenance car weren't new, they gave this O-27 set its "Industrial" look. Variation collectors should be aware





that for 1960 the 6812 had a black plastic platform (top), and a gray plastic control panel (base), whereas 1959 examples were yellow over yellow. A familiar 6017 SP-type caboose rounded out this neat set.

■ More and more play value

Lionel, trying to keep the price of an O-27 set with play value as far below \$50 as possible, developed another winner with the no. 1633 “Land-Sea-Air” set. This 4-car train, priced at only \$39.95, is collectible.

The motive power consisted of the new nos. 224P/224C U.S. Navy Alco A-B diesel units. That duo led rolling stock new to the line in 1960: nos. 6544 missile firing car, 6830 submarine car, and 6820 aerial missile transport car. Last came the matching no. 6017-200 U.S. Navy SP-type caboose.

For anyone looking for an Alco A-A combination set, the red-and-silver Santa Fe units were a step in the right direction. The reissued no. 218P/218T pair headed no. 1637W, a five-car freight that included the new no. 6475 pickle car.

Lionel augmented this set (priced at \$49.95) with two flatcars that came with removable loads: nos. 6175 with rocket and 6801 with boat. Also included were the nos. 6464-475 Boston & Maine boxcar and 6017-185 Santa Fe caboose.



The die-cast metal no. 2037 (equipped with an operating headlight, smoke mechanism, and Magne-Traction) packaged with a 243W served as the top O-27 steam locomotive and tender for 1960. That combination led two superb outfits.

The no. 1635WS “Heavy-Duty Special” (priced at \$49.95) featured the new no. 6361 timber car, along with four reissues. Returning veterans included the nos. 6826 flatcar with Christmas trees, 6636 Alaska RR quad hopper, 6821 flatcar with crates, and 6017 SP-type caboose painted brown.

Then for \$10 more you could pick up the no. 1639WS “Power House Special.” That six-car freight remains a favorite of collectors, even though it included only one

justify its rather high \$65 retail price, Lionel added a no. 1640-100 Presidential kit.

Inside its box, as the consumer catalog explained, were “markers, ‘whistle-stop audience’ and Presidential candidate.” The figures came from the Plasticville line by Bachmann Bros. of Philadelphia.

■ Two gift packs

Besides the 10 outfits, Lionel’s O-27 list of trains included a pair of what the firm referred to as “gift packs.” These were, copy declared on pages 16 and 17 of the consumer catalog, “The most wanted gift items for Lionel railroaders.”

The no. 1800 General returned for a second year; as in 1959, it had a retail price of



AMID ALL THE EXCITING NEWS OF 1960 WAS THE HOTLY CONTESTED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION THAT PITTED RICHARD NIXON AGAINST JOHN KENNEDY.

car brand new for 1960, the no. 6530 fire prevention training car.

Two other models in the 1639WS were quite desirable: the nos. 6816 flatcar with Allis Chalmers tractor dozer and 6817 flatcar with Allis Chalmers motor scraper. Also of some interest were the remaining three cars: the nos. 6812 track maintenance car, 6560 crane car, and 6119 work caboose.

■ Marking the election of 1960

Amid all the exciting domestic and international news of 1960 was the hotly contested presidential election that pitted Richard Nixon against John Kennedy. Lionel created O-27 set no. 1640W, a 4-car “Campaign Special” passenger train, to mark this event and offer something unique to Lionelville.

A 218 Santa Fe Alco A-A combination led a no. 3428 operating U.S. mail car and three silver illuminated passenger cars with blue stripes. Two no. 2412 Vista-Domes came with a no. 2416 observation car.

To make the 1640W outfit special and

\$25. The nos. 1862 locomotive and 1862T tender came packed in a special box with the nos. 1866 mail-baggage car, 1865 passenger car, 1877 flatcar with horses, plus a booklet that told the tale of the General from the Civil War.

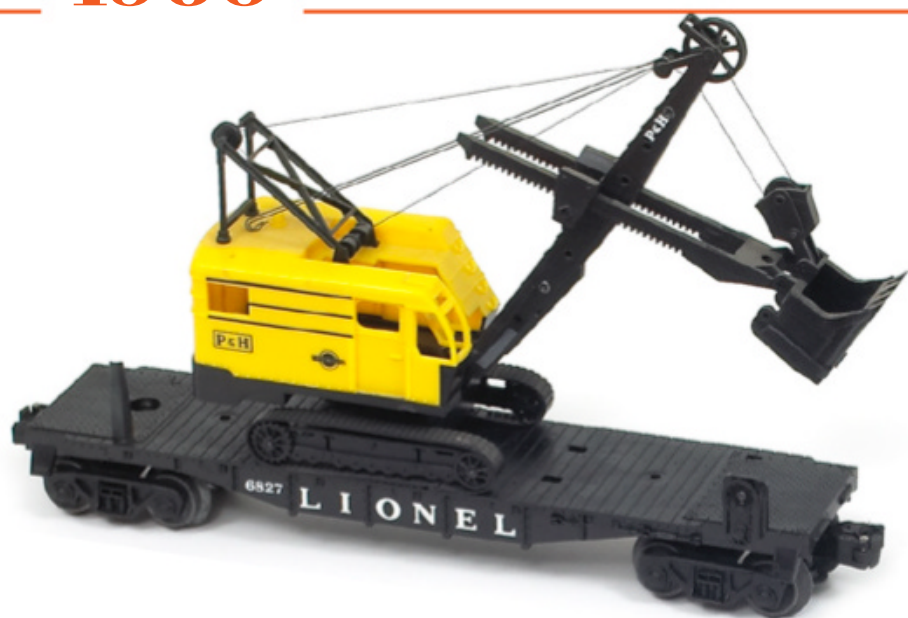
The no. 1805 “Land-Sea-And Air” gift pack, a brand-new 5-car item selling for \$35, is the most desirable and valuable O-27 cataloged set from 1960.

Inside the special orange-and-white die-cut display-style box were all-new models decorated in the khaki markings associated with the U.S. Marine Corps: the nos. 45 U.S.M.C. mobile missile launcher, 3429 U.S.M.C. operating helicopter launching car (chopper has “USMC” markings), 3820 operating submarine car, 6640 U.S.M.C. missile launching car, and 6824 U.S.M.C. first aid medical car.

■ Three Super O sets return

As appealing as Lionel’s O-27 outfits for 1960 definitely were, Super O was still the

PACKED WITH O-27 outfit no. 1640W was the slick no. 1640-100 Presidential kit, which provided budding engineers and politicians with banners and plastic figures (a candidate and several members of the audience crowding around the train to hear his speech).



SOME OF THE brand-new examples of rolling stock for 1960 that appeared in different O-27 or Super O outfits cataloged by Lionel included (left to right): the nos. 6827 flatcar with Harnischfeger power shovel, 6530 fire prevention training car, 6475 pickle car, and 6465 Cities Service double-dome tank car. All the outfits and individual models photographed for these articles come courtesy longtime *Classic Toy Trains* contributor Joe Algozzini.

king in Lionelville. Eight high-quality and collectable sets graced the pages of the 1960 full-color consumer catalog. Three of those trains returned from the previous year.

The no. 2528WS “5 Star General,” even though it was a carryover, kicked off the Super O section of the catalog. Pictured with a no. 1872 locomotive (equipped with an operating headlight, smoke, and Magne-Traction) and a no. 1872T tender, this neat Western set had nos. 1877 flatcar with six horses (Plasticville products), 1876 illuminated mail-baggage car, and 1875W illuminated passenger car with whistle.

If young operators desired an extra car for their General train set, Lionel mentioned (but didn’t show) in the catalog the no. 1875 illuminated passenger car, which was offered for separate sale at \$7.95. The locomotive and passenger cars in this gift pack, like those in the O-27 no. 1612 set, had been modified for 1960.

Lionel also reissued the no. 2527 “Missile Launcher Outfit,” again pricing it at \$39.95. At its head was a no. 44 U.S. Army mobile missile launcher. That motorized unit once more pulled nos. 3419 operating helicopter car, 6844 missile carrying car, 6823 flatcar with missiles, and 6814 first aid medical car.

The 2527 outfit came in a display-style “carrying case” set carton that had been mainly yellow in 1959 and now was primarily orange. Packed with the 44 and the four pieces of rolling stock was a no. 943 exploding ammo dump.

The catalog depicted the 3419, 6823 and 6844 as red flatcars, but only the 6823 came in red. The 3419 was blue, and the 6844 was black (rare red examples of the latter car have been reported, but that variation is associated with 1959).

The third Super O set that returned for a second year was the top-of-the-line passenger train. Lionel brought back the no. 2544W “Super Chief” Streamliner,” a classic outfit stretching more than 7½ feet, with a hefty suggested retail price of \$100.

A no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A combination provided lots of power, thanks to two vertically mounted motors, Magne-Traction, and a 3-position reversing unit. Those diesels pulled a no. 2530 Lionel Lines baggage car and three red-striped passenger cars. Those illuminated beauties included nos. 2563 *Indian Falls Pullman*, 2562 *Regal Pass Vista-Dome*, and 2561 *Vista Valley* observation car.

Collectors should be aware that the box containing the 2544W changed in color. It was primarily yellow for 1959 and then mainly orange for 1960.

■ Sets with reissued engines

The first new Super O outfit shown in the 1960 consumer catalog was the no. 2547WS “Variety Special.” That freight set featured a reissued no. 637 steam locomotive (with an operating headlight, smoke, and Magne-Traction) and a no. 2046W streamlined whistle tender pulling three new cars and a familiar caboose.

Newcomers to the line in 1960 included the nos. 3330 flatcar with operating submarine in kit form, 6475 pickle car, and 6361 timber transport car. A no. 6357 illuminated SP-type caboose brought up the rear of this set, priced at \$49.95.

Besides using the new operating submarine kit as a flatcar load in this and two other outfits, Lionel packaged it as a separate-sale item. The no. 3330-100 operating submarine kit was priced on page 23 of the consumer catalog at \$3.95. Its memorable

picture box came in two shades, with either a blue or green background.

Lionel would have expected the new line of submarines to be a big hit with junior engineers. That view might be the reason that submarines were featured prominently in *The Wonderful World of Trains* promotional TV show.

Continuing through the catalog, we find set no. 2549W, a freight retailing for \$59.95. The reissued no. 2349 Northern Pacific GP9 road diesel headed this set, which featured only one new car – the no. 3535 security car with rotating searchlight.

Disappointing? Not at all because the other four cars were so desirable. We’re referring to the nos. 3540 operating radar scanning car, 6470 exploding target car, 6650 missile launching car, and 6819 flatcar with a Navy helicopter. One mystery is why Lionel had designated the 2349 as an O-27 item in 1959.

The track included with the 2549W earned our attention because it was not the typical quantity of curves and straights to complete a loop. Instead, Lionel put in a no. 120 90-degree crossing so modelers would be able to assemble a figure-8 plan.

A surprise gem for 1960 was outfit no. 2551W. This 6-car freight set (priced at \$75) was headed by the reissued no. 2358 Great Northern EP-5 electric-profile locomotive, which featured an operating headlight and horn, plus Magne-Traction. It was breathtaking with its slick green-and-orange scheme.

The catalog explained that this “northwestern ‘Empire Builder’ is hauling equipment to be used for the construction of a power plant.” Lionel packed three new cars with this \$75 train set, including two black flatcars with intricate plastic models of



Harnischfeger construction machines (the nos. 6827 power shovel and 6828 crane). Also brand new was the no. 6736 Detroit & Mackinac open quad hopper.

Finishing this spectacular outfit were the nos. 3512 fireman and ladder car, 6812 track maintenance car, and 6427 Lionel Lines illuminated porthole caboose. The ample supply of track included enough curves to make hairpin turns. The no. 110 graduated trestle set let model railroaders raise and lower their main line.

Regarding the Harnischfeger models, that company must have helped Lionel out tremendously. As a special gesture of thanks, Lionel packaged 6827s and 6828s on a display board and presented them to executives at Harnischfeger.

■ The very best in Super O

Lionel just wasn't Lionel unless a mighty 2-8-4 Berkshire was included in an outfit. For 1960, the no. 736 steam locomotive (equipped with an operating headlight, smoke, and Magne-Traction) and its 736W streamlined whistle tender headed 5-car freight outfit no. 2553WS. The catalog described this 6-foot 1¼-inch-long train set as "The Majestic 'Berkshire' with a Caravan of Operating Cars."

The four freight cars included only one newcomer for the year, the no. 3830 operating submarine car. Still, all three of the reissued cars have become favorites of collectors and operators: the nos. 3435 aquarium car, 3419 operating helicopter car, and 3672 operating Bosco car. A 6357 illuminated SP-type caboose rounded out this set, which also came with a special "Figure 8 Switch and Spur track layout."

Variation collectors should know two bits of information about the 3419 for 1960. First, its frame was modified to include a smaller winding spool. Second, a helicopter with a single blade replaced the chopper with double blades.

Turning to the final set pictured in the catalog, we need to recall that Lionel's goal was to place a train in as many homes as possible. Part of this marketing approach involved selling the line of HO trains introduced in 1957. Executives considered this a strategic step, because HO appealed to another segment of the hobby; if their plan succeeded, Lionel could welcome a whole new breed of customers.

To achieve the best of both of those

in this set, so the number of examples made was small. The same was true with the boxed no. 111-50 trestle set included only with this set.

To protect the HO scale 5-car diesel freight train that was included with the 2555W, Lionel packaged them in their own set box (no. 5555W). The latter fit neatly inside the big box intended for the 2555W, thereby completing what really was a manufacturing marvel.



JOSHUA COWEN MIGHT BE GONE IN 1960, BUT HIS LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING AND MARKETING GREAT TRAINS REMAINED STRONG.

worlds, Lionel came up with a cat's meow of an idea, which became an innovation that beat all other innovations. Or, as Lionel put it in the 1960 catalog, "A Truly Great Model Railroading Achievement."

For \$150, you got two Santa Fe freight trains that were nearly identical, except one ran on Super O track elevated above the small one operating over HO rails.

Thus was born the "Identical Super 'O' and HO Twin Railroad Empire." Set no. 2555W has become one of the most sought-after sets ever made by Lionel. Fewer than 1,000 examples were packaged, so they are worth huge amounts.

This remarkable set, called "Father and Son" or "Over and Under" by collectors, included a 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A combination and five quality O gauge models. Three of those cars were re-issues: the nos. 3434 operating chicken car with sweeper, 3366 operating circus car and corral, and 6414 auto transport.

The other two pieces of O gauge rolling stock were new. The no. 6464-900 New York Central boxcar was also offered for separate sale at \$5.95. The no. 6357-50 Santa Fe SP-type caboose was available only

■ An impressive year

The diversity of outfits – promotional, advance catalog, and O-27 and Super O trains in the annual consumer catalog – reinforces the impression that Lionel had not given up the ghost. Joshua Cowen might be gone in 1960, but his lifelong commitment to developing and marketing great trains remained strong.

Go ahead and review the sets for 1960 and see how space, military, and industrial themes influenced the selection of rolling stock. Then study the array of excellent locomotives available at every price range. You'll come away believing that Lionel was still a vibrant and innovative corporation half a century ago.

Information shared about the outfits and individual items in the cataloged line for 1960 and all subsequent years of the decade reflects more than half a century of careful research conducted by Lionel postwar expert Joe Algozzini. He, in turn, credits George and John Schmid of Project Roar Publishing Co. for their assistance in furthering understanding of Lionel's many promotional outfits and their customers.



Handful of rare & unique items

A PANORAMA OF ONE-OF-A-KIND ITEMS

» **Lionel produced some rare** items each year, and collectors aggressively pursue legitimate factory mock-ups and prototypes. Preproduction models of the no. 3376 operating giraffe car and various submarines used on flatcars are probably the most well known examples Lionel made for 1960.

There was the decaled preproduction sample of the no. 1805 Land-Sea-Air gift pack Lionel used for an illustration found in its consumer catalog. This unique item would cause many a collector to take out a second mortgage.

The prototype for the 6464-900 New York Central boxcar introduced in 1960 was also decaled and so likely was a one-of-a-kind model. Collectors searching for a rare version of this attractive boxcar should,

therefore, search for a regular-production that was stamped over a type III body shell.

A couple of unpainted black plastic examples of the no. 6530 fire prevention training car have been reported. However, we need to keep in mind the fact that because neither of them was decaled the possibility exists that others were made. The no. 6047 Southern Pacific-type caboose painted "brick brown" is also considered rare.

Lionel's no. 6044-1X McCall's/Nestle's

promotional boxcar is considered rare and highly desirable in a collectable condition; the box the mysterious boxcar came packaged in is also rare.

■ Rare displays for new cars

Lionel brought out new rolling stock in 1960 whose development depended on the assistance of outside businesses. To show its appreciation to the Harnischfeger Corp. of Milwaukee, a manufacturer of construction machinery, Lionel produced a few displays for executives using the new nos. 6827 and 6828 flatcars carrying models of that company's power shovel and crane.

Another rare display from 1960 featured the brand-new no. 6465 Cities Service double-dome tank car, along with an HO scale billboard advertising that business. Lionel is known to have produced a handful of these displays and presented them to executives at Cities Service in gratitude for their assistance with the development of this tank car.



LIONEL'S NO. 6357-50 Santa Fe illuminated Southern Pacific-type caboose was available only in the no. 2555W outfit that packed both a Super O train and an HO scale version in one enormous box. This fabled set was cataloged exclusively in 1960.

FIVE RARE and unusual Lionel items associated with 1960 that collectors search for (clockwise from upper left): the no. 6530 fire prevention training car in black plastic, this preproduction version of the no. 3376 operating giraffe car, no. 6044-1X box for the McCall's/Nestle's promotional boxcar, a Channel Master billboard used in promotional sets, and the McCall's/Nestle's boxcar itself.

■ Regular-production items

Regarding regular-production items, fewer than 1,000 examples of the nos. 6357-50 Santa Fe Southern Pacific-type caboose and 111-50 trestle set probably were manufactured. Both of these scarce items were used exclusively in the top-of-the-line no. 2555W "Over and Under" outfit that came with Super O and HO scale versions of similar Santa Fe freight trains.

Lionel most likely produced only 400 examples of promotional set no. X-568NA. One item found only in it was the no. 6044 Airex plug-door boxcar equipped with two operating AAR trucks having indented side frames instead of two dummy archbar trucks. Consequently, this Airex boxcar is scarcer than generally thought, as explained in the October 2009 *Classic Toy Trains*.

The no. 1050 steam locomotive was a watered-down version of an 0-4-0 when it debuted in 1959, but it returned in 1960 and is scarce. Much scarcer is a boxed no. 228 Canadian National Alco A unit used in promotional set X-550NA; remember, it's the box that's rare, not the diesel.

Another rare box was the no. 3386-10. It came with a no. 3386 giraffe car and was

offered for separate sale at \$6.95. A box for a no. 3386 operating giraffe car is scarcer than most postwar collectors imagine.

■ Condition and color can make it scarce

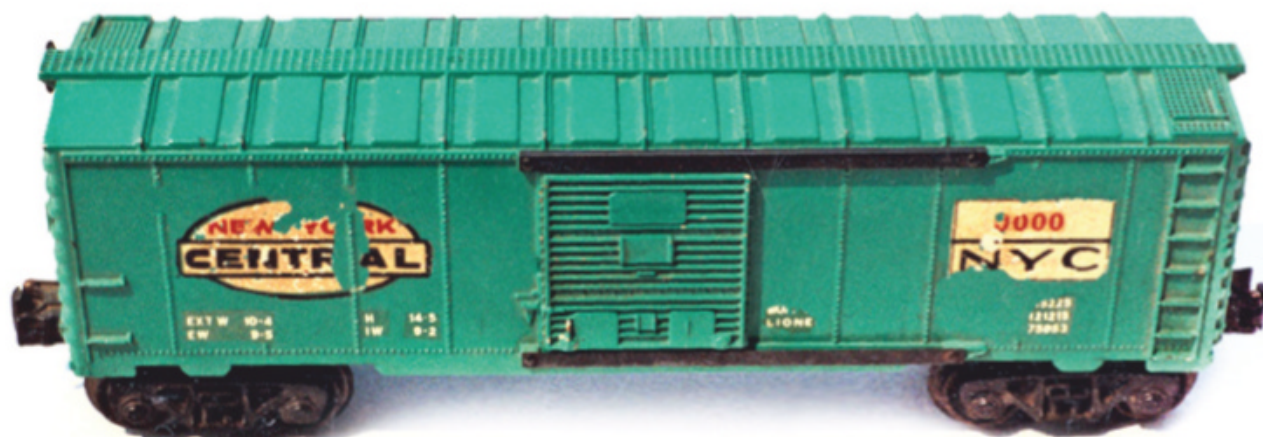
The no. 3429 flatcar with helicopter was included in the 1805 gift pack. The Marine Corps 'copter used is often missing or broken, so consider it scarce.

Another item that's usually missing or in rough shape was the Channel Master billboard created and packed with the Channel Master promotional sets. Finding a billboard in like-new condition is a challenge.

We all well aware of how Lionel made plastic-test shots in various colors before supervisors decided on which color worked best. Therefore, chancing upon a legitimate submarine with a different color periscope or propeller is not out of the question.

Neither would be finding a no. 6544 missile firing car whose gray-plastic firing mechanism (console) is another color. A red-plastic car is known to exist.

LIONEL'S ENGINEERING department painted and decaled a mock-up of the no. 6464-900 New York Central boxcar for company executives to inspect and approve.



3535 OPERATING SECURITY CAR WITH ROTATING SEARCHLIGHT



ENGINEERS AND MARKETING heads set out to invigorate the line in hopes of winning interest from kids whose taste in toys continued to broaden. No longer was an electric train the favorite on every boy's list; kids had plenty to choose from.

Designers struggled to create entertaining and novel models sure to challenge kids. They were told to keep down research and development costs. So they had to bring out trains that, though new, were familiar enough to appeal to a fickle audience.

A wonderful response to this changing market was the no. 3535 operating security car with rotating searchlight. It promised animation in the form of a floodlight easily manipulated. But notable elements of the model struck engineers and consumers as coming from past catalogs. The odd-looking car seemed safe and sure, slightly traditional and totally modern.

■ Roots in 1956

Take a peek at the 3535 and you'll see much that's familiar. The product number, Atomic Energy Commission logo, and name ("Security Car") heat-stamped in white on each side

of the superstructure stand out as new. But the overall appearance harkens back a few years and offers some comfort to users.

The unpainted superstructure, made from injection-molded plastic, had made its debut just four years earlier for the no. 520 boxcab electric-profile locomotive. Lionel had

out for something else – and quickly got a bit more.

■ Guns and a light

Probably the next step in the sequence of development involved doctoring up the red cab with the gray plastic antiaircraft guns previously attached to one of military trucks made by Pyro Plastics and placed on Lionel flatcars to create the nos. 6804 and 6809 items cataloged in 1958 and '59. Nimble fingers would enable a child to move the twin guns toward the sky to threaten an O gauge foe.

Still, a dubious employee might have observed, the proposed security car must have more animation and more excitement if jaded youngsters were going to approve it and wish to add it to their O gauge rosters. Back to the drawing board!

Designers turned their attention back more than a decade as they searched for simple and inexpensive methods for improving the 3535. Their answer was to install a feature kids had long favored: an operating floodlight.

Since the introduction of the no. 6520 searchlight car

in 1949, young operators had enjoyed illuminating their darkened bedrooms and attics with a powerful beam of light. One could transform a somewhat boring security car into a fun and exciting item.

Therefore, a steel plate was mounted to the plastic frame to support the floodlight assembly taken from the no. 3620 searchlight car (cataloged from 1954 through '56). As with the older car, a patented vibrating mechanism powered the plated holder and gray molded revolving light. Wires connected to a pickup roller affixed to one of the AAR trucks provided all the juice the floodlight needed.

■ Many uses

As the new operating security car moved toward completion and then production, executives had to decide the best ways to use it. Naturally, they offered the 11-inch-long car as a separate-sale item, with a retail price of \$7.95.

The 3535 also ended up as a component of one Super O outfit in 1960. It protected the rear of set no. 2549W, riding carefully behind a no. 2349 Northern Pacific GP9 road diesel as well as four action-packed pieces of rolling stock.

The security car returned to the line a year later. It brought up the end of Super O outfit no. 2572, led by a different GP9 (the no. 2359 Boston & Maine). Between were four space-and-military pieces.

The 3535, an amalgam of old and new, fit in Lionelville circa 1960.

Thanks to the car's searchlight and guns, kids could pretend they were safeguarding the skies above and the land around their layout.

STARS OF 1960

cataloged that squat and bulky engine for only two years before dropping it after 1957. Had the bright red cab outlived its usefulness?

At least one guy in engineering didn't think so. He had the bright idea of fastening the cab to an unpainted black plastic no. 6511-2 frame without any markings. Unquestionably different in

appearance, the strange amalgam cried





3376 BRONX ZOO OPERATING GIRAFFE CAR



TALK ABOUT GOING from the sublime to the absurd or vice versa! The same group of new rolling stock that boasted military-oriented models capable for firing rockets and shooting shells had an operating stockcar with a giraffe bobbing through an opening in the roof. Truly, the line for 1960 promised something for everybody!

Not that diversity was a flaw. Executives understood how the market was changing; shifts in what kids wanted compelled them to bring out a variety of trains. Some models had to satisfy consumers for whom realism was paramount. Others should follow trends, such as the national fascination with space. Still others ought to be whimsical, like a stockcar transporting exotic animals rather than familiar cows and chickens.

The no. 3376 operating giraffe car touched several bases and as such must have left corporate heads laughing yet hopeful. The Bronx Zoo car (the name linked it to a well-known institution in New York City) differed so dramatically from what Lionel and its rivals typically cataloged that it might prove a winner.

■ Ups and downs

Designers in the Engineering Department who were collaborating on the 3376 began by taking the plastic mold from the old and no longer cataloged no. 3656 operating cattle car. They modified it for the proposed animated giraffe car. Major alterations included cutting a large slot in the roof where the upper half of a plastic giraffe could protrude to rise and dip.

The operation of the Bronx Zoo car was simple and entertaining. It amounted to having the counterweighted giraffe bob up and down while the O-27 stockcar rolled around a three-rail layout. The yellow polystyrene animal decorated with brown spots moved via a cam assembly secured beneath the frame of the unpainted blue plastic car.

A cam plate assembly arranged along a straight section of track mechanically activated the giraffe to poke its head out of the hole molded into the roof.

To increase the fanciful nature of the operating giraffe car, Lionel packed with each model a tell-tale pole to be installed somewhere on the layout. It would cause the giraffe to duck inside the car after the animal had brushed up against the white plastic lines. The animation should remind faithful Lionel hobbyists of the no. 3424 operating brakeman car, dropped after 1958.

■ Ripe for promotion

The consumer catalog for 1960 announced the 3376 operating giraffe car almost immediately. On page 4, the description lauded the model as “a circus on wheels.” The text stated how the new model performed, delighting everyone, regardless of age.

Ready to bet Lionel took full advantage of the novel piece? Save yourself the cash!

For reasons difficult to grasp, the car was available

only as a separate-sale item (priced at \$6.95). Executives omitted the car from every cataloged set for 1960.

They did not, however, underestimate the Bronx Zoo as a component of promotional outfits. The 3376-1 (the boxed version of the giraffe car) appeared in 13 such sets in 1960. The 3376-25 (the unboxed version) came in one.

Hard to understand how the operating giraffe car could strike marketing men as ideal for a total of 14 promotional outfits and absolutely no cataloged sets. By the way, that number far outdistanced the four uncataloged sets coming with a 3535 operating security car with rotating searchlight during that noteworthy year.

Of course, the 3376 would live on and on. It remained a stalwart member of the O-27 roster through 1965 and made a comeback in 1969 at the close of the postwar period. In assorted incarnations, the Bronx Zoo car influenced the modern-era roster right into the first years of the 21st century. What seemed a joke in 1960 rose to be a classic.



EXCELLENT O-27 AND SUPER O
OUTFITS THRILLED EVERYONE

Wonders in advance catalogs & gift packs



By 1960, executives at the original Lionel Corp. were making plenty of changes in the product line and the techniques used to market it. There were, in fact, many changes in the very individuals in charge. Yet Lionel's position and its direction in the domestic toy train market appeared to be right on track.

By the time 1961 had faded into history, however, all of those changes no longer looked so beneficial. In retrospect, they were leading to the eventual downfall of Lionel, once the most important producer of toy trains on the planet.

■ Marching in reverse

There was a new sense of direction at Lionel for 1961 – the first 21 pages of the annual full-color consumer catalog left absolutely no doubt about it. For the first time in the firm's 60-year history, the electric trains that had made Lionel so important in the national toy business were being upstaged. Science kits, electronics outfits, and wood-working sets, seemed more important.

Gutenberg and Edison, physical science and geology, were displacing the toy trains that had shone on one generation after another of boys and dads. Even so, these changes could be found earlier, by inspecting the advance catalog select retailers had in hand, by late March or early April of that year.

On the front cover of the advance catalog, John B. Medaris, who had been hired as Lionel's president on August 2, 1960, looked very professional, as he held a probable composite-image of the brand-new no. 3665 Minuteman missile launching car. But once inside the catalog, toy trains were delegated to the rear, as Lionel's new science kits caught your immediate attention. In fact, Lionel's message to its retail trade was “the

Lionel Corporation has boldly expanded operations into the field of science.”

Everything looked promising for Lionel and its leaders. Too bad the overall situation quickly soured in 1961, with the corporation losing in excess of \$2 million.

Admittedly, net sales for the year had never been greater, hitting \$55 million (an increase of about \$24 million from the previous year). But though the cost of sales had grown by only 1 percent, administrative expenses had jumped by \$7 million, an increase that caused the deficit and left some stockholders wondering how carefully executives were minding the store.

Let's focus on Lionel's trains and not its internal matters. When studying the 1961 production year, we still see great items.

■ Advance catalog O-27 sets

“Built For Volume ... Marketed For Your Profit ... Three New Outfits Designed Especially For The Mass Toy Market.” This statement in the advance catalog sums up the



JUDGING BY THE ARRAY of Super O and O-27 outlets Lionel heralded in its consumer catalog for 1961, that year would be another great one. The firm's commitment to developing space and military models was reflected in Super O outfit no. 2572. Pulled by a no. 2359 Boston & Maine GP9 road diesel, it featured two new cars (nos. 3519 operating satellite car and 6448 exploding target range car) and three other items: nos. 3535 security car with a rotating searchlight, 3830 U.S. Navy flatcar with an operating submarine, and 6544 missile firing car. Trains courtesy Joe Algozzini

approach taken by marketing executives in 1961. All three of those advance catalog sets had catchy nicknames and low prices.

Two of the outfits – the nos. 1123 Pace-setter and 1124 Hawk – relied on a reissued no. 1060 plastic steam locomotive with a headlight as their motive power. Different tenders came with these sets: a no. 1050T slope-back model was packed in the 1123, and a no. 1060T small streamlined tender was in the 1124.

In addition, each of these low-end sets included a car and a caboose new to Lionel's line. The 1123 had a no. 6406 unmarked brown plastic flatcar with a yellow automobile that had gray plastic bumpers; the 1124 had a no. 3409 flatcar carrying an operating

helicopter. Both sets came with a no. 6067 red plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose lacking any markings.

The no. 1125 Missileman was the prize among this trio of sets. It had four brand-new items, starting with the no. 1065 Union Pacific Alco A unit. That diesel pulled the nos. 6630 missile launching car, 6480 exploding target car, and 6120 unpainted yellow plastic work caboose. No wonder retailers were happy in 1961.

■ Promotional outfits

Once Roy Cohn took over the helm, Lionel adopted a multi-pronged selling strategy. This continued in 1961, with new and exciting promotional sets made for Sears,

Roebuck & Co.; Spiegel; Montgomery Ward; and more retail enterprises, chain stores, manufacturers, and other outlets.

The most spectacular promotional outfit for 1961 – at least from a collector's point of view – was the no. X-625. It included the scarce nos. 910 Navy substation (actually introduced in 1960) and X-625-20 cardboard scenic set.

This Richie Premium outfit included a reissued no. 228 Canadian National Alco A unit and four freight cars: nos. 3330 flatcar with operating submarine kit, 6825 flatcar with a black plastic trestle, 6062 gondola, and 6017 SP-type caboose.

Another desirable promotional outfit was the no. X-646, led by no. 224 Navy Alco A-B units. Those reissued diesels pulled three military items (nos. 3410 operating helicopter car, 3665 Minuteman missile



launching car, and 6017-200 U.S. Navy SP-type caboose), with a no. 6062 gondola thrown in for good measure.

If you wanted a set that had a large military accessory, check out the no. X-658. A no. 470 missile launching platform accompanied a train headed by the brand-new no. 231 Rock Island Alco A unit. Besides the four military cars (nos. 3519 automatic satellite car, 3665 Minuteman missile launching car, 3830 operating submarine car, and 6470 exploding boxcar), there was a no. 110 trestle set.

From a promotional perspective, the no. X-600 Quaker Oats set stands out. Consumers acquired it by mailing \$11.95 and two box tops to Lionel. They got a no. 246 black-plastic steam locomotive with a headlight and tender pulling a no. 6042 blue plastic gondola with two unmarked red plastic canisters, a 6406 flatcar with a yellow automobile with gray bumpers, a 6076 (-25) red- or (-75) black-plastic Lehigh Valley hopper, and a 6067 unmarked red plastic SP-type caboose.

Card collectors would have preferred the no. X-704 outfit. That set came with Lionel's no. 903 trading cards, which depicted various postwar locomotives.

■ Inexpensive O-27 sets

The consumer catalog for 1961 illustrated and described 11 O-27 outfits plus two O-27 gift packs. Six of the sets had a retail price of less than \$40, so we'll cover them first; then we'll turn to the five sets priced between \$49.95 and 69.95.

As starter sets go, the no. 1641 was a terrific beginning. Attractively priced at \$25, it came with a reissued 246 steam engine and a 244T slope-back tender pulling three freight cars. The rolling stock included the new no. 3362 helium tank unloading car, along with a no. 6162 gondola with canisters



and a no. 6057 Southern Pacific-type caboose.

The no. 1642 Circus Special, which was headed by a no. 244 steam engine with a headlight and an 1130T tender, had a reissued no. 3376 operating giraffe car that accounted for the set's name. Also packed in the set box were a new no. 6405 flatcar with a yellow plastic piggyback van and a no. 6119 work caboose, all for just \$29.95.

For the same price, you could purchase a no. 1643 Sky-Scout led by a new no. 230 C&O Alco A unit. That diesel came with a new no. 3509 satellite car, a no. 6050 savings bank car, a reissued no. 6176 flatcar with rocket, and a 6058 yellow-painted SP-type caboose (lettered for the Chesapeake & Ohio to match the 230).

The 6050 car is usually found with "Blt By Lionel" directly to the bottom right of the solid white-plastic door. The earliest packaged versions of this outfit probably included the scarce variation of the car stamped "Built By Lionel" instead.

