

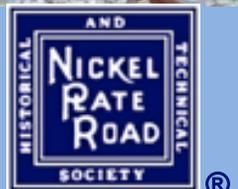
# NICKEL PLATE ROAD *Modeler's Notebook*™

Volume 20, September 2015

## **Modeling a NKP Composite Gondola W&LE Offset-Side Hoppers in HO Scale**



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## CONTENTS THIS ISSUE:

**PAGE 4:**  
**Choices: W&LE Offset-Side Hoppers in HO**  
By Chris Ellis

**PAGE 16:**  
**Modeler's Reference: NKP Standard Portable Cattle Chute, ca.1920**

**PAGE 17:**  
**The NKP's 70000-series Gondolas**  
By Frank Hodina

**PAGE 25:**  
**The Local's Journey**  
By Arthur Shale

**PAGE 28:**  
**New NKP Detail Parts**  
By George Greene

**PAGE 29:**  
**ALONG THE LINE**

**PAGE 31:**  
**Model a NKP Train: Train #10 through St. Louis, 5/21/1958**  
By Ray Breyer

**PAGE 35:**  
**Modeler's Reference: Clover Leaf Poultry Caretaker's Car, circa 1920**

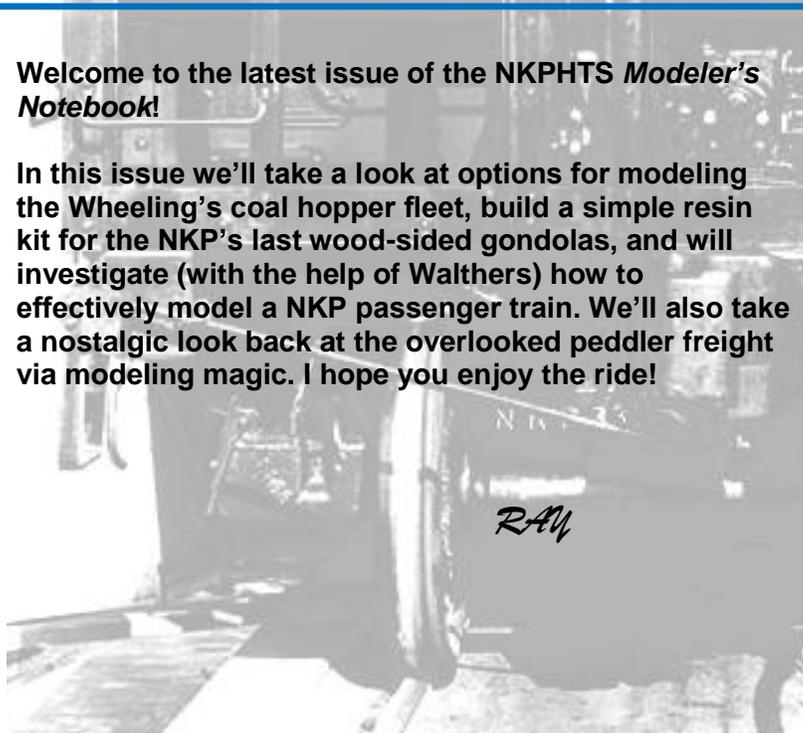
*Cover: NKP 402 leads a local through the rolling hills of North-Central Ohio, on Mike Weiss' home layout. Eric Hansmann photo.*

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Welcome to the latest issue of the NKPHTS *Modeler's Notebook!*

In this issue we'll take a look at options for modeling the Wheeling's coal hopper fleet, build a simple resin kit for the NKP's last wood-sided gondolas, and will investigate (with the help of Walthers) how to effectively model a NKP passenger train. We'll also take a nostalgic look back at the overlooked peddler freight via modeling magic. I hope you enjoy the ride!



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Founded in 1966, the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society is America's only rail-history organization dedicated solely to preserving the history and legacy of the Nickel Plate Road and its predecessors.

The Society publishes a quarterly magazine, maintains an award-winning website at [nkphts.org](http://nkphts.org), provides stewardship of a major archive of historical material at the Western New York Railway Historical Society, and offers numerous member programs and projects, including an annual convention. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, financial donations and contributions of historical photos, documents and ephemera are tax-deductible and always appreciated.

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## Proposed NKPHTS Project Car: Nickel Plate Tri-Level Auto Racks



*Jim Boyd photo, courtesy White River Productions*

Attention NKP modelers: The Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society's Modeling Committee needs your input. We are seriously considering the production of a model of one of the Nickel Plate Road's three tri-level auto racks based on the HO scale Accurail kit. (*Vehicles not included.*) The list price would be \$29.95 plus shipping. Accurail's special easy-to-use opaque-background decals to renumber the car to one of the other two tri-levels would be included. If you would purchase one or more of these kits, please let us know immediately at the email address below so we can gauge the interest and plan the production run accordingly. Only a very limited number of kits can be produced owing to a parts shortage at Accurail. The release date would probably be early to mid-2016.

Tony Koester, NKPHTS Modeling Coordinator, [nkpfan@ptd.net](mailto:nkpfan@ptd.net)



(Generic Accurail model of a TTRX tri-level autorack shown as reference. NKPHTS car will come as a painted and lettered but unbuilt kit.)

# Choices: Wheeling & Lake Erie Offset-Side Hoppers in HO Scale

## By Chris Ellis



A recent discussion on the [Nickel Plate Road Modelers Yahoo Group](#) led me to compare and contrast my small collection of W&LE hoppers to their prototype counterparts.

In my modeling time frame of 1953-54, I always assumed that there would be some W&LE equipment that had yet to be repainted with new Nickel Plate Road lettering. A recent look at data contained in the January 1954 Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER), confirmed that plenty of Wheeling lettered freight cars still roamed the rails in two different classes of open top hoppers.

258 THE OFFICIAL RAILWAY EQUIPMENT REGISTER

INVENTORY NUMBER AND REGISTRATION		MARKINGS AND KIND OF CARS.	NUMBERS.	DIMENSIONS.																CAPACITY.		NUMBER OF CARS.	
				INSIDE.			OUTSIDE.						DOORS.				Cubic Feet Level Full.	Pounds or Gallons.					
				Length	Width	Height	LENGTH.		WIDTH.		HEIGHT FROM RAIL.		SIDE.		END.								
							At Base or Top of Sides or Platform	At Base or Top of Platform	At Base or Top of Sides or Platform	At Base or Top of Platform	To Base or Top of Sides or Platform	To Base or Top of Platform	Width of Opening	Height of Opening	Width of Opening	Height of Opening							
1	FM Flat, Steel, Wood Floor.	1900 to 1999	42	9	4	43	9	4	10	3	8	5	8	9	8	9	8	9	10000	lb.	27		
2	XM Box, All Steel, Z-bar, Note A)	23000 to 23499	40	6	9	41	9	9	10	8	5	9	11	14	7	14	8	6	3713	100000	lb.	249	
3	XM " All Steel, Z-bar.	23500 to 23749	40	6	9	41	10	9	10	8	5	10	13	5	14	7	14	8	7	3713	100000	lb.	200
4	XM " " Z-Bar.	24000 to 24501	40	6	9	41	10	9	10	8	5	11	14	7	14	8	6	9	4	3723	100000	lb.	289
5	XM " " Z-bar.	25000 to 25999	40	6	8	42	8	8	11	2	5	7	12	10	18	3	14	9	7	3066	100000	lb.	410
6	XM " " Right Weight	26000 to 26199	40	6	9	41	11	9	10	8	5	10	13	3	14	7	14	9	6	3723	100000	lb.	135
7	XM " " Staggered Doors.	27000 to 27999	40	3	8	41	7	9	8	10	1	3	13	3	13	9	14	5	7	3092	80000	lb.	3
11	XM Box, Steel, Slugg. Doors.	30000 to 30049	40	5	9	42	1	9	3	10	8	5	8	9	14	6	15	2	3704	80000	lb.	2	
19	GB Gondola, Steel, High Side, Fixed Ends.	45000 to 45499	41	6	9	42	8	4	8	10	4	8	2	8	2	8	2	8	2	1840	100000	lb.	289
18	GB " " " " "	45500 to 46749	41	6	9	42	8	4	8	10	4	8	2	8	2	8	2	8	2	1842	100000	lb.	850
14	GB " " " " "	51000 to 51999	41	6	9	42	11	10	3	10	3	8	4	8	4	8	4	8	4	1897	100000	lb.	15
15	GB " " " " "	52000 to 53899	41	9	6	4	42	7	10	1	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	1688	100000	lb.	1	
21	GB Gondola, Steel, Low Side, Fixed Ends.	56000 to 56499	41	9	6	42	7	10	3	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	1168	100000	lb.	1	
22	HM Hopper, Steel.	61000 to 61999	33	10	4	34	10	6	10	6	10	10	11	10	11	10	11	10	11	2321	100000	lb.	265
23	HM " " " " "	62000 to 64399	33	10	4	34	10	6	10	6	10	10	11	10	11	10	11	10	11	2321	100000	lb.	270
24	GB Gond., Stl., Wood Floor, Fixed Ends.	72000 to 72999	46	9	6	4	47	7	10	1	10	8	7	7	8	8	8	8	1894	140000	lb.	1	
25	GB Gond., Steel, Drop Ends, Low Side	73000 to 73099	36	8	7	3	37	8	8	5	9	4	5	10	7	7	6	6	1931	140000	lb.	41	
26	GB " " " " " High Side	74000 to 74999	48	6	9	2	49	5	1	10	4	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	10	1286	140000	lb.	76
27	GB " " " " " " "	75000 to 75499	52	6	9	3	53	8	10	4	10	4	7	4	7	4	7	4	1890	140000	lb.	418	
31	BT Hopper, Steel.	78000 to 80999	40	8	10	4	8	10	6	10	6	10	8	10	9	10	9	10	9	2773	140000	lb.	1037
Total																				4559			
32	CB Caboose.																				4559	105	

The W&LE car listing from the January 1954 ORER shows that 1,602 hoppers, or about 24% of the Wheeling's 1949 fleet, were still wearing their original lettering. Exactly one year later that number would be down to just 539 cars (8%).

