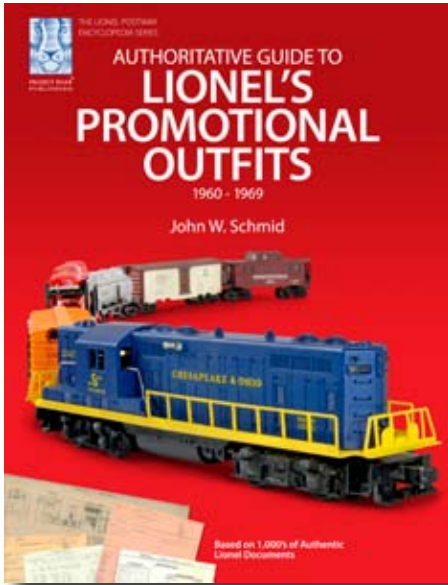


("Review of the *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits 1960 - 1969* reproduced with permission of Lionel Operating Train Society from the December 2007 issue of the club's *Switcher* magazine.")

SWITCHER

A Book Review

By Ed Mazur, RM 3123



848 Pages - 8½" x 11"

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This very informative and highly readable book is the second installment of a planned postwar series on Lionel trains in the broadest definition imaginable. Like its predecessor *Lionel's Postwar Operating Cars* (reviewed by Cris Matuszak in the August 2007 *SWITCHER*) the book is based on the internal records of the postwar Lionel Corporation that author and publisher John W. Schmid and his father George J. Schmid acquired

during the legendary 2001 auction of Lionel modern day "savior" Richard Kughn's personal collection.

This book has 848 pages with over 1,500 color photos and tips the scales at almost six pounds. It can greatly add to our knowledge about Lionel, its internal and external operations, rarity, collectability, distribution and customers, completing outfits, outfit peripherals, accessories, scenery, packaging, graphics, labeling, boxes, inserts, outfit numbering, individual item boxes and much, much more. Operators and collectors should rush to add these new publications, usually for the cost of a piece of rolling stock, to their Lionel libraries.

Where we were once happy with the latest in price guides and listings, the incredible amount of work in current publications by John W. Schmid and other authors including Manuel and Frank Piazza, Joe Algozinni, and Roger Carp leave us gasping for breath and demanding and expecting more and more of the "inside stories" of Lionel trains.

In 1963, I was a junior at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. Toy trains were not present on my horizon. I was more concerned with graduating, joining the Peace Corps, dating my girlfriend Myrna (who would become my wife in 1965), tutoring two legendary football players, Jim Grabowski and Dick Butkus, and helping the Fighting Illini gridiron team win the Big Ten Championship

and eventually the 1964 Rose Bowl Championship.

If I had been more interested in my Lionel trains (buried somewhere in my parent's basement), I could have gone to the Sears Warehouse Headquarters located on Chicago's west side at Homan and Arthington streets and purchased one of the 23 different Sears "Special Purchase" outfits from late 1963. These sets had a little bit of everything in them as Lionel was cleaning out its inventory.



For example, here is outfit #19312 an 0-27 promotional outfit that never appeared in the Sears catalog and only 660 units of it were ever made. It had the Sears no. 9868 stamped on the outfit box below Lionel's number and is the only outfit to have two diesel engines as well as two motorized units. Also included was the no. 375-1 Motorized Turntable that could be used to switch all of this motive power on and off the layout.

Here is Lionel's Factory Order from 1963 for outfit #19312.

The Anatomy of a Factory Order

The original Factory Order for promotional train outfit no. 19212 from 1963. It is annotated to describe the level of information the Factory Orders provide. This authoritative information - never before published or available to general readers - is the basis of this volume.

- Lionel's internal outfit number. This is most often the same as the customer number and appears on the outfit box.
- A full description of the outfit is provided.
- The original date of the Factory Order.
- The date issued was revised ("REV") on 8-29-63.
- Lionel's department number for this Factory Order. Department 57 is the Outfit Packing Department.
- The quantity of no. 19212s to be manufactured (3,156).
- If the outfit is for a specific customer their name most often appears here. For no. 19212, the customer is Western Auto.
- The "Operations" section lists the tasks to complete the Factory Order. In this case, only one operation "Assemble & Pack" is required.
- The date the outfits are required. 2,000 outfits are to be delivered on 6/24/63 and the balance on 8/26/63.
- The type of packing is "Display" box. Note that Lionel's "#1" is a display box with Kraft (Tan) corrugated separators with units loose.
- The "Outfit Contents" section lists all the items that come with the outfit. Suffixes indicate everything from variations to packaging.
- This Factory Order instructs the Outfit Packing Department to mark the boxes with Western Auto's customer number.
- When the order is completed, the Outfit Packing Department is to deliver the outfits to Department 76 (Finished Goods).
- The "Alternate" section lists any substitutions or special instructions. For this outfit, 1,000 no. 6059-25s are substituted for no. 6047-25s.
- A full description of each item included in the outfit.
- An arrow indicates a change from the last revision of the Factory Order.
- The quantity of each item to include.
- This column shows which department is to pull items to complete the outfit. 70 = Stock 73 = Quonset Hut 76 = Finished Goods
- The "Outfit Contents" section lists all the Boxes & Packing for outfit no. 19212.

