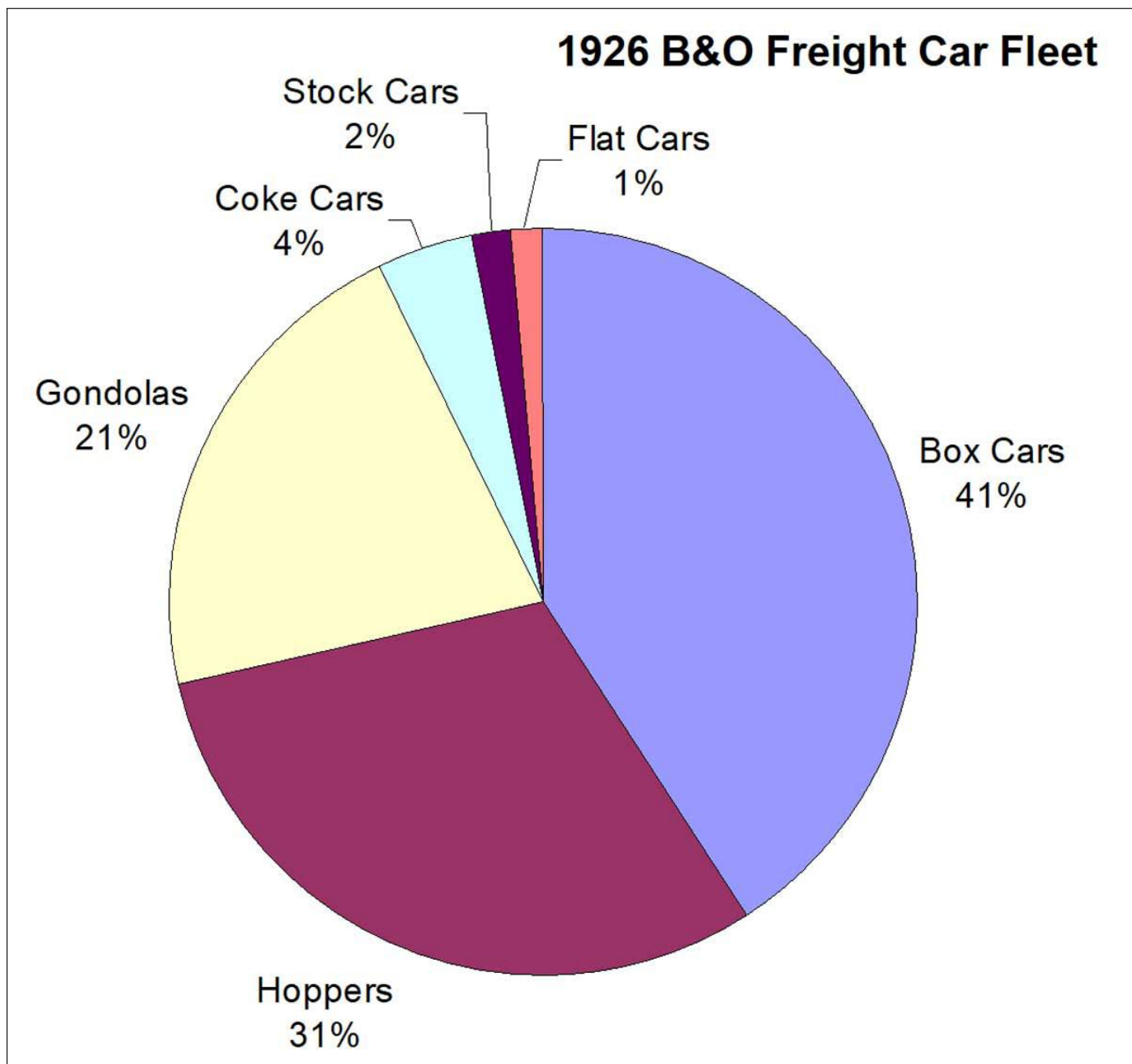


Baltimore & Ohio 1926 freight car fleet

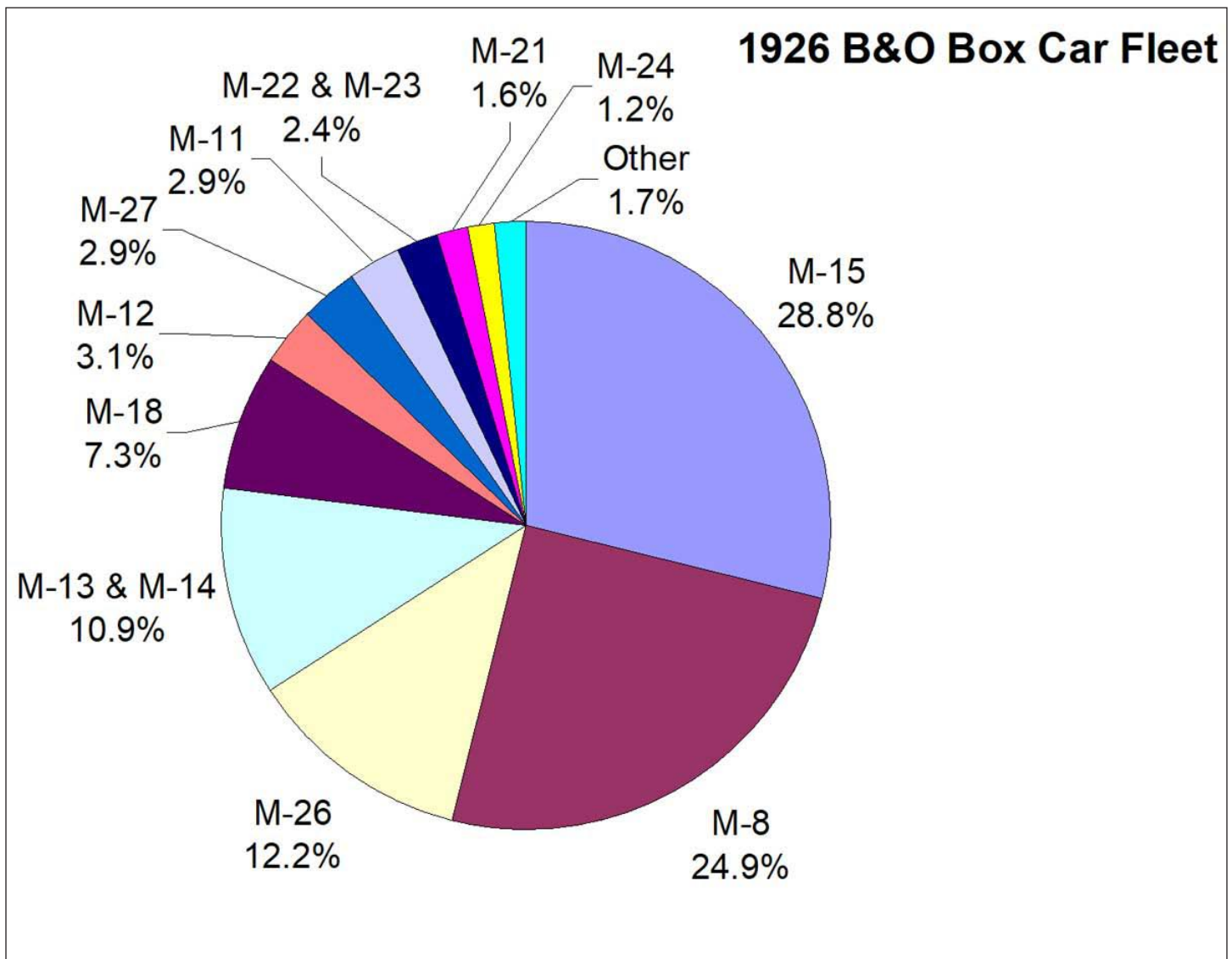
The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had an interesting freight car fleet in 1926. The October 1926 Official Railway Equipment Register indicates there were 101,227 B&O freight cars in service. These cover a variety of car types and car classes. This simple pie chart illustrates the various car designs of the B&O fleet.