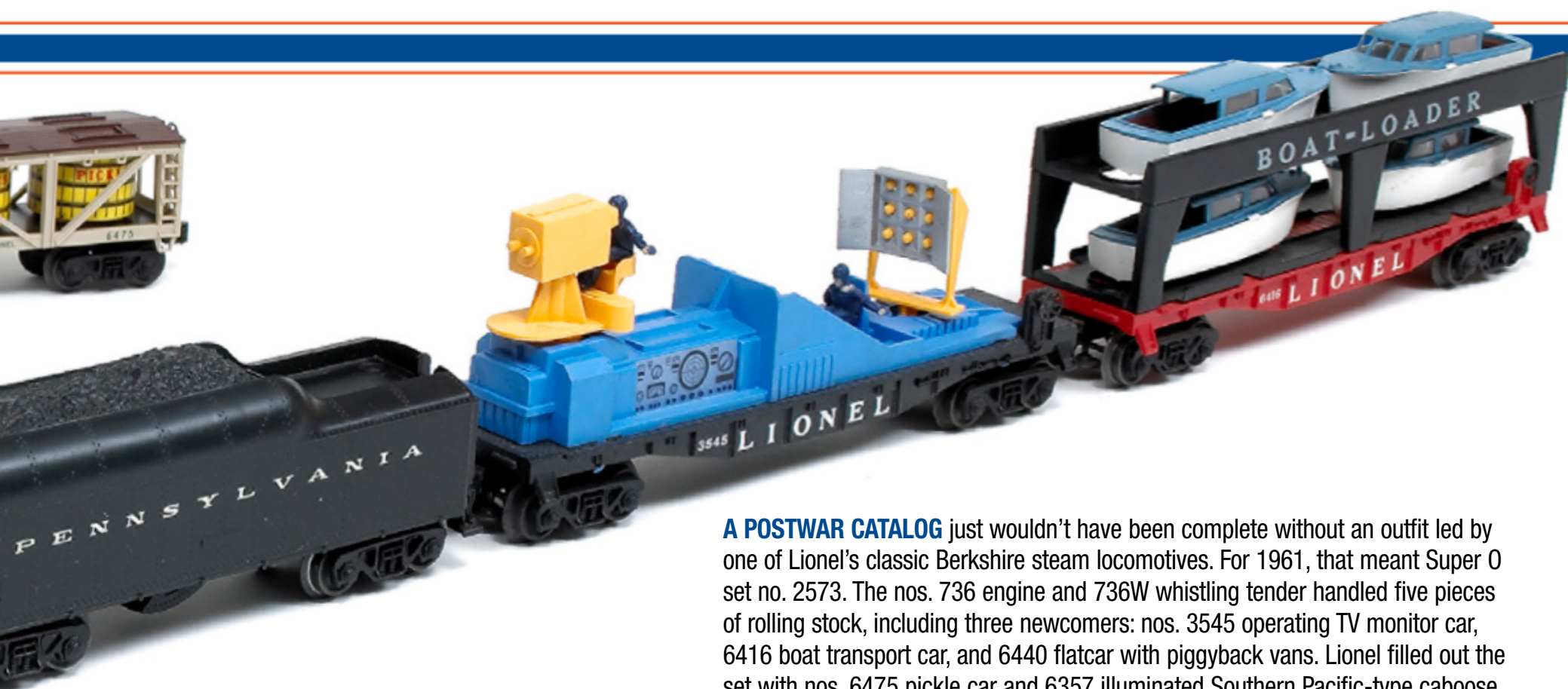
Speaking of scarce, don't overlook the related no. 1643C (the "C" indicated "conventional outfit packing"). This set, probably packaged at the same time as the 1643, included a 3509 whose satellite had a gray, not the usual silver, plastic top. Also, Lionel planned to substitute a no. 6819 helicopter car for the 6175; some sets were likely packaged with a 6175 until stock was depleted.

The no. 1862 General steam locomotive equipped with a headlight was reissued as part of outfit no. 1644. The old-time train came with a no. 1862T tender and brand-new no. 3370 animated sheriff and outlaw car that was fitted with scarce archbar trucks instead of the typical AAR types. Also included in this outfit, which retailed for \$39.95, were the reissued nos. 1865 old-time passenger car and 1866 mail-baggage car.

The brand-new no. 229 Minneapolis & St. Louis Alco A unit with a horn headed the no. 1645 four-car outfit. Besides three reissued freight cars (nos. 3410 flatcar with a helicopter, 6465 Cities Service double-dome tank car, and 6825 flatcar with a bridge), the cool set included a brand-new no. 6059 Minneapolis & St. Louis Southern Pacific-type caboose to match the diesel. The more difficult to find red-painted model came with this colorful set.

The final cataloged O-27 set priced at less than \$40 was the neat no. 1646 Utility train. Leading it was a new no. 233 steam engine, which featured Magne-Traction, a smoke mechanism, and an operating headlight; the locomotive was nicely paired with a no. 233W whistle tender.

Behind were a new no. 6343 barrel ramp car and three familiar models. You got the nos. 6162 gondola (erroneously depicted in the consumer catalog as black and not blue) with canisters, 6476 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6017 SP-type caboose.



A POSTWAR CATALOG just wouldn't have been complete without an outfit led by one of Lionel's classic Berkshire steam locomotives. For 1961, that meant Super O set no. 2573. The nos. 736 engine and 736W whistling tender handled five pieces of rolling stock, including three newcomers: nos. 3545 operating TV monitor car, 6416 boat transport car, and 6440 flatcar with piggyback vans. Lionel filled out the set with nos. 6475 pickle car and 6357 illuminated Southern Pacific-type caboose.

■ Upscale O-27 outfits

Five outstanding outfits filled out Lionel's O-27 roster of outfits for 1961.

Keeping with the marketing angle of space and military models, Lionel reissued the no. 45 U.S. Marine Corps mobile missile launcher. It led set no. 1647. The 5-car Freedom Fighter train retailed for \$49.95.

Three new exciting cars were packed in the 1647: the nos. 3519 operating satellite car, 3665 Minuteman missile launching car, and 6448 exploding boxcar. This set – now considered the most valuable of all the O-27 sets from 1961 – also included a no. 6830 flatcar with a submarine and a no. 6814 first aid medical car.

The no. 1648 Supply Line, priced at \$49.95, was pulled by the pride of the O-27 line – the no. 2037 die-cast metal steamer with Magne-Traction, a smoking mechanism, and a headlight, along with the new 233W whistling tender.

Although all the cars were carryovers, they promised lots of fun for young engineers. The nos. 6062 gondola with cable reels, 6465 Cities Service tank car, 6519 Allis Chalmers car, 6476 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6017 SP-type caboose rounded out an interesting set with an industrial theme.

For kids who wanted a diesel-powered set for \$49.95, the no. 1649 was the ticket. On

the point were nos. 218P and 218C Santa Fe Alco A and B units. Coupled to them were three brand-new cars: nos. 6343 barrel ramp car, 6405 flatcar with a yellow-plastic van, and 6445 Fort Knox gold bullion transport car. A reissued no. 6475 pickle car was included, and a 6017 brown-painted SP-type caboose brought up the rear of this collectible 5-car freight train.

For \$10 more, consumers could pick up the no. 1650 Guardian freight set. The familiar 2037 steam engine and 233W tender handled this 5-car outfit, which featured four reissued space and military models: nos. 6544 missile firing car, 6470 exploding target car, 3330 flatcar with an operating

submarine as a kit, and a 3419 operating helicopter car. A 6017 Southern Pacific-type caboose finished the train.

For the second straight year, a 218 Santa Fe in an A-A combination pulled an illuminated streamlined train for those enthusiasts who preferred passenger service. This time, it led the no. 1651, a set with four blue-striped beauties – the nos. 2414 Pullman, two 2412 Vista-Domes, and 2416 observation – all for \$69.95.

■ A pair of gift packs

"For the Model Railroader who has Lionel Track and Transformer," the consumer catalog stated, Lionel was offering a couple of



OPERATING ROLLING STOCK with a space or military orientation assumed growing importance in the early 1960s. For 1961, the Lionel Corp. introduced the no. 6480 exploding target car (front), which was strictly a component of promotional outfits, and the no. 3665 Minuteman missile launching car.



gift packs. Both of them, it was quite plain to see from the illustrations, were designed to offer plenty of fun and action.

The no. 1809 Western Gift Pack retailed for only \$29.95, making it an unbelievably terrific value. Included were the brand-new nos. 3370 animated sheriff and outlaw car, 3376 operating giraffe car, and 1877 horse transport car loaded with six removable Plasticville horses. A 6017 SP-type caboose was at the rear of a dynamite set pulled by a reissued 244 steamer with an 1130T tender.

Equally exciting, and providing a lot of play value, was the no. 1810 Space Age Gift Pack. It came with four cars, two of which were brand new for 1961: 3519 operating satellite car (erroneously depicted in the consumer catalog as being a red flatcar rather than the correct green) and 3665 Minuteman missile launching car.

Included as well in this eye-catching gift pack were a reissued no. 3820 U.S.M.C. flatcar (olive drab and not blue as mistakenly shown in the consumer catalog) with an operating submarine and a no. 6017 brown Southern Pacific-type caboose.

At the head of this neat train was the brand-new no. 231 Rock Island Alco A unit, equipped with Magne-Traction and a headlight. Typically, this black-painted diesel locomotive was decorated with a broad red stripe along its sides and nose.

Be aware, however, that scarce versions of the 231 exist without the accent striping. Scarcer is the box with an "X" stamped at the end used to pack separate-sale models.

■ Super O outfits to be proud of

Rounding out the outstanding roster of sets illustrated in the consumer catalog were eight Super O outfits. We'll consider the first five sets – noteworthy though not particularly valuable – in this section. Then we will focus on the three top-of-the-line sets, each of which stands among the most desirable of all cataloged outfits from the post-World War II era of Lionel's long history.

The no. 2570 Husky 5-car set kicked things off in the Super O section. Retailing for a mere \$49.95, it introduced the no. 616

Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher, equipped with Magne-Traction, an operating horn, and a functioning headlight.

This work train included the brand-new nos. 6822 night crew searchlight car and 6130 Santa Fe work caboose. It also had three carryover items: the nos. 6736 Detroit & Mackinac open quad hopper, 6812 track maintenance car, and 6828 flatcar with an unassembled Harnischfeger crane packed in its own box.

An important side note relates to the one rubber figure used on the 6822 and the two figures on the 6812. All of them had a painted face and hands, and each was "T" shaped at the bottom to fit the raised, molded area on each car.

For the third straight year, the no. 2528WS 5 Star General set returned – at the same \$49.95 suggested retail price as before. A no. 1872 engine with 1872T tender handled the nos. 1875W illuminated passenger car with a whistle, 1876 illuminated mail-baggage car, and 1877 horse car with six removable horses.

The no. 2571 Ft. Knox Special freight set was pulled by a reissued no. 637 steam engine equipped with Magne-Traction, a smoking mechanism, and a headlight. It was mated with a no. 2046W whistling tender. Among the four cars were the brand-new 6445 Fort Knox gold bullion car and the returning 3419 operating helicopter car, a 6361 timber transport car, and a 6119 work caboose.

The Space Age set for tomorrow was the no. 2572 train headed by a striking no. 2359 Boston & Maine GP9. Two new cars



ANOTHER TWO OF THE COOL, colorful, and collectible freight cars that Lionel introduced to its cataloged line in 1961 were the nos. 3370 animated sheriff and outlaw car (front) and 6464-700 Santa Fe boxcar. The 3370 came in one set and one gift pack, but the 6464-700 was available strictly as a separate-sale item.



LIONEL DEVELOPED A special version of O-27 outfit no. 1643 known as “1643C” because of its packaging. This set featured a no. 230 Chesapeake & Ohio Alco A unit that pulled the nos. 3509 satellite car (note the gray and not silver top), 6050 savings bank car, and 6176 flatcar with rocket. Lionel lettered the no. 6058 Southern Pacific-type caboose for C&O to complement the diesel.

were packed in the outfit box: the 3519 operating satellite car (erroneously depicted in the consumer catalog as a red flatcar rather than the correct green) and 6448 exploding target range car.

The other action-packed cars were the nos. 3535 security car with a rotating searchlight, 3830 flatcar with an operating submarine, and 6544 missile firing car.

The no. 736 Berkshire with a 736W whistle tender pulled the no. 2573, known as the TV Special. Attractively priced at \$75, this set received its name from the new no. 3545 operating TV monitor car incorrectly depicted in the consumer catalog as having a red flatcar instead of a black one.

Two other cars were brand new: the nos. 6416 boat transport car and 6440 flatcar with piggyback vans. The *Lionel Service Manual* listed the load for the 6416 as a no. 0801-215 boat, which is the HO scale designation for that load. The HO boat had a blue deck with a white hull and was the color used for the O gauge model.

Lionel also placed in this outfit, which was the top-of-the-cataloged-line steam train of the year, a 6475 pickle car and a 6357 illuminated SP-type caboose.

■ A trio of Super O classics

Let's close by turning our attention to three great Super O sets, classics that in like-new condition with all their original boxes are valued between \$2,500 and \$6,000 in the third volume of *Greenberg's Guide to Lionel Trains, 1945-1969*.

First was the no. 2574 Defender, whose length exceeded 6½ feet. The no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 diesels in an A-A combination returned for the fourth straight year as the motive power for this set, which had a retail price of \$89.95. Included were the

new 3665 Minuteman missile launching car and reissued 3419 operating helicopter car and 3830 operating submarine car.

The outfit introduced the no. 6437 illuminated porthole caboose, an updated version of the no. 6427. Mistakenly shown with Lionel Lines markings in the consumer catalog, this superb model actually was decorated for the Pennsylvania RR.

Also packed inside the box were a new no. 448 missile firing range set that came with new nos. 6448 exploding target range car and 943 exploding ammunition dump.

The 2574 had a 12-piece trestle set that came with a hard-to-find no. 109 envelope.

version of the Santa Fe's internationally famous *Super Chief* streamlined passenger train. It returned as outfit no. 2576, which had a retail price of \$100.

This outfit, stretching out more than 7½ feet, featured the powerful 2383 A-A duo at its head. Thanks to a pair of rugged motors, those F3 diesels could pull four illuminated red-striped aluminum passenger cars, all with Santa Fe markings: two no. 2562 Vista-Domes, a no. 2563 Pullman, and a no. 2561 observation car.



THERE WAS A NEW SENSE OF DIRECTION AT LIONEL FOR 1961 – THE FIRST 21 PAGES OF THE ANNUAL FULL-COLOR CONSUMER CATALOG LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

The second beauty was the no. 2575 Dynamo, priced at a whopping \$100. It was led by a no. 2360 Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric-profile locomotive. That single-striped stud returned to the cataloged line after a two-year absence.

This set included seven reissues, starting with the nos. 6530 fire prevention training car, 6828 flatcar with a Harnischfeger crane, 6464-900 New York Central boxcar, and 6827 flatcar with a Harnischfeger power shovel. At the rear the catalog depicted nos. 6736 Detroit & Mackinac hopper, 6560 crane car, and 6437 illuminated porthole caboose (erroneously shown with Lionel Lines markings).

The third classic gracing the peak of the Super O roster of sets was Lionel's gorgeous

■ Wait till next year

Even though Lionel lost money in 1961, it still brought out an excellent line of O-27 and Super O trains with plenty of new and exciting innovations.

This was a pivotal year for Lionel. Only the future would reveal to its leaders and stockholders whether its marketing plans and proposed acquisitions could overcome financial setbacks and improve its fate.

But top executives expressed optimism. According to General Medaris, “We look forward to 1962 with considerable confidence, and we earnestly solicit your approval and support of the decisions we have made and will make toward assuring you of a sound investment.” The truth would soon come out.



2359 BOSTON & MAINE GP9 ROAD DIESEL



OFTEN WHEN EVALUATING the post-war line, a noteworthy trend or positive change will be overshadowed by one that appears to suggest a negative state of events. Collectors seem, in a slightly perverse way, to prefer evidence of decline.

Take the drop in the number of F3 diesels cataloged after 1958. Observers, aware that Lionel didn't add new road names, assume the worse. Yet Lionel brought out new versions of the GP7/GP9 model. So, while fans of cab units had only the Santa Fe, modelers charged by road diesels had a nice variety to consider.

Starting in 1961, O gaugers enjoyed a newcomer painted and lettered for the Boston & Maine. The no. 2359 would hang around through 1962.

■ Up to New England

The story of the 2359 began in 1955, with the introduction of three models of the GP7 road diesel developed by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors. Lionel cataloged the nos. 2028 Pennsylvania RR; 2328 Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; and 2338 Milwaukee Road units for its O-27 and O gauge rosters.

Over the next few years, more arrived. Some were advertised as GP9s. Designers had fastened a small piece of plastic on the roof of the hood they claimed was the dynamic brake unit installed on full-size GP9s. Otherwise, they were identical to their forerunners.

Lionel decorated the models filling out the group of EMD road diesels with midwestern and western railroads. Units hit the market between 1957 and 1960 lettered for the Wabash, the Minneapolis & St. Louis, and the Northern Pacific. Mock-ups for Geeps marked for the Alaska RR, the Grand Trunk Western, the U.S. Army, and the Western Pacific existed.

For 1961, Lionel looked to New England, choosing the modernistic logo of the Boston & Maine. The herald, with intertwined "B" and "M," wasn't novel. Lionel had used it on the no. 6464-475 Boston

& Maine boxcar cataloged from 1957 through 1960.

■ Slick features

From a cultural perspective, blue generally symbolizes melancholy and sadness. Whether referring to paintings done by Pablo Picasso or music performed by Muddy Waters and Albert King, the blues can leave a person feeling low and resigned to the hardships connected to relationships and finances.

Yet there's nothing about the 2359 model to bring anyone down or leave you wondering whether life and love have purpose. The elegant look reflects sophistication and a hint of sassiness; the bold letters feel right.

STARS OF 1961

The road switcher boasted a plastic body shell painted a pleasing shade of blue. Attached was a black-painted cab. Both ends also came painted black. The white heat-stamped lettering contrasted with the other colors to look fantastic. Even better was the

herald, heat-stamped in the middle of the unit.

The 2359 had a motor with a 3-position reverse unit and everything needed for Magne-Traction. The body sat atop a white-painted frame and had an ornamental horn on each side of the roof. On each end were number boards and a headlight lens through which the functioning lights shone. Other operating features included a horn and couplers.

■ Ready to work

The men assigning motive power to outfits wanted to use the 2359 wisely in the Super O line. For 1961, the 14¼-inch-long diesel led the no. 2572 "Space Age" Diesel Freightier 5-car outfit, which had a retail price of \$59.95. For 1962, the second and final year Lionel cataloged the 2359, it led set no. 13028, a space-and-military train selling for \$59.95.

Lionel listed that B&M road diesel in its consumer catalog for 1961 and '62 as available for separate sale at \$29.95. It did not, however, use the 2359 in any promotional sets. Then the Geep was gone.

3509 AUTOMATIC SATELLITE LAUNCHING CAR



YOUNGSTERS INFATUATED with space- and military-themed playthings wanted – no, demanded – action-oriented trains from Lionel as the 1960s wore on. If the toy manufacturer hoped to maintain a large share of the rapidly shifting domestic market, its engineers would have to continue to devise animated rolling stock.

Designers at Lionel were exploring how some rather simple O gauge freight cars and accessories might engage children by enabling them to launch various projectiles. Miniature missiles sent off with spring-loaded launching mechanisms proved to be the rage in 1959 and '60.

The success of those toy launchers pushed Lionel to forge ahead. Helicopters, their rotors spinning, took off from flatcars in 1960. Then engineers envisioned sending miniature satellites into the heavens. Out of the gates with a burst for 1961 was the no. 3509 satellite launching car.

■ Two for one

Before delving into the intricacies of the 3509, any description of the car introduced in 1961 and cataloged through the next year should underline the basic and notable fact that it was actually a twin. Lionel wisely paired the manually operated satellite launching car with one reliant on remote control, the no. 3519.

Engineers seemed to be working

in tandem with marketing executives in coming up with identical cars whose animation could be generated by pressing the button on a controller wired to a transformer or moving a finger. The helicopter-launching flatcars featured manual or remote operation. Now for 1961, the cars capable of sending satellites overhead promised to do the same.

Having two similar satellite-launching freight cars made solid business sense. The remote-controlled version might be designated for more deluxe outfits and priced higher as a separate-sale item, whereby the manual car would be seen as a great component for low-end O-27 sets and then retailed for slightly less.

The overall marketing strategy at Lionel therefore had big plans for both of the satellite-launching models, intending to aim them at different segments. For 1961

and '62, the identical-looking pair fulfilled the plans of the men in charge.

■ Down to earth

The 3509 automatic satellite launching car started where many other models did in the late 1950s and early 1960s – with a flatcar. The foundation was a commonplace frame (part no. 3509-3). It was molded out of a dark shade of green plastic and not painted. The product number (“3509”) and “Lionel” were heat-stamped in white on each side.

Other details on the model included a black-plastic brake wheel affixed to the short stand at one of the four corners. At both ends were installed the one-piece AAR coupler fashioned out of Delrin plastic introduced in 1961.

Curiously, the consumer catalog for 1961 portrayed the 3509 as being a blue model. What gives? Every known regular-production model came in green.

In the opinion of Joe Algozzini, the example shown in the consumer catalog was almost certainly the preproduction model of the 3509. He believes the mock-up used a helicopter flatcar (molded in

blue plastic that had “3509” decaled over the latter’s correct number (3419).

■ And up in the air

The helicopter-launching car first cataloged in 1961 (the no. 3409) was the source of the manual trigger mechanism installed on the 3509. The key difference was the winding spool on the latter needed a longer neck to accommodate the satellite. The spacecraft came from Lionel’s HO scale line (part no. 0333-100). It usually had a chrome-plated top; gray tops were known.

Also included on the 3509 was a yellow plastic antenna first developed for the no. 465 sound dispatching station (new for 1956). It came mounted on a gray plastic pedestal secured with adhesive to the surface of the 11-inch-long flatcar.

A change made to the old frame was the insertion of a raised section of plastic to handle an opening in the pedestal. It left a round impression in the mold.

Once ready for the market, the 3509 ended up as a component of one O-27 outfit, the no. 1643 “Sky-Scout” Diesel Freight, which retailed for \$29.95. It was part of one O-27 set the next year. The 3509 was included in 12 promotional sets for 1961 and two a year later. Finally, Lionel did not make it available separately.





Clever marketing to reach all buyers

LOTS OF FUN IN CATALOGED AND PROMO SETS



Under the direction of Chairman of the Board Roy Cohn and President John Medaris, Lionel continued its efforts to diversify the line of toys it offered in 1962. In addition to science kits, the corporation began selling road racing sets made by Scalextric. Those products, along with electric trains and accessories, filled the full-color consumer catalog distributed to kids.

In spite of all those different products and a range of promotional efforts, Lionel lost money for the second straight year. The sum exceeded \$4 million, a staggering amount for the time and one upsetting to officers and shareholders alike. Medaris ended up being replaced as president of the company by Melvin A. Raney.

Nonetheless, the array of train sets offered was impressive. Collectors and operators might note shortcomings in the performance of locomotives, but they agreed that Lionel's line remained broad and appealing to its many customers.

■ **Sets in the advance catalog**
Lionel introduced two unique outfits in its

advance catalog, one less than it had a year before. Those two sets were, according to Lionel, "Styled and Priced to Meet the Demands of the Mass Toy Market."

First came the no. 11001 Trailblazer (Lionel introduced a 5-digit set box numbering system to replace the four-digit system it had been using since 1946). The set had a reissued no. 1060 plastic 2-4-2 steam locomotive with a 1060T Lionel Lines streamlined tender and three cars: unmarked brown-plastic flatcar with two orange cable reels, no. 6042 blue gondola with two red-plastic canisters, and an unmarked red plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose.

To assist dealers and other customers, Lionel took liberties with the black-and-

white illustration of the set. To be specific, it depicted the flatcar as a no. 6402 and the caboose as a no. 6067 Lionel Lines (both their correct numbers).

The no. 11011 Constellation outfit draws more attention because it included two new items: a no. 222 Denver & Rio Grande Western Alco FA diesel locomotive with a headlight and an unmarked red plastic satellite launching car. The latter was shown incorrectly in the black-and-white illustration of that set with "3510" on the side, although that was the correct product number for this operating car.

Also parts of the 11011 were a no. 6076 red plastic open hopper with Lehigh Valley markings and an unmarked work caboose with a black frame and a yellow-plastic tray and cab. The illustration displayed its correct 6120 number.

The *Authoritative Guide To Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969* (Project Roar Publishing), notes that Lionel received orders for 55,000 examples of the Trailblazer outfit and 20,000 of the Constellation.



PERHAPS THE MOST exciting set Lionel cataloged in 1962 was the no. 13058 Vanguard. Led by no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A diesels, that Super O set included four cars, including three newcomers, and an accessory (the no. 470 missile launching platform) that used the no. 6470 exploding target car.

■ Steam and diesel power in promotional outfits

The marketing strategy of placing a Lionel set in as many American as well as Canadian homes as possible continued through 1962. A grand total of more than 200,000 promotional outfits was produced for the third straight year.

Fans of steam power considered outfit no. 9658 king of the hill. It featured a no. 736 2-8-4 Berkshire (with Magne-Traction and a three-position reverse unit) and a no. 736W Pennsylvania RR whistling tender. The Berk pulled five reissued cars: nos. 3362 helium tank car, 6519 Allis-Chalmers car (introduced in 1958), 6475 pickle car, 6820 flatcar with missile transport helicopter (a scarce car), and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated N5c porthole caboose.

Fans of diesel power preferred outfit no. 9655, which contained the brand-new no. 2365 Chesapeake & Ohio GP7 road diesel. Among the rolling stock that EMD diesel

led was a trio of brand-new models: the nos. 6463 rocket fuel car, 3349 turbo missile firing car, and 6413 Mercury capsule transport car. A no. 6448 exploding target range car and a no. 6057 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose completed the set.

■ Notable promotional items

The no. 19142 is an important outfit to mention, not because of the items included, but because it was sold to Stokely-Van Camp as a genuine promotion. A customer needed only to mail \$11.95 and one label from a marked "pork and beans" product to get this inexpensive starter (promotional) set.

The no. 19203X wasn't a premium set, but it played a key role in Lionel's chronology. The reason? It introduced brown plastic cable reels as a load for the no. 6062 black-plastic New York Central gondola packed with that set.

With only 600 examples ordered (according to the *Authoritative Guide To*

Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969), the no. 19201 was the cream of the crop, a rare set desired by postwar enthusiasts, thanks to the gem in it. That item was a no. 910-1 U.S. Navy submarine base station, which included some cardboard fixtures, such as a building, a bridge, and submarines.

The pulling power for the 19201 was a carryover product from 1960: a no. 224 U.S. Navy Alco diesel locomotive in an A-B combination. At the end of the train rode a no. 6017-200 U.S. Navy SP-type caboose (also introduced in 1960). A no. 3362 helium tank car and a no. 6343 barrel ramp car added play value. Lionel made sure to add a logical item to this outfit – a no. 3830 operating submarine car.

■ O-27 outfits priced to sell

For the second straight year, Lionel showed a total of 13 O-27 outfits in the consumer



catalog. The retail prices of that baker's dozen virtually duplicated the amounts specified in the catalog for 1961. Doing so made sense because Lionel was experiencing unprecedented pressure from a competitive market that included plenty of new types of playthings for consumers to choose besides electric trains.

The promotional outfits likely relieved some of that pressure, but kids and their parents and grandparents were used to examining the yearly consumer catalog for new trains and information relating to Lionel products. Lionel said it best when introducing the O-27 sets as being "At A Price Anyone Can Afford."

Above all, Lionel was referring to the no. 11201 Fast Starter, a 3-car steam freight outfit attractively priced at only \$19.95. With more than 20,000 examples produced, it served the purpose of getting the Lionel name into households.

The 11201 set featured a new no. 242 steam locomotive with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement and a headlight plus a 1060T streamlined tender pulling two new cars (nos. 6042-75 Lionel gondola with two orange-plastic cable reels and 6502 Lionel black-plastic flatcar with an orange girder) and a reissued no. 6047 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose. (The "-75" and "6502" were omitted on the actual cars.)

The no. 11212 Cyclone 3-car diesel freight set was a bargain at \$25. However, surviving records indicated that Lionel produced only 9,000 examples, so the company must not have been convinced that outfit had selling power.

A brand-new no. 633 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher with a headlight but no front

coupler served as the motive power for the 11212. It pulled nos. 3349 turbo missile firing car ("3349" wasn't stamped on the red-plastic frame), 6825 flatcar with a black-plastic bridge, and 6057 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose.

■ Midrange O-27 outfits

For \$29.95, customers could choose from two other good O-27 outfits: nos. 11222 Vagabond and 11232 New Haven. Both of these midrange sets came with small assortments of freight cars, including simple operating models.

The new no. 3357 cop and hobo car was the principal attraction in the 11222. That model featured a policeman who jumped from the train onto an overhead bridge in pursuit of a hobo, only to discover the hobo leaping from the bridge back onto the train. The endless animation was entertaining.

A no. 236 steam engine with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement led the three-car Vagabond. That returning locomotive, equipped with an operating headlight and smoke, pulled a no. 1050T slope-back tender, plus a reissued no. 6343 Lionel barrel ramp car and a no. 6119 Delaware, Lackawanna & Western work caboose.

The brand-new no. 232 New Haven Alco A unit (painted orange, with headlight and Magne-Traction) teamed with a new no. 6057-50 Lionel Lines orange plastic SP-type caboose to headline the 11232. Three quality cars were packed with that outfit: the nos. 3410 helicopter launching car, 6062 New York Central gondola with three orange plastic cable reels, and a new 6413 Mercury capsule carrying car.

Even though the color illustration of the

11232 in the consumer catalog showed a yellow helicopter with Navy markings hovering above the 3410, the model included with that car was gray (the 'copter with the no. 419 heliport was yellow).

■ Two neat sets for \$39.95

For anyone able to spend \$39.95 on a set, Lionel cataloged two excellent freight outfits sure to provide lots of play value.

The no. 11242 Trail Blazer had a no. 233 steam engine (another 2-4-2 introduced in 1961) with a headlight and smoke. It pulled a no. 233W whistle tender and four cars: nos. 6465 Cities Service double-dome tank car, 6476 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6162 New York Central blue plastic gondola with three canisters (incorrectly depicted as black), and 6017 Lionel Lines caboose.

A better choice at the same price was the no. 11252 Texas Special, a five-car outfit led by the new no. 211 *Texas Special* Alco A-A combination. That red-and-white duo pulled two new cars (3349 turbo missile firing car and 6463 rocket fuel car) and three returning ones (nos. 6448 exploding target range car, 3509 satellite launching car, and 6057 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose).

■ Three great trains at \$49.95

Still trying to reach out to consumers with larger wallets, Lionel offered a trio of superb O-27 sets with a retail price tag of \$49.95. Each of them came with a cool locomotive and exciting rolling stock, including at least one operating car.

The no. 11268 Chesapeake & Ohio was

THE SLICK NEW NO. 2365

Chesapeake & Ohio GP7 road diesel led O-27 outfit no. 11268. The handsome locomotive pulled four cars, each of which was new to the Lionel roster and promised some degree of action, plus a common caboose.



the place to start. That 5-car outfit was, the catalog promised, "Armed ... and ready for action!" The prize was the new 2365 Chesapeake & Ohio Electro-Motive Division GP7 road diesel, which came equipped with Magne-Traction, a 3-position reverse unit, and operating headlights. Too bad that Geep lacked an electric horn.

The 11268 had four new cars and a 6017 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose. Start with the nos. 3619 reconnaissance 'copter car (touch a button and an HO scale red plastic helicopter was shot into space), 3470 aerial target launching car (a special balloon floated above the car as it moved), and 3349 turbo missile firing car (it could shoot down that balloon). Then enjoy the no. 6501 jet motor boat transport car (a bathtub favorite, as a special pellet sent the boat racing).

The no. 11278 Plainsman included the top-of-the-line O-27 steamer – the die-cast metal no. 2037, a 2-6-4 engine with a headlight, smoke, and a 233W whistle tender. Then came five cars, including two newcomers (nos. 6473 rodeo car and 6050-110 Swift savings bank car) and two reissues (nos. 6162 New York Central gondola with three canisters and 6825 flatcar with a black-plastic arch trestle bridge). Last was, you guessed it, a 6017 Lionel Lines caboose.

AMONG THE PIECES of rolling stock added to the Lionel line in 1962 was the final cataloged entry in the no. 6464 series of near-scale boxcars, the -725 New Haven. Youngsters found the no. 6473 rodeo car fun to watch as the horses bobbed in and out of the two windows.

The third O-27 set priced at \$49.95 was the no. 11288 Orbitor, which provided space-launching fun and thrills. A no. 229 Minneapolis & St. Louis Alco A-B combination looking classy in its red paint scheme pulled four new cars and a matching no. 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

The quartet of newcomers in that diesel freight set was impressive. Lionel used the nos. 3413 Mercury capsule launching car (its number incorrectly shown in the set's catalog illustration), 6512 cherry picker car (incorrectly shown as a blue car), 6413 Mercury capsule carrying car, and 6463 rocket fuel tank car.

■ Top-of-the-line O-27 offerings

Two great outfits occupied the top echelon of Lionel's O-27 roster for 1962. The no. 11298 Vigilant, priced at \$59.95, relied on a 2037 steam engine with a 233W whistle tender to lead four excellent cars packing plenty of play value. Rolling stock included nos. 3419 operating helicopter car, 6544 missile firing car, 6448 exploding target range car, and 3330 flatcar with operating submarine in kit form. At the rear came a 6017 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose.

Collectors should be aware the set sometimes included the rare version of the 6544 with a black console; cars with a white console are easier to find.

Selling for \$69.95 was the sole passenger

outfit in the O-27 line for 1962. Too bad the no. 11308 Santa Fe was just set no. 1651 from 1961 back with a different number. Once again, it had no. 218 Santa Fe Alco A-A units on the point and four blue-striped streamlined cars: nos. 2414 illuminated Pullman, two 2412 illuminated Vista-Domes, and 2416 illuminated observation.

■ Two terrific gift packs

Two new gift pack sets, each packaged in a carrying-case type of box and lacking track or transformer, had attractive prices. The logic behind the concept of gift packs, which Lionel launched in 1959, was to provide consumers with the luxury of a 2-train operation, or the choice of running one of two sets, while using previously purchased track and transformer rather than having to buy more.

Lionel's marketing executives believed that once two sets were in place in a household, customers would consider buying additional track, cars, accessories, and other ancillary items. Furthermore, satisfied owners of Lionel products would move on to building a 3-rail layout, thereby solidifying a long-term relationship with the firm. Joshua Lionel Cowen had promoted the same sort of arrangement.

The first gift pack that was illustrated and described in the consumer catalog for 1962 was the no. 12502 Prairie-Rider, priced at \$35. That 19th-century train depended on a





reissued no. 1862 old-time 4-4-0 steam engine and no. 1862T tender with a simulated wood-burning load to pull three pieces of rolling stock making up a “frontier circus train.”

Leading the way in the 12502 set was a no. 1877 flatcar with six horses (items from the Plasticville U.S.A. line by Bachmann Bros. and purchased and packed by Lionel). Next came nos. 1866 mail-baggage car and 1865 passenger car.

The fourth item was a no. 3376-150 operating giraffe car. That newcomer was made out of green plastic, even though the catalog illustration depicted it as a blue model, which was possible. That neat car, when offered for separate sale or part of a promotional set, also came individually boxed as a no. 3376-160.

An unbelievable bargain at only \$39.95, was the no. 12512 Enforcer. That gift pack showcased the great no. 45 U.S. Marine Corps mobile missile launcher.

The remainder of the 12512 turned out to be equally impressive (with the exception of the run-of-the-mill 6017 Lionel Lines caboose). Four brand-new cars filled out that terrific gift pack: 3413 Mercury capsule

launching car (with a light or dark gray-plastic loading platform), 3470 aerial transport car, 3619 reconnaissance 'copter car, and 3349 turbo missile firing car.

■ Super O sets on a budget

The number of Super O sets cataloged increased from eight in 1961 to nine just a year later. Lionel's finest locomotives – the nos. 2360 Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric-profile engine and 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A diesels – pulled great freight and passenger trains, as captured by the stunning illustrations in the consumer catalog.

Two low-end Super O outfits sold for \$49.95. The no. 13008 Champion featured a reissued no. 637 steamer with a 2-6-4 wheel arrangement, plus an operating headlight, smoke, and Magne-Traction. It pulled a 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle-tender, followed by four cars. Two were new for 1962 (3349 turbo missile firing car and 6501 jet boat transport car) while the other two were returning (6448 exploding target range car and 6119 work caboose).

At the same price, the no. 13018 Starfire was a fantastic buy. It featured a no. 616 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher (equipped

with a headlight, an electric horn, and Magne-Traction) pulling four freight cars and a brand-new caboose.