Page 2 of the Factory Order includes the boxes and other materials required to pack outfit no. 19212.



(It is an example of one of the many Orders that the authors used as the basis for this book.) Get your calculators and price guides out and I will give you a complete list of the items in this Lionel promotional outfit.

Included were: 231P-25 Rock Island Alco A unit; the 230P-25 Chesapeake and Ohio Alco A unit; 6045-150 Tank Car; 6484-25 New Haven Box Car; 6536-25 Hopper Car-Red-Minneapolis-St. Louis; 6825-25 Flat Car w/Trestle Bridge; 6825-3 Trestle Bridge; 3545-1 Operating TV Monitor Car; 6059-50 Caboose; 40-1 Cable Reel w/ wire (any color); 50-1 Gang Car; 59-1 Minuteman Diesel Switcher; 260-1 Illuminated Bumper; 375-1 Motorized Turntable; 262-1 Highway Crossing Gate; 1013-8 Curved Track; 1018-7 Straight Track; 1018-30 Straight Track; 6029-25 Uncoupling Track Section; 364C-50 Contactor; 1121-1 pair Remote Control Switches; KW-1 190-Watt Transformer; 1103-20 Envelope Packed; 310-62 Set of (3) Billboards; 1-62 Parts Order Form; 1-63 Warranty Card, 6650-92 Instruction Sheet; 230-6 Instruction Sheet; 1123-40 Instruction. The boxes and packing included 63-390 Outfit Box; 62-224 Corrugated Insert; 62-245 Corrugated Insert (2) and 62-248 Corrugated Insert.

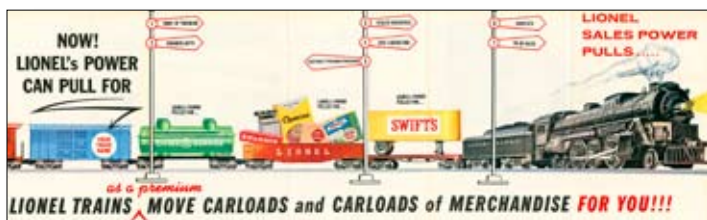
The *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits* reveals for the first time ever how this and many other sets came about, how they were put together at the factory, all of the packaging that was used, how these sets came to the retailer, and why they are so difficult to find.

For example, for outfit #19312 on a rarity scale of 1-10, this set rates R9. If available either on or beneath a table at a swap meet, at the LOTS Convention or the LOTS buy/sell listing, or even on the Internet, count on relieving your bank account of the sum of \$4,000 or more.

For Lionel, a package that included a locomotive, cars, track and transformer was called an "outfit." If the outfit was not listed in Lionel's consumer catalog, it was and is known as a "promotional outfit."

Under the leadership of Joshua Lionel Cowen the train company's "bread and butter" customer had been a traditional retail network of large, metropolitan department stores including my favorite in Chicago, Marshall Field and Company. (There on the fourth floor, in the toy department, my mother for many years had left me for hours while she shopped. I was content to spend countless hours watching the trains run and daydreaming about what I might find for holiday gifts from my parents and relatives.)

But the 1960s were times of great change – for American society both at home and abroad. This was the decade of both the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. At that point in time, Lionel executives argued that the company should strive to develop promotional outfits for any and all preferred customers, including discount retailers, who submitted enormous orders for electric trains.



In this example Lionel boasted its success in sales promotions in this 1961 multi-page foldout that appeared in *Premium Practice* magazine. A subsequent advertisement featured Lionel's Porter, Spear and Scalextric product lines.

In late 1963, Robert Wolfe, then president of the Lionel Toy Corporation, worked out a deal – "Special Purchase" – with Sears, Roebuck and Co., to quickly bring additional revenue to Lionel by liquidating surplus toy inventory. This deal accounted for the 23 Retailer Promotional outfits purchased by Sears in late 1963. None of these sets has been discovered to grace the pages of any Sears Catalog!



