



Photo 1

## A PRIMER: American Flyer “New Haven” Boxcabs

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Photo 2



Photo 3

By 2001 I was firmly hooked on American Flyer Wide Gauge collecting. I was actively hunting for NYC 20th Century electrics at the time, as you read in the January *Quarterly*. The opportunity came in late 2001 to acquire a 1929 Eagle set, though at the time I did not know much about New Haven electric boxcab locomotives. My honorary Uncle Dave quipped that he felt that I would enjoy collecting sets with this little locomotive in them. He was, as usual, right on point! I started researching these sets, using original catalogs and talking with other wide gauge collectors.

The New Haven models were likely modeled after the New York, New Haven and Hartford's EP-2 electric locomotive. Built by Baldwin-Westinghouse, the EP-2 operated on the New Haven electrified division west of New Haven, Connecticut. Delivered from about 1920 to 1927, the EP-2s stayed in service until diesel-electrics replaced them in 1958.

American Flyer introduced the New Haven style locomotive in 1927 in the inaugural “The Eagle” set. This loco was numbered 4643 and was thistle green in color (Photo 1). Roof top details included a nickel headlight shroud, bell, and small DC type pantograph. Accompanying the 4643 in 1927 was the 4653 loco in brilliant orange livery with red window trim (Photo 2). This locomotive pulled the three car orange “The Commander” set. Rooftop details were the same, as was the gloss black frame. The 4653 added brass journal boxes and air tanks to its black frame. 1927 also saw the first reported uncataloged New Haven boxcab set. “The Empire Express” was a tomato red 4743 or 4753 with identical details to the 4643 and with two fourteen inch cars, specially lithographed in tomato red livery (Photo 3). This set is hard to find in any condition.

1928 saw significant growth to the number of New Haven locomotives in the lineup. Flyer saw fit to start naming their locomotives as well. A slight numbering change to 4644 introduced “The Pioneer” locomotive, which started a run of commonly detailed cabs and frames. Generally the cabs now had two cast headlights painted gold, a large brass AC type pantograph, and a brass bell. The frame had a brass pilot overlay and four turned brass flag holders. Then there were two brass journal boxes and two brass air tanks on each side. Leading “The Trail Blazer” set was the 4644 painted sunset red with a black frame (Photo 4), while “The Eagle” was painted emerald green on

a black frame. The 4654 locomotive got the moniker “Daniel Webster” and was slated for “The Statesman” set in brilliant orange and azure livery (Photo 5). This loco ushered in the French gray chassis, which pervaded the line until the end of production. The other significant introduction for 1928 was the electromechanical reverse unit for wide gauge. To identify locomotives equipped with the new remote control function, the 4644/4654s mentioned above were numbered 4684—the “8” being an indication of “R/C” or remote control. That made a total of six new locomotives for 1928!

1929 was simply a total duplication of the line. There were no innovations, no color changes, and no new introductions indicated in the catalog. I propose that we started to see changes in the lithography of the fourteen inch cars to include translucent gold in the liveries of “The Statesman” and “The Eagle” sets. More specific letter boards, and six colors instead of four in the lithography, made for spectacular combinations.

In 1930, American Flyer got back to implementing refreshing changes to the line. After a short transition period, the French gray frame took complete control in the New Haven boxcab line. Flyer introduced the first “complete railroad” in the wide gauge line, called “The Frontiertown.” This set was a version of “The Statesman” (Photo 6) in Northwestern railroad livery, along with a #96 Flossmoor Station, a #4266 tunnel, a #92 watchman’s tower, a #2021 crossing gate, a #2216 danger signal, a #2109 light, a #2012 semaphore, and a #460 fuse set. At the price of \$37.50 it was a good value. The basic sets cost \$24 to \$26, and steamer locomotive sets started at \$47. In addition to French gray, there was a color change to victory red for “The Eagle” set (Photo 7) and a color change to emerald green for “The Trailblazer” set (Photo 8). It was this year that we saw unusual color transitions, like sunset red on French gray locomotives appear (Photo 9), as Flyer used up their new old parts stock. 1930 also produced the other well-known uncataloged set, via JC Penneys’ Nation Wide Lines brand. The set consisted of a 4644 with NWL plates, 4017, 4018, and 4011 in stock colors with a 4677 number plate (Photo 10).