Leading the way were three returning models: nos. 6650 missile launching car, 3519 satellite launching car, and 6448 exploding target range car. Shown right behind the Santa Fe switcher was a new model, the no. 6500 Beechcraft Bonanza transport car (that number wasn't stamped on its black-plastic frame). The car's red-over-white plastic airplane had collapsible wings and wheels.

Last came a no. 6017-235 A.T. & S.F. caboose, with “-235” omitted from its red-painted body shell (“6017-235” was stamped only on the end flaps of the component box). This was the first time Lionel used a 6017 SP-type non-illuminated caboose with a cataloged O gauge or Super O set. When that caboose was placed unboxed within an outfit box, its identifying number was 6017-225.

■ Two midrange sets at \$59.95

The no. 13028 Defender outfit highlighted the striking colors of the no. 2359 Boston & Maine GP9 road diesel. That attractive locomotive teamed with four of what the catalog called “Land, Sea and Air Operating Cars,” along with an attractive matching B&M non-illuminated caboose (the no. 6017-100 SP-type borrowed from the O-27 line), to bring a world of fun and entertainment to Lionel enthusiasts.

The operating cars included a 3665 Minuteman missile launching car, a new 3349 turbo missile firing car, a new 3470 aerial target launching car, and a 3820 U.S.M.C. operating submarine car (shown as blue but made as olive drab).

THE POPULAR NO. 6500 Beechcraft Bonanza transport car was used in a single Super O set (no. 13018) and offered for separate sale at \$6.95. It was cataloged with a red-over-white plastic airplane (front). However, examples of that black-plastic flatcar with a white-over-red airplane have been reported for many years.





As an aside, Lionel Production Control Files listed only a boxed no. 3830-1 as part of this set, so olive drab flatcars were probably not available as a substitution. Thus, Lionel, like any manufacturer, reserved the right to change the prices, designs, and colors in its catalogs without notice.

The no. 13036 Plainsman was the last General outfit cataloged during the postwar era, and, judging from the set's illustration, probably the most colorful.

A no. 1872 old-time 4-4-0 steam locomotive (equipped with smoke, a headlight, and Magne-Traction) teamed for the very last time with a no. 1872T tender. The four cars they led included nos. 6445 Fort Knox gold bullion car (shown as red but painted silver as before), 3370 sheriff and outlaw car, 1876 illuminated General mail-baggage car, and 1875W illuminated General passenger car with whistle.

■ Two classics from 1962

Lionel wouldn't be Lionel without a 2-8-4 Berkshire steam locomotive pulling a heavy cargo of freight cars. Over the years, in fact, it cataloged an impressive total of 13 outfits headed by the classic 736 model. The no. 13048 Berkshire 5-car freight set (retailing for \$75) paired the 736 engine with a 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle tender.

The consist started with nos. 6822 night crew searchlight car and 6414 Evans auto loader (carrying four light yellow automobiles with gray bumpers or sometimes the rare dark yellow autos). Also in the 13048 were nos. 3362 helium tank unloading car, 6440 flatcar with a couple of gray plastic piggyback vans (the red car was incorrectly illustrated in the catalog as a blue model), and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated N5c porthole caboose (incorrectly shown as "Lionel Lines").

The no. 13058 Vanguard diesel freight set retailed for \$89.95 and included 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A units, five neat cars, and an accessory. The no. 470 missile launching platform with a no. 6470 exploding target car raised the outfit's quality.

THE VERY FIRST OUTFIT a reader of the Lionel consumer catalog for 1962 encountered was the no. 11201 Fast Starter. Retailing for less than \$20, that freight train featured a brand-new 2-4-2 steam engine, along with a new gondola and a new flatcar with a steel girder load.

Can't overlook the other outstanding contents that included three new cars: 3619 reconnaissance 'copter car, 3413 Mercury capsule launching car, and 6512 cherry picker car. Trailing behind was a reissued 6437 Pennsylvania RR N5c illuminated porthole caboose (again incorrectly shown as "Lionel Lines").

■ Peak of Super O sets

Hobbyists who preferred passenger service looked at set no. 13088 as their ticket to paradise. A 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A combination coupled to four brand-new gold-striped Presidential extruded-aluminum streamlined models: nos. 2523 *President Garfield* Pullman, two 2522 *President Harrison* Vista-Domes, and a 2521 *President McKinley* observation. The outfit boasted a retail price of \$120.

reason was plain: The 2360 GG1 retailed for \$59.95 and the 2383 F3s were \$55.

■ Handwriting on the wall

Counting the two O-27 outfits that were described in the annual advance catalog, Lionel cataloged two dozen train sets half a century ago, along with the hundreds of promotional outfits produced and packaged for a wide array of manufacturing and retail accounts. Seen strictly from the perspective of what the corporation offered and the wide variety of playthings it marketed, Lionel remained a prodigious and respected presence in the American marketplace for toys in 1962.

Sad to say, however, the flipside to that picture was declining sales in the face of heightened competition from the manufacturers of other kinds of toys. Electric



THE MARKETING STRATEGY OF PLACING A LIONEL SET IN AS MANY AMERICAN AS WELL AS CANADIAN HOMES AS POSSIBLE CONTINUED THROUGH 1962.

Finally came two Super O train sets led by a 2360 GG1. The no. 13068 Goliath, at \$100, had the last cataloged no. 6464 boxcar: no. -725 New Haven (painted orange). There also were the reissued nos. 6828 Harnischfeger crane car, 6416 boat transport car, 6827 Harnischfeger power shovel car, 6530 fire and safety training car, 6475 pickle car, and 6437 Pennsy illuminated porthole caboose (again incorrectly shown as "Lionel Lines").

The dual-motored 2360, like the 2383 Santa Fe A-A duo, pulled a 4-car passenger train consisting of the same four gold-striped models. So there was no purpose in showing the no. 13078 outfit. Be aware that Lionel listed outfit 13078 at \$125, which was \$5 more than its F3 counterpart. The

trains were losing the market edge that they had possessed for nearly all of the first 60 years of the 20th century. Despite the best efforts of Lionel's engineering and sales personnel, the company found it next to impossible to reverse that dangerous trend. Worry and gloom likely invaded every office.

Melvin Raney, the newly appointed president and chief executive officer of Lionel, captured the prevailing mood at the firm in his closing remarks to shareholders: "We look forward to 1963 with confidence but with the knowledge that there are problems still to be solved. We earnestly solicit your approval and support of the decisions we have made, and will make, toward solving them."



Fascinating and unknown



Product designations such as “X” and “NA” and “11-L” have until recently left Lionel collectors scratching their heads. Gifts Galore, Richie Premium, and Mercury Model meant nothing to nearly all of them. None could have defined the term “Retailer Promotional Outfit.”

Things have definitely changed! These designations and names are highly sought by hobbyists attending train shows and scanning listings for Internet auctions. Welcome to the world of uncataloged sets!

Not much beats the excitement of being at the forefront when a significant shift in thinking takes place. This is exactly what has happened during the past 30 years in an area of the toy train hobby collectors

once feared would remain mired in mystery and uncertainty.

Fans of postwar trains have learned much about the hundreds of outfits Lionel made beyond its cataloged line. Research using troves of newly available original documents has shed light on the fascinating yet often overlooked field of uncataloged sets.

■ Information about sets

Interest in everything Lionel produced and marketed between 1945 and 1969 gathered



DURING THE 1960S, marketing executives at Lionel worked with a wide assortment of customers to develop what are known as “promotional outfits” never shown in the firm’s annual consumer catalogs. Some of those highly collectible sets, including the no. 19320 from 1963 (left), came with an eye-popping number of models. The no. 2360 GG1 electric pulled nine pieces of rolling stock. This Super O outfit was available only through Sears, Roebuck & Co., which identified it as no. 9886.

uncataloged outfits

METICULOUS RESEARCH HAS HELPED SOLVE LINGERING MYSTERIES

momentum throughout the 1970s and '80s. The logical first step involved combing through the catalogs Lionel released each year to introduce its product line to consumers. Doing so helped hobbyists put together listings of the items offered to the public during particular years. They paid special attention to the train sets that were once merchandised.

Collectors aimed to verify the contents of individual outfits. That task required comparing what was stated and depicted in

consumer catalogs with actual sets. Then they studied other documents, notably the preliminary, or advance, catalogs released months before the consumer catalogs came out, to see whether manufacturers had made changes to their sets during a specific production year.

Informal lists of Lionel sets and their contents arrived first. They eventually gave way to published volumes. Those well-organized books featured black-and-white and color photographs of sets.

■ Importance of sets

Little by little, collectors put together an elementary outline of the sets Lionel had offered in its catalogs. They corrected mistakes about dates and components and nailed down facts about numbers and packaging. Research made clear that for decision makers looking at profitability, nothing had mattered as much as sets.

Sales executives as well as production



TO MAKE PROMOTIONAL sets more appealing, marketing executives might pack in its box switches or a crossover, an operating accessory, a set of billboards, or some novel item made out of cardboard. The no. X-628 from 1961 came with a crossover to form a figure-8 configuration. Lionel made the outfit available to a customer identified in relevant documents only as “Automotive.”

supervisors made sure everything a child or family required to enjoy operating a miniature railroad came in one big corrugated-cardboard box. They went to great lengths when spelling out which locomotive and group of railcars should be included in each set. They added sufficient track and the necessary instructional booklets. Usually, though not always, the individuals overseeing the line finished the set with a transformer.

Of course, the assortment of sets cataloged had varied in size and price because Lionel needed to reach potential customers whose budgets differed. No wonder the number of sets cataloged in a typical year seemed so large. Lionel might put on the market as many as 30 sets annually.

Besides being impressed by the variety of sets filling up the catalog, hobbyists appreciated how Lionel changed them each year in hopes of boosting sales, even with consumers who already owned a train. Year after year, consumer catalogs heralded new and more colorful and thrilling sets.

In general catalogs featured new sets only. Exceptions to that rule exist, of course. Occasionally in postwar days, corporate leaders carried sets over in their lines from one year to the next. They had done so either to meet high demand or get rid of excess inventory.

■ **Changing markets**

Something else about the postwar line assumed importance. For at least the first

half of the era, Lionel had been permitted to specify the price of each set. Federal fair trade practices had dictated that retail establishments of all sorts must sell consumer items at the same price, regardless of their size or finances. So, a set listed at for \$49.95 must go for that amount at the grandest urban department store as well as the simplest rural farm equipment supplier.

Perusing the catalogs Lionel had released for consumers in the early autumn of each year demonstrated that point. The retail prices of sets appeared there or in price sheets issued at the same time.

Upstart retailers, especially what were known as “discount houses,” began to challenge Fair Trade Laws in the middle and late 1950s. They saw no reason why they



AMONG THE MOST desirable promotional outfits released during the 1960s was the no. 19334, offered exclusively by J.C. Penney Co. in 1964. The 5-unit military-themed diesel freight set introduced several new olive drab plastic items. Increasing the play value of the train was a plastic bag filled with 10 toy soldiers. Only 400 sets were produced.

should be prevented from marking down prices as they chose in hopes of attracting more customers even if doing so cut into their profit margins. Courts agreed, and their rulings dramatically changed the market for Lionel and its rivals.

Toy train manufacturers responded to the erosion of fair trade practices by omitting prices from their catalogs. They went so far as to hedge on designating the contents of train sets. Letting retailers handle those decisions became their tactic. Producers would merely indicate the locomotives and cars currently made.

Managers of discount houses and buyers for department stores, in addition to reducing the prices of the sets stocked, accepted the opportunity to modify their contents. In short, it was not enough for them to purchase enormous quantities of sets included in the annual line put

together by Lionel and then market them for less. Enterprising retailers sought to exploit the freedom to lure potential customers with sets unlike those found on display at competitors.

The market for electric trains was, as Americans realized in the 1950s and ever after, undergoing monumental changes. So were the train sets being offered.

■ Meeting new demands

Whatever reluctance executives at Lionel might have felt for assembling uncataloged sets fell by the wayside as the 1950s wore on. They had no choice but to consider revising their sales philosophy with those special items.

For one thing, as noted, courts had routinely been overturning fair trade practices. Discounters and other determined retailers seized opportunities to treat toy trains as

merely other commodities by which to grab customers and pad sales.

For another thing, the market for toy trains was shrinking. When a host of customers, ranging from discount houses and chain outlets to premium enterprises and manufacturers of consumer goods, requested unique sets, top men at Lionel were ready to listen.

The details were finalized in internal documents seldom accessible to the public. Consequently, collectors in the 1970s and '80s had no accurate sense of how many uncataloged sets had been made or for whom. Often, they lacked information about which trains had been put in them.

With no published reports and advertising literature to study, hobbyists initially learned about the existence of uncataloged outfits only through personal observation or from word-of-mouth descriptions. Such



BY 1966, Lionel was cutting back on its list of promotional outfits. However, it did hammer out an agreement with Polk Model Craft Hobbies for 500 examples of set no. 19590. This O-27 set stood out because it provided owners with three of the no. 6464-series near-scale boxcars. At the end of the train rode a desirable no. 6517-75 bay window caboose painted and lettered for the Erie RR.

firsthand knowledge revealed Lionel sets existed with numbers or contents unlike what they could find in consumer catalogs. Empty set boxes as well as full ones served as evidence the firm had assembled such sets, but not much else was known.

■ Early efforts

If the first step in the long and exhausting process of deciphering the saga of uncataloged sets involved examining genuine examples, then the next took a few inquisitive collectors to public libraries and flea markets. They searched for surviving copies of old newspapers and magazines, vintage commercial and industry publications, and faded holiday catalogs from the post-war decades.

What were those researchers looking for? Advertisements and lists put out by the automotive and retail chains they knew had once collaborated with Lionel on developing uncataloged sets. From those scattered sources their base of knowledge about those long-forgotten trains grew. Yet the hit-and-miss nature of that tedious hunt frustrated some of them.

Ambitious collectors decided to explore

a different and ultimately more fruitful route. They visited the archives maintained by Sears, Roebuck & Co.; Spiegel; and Western Auto and consulted librarians affiliated with J.C. Penney and Montgomery Ward – all chains that they knew had marketed special Lionel sets.

The first attempt at publicizing what collectors Joe Algozzini and Paul Ambrose had learned appeared in the fourth volume of its *Greenberg's Guide to Lionel Trains, 1945-1969* (published in 1992). The two experts summarized the purposes served by uncataloged sets for both Lionel (broadening its market, especially at the low end, and depleting unsold or overstocked items)

STILL ANOTHER promotional outfit deserving of all the attention given it by collectors is the no. 19201-2, a diesel freight train from 1962. The rolling stock was a slick combination of military and traditional items. The best part of the O-27 set was the no. 910-1 Navy Yard cardboard display, which collectors also refer to as the atomic submarine base). It was just the right ancillary piece to accompany the no. 224 U.S. Navy Alco diesel A and B units and matching no. 6017-210 caboose.

and its many wholesale and retail accounts (obtaining trains whose prices they could manipulate to increase sales while still making money).

Ambrose and Algozzini observed many uncataloged sets duplicated cataloged ones, but were assigned different numbers by their buyers. And those numbers, whether

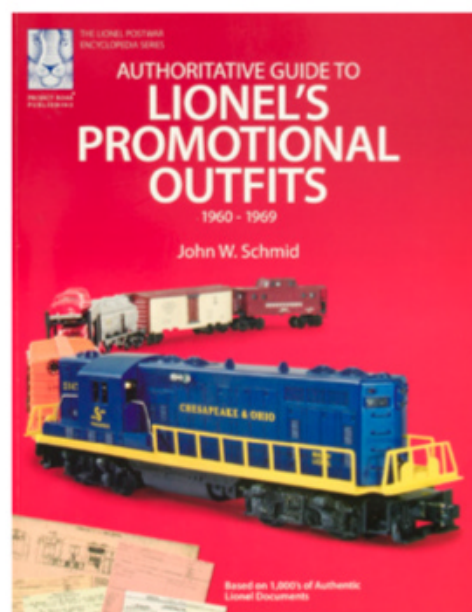


picked by either Lionel or particular customers, often proved inscrutable. After admitting that fact, the authors commented in general terms about the ways sets had been promoted and packaged and the frequency with which locomotives and rolling stock might be substituted for no other reason than to finalize business deals.

Chapters about the sets marketed by Sears, Ward, Spiegel, J.C. Penney, and Firestone followed in succession. Descriptions and photos accompanied handy charts listing all the known sets and, when relevant, their cataloged equivalents.

The longest section of the volume, spanning almost half the 128 pages, treated uncataloged sets marketed through what Algozzini and Ambrose referred to as "General Retailers." Grocery chains, manufacturers of automotive parts, pharmacies, trading stamp companies, department stores, and suppliers for convenience and hardware stores stood out among the miscellaneous customers.

The volume represented a noteworthy start. Yet it was one Algozzini, Ambrose, and others hoped would inspire more research and lead to more information.



SO MUCH OF WHAT postwar collectors now know about the contents of uncataloged sets from the 1960s, along with their customer, quantity, and packing, was presented for the first time in *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969*. This 848-page reference book was released in 2007 by Project Roar Publishing Co. (www.projectroar.com).

■ Breakthrough for Lionel

In 2001, to the amazement of longtime and novice collectors, an auction of items belonging to Richard Kughn, former owner of Lionel Trains Inc., included a tall stack of loose-leaf

binders purported to have information about uncataloged sets. A closer look revealed page after page of factory order forms, instructions, and packing sheets containing the names, dates, components, quantities, and box specifications about hundreds of items created by Lionel between 1960 and 1966.

George and John Schmid turned out to

The 848-page *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969* drew rave reviews from serious collectors. Some all but memorized the introductory chapters narrating the history of uncataloged sets and the numbering system Lionel formulated and its dizzying range of suffixes. The section outlining the assortment of peripherals, accessories, and scenery items filling out some of the sets captured the attention of other readers.

The Schmid's massive reference, put out by their Project Roar Publishing Co., has altered the course of toy train collecting.

■ More to come?

Gratifying, isn't it, to realize how stores of information carefully gleaned from authentic documents have expanded



THE MARKET FOR ELECTRIC TRAINS WAS, AS AMERICANS REALIZED IN THE 1950S AND EVER AFTER, UNDERGOING MONUMENTAL CHANGES.

be the successful bidders for the amazing notebooks. In time, father and son would generously share the information with the collecting community. Before they would do so, however, the pair recognized that more research into the uncataloged outfits and the mind-boggling variety of customers was essential.

Over the next six years, John and his sister, Christy, traveled to libraries and other facilities to sketch the background of the businesses Lionel had dealt with through much of the 1960s. George, in the meantime, joined John in seeking out authentic examples of the uncataloged sets mentioned in the notebooks. Paperwork needed to be compared against trains.

Comprehensive research conducted by two generations of Schmid's paved the way for John to write detailed descriptions and analyses of each of the more than 800 O-27, O gauge, and Super O outfits Lionel had assembled for different customers. With the lists of all the items added to particular sets, he appended color photos of hundreds of sets, some of which had never been shown in the past.

understanding of uncataloged Lionel sets. Hundreds of O gauge sets unfamiliar or unknown to train collectors when *Classic Toy Trains* made its debut in 1987 can now be thoroughly validated.

Bright as this perspective may be, more awaits. The Schmid's admitted to their readers the contents and buyers of plenty of uncataloged sets still needed documentation. In particular, what Lionel did between 1956 and 1959 remained unclear because order forms and packing sheets for outfits dating from those key years have yet to surface. Do they still exist?

For now, though, take comfort in how much about Lionel has been uncovered. Collectors understand the postwar history of the company to a much fuller extent, thanks in large part to the research published about its uncataloged sets.

Thanks go to Joe Algozzini, Mark Gaffner, Joe Sadorf, George and John Schmid, and Clark Vegazo for sharing uncataloged Lionel sets in their collections. All outfits shown courtesy Project Roar Publishing Co. unless noted otherwise.





6413 MERCURY CAPSULE CARRYING CAR



AN HONEST LOOK at the product line for 1962 might conclude that a part – rather than a model – was a star of the year. Designers created a brand-new component they subsequently used on two distinctive pieces of rolling stock and could have incorporated into an operating accessory.

The part was a detailed replica of an American spacecraft making headlines in 1962. Youngsters and adults had heard about the Mercury capsule and associated it with a new type of national hero. Whoever thought of developing an O gauge model and using it on an operating car and as the cargo for a freight car deserved a raise. It became the centerpiece of the 6413 Mercury capsule carrying car.

■ **Everybody knew it**

The space race between the United States and the Soviet Union generated an endless supply of news stories. Americans believed their country was in competition with the other superpower to be the first to put a man in orbit. Victory would belong to whichever proved to be more adventurous, more

daring, and more intelligent. People waited anxiously to see who would win.

The program launched in the U.S. was known as Project Mercury. Though the Soviet Union was first to launch a man into space and safely return him, the U.S. followed shortly thereafter when Alan Shepherd climbed aboard the capsule atop a rocket sent from Cape Canaveral.

The events of May 1961 thrilled Americans of every age, as did the launch of Virgil “Gus” Grissom two months later. Presumably, Lionel was hard at work on a replica of the Mercury capsule prior to the exciting news of John Glenn orbiting Earth three times in February of 1962. Once the model was finished, company engineers had to figure out how best to use it to promote sales of Lionel trains.

■ **Two notable cars**

Designers developed two types of rolling stock. One railcar would transport one or two of the Mercury capsules. Its operating companion could launch the spacecraft manually or remotely.

The no. 3413 Mercury capsule launching car earned top prize. Kids launched a rocket carrying a capsule, which flew upward until its parachute opened.

For the 6413, designers came up with a clever way to reuse a specialized piece of rolling stock. They took the plastic frame used for the no. 6519 Allis-Chalmers car (cataloged from 1958 through '61) and made it the foundation for the 6413.

over their blue plastic frame. In addition, engineers working on the 6413 removed the brake wheels that had been secured to each end of the Allis Chalmers car.

The markings announced the 6413 was bound for Cape Canaveral. No one could have mistaken it for anything other than a specialized piece of rolling stock tied to the Mercury Project.

■ **Different uses**

The 6413 came with a pair of the capsules secured with an elastic band through openings in the upper frame. Maybe it didn't promise all the slick action of its operating comrade, but the Mercury capsule carrying car was worth owning.

Lionel assigned the attractive freight car to a couple of O-27 sets cataloged for 1962: the nos. 11232 “New Haven” Diesel Freight (priced at \$29.95) and 11288 “Orbitor” Diesel Freight (priced at \$49.95). The 11-inch-long model also showed up as a component of a whopping 13 promotional outfits in that year.

STARS OF 1962

The key difference between the two pieces of rolling stock related to their color: the 6519 had been molded out of orange plastic, and the 6413 was molded out of blue. Some models of the new capsule transport ended up being painted blue

6463 ROCKET FUEL DOUBLE-DOME TANK CAR



QUIZ VIRTUALLY ANYONE who received a Lionel freight outfit between 1945 and '57 about the importance of a tank car, and you'll be bombarded with memories about the Sunoco or Gulf model included with the set. Young engineers likely believed a single- or double-dome car

constructed to transport petroleum to refiners, gasoline to fuel distributors, or liquid chemicals to manufacturers was essential.

Turn around and ask anyone who received a Lionel freight outfit between 1958 and '69, however, and you'll hear a different story. Heck, you may even get a blank stare or a puzzled look in response, indicative of a child who then had no idea what a tank car did or whether it served a necessary purpose on a train.

Times change, so the introduction of the no. 6463 double-dome rocket fuel tank car hardly caused a stir among fans of O gauge railroading. They viewed the car as having a minor role.

■ Changing roles

Tankers had been ubiquitous from the prewar era into the postwar. Deals between Lionel and Sunoco and then Shell in the 1930s and '40s explained why single- and double-dome cars came lettered for those two petroleum giants. Sunoco returned to dominate after the war, with its name and herald appearing on models with one, two, or three domes.

The problem with tank cars for Lionel was there was no way liquids could safely be stored in them. Designers

struggled to increase the play value. No answer surfaced, which meant pleasure came only through imagination.

By the late 1950s, however, decision makers, facing a challenging market, recognized how much weight consumers put on what they could do with a train. Kids and adults demanded animation, visual effects, and realistic loads from the various pieces of rolling stock packed in sets. Sheer imagination wasn't enough.

Consequently, the central role once played by tankers in filling out outfits and diversifying a miniature freight train shrank. Lionel's leaders, aware of the shortcomings of their single- and double-dome tank cars, deleted nearly all of them from the line. Few cataloged sets featured a tank car after 1958.

■ Trying something new

The initial answer offered by marketing leaders was to reduce the roster of tankers as much as possible lest outfits lose their appeal and sales collapse. A deal made with Cities Service led to the introduction of a green-painted variation of the popular no. 6465 tank car equipped with double domes. At least Lionel could make some money off it.

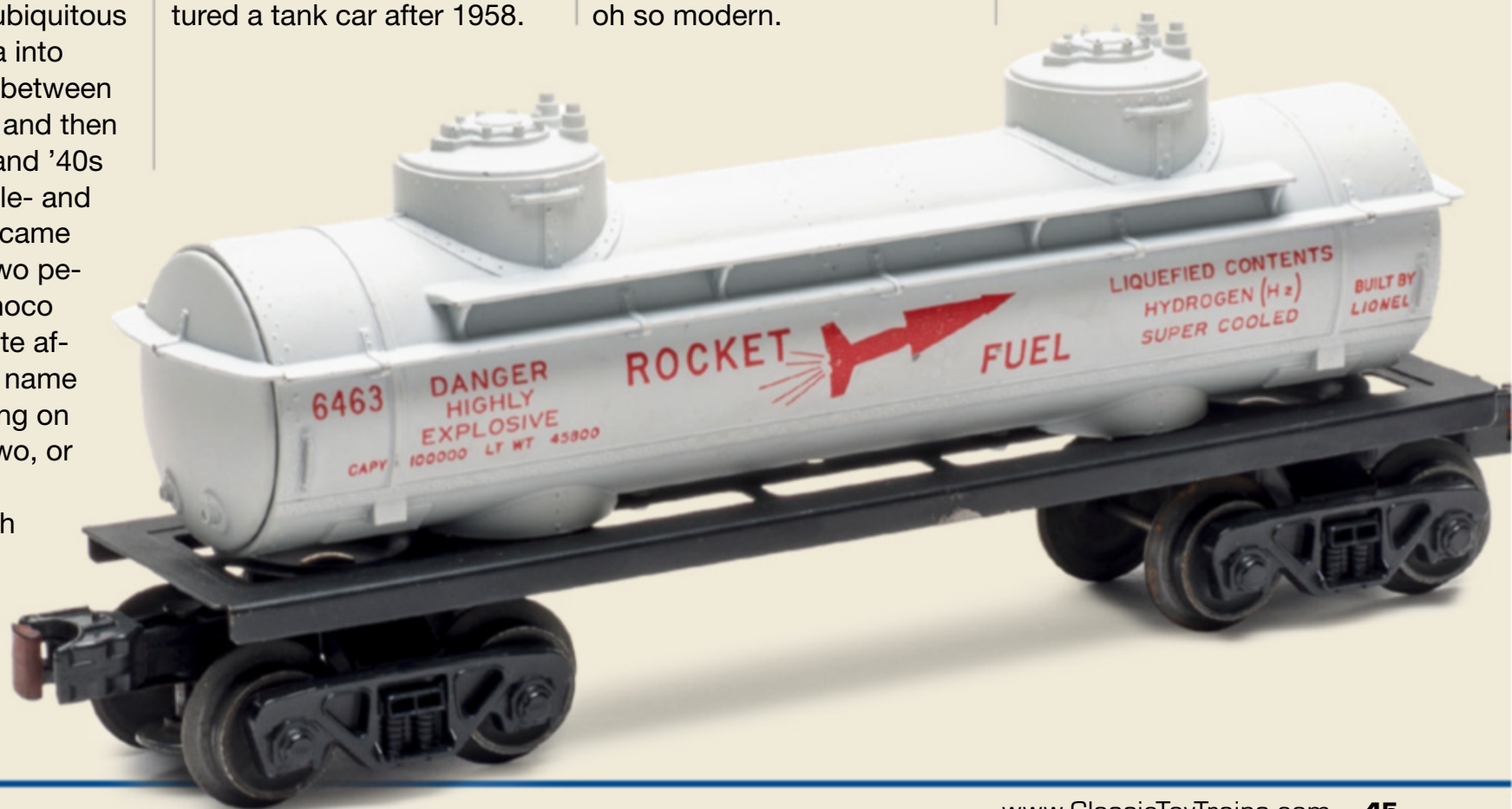
A different scheme emerged for 1962. The basic nature of a tank car – its lacking any potential for animation and being plain in decoration and detail – somehow made it right for appealing to children fascinated by space travel.

Members of the Engineering Department would pick up the plastic shell used for the double-dome tank car and brighten it with graphics related to the space age. Thus was born the 6463, whose lettering declared it carried rocket fuel. Painted white and rubber-stamped bright red, it looked bold and oh so modern.

Next, executives needed to decide where and how to use the eye-catching tank car, described in the consumer catalog as "A real 'missile age' railroad accessory." They began by making it available for separate sale for \$4.95.

In addition, Lionel placed the 6463 tank car in two O-27 outfits for 1962: the nos. 11252 "Texas Special" Diesel Freight (listed at \$39.95) and 11288 "Orbitor" Diesel Freight (priced at \$49.95). A total of 15 promotional outfits came with a rocket fuel car in 1962, with many others offering one over the next three years.

The appearance of a 6463 in several uncataloged sets as late as 1965 was quite a feat because Lionel deleted its only space-oriented double-dome tank car from the cataloged line after it was used in one O-27 outfit in 1963 (no. 11341). Evidently, there was plenty of leftover inventory to sell via outside customers.



Super O and promotional outfits offered gems

SUPERB ENGINES AND ROLLING STOCK REMAINED TO BE ENJOYED



THE BRAND-NEW NO. 634 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher served as the motive power for the no. 11341 Space-Prober. That O-27 outfit featured five freight cars.



The year 1963 is probably best remembered by older Americans as the year President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Tex. And if you're a baby boomer, do you happen to remember where you were when you first heard the terrible news of Friday, November 22, 1963?

In the sporting world, two of the most successful franchises calling New York City home took it on the chin in 1963. The Los Angeles Dodgers swept the Yankees in the World Series, four games to zip. Then the Chicago Bears surprised the New York Giants 14-10 for the National Football League championship.

Also suffering was another New York icon, the Lionel Corp. The business lost more than \$4 million that year. Lionel President and Chief Executive Officer Melvin Raney acknowledged to stockholders, "There are problems to be solved." Yet cir-

cumstances worsened, and Lionel reported losses of \$6.5 million for 1963.

Ironically, many of the sets released that year had impressive locomotives and rolling stock. They deserve our attention, as they show how engineers and sales executives at Lionel continued to develop and market memorable trains.

■ Advance sets ... down to one

After offering two or more outfits in its advance catalog every year since 1960, Lionel elected to package only one for 1963. How unfortunate for the company and its

customers the no. 11415 Trendsetter set, which had a retail price of less than \$8, lacked the value of its low-end predecessors.

On the point of that O-27 freight train was a no. 1061 plastic steam locomotive with an 0-4-0 wheel arrangement that rode the rails in a forward motion only. It pulled a no. 1061T black-plastic slope-back tender with no markings. The set came with two freight cars: the nos. 6502-50 blue plastic flatcar with an orange plastic girder and 6167-25 undecorated red plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose.

Lionel lauded the 11415 as "Biggest News In Model Railroading History ... A New, Complete Lionel Net Priced Outfit At An All-Time Low, Low Price." It packaged 85,000 sets for sale in a 7¾ x 10¾-inch box, with grand hopes of getting a foothold in as many homes as possible and putting a dent in that 1962 deficit.



■ Promotional sets still strong

For the fourth straight year, Lionel made more than 200,000 promotional sets. The goal, as before, was to reach households across the country with a toy train set.

Outfit no. 19216 was notable because it included two locomotives plus a pair of items considered rare. The nos. 1061 2-4-2 steamer and 1065 Union Pacific Alco diesel came with four freight cars: nos. 6045-150 Lionel Lines tank car, 6062-25 New York Central gondola, 6050-150 Van Camp savings bank car, and 6067-25 unmarked brown-plastic SP-type caboose. The black-plastic gondola included three plastic cable reels, usually orange but occasionally brown like the caboose.

The gems were the nos. X625-20 cardboard scenic set (made in Japan) and 903 set of 24 “trading cards.” The latter would more accurately be described as “promotional cards,” because you got all 24 cards: So what was there to trade?

Set no. 9730 really interests us because it included a pair of no. 6464-series boxcars. The no. 218 Santa Fe Alco A-A combination pulled five other freight cars: the nos. 6469-50 liquefied gas tank car, 6465-150 Lionel Lines tank car, 6476-25 red plastic Lehigh Valley hopper, 6473-25 rodeo car, and a 6017-25 SP-type caboose.

As for the boxcars, they came unboxed in the set carton, which meant that Lionel assigned different suffixes to them. Specifically, it used 6464-750 instead of -725 for the New Haven car and 6464-925 instead of -900 for the New York Central.

Lionel continued to reach out to “brand-name” companies, with set no. 19263 being

targeted to Libby’s. For \$10.95, plus four labels from cans of Libby products, you got a no. 1062 0-4-0 black-plastic steamer coupled to a scarce no. 1060T-50 Southern Pacific black plastic tender and four cars.

Those models included the nos. 6050-175 Libby’s boxcar and 6475-50 Libby’s Crushed Pineapple vat car, both developed for this set. Blue plastic was the norm for the 6475-50, but harder-to-find versions in aqua were also packaged.

Rounding out that neat set were two other new cars: the nos. 6076-125 ATSF (Santa Fe) hopper and 6167-75 Union Pacific SP-type caboose in yellow plastic.

Anyone intent on acquiring an O gauge empire sought set no. 19312. It’s highly desirable because only 660 were packaged and the contents were amazing!

Two Alco diesels (the nos. 230 Chesapeake & Ohio and 231 Rock Island) led six cars: the nos. Lionel Lines 6045-150 tank car, 6464-725 New Haven boxcar (labeled “6484-25” because it was supposed to have one operating coupler and one dummy), 6536-25 Minneapolis & St. Louis quad hopper, 6825-25 flatcar with black plastic trestle bridge, 3545 TV monitor car, and 6059-50 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Talk about play value! But the 19312 didn’t stop with just a train. Also included were two motorized units (the nos. 50 section gang car and 59 Minuteman switcher) plus accessories (the nos. 262 highway crossing gate and 375 motorized turntable). We can’t forget the pair of no. 1122 switches, no. 260 illuminated bumper, track, and powerful type-KW 190-watt transformer to handle all the action.



THE CONSUMER CATALOG released for 1963 showed electric trains as well as the new road-racing sets on its cover.

However, if you preferred real power, then set no. 19320 was an easy choice. It, too, could be the start of a well-planned model railroad empire.

Headed by a no. 2360 Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric with two motors, that outfit came with nine freight cars. This quantity hearkened back to set no. 1585W from 1957. Be aware that the 19320 came with O gauge models and the 1585W had smaller and lighter O-27 ones.

■ Three O-27 sets below \$20

When youngsters looked through the consumer catalog for 1963 for the first time, they were surprised to find that each page was depicted in black and white rather than full color as before. Only red highlights broke up the monotony.

Even so, the outfits had just the right touch of play value to be marketable. By the way, Lionel offered only 10 O-27 sets, down from 13 the previous year.

Starter set no. 11311, called the “Value Packed Steam Freightier,” retailed for \$14.95.



The 1062 0-4-0 steam engine came with a no. 1061T-25 slope-back tender. Unlike the 1061 steam locomotive in the advance catalog outfit, this model featured a 2-position reverse unit (forward and reverse) as well as a working headlight.

The pair pulled three cars: nos. 6409-25 Lionel Lines flatcar with three plastic pipes, 6076-100 unmarked gray plastic hopper, and 6167-25 red plastic caboose. All models had non-operating AAR trucks only.

The no. 11321, priced at \$2 more, was a better value. Leading the four cars was a no. 221 Denver & Rio Grande Western Alco A unit. Next came the nos. 6076-75 black-plastic Lehigh Valley hopper, 6042-75 blue-plastic New York Central gondola with two dark-orange cable reels, and 6167-50 yellow-plastic SP-type caboose.