Let's take a closer look at the B&O car classes of 1926. This review will focus on the box car fleet. Additional sections on hoppers, gondolas, and other cars in the fleet will be published. These summaries do not cover all of the car classes in service, just those with significant quantities or with a representative HO scale model. This document was completed in December 2017 with details current to that time.

Box Cars

40,064 B&O box cars are listed in service across 34 car classes and subclasses in a 1926 Official Railway Equipment Register. The following pie chart illustrates the proportion of the box car fleet for the car classes covered in this review.



It should be noted that the majority of the B&O box car fleet was built and installed before World War One. Only the M-24, M-26, M-27 cars and some of the M-15 subclasses were built in the 1920s. Many earlier M-8 class cars were rebuilt in the Teens with steel underframes. Overall, it is an interesting fleet with several forgotten car classes holding decent percentages of the total quantity.

The following data was collected from an October 1926 Official Railway Equipment Register, the January 1925 B&O Summary of Equipment, and B&O Fifty years of Rolling Stock Rosters, 1905-1954. The latter two books were purchased through the [B&O Railroad Historical Society](#). They offer reprints of many official B&O books to help with your research efforts. Visit their Company Store for more details. The Summaries of Equipment books are found under the Equipment link on the Company Store pages.

M-15 and subclasses

11,551 cars, 28.8% of the box car fleet



M-15e 174775 in an AC&F builder image of 1922. Lot 9227.

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-15c	173000 - 173948	2798	883	1921	
M-15e	174500 - 174999	2798	991	1922	
M-15d	175000 - 175999	2798	998	?	
M-15f	176000 - 178499	2807	2491	?	
M-15b	184000 - 184934	2810	881	1916	
M-15	191000 - 192999	2811	1917	1910-11	XA
M-15a	193000 - 196505	2811	3390	1912	XA

By the mid-1920s, the M-15 box cars were the backbone of the B&O box car fleet. These 40-foot, 3-inch inside length box cars had a fish belly steel center sill with wood double-sheathing. The first cars came into service in 1910 as door-and-a-half cars for automobile transport.

In addition to the M-15 class, six additional subclasses were installed by the mid-1920s. A variety of ends, roofs, door guides, and other hardware differentiated some of the subclasses. [Westerfield Models](#) offers several HO scale versions of the M-15 in their resin kit line.

M-8 and subclasses

9988 cars, 25% of the box car fleet



M-8b 99115 shown after a steel centersill was installed at the Ralston Steel Car Company in 1912.
(RSC Negative 252-1200)

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-8	65000 - 72699	2236	21	1897-1901	
M-8	75075 - 75998	2236	3	1897	
M-8	77000 - 80385	2236	2	1898-1900	
M-8b	81000 - 81030	2236	28	1920	steel center sills
M-8	81050 - 89979	2236	23	1896-98	
M-8b	86000 - 90499	2236	2660	1896-98	
M-8b	90500 - 99999	2236	6771	1901	steel center sills
M-8c	167000 - 167499	2236	480	1921	steel center sills

The B&O originally developed the M-8 box car design in the late 1890s. This wood, double-sheathed, 36-foot inside length car was large for the era, although many retained a 30-ton capacity through the 1920s. The cars were built with truss rods and doors that opened to the left, which was quite common in the early decades of the 20th century. Many of these cars received steel center sills in the Teens but retained the truss rods. Note the M-8c cars have a build date of 1921, which is probably a rebuild date. The M-8 car design was the main B&O box car until the M-15 class was introduced 1910. By 1926, there were three additional subclasses of the M-8 class but the quantities had started to decline. Currently, there are no HO scale models available for this prototype.