Slipping further into the Great Depression, US buyers were cutting back on toy train purchases (as well as other products), and this was reflected in the 1931 offering by American Flyer. “The Trailblazer,” “The Eagle,” and

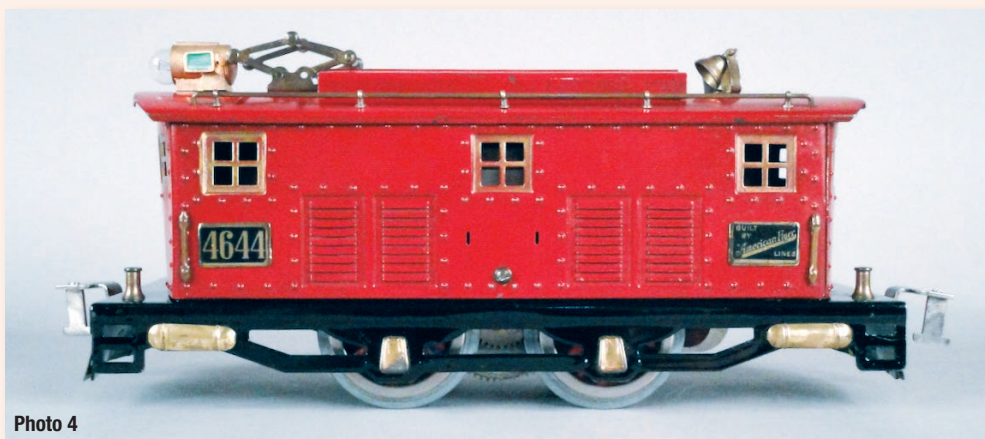


Photo 4

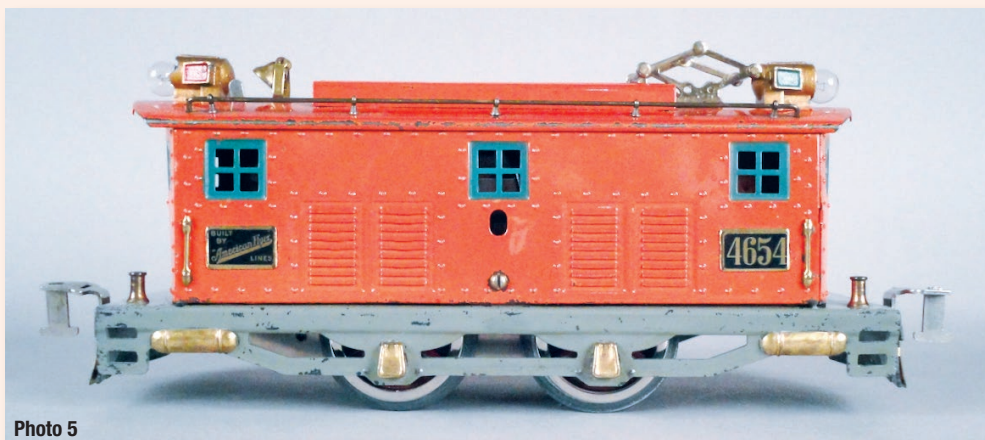


Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

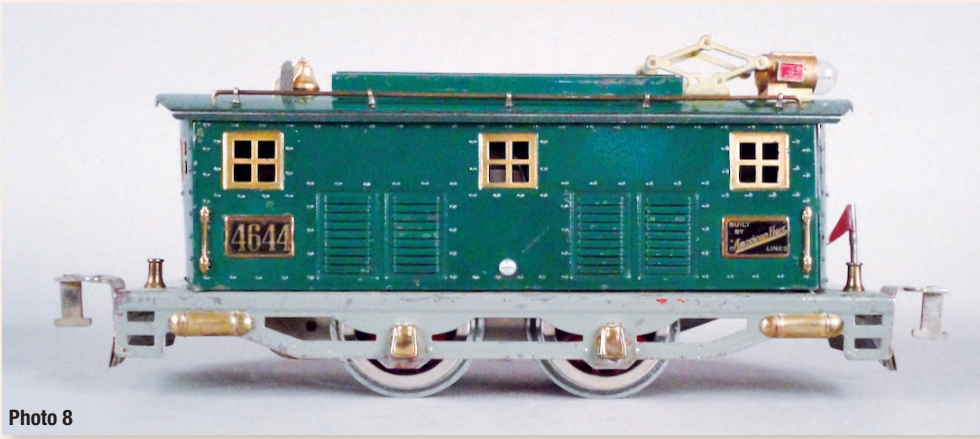


Photo 8

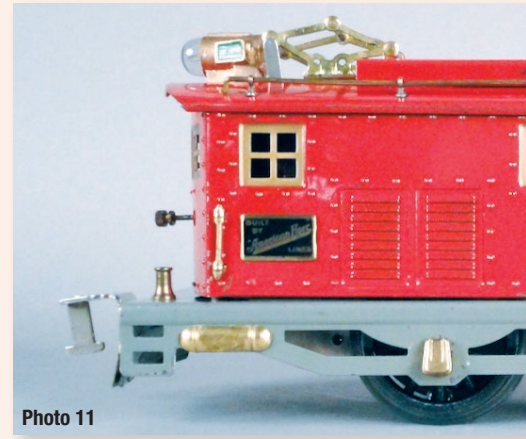


Photo 11

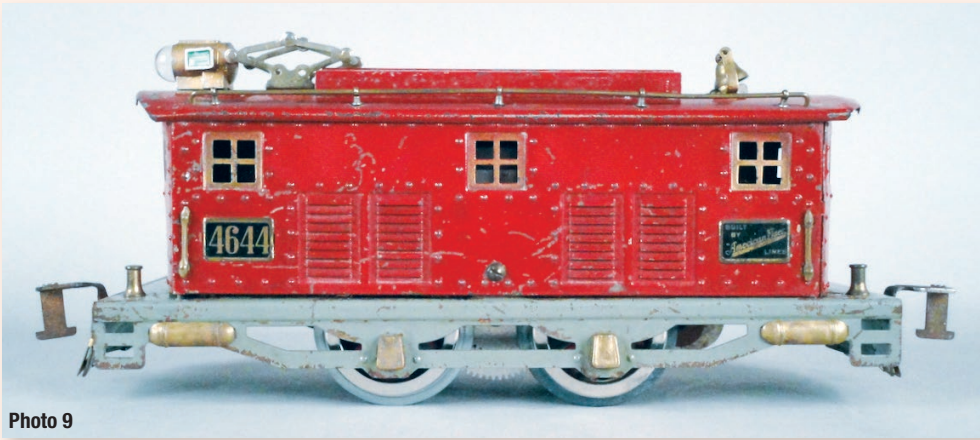


Photo 9

"The Statesman" sets were carried over from 1930, but the remote control (4684) option was discontinued. Flyer renumbered the R/C loco from 4684 to 4644R/C. It was offered in one set only, "The Brigadier," which had two new cars (4331 and 4332), all in victory red (Photo 11), a harbinger that lithography was on the way out. As usual with American Flyer, the exception is the rule. Photo 12 shows a 4684 plated 4644R/C (stamped on the frame).

1932 ushered in the beginning of the end for wide gauge. The deepening Great Depression left people who would otherwise be in the market,