There was even an operating unit in the 11321 – the no. 3309 turbo missile launching car. Lionel's marketing plan must have envisioned customers buying an exploding boxcar or another car to add to the train set.

Priced at \$19.95, set no. 11331 relied on a no. 242 steamer with a headlight coupled to a 1060T-25 Lionel Lines tender. The Outdoorsman offered four freight cars: the nos. 6473 rodeo car, 6476-25 red plastic Lehigh Valley hopper, 6142 Lionel gondola with two red plastic canisters, and 6059-50 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Lionel contemplated packaging 17,000 examples of sets 11321 and 11331. Those quantities gave some inside information about how many cataloged outfits executives thought they could sell just below the \$20 suggested retail price.

■ Mid-range O-27 sets

The no. 11341 Space-Prober was a value at \$25, as it included the new no. 634 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher. A no. 3410 Lionel

helicopter launching car guaranteed play value. Also included was a collector favorite, the no. 6407 flatcar with removable Mercury capsule (produced by Sterling Plastics of Union, N.J.).

Since Lionel packed the 6407 unboxed within the set, personnel added a -25 suffix for identification. When the red plastic flatcar labeled "Lionel" was boxed for separate sale, only "6407" was stamped at each end of that package.

The Space-Prober came with a brand-new no. 6014-325 white-plastic Frisco boxcar with a slot cut in its roof to encourage kids to deposit coins they could use later to purchase another Lionel item or two. Rounding out that solid outfit were the nos. 6463 rocket fuel tank car and a common 6059-50 M&StL SP-type caboose.

The last of five O-27 outfits retailing for less than \$30 was the no. 11351 Land Rover. That 5-car freight set included the brand-new no. 237 2-4-2 steamer with smoke and a headlight coupled to a 1060T-25 Lionel Lines streamlined tender.

Also new in that train was the no. 6408-25 Lionel flatcar with five plastic pipes. Returning were the nos. 6050-100 Swift savings bank car, 6465-150 Lionel Lines two-dome tank car, 6162-25 New York Central gondola with three white-plastic canisters, and 6119-100 Delaware, Lackawanna & Western work caboose.

The 6408-25 was a red-plastic flatcar with "Lionel" heat-stamped in white on both sides. It was fitted with one operating and one dummy AAR plastic truck.

Another car collectors covet that's a known component of this set is the 6050-100 with two openings on the roof. That desirable model was part of the design for the no. 3357 cop and hobo car, which Lionel had introduced in 1962.

Next was the no. 11361 Shooting Star, which had a retail price of \$35. By the way, don't confuse that cataloged outfit with the no. 11361-500, a promotional item released late in the year to get rid of excess stock.

The Shooting Star included three action cars: the nos. 3665-100 Minuteman missile launching car, 3413-150 Mercury capsule launching car, and 6470 exploding target car, all pulled by no. 211 *Texas Special* Alco A-A units. Those two diesels also handled a no. 6413 Mercury capsule carrying car. Last came a no. 6257-100 SP-type caboose with a die-cast metal smokestack for realism.

■ O-27 sets with neat cars

Another great set was the no. 11375, dubbed the Cargomaster. That 6-car train retailing for \$39.95 and featured a new no. 238 2-4-2 steam locomotive with headlight and smoke coupled to a no. 234W whistling tender.





The best of the items in that outfit were the nos. 6822-50 night crew searchlight car and 6414-150 Evans auto transport car. Four familiar and basic items came with them: the nos. 6465-150 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper, 6162-25 blue New York Central gondola with three white canisters, and 6257-100 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose with a die-cast metal smokestack.

Lionel assigned each component a specific suffix, which meant they were packaged unboxed within the set box. Also, each car was fitted with one operating and one dummy coupler truck, except the 6476, which had two operating trucks.

A 6414 with four brown plastic cars was the norm, but models with four green autos are known to have been put in that set. Green cars were the norm for 6414s offered for separate sale. All the same, brown ones could easily have been substituted.

Retailing for \$49.95 was the no. 11385

LIONEL INTRODUCED some outstanding models in 1963 that it used as neat components of different cataloged outfits. Left to right: the nos. 6469 Erie RR liquefied gas tank car, 6464-900 New York Central boxcar, 6446 Norfolk & Western cement car, and 6446-60 Lehigh Valley covered hopper.

Space Conqueror. Its scarce combination of a no. 223 Santa Fe Alco power unit and a no. 218C Santa Fe B unit led four action cars: the nos. 3619-100 reconnaissance coupler car, 3470-100 aerial target launching car, 3349-100 turbo missile firing car, and 3830-75 operating submarine car. Behind came the nos. 6407-25 flatcar with a missile (made for Lionel by Sterling Plastics) and 6257-100 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose.

Once again, the consumer catalog listed a suffix for all the cars except the 6407 flatcar with a missile ("6407-25" was understood), which meant some kind of change from normal packaging was involved. For the most part, the cars came unboxed within this set, so that probably explained the reason for the suffixes.

The 3470 included with the 11385 was usually the hard-to-find model molded in a lighter blue plastic than the normal dark blue. That version was fitted with one operating and one dummy coupler truck.

A 3619 instruction sheet (dated 1963) mentioned a 3619 with one operating and one dummy coupler truck, instead of the normal two operating ones. However, since Lionel scheduled only 2,000 sets for packaging, it seems likely it just packed the sets in accordance with procedures at that time. Thus, the 3619 was packaged as always (with two operating couplers), but came unboxed.

■ **Finest O-27 outfits**

At the pinnacle of the O-27 roster stood two outfits. Priced at \$59.95, the no. 11395 Musclemans 6-car freight set featured a no. 2037 2-6-4 die-cast metal steam locomotive fully equipped with smoke, headlight, and Magne-Traction. It was coupled to a no. 234W Lionel Lines whistling tender.

Lionel made sure to include quality cars in that outfit to support its suggested retail price. They were the nos. 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6469-50 Erie RR liquefied gas tank car, 6536 M&StL quad hopper, 6440-50



THE VENERABLE NO. 736 Berkshire steam locomotive with its matching whistling tender led one of the premier Super O outfits cataloged by Lionel for 1963. Set no. 13118 came with six exciting pieces of rolling stock, including three newcomers to the current roster.



Lionel twin piggyback van car, 6560-50 crane car, and 6119-100 DL&W work caboose.

Interestingly, the consumer catalog actually described the 6464-725 as a 6484 New Haven boxcar. As noted, that was Lionel's corresponding number if that boxcar happened to be packaged with one operating coupler and one dummy.

Of course, the O-27 listing wouldn't be complete without a passenger train. Set no. 11405 was worth every penny of its suggested retail price of \$69.95.

Although the catalog was printed in black and white, youngsters could discern that the

Western covered hopper, 6469 liquefied gas tank car, and 6447 Pennsylvania RR non-illuminated porthole caboose) as well as a pair of two returning items (6414 Evans auto transport car and 6464-900 New York Central boxcar) filled out the box for 13098.

A sleeper was a variation of the NYC boxcar known to be a component of this set. That car had black-plastic doors. To be factory-correct, however, the final "0" in the "6464-900" stamped on each side must almost touch the right vertical line. Also, the original box must be a darker 1963 type, with an inside "63" date.

the no. 736 Berkshire as part of a set, and the no. 13118 steam freight was a fantastic value for only \$75. Coupled to a 736W Pennsy tender, the 2-8-4 steam locomotive led six quality and highly collectible cars in an outfit of which only 600 were packaged.

Lionel mixed carryovers from 1962 with items from 1963. The contents of that set included three new items: the nos. 6315-60 Lionel Lines chemical tank car, 6446-60 Lehigh Valley covered hopper, and DL&W 6429 work caboose. Also packed inside were nos. 3362 helium tank unloading car, 6560 crane car, and 6827 flatcar with Harnischfeger power shovel.

To be correct, the 6446-60 hopper must have a red-painted roof with 12 red plastic hinged hatch lids. Also, the box for the tank car has "6315-50" stamped at each box end, and the 6429 has two operating couplers.



FOR THE FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR, LIONEL MADE MORE THAN 200,000 PROMOTIONAL SETS.

218 Santa Fe Alco A-A units pulled four illuminated silver Santa Fe cars with blue stripes (the nos. 2414 Pullman, two 2412 Vista-Domes, and 2416 observation). They probably remembered seeing the same set the previous two years, but with different numbers (no. 1651 for 1961 and no. 11308 for 1962).

■ Nice offering of Super O sets

Even though decision makers at Lionel cut the number of Super O outfits in the cataloged line from nine the previous year to six in 1963, they made sure to create some magnificent ones. Those sets ranged in price from \$49.95 to \$120.

First in the consumer catalog was the no. 13098, named Goliath. Retailing for less than \$50, it offered a no. 637 die-cast metal 2-6-4 steamer with Magne-Traction, smoke, and a working headlight. Coupled to the 637 was a no. 736W Pennsylvania RR streamlined whistle tender.

A trio of cool newcomers (the nos. 6446 Norfolk &

If you preferred a train with a military orientation for \$49.95, the no. 13108 was your ticket. The six-car set featured the brand-new no. 617 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher, complete with a headlight, horn, and Magne-Traction.

That outfit boasted five action cars, notably the nos. 3665 Minuteman missile launching car, 3419 operating helicopter launching car, 6448 exploding target range car, 3830 operating submarine car, and 3470 aerial target launching car. At the rear rode a 6119-100 DL&W work caboose.

For the fifth straight year, Lionel cataloged

■ Ready for the best!

Santa Fe F3 diesels had plenty to do in 1963. They led two of the top-tier Super O sets cataloged, beginning with the no. 13128, which retailed at \$89.95.

The A-A diesel combination pulled the nos. 3619 reconnaissance copter car, 3413 Mercury capsule car, 6512 cherry picker car, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated caboose. With those four pieces of rolling stock came a boxed no. 448 missile





OTHER NEWCOMERS to the line that found their way into cataloged outfits included (left to right): the nos. 6429 Delaware, Lackawanna & Western work caboose; 6447 Pennsylvania RR porthole caboose; 6315-60 Lionel Lines chemical tank car; and 6407 flatcar with missile.

firing range set with camouflage and a 6448 exploding target range car.

For the last time during the postwar era, Lionel cataloged a Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric-profile locomotive. The no. 2360, described as the “finest loco in model railroading,” headed outfit no. 13138. Next came the nos. 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6828 flatcar with Harnischfeger crane, 6416 boat transport car, 6827 flatcar with Harnischfeger power shovel, 6315-60 Lionel Lines chemical tank car, 6436-110 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR porthole caboose.

The description of the 13138 in the consumer catalog listed the boxcar as “6464-735,” which is the number stamped on its

original box. But New Haven cars were always heat-stamped “6464-725” on both sides of their shells.

The 6436-110 Lehigh Valley quad hopper is another interesting car, as its first production run probably paralleled that of the 6446-60 Lehigh Valley covered hopper from set 13118 that had “New 3-55” heat-stamped on both sides of the shell. The normal run for the 6436-110 omitted “New 3-55.”

There was at the very top the no. 13148 *Super Chief* passenger outfit. The 2383 A-A combination again pulled four Presidential streamlined illuminated cars: two nos. 2523 *President Garfield* Pullmans, a 2522 *President Harrison* Vista-Dome, and a 2521 *President McKinley* observation car, all for the grand price of \$120.

That glamorous train measured an incredible 7½ feet in length. Its retail price duplicated that of its all-but-identical predecessor (outfit no. 13088) from 1962. The only difference was that the latter included only one Pullman, and two Vista Domes.

■ Reaching out to all buyers

Executives acted aggressively in 1963 to market train sets to as many households as was possible. Unfortunately, the decline in craftsmanship had a far-reaching, negative effect on the company, which had a reputation for products built to last and guaranteed outstanding play and financial value.

To be specific, 1963 could be considered the year of the non-operating AAR coupler truck. That part made uncoupling cars more difficult, thereby frustrating so many of children who wanted to be entertained by their trains.

In addition, cheap train sets manufactured to be throwaway items were far from a smart way to introduce a family to the Lionel brand. How would corporate leaders motivate irate consumers to add more items or build 3-rail layouts?

In short, 1963 represented a time of hope and frustration at Lionel. Yet collectors still find items from that year worth striving to own and display.



ANOTHER SUPERB O-27 OUTFIT from 1963 was the no. 11375. The brand-new no. 238 2-4-2 steam locomotive with headlight and smoke pulled six cars, the best of which were the nos. 6822-50 night crew searchlight car and 6414-150 Evans auto transport car.



6407 FLATCAR WITH MISSILE



COLLECTORS PROBABLY can't avoid conceiving of every year at Lionel as unique and distinct. They focus on the outfits and models the firm cataloged for that particular time, inevitably putting on mental blinders that cut off what happened before and after.

So, they miss comprehending how planning and production there represented a flow, with ideas and items carrying over as the calendar changed.

Consider what was going as 1962 came to a close: designers and marketers were capitalizing on the public's interest in and support of Project Mercury, the program aimed at sending astronauts into space. So Lionel had introduced two cars featuring replicas of the space capsule.

Turning to 1963, the same individuals pondered how they might keep building on the national excitement, especially with the U.S. launching more men into orbit in Mercury spacecraft. The answer was another slick and eye-catching load fastened to a basic flatcar. The no. 6407 flatcar with missile, cataloged only in 1963, transported a sizable rocket capped by the familiar Mercury capsule.

■ Outside vendor

During the late 1950s and into the '60s, engineering and production managers at the Lionel factory occasionally contended that to save money and time, they ought to contract with outside vendors to manufacture a variety of key parts. Those components ranged from injection-molded plastic body shells to tiny electric motors. More prominent were the toys utilized as loads for flatcars.

Noteworthy examples of that trend included the different military vehicles acquired from Pyro Plastics for the flatcars in the no. 6800 series making its debut in 1958.

For the 6407 flatcar, Lionel turned to another plastics business within a short radius of the plant in Irvington, N.J.: Sterling Plastics Co., which produced school supplies. One of its best sellers was a pencil sharpener enclosed in

a plastic case created to look like a Mercury capsule.

Lionel reached out to Sterling to buy a supply of its rocket with a Mercury capsule, though not with a pencil sharpener. After all, what need did Lionel have for a load equipped with a sharpener?

The possibility exists that some of the rockets acquired from Sterling did have a pencil sharpener in the Mercury capsule molded out of blue plastic. Lionel was buying approximately 10,000 of these parts, so some likely arrived with the extra feature. But Lionel had no wish or need to pay for the piece.

■ Sharp sets

The consumer catalog for 1963 can leave you a bit

background. The trains seemed shorter than they must really have been. Furthermore, the accompanying text made plain how few new items Lionel had.

But the flatcar with missile was a bright spot. Copywriters heralded it as "New! Flat Car with Missile and Removable Mercury Capsule."

The 6407 appeared as a component of two cataloged sets. Kids could find it in the no. 11341, an O-27 freight train pulled by the brand-new no. 634 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switch engine. The 5-car outfit, nicknamed "Space-Prob-er," had a retail price of \$25. Or they might pick up a 6407 by getting the no. 11385, the so-called "Space Conqueror," for \$49.95. That O-27 set featured six excellent cars as well as the nos. 223 Santa Fe Alco A unit and 218 Santa Fe Alco B unit.

All but lost amid the more than a dozen illustrations of other "fun packed rolling stock" cataloged for 1963 was the artwork for the 6407 as a separate-sale item. The 11-inch-long red flatcar with its big missile was available for \$4.95.

STARS OF 1963

disheartened, as it might have kids almost 60 years ago. Beyond the front cover with its illustration of a race car barreling by a steamer, there wasn't a lot to entice you.

Illustrations of sets dissolved into black-and-white renderings on a light pink

6469 LIQUEFIED GAS TANK CAR



THERE WAS A degree of cleverness about the creation of the no. 6407 flatcar with missile that reflected well on how designers and marketing personnel continued to expand the train line even when the resources available were being cut. Another innovative load aimed to broaden the roster

of flatcars, thereby enabling Lionel to boast about a new piece of rolling stock.

The no. 6469 liquefied gas tank car deserves mention as one of the final achievements of the Engineering Department. Sadly, corporate heads would shutter it after 1963 as they struggled to balance the books and survive in a changing marketplace for toys.

■ New tankers

The 6469 demonstrates how often new models documented in miniature developments on American railroading. One of the key changes going on before and after World War II involved the use of tank cars.

Single- and double-dome tankers had still transported a variety of petroleum products, especially crude oil and gasoline. Increasingly, however, shippers in postwar America were relying on tank cars to move other types of liquids, everything from chocolate to orange juice to vegetable oil.

But even more different kinds of products had begun depending on tank cars to reach markets. Liquefied types of petroleum gas, in particular butane and propane used for heating residential structures, took on greater importance. The demand for high-pressure tank cars skyrocketed in the 1940s and '50s. Insulated tankers everywhere handled anhydrous ammonia, chlorine, and methyl chloride.

With that new breed of tank car becoming a familiar presence on full-size railroads, manufacturers of miniature trains had an incentive to add models. And engineers at Lionel wanted to do so, but the prospect of developing new tooling and molds for a novel single-dome tanker required allocating limited resources.

If designers hoped to add a tank car transporting liquefied gases to the Lionel roster, they would have to chart a simple and inexpensive course.

■ Familiar start

The tale behind the 6469 opened in 1956. Designers, striving to eliminate steps in the creation and manufacturing of new items, had taken the common no. 6511-2 red plastic frame and fitted it with a black-plastic bulkhead at each end. Thus emerged a new contemporary flatcar: the no. 6467 miscellaneous car.

The same model returned in 1957, only now it had a load. The no. 6477 miscellaneous car, cataloged through 1958, came with the five silver-gray plastic pipes packed with each no. 6511 pipe car, which Lionel had dropped.

Looking to 1963, someone recalled the miscellaneous car. He saw how it might be embellished with a part and thereby be transformed into a model of a tank car transporting liquefied gases.

Riding between the black bulkheads attached to a frame molded of red plastic was a cardboard tube (not a plastic part). Glossy white paper wrapped around the open cylinder filled at each end with a steel cap painted to match. The white surface featured minimal printed graphics, including the diamond herald of the Erie Railroad and the

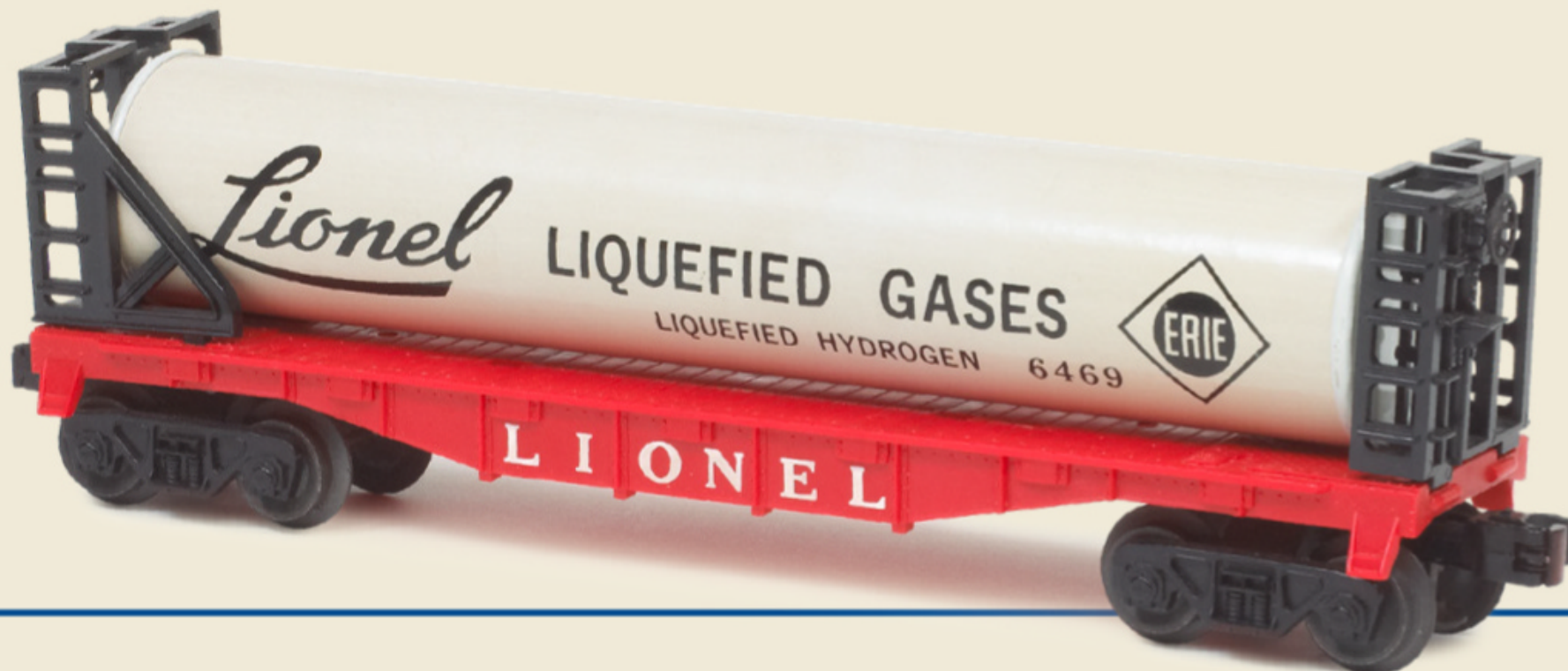
name of the toy company in bold cursive lettering.

As produced, the 6469 used a different frame from the one designers had chosen for the miscellaneous cars. Instead of the 6511-2, Lionel opted for the no. 6424-11, which they modified in 1963 by opening the stake holes and removing the truck-mounting plates. The rear of the bulkheads on the model – closer to a flatcar than a tank car – could be secured only by glue.

False advertising

Judged on its appearance, the liquefied gas tank car could not claim to be a high-pressure tanker. What Lionel offered resembled nothing seen on the Erie or other lines.

It was doubtful that many youngsters protested. They noticed the new car as a component of a deluxe O-27 outfit (the no. 11395 “Muscleman” 8-unit steam freight, priced at \$59.95) and a low-end Super O set (the no. 13098 “Goliath” 7-unit steam freight, priced for less at only \$49.95). The 11-inch-long liquefied gas tank car, part of the cataloged line for only 1963, sold by itself for \$4.95. It was added to 11 promotional outfits that year and one the next.





O gauge returns with a roar

PROMOTIONAL OUTFITS AND O-27 SETS STILL SELL



Based on the train sets released in 1964 as well as the final sales figures, that year, like the one before it, represented a time of frustration – and hope – for Lionel. Consumers more than half a century ago knew that first feeling well, right down to finding the 24-page consumer catalog had been printed in black and white for the second consecutive year. To make matters worse, products were poorly shown in it.

Collectors of today might have told all Lionel enthusiasts in 1964 that the line held some hope. There were, they would have said, items worth owning and displaying.

Besides searching within the disappointing catalog for a handful of neat and unusual pieces, hobbyists need to examine the enormous number of promotional outfits created for an array of customers. They'll find that 1964 was, from a collector's perspective, a better year than generally thought.



■ Three overriding goals

Executives set out three objectives beyond making a profit (or at least reducing the nearly \$6.5 million deficit from the previous year). First, they aimed to continue placing as many sets as possible in homes. Second, they hoped to create new products. Third, they wanted to sell off leftover inventory.

To achieve the first objective, Lionel assembled more than 200 different promotional outfits for the fifth straight year. Those “uncataloged” sets helped it cut down on stock left from the past. The second goal also came into play because, as collectors can tell you, certain promotional sets happened to contain some of the most desirable items made during the postwar period.

■ Two great sets for Sears

The “cream-of-the-crop” for 1964 was probably outfit no. 19326. Packaged as an exclusive for Sears, Roebuck & Co. (which stamped it “9820” on the box), it met the

second objective by introducing a brand-new engine, three pieces of rolling stock, and an accessory! Not to mention a slick ancillary item Lionel threw in.

The 19326 set marked the debut of the no. 240 steam locomotive equipped with an operating highlight and a smoke mechanism as well as the nos. 3666 cannon boxcar, 6401 flatcar with a tank, and 6824-50 rescue unit work caboose. Also brand new was another collector favorite, the no. 347 cannon firing range set; the no. 975-1 squad of soldiers added fun.

Impressive in its own right was the four-car freight train Sears offered as its no. 9807. Big news was another brand-new accessory, the no. 346 manually operating culvert unloader. The reissued no. 237 steamer pulled a no. 242T tender plus the nos. 6176 Lehigh Valley hopper in yellow, 6822 searchlight car, 6342 culvert car, and 6059 Southern Pacific-type caboose (lettered for the Minneapolis & St. Louis).

Like some of the other promotional outfits from 1964, that Sears exclusive came with a few other items useful in developing a three-rail empire. Kids loved the nos. 310 set of three billboards, 321 trestle bridge, and 958 auto set (a Plasticville item from Bachmann packaged for Lionel in a rare white generic box). A no. 1022 pair of manual switches increased the play value of this set.



PROMOTIONAL OUTFITS, whose contents often differed from anything Lionel offered in its cataloged line, could have collectible items in 1964. Set no. 19326 – sold exclusively through Sears, Roebuck & Co. as its no. 9820 – featured the nos. 3666 cannon boxcar, 6401 flatcar with a tank, and 6824-50 rescue unit work caboose. Also new were the nos. 347 cannon firing range set and 975-1 squad of soldiers. The 6470 exploding target car was included in the set as well.



THE CONSUMER CATALOG for 1964 had only 24 pages printed in black and white. Executives, determined to save money, used on the cover an illustration originally added to an advertisement printed in *Life* magazine in 1953.

■ Another great promotional set

Another outstanding promotional set, one available only through Maritz (a premium company), was the no. 11385-500. Interestingly, the components of that military-oriented outfit surpassed those of every O-27 set cataloged in 1964.

Lionel placed at the head a no. 212 Santa Fe Alco A-A duo. Those diesels pulled seven cars, five of which were military models (the nos. 3349 turbo missile firing car, 3470 aerial target car, 3830 flatcar with

an operating submarine, 6407 flatcar with a rocket, and 6544 missile firing car). None of those five pieces of rolling stock appeared in any set shown in the catalog for 1964.

Rounding out the outfit (only 300 examples were ordered from Lionel) were the nos. 6176-50 Lehigh Valley hopper in black and 6257-100 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose with a smokestack. Then add in a 310 set with five billboards.

Plainly, Lionel was using the 11385-500 to get rid of existing inventory, in particular, space and military items whose popularity was dwindling. In fact, if it did not package a car of that nature (other than the 3309 turbo missile launching car) in a promotional outfit in 1964, the only place the company mentioned it was in the separate-sale section in the middle of the consumer catalog.

Therefore, executives used other promotional sets released in 1964 to further reduce stock left from previous years. Specifically, a no. 3410 operating helicopter car went in the no. 19350, a 3619 reconnaissance copter car in the no. 19350-500, and a 3665 Minuteman launching car in the no. 19408.

■ Overlooked promotional gems

Lionel also packaged special sets for trusted customers like J.C. Penney and Western Auto. Doing so let it reach out to consumers living in all parts of the U.S. who were doing business with those notable retailers.

One of the finest promotional outfits available in 1964 came through Penney. The no. 19334, a military-oriented train in olive drab, featured a no. 221 U.S. Marine Corps Alco A unit pulling three brand-new cars: the nos. 3309 turbo missile launching car, 6142-175 gondola, and 6176-100 hopper. Trailing behind was yet another newcomer, the no. 6119-125 work caboose.

The three freight cars lacked any markings, and the caboose was a spin-off of the no. 6824 U.S.M.C. rescue unit (new in 1960), but without the complement of a stretcher, oxygen tanks, and a figure used on that model. In addition, the 19334 outfit, like the 9820 from Sears, included the 975-1 squad of soldiers.

Penney also sold an enjoyable freight outfit priced at \$9.99. The no. 19333 boasted a no. 1042 steam locomotive with an 0-4-0 wheel arrangement and a no. 1062T streamlined tender. That combination pulled three cars: the nos. 6176-75 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6502 flatcar with a girder, and 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Meanwhile, Western Auto promoted a starter set priced at only 89 cents more. The no. 19244, illustrated in its Christmas catalog, came with a no. 1061 steam engine and a no. 1061T slope-back tender. Behind rode the nos. 6042 gondola with two cable reels, 6406 flatcar with an automobile, and 6067 SP-type caboose.

SET NO. 11430 showed how “bare bones” the cataloged line could be in 1964. For \$14.95 buyers got the new no. 1062-50 steamer and 1061T-50 slope-back tender pulling three unmarked freight cars: the nos. 6176-25 yellow hopper, 6142-50 green gondola, and 6167-125 Southern Pacific-type caboose in red.



Putting inexpensive sets like the latter two in households helped publicize the Lionel brand name while keeping consumers in touch with prominent retailers. Those were certainly positive steps. However, because those outfits were basically toys to be used and then thrown away, they and similar ones probably didn't do much to entice customers into buying additional (and more costly) Lionel equipment.

■ Freight dominates O-27 sets

Moving from the world of promotional outfits to the more familiar one encompassed by Lionel's cataloged line, we find the company filling its O-27 roster with 10 sets, as it had done in 1963. Nine of them were freight trains.

What a far cry the presentation of those outfits was from the glorious years a decade before. Jammed on a single two-page spread were illustrations of five sets, with another couple described there. And kids must have missed the cool names given sets the previous year, such as “Outdoorsman” and “Shooting Star.”

The first cataloged set, the no. 11420, was a 2-car freight train pulled by a no. 1061-50 equipped with a rubber tire for additional traction. It could move only forward and

lacked a headlight. The sad little steamer led the nos. 6042-250 blue plastic gondola with no markings and a 6167-25 red plastic SP-type caboose also with no markings.

Next was the no. 11430, a 3-car freight outfit priced at \$14.95 (only \$3 more than the 11420). The motive power was the new no. 1062-50 steam engine with an 0-4-0 wheel arrangement, along with an operating headlight, and a rubber tire. It was coupled to a no. 1061T-50 slope-back tender.

The steamer headed a consist with the nos. 6142-50 green gondola, 6176-25 yellow hopper, and a 6167-125 red SP-type caboose with an operating coupler truck (better than the all-but-identical no. 6167-25 caboose in set 11420 equipped with a dummy coupler truck instead). None of the cars had markings.

As an aside, collectors should be aware that examples of this low-end set occasionally included the scarce translucent variation of the gondola.

Rounding out the first two inner pages of the consumer catalog, the no. 11440 four-car freight train looked like the best purchase yet at \$17.95. Buyers received a no. 221 Rio Grande Alco A unit (with two

directions) hauling three cars: the nos. 3309 turbo missile launching car, 6142-125 Lionel gondola in blue with two canisters, and 6176-50 Lehigh Valley hopper in black. Last was found a 6167 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose. No other outfit cataloged in 1964 included a space or military item.

■ Top-shelf O-27 outfits

Flipping the pages of the consumer catalog, Lionel enthusiasts saw a wide assortment of sets – steam or diesel, freight or passenger!

Set no. 11450, a steam freight train, had four cars: the nos. 6142-75 blue gondola with two canisters, 6176-50 Lehigh Valley hopper in black, 6473 rodeo car, and 6059-50 M&StL caboose. That mid-range O-27 set consisted of the same basic contents as set no. 11331 from 1963, although some of their features had been updated. Both outfits came with a retail price tag of \$19.95.

The no. 242 locomotive on the point was equipped with an operating headlight; also, its 2-4-2 wheel arrangement meant the O-27 line would have a steamer with something other than an 0-4-0 arrangement. Another improvement was the no. 1060T streamlined tender – a step above the slope-back models generally used.

For \$15 more, you could get the no. 11460,





a 7-unit freight outfit led by a no. 238 steam engine with an operating headlight and a smoke mechanism. The five pieces of rolling stock included the nos. 6014 Frisco boxcar in white, 6142-100 gondola in green with two white unmarked plastic canisters, 6176-75 Lehigh Valley hopper in gray or yellow, 6465-150 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car in orange, and 6119-110 Delaware, Lackawanna & Western work caboose.

Lionel shrewdly marketed an all-but-identical set (the no. 11470) for \$29.95. To explain cutting the price \$5, sales executives substituted a no. 237 steam locomotive with a 1060T tender without a whistle for the 238 and its no. 234W tender. The latter, you can easily guess, came equipped with a whistle.

■ Diesels and passenger trains

If you preferred a diesel freight outfit for \$34.95, then the no. 11480 was your cup of tea. Featuring a no. 213 Minneapolis & St. Louis Alco A-A combination, it contained the nos. 6014 Frisco boxcar in white, 6142-150 gondola in blue with two orange cable reels, 6176-50 Lehigh Valley hopper in black, 6473 rodeo car, and a 6257-100 Lionel Lines Southern Pacific-type caboose with a smokestack.

Kids who dreamed of a passenger train thought the no. 11490 set a bargain at \$49.95 (\$20 less than the passenger sets cataloged the past three years). A pair of no. 212 Santa Fe Alco diesel A units pulled three Santa Fe cars: nos. 2404 Vista-Dome, 2405 Pullman, and 2406 observation.

However, the earlier sets had come with four cars. Also, the three models in outfit 11490 lacked their illumination as well as silhouetted window strips. So maybe this set wasn't such a bargain after all, although it's difficult to find these days, probably because Lionel apparently packaged fewer than 1,000 examples.

■ Same – but not quite!

The final two O-27 sets cataloged in 1964 reflected the marketing prowess so typical of the top brass at Lionel. You see, the nos. 11500 and 11510 were basically the same, except they were priced at \$44.95 and \$39.95 respectively.

How did corporate decision makers justify the difference in retail price? Simple! They gave the more expensive outfit a steam locomotive whose tender came with a whistle. Further, that set had a slightly more powerful transformer.

To be specific, the 11500 set featured a no. 2029 steam locomotive with an operating headlight and a smoke unit coupled to a no. 234W tender. They pulled five cars: the nos. 6014-325 Frisco boxcar, 6176-75 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6402-50 flatcar with cable reels, 6465-150 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car in orange, and 6257-100 Lionel Lines SP-type caboose with a

smokestack. Also included in the set were the nos. 1073 60-watt transformer and 147 whistle or horn controller.

The less-expensive 11510 outfit (described but not depicted in the catalog) had the same five cars plus a 2029 steamer, but its no. 1060T tender lacked a whistle. The no. 1025 transformer was capable of delivering 45 watts. Lastly, because the set didn't have a whistle or horn, there was no need in packing a 147 controller.

Had executives outsmarted themselves? As with set 11470, we're not sure whether the \$5 discount really appealed to customers. After all, not having a set with a whistle robbed them of some of the fun distinguishing Lionel trains.

■ O gauge returns to the line; Super O leaves

Men at the helm, who had replaced O gauge outfits with Super O ones in 1958, changed their marketing plan in 1964. They brought back a roster of nine O gauge sets while carrying over only one Super O train.

Whether corporate leaders based their decision on financial considerations or consumer complaints about Super O track damaging the pickup rollers on locomotives remains unclear. However, we do know that

A STEP UP FOR O-27 enthusiasts was outfit no. 11470. The five freight cars looked fantastic. The no. 237 steamer came paired with a no. 1060T tender lacking a whistle.





Lionel cataloged 10 sets in 1964, whereas the previous year it offered only six Super O outfits for sale.

For all intents and purposes, consumers might easily have judged the line as having only the six sets illustrated. The others earned only brief descriptions.

■ Eight O gauge sets from two

The first O gauge entry was set no. 12700, a seven-unit steam freight that retailed for \$59.95. Lionel once again cataloged the mighty no. 736 Berkshire locomotive, pairing that classic with a no. 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle tender.

Included in the 12700 were five cars offering lots of play value. They were the nos. 6162-100 New York Central gondola with three white plastic canisters, 6414-75 automobile transport car with four “cheapie” autos (two red and two yellow), 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6476-125 Lehigh Valley hopper in yellow, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR N5c porthole caboose with illumination.