M-26 and subclasses

4883 cars, 12.2% of the box car fleet



M-26a 268000 as built by Standard Steel Car Company in 1925. (Keith Retterer photo collection)

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-26	265000 - 266999	3056	2000	1925	
M-26b	267000 - 267999	3056	1000	1926	
M-26a	268000 - 268999	3056	1000	1925-26	
M-26a	269000 - 269999	3056	883	1926	

Steel sheathing had been successfully employed on several box car designs before World War 1. The American Railway Association finalized a proposed standard steel-sheathed box car in 1923. Railway Prototype Cyclopedia Volume 18 contains extensive details on this car design and related alternate proposed standard designs. The B&O was an early adopter of this car design, most likely as they knew their aging fleet of M-8 class cars needed to be replaced. Between 1925 and 1931, the railroad installed 14,000 box cars in the M-26 class that mostly followed the ARA 1923 proposed standard box car design. By late 1926, cars of the M-26, M-26a, and M-26b classes were in service. [InterMountain Railway Company](#) has offered several HO scale versions of this car design from tooling once marketed by Red Caboose.

M-13, M-14 and subclasses

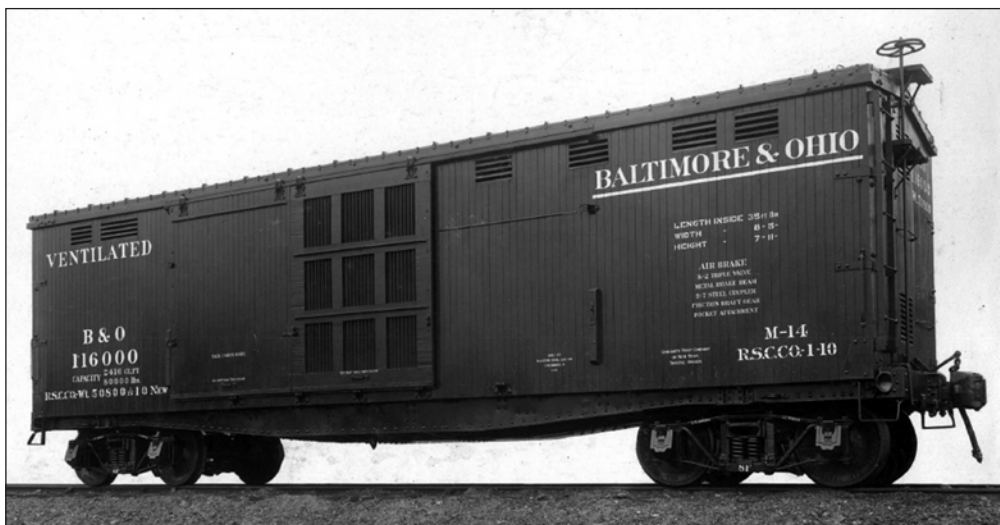
4366 cars, 10.9% of the box car fleet



M-13a 183018 as built by AC&F in 1910. ([Westerfield Models AC&F photo collection](#))

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-13	180000 - 181999	2448	1931	1906	
M-13a	182000 - 183699	2480	1660	1910	
M-13b	190000 - 190299	2480	292	1910	XA
M-14	116000 - 116499	2416	73	1910	XV
M-14a	186500 - 186984	2416	410	1910	XV

The M-13 car design seems to be a variation of the M-12 cars the B&O installed while under Pennsylvania Railroad control. After PRR control ended, the B&O refined the M-12 car design to produce the M-13 car class. These wood, double-sheathed, 36-foot inside length cars had a distinctive fish belly side sill and a straight steel centersill with a 40-ton capacity. The first M-13 cars were produced in 1906. A ventilated M-14 class was produced in 1910. [Westerfield Models](#) offers HO scale versions of the M-13 and M-14.



M-14 116000 as built by Ralston Steel Car Company in 1910. (RSC photo)

M-18

2914 cars, 7.3% of the box car fleet



Former M-18 in 1950s with roof removed for coke service and reclassified as O-39b. The car in this photo is mis-stenciled. (Jay Williams photo collection)

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-18	170000 - 172999	2783	2914	1916	

The M-18 cars are the only 40-foot, 3-inch inside length B&O box cars with truss rods. These cars were built in 1916 and also had steel center sills. These wood, double-sheathed cars seem like an oddity as the company had been installing the M-15 class with a heftier underframe for several years. Many of these M-18 cars were converted in 1936 for coke transport. The roofs were removed and the cars reclassified as O-39b. Currently, there are no HO scale models available for this prototype.