Photo 10

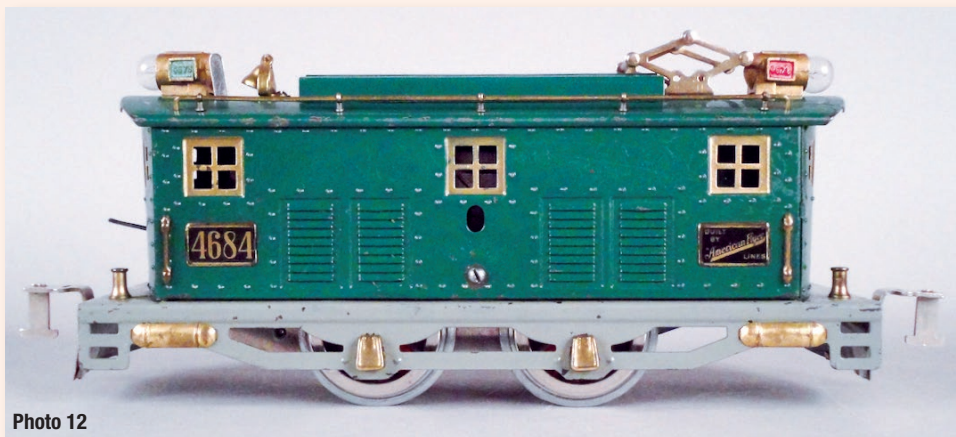


Photo 12

were now looking for starter trains sets. The New Haven part of the offering was reduced to two sets, "The Trailblazer" and "The Brigadier." Gone were the lithographed cars. Interestingly, the more expensive sets were now all remote control and still going strong. Locomotives were no longer offered for separate sale.

1933 saw the end of the New Haven cab offering. "The Trailblazer" was the sole offering carried over from 1932. The set was renumbered to 1471R from 1471. "R" was for manual reverse. "RC" was for remote control, now exclusive in the higher end of the product line.

Accompanying this article is a chart of

these locomotives, with their applicable catalog set names and numbers.

This article is meant to introduce readers to the 46XX series New Haven boxcab locomotives as manufactured by American Flyer in Chicago, IL, during the 1920s and 1930s. Readers may contact me at my email under the byline.

**AMERICAN FLYER NEW HAVEN BOXCAB LOCOS**

Year Catalogued	Loco Number	Loco Name	Loco Color	Set Name	Set Number	Set Contents	
1927	4643		Thistle green/ Black	The Eagle	1422	America/Pleasant View	
	4653		Orange / Black / Red	The Commander	1423	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4743		Tomato Red/Orange/Black	Empire Express	1422	Henry Hudson/Knickerbocker	Uncatalogued JCPenny
	4753		Tomato Red/Orange/Black	Empire Express	1422	Henry Hudson/Knickerbocker	Uncatalogued JCPenny
1928	4644	Pioneer	Sunset Red / Black	The Trail Blazer	1471	4017 / 4011	
	4644	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Black	The Eagle	1472	America/Pleasant View	
	4654	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1473	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4684	Pioneer	Sunset Red / Black	The Trail Blazer	1481	4017 / 4011	
	4684	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Black	The Eagle	1482	America/Pleasant View	
	4684	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1483	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
1929	4644	Pioneer	Sunset Red / Black	The Trail Blazer	1471	4017 / 4011	
	4644	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Black	The Eagle	1472	America/Pleasant View	
	4654	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1473	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4684	Pioneer	Sunset Red / Black	The Trail Blazer	1481	4017 / 4011	
	4684	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Black	The Eagle	1482	America/Pleasant View	Eagle Litho?
	4684	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1483	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	6 color Litho?
1930	4654	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	Frontiertown	1469	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4644	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Grey	The Trail Blazer	1471	4017 / 4011	
	4644	Pioneer	Victory Red / Grey	The New Eagle	1472	Eagle Litho	
	4644	Pioneer	Victory Red / Grey	Nation Wide Lines	??	4017/4018/4011	All cars numbered 4677
	4654	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1473	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4684	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Grey	The Trail Blazer	1481	4017 / 4011	
	4684	Pioneer	Victory Red / Grey	The New Eagle	1482	America/Pleasant View	
	4684	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1483	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
1931	4654	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	Frontiertown	1469	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4644	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Grey	The Trail Blazer	1471	4017 / 4011	
	4644	Pioneer	Victory Red / Grey	The Eagle	1472	Eagle Litho	
	4654	Daniel Webster	Orange/Grey/Azure	The Statesman	1473	Bunker Hill/Yorktown	
	4644RC		Victory Red / Grey	The Brigadier	1474	4331 / 4332	
1932	4644	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Grey	The Trail Blazer	1471	4017 / 4011	
	4644RC		Victory Red / Grey	The Brigadier	1474	4331 / 4332	
1933	4644	Pioneer	Emerald Green / Grey	The Trail Blazer	1471R	4017 / 4011	