Following the tactic seen with the O-27

line, Lionel offered the same freight cars in another O gauge outfit. The sole difference related to the motive power. Set no. 12720 showcased the no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A combination. The retail price rose from \$59.95 assigned the 12700 to \$65 for the diesel freight set.

By the way, consumers could, according to the catalog, buy either set with a type-LW transformer. The corresponding steam outfit sold for \$75 as the no. 12710; the diesel train was priced at \$79.95 as the no. 12730 (in case you’re wondering that 125-watt power source retailed for \$19.95). Both sets needed slightly oversized generic boxes to provide enough extra space for their LW.

Executives capitalized on the same arrangement with a train intended to have seven cars: the nos. 3662 operating milk car, 6315-60 Lionel Lines single-dome chemical tank car, 6436-110 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6361 timber car, 6464-525 Minneapolis & St. Louis boxcar, 6822 night crew search-light car, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR N5c illuminated porthole caboose.

Lionel relied on the handsome 2383

Santa Fe Electro-Motive F3 A-A duo as the motive power for outfit no. 12740, which was priced at \$79.95. Want an LW transformer, too? Then go ahead and look for the no. 12750; that set was listed in the consumer catalog at a flat \$95.

The powerful 736 Berkshire steam locomotive and its 736W Pennsy whistle tender took over in outfit no. 12760, which sold for \$75. The version containing “the mighty LW” was identified as set no. 12770. Its retail price was \$89.95.

Lionel needed slightly larger generic boxes for the sets with a transformer. But production estimates for the 12750 and 12770 were probably less than 250 units each, whereas estimates for their companions should have been higher.

■ The crowning pair in '64

Consumers half a century ago, like collectors these days, knew Lionel wouldn’t have been Lionel without the company cataloging at the peak of its lineup a streamlined passenger set. The no. 12780 was a repeat of the no. 13148 from 1963. Now, however, O gauge track had been substituted for Super O sections.

Once more, a pair of 2383 EMD Santa Fe F3 A-units pulled four gold-striped, illuminated passenger cars: the nos. 2522

■ Unique & rare items of 1964

Lionel produced items that collectors consider scarce or in some instances even rare or unique. Let’s take a look at some of the most desirable of them.

The no. 6414-85 automobile transport car, or “auto-loader” as it’s often called, was reissued, but with four “cheapie” autos that lacked the premium look of the earlier models. When the car

was included with a specific set, it carried a -75 suffix because it was packaged unboxed. When boxed, however, the box had a -85 suffix. The box makes this 6414 auto-loader so special.

The no. 6402 flatcar was described but not shown in the separate-sale section of the consumer catalog priced at \$3.95. If manufactured and packaged as such, an original box had to be made for that

car. But Lionel must have had a problem, because the 6402 was included in another black-and-white edition at \$2.50.

The actual freight car Lionel packaged and then sold was the no. 6401 flatcar, and it is considered scarce and valuable by collectors. Truth be told, the box is responsible for the value.

Different price guides published over the years have incorrectly referred to this packaged car as a 1965 item. Every boxed example had features associated with 1964 and not ’65 production, although Lionel did reissue the car. More importantly, a unique 6401 Lionel production sample is dated 6/24/64.



President Harrison Vista-Dome, a couple of 2523 President Garfield Pullmans, and 2521 President McKinley observation.

The 1964 set had the same \$120 price tag as both the 1962 and 1963 sets, except the train from '62 had two Vista-Domes instead of two Pullmans. Lionel targeted more 1962 sets for production, probably because it was the first, whereas the 1963 and 1964 sets were probably made in smaller yet similar quantities.

Concluding the cataloged offerings was outfit no. 13150, a Super O set proclaimed, "The Biggest, Most Spectacular Steam Freighter Ever Made By Lionel." The steam locomotive beloved by Joshua Lionel Cowen handled the seven cars. Lionel had reissued its 4-6-4 Hudson from 1950, still designating it as the no. 773. With it came a no. 773W New York Central tender.

The rolling stock included in what the catalog deemed "a complete model railroad empire" was highlighted by three animated cars: the nos. 3356 operating horse car with a corral, 3434 chicken sweeper car, and 3662 operating milk car with a platform. With them came the nos. 6361 timber car, 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, 6436-110 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated porthole caboose.

PROMOTIONAL OUTFIT NO. 19334, available only through J.C. Penney, won't win any beauty contests. Still, the military-oriented train in olive drab attracts attention thanks to its no. 221 United States Marine Corps Alco A unit and brand-new freight cars.

The retail price? A whopping \$200, the most Lionel ever charged for an outfit cataloged during the entire post-World War II period. Until then, the no. 4110WS Electronic Control Set from 1948 and '49 had held that honor. The consumer catalogs for both years had listed it at \$199.95.

■ Concluding thoughts

In Lionel's history, 1964 stands as a year promotional outfits ruled the roost. The firm began to clean house by developing certain sets that included items it would no longer offer for sale as parts of its cataloged line. The strategy paid off, with Lionel cutting its deficit by approximately \$5 million.

In the process, Lionel did catalog some collectible sets, with production estimates closely matching or even exceeding those from the year before. The key word here was "catalog." Even though promotional sets enabled Lionel to get a foothold in as many homes as possible, sets featured in the consumer catalogs deserved credit for

inspiring families to construct permanent three-rail layouts.

Frankly, too many promotional outfits lacked the quality consumers had learned over time to enjoy and respect about Lionel trains. Additionally, not many loyal and satisfied customers were even aware of the hundreds of uncataloged sets or the new locomotives and pieces of rolling stock packaged in them. Meanwhile, purchases of separate-sale items were likely declining, which weakened Lionel.

Lionel President Robert A. Wolfe best summarized the situation at the corporation when he called "1964 ... a year of substantial progress" but added, "I am disappointed we did not have an operating profit." With guarded optimism he closed by remarking that he "looked forward to 1965 with confidence."

Special thanks for their insights go to George and John Schmid of Project Roar Publishing and Bob Jacobson.



Probably the two rarest items from 1964 were actually made of cardboard: the nos. 311-25 target range

billboard and X625-20 cardboard scenic set.

The 311-25 was included in only one promotional outfit, the

no. 19332 offered by Western Auto (1,050 sets were assembled by Lionel). The X625-20 (printed in Japan)

was likely produced in larger quantities since it was a component of nine promotional outfits from 1961 through '66. In 1964 it came in set no. 19328.

Other special items from 1964 include the nos. 6142-125 Lionel gondola with three gray cable reels, also from the 19328 set, and 6167-175 Southern Pacific-type

caboose in olive drab. The latter model originated in promotional outfit no. 19343.

Finally, never overlook the array of desirable items associated with set 9820. They include the nos. 347 cannon firing range set, 975-1 squad of soldiers, 3666 cannon boxcar, and 6401 flatcar with a tank. Each enhances a collection.

Trains starred – and crashed! – on television

TRAINS WERE PART OF THE ENTERTAINMENT ON THE CLASSIC SERIES *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*



Circumstances changed dramatically between the 1950s and the 1960s. Around midcentury, executives at Lionel shipped quantities of outfits smaller than retailers had ordered, because the demand for Lionel trains was so strong they could afford to keep customers hungry for more. They discouraged the creation of promotional sets, telling accounts to be satisfied with what was in the annual catalog. The exact opposite took place in both cases during the next decade.

Something else that was different related to the use of Lionel trains on television. In the 1950s, producers and performers alike begged the company to build operating displays for TV programs and then to make certain the models ran perfectly. Years later, however, electric trains seldom appeared on variety shows, weekly dramas, and situation comedies. No one seemed to miss them.

There was one memorable exception – Lionel trains were the stars on one of the most influential comedy series of the 1960s.

What left viewers astonished was seeing that the locomotives were not expected to operate without incident. The crashes deliberately caused thrilled young and old alike. They were the reason hobbyists loved the scenes and never forgot the explosions.

Puzzled by this description? Let's offer clues. First, cue the theme song, with its snapping fingers and harpsichord notes. Second, toss out one repeating line: "Thank you, Thing." You got it! We're talking about *The Addams Family*.

■ Pages of *The New Yorker*

The story behind the TV series shown on Friday nights over the ABC network between 1964 and '66 opened almost 30 years earlier. Charles Addams, a freelance cartoonist who contributed regularly to *The New Yorker* magazine, had submitted his first drawing of a bizarre family in 1938. Editors and readers found the macabre characters and ironic gag lines entertaining. They requested more such cartoons, and Addams continued to churn them out.

It will probably come as a shock to discover that Addams never gave any of the characters names. Perhaps he didn't need to. Readers, regardless of their age or background, deduced who was the father, the mother, the two children, their pets, and the recurring members of the extended family and household.

As one critic put it, the clan represented a "satirical inversion of the ideal 20th-century American family."

What became plain as the single-panel cartoons multiplied was a family obviously wealthy, even slightly aristocratic, whose behavior disturbed and frightened others while seeming normal to themselves. The parents cared for each other and were devoted to their offspring.

Truth be told, the family could hardly be described as

THE MOST FAMOUS – or should we say notorious – 0 gauge model railroader in the middle 1960s was Gomez Addams, the loving but eccentric dad on *The Addams Family* television series. Played by John Astin, he enjoyed crashing his Lionels.



Don Cravens



Both photos ABC Photo Archives courtesy Getty Images



THE 5 X 9-FOOT Super O layout first used on *The Addams Family* in the fall of 1964 had been built by Lionel for an episode of *The Twilight Zone* broadcast four years earlier. Popular television comedian Art Carney had played a far-from-perfect department store Santa Claus.

evil or cruel. The dad and mom and their son and daughter, along with a butler and grandparents, simply shared what might be referred to as “macabre interests.” Among those hobbies was a model railroad on which the father enjoyed staging disasters. His tiny locomotives derailed and endured head-on collisions sure to elicit sly grins.

■ Translation to TV

Appreciation of the weird yet hardly sinister cast of distinctive characters grew steadily through the 1950s and into the early '60s. The general public knew all about them. Even the vast number of people who never subscribed to *The New Yorker* were likely familiar with what everyone called, “the Addams family.”

At some point, an executive or a screenwriter expressed the idea of developing a TV series about them. So many series about nuclear and extended clans had garnered positive reviews that someone high up at one of the three major networks must have seen the potential of developing a new, off-beat one based on the cartoons. Favorable responses launched the project.

Unfortunately, few details have surfaced about when or how the Addams cartoons were translated to television. The individual responsible for the idea hasn't received proper acclaim. We know only that the series was created by a pair of TV veterans:

David Levy and Donald Saltzman. Also, screen credits specified Levy as executive producer and Nat Perrin as producer of the 64 black-and-white episodes, each 25 minutes long with another 5 minutes allotted to various commercials.

A few final notes: Perrin also served as the head writer of the series, which was made for Filmways Inc. at General Service Studios located in Hollywood. Amazingly, considering just how widely remembered

Ted Cassidy rounded out the cast, playing Lurch the butler as well as Thing.

■ Not a typical hobbyist

Plots for *The Addams Family* boiled down to the interaction of the adults and kids with peers from the outside world. Outsiders thought of themselves as normal and so found the behavior and assumptions of family members eccentric, odd, or even horrifying. Often they believed the actions taken by the Addams clan masked a naive nature that suggested they were ripe to be fooled or deceived.

Of course, Gomez, Morticia, and others in their household were anything but naive or simple. As sympathetic TV viewers realized, they tried to be kind and generous hosts, even if visitors proved to be rude or misunderstood their motives.

Just how differently the family looked at life became apparent every time Gomez was filmed standing at the control panel of his O gauge layout. That happened fairly frequently during the two seasons *The Addams Family* was aired. The so-called “normal” folks dropping by their mansion at 0001 Cemetery Lane witnessed an approach to model railroading seldom if ever presented on TV.

Gomez hardly qualified as a conventional hobbyist. He demonstrated little interest in operating the layout with a great deal of care. Regulating the speed of the trains or remaining alert to where they were going – those were not for him.

The wild-eyed, mustachioed O gauger



THE WILD-EYED, MUSTACHIOED O GAUGER LIKED CRANKING UP HIS LOCOMOTIVES AND THEN WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR THEM TO RUN INTO EACH OTHER.

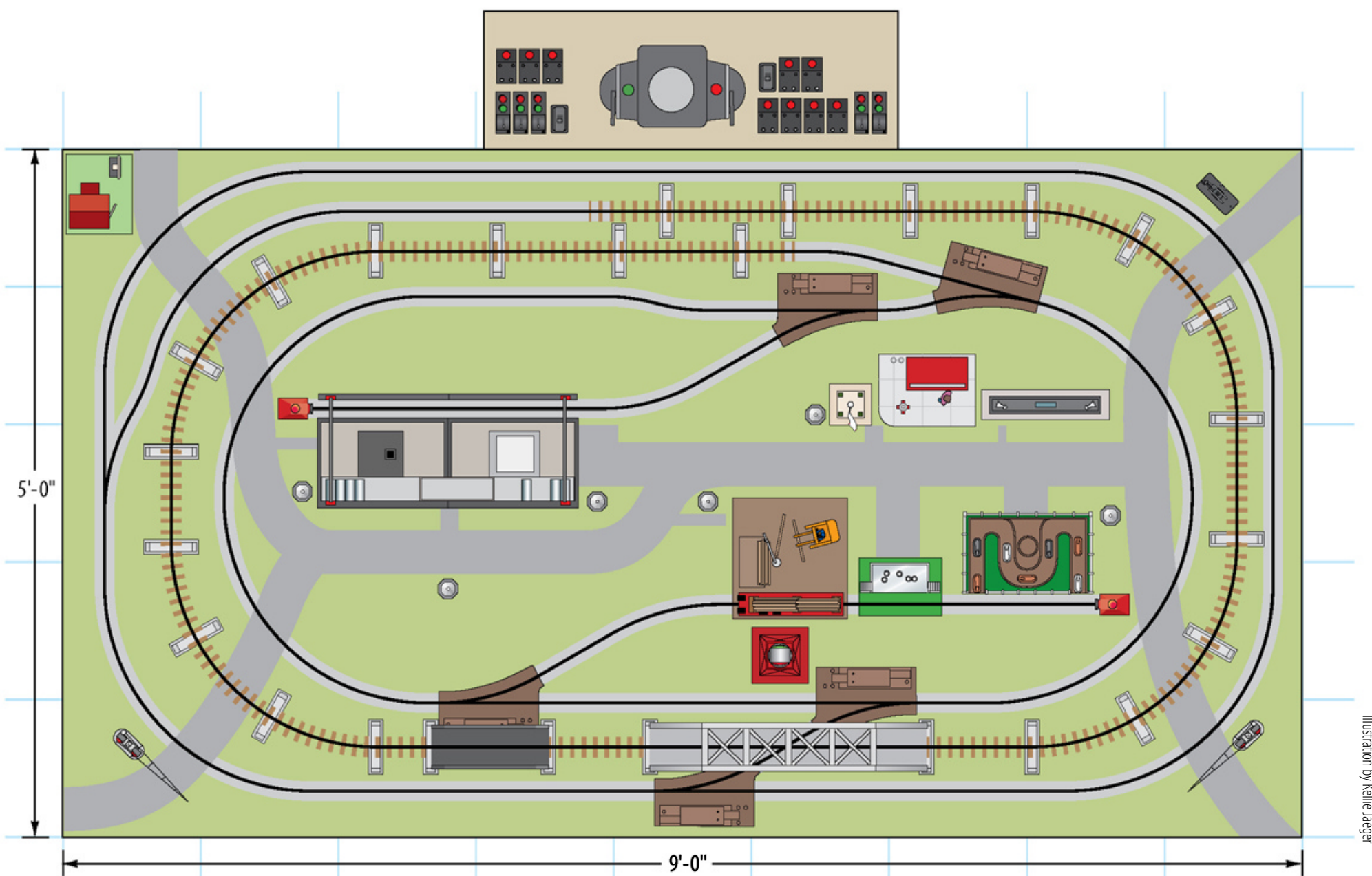
The Addams Family still is, particularly among younger generations not born when it was being aired, it was on for only two seasons. It started in September 1964 and ended in April 1966.

The outstanding cast explains why viewers have not forgotten the show. Leading the way as Gomez Addams was John Astin, madly in love with his wife, Morticia, played by Carolyn Jones. Their son, Pugsley (Ken Weatherwax), and their daughter, Wednesday (Lisa Loring), increased the fun, as did Uncle Fester (played by the legendary actor, Jackie Coogan) and Grandmama (Blossom Rock).

liked cranking up his locomotives and then waiting impatiently for them to run into each other. Or, best of all, anticipating their arrival within a Lionel trestle bridge and then blowing the accessory and the trains to smithereens. The smoldering remains delighted him.

■ Crash and burn

How, the producers of *The Addams Family* must have wondered, should they film the crashes and explosions destined to result when the devious Gomez got his hands on a live transformer? They had to devise something to boggle minds, an absolute



LARRY OSTERHOUDT, who has created the most accurate track plan of Lionel's 1949 Showroom Layout (published in the May 2019 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*), has done similar work on the 5 x 9-foot Super O layout used on *The Addams Family*. Larry sells an AutoCAD version of the plan, with all sections of track shown, that he has printed on high-quality paper (24 x 36) for \$49.95 plus shipping. To purchase a track plan or to obtain additional information, please email Larry at cycloneracer@earthlink.net

challenge way back during the 1960s, when computer-generated imagery did not exist.

Ingenious camera operators captured two short trains dashing with abandon from different directions toward the trestle bridge in the center of the layout. Gomez awaited with glee the moment when they would surely collide.

But rather than show the pair of Lionel diesels smashing into each other, technicians on the set cleverly staged the destruction of the bridge caused when Gomez pushed down the plunger on a homemade explosive device. Suddenly, smoke enveloped the scene, with the locomotives and cars flat on their sides.

■ Super O comes first

Quite an incredible use of a 3-rail layout. The wrecks had been faked and yet the explosion seemed absolutely real. How had the amazing effects been executed? More telling, had the terrible sight actually taken place on a layout?

Examination of the scenes with O gauge trains on *The Addams Family* has led to the conclusion that they did take place on a layout. Actually two 3-rail operating displays were filmed over the show's seasons.

A Super O display 5 x 9 feet appeared first and was used for four of the programs aired during the opening season. The crash and burn created for the first show happened on that layout (the filmed sequence was spliced into a few of the episodes in the rest of season one and into season two).

Then a 4 x 8-foot O gauge railroad replaced the Super O display about halfway through the initial season. It could be seen in three episodes then and another three during the second season. (A total of 64 shows were produced.)

Further investigation has revealed something significant about the Super O layout. Its appearance initially suggested it was one of the commercial displays Lionel made available to authorized service stations and other retail accounts.

However, closer inspection proved it differed from any of the three 5 x 9-foot Super O layouts the Display Department at Lionel had already designed and built in large quantities: the nos. D-224 from 1958, D-264 from 1959, and D-291 from 1960. It clearly was a brand-new project made to resemble those displays.

Why limit research to the 5 x 9-foot Super O layouts fabricated by the Display Department at Lionel between 1958 and 1960? Because the railroad in the hands of Gomez Addams had served as a prop on a TV program aired in 1960.

The display showcased in 1964 and into the next year on *The Addams Family* had been salvaged from storage, probably at MGM Studios, and given a new lease on life for the new series. Its accessories and track plan were the proof.

■ Santa's layout first

What the patriarch of the Addams clan seemed determined to demolish had been



THIS REPLICA of the Super O display once used on *The Addams Family* shows the location of the levels of track and the operating models. Even the trains are poised to collide on the bridge, something Gomez would have approved of with tremendous glee!

the property of the patriarch of Christmas when introduced to millions via the small screen. Santa Claus had been the first to operate the Super O layout.

Here's the background: The display had been developed for an episode of *The Twilight Zone*, the landmark anthology series broadcast on CBS. The program, shown in December of 1960, was titled "The Night of the Meek." It starred the popular TV comedian Art Carney as Henry Corwin, a well-meaning fellow down on his luck and unable to resist alcohol.

Hired to dress up like Kris Kringle for a department store right before Christmas, Henry arrives drunk, a condition the children waiting anxiously for him to operate the layout quickly discover. No matter how hard he tries, he just can't keep the Lionel trains from racing off the tracks or running into each other.

Among the 3-rail casualties of Henry's

inebriated condition are a no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 diesel unit and a no. 1872 Five-Star General old-time steam engine. The contemporary diesel slams into the locomotive from the Civil War era. The accident leads to Henry's being fired from the seasonal job and ordered by an irate store manager to get out.

Before the scene has shifted to a grungy alley where Henry, still wearing his Santa suit, encounters the true spirit of Christmas, more of the layout has been showcased. Particular attention has gone to three great accessories: the nos. 264 operating forklift platform, 342 operating culvert loader, and 494 rotary beacon.

There wasn't enough action to satisfy Lionel enthusiasts then or now, but the few minutes of filming were all producers of "The Night of the Meek" were willing to devote to the Super O display. They needed to finish telling their tale.

■ New Jersey to Hollywood

The 5 x 9-foot railroad resembled the Super O displays department stores and toy shops could have purchased at the time in order to increase sales of Lionel trains. Yet it differed in enough ways to suggest it had been designed and assembled as a special project for *The Twilight Zone* in 1960.

Recollections shared by Jim Stewart, a member of the sales force Lionel maintained on the West Coast, in the March 1993 *Classic Toy Trains* shed light on the creation of the layout. Jim discussed the requests he received from TV studios and performers to build special 3-rail displays.

Among the more elaborate of those unique projects was the Super O layout needed by the production team of *The Twilight Zone*. Their budget for "The Night of the Meek" was tight, but members concurred the railroad would be a prominent element in all the scenes showing Henry

Corwin as a bumbling and drunken ne'er-do-well. So they needed a layout to engage the cast and viewers.

Jim submitted the request to the Display Department, which was based at the sprawling factory owned by Lionel in New Jersey. Its talented crew constructed a bi-level layout that looked terrific on camera. The number of operating items more or less equaled what designers customarily included on their 5 x 9-foot projects.

Also, the accessories awarded extra footage, notably the forklift platform and the culvert loader, were among the best Lionel had to offer in 1960 even if they were not new. Curiously, nothing brought out after 1957 was given a spot.

Finally, the new Super O layout differed in two notable respects from typical displays. First, to make the main lines look more appealing, builders laid special road-bed beneath them to elevate the track. Second, as a cost-cutting measure Lionel left off the mountain that was a standard feature on the larger displays. Since the entire layout was never shown during "The Night of the Meek," the absence of a mountain with tunnels for trains to pass through didn't matter.

■ Being spared

Following the filming of "The Night of the Meek" and its broadcast on the night of December 23, 1960, the fate of the neat layout could have been predicted. Almost certainly, someone involved with producing *The Twilight Zone* or an actor in the episode would take it. Perhaps Art Carney had been bitten by Lionel bug as bad as Jackie Gleason, his costar on *The Honey-mooners* comedy series, had been.

Another scenario had the manager of a hobby shop or toy store in southern California wanting it to promote Lionel trains. Less likely to imagine marketing executives at Lionel needing it back to send to another vendor or a public venue.

Funny, but none of those possibilities occurred. Instead, the Super O layout ended up packed away. Once the episode had been aired, the display went into storage. Who knows what prop personnel or film directors had in mind for it.

Until, less than four years later, the concept behind *The Addams Family* evolved into an actual

TV series. Then the production team called out for a toy train layout. The hunt was on, culminating with MGM shipping the 5 x 9-foot three-rail display over to Filmways. Gomez and the others at last had their railroad!

■ A second layout

Grinning maniacally, John Astin regularly stood behind the modified type-ZW transformer controlling the layout during the first season of the show. The segments showing him at the throttle suggested the power source had been altered so it took merely the touch of a button on top to run the trains and not the levers.

explosion of the bridge could have taken a toll on the big layout.

The second layout measured 4 x 8 feet and featured traditional tubular straights and curves. The O gauge railroad had two levels, like its predecessor, with trains ascending and descending from the trestle bridge at the highest point over the gray plastic bents and supports Lionel put in every package of trestles.

The arrangement of track on the primary level had an oval of track on the perimeter with a figure-8 inside. A cross-over figured prominently, and it invited collisions between steam and diesel locomotives, although Gomez never obliged.



BEFORE THE SUMMER SEASON OF RERUNS OPENED, THE SUPER O LAYOUT HAD DISAPPEARED AND AN O GAUGE RAILROAD ARRIVED.

Of course, the kids and older folks watching in astonishment as Gomez wrecked his trains were preoccupied with what he was doing and didn't care how he was doing it. What they witnessed on the first program and subsequently saw a few more times was the same footage of a Santa Fe F3 colliding with a no. 2348 Minneapolis & St. Louis GP9 on the bridge rigged with dynamite to be blown up.

Yet before the summer season of reruns opened, the Super O layout had disappeared and an O gauge railroad arrived. The 5 x 9-foot display might have been the victim of too much handling by careless stagehands. Then again, the unbelievable

■ Mysteries unresolved

Diligent research conducted by Larry Osterhoudt has resulted in the most accurate track plan of the Super O layout used on *The Twilight Zone* and then on *The Addams Family*. Careful study of the relevant episodes of the latter enabled David Brunette to corroborate the types of accessories installed and their location.

Puzzles yet to be cracked relate to the transition of the Super O railroad from "The Night of the Meek" to *The Addams Family* as well as the substitution of the smaller O gauge display sometime during the middle of the first season. In addition, full details of the design of the second 3-rail layout haven't surfaced.

Still, toy train enthusiasts have learned a great deal about what is without a doubt one of the most celebrated displays ever made by Lionel for television. The 5-x-9 operating layout offers plenty of action and enjoyment, regardless of whether you choose to blow up the trestle bridge or cause your postwar or modern-era locomotives to crash.

We hope readers of *Lionel Trains of the 1960s* will benefit from the track plan shared here and be motivated to construct their own replica of the exciting Super O display. Henry Corwin and Gomez Addams would be proud and a little envious.



Entertaining and colorful sets

PLENTY TO FILL CATALOGED AND PROMOTIONAL OUTFITS



Lionel's leaders approached the new year of 1965 with surprising confidence in their line of toys. At least that's the impression given by the overall look of the consumer catalog, despite its being printed in black and white for the third year in a row. Messages directed at parents in the catalog reinforced the upbeat feeling.

The introduction on page 3 by Francis R. O'Leary (president of Lionel's toy division) gave an understanding of where Lionel was going. He described the new roster of sets, locomotives, cars, and more as "Sane Toys for Healthy Kids."

At a time when more toys encouraged aggressive and anti-social behavior, O'Leary suggested, "Lionel still made toys that nurtured proper values. And, 'your child will

play with [Lionel trains] year after year.' The latest trains were 'Toys he'll remember – just as you may remember the Lionel toys you had.'"

■ Promotional outfits decline

For 1965, as had been true for the past several years, Lionel followed a two-pronged sales strategy. The more apparent method emphasized developing a strong roster of

O-27 and O gauge outfits to showcase in the annual cataloged line. Less obvious, yet as important to the final revenue, was working with a variety of businesses and other groups to market special "promotional" sets.

After producing more than 100 different promotional outfits each year between 1960 and 1964, Lionel changed direction and issued fewer than 50 for 1965. Even so such a quantity, even if spiraling downward, still outpaced the number of cataloged sets (seven O-27 and five O gauge sets).

One more reminder – Lionel put out some outstanding promotional sets in 1965. Why, the no. 9836, was as good as anything in the catalog. Sold through Sears, Roebuck & Co., it had everything needed to build a 3-rail empire.





Lionel assembled a versatile selection of neat cataloged and promotional outfits for 1965. Set no. 11560 caught the attention of O-27 enthusiasts in 1965, thanks to its striking *Texas Special* Alco diesels and five colorful cars.

Outfit 9836 came with the new no. 2347 Chesapeake & Ohio GP7 road diesel, six freight cars (including a couple of operating models), and a few accessories.

Leading the way in the outfit were the nos. 3662 operating milk car and its platform and 6342 culvert car used with the no. 346 manually operating culvert loader. Next came the nos. 6414 Evans auto loader with four red automobiles with gray bumpers, 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated N5c porthole cabooses.

Rounding out the highly desirable uncataloged set were the nos. 321-100 trestle bridge, 76 set of three street lights, 310 billboard set, a pair of O-27 switches, and a 125-watt transformer. Oh, did we mention there was plenty of track to go around?

A second top-notch promotional outfit was the no. 19444. Its contents might have resembled those in cataloged O-27 sets from 1965, yet it served to introduce Lionel

trains to people not always familiar with the consumer catalog.

Owners of a 19444 had the nos. 215P and 212T Santa Fe Alcos (introduced in 1964) leading four neat freight cars: the nos. 6176-75 gray or yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, 6142-100 Lionel green gondola with two unmarked white plastic canisters, 6465-150 orange Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, and 6130 Santa Fe work cabooses.

Collectors focus as well on a third promotional outfit from Sears, the no. 19434. On the point of that 4-car freight with a military flavor was a no. 221 olive-drab Santa Fe Alco diesel, though a U.S. Marine Corps Alco was easily substituted.

Filling out the outfit package were the nos. 3665 Minuteman missile launching car and 6470 exploding boxcar (both carried

over from the previous year), along with a no. 6142 Lionel gondola that could be used to transport any of the three auxiliary items and a no. 6059 Minneapolis & St. Louis Southern Pacific-type cabooses.

Two of the items returned from 1964: the nos. 975-1 squad of soldiers (made by Multiple Products Corp.) and 958-75 tank (Payton Products). However, their material had more gray than the green examples associated with 1964. Lionel also purchased from Payton the new green jeep pulling a matching howitzer. A no. 347 cannon firing set delighted fortunate youngsters getting outfit 19434.

Lionel likely bought the soldiers from a company other than Payton, which also made rubber soldiers, because of price or availability from either manufacturer.

OUTFIT NO. 19444 stood out in the roster of promotional O-27 trains associated with 1965. The nos. 215P and 212T Santa Fe Alco diesels pulled the nos. 6176-75 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6142-100 Lionel gondola, 6465-150 Lionel Lines tank car, and 6130 Santa Fe work cabooses.



THE LOWER HALF of the O-27 roster included outfit no. 11530. The 4-car freight train depended on the new no. 634 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher for its pulling power.



■ O-27 outfits at the low end

Lionel cataloged seven O-27 sets – three fewer than in 1964. They ranged in price from \$20 to \$55; those cataloged in 1964 started at a lower level (\$11.95) yet never reached the same higher amount (\$49.95).

Recognizing that Lionel was offering fewer O-27 sets and promotional outfits in

gondola with a pair of white canisters, 6402 flatcar with two orange cable reels, and a 6130 Santa Fe work caboose.

Set 11540, which was priced at \$30, used a no. 239 die-cast metal steamer with smoke and a no. 242T non-whistling tender to pull the nos. 6473 rodeo car, 6465 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, 6176-50 black

double-dome tank car, and a red-plastic 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Since Lionel was offering the pair of *Texas Special* Alcos as a separate-sale item at \$25, it becomes apparent the set was a great deal. After all, customers were able to bring home the four neat cars plus other pieces for only \$12.50 more.

■ Upper-tier O-27 sets

The no. 2029 die-cast metal locomotive with a 2-6-4 wheel arrangement and smoke might have been proclaimed “King of the O-27 steamers.” Lionel matched it with a 234W whistling tender and offered the combination at \$37. That figure surpassed what the firm was charging for three additional O-27 outfits in 1965.

This combination headed set no. 11500, a 5-car freight reissued with a price of \$50. Another bargain, considering it came with five cars, a transformer, and track, yet was only \$13 more than the duo's price.

1965, when compared with 1964, leads to the conclusion the firm was pulling away from the promotional field. Because of that trend, the production of O-27 outfits for 1965 should have been at least 50 percent higher than 1964.

Set no. 11520 occupied the lowest rung of the O-27 ladder. A no. 242 plastic steam engine with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement and its no. 1062T slope-back non-whistling tender pulled four freight cars. Three of them returned from set no. 11450, a low-end O-27 outfit from 1964: the nos. 6176 Lehigh Valley hopper (gray was the norm), 6142 Lionel gondola with two white canisters, and a 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Lionel substituted a no. 3364 operating log car for the no. 6473 rodeo car from the year before. That new car increased the play value of this inexpensive set.

Next was set no. 11530, a 4-car freight retailing for \$25. It featured the new no. 634 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher equipped with forward and reverse motion only. It pulled the nos. 6014 Frisco boxcar, 6142

Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6119 Delaware, Lackawanna & Western work caboose. A 45-watt transformer was included, too.

Interestingly, set no. 11550 included the same freight cars as outfit 11540, but had a retail tag of \$40. That outfit went for \$10 more because Lionel had upgraded the tender to a no. 234W whistling model (the number was heat-stamped on the side of the plastic shell). Additionally, the transformer was now a 60-watt model.

To help collectors, the 6176-50 black Lehigh Valley hopper omitted the “New 1-48” on the side of the shell starting in 1965. Also, both the operating and dummy couplers had visible axles by the journal boxes. In fact, the same was true for all 1965 hoppers, although leftover inventory was always a possibility.

Continuing up the line was the no. 11560 5-car freight set – a terrific bargain at \$37.50. Two no. 211 *Texas Special* Alco diesels pulled the nos. 6473 rodeo car, 6176 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6142 Lionel gondola with two white canisters, 6465 Lionel Lines



PERCHED AMID the outfits at the very top of Lionel's cataloged O gauge line for 1965 was the no. 12780. The streamlined passenger train led by Santa Fe F3s returned for a second year.

LIONEL'S LEADERS APPROACHED THE NEW YEAR OF 1965 WITH SURPRISING CONFIDENCE IN THEIR LINE.



The rolling stock in the set included the nos. 6465 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, 6402 flatcar with two cable reels, 6176-75 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, 6014 Frisco boxcar, and 6059 M&StL caboose. All the cars had visible axles; in 1964, the axles on the operating couplers were hidden where they attached to the journal boxes.

Collectors hope for a lemon-yellow version of the hopper when they hunt for this set. That variation, being harder to find, naturally is more valuable.

Set no. 11490 was another carryover from 1964. A pair of no. 212 A-A Santa Fe Alco diesels led three Santa Fe passenger cars lacking illumination and window silhouettes: nos. 2404 Vista-Dome, 2405 Pullman, and 2406 observation.

Although the set returned for a second year, Lionel raised the suggested retail price from \$49.95 to \$55. Experience has shown a packaged 1965 set is easier to find, so production increased by at least twice for 1965.

■ O gauge treads rough waters

Lionel's marketing plan for 1965 was exceptional. Creating five O-27 outfits with a

retail price of \$40 or less left consumers with plenty of options on how to introduce their kids to Lionel toy trains. Many parents decided then to look toward the upper end at O gauge outfits.

After cataloging nine O gauge sets in 1964, Lionel went down to only five a year later. The four additional outfits in 1964 differed from identical versions by having a transformer packed in their set box.

Furthermore, Lionel put more effort into 1965 production; thus, based on rarity, those sets are easier to find than 1964's. The end result was Lionel's 1965 production of O gauge sets probably doubled the quantity made the year before.

We start with set no. 12800, a 5-car freight led by the new no. 2346 Boston & Maine GP9 road diesel. The outfit, which retailed for \$60, had the nos. 6428 U.S. Mail boxcar, 6436 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6464-475 Boston & Maine boxcar, 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, and 6017 Boston & Maine SP-type caboose.

The 6464-475 was listed in the catalog as a 6464-485, instead of the -475 stamped on the car. As the B&M was put unboxed within the set box, the -485 was Lionel's corresponding number for packaging.

Set nos. 12710 and 12730 were 5-car freights Lionel carried over from the previous year. With the way the company was conducting business, the production numbers for those two sets probably doubled or even tripled 1964's production of fewer than 1,000 examples each.

A no. 736 2-8-4 Berkshire steamer with smoke and its no. 736W Pennsylvania RR whistling tender provided the pulling power for the 12710, which retailed for \$80.

Also in the set box were the nos. 6464-475 New Haven boxcar, 6162 New York Central gondola with three white canisters without markings, 6414 auto transport car with four removable red automobiles equipped with gray bumpers, 6476-135 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated porthole caboose.