However, finding Wheeling-painted models to show this mix of old W&LE and newly lettered NKP hoppers hasn't been easy. I've had to look long and hard for any Wheeling-lettered models, and some suit my needs better than others.

The Wheeling & Lake Erie name is very uncommon for any model releases in any scale, and in addition decals for freight cars are also hard to find (I've found exactly two: an old Campbell Road dry transfer sheet, Set WT-31 for the W&LE-type hopper lettering, and a W&LE Boxcar Decal set from Wabash Custom Decals). Luckily there have been some choices lately in ready-to-run HO scale models that make adding some W&LE flavor to your hopper roster easier.

I'll cover the two classes of W&LE hopper that populated the NKP car roster, and the HO scale models that represent them. All of these models are lettered for the W&LE, but with the exception of two, they are special limited runs and are no longer available.

I won't get too nit-picky covering these models unless warranted. I don't really get into super detailing freight cars or get too bothered by a missing inch here or there dimensionally. I need a fleet of 200-300 hard working hoppers to model the coal hauling part of the Nickel Plate. If it comes with brake piping fine, but adding that stuff or worrying about a missing row of rivets isn't high on my to-do list.

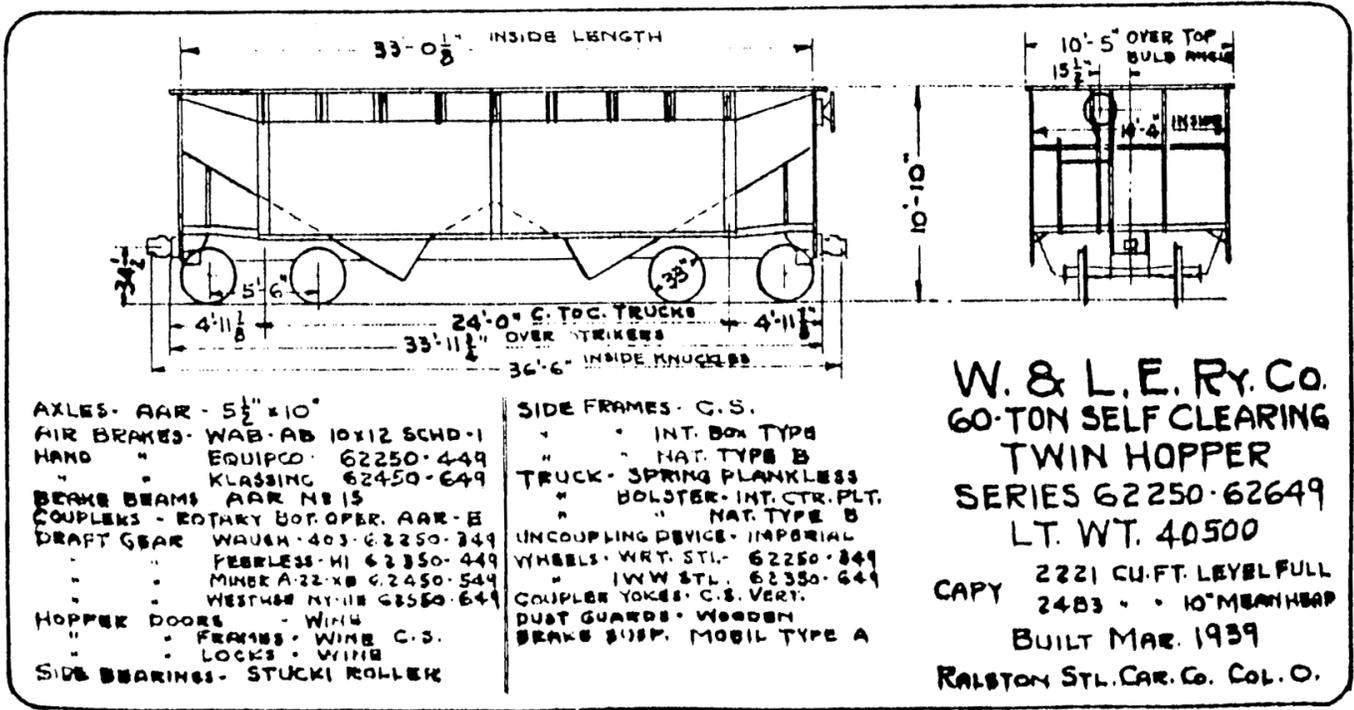
### [W&LE #61000-64399: Steel, 2-bay, 50-ton, offset-side hoppers](#)

#### The Prototype:



*An almost new W&LE 61147 stands at the car repair shops at Ironville in the spring of 1937. The 61000-series offset side hoppers were a brand new design to the Wheeling, so it's likely that the car is undergoing an inspection to make sure everything is performing as advertised.  
W&LE photo, NKPHTS collection*

The prototype W&LE #61000-64399 were all steel, 2-bay, 50 ton offset hopper cars built between 1936 and 1947 in various lots by Bethlehem Steel, Pullman, Ralston, American Car & Foundry and even the W&LE's own Ironville shops. These 3,400 hoppers would make up almost 40% of the NKP's hopper roster in my time period, and in January 1954, 565 still had W&LE lettering.



60

An example diagram page from the Wheeling's 1947 freight car diagram book. All of the cars in the group were dimensionally identical, even though they were built by half a dozen different manufacturers over the course of a decade. They only differed in minor details, and in paint schemes.

### The 2-Bay Models:

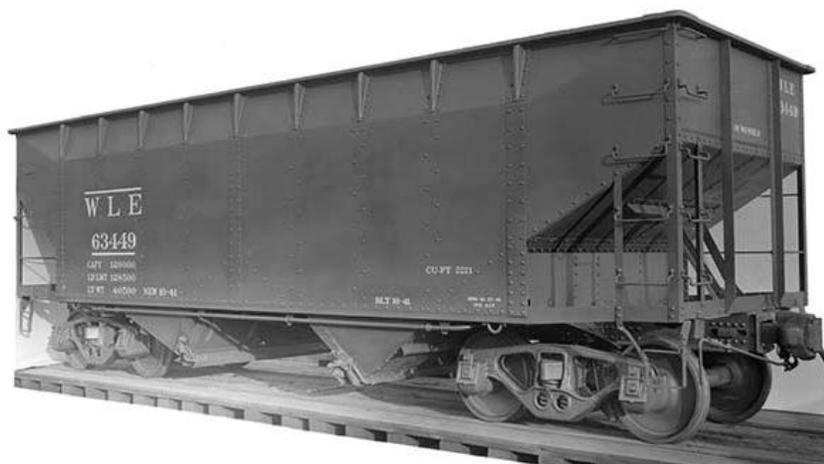


Athearn 34' 2-bay 50 Ton Offset Hopper

This is the Athearn 34' 2-bay 50 Ton Offset Hopper model. The Athearn hopper is showing its age now with newer and better looking versions produced by other manufacturers. It's still a reliable and inexpensive model though, which is great for trying to build a very large fleet of nondescript hoppers.

I found this model on eBay and its' Athearn box was labeled as an NMRA Cleveland Division 1 special run; from when I have no idea. The lettering is a little rough but this is a good example to show the different lettering styles the W&LE used.

The photo of the prototype car W&LE #61147 above, shows the "as delivered" lettering style which was stretched out using an ampersand and abbreviation periods after each letter. At some time before the NKP lease of the Wheeling in December 1949, the periods and ampersand were dropped in favor of a more simplified "W L E". Based on photo evidence, the ampersand was dropped between 1937 and 1939 and the periods were eliminated between 1939 and 1941. I'd love to see proof of the older lettering on a hopper appearing in the 1950s, since that would save me some decal work to change the older hoppers.



*These three photos illustrate the simplification of the Wheeling's already Spartan paint scheme during the late 1930s. Car #62230 was built by the W&LE in Ironville in November 1937, and have both the ampersand and the periods. Car #62347 is a March 1939 product of Ralston, and has lost the ampersand. Finally, W&LE #63449 was built by AC&F's Berwick plant in October 1941, and has lost the periods as well as the ampersand. All photos NKPHTS collection*



*Atlas 34' 2-bay, 50 ton, offset side twin hopper*

The [Atlas 34' 2-bay 50 Ton Offset Hopper](#) was announced in February 2012 and released some time in 2013. This was the first time Atlas offered these models in W&LE lettering. They came with the “as delivered” 1930s lettering and in two different numbers, #61071 and #61147. The Atlas model is closer to the prototype with crisper detail and comes with a plain coal load, Kadee-compatible couplers and all-metal wheels, all of which are a real plus. The Atlas model also matches the Wheeling’s lettering style nicely, but is just a touch thick.

