

# History in a Minute

## N Scale in a Box



by Steve Stark

Soon after N Scale was introduced to North America in 1964, some manufacturers briefly sold their single cars in completely enclosed boxes. The jewel cases were in the future. Arnold Rapido, Aurora (Minitrix<sup>1</sup>) and Atlas all used enclosed boxes (photos 1, 2). The Arnold Rapido model 0483A (photo 3) and Aurora model 4880/260 (photo 4) date from circa 1968, while the Atlas kit 5002-129 dates from 1968<sup>2</sup> (photos 5, 6).

However, the first Arnold Rapido North American equipment in 1964 came individually in small cardboard boxes with a clear flexible plastic covering (photo 7). In 1967, the short-lived Revell/Rapido brand<sup>3</sup> cars also came in a small cardboard box, albeit one that could be hung from a wall bracket (photo 8). The box cars in both these boxes had all details molded on and sported screw-mounted trucks.

By 1968, Arnold Rapido, using its own brand as well as the Revell/

Rapido brand, had switched to a cardboard box with a partial flexible clear plastic cover<sup>4</sup> (photo 9). By 1970, the company had returned to a smaller box with a full flexible clear plastic cover, while both Aurora and Atlas were using jewel cases by 1969<sup>5</sup> (photo 10).

It is interesting to note that although the Con-Cor models produced by Sekisui (Kato) in Japan had cardboard boxes surrounded by a clear plastic sleeve from the outset in 1967, Con-Cor in 1976 was marketing its kits in enclosed cardboard boxes. Dimi-Trains and American N Brass in the late 1970s also produced their kits in enclosed boxes, but those are stories for another day.

<sup>1</sup> All the models I have in Aurora boxes, including the completely enclosed one, have Minitrix Austria stamped on the plastic underframe.

<sup>2</sup> The Atlas instruction sheet bears a copyright date of 1968

<sup>3</sup> Revell/Rapido packaging in my collection bear copyright dates of 1967, 1968 and 1969.

<sup>4</sup> The Revell/Rapido box bears a copyright date of 1968

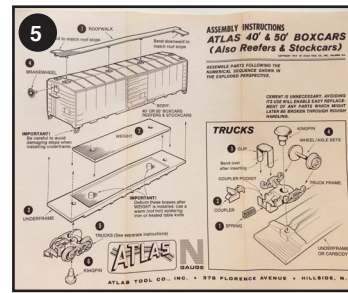
<sup>5</sup> I purchased these cars in 1969 and 1970



Arnold Rapido part # 0483 A, Aurora (Minitrix) part # 4880/260, Atlas part # 5002-129



Arnold Rapido part # 0483 A, Aurora (Minitrix) part # 4880/260, Atlas part # 5002-129



Atlas Assembly Instructions for 40' and 50' box cars, 1968



Arnold Rapido part # 0483 A, Asco Milk #12060



Arnold Rapido part # 0412, New York Central 259180



Aurora (Minitrix) part # 4880/260, National Cylinder Gas # 1007



Revell/Rapido part # N2503, New Haven # 4003



Revell/Rapido part # N-2597, Western Pacific caboose # 754, Rapido part # 0481 S, A.T. & S.F. caboose # 1957



Atlas part # 5002-129, Vermont Railways # 305



Arnold Rapido part 0483 A, Aurora (Minitrix) part 4886, Atlas part 2361