The identical group of cars came in set 12730, which retailed for \$85. Its motive power was a no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A duo. Both sets included a type-LW 125-watt transformer and plenty of track.

Of interest, the yellow-plastic Lehigh Valley hopper packaged with either set in an original component box marked "6476-135" was heat-stamped "6176" on the shell. The stamping also omitted "New 1-48."





YELLOW PAINT added zest to three members of the stable of diesel models for 1965, starting with the no. 635 Union Pacific NW2 switcher and continuing with the scarce no. 2347 Chesapeake & Ohio GP7 and no. 2322 Virginian Train Master.



The determining factor regarding the classification of the 6476-135 Lehigh Valley hopper was Lionel equipping the freight car with a pair of operating couplers. The model consequently differed in a key way from the nos. 6176 hopper (one operating and one non-operating couplers) and 6076 hopper (two non-operating couplers).

■ Giants at the O gauge peak

The reissued Virginian Fairbanks-Morse Train Master diesel locomotive – now numbered “2322”) took control of set no. 12820. The 7-car freight might have encouraged toy train hobbyists to think back to 1957, when Lionel first started cataloging outfits containing more than five railcars.

The 12820 retailed for a whopping \$100. Instead of a classic postwar engine, buyers got amazing rolling stock: the nos. 3662 operating milk car with platform, 6822 night crew searchlight car, 6361 timber transport car, 6464-735 New Haven boxcar, 6436 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6315-60 Lionel Lines single-dome tank car with walk-around platform, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR porthole caboose with illumination.

Outfit no. 12780, an O gauge 6-unit passenger train, retailed for \$125. Lionel carried it over from the year before. The retail price was \$5 less in 1964.

As before, a pair of 2383 Santa Fe F3

units pulled four gold-striped streamlined passenger cars with illumination: the nos. 2522 *President Harrison* Vista-Dome, two 2523 *President Garfield* Pullmans, and a 2521 *President McKinley* observation.

A boxed example of the set from 1965 is more common than its 1964 cousin. Lionel must have increased the number of examples it made, so there might have been two or even three times the number from 1964.

Finally, there was set no. 13150. It was also reissued from the year before. The retail price zoomed to the sky, rising from \$200 in 1964 to \$225 for 1965.

On the point was Joshua Lionel Cowen's favorite locomotive, the mighty yet elegant New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson. The 773 with smoke returned with a no. 773W New York Central whistling tender (replacing the 736W Pennsylvania RR tender from 1964, though as we must remember, transition was always a possibility at Lionel).

The set had three great operating cars: the nos. 3356 horse car with corral, 3434 chicken sweeper car, and 3662 milk car with platform. Completing the train were the nos. 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, 6361 timber transport car, 6436 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR N5c porthole caboose with lighting.

Extras in the 13150 varied from a pair of no. 112 Super O remote-control switches to

a type-ZW 275-watt transformer. And there were enough pieces of Super O straight and curved track to lay out an inside and outside circle configuration.

■ Conclusions

Lionel's marketing, pricing, and distribution plans for 1965 must have worked. After losing money for four consecutive years, the company turned a nice profit of \$411,763. Perhaps the reason was its improving the cataloged line of trains while devoting fewer resources and attention to the promotional side.

Or the answer might go back to what Francis O'Leary had promised about wholesome toy trains for the entire family to enjoy. After all, 1965 was the last year Lionel cataloged space and military items, as that fad lost momentum.

Whatever the cause, Lionel ended 1965 on the upbeat. In a report to shareholders issued early the next year, Robert A. Wolfe (president of the entire corporation) stated “appreciation to all those within our organization and those outside who have helped to produce this turn-about in the Company's fortunes.”

As 1965 came to an end, Lionel's leaders thought they had corrected past problems. They hoped 1966 would be another positive and profitable year.



6651 SHELL LAUNCHING CAR



DESIGNERS AT LIONEL secured a number of mechanisms to the decks of ordinary flatcars. They figured out how to enhance basic models so they could launch miniature satellites and rockets, fire plastic missiles, and cause tiny helicopters to spin upward. The animated cars offered youngsters additional action and fun.

Plans evolved until a new model was proposed for 1964. It would have a large plastic cannon capable of shooting wood shells. The spring-loaded mechanism on the flatcar seemed just right for the line, particularly at a time when kids were demanding military items.

But delays occurred in the final development of the no. 6651 shell launching car. They affected its release, though for how long has yet to be measured precisely.

■ New and old

The 6651 used a no. 6511-2 flatcar mold in black or red plastic. It was painted olive drab, with its number and "U.S.M.C." heat-stamped in white along both sides.

Next came the innovative aspects. Lionel began with the plastic launcher base its

engineers had developed for the no. 6650 missile launching flatcar first cataloged in 1959. While that model stayed in the line through 1963, Lionel added two all-but-identical versions in the next two years: nos. 6640 in 1960 and 6630 in '61.

What set the 6651 apart from the latter three was the new plastic cannon affixed to the launcher base assembly. Perhaps the Engineering Department had been refining the gun prior to its being closed at the end of 1963. Or the design could have been finished shortly after.

■ Slightly delayed

Lionel worksheets revealed that supervisors started to assemble the 6651 in 1964. On the newly molded flatcars went trucks and couplers whose details dated them to

the current production year. Trucks had closed journal boxes and plastic couplers with a copper leaf spring.

Assembly came to a halt before the shell launching cars could be completed. The notation on a worksheet from September of 1964 indicated that work on the mold required for the 6651 had been "delayed in Italy."

Something was holding up the final assembly of the green plastic cannon. Consequently, it couldn't be added to the missile launch base, essential for getting the new operating car ready for mass production by Lionel.

All Lionel could do was wait, hopeful everything would be fixed soon. The

a problem because work orders spelled out how six promotional sets of varying quantities were supposed to have a shell launching car.

In September, however, Lionel annotated a relevant worksheet to instruct customers that a no. 3666 cannon firing boxcar had to be substituted. If the delay affecting the 6651 proved to be brief, the firm could have countermanded that plan for customers placing orders.

What did end up being verifiable was that two identical uncataloged sets associated with 1965 did come with a 6651 shell launching car. The nos. 19438 and 19438-502 featured a no. 241 steam engine and tender pulling four freight cars and a caboose. They were general release promotional outfits, the

first being linked to Bennett Brothers and the second to Aldens and J.C. Penney Co.

There was no indication Lionel ever meant to add the 6651 to its cataloged roster in 1964 or '65. The delay of the gun had no effect on that aspect of the line.

STAR OF 1965

situation proved reminiscent of the delays that had held back the introduction of the no. 2333 F3 diesels in 1948.

Circumstances improved, though almost certainly not fast enough to enable Lionel to introduce the 6651 before the end of 1964. That was

Growing variety of promotional and O gauge sets

CHALLENGING MARKET DRIVES INNOVATION



Corporate leaders approached the new year of 1966 with confidence. During the previous year, Lionel advertising had told parents to buy trains in order to mold their kids in constructive ways. Those messages must have had a positive impact because Lionel made a profit after losing money for four straight years.

President Robert A. Wolfe was pleased to inform shareholders about what he and other managers had accomplished. Wolfe wrote in a similarly optimistic fashion in the annual consumer catalog released in the fall. There, he explained to parents the importance of buying wholesome toys.

And to the surprise of faithful customers everywhere, Lionel was again having its consumer catalog printed in full color. What a sight for sore eyes after having the annual “wish list” printed in only black and white in 1963, ’64, and ’65.

There was every reason to think Lionel was truly headed in the right direction. As

the selling season arrived, another year of profits must have been anticipated.

■ Several outstanding O-27 promotional sets

For 1966, as had been the case the previous year, packaging promotional outfits – specially created train sets whose contents generally differed in some manner from what could be found in cataloged sets – assumed less importance for Lionel. In fact, fewer than 100 different promotional outfits were assembled for chain stores and various other customers during the year.

That decline in quantity represented

quite a change for Lionel. After all, every year between 1960 and 1964, the corporation had eagerly created more than 100 uncataloged sets for a wide array of retailers and other businesses.

Even though the number of promotional outfits fell to less than 100 in 1966, not every one of them was a dud. Far from it. Lionel introduced a few classics.

Let’s begin by looking at outfit no. 19546. Available through Montgomery Ward, that O-27 steam 5-car freight train was special because it had three Plasticville U.S.A. structures: the nos. 1402 switch tower, 1403 signal tower, and 1407 watchman shanty. That set also included three Lionel accessories: a boxed no. 461 platform with truck and trailer, 309-100 yard set, and 261-25 non-illuminated bumper.

A no. 237 steamer with smoke and 242T Lionel Lines streamlined tender pulled five cars. Four were common: the nos. 6465 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, 6050 Swift



LIONEL O GAUGE SET NO. 12840 was brand new for 1966. Headed by a no. 665 Hudson and a no. 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle tender, it featured two near-scale boxcars, a flatcar with two trailers and a tractor, plus a deluxe porthole caboose.

boxcar, 6142 gondola with two unmarked white canisters, and 6167-100 Lionel Lines Southern Pacific-type caboose equipped with a rear dummy coupler. The fifth model stood out – a no. 6431 piggyback flatcar that worked with the 461 accessory.

Next came O-27 outfit no. 19567-500, a 5-car set available through Mercury Model (a leading distributor of Lionel trains). To lead that slick freight train Lionel picked a no. 1062-125 steam engine with a 2-4-0 wheel arrangement. Paired with that locomotive was a no. 1061T-50 Lionel Lines slope-back tender.

The little combination pulled four common models: the nos. 6142 gondola, 6014 white Frisco boxcar, 6176-25 unmarked yellow plastic hopper, and 6167-100 Lionel Lines Southern Pacific-type caboose. Distinguishing the uncataloged set was a no. 6401-25 flatcar carrying a Mercury Model plastic vehicle. Be aware Lionel put in the outfit box a special instruction sheet that explained the substitution.

As neat as that flatcar was, the prize of set 19567-500 was without any question the no. C76591 44-piece railroad accessory set. Its unique envelope contained a great assortment of cardboard punch-outs of buildings, bridges, signs, and other items.

■ Great O gauge promotions

Lionel's Fab Four for 1966 was surely the nos. 12710X, 12800X, 12850X, and 19590. Each of those promotional outfits was packaged in low numbers (500 or fewer examples) and so is considered by collectors to be scarce and valuable.

The iconic no. 736 2-8-4 Berkshire steam locomotive with a no. 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle tender headed O gauge set 12710X, which has yet to be connected to a specific retail or another account. It resembled cataloged outfit no. 12710.

The two sets shared four cars: the nos. 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6162-110 gondola with three unmarked white-plastic canisters, 6414 Evans auto loader with four red plastic automobiles equipped with gray bumpers, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated N5c porthole caboose. Lionel substituted a no. 6431 piggyback car with a tractor and trailer in its new cellophane window box as the fifth model.



The second quality O gauge set was the 12800X. A no. 2346 Electro-Motive Division GP9 decorated for the Boston & Maine headed that 6-car freight, which has yet to be linked to a specific client. The B&M road diesel also served as the pulling power for cataloged set no. 12800, which came with one less railcar.

The 12800X outfit featured the nos. 6414 Evans auto loader, 6428-25 U.S. Mail boxcar, 6436-100 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6464-485 Boston & Maine boxcar, 6415-25 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, and a 6017-110 Boston & Maine SP-type caboose.

Did you notice five of the cars had an odd suffix number? Lionel used that number to identify each model as coming unboxed within the large outfit box.

Set 12850X is interesting, because it came with not one but two no. 6464 boxcars. Lionel first put a couple of those near-scale boxcars in an outfit in 1957 when it introduced the no. 1587S Lady Lionel to its

WHAT OUTFIT could surpass the no. 12800 in color? Fans of the Boston & Maine loved the nos. 2346 GP9 road diesel that came with a matching boxcar and caboose.



O-27 roster. The Girl's Set came with the nos. 6464-510 and 6464-515 boxcars.

For the 12850X (yet to be associated with a particular retail or other client), a no. 2322 Virginian Fairbanks-Morse Train Master pulled the nos. 6464-450 Great Northern and 6464-725 New Haven boxcars. Also included in that O gauge outfit were the nos. 3662 operating milk car and

Pacific, 6464-650 Denver & Rio Grande Western, and 6464-700 Santa Fe. Rounding out the train was a brand-new no. 6517-75 Erie bay-window caboose.

According to the *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits 1960-1969* from Project Roar Publishing, Lionel packaged the 242T non-whistle tender in a no. 6429-10 folding box originally intended for a work caboose. That box had a 242T identifying label placed at both ends.

Lionel produced at least half as many of the 11520 in 1966 as it had the year before. Most likely, a supply of unsold outfits from 1965 was still on hand at the company's plant in New Jersey.

Be aware of three changes to the graphics on the 6176 hopper. First, Lionel had omitted "NEW 1-48" in 1965. Second, it removed "6176" during the next production run in 1965 or '66. Third, "Built 1-48 Lionel" was removed, probably starting around June of 1966 (see the description below of cataloged outfit no. 12820). A transition of the different types continued throughout the remainder of the postwar era.

For \$2.50 more, enthusiasts were treated to the reissue of set no. 11530, which had on the point a no. 634 Santa Fe NW2 diesel switcher with a headlight. As an aside, separate-sale examples of that locomotive came packed in a new cellophane window box placed inside a generic master carton.

This 4-car set included the nos. 6014 white Frisco boxcar, 6402 gray-plastic flat-car with two orange cable reels, 6142 gondola with two unmarked white or red plastic canisters, and a 6130 Santa Fe work caboose in red.

Both O-27 and O gauge outfits genuinely packaged by Lionel in 1966 usually included at least one railcar with a washer placed beneath the leaf spring. Production supervisors likely added that washer to provide better spring tension.

Furthermore, sets packaged in 1966 had a label affixed to the side of the set box with a photo identical to the image published in the consumer catalog.

Consumers wanting a quality set headed by double units liked the no. 11560, cataloged again at \$37.50. The colorful no. 211 *Texas Special* Alco diesel A-A combination pulled five quality O-27 freight cars: the



A REAL SURPRISE WAS AN O-27 FOUR-CAR FREIGHT SET ASSEMBLED FOR POLK MODEL CRAFT HOBBIES.

platform, 6476-135 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, 6361 timber car, 6436-110 Lehigh Valley quad hopper with a spreader bar, and a 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated N5c porthole caboose.

That 7-car freight set closely resembled cataloged outfit no. 12850. However, Lionel substituted the 6464-450 and 6476-135 for two other models.

A real surprise was an O-27 4-car freight set assembled for Polk Model Craft Hobbies, a longtime Lionel customer located in New York City. Outfit no. 19590 came with a no. 239 die-cast metal steam locomotive equipped with a smoke unit and an operating headlight. It was paired with a 242T Lionel Lines streamlined tender.

What separated the 19590 from the previous three outfits – or any other set assembled by Lionel during the postwar era – was the presence of three 6464-series boxcars. Included were nos. 6464-250 Western

■ About the same for cataloged O-27 outfits

Lionel cataloged seven O-27 sets in 1966, as it had in 1965. Six were carried over from that year; the seventh was entirely new.

The no. 11520 kicked off the O-27 roster again, but now Lionel pictured it in full color in the consumer catalog. That upgrade should have helped sales because the train looked more appealing than the year before, despite the fact that Lionel raised the retail price from \$20 to \$22.50.

Leading the way was a 242 steamer with a headlight. It came coupled to a 1062T Lionel Lines slope-back tender. The set included four freight cars: nos. 3364 operating log dump car, 6142 gondola with two unmarked white plastic canisters, 6176 yellow plastic Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6059 Minneapolis & St. Louis SP-type caboose molded out of red plastic.

Research of original boxed sets suggests



nos. 6473 rodeo car, 6142 gondola with two canisters, 6465 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, 6176-50 black Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Lionel probably reduced production of this set by 50 percent or more from the year before. A 6473 with heat-stamped maroon lettering was the norm.

■ Moving up in O-27 quality

Next in the line came two 4-car steam freight outfits that, except for their tenders, were identical. The no. 11540 retailed for \$31.50 and paired its no. 239 die-cast metal steamer (with smoke and operating headlight) with a no. 242T non-whistle tender. The no. 11550, which retailed for \$41.50 (only \$1.50 more than Lionel had asked in 1965) came with a no. 239W whistle tender.

Both sets included nos. 6473 rodeo car, 6176-50 black Lehigh Valley hopper, 6465 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, and 6119 Delaware, Lackawanna & Western work caboose. Lionel likely packaged the two sets at the same time.

A rarer 239 with a larger rubber-stamped number was sometimes included with the 11540. Also, "Built By Lionel" began appearing at the bottom left of the caboose cab during the run; that became the more desirable variation of a 6119. So Lionel was adding data to the 6119 but deleting it from boxcars and hoppers.

For the third year in a row, the die-cast metal no. 2029 was the top O-27 steamer.

Equipped with smoke and headlight, it came with a 234W whistle tender in outfit no. 11500. That 5-car train included nos. 6014 white Frisco boxcar, 6465 Lionel Lines double-dome tank car, 6402 flatcar with orange cable reels, 6176 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

This set had the same \$50 price tag as the year before. Outfits offered for sale were primarily leftover inventory from 1965. However, Lionel added a short run in 1966 to complete its sales projections.

Of course, there had to be at least one O-27 passenger set in the consumer catalog. That had been the rule on the roster going all the way back to 1946.

Outfit no. 11590 looked like no. 11490 from the year before. However, a closer look revealed the new Santa Fe cars were illuminated with silhouetted window strips: nos. 2409 Pullman, 2408 Vista-Dome, and 2410 observation.

Retailing for \$60, which was \$5 more than before, the 11590 was the only true new set Lionel cataloged for 1966, and it was a much better buy. Pulled by no. 212 Santa Fe Alco A-A units, it was the perfect farewell. No other O-27 passenger set would grace another Lionel catalog in the postwar period.

■ More of the same in O gauge

Lionel cataloged seven O gauge outfits in 1966 – one more than in 1965. Yet five of them were carryovers, and one was an upgrade from the previous year. The only new set was the model for two of the "Fab Four" sets mentioned earlier.

Set no. 12800, which was headed by the striking blue, black, and white no. 2346-25 Boston & Maine GP9 road diesel, was still priced at \$60. Packed inside the set box were five neat freight cars: nos. 6428-25 U.S. Mail boxcar, 6436-100 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6464-485 Boston & Maine boxcar, 6415-25 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, and a matching 6017-110 Boston & Maine Southern Pacific-type caboose.

The contents carried odd suffix numbers because each of them came packaged unboxed within the rectangular outfit box with a lid. Inside the sizable box, two flat pieces of cardboard were scored and folded into shape and then perforated and cut to mimic the size of the locomotive, cars, and other items placed inside.

For collectors, this great set included the scarce and desirable "Glossy Blue" B&M caboose. The Boston & Maine boxcar included the "2-57" built date to the left of the sliding doors (data removed from the shell during June production).

A production sample dated June 2, 1966 substantiated that fact. That change in decoration probably affected as well the removal of data from the 6176 hopper.

Set nos. 12710 and 12730 were identical freights carried over from 1965. The no. 736 2-8-4 Berkshire with a no. 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle tender led the first set. A no. 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A combination handled the other. Lionel increased the prices of both sets by \$5: \$85 for 12710 and \$90 for 12730.

The five cars included the nos. 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6414 Evans auto loader, 6476-135 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, 6162-110 gondola with three unmarked white plastic canisters, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated caboose.

The hoppers were heat-stamped "6176," which was the designation for a model with one operating and one dummy coupler. However, Lionel equipped those 6176s with two operating couplers, so it identified them as "6476-135."

Each car in the two sets came packaged in its own box, which could be either the

OUTFIT BOXES FOR 1966 typically featured a reproduction of the neat photograph of the contents Lionel included in the full-color consumer catalog, along with a description.



THE NO. 736 BERKSHIRE returned with a 5-car train from 1965. Set no. 12710 came with the nos. 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, 6414 Evans auto loader, 6476-135 Lehigh Valley hopper, 6162-110 gondola with three unmarked white plastic canisters, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated N5c porthole caboose.



earlier orange picture boxes or the new ones with a cellophane window. Lionel used up box inventory as needed, as it did in 1966.

■ Top-of-the-line O gauge sets

A no. 2322 Virginian Train Master pulled a seven-car freight loaded with a grand array of cars, as had been the case with outfit no. 12820, which was priced at \$100 in 1965. For 1966, Lionel added a pair of remote-control switches to that train and hiked the retail price of new set 12850 to \$135.

Lionel probably manufactured the same quantity of sets both years. The version for 1966 still had nos. 6436 Lehigh Valley hopper, 3662 operating milk car with platform, 6822 searchlight car, 6315 Lionel Lines single-dome tank car, 6361 timber transport car, 6464-725 New Haven boxcar, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR caboose.

The last Virginians made and packaged in set form or for separate sale at \$65 were the more desirable models. They came painted both yellow and blue.

For the 15th consecutive year, Lionel cataloged an O gauge passenger set (the Korean Conflict had interrupted the sequence back in 1951). Back again at the same \$125 suggested retail price as the year before was outfit no. 12780.

A 2383 Santa Fe F3 A-A duo again led the train. Also the same were the four illuminated streamliners: two no. 2523 *President Garfield* Pullmans, a 2522 *President Harrison* Vista-Dome and a 2521 *President McKinley* observation car.

This time the four passenger cars came packaged in the new cellophane window boxes, as they also did when offered for separate sale during 1966.

Unbeknown at that time, Lionel was bidding farewell to its O gauge passenger cars, although through the efforts of Lenny Dean (supervisor of the Service Department), they were eventually packaged in “all-white” generic boxes as a final effort to sell off the remaining inventory and make a profit.

Lionel said good-bye to its New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson steamer. The no. 773 (coupled to a no. 773W New York Central whistling tender) made one last stop in the postwar line as the feature for set no. 13150, which retailed at \$225, as it had in 1965.

The set included 7 cars. Back was a no. 3434 operating chicken car with sweeper. Then came nos. 6361 timber transport car, 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, 6436-110 Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6437 Pennsylvania RR illuminated porthole caboose. Plus a pair of animated models added lots of fun: nos. 3662 operating milk car, and a 3356 operating horse car and corral.

Lionel offered the 773 for separate sale at \$90. During the final production run, it introduced a 773W tender with condensed New York Central lettering.

The seventh O gauge outfit was, as the catalog proclaimed, “back by popular demand.” A no. 665 Hudson with a 736W Pennsylvania RR whistle tender provided the power for outfit no. 12840, which retailed for \$80.

That outfit, which came with five cars, represented the only true new O gauge entry for 1966. Lionel used it as the model for promotional outfits 12850X and 19590. All three stood out for having two boxcars from the 6464 series.

Nicely highlighting set 12840 were the nos. 6464-375 Central of Georgia and 6464-450 Great Northern boxcars. Next came nos. 6431 piggyback car with trailers and tractor, 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car, and 6437 Pennsy porthole caboose.

Although both boxcars were shown with die-cast metal trucks in the full-color consumer catalog, Lionel assembled them with plastic AAR trucks. Lionel used a previous model for the illustration of the 6431. The actual model was heat-stamped with “6430” to the left of the car; it was on the right on the car shown.

Yellow vans were the norm for a boxed set, whereas white vans typically came with separate-sale versions of the 6431 (priced at \$6). Lionel mixed and matched as it found necessary, so a transition of yellow or white vans occurred. Either way, a 6431 also had a red Midgetoy die-cast metal tractor made in Rockford, Ill.





■ Superb models

Since the start of the postwar era, Lionel had cataloged items for separate sale. In 1966, it included 5 pages of those goodies.

Start with the freight car declared “Back by popular demand.” The no. 6464-250 Western Pacific boxcar with a blue feather was finally stamped with its correct corresponding number on the shell. When introduced in 1954, that car had been rubber-stamped incorrectly as a 6464-100, which was the number reserved for the WP silver car with a yellow feather. At that time, however, Lionel had correctly placed the cars with blue feathers in component boxcars marked “6464-250.”

Lionel, aware of growing interest in the 6464s, made a few special cars during an early run. The top collectibles in that initial run were a 6464-375 painted red and a 6464-650 whose roof was painted yellow.

Each of the cars came in an earlier style box and was fitted with a small label marked “375” or “650,” respectively. Also, a production sample of each boxcar was put in the archives maintained by Lionel.

Lionel made a few 6464-450 Great Northern and 6464-700 Santa Fe boxcars

that used a small label on the outside of the box. Whether a coincidence or not, a few of those cars were stamped over Type III shells (last used in 1960), thereby making those models extremely rare.

Lionel manufactured some 6464-475 Boston & Maine boxcars in a dark shade of blue verging on purple. That desirable variation was packaged in the newly



THE COMPANY FELL FLAT ON ITS FACE IN 1966 AND REPORTED AN OPERATING LOSS TO THE TUNE OF \$1,612,231 FOR THE YEAR.

developed cellophane window box.

Lionel also carried over the nos. 6464-525 Minneapolis & St. Louis 6464-725 New Haven, and 6464-900 New York Central boxcars. The suggested retail price of those separate-sale items was \$6.00, which was the same as for 1965.

The last star was a reissued no. 6828 flatcar with a Harnischfeger truck crane. It used a rare and valuable red-plastic flatcar instead of the usual black-plastic version made from 1960 through 1963.

■ Conclusion

After all the publicity by Lionel about how its new management had turned things around and how wholesome its trains were, the company fell flat on its face in 1966 and reported an operating loss to the tune of \$1,612,231 for the year.

That had to be a difficult pill for management and shareholders to swallow. Someone or something had to be held accountable.

Unfortunately, the Lionel Toy Corp. took the fall. Management was too busy looking for and gambling on other items to get Lionel out of the hole, as it headed into the later part of the 20th century.

But how could that be, especially since Lionel reported net sales had increased from the year before? Which part of the overall toy line had fallen short? Toy trains? HO scale trains, Raceway sets? What?

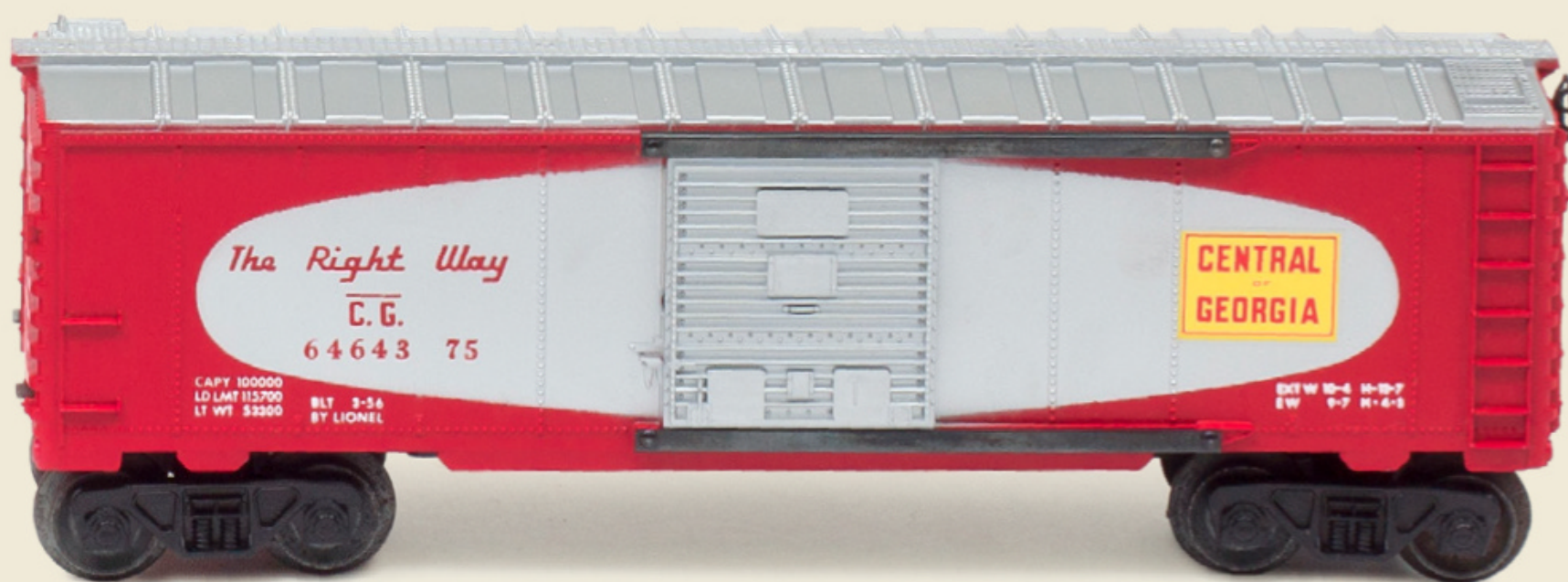
Not even an attractive, full-color consumer catalog had helped the cause, although the likelihood of Lionel having reduced set production didn't help either.

That action didn't do much for promoting and marketing the line, especially when most of those sets were nothing more than the same products reissued from 1965.

The bottom line, however, was that something had to be done, especially since the next production year was around the corner. Management had to decide how to move on, with or without the trains that long served them well.



THE LAST O-27 PASSENGER TRAIN released in the postwar era was the no. 11590. Its no. 212 Santa Fe Alcos pulled new short illuminated cars with silhouetted window strips.



6464-375 CENTRAL OF GEORGIA BOXCAR



SELECTING NEWLY developed models as the stars of particular years in the 1960s grew increasingly difficult as the decade wore on. Once the Engineering Department was closed after 1963, the possibility of entirely new models being added shrank dramatically. About the best were reissues.

Key items were brought back and offered again in 1966. The nos. 773 Hudson and tender and 2322 Virginian Fairbanks-Morse Train Master diesel were two.

Another attractive model deserving of readmission to the cataloged roster was the no. 6464-375 Central of Georgia boxcar. Later, after actual cars were available, a few enthusiasts chanced upon a version of the reissue whose color differed in a slight yet significant fashion.

■ Wine and not black

A little more than 10 years before Lionel revived its Central of Georgia boxcar, the actual 50-foot-long pieces of rolling stock had made their debut. The Central of Georgia had purchased from Pullman-Standard a total of 500 boxcars. They came painted black with a yellow-and-black herald inside a silver oval covering nearly the entire side of the boxcar.

The regional line taking ownership boasted a long history, with claims about its origin dating to 1833. Citizens of Savannah had organized the Central Rail Road & Canal Co. to compete with a venture already operating between Augusta, Ga., and Charleston, S.C. It continued to grow over the years.

By the time the boxcars with their distinctive paint scheme arrived in 1955, the Central of Georgia encompassed more than 1,700 miles of track, most of which ran through the Peach State. Key lines extended west into Alabama, terminating in Birmingham and Montgomery. To the north, the railway pushed into Tennessee. Its network ended right over the border in Chattanooga.

Showing the new boxcars in publications serving the domestic railroad industry explained why in 1956 both Lionel and American Flyer introduced miniature versions.

Designers at the A.C. Gilbert Co., which then manufactured and marketed the Flyer S gauge line, reproduced on the no. 981 boxcar the prototypical look. That meant the large silver “blimp” or “watermelon” in the modernistic scheme fashioned by the Harley Earl Corp. was surrounded by black sides and ends.

Lionel retained the silver blimp and added the large yellow herald (a decal). An assortment of car data, along with “The Right Way” slogan and “BLT 3-56 BY LIONEL” were heat-stamped there.

But Lionel substituted a shade referred to as “wine” for the prototypically correct black. Whether the rationale was to save money or make the O gauge boxcar stand out was never answered.

component of a cataloged set in either 1956 or 1957.

Possibly because the 6464-375 had been underutilized when first offered, Lionel put it in the list of nine near-scale boxcars given a new lease on life for 1966. Think about it – of the 29 paint schemes cataloged by Lionel for its 6464 series, about one-third of them were available in that year.

Even better from the vantage point of fans of the Central of Georgia, the attractive boxcar was available as both a separate-sale item at \$6 and finally a component of an outfit. The no. 12840 O gauge 7-unit set came with the 6464-375 riding behind its no. 665 Pennsylvania RR small Hudson steamer.

Amid the array of examples duplicating what Lionel had done in the past, a tiny number of Central of Georgia boxcars departed from the norm by hav-

ing a gray injection-molded plastic body shell painted red and silver. Unlike the other reissues, the stunning red variation retained the original date with its “BLT / BY LIONEL.” For some unknown reason, the “3-56” was still on the type IV body.

STARS OF 1966

■ Repeat performance

The 6464-375 reached stores and showrooms in the autumn of 1956. The 10½-inch-long model remained part of the cataloged line for a second year. Oddly, Lionel did not designate the Central of Georgia boxcar as the

6431 PIGGYBACK CAR WITH TRAILERS & TRACTOR



PRODUCT MANAGERS were trying to assemble the most appealing line for 1966. The pressure from the top was relentless, pushing them to bring out items sure to sell well while costing as little as possible to manufacture and distribute.

The obvious response was to reissue popular engines and cars. Key personnel thought it wise

to bring back some of the freight cars that had received approval and won sales in recent years. The roster of 6464 boxcars grew impressively for 1966. Other crowd-pleasers included an Evans auto-loader, a crane car, and a bay-window caboose.

Another tactic, one that reflected the creativity still in existence after the Engineering Department had been dismantled, involved adding a new element to something traditional. The no. 6431 piggy-back car with trailer trucks and tractor exemplified this noteworthy trend.

■ Better flatcars

Flatcars had always been part of the roster of rolling stock at Lionel. An empty bed riding atop trucks at each end was as simple as a toy train might be. Perhaps a flatcar would be embellished with metal stakes along the sides to keep an actual or imaginary load of logs or pipes or something kind of toy from slipping off.

Hardly anything changed during the first part of the postwar era. Early flatcars (the nos. 2411 and 6411) transported pipes and then logs. Next came a near-scale model carrying plastic pipes to industrial and construction sites (the no. 6511).

The real breakthrough took place as engineering and sales leaders looked at what they could do for 1955. Designers burst forth with a pair of brilliant solutions.

First, engineers modified the basic flatcar by securing to it a special piece of apparatus to create an impressive model of a modern automobile carrier. The no. 6414 Evans auto-loader mirrored what railroads were doing.

Second, engineers made a flatcar more commercially appealing and fun by shipping it with a unique load unlike logs or pipes. Something that had its own play value. Suddenly, the commonplace

car with a pair of trailers.

In 1955, executives did not market the updated flatcar by itself. Instead, engineers introduced it as part of a new accessory dependent on manual control. The no. 460 piggyback transportation set let you shift the trailers around.

For 1956, however, Lionel did release virtually the same flatcar with two trailers as the no. 6430. It occupied a key spot, whether as a set component or a separate-sale item through 1958. That year there was also a flatcar with one van.

■ Time for more

The 460 lasted through 1957, and the 6430 made it just one year longer. What

through 1963. Gravity kept the two vans from falling off the red plastic flatcar as it ran around a layout. Lionel used the car in promotional sets much longer. Two outfits from 1965 had a 6440.

Then a stroke of brilliance. For 1966, Lionel announced another piggyback car with trailer trucks. The 6431 was identical to the latest variations of the 6430, right down to using a no. 6424-11 frame. In fact, the red plastic flatcar with white lettering still came numbered "6430." On top of the rolling stock, secured by rubber bands, were two white unmarked vans.

Ho-hum so far, the 6431 car quickly broke loose, thanks to something else packed inside its orange



flatcar promised consumers pleasure beyond just coupling it to a train.

What Lionel did for 1955 was revise the no. 6511-2 frame so it could hold a 2-piece sheet-metal rack. Secured to the rack were a couple of plastic over-the-road trailers (also called "vans"). Now you had a flat-

car that had seemed innovative had run its course. About all the interest Lionel had in a flatcar with one or two trailers was in sticking a pair of the plastic toys on a 6511-2 frame lacking the necessary sheet-metal rack.

The no. 6440 twin piggyback van car filled out the cataloged line from 1961

box with a cellophane front. Visible on the left side was a small die-cast metal tractor painted bright red, just right for hauling a trailer.

The truck was not a Lionel production. Instead, the firm had purchased an ample supply from Midgetoy, a small toy manufacturer based in Rockford, Ill.