I have four of these and hope to get a few more as they are nicer looking than the Athearn model and generally easier to find. I’d like to update the lettering to the 1940s standard on these hoppers.



*Intermountain 34' 2-Bay 50 Ton Offset Hopper*

As the song goes, if I had a million dollars, I'd buy a whole fleet of these hoppers! The [Intermountain 34' 2-Bay 50 Ton Offset Hopper](#) is the cat's meow of the small offset hopper models we've looked at so far. All the nit-picky details, rib notch spacing at the top, rivets and more, look just like the prototype photos. Even the inside looks awesome. The only flaw I could think to point out is the lack of a trust plate in the upper left corner, but now that's getting picky. Did I mention it comes with metal wheels and Kadee #158 scale whisker couplers? These are available in that 1930s lettering and six different numbers; #61147, #61164, #61235, #61259, #61370 and #61428.



*The details on this model are simply amazing, especially on the ends!*

Unfortunately, these models retail for \$38.95, so it's not really economical to build part of a large hopper fleet with these bad boys. But if you only need a few then you can't go wrong investing in these. Every now and then you can snag one (and only one) for \$25 on eBay like I did.



*Accurail 2-bay, 50-ton, offset side hopper, shown as undecorated*

Also worth mentioning is a [future release from Accurail](#) of their 7700 Series Offset Side Twin Hopper. I have no idea when this new Wheeling model will get released or which lettering style will be used, but at least it's on the schedule (see part #7730) and will get released some day. These cars would be also be an economical option to build a fleet with and Accurail makes it easy by offering decal renumber sheets matched to the particular road name.

I always felt like the Accurail twin hopper seemed a little petite standing next to any of the other three models mentioned above. One day I'll have to take a scale ruler to one and compare it to the NKP Freight Diagram sheets and see.

W&LE #78000-80999: Steel, 3-bay, 70-ton, offset side hoppers

The Prototype:



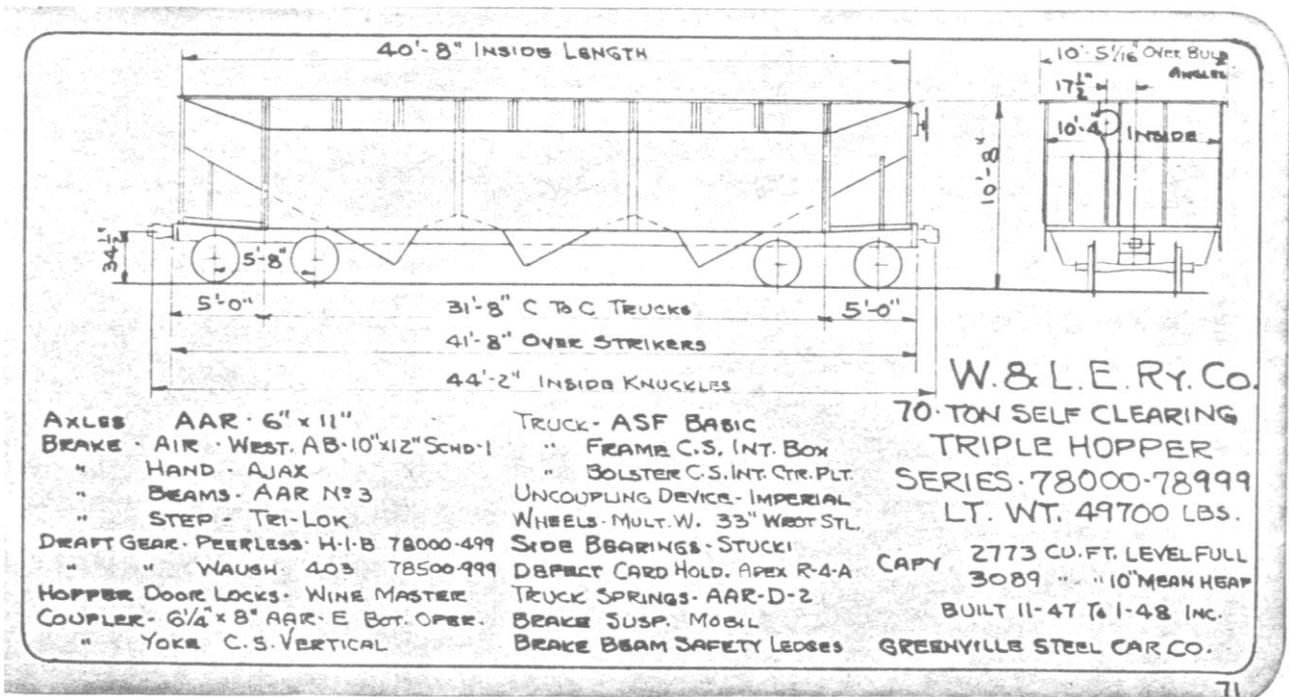
*NKPHTS collection*

The prototype W&LE #78000-80999 were all steel 3-bay 70 ton offset side hopper cars, built between 1947 and 1948 in three lots by Pressed Steel, Greenville and Ralston. These 3,000 cars and other identical hoppers built after the W&LE lease would make up almost 35% of the NKP's hopper roster in my time period. By January 1954, 1,037 of them still had W&LE lettering.



W&LE #80829 sits on one of Ironville's RIP tracks in mid-1953.

*Photographer unknown, Bill Nixon collection*



As with the two bay hoppers, all of the Wheeling's three bay offset side cars were generally identical, except for minor details like brake wheels and, well.....rivet placement.

### The 3-Bay Models:



Roundhouse 3-bay, 70 ton, offset side triple hopper

The old Model Die Casting 3-Bay offset hopper has been around forever. I have no idea what real life example this hopper was based on, if one really existed at all. The ends of each side where the angled offset bulge is supposed to begin doesn't match the W&LE cars and is completely wrong, and the model's details are heavy and crude. The more accurate Stewart/Bowser and Accurail cars have rendered this MDC hopper version obsolete. Athearn now owns the MDC/Roundhouse line and is still occasionally making this car for sale. Most recently it was announced as a future release in NKP lettering as this ex-W&LE class of hopper.

While this car doesn't show up in the [NKPHTS's All-Time NKP Model List](#). I found one on eBay with an original box. Apparently this was a Roundhouse release, as kit #7784 with my models W&LE number of #78958.

I hate to be so critical of a car model, but this one needs to be retired just like the old Athearn wide body diesel engines. So why do I have it? I believe I got it on eBay at the same time as the weathered W&LE Athearn 2-bay hopper above. I think I threw a lowball first bid on it for the novelty of it being lettered W&LE, thinking I would probably get outbid at the last second anyways, oops...

The weathering job hides its ugly lines decently enough, so I'll keep it as an example to show why it shouldn't be in your W&LE/NKP hopper fleet when there are way better looking alternatives.



*Stewart/Bowser 3-Bay 70 Ton Offset-Side Hopper*

This is the Stewart (now Bowser) 3-Bay, 70 Ton, Offset-Side Hopper. These are really nice models, easy and quick to assemble and can be found cheaply enough to use for building a large hopper fleet. Unlike the MDC car, the offset hopper sides are just like the prototype and the rest of the basic details match up as well. Of the three models I'm displaying this one has the best rivet detail.

I found two of these cars in W&LE lettering at a train show in Cleveland and quickly snatched them up. Only later I noticed the data lettering is the wrong font, but they came with Kadees, metal wheels and coal loads so I couldn't pass them up at \$10 each. The Athearn box they came in said Greenway Products, and a Google search found an old message from 2001 on the NKP Yahoo Group mentioning they had these for sale back then.

I have about 40 of the Stewart/Bowser in various road names (mostly NKP) and they make a great base to any NKP era hopper fleet.



*Accurail 3-bay, 70 ton, offset side triple hopper*

The Accurail 3-Bay, 70 Ton, Offset-Side Hopper is very similar to the Stewart/Bowser model. Both match the prototype well, but the Accurail has finer details, better looking brake gear and thinner grab irons and stirrups. The assembly of your first one can be a bit tricky to fit together, especially the fitting of the bolster assembly into the ends of the car. But like most difficult things, after doing a few I can now build one in about 20 minutes.

The NMRA Cincinnati Division 7 [offered](#) these W&LE Accurail hoppers back in 2007. These were lettered as delivered in the 1940's lettering and available in four numbers; #78952, #79240, #79897 and #80829. Now they are long sold out, but I found a few of these on eBay awhile back. The [Cincinnati Division 7](#) always has good car projects to offer modelers. Lately they have featured cars from Tony Koester's Allegheny Midland and Allen McClelland's Virginian & Ohio.

Accurail's webpage for their [7500 Series 70-Ton Offset-Side Triple Hopper](#) doesn't list the W&LE cars as a possible future release, probably because of the Division 7 release. Accurail does offer the car lettered for the Nickel Plate (stock #7508), but they seem to be sold out at the moment. They also offer a black painted car with just dimensional data (stock #7597) if you want to build a fleet quickly by adding the reporting marks and road numbers with decals.

### **New Trucks and details:**

In general, since my roster will need very large numbers of basically identical and boring hopper cars, I'm not interested in adding fine details to them. Besides adding semi-scale couplers and fixing any broken parts, I'll be more than satisfied with my hoppers as they come out of the box. Well-printed lettering and quality weathering jobs will go a lot farther in adding realism to my layout, rather than a few tiny details that nobody will ever notice.