M-12

1239 cars, 3.1% of the box car fleet



Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-12	165001 - 166299	2448	1239	1902	PRR design

These were the first steel underframe box cars installed on the B&O, and the first B&O box cars of 50-ton capacity. These cars came into service in 1902, when the B&O was under Pennsylvania Railroad control. These cars utilized the underframe design of the PRR XLA box cars. The M-12 class has other similarities to the PRR box cars but they are not exact copies. Currently, there are no HO scale models available for this prototype, although modifying a [Westerfield Models](#) PRR XL box car kit would be a possibility.

M-27 and subclasses

1173 cars, 2.9% of the box car fleet



M-27 281977 in 1946-47. The car has had some modifications since being built as there is a full extra door but the car is stenciled as a single door car for grain service.

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-27	290000 - 290999	3193	1000		XA
M-27a	291000 - 291999	3193	173		XA

These cars are a variation of the M-26 design for use in the automobile trade. They were originally built with an extra half door to cover a 10-foot door opening and the inside height was a few inches taller than the M-26 cars. Currently, there are no HO scale models available for these prototypes although Sunshine Models resin kits were produced long ago.

M-11 and subclasses (no image available)

1147 cars, 2.9% of the box car fleet

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-11a	74471 - 75068	2394	413	1913	
M-11a	76000 - 76994	2394	611	1913	
M-11a	190700 - 190999	2394	123	1913	XA

The original M-11 class was installed in 1901. Many of these 36-foot inside length cars received steel center sills in the early Teens and a reclassification to M-11a. These cars were slightly larger than the M-8 car design and also had a 30-ton capacity. Currently, there are no HO scale models available for these prototypes. This is one of the few B&O car classes where I have not yet found an image.

M-23 and M-22

958 cars, 2.39% of the box car fleet



M-23 185099 was captured by Lackawanna staff photographer William B. Berry, Jr., circa 1925-26. (Photo from the Railfan.net 'erielack' E-Mail List Photo Archive, neg X4523)

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-23	185000 - 185499	2448	477	1915	
M-22	199500 - 199999	2448	481	1915	XA

These 36-foot, 8-inch inside length cars were originally built in 1910 for the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton. The B&O acquired the CH&D in 1917 and these wood, double-sheathed cars became the M-23 class. A companion set of automobile cars had the same dimensions, except for a wider door opening. These became the M-22 class on the B&O. Both of these car classes had a 40-ton capacity.

Although these are a small percentage of the 1926 B&O fleet, [Accurail](#) offers a plastic HO box car kit that has similarities to the M-23 cars. A modeler may wish to do additional detail work to reflect the B&O prototype. With additional effort, a half door can be installed to resemble the M-22 cars.



CH&D 47219 in a 1915 AC&F builder image.

After the B&O acquired the line in 1917, these cars became the M-23 class.

([Westerfield Models](#) AC&F photo collection)

M-21

661 cars, 1.65% of the box car fleet



M-21 169039 sits on the Brunswick yard repair track, circa 1920.