So simple an addition enhanced the flatcar greatly. Modelers had more to do with the trailers perched on the flatcar. The 6431 could be purchased by itself for \$6 or obtained in a steam-led freight set (no. 12840).



Reducing the number of



Since Lionel's emergence in 1900, its products had earned an enviable reputation in the American toy industry for quality craftsmanship, dependability, safety, and durability. Lionel said it best when it promoted its electric train outfits as "A lifetime investment in happiness."

But everything the venerable company accomplished seemed on the verge of collapse in 1967. As hobbyists learned to their disappointment when they visited authorized dealers, Lionel did not print a consumer catalog for 1967. Quite a letdown after 21 consecutive years of offering appealing catalogs in the postwar period.

What happened in 1967? How did corporate executives deal with a declining market for toy trains? Let's look in depth at the situation at Lionel in a disheartening yet consequential year, paying close attention to the trains released.

PROMOTIONAL OUTFIT

NO. 19705 was the only packaged set in 1967 that had a remote-controlled operating car – the no. 3364 log unloading car (stamped "3362").

■ Board of directors takes charge

The name Lionel meant miniature electric trains and accessories to the typical American in 1967. Or at least it did to well-informed members of society.

Executives at the corporation would not have disagreed with that fundamental notion; they just would have added more. To them, Lionel was a trade name involving profits and investments, annual bonuses and

job security. Truthfully, leaders focusing on those aspects might not have cared what type of products they made.

Look at what took place at Lionel's annual meeting of stockholders held in New York City on May 26, 1967. President Robert A. Wolfe announced as his priority determining the next eight members of the firm's board of directors.

The meeting still offered the usual hoopla and summary of promises and excuses. Wolfe discussed how present management had inherited problems and issues from its predecessors. He spoke of how current leadership had made a profit in its first year at the helm in 1965, after four straight years in the red.





LIONEL DID not release a catalog for consumers in 1967, so it could not offer a true cataloged outfit. But it did package six uncataloged, or promotional, sets. Four went to Sears, Roebuck & Co. Among them was the no. 19705, a 5-car freight led by a no. 242 steamer and tender.

all outfits

CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE BLENDED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

However, the profits earned in 1965 and the dividends last paid in 1962 were nothing more than history to stockholders in 1967. They noted with dismay that Lionel had fallen back during the previous year. The corporation had recorded losses exceeding \$1 million.

To remedy the situation and react to a changing toy market, Wolfe and his fellow executives reached a few tough, almost shocking decisions. First, they would not issue a consumer catalog for 1967, not when an abundance of catalogs from 1966 had never left the Lionel warehouse due to reduced demand for them. Second, Lionel was not going to manufacture any new locomotives, railcars, accessories, and so forth.

Service Manager Lenny Dean was left to inform all authorized service stations about the overall marketing plan early in 1967. In his *Lionel Service News* report, he broke the disappointing news and mentioned that the consumer catalog for 1966 would remain the basis for ordering. Dealers, it was plain, would have to rely on that catalog until the entire product line was, of course, either sold or just carried over.

Lionel would try, however, to produce a few items, such as O-27 track and switches. As the year proceeded, a few pleasant surprises would emerge. They gave hope that the firm might start turning things around by the end of 1967.

■ Six promotional outfits

Admitting that Lionel failed to bring out any cataloged O-27 or O gauge outfits in 1967 does not mean there was nothing new. The company did plan a few promotional sets. According to *Authoritative Guide to*

Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969, seven of those uncataloged sets were under consideration (numbered 19701 through 19707). But only six were packaged and marketed; set no. 19702 has not yet been confirmed to exist.

Each of the six had a price somewhere between \$18 and \$33. They were, in short, on a par with less expensive O-27 sets cataloged during previous years.

The no. 19701 was a 4-car freight outfit sold to Sears, Roebuck & Co. Priced at \$18.44, it used a no. 1061 plastic steamer with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement that operated forward only. It had a no. 1062T Lionel Lines slope-back tender.

A fine example of a late-1960s starter set, the 19701 featured four cars with some play value. They included the nos. 6402 flatcar with three logs, 6042 gondola with two orange cable reels, 6076 black Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6167 red-plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose. The 19701 was priced in line with cataloged outfit no. 11520, which retailed for \$20 in 1965 and \$22.50 in 1966.

Another bargain sold to Sears was outfit no. 19705, which had a retail price of \$19.99. Despite the





SEARS WAS ALSO the customer for promotional outfit no. 19706, which featured Santa Fe Alco diesels in the warbonnet scheme. The duo, the last of the postwar era so decorated, pulled four freight cars. Image courtesy of Project Roar Publishing.

low price, this set should be viewed as the high-end steam set offered by Sears in 1967, thanks to its motive power and operating car. The 19705 was the only packaged set with a remote-controlled operating car that year. It boasted the no. 3364 log unloading car, which Lionel had sold for \$6 in 1966.

A no. 242 steam engine with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement pulled the outfit. It came equipped with a 2-position reverse unit and an operating headlight. A 1062T

Lionel Lines slope-back tender was paired with the cute little locomotive.

The five cars promised lots of fun. Probably the best of them was the 3364, which was rubber-stamped “3362” on each side (in reality, the number given to the helium tank unloading car introduced in 1961). Lionel identified the new model as “3364” because it had a different load: three logs.

The remaining freight cars included the nos. 6050 Swift’s Premium savings bank

boxcar, 6142 blue Lionel gondola, and 6176 black Lehigh Valley hopper. Rounding out the set was a 6167 Southern Pacific-type caboose lettered Lionel Lines.

■ Two diesel sets for Sears

Besides those two promotional outfits led by steam engines, Sears put in its catalog a pair of Lionel sets headed by diesels. The nos. 19703 and 19706 – both 4-car freight sets – had excellent locomotives.

A no. 635 Union Pacific NW2 switcher painted yellow headed the 19703, which

■ Short production run

LENNY DEAN, HEAD OF THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT, ONCE NOTED THAT LIONEL’S RULE OF THUMB FOR STOCKING SELECTED PARTS DURING THE COMPANY’S HEYDAY WAS AROUND 7 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION.

This information assumes great importance in shedding light on what was going on at Lionel in 1967, a year far from its heyday. Knowing the firm probably was teetering on bankruptcy, it seems unlikely Lionel was stockpiling

parts or completed products. Therefore, by comparing production figures from earlier years with what’s known for 1967, we can draw a few logical conclusions.

Take the 635 Union Pacific diesel switcher. According

to surviving production and packaging estimates, Lionel scheduled 2,210 units for 1965 production and 4,100 for 1966 – a total of 6,310 locomotives.

To fill the order Sears had placed for outfit 19703, Lionel had to provide 3,831 UP switchers. That figure represented approximately 60 percent of all of those diesels made in 1965 and ’66. But it appears doubtful Lionel had that many still in its factory.

Such a quantity would mean about 60 percent of 1965 and ’66 production had gone unsold. If Lionel had followed the 7 percent selected parts estimate given by Dean, it would have about 440 extra units in parts.

The 3,831 Union Pacific diesel switchers used in the Sears promotional could not have been leftover inventory. Lionel would not, if the units made in 1965 had failed to sell, double production a

Sears priced at \$22.50. This neat diesel, a component of promotional outfits only, boasted a 2-position reverse unit and a working headlight. Lionel dropped it in 1968, only to revive it as the no. 645 for the cataloged line released in 1969.

Filling out the 19703 were the nos. 6050 Swift's Premium savings bank boxcar, 6176 black or gray Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6408-50 Lionel flatcar with two orange cable reels. At the very end rode a no. 6130 Santa Fe work caboose.

Lionel had introduced the 6408-25 to the product line in 1963, with a load of five plastic pipes. As noted, the load for the 6408-50 (different suffix) was two cable reels. Examples of the 19703 have been reported with a no. 6825 flatcar. All the same, be aware that 6408-50 is the correct identifier, as specified by Lionel.

Finally, Sears offered set no. 19706 at \$32.99. A powered no. 215 Santa Fe Alco and a matching no. 212 non-powered unit served as the motive power for the 4-car freight. The powered A unit, which Lionel put only in promotional outfits, featured a 2-position reverse *mechanism* as well as a working headlight.

The Santa Fe Alco diesels came painted in the railroad's famous red-and-silver "warbonnet" scheme. As such, the two A units represented the final appearance of that great scheme on Lionel diesels during the postwar era. Since making their debut in 1948 on the no. 2333 F3 A-A duo, the name and decoration had become synonymous with Lionel electric trains in the U.S.

The locomotives heading the 19706 came with three freights plus a caboose. Leading the way were the nos. 6176-50 black Lehigh Valley hopper, 6465 orange Lionel Lines two-dome tank car, and 6473

rodeo car. Trailing behind was a no. 6059 Minneapolis & St. Louis SP-type caboose.

■ Promotional sets for others

Lionel made available its two remaining promotional outfits to a variety of retail accounts. The previous four were offered exclusively to Sears, Roebuck & Co.

Three-car freight set no. 19704 relied on a no. 1062 plastic steam engine designed with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement, a 2-position reverse unit, and an operating headlight. It arrived with a 1062T Lionel Lines slope-back tender.

hopper, 6401 log car with three stained logs, and 6465 orange Lionel Lines double-dome tank car. Completing the outfit was a 6059 M&StL SP-type caboose.

Marketing plays an important role for any business. The use of sets like the 19707 was important for Lionel, because it gave consumers the opportunity to buy a train with play value at a reasonable price. Examples of the 19707 have been reported at \$19.99, \$27.97, and \$30. Lionel, of course, hoped consumers would like the train so much they would buy additional track and other items.



LIONEL GAVE CONSUMERS A CHANCE TO BUY A TRAIN WITH PLAY VALUE AT A REASONABLE PRICE.

The duo pulled the nos. 6401 flatcar with three logs, 6176-75 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6167 red plastic Lionel Lines SP-type caboose. All components of the 19704 duplicated what Lionel had packaged in promotional set no. 11580 the year before, except the Lehigh Valley hopper then had been black.

A 5-car freight train completed the roster of promotional outfits sold in 1967. Set no. 19707 placed on the point a no. 241 die-cast metal steam engine with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement. Features on the locomotive, used exclusively in uncataloged outfits, included a 2-position reverse unit, a smoke mechanism, and a working headlight. It came with a no. 242T Lionel Lines streamlined tender.

Set owners got an enjoyable and colorful freight train. Counted among the five cars were the nos. 6050 Swift's Premium savings bank boxcar, 6176-75 yellow Lehigh Valley

■ Hope in diversification

Different elements of Lionel's business in 1967 – reusing the consumer catalog for 1966, halting production of any new items, packaging four exclusive promotional outfits for Sears, and selling unused rolling stock to hobby groups – reflected the corporation's marketing strategy. It was tough-minded or desperate.

Wolfe summarized that outlook to stockholders at the May 26, meeting:

"This board [of directors] adopted a very simple philosophy. Obviously, first to survive and second to effectuate the most basic rule of all business – build up that which was potentially profitable and stop losses in other areas."

On the face of it, the president of the Lionel Toy Corp. appeared to state that electric trains, the very reason the firm had been established, had less and less relevance because the domestic market was declining.

year later. That would have been bad business.

The same scenario holds true for the 6050 Swift's boxcar. According to surviving records, Lionel projected to make 26,680 units for 15 promotional outfits in 1966. Orders taken for three promotional sets in 1967 required 16,920 cars, which amounted to approximately 63 percent of the sum from 1966. Again, it seemed very unlikely Lionel had carried over so many.

The UP diesel and Swift's car suggest Lionel needed to schedule a short production *run* late in 1966 or early in 1967. Lenny Dean alerted dealers to the fact Lionel was going to make track and switches in 1967; adding a few other items to fill gaps shouldn't have been difficult.

Still, if we knew how many units Lionel made and how many were eventually sold, we would know if short runs were ever necessary.



LIONEL HAD INTRODUCED the no. 6050 Swift's Premium savings bank boxcar in 1962 and cataloged it through '63. Yet it needed so many of them to fill promotional sets in 1967 that supervisors at its factory must have authorized a production run.

Reversing that dire trend seemed impossible, or at least beyond the capability of Wolfe and his associates.

Consequently, the board of directors at Lionel believed serious decisions awaited. They decided to close the sprawling plant in Hillside, N.J. They saw no choice but to discontinue the manufacturing of “certain of product lines and to transfer certain other product lines to other of [the company’s] facilities.”

Soon after, another bombshell hit. In August, Lionel planned to sell almost all machinery and equipment used to manufacture various products at an auction supervised by Samuel L. Winternitz & Co. Shocking news for the toy industry.

Additional proof that Wolfe and the board aimed to diversify Lionel’s portfolio came in a memorandum dated December 11, 1967. Wolfe wrote, “We have acquired the outstanding stock of Canadian Sterling Electric Limited, a Canadian-based electric motor company.... This purchase, though modest in size, is the first step in our program to supplement the distribution and scope of our more profitable subsidiaries through acquisition.”

■ Trains still had a place

Anyone familiar with Lionel’s tradition as a manufacturer of toy trains might have feared executives sought a new course. Yet a closer look at what occurred in 1967 revealed a more complicated picture. Even the auction at the factory ended up sacrificing equipment generally used to make items other than those in the train line.

Leaders, though feeling compelled to search for other products and acquisitions likely to improve the bottom line, weren’t ready to abandon trains. Wolfe told stockholders, “We have acquired the American Flyer Train line [from the A.C. Gilbert Co.]. This is my announcement of that acquisition. Now Lionel Trains and American Flyer Trains will be side by side.”

The announcement offered hope there would be Lionel trains, and even American Flyer, in the future, especially since Wolfe went to Japan to check out the possibility of making some products there. He likely knew the Gilbert Co. had pursued manufacturing ties in Hong Kong and Japan.

Also, Lionel continued to rely on trains to burnish its reputation. Executives at the corporation had targeted four exclusive

promotional outfits to Sears (where Wolfe previously had been employed). By doing so, Lionel essentially used the retail giant to market and advertise its brand name, all the while letting Sears foot the bill.

■ Looking ahead

Greater hope arose much later when Lionel reported having earned a profit of \$1,580,519 for 1967. Already, Wolfe had noted how the firm was cutting its debt, having reduced it by \$6 million and striving to continue to aim for solvency. Looking to the future, he pointed out, “Each of our operations was profitable in 1967, and we anticipate further improvements at each facility this year.”

Drastic changes in how Lionel conducted its business in the electric train segment of the American toy field apparently had yielded positive results. There was good reason to hope it would return to cataloging new trains in 1968.

Thanks to John Schmid, Ray Fetzner, Ed Mullin, and the late Lenny Dean. Image of promotional set no. 19706 courtesy Project Roar Publishing Co.

■ Generic white and labeled boxes



LENNY DEAN ALSO SAID HE HAD RECOMMENDED USING GENERIC WHITE BOXES FOR A FEW ITEMS. HE POINTED OUT THAT SUCH PACKAGING COST LESS BECAUSE IT ELIMINATED UNNECESSARY COLORED GRAPHICS.

Additionally, generic boxes could hold different yet similarly sized models, thus saving supervisors time and money.

Boxes used for a no. 2521 *President McKinley* observation car or no. 3662 operating

milk car are noteworthy. Lionel cataloged both items in 1966 but not again in 1968, which proves late 1966 or 1967 as the date of origin.

Lionel also used flattened boxes remaining in stock and



applied a label at both ends, thereby accounting for any number of different individually numbered items workers could pack inside. The practice of aggressively using labels to sell remaining inventory and make money began as early as 1965, as proved by a production sample in the Lionel Archives of a no. 6142-85 gondola that was dated 9/21/65.

THE LATE LENNY DEAN, who was then supervising the Service Department at the Lionel factory, had the company package pieces of rolling stock, including no. 2521 *President McKinley* observation cars, in generic white boxes in 1967. The product numbers were rubber-stamped on each of the ends.



6464 BOXCARS WITH BRASS DOORS



EVERYBODY HAS a relative or friend on the holiday gift list who is truly impossible to shop for. “He’s got everything already,” is heard before hands are thrown up in frustration.

Sometimes train collectors can be exactly like that. What can one hobbyist give to a fellow enthusiast that he or she will not have and genuinely desire?

Such was the dilemma facing organizers of the national convention of the Train Collectors Association planned for Baltimore, Md., in the summer of 1967. They wanted to sell a unique item to raise funds and wanted something sure to be a hit with the hundreds of members they could count on attending the annual event.

The solution emerged after one of the best-known and most-respected men in the TCA talked with sales executives at Lionel. He arranged for the toy train manufacturer to sell TCA 601 boxcars from the 6464 series. Then he performed a bit of magic on the near-scale models to transform them into stars.

■ Magician from Garfield

William Vagell was the gentlemen responsible for creating a small group of highly collectible boxcars still pursued with passion by postwar enthusiasts. He had,

as a young man during the 1920s and '30s, established himself as a popular magician along the East Coast. Bill performed in theaters and other venues, delighting audiences with his amazing dexterity, quick wit, and dazzling array of tricks.

Following World War II, Bill settled down in Garfield, N.J., not too far from the Lionel factory. He opened the Treasure House, a store specializing in electric trains, and rose to the pinnacle

among retailers stocking Lionel products. Corporate leaders, in particular Joshua Lionel Cowen, noticed his success. Soon, Bill had made the elderly gentleman’s acquaintance and a friendship blossomed.

Many years later, with Bill continuing to manage his business while rising to the upper echelon among TCA leaders, he remained friendly with Lionel’s chiefs.

STARS OF 1967

So it wasn’t out of the ordinary for him to negotiate the deal by which TCA purchased extra inventory of the boxcars cataloged by Lionel for 1966.

The previous year, Lionel

had decorated a near-scale model for the Train Collectors Association. The blue car with white markings had differed from any of the boxcars placed in past years in the cataloged lineup. Maybe officers of the TCA were considering having Lionel create another model with special lettering.

■ Top brass

Instead, Lionel and the collectors group came up with an idea unlike any proposed before. The leftover boxcars, decorated for 9 different railroads, were going to have one of their sliding doors removed. In its place would be secured a different sort of door fashioned out of brass and marked with the name and logo of the Train Collectors Association as well as information about its national convention for the year.

The shiny doorplates affixed to the Great Northern, Santa Fe, Western Pacific and other boxcars looked fantastic, catching the eyes of every bystander. They have remained popular in the intervening decades, with prices for examples staying constant after rising steadily for years. All nine models are worth owning.





More going on than might be imagined

DOWN TO MORE THAN A PAIR OF TRAIN SETS



Just what happened at Lionel in 1968 is critical to understanding the trains associated with the end of the post-war era and decisions made regarding the future of the famous toymaker. While trains will be the focus here, we'll consider as well the financial impact of Lionel's non-train product lines.

■ Good news came early

Lionel experts have for too long viewed 1968 as an unimportant year. And they have mistakenly assumed the company used only leftover inventory to fill orders. Our research proves there were production runs. That, in turn, shows Lionel remained vibrant and creative at a difficult time in its history.

Lionel enthusiasts and dealers had been shocked and disappointed in 1967 when they heard the firm would not be releasing a consumer catalog. Such an omission had never occurred in postwar days.

Fortunately, its decision makers gave indications they would authorize the manufacturing as well as the cataloging of some type of toy train products for 1968.

Lenny Dean, then serving as manager of the Service Department, got the ball rolling in a positive direction early in 1968. He announced in the February issue of the *Lionel Service News* there would indeed be trains available. "Lionel's train line," Dean noted, "will consist of 'O27' gauge only in 1968 including accessories, however, 'O' gauge track will be available."

The dramatically limited line Dean was

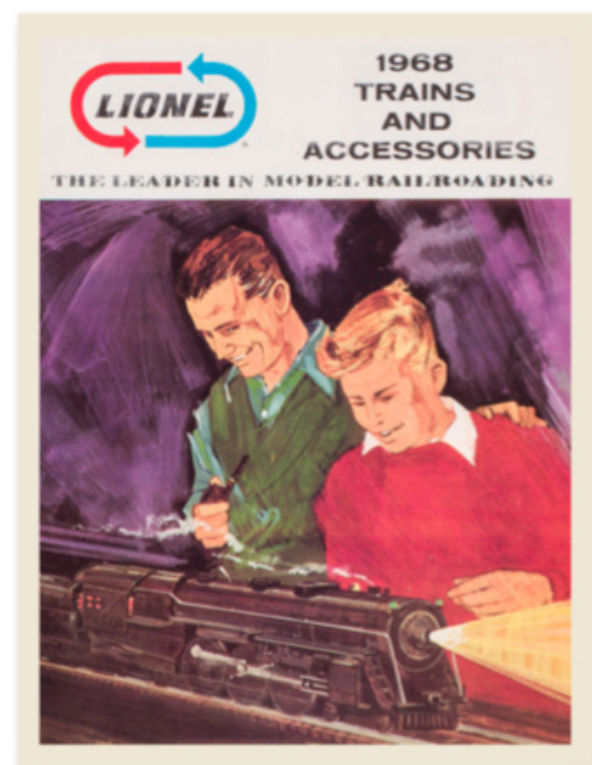
describing wasn't the news Lionel dealers and fans wanted to hear, especially after a year off. But at least they learned something new was apparently planned.

Better yet, Dean informed distributors and retailers they would be able to see the new line at the American Toy Fair (the annual industry trade show), to be held in New York City, between March 11 and 15, 1968. "I'll be looking forward to visiting personally with many of you at that time," he concluded.

■ An advance flyer offers more

More details about what Lionel intended to offer in 1968 surfaced right after the American Toy Fair. The March issue of the *Lionel Service News* came with a flyer given the title, "Lionel '68."

The front side of that single-page flyer depicted a brand-new 7-unit freight outfit (no. 11600) and listed its contents. The reverse side showed assorted sections of O and O-27 gauge track, a few accessories (including a trestle set, two signals, a set of boulevard lamps, a girder bridge, and a manual culvert unloader), and a 90-watt transformer (no. 1044).



IN ADDITION TO AN ADVANCE flyer Lionel released to the toy trade, the company put out an 8-page consumer catalog in 1968. It showed electric trains, juvenile phonographs, and science sets.

Also included with the March issue of the *Lionel Service News* was a suggested retail price sheet for 1968 as well as information that Lionel's consumer catalog for the year would be available by the end of May. By the time the full-color catalog did arrive, Lionel was offering for sale a handful of premium items from prior years. That announcement brightened the mood of both dealers and enthusiasts.

LIONEL ASSEMBLED two somewhat similar outfits for 1968. This one, a promotional set designated no. 11620, had a no. 2029 steam engine and non-whistle tender on the point leading four run-of-the-mill models.



■ Creating a consumer catalog once again

The consumer catalog for 1968 hardly compared in visual design or number of pages with the full-color “wish books” Lionel had released in the past. It consisted of a long glossy sheet folded into eight pages, one of which served as the front cover (reusing the illustration of a father and son watching a Hudson steam engine that had been used for the 1966 catalog).

Of the remaining seven pages, all but one advertised the group of trains Lionel intended to produce, assemble, and package. The anomaly had black-and-white shots of the abbreviated lines of Spear juvenile phonographs and Porter science sets (both minor parts of the toy division overseen by the Lionel Toy Corp.).

Overall, the appearance of a consumer catalog, regardless of its look and size, did much to reassure dealers shaken by the absence of a catalog and trains the previous year. They felt confident about placing orders and expecting to receive them prior to the holiday selling season.

■ Highlights of 1968

The opening two pages of the consumer catalog highlighted in full color the 11600 set (immodestly proclaimed, “The Greatest Train Set of All Times”). The train was posed on ballasted track amid forested hills. A cloudy sky loomed beyond. A rectangular box specified the contents of the set.

The next two pages focused on locomotives and rolling stock for 1968, with color photos, brief listings, and retail prices.

Surely the best of those offerings was a locomotive symbolic of Lionel’s postwar glory. The nos. 736 2-8-4 Berkshire and 736W whistle tender retailed for \$60.

Among the other 15 items shown were the nos. 54 ballast tamper for \$15, 3364 operating log dump car for \$7, 6560 crane car for \$9, 6361 timber transport car for \$6, 6437 illuminated porthole caboose for \$7, and 6822 night crew searchlight car for \$8. Two near-scale boxcars were there at \$7 each: the nos. 6464-475 Boston & Maine and 6464-735 (-725) New Haven.

Regarding the 54, Lionel had to dig deep in its vault to find enough examples to warrant bringing it back in order to *finally* deplete existing inventory it had failed to get rid of in 1966. The ballast tamper (introduced in 1958) had not been part of the cataloged lineup since 1961.

The final pages showed the 21 ancillary items found in “Lionel ’68,” ranging from

individual sections of straight and curved track to a group of basic accessories. Added to that roster were a no. 310 billboard set, a second trestle set, a tube of lubricant, and two instructional booklets.

As a whole, the consumer catalog for 1968 conveyed a positive message to Lionel’s network of authorized dealers. The train line, although scarcely like what the company had put together in the 1950s, still seemed viable.

■ Bold claim and high price

The 11600 was a quality 5-car freight outfit representing a step up from the O-27 sets Lionel had dcataloged between 1964 and ’66. It was also expensive, being assigned a retail price of \$90 (\$664 in today’s dollars). Yet keep in mind that Lionel was listing the 11600 set at just \$10 more than it had priced O gauge outfit no. 12840, also a 5-car freight, back in 1966.





All the same, corporate leaders must have believed the current toy train market could handle an O-27 set priced on par with an O gauge set.

So personnel prepared to package and ship the new set from Lionel's facility in Hagerstown, Md., which handled the toy train operation previously based at the firm's factory in Hillside, N.J. In fact, Dean had reminded dealers in the March issue of *Lionel Service News* to send orders for cataloged items to Hagerstown and orders for repair parts to Hillside.

■ Set with play value

To start, a two-level, flip-top box having an attractive picture of a fictitious set on the box cover, gave flair to the 11600. The packaging left the impression that any parent buying this outfit was bringing home a train certain to make his or her son the envy of every other kid on the block.

Packaged on the top tray of the set box was the motive power, a no. 2029 die-cast metal steam engine. Although not as glamorous as a no. 2020 turbine or a no. 2065 small Hudson from the glory days, it still featured a working headlight and smoke and came with a no. 234W whistle tender.

The 2029 steamer was usually boxed to properly fit the predetermined space within the die-cut, cardboard filler. Not too far away, there was a no. 260-25 illuminated bumper. A small piece of Styrofoam protected it from damage.

As an aside, the -25 suffix assigned the bumper meant it came unboxed when placed within the set box. (If boxed, it would be 260-1.) The same held true for the locomotive. It was listed as a no. 2029-1 when boxed and a no. 2029 -25 when placed unboxed within the die-cut filler of the outfit box.

The rolling stock selected for the 11600 included the nos. 6014 Frisco boxcar, 6476 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, 6315 Lionel Lines single-dome tank car, 6560 crane car, and 6130 ATSF work caboose. The 6315 and 6560 gave this set two quality O gauge-type cars that had been missing from previous years. To be honest, the most recently cataloged O-27 steam outfit to have come with a number of quality O gauge-type freight cars was the no. 11395 from 1963; it came with five of them.

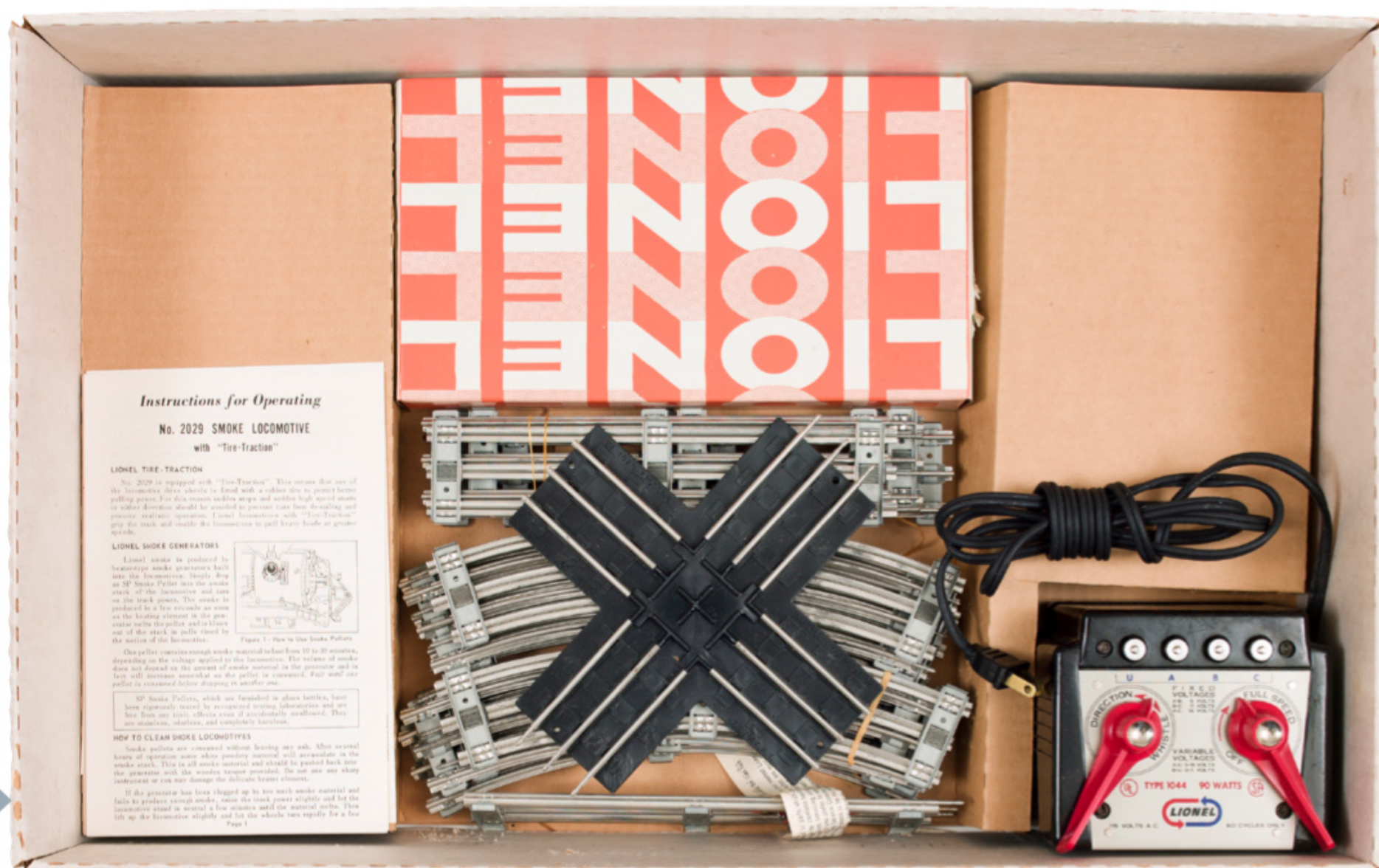
On the bottom tray of the set carton used for the 11600, a no. 1044 90-watt transformer was packaged in such a way as

THE ONLY CATALOGED set made in 1968 came packaged in two trays. The upper one, seen first after removing the flip-top lid, had the powerful steam engine and whistle tender, four neat freight cars, and a work caboose. The lower tray had the track, a crossover, a 90-watt transformer, and instruction sheets.

to protrude through the top. There was a no. 1122 remote-control left-hand switch packed in a new checkerboard-type box.

Completing the 11600 were 12 pieces of curved track, six pieces of straight track, and a no. 6149 remote-control uncoupling track. Those different track sections and the no. 1020 90-degree crossover packed with the set neatly formed a figure-8 network.

The left-hand switch and the no. 260 illuminated bumper made it possible to add a siding. Lionel cleverly inserted text in the description of the set to suggest how someone could build a freight yard there – a smart ploy to entice consumers to buy extra freight cars and even an accessory like the 348 manual culvert unloader shown elsewhere in the catalog.



■ Production run needed

The consumer catalog for 1968, though unimpressive, still illustrated a new train set, two locomotives, a motorized unit, many freight cars, track, signals, and more. How was Lionel going to make so many items available?

The consensus among Lionel experts has long been that the firm had sufficient leftover inventory at its Hillside plant to enable it to assemble and package the required quantity of items necessary to finalize production for the year. In other words, it could fill *all* orders simply by utilizing what was already there.

We totally disagree! Circumstances were not so simple unless Lionel planned on packaging only a few hundred sets. That makes no sense.

Why? Because the overhead would have killed Lionel! Furthermore, the complaints from dealers would have sent Lionel's executive team packing.

Of course, the real reason Lionel for 1968 must have authorized an additional production run, even a short run, is discovered by researching the trains as manufactured, assembled, packaged, and sold by the Lionel Toy Corp.

■ Three key items – 2029 steam engine

To prove Lionel authorized a production run in 1968, let's look at three items manufactured, packaged, and sold then.

We'll begin by turning a spotlight on the overlooked 2029 steam engine.

The critical piece of the puzzle appears in *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960 -1969*. Author John

aware of how the A.C. Gilbert Co. had used parts made for it in Japan and Hong Kong.

Moreover, it seemed unlikely the items made for Lionel in Japan were done as a trial run. To the contrary, they probably were the result of a regular production run consisting of at least around 10,000 units of each part.

From a manufacturing and accounting point of view, therefore, why waste time



AS A WHOLE, THE CONSUMER CATALOG FOR 1968 CONVEYED A POSITIVE MESSAGE TO LIONEL'S NETWORK OF AUTHORIZED DEALERS.

Schmid notes the motor assembly for the 2029 was made in Japan. So was the trailing truck (die-stamped with the word "Japan"). Knowing the front truck was made out of the same copper-color material, we believe it was, too.

The manufacture of those parts for the 2029 likely was the result of Lionel President Robert A. Wolfe traveling to Japan in 1967. He must have been scouting a source for fabricating parts, probably being well

and money going overseas to make a product no one needed?

But the key part for a 2029 was its die-cast metal boiler. So, were new ones manufactured in 1968, or was Lionel using leftover inventory?

To reach a conclusion, we suggest you review the reasons someone might have taken a 2029 to be serviced. The motor assembly and smoke unit would have been the primary issues, and so replacements



were made. The trucks would have been secondary issues, so new ones were also made.

But there was little need for spare boilers (a part Lionel probably was not offering anyway). That point became plain when investigating what hobby shops located in and around Chicago had on hand in the 1970s and '80s. They had plenty of brand-new, nicely wrapped plastic locomotive shells. But none had brand-new metal boiler shells.

The bottom line is since the motor and trucks for the 2029 steamer were not leftover stock, then the die-cast metal boilers for that locomotive were not either. Instead, they represented new items made at the Lionel factory or by an outside vendor.

■ Role of the 6560 crane car

The 6560 crane car associated with outfits from 1968 stands out from earlier versions because its base was molded out of black or even dark blue plastic. Proof came from Steve Bittinger, onetime owner of a toy train museum and retail store in Harpers Ferry, W.Va., who recalled acquiring "a quantity of Lionel train goods that had been stored in a barn adjacent to the Lionel plant at Hagerstown, Maryland, in the early 1980s."

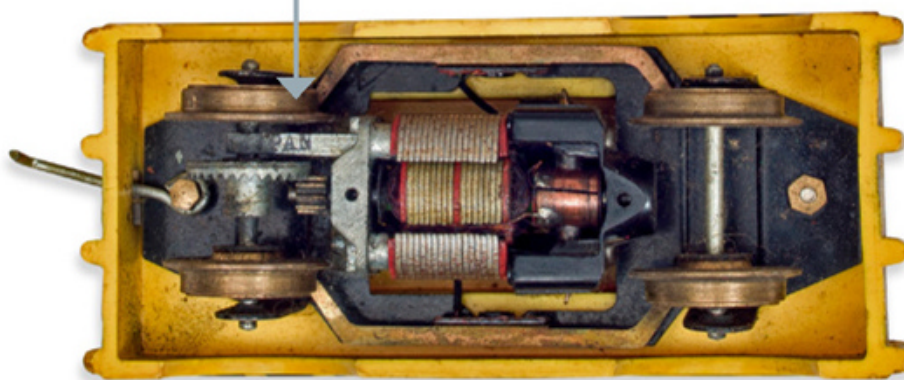
In that group of trains were 6560 crane cars with dark blue frames (widely known in the hobby as "Hagerstown crane cars"). Steve attributed them to Richmond Plastics, located in Richmond, Va.