One exception to this will be the trucks under SOME of these cars. Most (all?) of the twin hoppers in the 62000 and 63000 number series were delivered with National B-1 trucks, a type of truck that looks unique enough that it's easily spotted in a string of cars. This type of truck is made by Walthers (formerly Life Like Proto 2000) as part [#920-21254](#), and by Kadee as part [#567](#). I'll need a lot of these trucks, so I'll be adding them slowly as I can find them cheap!



*Kadee truck (left) and the Walthers/Proto version of the National B-1 truck.*

## Conclusion:



Adding HO scale W&L E hoppers to a 1940s-1950s period car roster has many paths:

**Option One** for quickly including some W&L E hoppers in a NKP hopper fleet would be to just to buy the Atlas or Intermountain 2-bay models, not worry about how long certain lettering styles lasted and call it a day. If those are too pricey or become difficult to find, then waiting for Accurail to release their 2-bay hoppers becomes a back-up plan.

**Option Two**, which I'm using for now to boost the W&L E presence in my roster is the above option plus scrounging online sites and train shows for the special runs.

**Option Three** is decaling your own hoppers with;

1. The old Campbell Road dry transfer decals, if your comfortable using that type of decal.
2. Repurposing the [Wabash Custom Decals W&L E Boxcar set](#) (I don't know is the lettering size is correct for hoppers).
3. Making or your own decals on an ALPS printer or have a custom decal printer make them for you.

Aside from a lucky train show score, decals are the only way to get 3-bay W&L E hoppers right now.

If I **had** to standardize on one 2-bay and 3-bay model for a **large** fleet, I would probably just have Accurail make me a custom run of everything I would hope to need. This would be the way to go if you were modeling the W&L E in the late 1940's.

My plan for now is to standardize on just the Atlas 2-bays with Accurail and Stewart/Bowser for the 3-bay hoppers.



A Wheeling I-3 Mallet switches loads at Goodyear mine, circa 1950. The cars are a mix of W&LE, PRR, NYC, NKP and D&H cars, with the W&LE and Pennsy predominating. This photo reflects how I'd like to see my own fleet some day!  
Cleveland State University collection



And I'm getting there. In this final view of my home layout, an I-3 switches my yard, which is full of Wheeling hoppers. Hiding deep in the back are cars from the Nickel Plate, Pennsy and N&W.

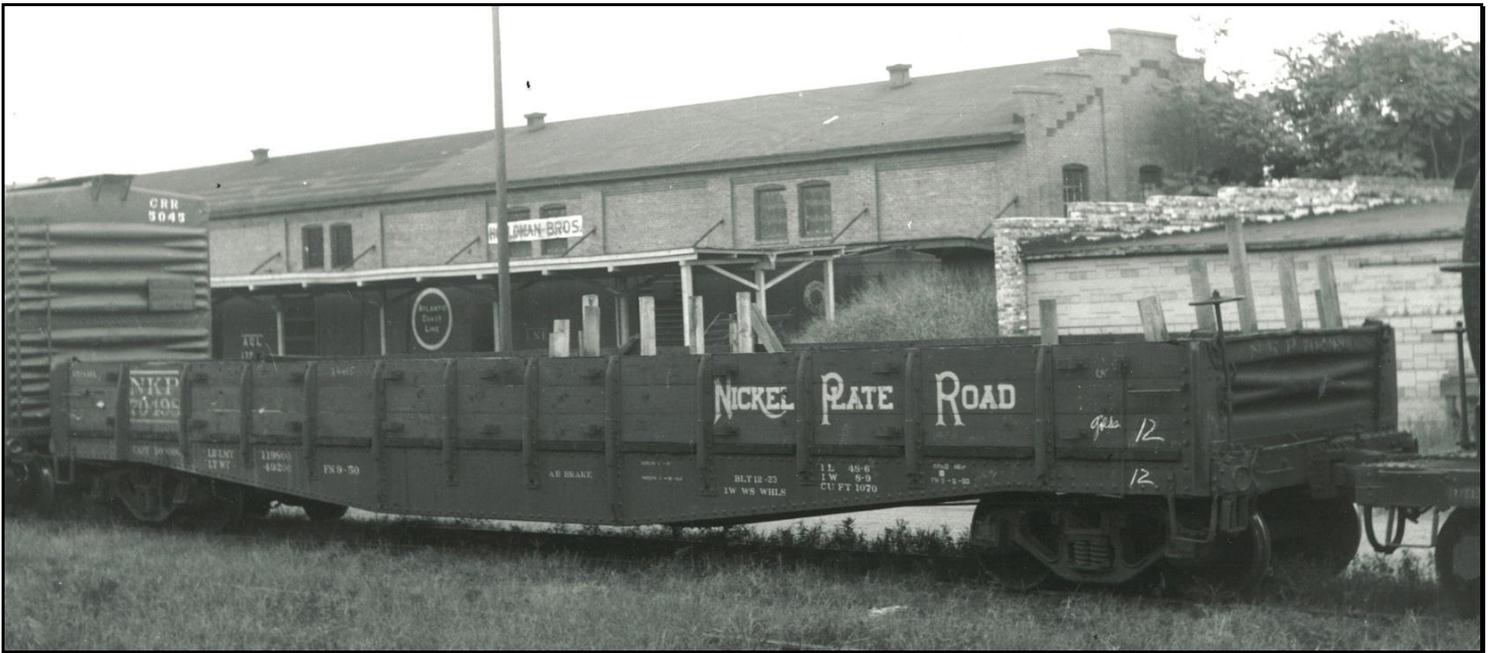
Follow Chris and his Wheeling & Lake Erie modeling adventures at his blog, [Adena Railroad](http://AdenaRailroad.com).



# THE NICKEL PLATE'S 70000-SERIES GONDOLAS

## Prototype and Model

By Frank Hodina and Ray Breyer

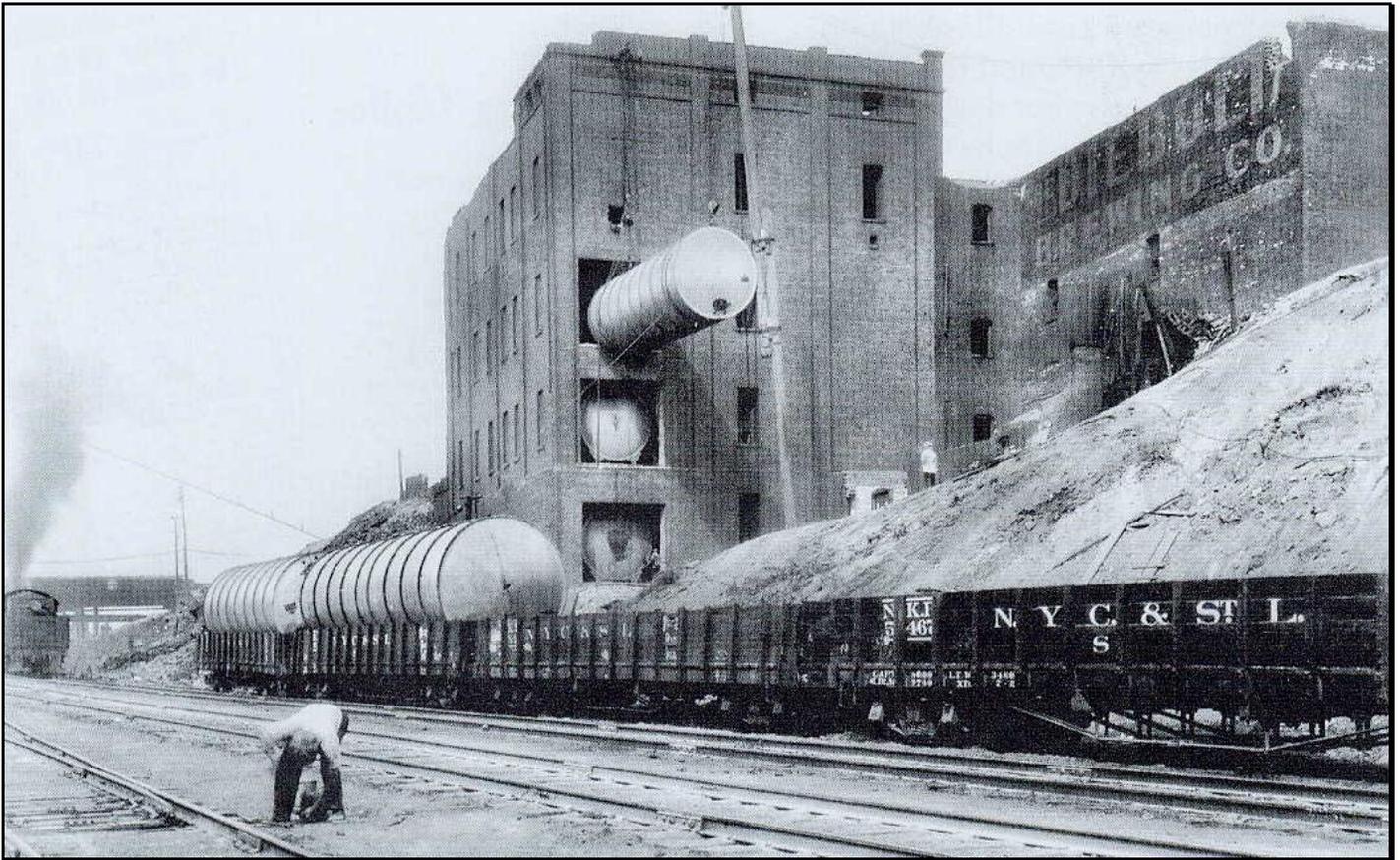


*Joe Collias photo, Frank Hodina collection*

The early 1920s was an exciting time to be a part of the Nickel Plate Road. After the USRA period came to an end on March 1, 1920, the railroad began a rapid expansion and modernization program, with the absorption of the Lake Erie & Western and Clover Leaf railroads as its cornerstones. The modernization plan included buying all-new equipment to replace the rickety old remnants of the NYC years, including new engines, freight equipment and passenger cars.