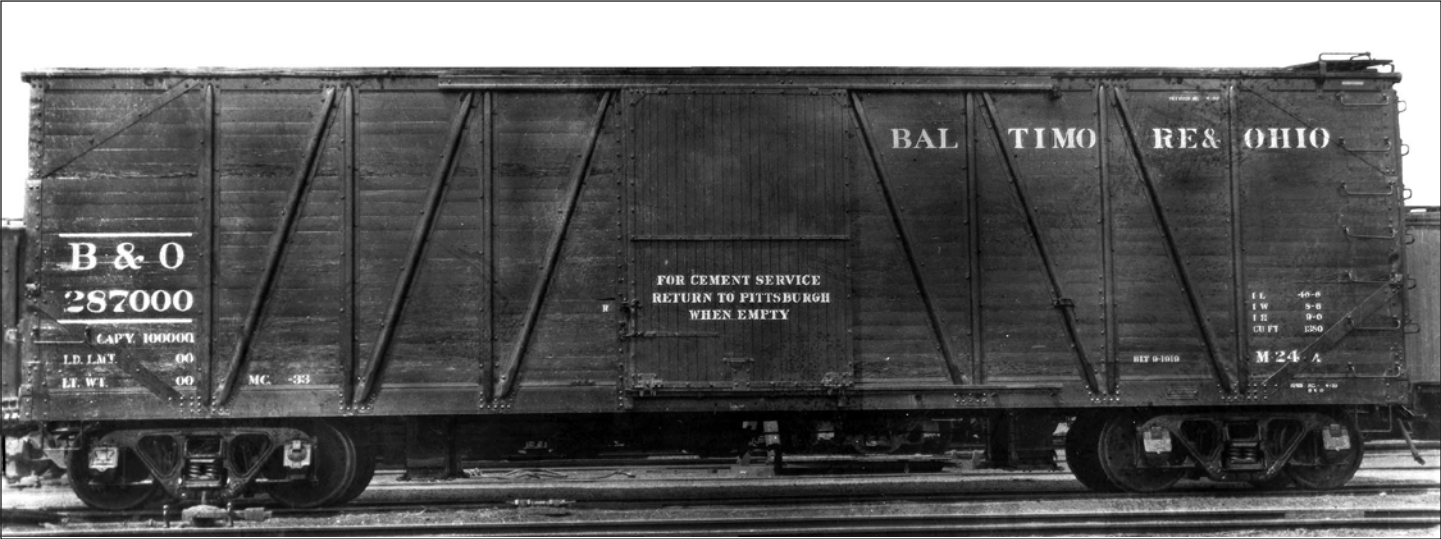
Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-21b	168100 - 168299	2448	135	1904-05	
M-21	168300 - 169202	2448	4	1904-05	
M-21a	169500 - 169999	2448	522	1904-05	steel center sills

The original M-21 car class was installed in 1904 and 1905. Many of these 36-foot inside length cars received steel center sills through the Teens and reclassified to M-21a and M-21b. These cars were slightly larger than the M-8 car design and similar to many of the 36-foot box cars built in the 1900-1910 years. These cars had a capacity of 30-tons.

Currently, there are no HO scale models available for these prototypes but the Accurail 1800 series models offer a start with wood ends and a straight center sill. Truss rods would need to be added along with archbar trucks.

M-24

500 cars, 1.25% of the box car fleet



M-24a 287000 poses at Mount Clare in this photo, circa 1933. The car has been modified for cement hauling service, as noted by the special stencil on the door.

Class	Car Series	Cubic Capacity	Number of Cars	Built	Notes
M-24	187000 - 187499	3098	500	1919	USRA

While the USRA box cars are well known, they were a small car class on the B&O. These were the first single-sheathed box cars installed on the railroad and assigned by the United States Railway Administration while the railroad was under USRA control. Railway Prototype Cyclopedia Volume 17 contains extensive details on these USRA cars. [Westerfield Models](#) offers HO scale versions of these cars in their resin kit line. [Tichy Train Group](#) offers an HO scale styrene kit.

There were five other box car classes in 1926; M-25, M-20 M-19, M-17, and M-9. The quantities were small with a combined total of 682 cars. The M-25 cars came from the Coal & Coke Railway, which the B&O acquired about 1920. One or two of the other car classes may have been former Morgantown & Kingwood cars. The M&K was acquired about the same time as the C&C. I suspect the cars in the other classes came through acquisition and merger of smaller railroads.

As an interesting note, in late 1926 19,038 B&O box cars had interior lengths less than 40 feet. These shorter cars represented 47.5% of the 1926 box car fleet.

The 1926 B&O freight car fleet summary is project has been on my mind for over a year. Several modelers and historians have assisted with this project. It would not have progressed this far without their assistance. I owe gratitude to James Mischke, Bob Witt, Ed Kirstatter, and Ray Breyer for sharing details, photos, and proofreading as this has lurched ahead over the months.