50300 – 50389 Series, 2-Bay, Open Hoppers

By Joe Piersen

In the 1970’s the C&NW bought some second hand, 2-pocket, open hoppers. (a.k.a. 2-bay). These hoppers were made for the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie and were sold to the C&NW by a dealer for $2,650 each. The C&NW figured that an extra $400 would bring them up to a four-year service life. And four years it was: These cars were not around long enough to be seen much.

The stated reason for the purchase of these cars was for use by various firms for sand and crushed stone service in South Dakota. There is evidence that the cars found other uses around the system. Because the cars were old and had obsolete couplers, they were not fit for interchange service. The P&LE interchanged a few of them, but they probably had a waiver. The C&NW did not intend to do that.

The Clinton Shops painted the series in a black scheme with white lettering. The herald was an “Employee Owned” logo with outlining only, in all-white. They were supposed to be lettered, “FOR SERVICE ON CNW ONLY / NOT TO BE MOVED OFF LINE”, but Clinton shops dropped the ball on the first group through the shops, and the stenciling had to be done, ad hoc, elsewhere on the system. Micro Trains did an N Scale model of this series in the 1990’s.

Most cars were dismantled in 1978 and one lasted until 1980.

Source of information: C&NWHS Archives / AFE’s

Modeling these cars:

These are unusual offset-side hoppers of NYC origin that as indicated in the diagram only have an IL of 31’-6” and are thus 2-ft shorter than the standard AAR offset-side twin hopper. The Athearn or Atlas car could be use with some compromise.
• 4088 P&LE, C&NW photo, during inspection in Pittsburgh area, 1974, C&NWHS collection (rejected or not chosen for purchase by C&NW)

• 4647 P&LE, C&NW photo, during inspection in Pittsburgh area, 1974, C&NWHS collection (later became CNW 50314)
* 50316, 50323 Keith Kohlmann photo, Racine, WI, 03-05-1978

* 50347 Neil Nowak photo, Eau Claire, WI area, 1976 approx.. C&NWHS collection