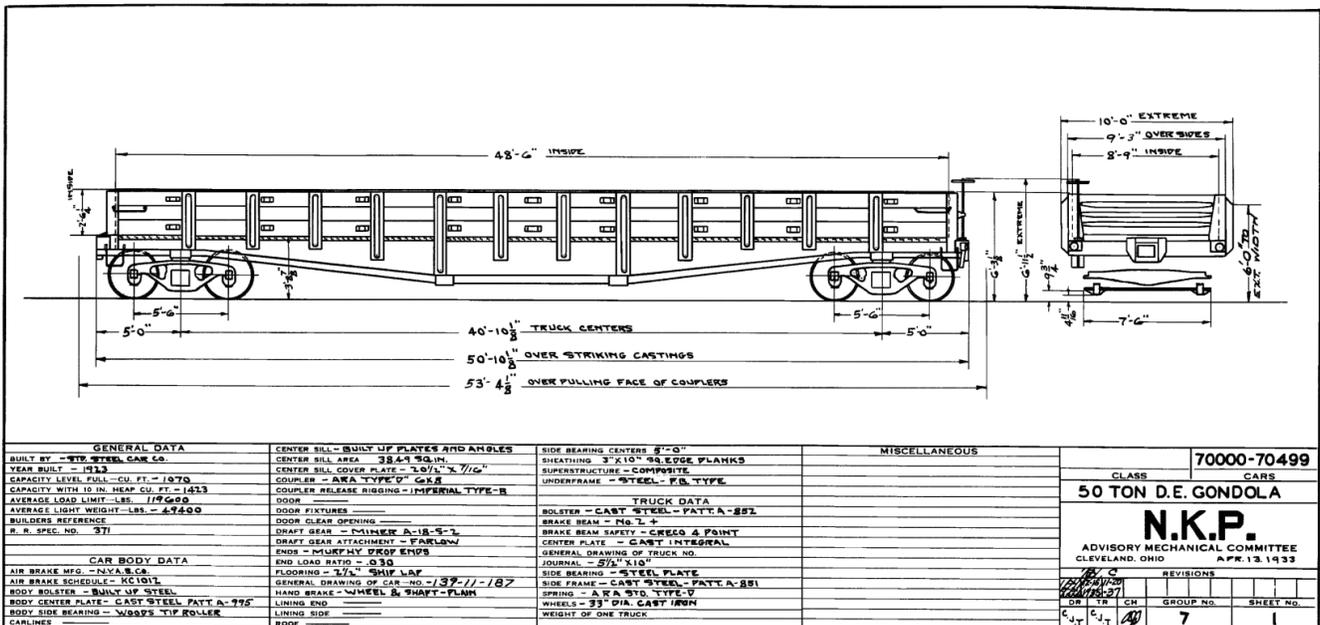
The NKP's freight car modernization program of the 1920s actually started in 1917 with the purchase of the railroad's first hopper cars and ended in late 1929 with the delivery of the road's first all-steel boxcars. Between those two dates the railroad bought 7,000 new freight cars and retired over 10,000 antiques. During the John Bernet years especially, the NKP received a huge number of then-modern pieces of equipment, including 40-foot boxcars, hoppers, all-steel passenger equipment, and all of the road's Mikados, Pacifics and Hudsons.

One type of car that generally goes unnoticed in this influx of new equipment is the lowly gondola. Serving the Great Lakes heavy industrial region means hauling a large amount of finished and semi-finished steel for railroads, and that means needing to own a large number of gondolas, and the Nickel Plate did own its fair share of that car type. But in 1920 the gondola roster was full of nothing but 36- and 40-foot all-wood cars, most more than 20 years old. The purchase of the LE&W and TStL&W added lots of mainline miles to the railroad but only a few hundred gondolas, all of which were even older than the NKP's own cars. The gondola fleet was old, getting older, and wasn't able to keep up with the demands of customers requiring newer, stronger, and longer cars.

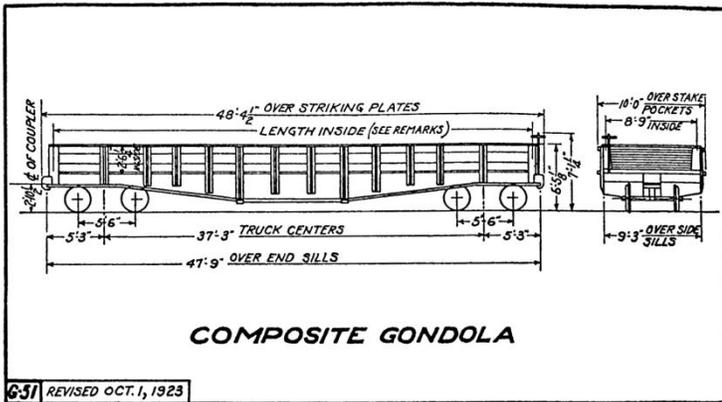
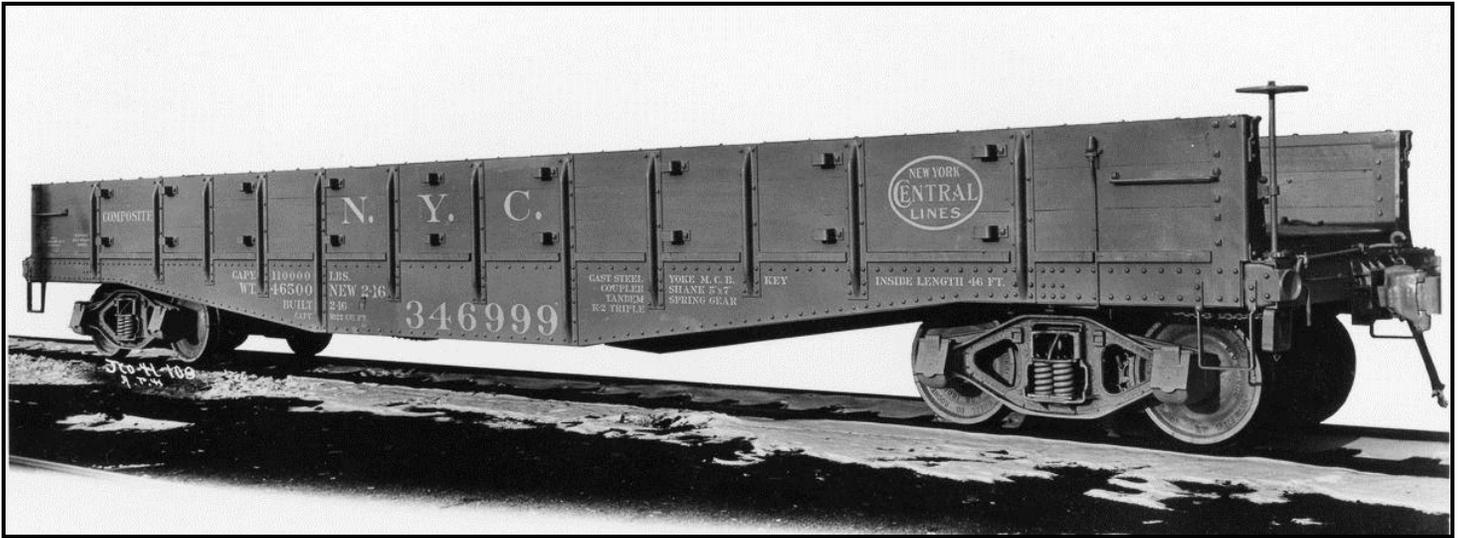


A string of 40-foot, all-wood NKP gondolas is loaded in Cleveland in 1927. Built in 1905 by Haskell & Barker, these cars were growing obsolete when built (all-steel gondolas were introduced in the 1890s) and by 1920 were well on their way to being completely outdated cars. Newer cars were needed, and fast. Dan Merkel collection

In 1923 an order was placed with the Standard Steel Car Company for 500 brand new gondolas. Built next to the NKP mainline in Hammond, Indiana, the 70000-70499 series cars would become the first "basically steel" freight cars the NKP bought, and would perform in regular service well into the 1970s.



The cars themselves really weren't all that innovative. Basically an all-steel, fishbelly side flat car with wooden gondola sides, the general car type had been built in gigantic numbers for all of the major eastern railroads for almost two decades. But for the Nickel Plate they were completely modern monsters, and were the longest freight cars on the roster.



