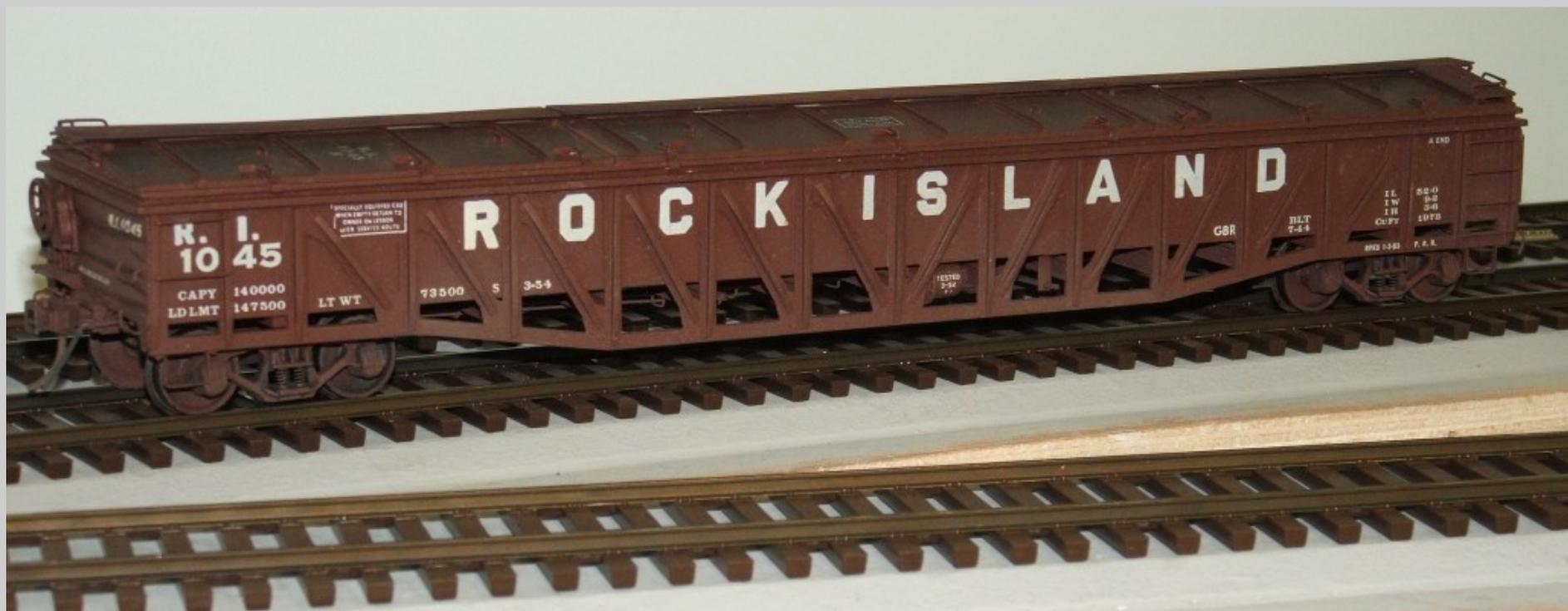


Spring 1997 Baldwin Trophy Winner Ed Bommer's Rock Island Covered Gondola



Prototype Information:

Rock Island Lines rebuilt a fleet of WWII emergency composite gondola cars in the early 1950's for transporting rolls of tin-plated steel between the mills in Pittsburgh, PA to can and small appliance manufacturers in the mid-west. The cars were fitted with steel sides and floors with racks for holding the cargo. A weather-tight, three-section removable roof was applied to each car. The cars were initially assigned to dedicated service during the WWII economic recovery boom. Later on, without tops, they were placed in general service until retired.

References used for the model:

The primary reference used was a construction article in the November 1958 issue of Model Railroader for an HO car. The 19th edition of the Carbuilder's Cyclopedia of 1953 was also a reference for the brake system, safety appliances, and roof section latching devices. A Universal Rotary Stack Adjuster is also installed in the brake rigging of the model following the manufacturer's diagrams.

The Model:

The model is built up from sheet wood with styrene and metal overlays. The side framing is built up from styrene sheet and strips. A jig was made to assure accuracy of the frame on both ends and each side. The car ends are made from cut-down Athearn metal dreadnaught box car ends to match the prototype. The underframe is built up from Northeastern milled wood as is the roof and its ribbing. The runningboard and end platforms are Weaver parts and All Nation brake details were applied to the underbody and B end of the car.

Brass wire and flat strip was used to make the brake rods, piping, latch dogs, lift eyes, hasp loops, grab irons, corner steps and uncoupling rods. Aluminum sheet was used to make brake levers, clevises and slack adjuster parts. Precision Scale air hoses were applied.

Floquil paint and a combination of Walthers and Champion decals as well as dry transfer lettering was applied to the model. There are no specific decal sets available to complete the lettering for this type of car and many individual letters and numbers were used. The weathering is done with thinned-out Floquil paints to represent the car early in its service life.