Factory Orders for another highly prized set, #X-507NA, are again quoted in the book for the outfit nicknamed the "Halloween General". This Retailer Promotional Type Ic came in a Type E Red Corrugated Tray with a speckled die-cut platform. It was the last of four outfits that were sold to Druggists' Service Council and advertised in that firm's Gifts Galore catalog.



Quaker Oats Manufacturer Promotional outfit no. X-600 is shown with an original 1961 Quaker Oats container with the offer printed on the cover as well as the mail coupon. The outfit is shown without any of the substitutions.

According to the Factory Orders that serve as the foundation of this important work, Lionel produced over 700 promotional outfits, including those shown only in advance catalogs (about 1,597,000 total quantity) between 1960-1969. These figures surpassed the more than 140 cataloged outfits (about 879,000 total quantity) from the same period. The authors observe that counting variations of outfit boxes



and year combinations there were probably more than 1,000 promotional outfits. The book lists 707 outfits based on outfit number and year combination. However, one outfit, #19434 from 1965 came in over 150 different ways. To keep things simple and help preserve our sanity, the author is content to state "over 700..."

Lionel's customers for the promotional outfits included retail department stores such as Sears, J.C. Penney, and Montgomery Ward; distributors such as Arkwright and Associated Merchandising Corporation; catalog houses such as Aldens, Sears, and Spiegel; premium houses such as Sperry & Hutchinson (S&H) and Top Value Stamps; automotive and tire dealers such as Western Auto and Firestone; hardware and hobby retailers such as Madison Hardware and Polk's Hobbies; manufacturers of consumer goods such as Libby's and Quaker Oats and business associations such as the National Organization of Railroad Business Women.

One of the most fascinating chapters in the volume is found in Part II – Lionel's Distribution and Customers. There is a listing of Lionel's customers with narrative for every customer beginning with A&P and continuing through the alphabet to William Taylor & Son Co., a variety store located in downtown Cleveland. In 1960, Taylor's purchased 36 units of a Retailer Promotional outfit no. X-547.

Several generalizations can be carefully made after digesting this volume over time:

1. The vast majority of promotional outfits were O-27 gauge. Only 0.7 % of total production was "O" or "Super O."
2. Promotional outfits were usually freight trains. According to my fellow academic and Lionel authority, Dr. Joseph Lechner, only "twelve outfits contained passenger cars."
3. Either plastic ALCO diesels or Scout-type 2-4-2 steamers led the majority of promotional outfits. The most popular paint scheme was the ATSF Warbonnet.

Actually none of this should surprise us. Those vendors who placed promotional orders wanted to beat their competitor's price. Freight trains then and now offer more play value for youngsters (the desired audience) and lastly, freight trains outnumbered passenger consists on prototypical railroads throughout the USA.

Since 2001, Lionel collector and historian John W. Schmid has traveled across the USA seeking, photographing, and analyzing the outfits identified in Lionel's Factory Orders.

Complete descriptions along with the TCA and LOTS grading scale, rarity, and ever-fluctuating market values for every promotional outfit are beautifully displayed in more than 1,500 full-color pictures and images.

LOTS Members will recognize that this is the most complete and authoritative guide to Lionel's promotional outfits. With this book in hand, or even two hands, toy train collectors can verify or complete their promotional outfits and learn the value and rarity of their outfits. My copy rests next to my nightstand. When I was a youngster I would go to bed with my Lionel catalog and fall asleep dreaming of new additions to my toy trains. Now, I can relive many of those

childhood memories by finding the train I had or wished I had long ago.

The *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits 1960 - 1969* is available in both hardcover and soft cover. Check availability at your local hobby retailer or from Project Roar Publishing, PO Box 599, Winfield, IL 60190, 630-653-ROAR(7627). Or, visit their web site at www.projectroar.com

It is a terrific gift for a train lover's birthday, Father's or Mother's Day, anniversary, Christmas, Hanukkah, Valentine's Day (maybe with a box of sweets for insurance) and any other occasion. This is a work that you will return to many, many times to exponentially increase your enjoyment of Lionel Trains.



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Project Roar Publishing
P.O. Box 599
Winfield, IL 60190
www.projectroar.com

The *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits 1960 - 1969* by John W. Schmid. Available from Project Roar Publishing, P.O. Box 599, Winfield, IL 60190. To order, visit www.projectroar.com or call 630-653-ROAR (7627). 848 pages, 1,500+ color photos and images, Soft Cover \$69.95, Hard Cover \$89.95, Limited Edition Collectible Hardcover \$150.

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