LOT#	ROAD	ROAD NUMBERS	CAPACITY CU. FT. TONS	LIGHT WEIGHT	GEN'L DRAW'G	CAST'G LIST.	BUILDER	WHERE BUILT.	DATE BUILT	Nº OF CARS	REMARKS.	
270-G	P&LE	42000-42999	1014 55	46600		F23759	PST.C.C.º	WHEELS RKS	1911	1000	46'-0\"/>	
1000	P&LE	43000-43499	1014 55	46900			PST.C.C.º	WHEELS RKS	1912	500	46'-0\"/>	
1001	P&LE	43500-43999	1014 55	47800			STD.ST.C.C.º	NEW CASTLE	1912	500	46'-0\"/>	
1021	P&LE	44000-44999	1014 55	47400			STD.ST.C.C.º	NEW CASTLE	1913	1000	46'-0\"/>	
325-G	PHIKKY	90000-90999	1018 55	47000		F24684	PST.C.C.º	WHEELS RKS	1916	1000	46'-2\"/>	
328-G	P&LE	45000-45999	1018 55	47000		F24685	STD.ST.C.C.º	NEW CASTLE	1916	1000	46'-2\"/>	
333-G	P&LE	46000-46999	1018 55	47000		F24686	STD.ST.C.C.º	NEW CASTLE	1916	1000	46'-2\"/>	
336-G	M.C.R.R.	4500-4999	1018 55	46000		F24676	STD.ST.C.C.º	HAMMOND	1916	500	46'-2\"/>	
331-G	N.Y.C.	345000-345999	1018 55	46000	Q-37641	F24672	PST.C.C.º	WHEELS RKS	1916	500	46'-2\"/>	
332-G	N.Y.C.	345500-345999	1018 55	46000	Q-37641	F24673	STD.ST.C.C.º	NEW CASTLE	1916	500	46'-2\"/>	
334-G	N.Y.C.	346000-346999	1018 55	46000	Q-37641	F24674	STD.ST.C.C.º	HAMMOND	1916	1000	46'-2\"/>	
335-G	N.Y.C.	347000-348999	1018 55	46200	Q-37641	F24675	STD.ST.C.C.º	HAMMOND	1916	2000	46'-2\"/>	
										TOTAL	10500	



Between 1906 and 1916, Standard Steel and Pressed Steel Car Companies had been cranking out thousands of nearly-identical composite gondolas for then-NKP parent New York Central, ultimately adding 14,250 cars of this type to the rosters of the NYC, P&LE and MC. By 1923 the NYC had abandoned wood-sided gondola construction in favor of all-steel cars, although these earlier gondolas cars would run in revenue service well into the 1950s.

Standard Steel builder's photo, Ray Breyer collection

John Bernet was a longtime NYC employee and executive, and when he became president of the NKP he brought along a lot of other former NYC men with him. So it's no wonder that these new gondolas bore a more than passing resemblance to NYC cars. Similar but shorter 40-foot long cars were built for the Pennsylvania R.R., DL&W, CNJ, and a host of other Eastern roads, making the general car type a typical but generally overlooked car.

When the cars were added to the NKP's roster in 1923, the 500 cars of the series made up 14% of the total gondola roster of 3,668 cars. That percentage jumped to 33% of the roster by 1933 following the Depression-era antique equipment scrapping of 1932-1933. The purchase of new, all-steel gondolas before WWII made the 70000's significance dwindle, as did the lease of the Wheeling & Lake Erie in 1949, but they still accounted for 7% of all gondolas on the roster by 1964.

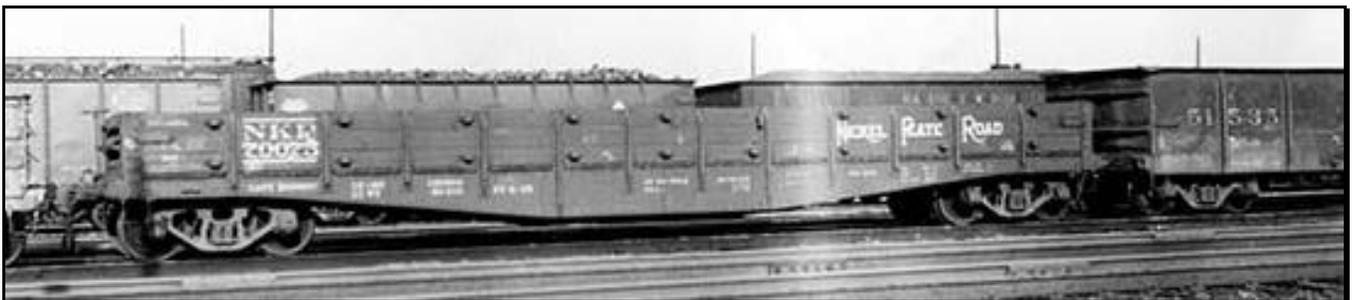


*(Frank Hodina collection)*

Overall, these gondolas remained virtually unchanged throughout their service lives. Seven cars were modified with steel sides replacing the wood in early 1946, and all of the surviving cars had their KC air brakes replaced with AB brakes by 1953. At some point just before WWII, most if not all of the cars received new Dreadnaught steel drop ends to replace the original Murphy corrugated steel ends, and many cars lost their extra side stake pockets whenever replacement wood sides were added. But besides these relatively small changes the cars running in the 1970s looked identical to the ones delivered new in the 1920s.

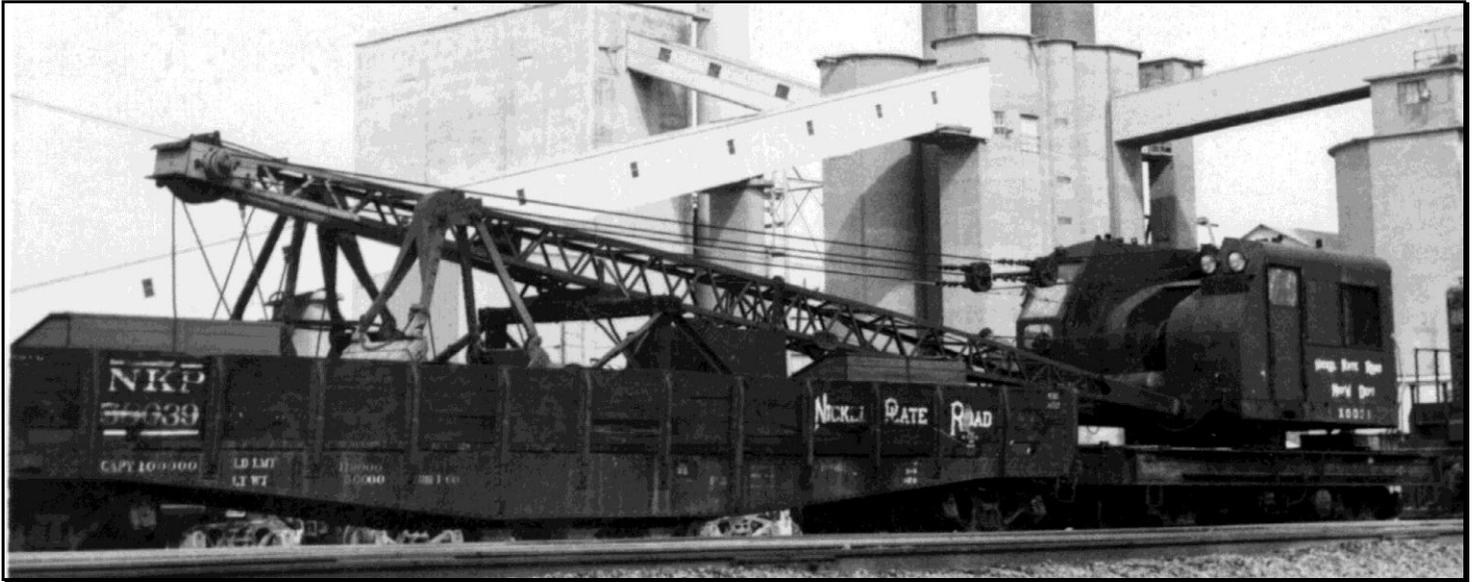


*The 70000-series travelled everywhere on the North American rail network. NKP 70016 is shown here in Revelstoke, British Columbia in 1946, being loaded with utility poles.*  
*Ray Breyer collection*



*NKP 70075 is shown here in Harrisburg, PA on 5/1/1947, wearing the rarely-used WWII-era "Swing-tail R" road name.*  
*Ray Breyer collection*

Many of the cars survived past the 1950s by being transferred to the maintenance of way fleet. Many of these cars were re-purposed as boom cars for various cranes and pile drivers well past the 1970s, until finally being retired by new owner Norfolk & Western.



Crane X0031 and boom car 58037 pass through Maple Grove OH on 10/13/1967. At least a dozen of the 70000s would spend 20-odd years in this service. Howard Ameling photo, NKPHTS collection



The last surviving car of this type, NKP 70130, was donated by the Norfolk & Western in April 1982, and is preserved at the Mad River & NKP Museum in Bellevue, OH, surrounded by many of the cars' NKP relatives. NKPHTS collection

## MODELING THE 70000s

In general, this type of gondola isn't the hardest thing in the world to model, especially if you're only interested in a car that captures the overall look and feel of the prototype. Models for similar 40-foot gondolas have been made in all of the popular scales, so kitbashing and splicing two together wouldn't be that big of a deal. The car could even be scratchbuilt in only a few evenings, with the hardest part of the process being the application of all of the car's rivets (thank goodness for Archer rivet decals!). Detailed elevation drawings are available through the NKPHTS for those willing to take on a challenge.