Never before 1968 did crane car parts come in dark blue. Therefore, they could not have been leftover inventory lying around the Hillside plant!

■ Noting the TCA tender shell

Volunteers in charge of the national convention of the Train Collectors Association

LIONEL HAD PARTS USED on the no. 2029 steam engine manufactured in Japan. The name of that country appeared on the trailing truck, as it did on a part the A.C. Gilbert Co. had made there for its no. 23743 track maintenance car.



being held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1968, contracted with Lionel for a tender shell. It supplied 1,500 blank black-plastic streamlined shells, which an outside vendor heat-stamped with the 1968 convention graphics.

Again, Lionel must have been ready and willing to produce (and assemble and package) new items, such as the tender shells, for 1968.

What remains a mystery is exactly what Lionel in either Hagerstown or Hillside did make that year. Similarly perplexing is guessing how often it turned to outsiders.

Lionel had used Richmond Plastics for crane car parts, so it could have requested additional items. Or Lionel might have reached out to businesses closer to home in New Jersey. We have in mind such small firms as Donna Models in Belleville and Jersey Plastic Molders in Irvington.

■ Promotional set no. 11620

Besides the set in the consumer catalog, Lionel sold a promotional outfit in 1968. It announced the no. 11620 in the November 1968 issue of the *Lionel Service News*. The train had a suggested retail price of \$45.

The entry for the 11620 in *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969* implies Lionel assembled the set from existing stock. This makes sense, especially if Lionel had overproduced items for set

11600 to account for breakage and warping and had not sold out of the set or its components by the third or fourth quarter of 1968.

These observations about the 11620 derive from a mint example that was purchased in 1991 from Madison Hardware Co. two years after Richard Kughn acquired that famous Lionel retailer and moved it from New York City to Detroit, Mich. Difficult as it may be to believe, Madison had on hand 44 mint examples of that promotional outfit so many years later.

Promotional set 11620 included a 2029 steam locomotive, now paired with a no. 234T-25 non-whistle tender. Lionel most likely assembled the tender that way to reduce the cost of the set (the shell still had "234W" heat-stamped in white).

The four freight cars included in the set, which has yet to be linked with a particular retailer, included the nos. 6402-50 flatcar with two cable reels, 6476-125 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper, and 6062-25 New York Central gondola. A no. 6130-25 ATSF work caboose brought up the rear. The suffix provided for each car meant it came unboxed within the outfit box.

■ A decent year

After 1967, when Lionel put toy train production on hold, loyal dealers and longtime enthusiasts must have been pleased to learn about a new cataloged outfit, even if it failed to match the great sets the company had offered in the past. They would have been impressed with its brand-new flip-top box and colorful artwork, which gave the appearance of a railroad empire loaded with play value.

However, the profit or loss derived from set 11600 would have been Lionel's chief concern for 1968. We can now only speculate about its financial impact because production estimates have not surfaced.

Calculating a range of possible numbers involves looking first at the research conducted by John Schmid. He reports that the greatest quantity of O-27 outfits cataloged for 1966 was 14,770 units for set no. 11520. The smallest quantity of sets cataloged then was 3,500 units for the no. 11590.

Next, we factor in the point that manufacturing parts for the 2029 steam engine should have resulted in lower labor and material costs for Lionel.



THE UNIQUE BLUE-COLORED PLASTIC discovered on the no. 6560 crane car associated with 1968 helped prove it was molded by an outside vendor.



A couple more key points are worth contemplating when looking back at 1968: the 11600 retailed for \$90, and dealers were given a 50 percent discount off cost. Therefore, Lionel received \$45 from each 11600 set sold.

Using a quantity of 10,000 sets as our projection and knowing that Lionel eventually sold out of the 11600 suggests sales reached \$450,000. If the company produced only 5,000 sets, then the sales amount would be \$225,000.

Keep in mind, however, that Lionel President Ronald D. Saypol later asserted, "All company subsidiaries operated profitably." His statement suggests the production of at least 10,000 sets should be in line.

Of course, Lionel also cashed in on the many items offered for separate sale. Yet with those sales going to dealers and distributors, it's very difficult to make a projection, other than the line was profitable, especially with the number of items being carried over from prior years.

■ Looking to 1969

A few notable clues about where Lionel apparently was heading could be found in newly elected President and CEO Saypol's annual report to stockholders. There, he sought to impress stockholders and investors by declaring, "The year 1968 saw further improvement in your Company's financial condition."

Specifically, Saypol went on to observe, "Sales in 1968 totaled \$32,102,836 as compared to \$31,885,592 in 1967. Net income declined from \$1,714,260 to \$351,902." That in spite of the fact that all subsidiaries operated profitably.

Saypol's goal boiled down to showing that Lionel, now under his control and direction, had started turning things around in a positive way. He probably did so, above all, to reassure the five new directors who had very likely been most responsible for elevating him to leadership of the venerable business.

Oddly, Saypol said nothing about the toy trains, the foundation of the company's greatness, except when he discussed profit and loss. Then it appeared Lionel was being dealt a losing hand, as costs from Hillside and Hagerstown were probably accounted for on the year-end balance sheet.

But Saypol's final comments set the tone for the future of the toy train division: "We believe that the Lionel name, image and reputation are among our most valuable assets, and we hope to be able to utilize this name in creating new and profitable enterprises for your company."

Saypol's message gave no indication of where Lionel was heading with regard to toy trains. It was easy, therefore, to read between the lines and end up fearing the end of that chapter of its history was around the corner.

Special thanks go to Steve Bittinger, Ray Fetzner, John Schmid, and Mark Speichert.



THE 1,500 TENDER shells Lionel sold to the Train Collectors Association for a special run suggested the firm had authorized a production run in 1968.

Ending the era on a positive note

MORE SETS AND KEY MODELS CONCLUDE THE POSTWAR SAGA



For Lionel enthusiasts, the tendency has been to criticize as inferior and embarrassing the O-27 outfits and other items the company made and marketed during what became the last year of the postwar period. They downplay what Lionel produced, almost instinctively comparing it unfavorably to what had been released a decade or more earlier.

■ New view of the train line

Such a negative view misses what should be obvious and so cause us to raise our opinion of Lionel's line for 1969. Namely, although executives knew General Mills had leased the rights to make and market the line of trains, they refused to pass the buck or quit trying their best. To the contrary, the men in charge insisted on bringing out six sets with contents that matched or even surpassed what had been put in the O-27 sets released during the previous five years.

To start, four of the six outfits cataloged came as 5-car freight trains. Lionel had not cataloged as many long freights with so much play value since 1964. Since then, only two of the O-27 sets Lionel offered in 1965 and '66 had been 5-car freights.

Second, Lionel priced the sets from less than \$20 to \$76 (based on the pricing policy or objective of each retailer). The prices were in line with what it had done before.

Third, management sought to package the sets in an innovative way. Knowing a

picture was a valuable marketing tool, they placed a photo of the set contents on a label affixed to the side of each set box. It gave dealers a quick look at what they were selling while showing consumers the contents of the outfit they were considering buying.

■ New view of production

A second key misconception relates to what Lionel was or was not doing in 1969. The view has taken hold among collectors that the company filled orders with nothing but existing inventory it had failed to sell over the previous years. Nothing was produced.

Personal research and interviews with key personnel from Lionel blow this idea apart. The O-27 outfits shown in the consumer catalog for 1969 and many of the separate-sale items offered represented new products being manufactured in that year.



OUTFIT NO. 11740 was one of four 5-car freight trains cataloged by Lionel for its O-27 line of 1969. The colorful set, one of six cataloged for that year, featured lots for children to enjoy. It belies the widespread view that Lionel had little to offer at the end of the era.

Two sources about what was going on appeared early in 1969. Lenny Dean, who held the position of service manager at the time and so had insights into parts production, wrote in the March newsletter sent to authorized service stations: "Production of all items shown [in the consumer catalog] will be in high gear shortly – ready for shipment by July 1st, and I would appreciate receiving an order for your needs now to insure delivery."

Lenny's statements leave no doubt that Lionel had been preparing for 1969 production since the end of the previous year. Moreover, he suggested Lionel's final 1969 production of trains would be closely watched and adjusted accordingly by the early orders received.

On April 28, Lenny told Lionel dealers, "We are pleased to announce that an agreement has been signed by The Lionel Corporation, Hillside, New Jersey and General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota pursuant to which Lionel and General Mills will cooperate in the manufacture and sale of Lionel's toy trains and other toy products during 1969."

What an important insider at Lionel was revealing to the trade should not be underestimated. Lenny was making clear the company's intentions to manufacture substantial quantities of new trains. Those products were needed to fill orders of outfits, engines, and more.



THE CONSUMER CATALOG released to the public in the spring of 1969 showed a 2-8-4 Berkshire steam engine and a Fairbanks-Morse Train Master diesel on the front cover. Too bad neither of those stalwarts of the postwar period was cataloged by Lionel in that year!

■ Suggested retail prices

We noted that Lionel was pricing its outfits for 1969 from less than \$20 all the way up to \$76. Ascertaining that basic yet vital information proved to be quite difficult.

During the last decade of postwar production, Lionel's yearly consumer catalogs had suggested retail prices for each set and all the separate-sale items. Then circumstances changed in 1968. The consumer catalog had included prices for separate-sale items only. It revealed nothing about the price of the only set being cataloged: the no. 11600. A Lionel order form sent to dealers in 1968 indicated it was listed at \$90.

For 1969, Lionel's pricing policy continued that same way. Meaning, the dealer price lists we're familiar with included only

net prices (instead of suggested retail) for each set offered. Retail prices were again included for items offered for separate sale.

There were at least two known Lionel price lists for 1969. Prices for cataloged sets found in the second list were approximately 11 percent higher than those in the first.

We'll use the second list, where outfits ranged in price from \$13.90 to \$37.80. This list failed to include O-27 passenger sets, which Lionel had discontinued after 1966.

■ Last O gauge hurrah

By the end of 1968, leaders of the Lionel Corp. had already made plans to manufacture, assemble, package, and market as fine a line of toy trains as possible for 1969. They chose to focus on O-27 sets, refusing

OUTFIT NO. 11730 promised consumers a new NW2 diesel switcher and a matching Union Pacific caboose. Lionel needed to manufacture sizable quantities of those and other new items during 1969. The notion the firm relied on unsold inventory to fill orders makes no sense.



to make any O gauge outfits. Instead, Lionel hoped to entice modelers in that niche with a handful of separate-sale goodies.

That corporate marketing strategy probably made sense from Lionel's perspective. After all, the production and sales of O gauge outfits the previous few years had been low and not as profitable as before. Still, like any other toy manufacturer, Lionel was aware of other parts of the market and so made a final attempt to increase sales and profits accordingly.

The cream of the O gauge crop were the five no. 6464-series near-scale boxcars Lionel had brought back "by popular demand." Production supervisors improved the boxcars by fitting them with die-cast metal trucks rather than the plastic AAR examples the company had introduced in 1957.

With a suggested retail price of \$9 each, the nos. 6464-75 Rock Island, 6464-200 Pennsylvania RR, 6464-400 Baltimore & Ohio Time Saver, 6464-425 New Haven, and 6464-500 Timken provided O gauge enthusiasts with something to cheer about. Still, a few consumers probably were confused to discover Lionel had stamped the black-painted New Haven with the number 6464-725. The latter had been reserved by the company for the orange-painted New Haven boxcar that debuted in 1962 and continued through 1968.

■ More notable models

Sensing O gauge operators were probably looking for more, Lionel also cataloged the no. 6560-25 Bucyrus-Erie crane car for \$9

and the no. 6822 night crew searchlight car for \$8. It revived the no. 6415 Sunoco triple-dome tank car after an absence of two years at \$9. The no. 6315 single-dome chemical tank car and the no. 6361 timber transport car each went for \$7. Even though the consumer catalog pictured the 6315 with Lionel Lines markings and circle-L herald, the chemical cars released in 1969 came with a Gulf logo.

Everyone must have been glad to notice a motorized unit in the 8-page catalog. Lionel had priced its remaining and unsold inventory of no. 54 ballast tampers at \$15.

Thrown into the mix was a no. 3362/3364 operating unloading car priced at \$7. To clarify, when the basic model came with three helium tanks, it was designated a 3362. But when it came with three brown-stained logs, it was a 3364. The idea of taking one operating model and giving it two identities, based on whatever load it had, was Lenny's. Another clever way to use up the old stocks of wood logs and tanks.

Two other colorful models came back, although they probably had outlived their usefulness when it came to sales. The no. 3376-150 operating giraffe car (priced at \$8) and the no. 6473-60 rodeo car (priced at \$7) returned to the line after a few years off.

O GAUGE ENTHUSIASTS must have been thrilled when they discovered Lionel had brought back five of the near-scale boxcars it had added to the no. 6464 series in the 1950s. A new production run of the models was necessary; unsold inventory surely didn't exist.

Decision makers likely aimed the two novelty-type cars at youngsters, who would view them as add-ons to the O-27 outfits being sold. Production of the 3376 and 6473 was probably kept to a minimum, with fewer than 1,000 each made. Both ended up packaged in the new checkerboard type of box Lionel had introduced in 1968.

■ Low-end freight cars

A few of the other O-27 cars for 1969 were targeted to the low end of the hobby market. We're referring to the nos. 6014-85 orange and 6014-410 white Frisco boxcars (\$6 each) and 6062-50 black New York Central gondola with two unmarked red-plastic cannisters (\$4).

Additionally, you had the nos. 6476-135 yellow and 6476-160 black Lehigh Valley hopper cars (\$4 each). The Lionel consumer catalog for 1969 added to the confusion surrounding the yellow hopper by referring





to the separate-sale version as the no. 6476-185, though the car actually came boxed as the aforementioned 6476-135.

■ Looks like a Scout set

Nice as the freight cars were, Lionel earned the most money by selling boxed sets. The few outfits assembled during the final year of postwar production deserve attention.

Lionel just wouldn't be Lionel without an inexpensive starter set kicking off its cataloged O-27 line. That had been the case since 1946, when set no. 1401 had made its debut (retail price of \$24.95). In 1948, the nos. 1111 and 1112 Scout sets had popularized the lower end of the market. They had retailed for \$15.95 and \$18.95, respectively.

That notable marketing trend and clever pricing strategy had continued at Lionel through the 1950s and into the 1960s. With the growing popularity of promotional sets, Lionel had been given the ammunition needed to gain a foothold in as many households as possible, while making a realistic profit and satisfying the firm's many shareholders.

The no. 11710 was a 3-car set with a net

price to dealers of \$13.90. According to the description in the consumer catalog, "This exciting budget priced Lionel steam freighter includes all the necessary components to give you many happy hours of railroading fun and excitement."

Although short-sighted by today's standards, this set featured as its motive power a no. 1061 steam engine with forward-motion only. That locomotive had first appeared in 1963 with an 0-4-0 wheel arrangement in advance catalog set no. 11415. For 1969, the no. 1061-75 was a 2-4-2 coupled to a no. 1062T-25 Lionel Lines slope-back tender.

Set 11710 also included the nos. 6402-50 flatcar with two orange-plastic cable reels and 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters. At the end rode the no. 6059-50 Minneapolis & St. Louis red-plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose. It came with both an operating and a non-operating knuckle coupler.

Incidentally, the 1061 packaged in set 11710 could be the scarce version with a paper label attached below the cab window and the number 1061 already heat-stamped. A 1061-75 unmarked black-plastic slope-back tender was substituted to possibly deplete inventory.

■ Diesel power – O-27 style

Models of diesel-electric locomotives had distinguished the Lionel line ever since the first Electro-Motive F3s had made their debut in 1948. Not surprisingly, one more diesel made a guest appearance in 1969. Too bad it wasn't as glamorous or powerful looking as earlier ones.

The no. 2024 Chesapeake & Ohio Alco diesel A unit came painted blue and pulled four cars in set no. 11720. With a net price of \$18.60, it promised lots of play value, thanks to its nos. 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters, 6402-50 gray-plastic flatcar with two cable reels, and 6476-75 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper.

The freight set finished with a no. 6057-25 unpainted brown-plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose. However, supervisors at Lionel apparently took some liberties when assembling and packaging cabooses for 1969. As a consequence, a 6059-50 Minneapolis & St. Louis brown-plastic SP-type caboose was often substituted in outfits.

■ 5-car beauties

The first 5-car freight for 1969 was outfit no. 11730 (it had a \$20.80 net price). Leading the way was the new no. 645 NW2 diesel switcher that came decorated for the Union Pacific. The 645 derived from the



no. 635 Union Pacific NW2 diesel switcher Lionel had introduced in 1965.

The rolling stock would have made any young railroader smile. Start with the new no. 6402-25 flatcar with boat. A reissue of the no. 6801 flatcar with boat (cataloged from 1957 through '60), it featured a new boat in a different shade of blue.

The other cars were also excellent. They included the reissued 6014-85 orange Frisco boxcar, 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters, and 6176-50 black Lehigh Valley hopper. Last came a no. 6167-85 Union Pacific mustard-plastic SP-type caboose (uncataloged from 1963 through '66).

The final O-27 diesel set of the postwar period hearkened back to the memorable Alco A-A duos from the 1950s. The new no. 2041 Rock Island diesels were attractive enough to run on any O gauge layout. They led a 5-car freight, the no. 11740 (net price of \$23.40).

The outfit featured some very familiar faces. There were the nos. 6014-325 white Frisco boxcar, 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with a pair of unmarked red-plastic canisters, 6315-25 Gulf single-dome chemical tank car, and 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper.

Last came the no. 6059-50 Minneapolis & St. Louis maroon-plastic Southern-Pacific-type caboose. The basic model lacked its own component box, yet apparently carried the same product number and suffix as the red-plastic variation of the 6059-50 M&StL caboose.

When boxed, the maroon-plastic caboose came numbered "6057" on the box. At the same time, then, the red-plastic version of the M&StL caboose was assigned 6059-60.

■ Last of the postwar steamers

Lionel had opened the postwar era with a steam locomotive and tender (the no. 224 packed in outfit no. 463W cataloged in 1945). Fittingly, therefore, it closed the era with an excellent steamer and tender combination at the head of two O-27 outfits in 1969. Both the nos. 11750 and 11760 used a no. 2029 engine to pull the five cars used in each.

Outfit 11750, which had a

net price of \$28.60, paired its 2029 with a no. 234T-25 non-whistle tender with Pennsylvania RR markings. Behind rode the 6014-85 orange Frisco boxcar, 6315-25 Gulf single-dome chemical tank car, 6473-25 rodeo car, and 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper. Last was a no. 6130-25 Santa Fe work caboose with an unpainted red-plastic tool tray and a matching cab, both with white graphics.

By the way, collectors should be aware the Gulf chemical tank car was usually missing the rubber-stamped built date that was part of the design for the scarcer version of the car included in set 11740. Even so, anything was possible at Lionel during last days of postwar production.

■ Top of the line

Costing a few dollars more at \$37.80 net, outfit 11760 offered more for anyone acquiring it. Lionel had substituted a no. 234W-25 Lionel Lines whistle tender for a 234T-25 and a 3376 operating giraffe car in place of the rodeo car. Best of all, a more powerful no. 1044 90-watt transformer replaced the no. 1025 45-watt transformer.

Collectors should note the set generally came with the common version of the giraffe car with white heat-stamped lettering. Occasionally, though, the scarce variation of that popular operating model with yellow heat-stamped lettering appeared.

The other cars included in the 11760 were a 6014-325 white Frisco boxcar, 6315-25 Gulf single-dome chemical tank car, and 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper.

According to the catalog, the outfit finished with a no. 6119 work caboose with an unpainted gray-plastic tool tray and an unpainted red-plastic cab with a Santa Fe herald. But some examples of the 11760

ANOTHER BRAND-NEW DIESEL introduced in 1969 was the no. 2024 Chesapeake & Ohio Alco A unit. Lionel assigned it to outfit no. 11720. Set boxes included vivid illustrations of the contents, an innovation certain to please dealers as well as their customers.



had the 6130-25 Santa Fe work caboose with red parts.

Why would different sets have different work cabooses? Evidently, Lionel had inventory to get rid of as fast as possible. Therefore, either caboose could be packed.

■ Promotional sets for 1969

In spite of the problems and other issues facing Lionel at this critical point in its history, sales executives managed to assemble additional sets. To be specific, three promotional, or uncataloged, outfits are known or are reported to exist from 1969.

Those three sets – the nos. 10613SF, 10653SF, and 10663SF – are difficult to find these days, most likely because Lionel almost certainly packaged them in small quantities. The main intention for the firm in creating them was to reduce existing inventory as fast as possible while boosting sales and profits at the same time.

Promotional outfits that were associated with 1969 included current-production items as well as earlier ones. Examples included the 1061 steam engine as well as common cars, such as the 6402 flatcar with two cable reels, 6042 gondola with various loads, and 6167 Lionel Lines Southern Pacific-type caboose. All of them were assembled and packaged then.





Getting more specific, Lionel had a few of the no. 1065 Union Pacific Alco A units left (shown in the advance catalog for 1961). It used them as the motive power for set 10653SF. Also in that outfit were leftover green-plastic cable reels. Plainly, Lionel was doing everything it could to deplete leftover inventory and simply clean house then.

■ Models for TTOS

Lionel made yet another attempt to reduce its inventory and increase sales and profits. It contracted with the Toy Train Operating Society (TTOS) to provide that group with an assortment of specially marked cabooses and a hopper car to be offered to attendees at its fourth annual national convention (held in Los Angeles) as souvenirs.

By collaborating with TTOS, Lionel assembled or produced 558 Southern Pacific-type cabooses and 493 hoppers. The latter models were heat-stamped “6476-1.”

The quantities of the items for TTOS offer us perspective on how much leftover inventory Lionel had at the time. That information lets us hypothesize that many more units of new inventory were necessary to fill projected orders for 1969.

■ New production runs

The descriptions of the six sets cataloged for 1969 should make it obvious Lionel needed ample supplies of new locomotives and updated rolling stock. Necessary, too, were sufficient quantities of some older items called into service for those sets as well as separate sale. The notion Lionel did not manufacture anything new in 1969 because it had sufficient amounts of leftover trains to assemble and package to meet

consumer and dealer demands makes no sense. It genuinely belies common sense and insiders’ views.

Just as we used data to prove that Lionel manufactured new trains in 1968 to meet demand, so now will we follow the same course to demonstrate the company made trains in 1969. Four different individual items or groups associated with that year help make the case.

■ 2029 steam engine

Let’s start with the 2029 steam engine. As noted in the earlier article about Lionel

inventory was just gathering dust in the Lionel factory, why weren’t the two cars cataloged for separate sale in 1968? It makes no sense!

Additionally, there’s no evidence the scarce variation of the 3376 Bronx Zoo car with yellow heat-stamped lettering appeared before 1969. So where did it come from other than being new production? Lionel probably had finished shells in stock. However, they had white lettering, as unstamped examples had no value to service stations as replacement cabs.

■ 6464-series boxcars

In March of 1969, when Lenny Dean outlined what was in store for dealers in the upcoming year, he referred to “the return of



THE NO. 2024 CHESAPEAKE & OHIO ALCO CAME PAINTED BLUE AND PROMISED LOTS OF PLAY VALUE, WITH A NET PRICE OF \$18.60.

during 1968, the motor and trucks used for it were manufactured in Japan. Because the line for 1969 had new sets pulled by a 2029 locomotive, those required items also needed to be accounted for.

Interestingly, other documentation made available later in 1968, suggested that the entire 2029 locomotive was made in Japan. That made perfect sense, although having actual Lionel documentation to support this statement would truly make it the final word.

■ 3376 Bronx Zoo giraffe car and 6473 rodeo car

We’ll turn next to the giraffe and rodeo cars. In 1964, Lionel had cataloged both the 3376 giraffe car and the 6473 rodeo car for separate sale. That year represented the final one in the era Lionel cataloged both of them. Two years later, it had cataloged only the 6473. Moving forward to 1968, Lionel did not catalog either one of those models.

But for 1969, Lionel cataloged both as set components and as separate-sale items. Where did the cars come from? If leftover

5 box cars all equipped with metal trucks.” He had in mind, of course, the 6464-series boxcars. Shortly after, in the May newsletter, he offered parts for seven of the near-scale boxcars, including body shells and doors. Again, Lionel would have to manufacture brand-new bodies and doors to meet demand.

That point was especially true with the five updated boxcars in the cataloged line. Remember, Lionel had not cataloged the 6464-75 Rock Island, 6464-200 Pennsylvania RR, 6464-400 Baltimore & Ohio Time Saver, 6464-425 New Haven, and 6464-500 Timken since the 1950s. A 6464-725 New Haven had never before been painted black. Finally, the new models were made using plastic shells from 1969 and not the 1950s.

■ TCA hopper

Our last example of new production were the 1,000 specially marked hoppers to be used by the Train Collectors Association (TCA) at its annual convention. It’s hard to imagine that many unsold hoppers were at the factory. Even if true, they would have

come with Lehigh Valley markings and not anything connecting it to the Train Collectors Association.

■ 1969 production estimates

In the article about Lionel for 1968, we made an estimate for the production of set no. 11600, deriving it from available information. Currently lacking known or reported production figures for 1969, we must again try to make a sound projection. We will take into account different kinds of information, ranging from Lenny's recollection of having the corporate goal of selling \$1 million's worth of trains in 1969 to the need for Lionel to convince General Mills the train business was sound and its investment in the field was smart.

Here are more points. First, Lionel's planned production of freight sets for 1966 had amounted to 42,670 units. Therefore, at least a preplanned production of 50 percent of those 1966 projections should have been considered for 1969. Otherwise, why should Lionel manufacture anything at all, especially with General Mills looking on?

Second, after waiting two years for production to resume, Lionel should have had hundreds of loyal customers, plus more than 50 franchised distributors. The latter were ready and eager to place orders for new outfits, rolling stock, accessories, transformers, and track.

Third, Lionel's overseas production of new 2029 steam locomotives should have entailed, to make everything really worthwhile, a run of at the very least 5,000 units.

Fourth, the line for 1969 should have

been gobbled up as soon as items became available. Still, executives could have taken relief in knowing surplus inventory would, as it had in the past, have found an outlet at Madison Hardware Co. in New York City.

Fifth, any potential overrun for 1969 production could have been used for the few promotional outfits Lionel planned to create for special customers. Anything left over after those uncataloged sets had been packaged and sold could have gone to Madison Hardware Co.

Sixth, Lionel and General Mills should have paid close attention to the advance orders received from members of the toy trade and adjusted production accordingly.

■ Production and sales figures

Estimating how many cataloged sets Lionel produced in 1969 sheds light on how actively its leadership sought to boost sales and increase profits. Among the other items offered that year, the five 6464-series boxcars can also provide insights.

Sales of the other toy train products cataloged in 1969 – everything from O-27 and O gauge track and switches to trackside accessories from replacement light bulbs and trestle sets to transformers and smoke materials – would have reached \$100,000. When looked at in the aggregate, projected sales estimates would have been \$647,425.

■ Final thoughts

This completes the extensive investigation of Lionel for every year of the 1960s, the last years of what's known as the postwar era. We have focused on the cataloged and

promotional sets to show how executives responded to a declining market, often with ingenuity, determination, and optimism. This was true right through 1969, when the picture was more successful and productive than often said.

Too bad Ronald Saypol, who held the positions of president and chief executive officer of the Lionel Corp. at the end of the era, could not have viewed the firm and the hobby from our perspective. He might have taken different actions and expressed greater confidence in the electric trains that had been Lionel's bread and butter since its start.

Saypol evidently believed interest in toy trains was in an irreversible tailspin. He sought to find another business to take over production and marketing while he promoted the diverse subsidiaries owned by Lionel as the hope of the future. He said as much to shareholders in communications sent out between 1968 and 1970.

Yet if circumstances were as dire as Saypol assumed, why would management at General Mills have moved forward with an agreement to license the rights to produce and sell Lionel trains? They must have recognized the ongoing strength of the market among families. Perhaps they even saw the growing passion among adults to collect older trains.

We can merely speculate about the decision-making processes at Lionel and General Mills at this critical moment. Of more immediate value is acknowledging the achievements made by sales executives and production supervisors right until the end. They carried on the proud heritage always associated with the business.

■ Production and sales figures

SETS	ESTIMATED PRODUCTION	NET PRICE	SALES
Set 11710	6,000	\$13.90	\$83,400
Set 11720	3,500	\$18.60	\$65,100
Set 11730	2,500	\$20.80	\$52,000
Set 11740	4,500	\$23.40	\$105,300
Set 11750	1,250	\$28.60	\$35,750
Set 11760	3,750	\$37.80	\$141,750
TOTAL SETS PRODUCED: 21,500			
TOTAL SALES: \$483,300			

BOXCARS	ESTIMATED PRODUCTION	NET PRICE	SALES
6464-75	3,500	\$4.50	\$15,750
6464-200	2,500	\$4.50	\$11,250
6464-400	3,500	\$4.50	\$15,750
6464-400	1,250	\$4.50	\$15,750
6464-425	3,500	\$4.50	\$5,625
6464-500	14,250	\$4.50	\$15,750
TOTAL BOXCARS PRODUCED: 14,250			
TOTAL SALES: \$64,125			

645 UNION PACIFIC NW2 DIESEL SWITCHER



THE ABBREVIATED LINE released in 1969 featured a number of freight cars and locomotives returning from previous years. Some had been made and marketed only a few years before, while others had been missing from the catalog for years.

Among the reissued items was a nondescript diesel switch engine that showed how far things had regressed at the company. The no. 645 Union Pacific NW2 locomotive revealed the extent to which designs had been altered and key features removed over the years Lionel had offered a model of the Electro-Motive Division unit.

■ What arrived in 1969

From eliminating all models of diesel locomotives for 1968, the planners at Lionel realized they needed to diversify the train line a year later. Consequently, their new roster included two of the Alco FA diesel (the nos. 2024 Chesapeake & Ohio and 2041 Rock Island) as well as the 645 Union Pacific NW2 switcher. Each led a freight outfit and was also offered for separate sale. The 645 was priced at \$19.50.

The catalog called the switcher “a powerful unit that pushes and pulls.” Couplers had been installed at both ends. In front was a functioning headlight. “Rigid steel frame with heavy steel one-piece step and railing construction at front and rear,” the copywriter stated. It was, he concluded, a “finely detailed” item.

According to the standards then followed by Lionel, perhaps the 645 was worthy of praise. The unpainted yellow plastic body shell came with red heat-stamped lettering that was not the same on the two sides.

The list of missing details was long. The 645 lacked ornamental trim. It had only plugged ornamental bell and whistle slots and an open marker lens hole. The late sheet-metal frame came with plastic-sideframe trucks and a motor truck with a traction

tire. The reverse unit had just two positions and not the once-standard three.

The model had a coupler at each end, as described in the consumer catalog. Both couplers were fixed, with one being fashioned out of plastic and the other being made of die-cast metal. Finally, there was no product number anywhere on the tough diesel switcher.

■ What was missing

Twenty years earlier, with the line announced for 1949, Lionel had made headlines with a brand-new diesel: a model of the NW2 switcher from the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors. So confident had executives

been about the appeal of the engine they had released identical versions for their O gauge roster (no. 622) and their O-27 (no. 6220).

Outstanding features, including Magne-Traction and a 3-position reverse unit, had made the new diesels excellent performers. They had come painted black and heat-stamped in white for the Santa Fe. As important for young operators, the locomotives had working bells.

Over time, some details and operating features were removed. What had been a top-of-the-line unit slipped to the low end. More road names were offered, but that hardly compensated for the decline in quality.

The devolution of the NW2 continued through the early and middle 1960s. Had the end of the line been reached in 1965 with the uncataloged no. 635 Union Pacific and the no. 634 Santa Fe (last cataloged in 1966)?

It had seemed so, but Lionel, in need of a basic switcher to lead a set for 1969, revived the NW2.

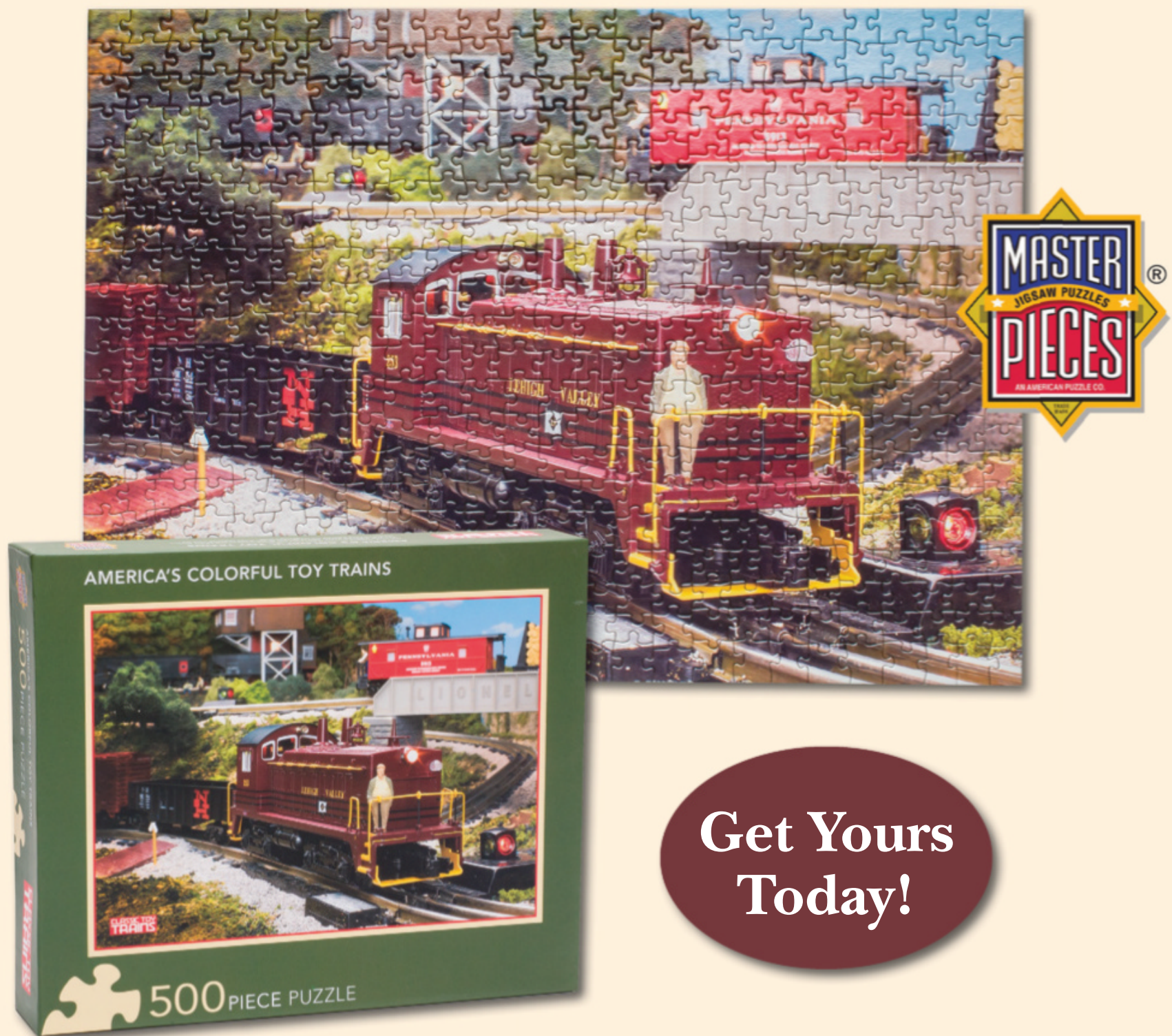
The yellow body shell and red trim and lettering on the 645 weighed positively on the esthetic scale. Nonetheless, the stripped-down and weakened model reflected poorly on the heritage of the firm. Consumers couldn't help wondering what kind of future Lionel might have.

STAR OF 1969

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