But some of us won't have to resort to scratching or bashing. In late 2012 Chad Boas released a resin kit for the NKP 70000-series gondolas in HO scale. Utilizing the resources of the NKPHTS archives for plans and photographs, Chad was able to issue a much-needed kit of a typical piece of NKP equipment. Recently, modeler Frank Hodina had some free time and decided to build one of these kits. Here's Frank's modeling report:



My latest build is ready for service!

I needed to get back into the habit of modeling stuff, as recent events around the home have conspired to make me completely forget about the hobby in general, with a big distraction being my garden during nice weather.

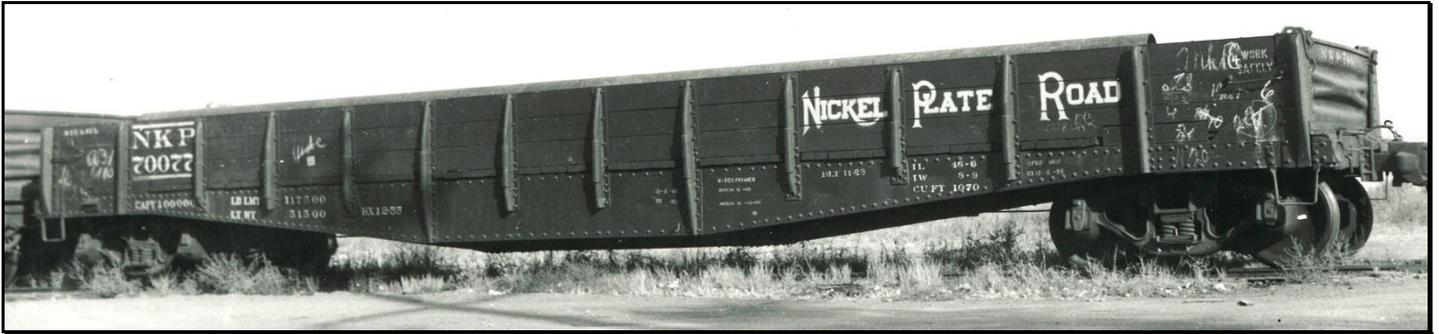
I recently looked around for something to build that wouldn't take more than an evening to finish and I had this HO scale Chad Boas kit among the stash. This is a very nice, very simple kit composed of a resin underframe, resin side braces, and laser cut wood deck and sides.



*Eric Hansmann photo*

I replaced the resin ends with plastic ends from my extra parts bin to get a thinner part (I think they're Red Caboose GS gondola ends). The kit didn't come with any grab irons, brake hardware, or stirrups, so those also came out of my parts bins.

Surprisingly, the model was done and ready to paint in about an hour! I don't believe I have ever built a resin car that fast. This is a simply detailed freight car so only 28 holes had to be drilled into the kit. About the only difficult part of the construction is adding the side ribs: use the wood side's rivet lines as gluing guides and glue all of the ribs to the sides so that their tops are even with the top edge of the sides. Once done, glue the sides to the frame, and glue the corners to the ends. The end doors can be added in either the up or down positions. One detail that I left off of my model were the multiple side stake pockets (used on the prototype to help brace pipe and lumber loads). The kit comes with drilling guide dimples cut into the wood sides, so it's a simple enough process to drill all of the holes and glue on the pockets.



*By the end of 1955, the prototype NKP 70077 had also lost all of its stake pockets.*

*NKPHTS collection*

As this is an operating model where the brake gear can't be seen, I did not install any brake system, and instead filled much of the underframe space with weights. The fish belly side sills would obscure any view of the brake system, so why not fill the area, especially since gondola models are almost always too light? My weights are a mix of A-Line moldable lead and lead shotgun shot, all held in place with CA.



I think the car took maybe ten minutes to paint. The most time was spent waiting for the Scalecoat I paint to dry. I stained the interior of the laser cut wood sides and deck with thinned grimy black paint for a nice gray look, and touched everything up with some more Scalecoat as needed.



The decals are scraps from used NKP sets and the weathering was done with Pan Pastel chalks. Kadee #58 couplers in Accumate coupler boxes and Accurail Bettendorf trucks finished up the model.



This gondola build was so much fun to build I think I'll get a couple of Chad's flat car kits! Email him at [chadboas@yahoo.com](mailto:chadboas@yahoo.com) to check out his current model list.



*Frank Hodina is a prolific prototype modeler and a fan of the NKP (he helped Tony Koester design his Third Sub basement empire).*

*Frank recently opened his own resin model company and is planning on offering several NKP and W&LE models in the near future.*

*Visit [Resin Car Works](http://ResinCarWorks.com) today!*

# The Local's Journey

Arthur Shale



The Nickel Plate isn't always about Berkshires racing from Chicago, St. Louis or Peoria to points East. Sure, they get the glory, but without the bit players the Berks meet along the way, those mighty fast freighters would have a whole lot less to do.

Enter the humble Peddler stage left. Every day except Sunday there's cars to push through the weeds to a dusty feed mill, an elevator or an interchange shared with the likes of the mighty Pennsy, the Big Four and the coal-toting C&O. Nothing too small for the local...often times nothing too big either.



Ever wondered how that bowl of sugar got to your table? The catsup? The flour in your bread? Chances are they started somewhere out there on the mainline. In places like Fremont, Kimball, Van Buren and New Douglas. Never heard of them?

Good thing the Nickel Plate has, and a good thing the Peddler does too. By the package, by the bag and by the car, the local makes no discrimination. It's all freight, and it's all important.



For the local wending westwards, speed doesn't count, it's the service. Yes, sir those Berkshires look good making a mile a minute with one hundred reefers in tow, but the big 2-8-4s have never been the personable face of the NKP. They don't stop at every town corner and grade crossing to unload a prized rooster or load the best hunting hound. To the every man – the Nickel Plate customer – the real face of the railroad is a war weary Lima Consolidation pausing between the cornstalks, Westinghouse panting, valves hissing, gathering up steam for the next mad dash on the mainline to keep ahead of the Flying Saucer.





In 1922 she was the pride of the Clover Leaf. Back then, old 916 was trusted with those reefers the Berskhires pull, but now? Now this little mill is the Nickel Plate's public relations girl. Of course, she isn't selling speed or promising tons by the million, but she is telling the man with the tractor, with the general store and with that delivery on order, she's here for you. This is your Nickel Plate; speedy yes, but even more importantly, reliable. Every day except Sunday.



*Arthur works in broadcast television and has been modelling the Nickel Plate for the last decade. He has also written six novels set in Republican Rome. Arthur lives in Townsville, Australia, with wife Annaley, Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog, Sacha and Bull Arab, Oscar.*

## New NKP Details George Greene

Recently, Bowser released several new brass details in their Cal-Scale line, for superdetailing diesels.

<http://www.bowser-trains.com/new/calscalejuly15.html>

Of these parts, two horns in the group have an application to NKP units.

The Leslie RS3R3, #190-629, was standard on the GP-30's, GP-35, and the C-420. The NKP was beginning to retrofit the RS-11's with these horns as well. Check prototype photos to see which of those units got the newer horns.



#190-629 HO Leslie Air Horn 3 Chime RS3R3 \$4.50

The Nathan K-2, #190-645, was never used on the NKP, since it was introduced after the merger. However, this horn might be usable to duplicate the horn treatment on the RS-36's. These engines were delivered with two single horns like the PA-1's were. The NKP started changing these by replacing the rearward facing horn with a smaller horn and placing both of them on a mounting bracket pointed forward. On my model of the 866 I used an older plastic 3 chime horn that I had in my parts box, and cut off the rearward facing bell. This is another one of those unit-by-unit changes, so check prototype photos to see when and if an engine ever got this new horn arrangement.



#190-645 HO Nathan K2 Air Horn K24 \$4.50



*Dennis Schmidt*



*Howard Ameling*

# ALONG THE LINE



Jim Six has been busily filling his WWII-era terminal layout with inexpensive yet good looking and *realistic* rolling stock, and he's sent along a photo of one of his newer acquisitions as an example of a model that's not prototypical, but which does "look real". Jim's car is a great example of how careful model choices, authentic and well done lettering, and a first class weathering job can make a "foobie stand-in model" look completely at home on a "proto-based" layout.



NKP 601 waits on the passing track at East Lynn with a short local, while NKP 587 passes on the main with a through freight to Peoria.  
*Ray Breyer photo and modeling*



To accompany this issue's cover photo, Eric Hansmann sent in two more photos of Mike Weiss' Nickel Plate local. Mike lives in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and has a large home layout featuring his freelanced Kingston Southern Railroad. The layout shows a large NKP influence however, as Mike grew up in the Cleveland area in the 1950s.



## MODEL A NICKEL PLATE TRAIN

(in HO scale)

By Ray Breyer

(all photos author's collection)

Sometimes modeling an entire Nickel Plate train can be a real challenge. Identifying rolling stock can be problematic, finding appropriate models can be worse, and modeling any engine beyond a Berkshire or an as-delivered Geep can drive you to take up fishing (or some other drinking sport). But sometimes it's REALLY easy to do, as in the case of this particular train:



(Prototype photos of Train #10 taken by [John Dziobko](#))

This is passenger train #10 heading out of St. Louis Union Station at 6:30 PM, on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1958. At only four cars long it's a compact passenger train to be sure, but it has all of the essential elements packed into five pieces of equipment. And thankfully, every last piece is actually made in HO scale. More importantly, Walthers has recently announced a new "[Fallen Flags](#)" small passenger train series that will ALMOST get you everything you need to replicate this train without breaking a sweat.



The equipment in this photo series is pretty simple to identify. First off is PA-1 #180, with a new multi-chime horn but before the "modernization" of a hole in the nose for the bell and a side ladder. The express reefer is REX 7404, the streamlined car is a 200-212 series roomette car (possibly the "City of Muncie"), and the heavyweights is a 90-97 series heavyweights coach, possibly #96.

The PA and 200-series sleeper come with the new Walthers train series, but you'll have to do a LITTLE scrounging for the other three cars.



Walthers makes a very nice model of the REA express reefers, in the appropriate paint scheme:

<http://www.walthers.com/exec/productinfo/920-17311>



*(one interesting "factoid" about REA cars is that they were ALL always 50-foot reefers. Far too many people in the hobby think that 40-foot boxcars or reefers are appropriate for REA equipment, simply because for too long all they ever saw were the old Athearn "Blue Box" kits decorated in REA colors)*

Modeling RPO/baggage 361 will be a bit of a challenge, but not too terribly hard. The simple way to come close would be to add a 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Car Shop [arched roof kit](#) onto a Con-Cor smooth-side RPO. The hard way would be to add the same roof onto a Nickel Plate Car Co. kit, possibly their [Southern Railway](#) ACF-built RPO/Baggage car.



*(Sadly, there really aren't a whole lot of options when it comes to modeling heavyweight RPO equipment, even in this "golden age" of passenger car modeling. NKP Car Co. does have a [brass and plastic kit](#) for a NKP heavyweight RPO/baggage car. Alternatively, you can always use the tried and true, but not really accurate for anything in particular Athearn heavyweight RPO)*

Finally, the 90-series heavyweight is pretty simple. Just use a Branchline (now Atlas) 80' single window [heavyweight coach kit](#), and add Walthers two axle trucks to it.



And finally, for some extra splash, adding a [tail light](#) to the end vestibule rounds out this project.



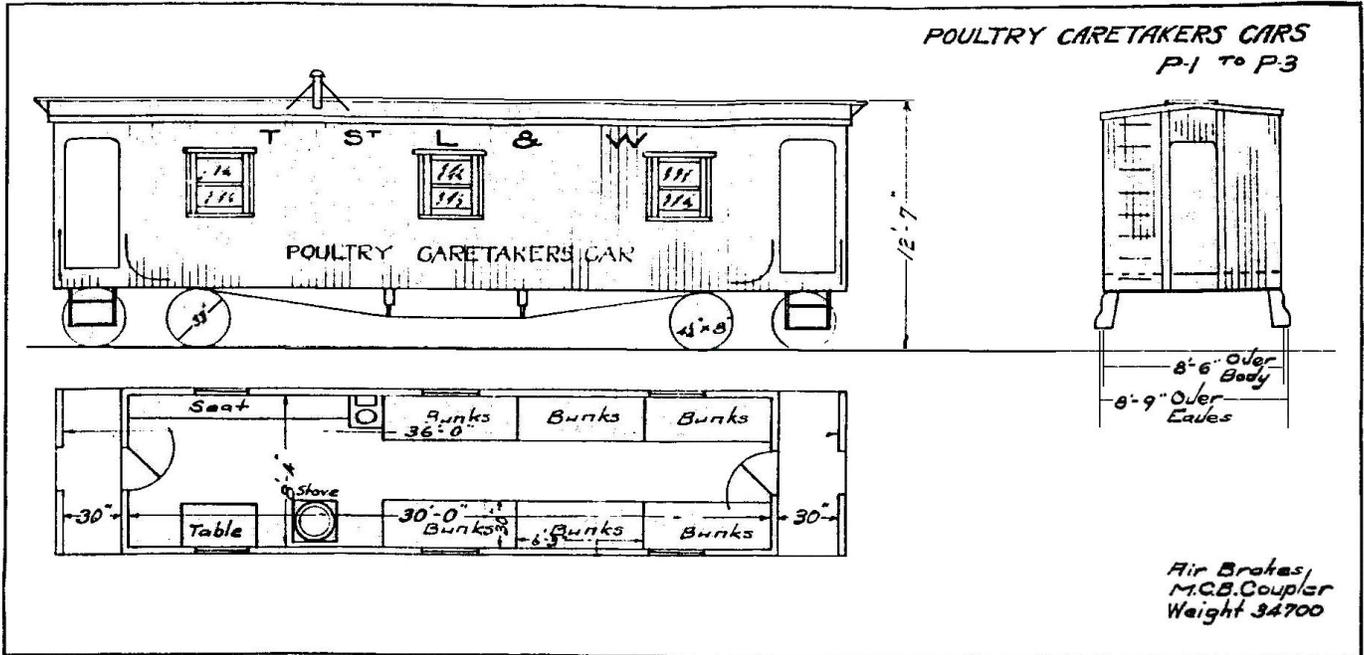
*(The Tomar kit that I linked to is actually a modern FRED. But it's a very simple, battery-powered, self-contained unit that will work well in this application with only a little visual work. Best of all, it's simple!)*



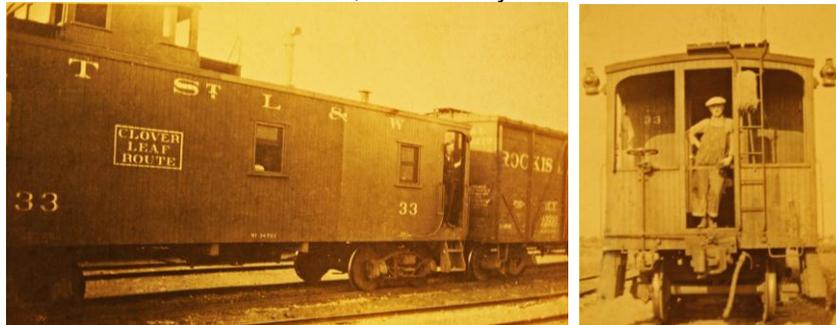
All in all, this is a pretty straightforward project, and an effective way to get a very realistic Nickel Plate passenger train running on your layout quickly. A bit more compromise and scrounging will have to be done in O, S or N scales, but using these photos as a general template will get you something similar in those scales as well.

# MODELER'S REFERENCE

Clover Leaf Poultry Caretaker's Car  
Ray Breyer Collection



Here's an interesting car that would be sure to draw attention on any Nickel Plate or Clover Leaf West end layout: a poultry "drover's car". Built out of old 36-foot boxcars in 1922, the TStL&W needed these three cars due to a HUGE increase in live poultry traffic immediately after WWI. In 1918 they shipped 636 carloads of live poultry, but in 1922, the year these cars were converted, they shipped a whopping 2,695 carloads, or almost eight cars a day! (remember that this is the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when "Sunday chicken dinner" was a rare treat, unlike today when more chicken than beef is consumed).



Both photos: Steve Grigg collection

The Clover Leaf had lots of experience in building cars like these: between 1913 and 1915 they had converted fifty old boxcars into cabooses, and these cars were simpler versions of those cars. This car would obviously be a scratchbuilding project, but not a difficult one: it's basically just a rectangle! I've built a similar Clover Leaf caboose using a Roundhouse caboose as a starting point, and it's not really difficult at all.



(I'll have an article "coming soon" on how to scratchbuild one of these Clover Leaf cabooses!)

## [THE NKPHTS MODELER'S NOTEBOOK NEEDS YOUR HELP!](#)

Are you a Nickel Plate modeler? Or a modeler of the Wheeling & Lake Erie, the Lake Erie & Western, the Clover Leaf, or any of the predecessor roads that went into creating the Greater Nickel Plate? Do you have a digital camera? Would you like to share what you're doing, or what you know, or your tips and techniques on modeling the NKP? Then have we got the forum for you!

These issues of the *Modeler's Notebook* marks the rejuvenation of the NKP's online modeling presence, which can become the greatest resource available for modeling and showcasing NKP models. Ultimately, the plan is to issue this virtual magazine quarterly, but that means that the editorial board of the NKPHTS will need YOUR help in adding to its content!

We're looking for just about any and all submissions for the magazine. Full-length features, small one to three page "mini features", and stand-alone photos are all welcome and desired. So long as the subject matter is at least somehow NKP-related, it's fair game! You say that you aren't a writer? No problem: the NKPHTS editorial staff is here to help. With good quality cameras coming standard with just about every smartphone these days, taking photos couldn't be simpler! (so long as they're relatively well lit and in focus, that is) And we'd love to see your work in all scales and skill levels: S, TT, High-Rail and live steam are all as welcome as O, HO and N.

So share your love of Nickel Plate modeling today! To talk to the editorial staff about a submission, or to submit an article, please contact the following:

Ray Breyer (Editor, NKPHTS *Modeler's Notebook*)  
Thomas Gascoigne (NKPHTS Publications Director)  
Bill Quick (NKPHTS Modeling Editor)  
John Fryar (NKPHTS Internet Services Director)

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*Eric Hansmann photo*