

TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION GRADING STANDARDS

A guide to using the paper and box
grading standards

Adopted - April, 2009

Introduction

The Standards Power Point program on grading prewar and postwar paper and boxes completes our committee's work on condition grading. This project has been the collaborative effort of many people. However, the main work was done by and credit goes to Glenn Stinson with the help of Ron Morris and John Krill of the Library committee.

The program will entertain you and show you specific items in each grade and explain why they are so graded. You will then be able to effectively grade your boxes and paper items easily and accurately.



TCA Standards Committee Display 2006-07 -
National Toy Train Museum,
Strasburg, Pa.



TCA Standards Committee Display
2009 - National Toy Train Museum,
Strasburg, Pa.



TCA Standards Committee Display – 2010
National Toy Train Museum, Strasburg, Pa.

TCA Grading Standards for Paper and Boxes

P-10 Mint- Brand New - Complete and all original and unused.

P-9 Store New – Complete and all original and unused. Have merchant additions such as store stamps, price tags, et al. Boxes must have inner liner/s, if appropriate.

P-8 Like New - Complete and all original. Evidence of light use and aging, additional notations since leaving publisher or manufacturer. Contents of box may be missing.

P-7 Excellent - Complete and all original. Handling indentations, minute edge wear, small creases.

P-6 Very good - Complete and all original. Minor abrasions, creases and or folds. Small tears, slight color changes, minor soiling. Box may have inner liners missing.

P-5 Good- Items show substantial wear. Moderate abrasions, creases and or folds; moderate tears and losses. Moderate color changes, staples may be rusty or replaced. May have been repaired with archival tissue and adhesive.

P-4 Fair - heavy damage but generally legible. May or may not have been repaired. Paper may be brittle. Boxes may have inner flaps missing.

P-3 POOR - Incomplete, may be very brittle, significant deterioration. Extensive amateur repairs.

These grading standards apply to all toy train related paper and box items. They were prepared to act as guidance and to encourage usage of common terminology when describing the category of grading condition for specific items.

Developed by the Standards Committee and adopted in April, 2009, the Standards apply to the visual appearance and originality of the item.

Items are graded as they are presented at the time they are examined.

The grade of an item can be dramatically lowered if the item is subjected to poor handling or adverse storage conditions. High heat and moisture are the worst enemies of paper collectables.

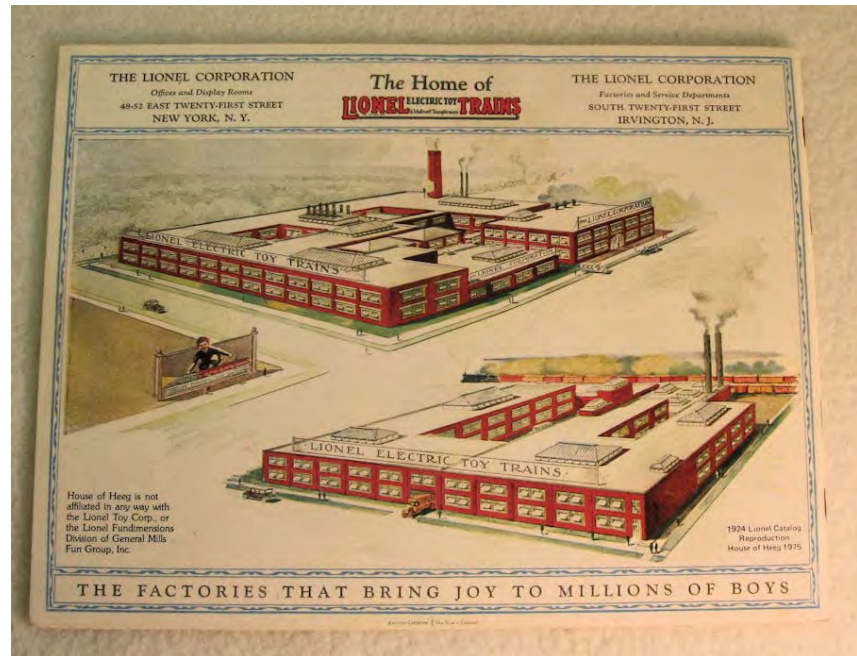
For an item to be graded at a specific level it cannot exhibit any of the flaws noted in lower grades. No flaw is too small to be considered in grading.

These standards do not consider the age of an item when assigning a grade.

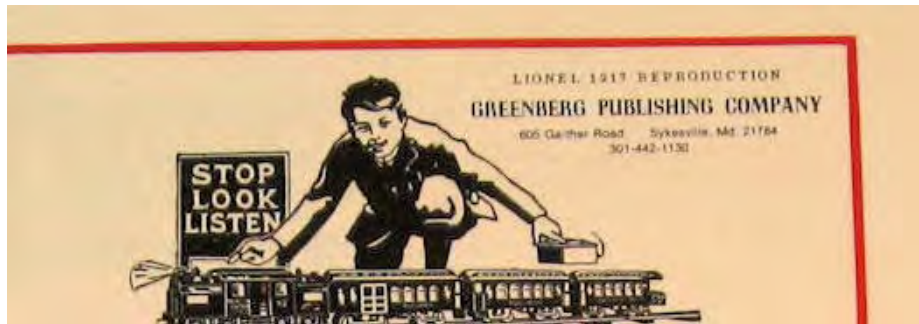
The overall condition of an item needs to be considered with the most severe flaw(s) being the limiting grading factor. However, the grade of an item need not be a single grade. For example, it is acceptable to grade an item as P-6 due to minor wear to corner but otherwise P-8.



This box is considered incomplete due to missing tape limiting grade to P-4. But it is acceptable to rate box as “otherwise P-X”.



Reproduction catalogs must be properly marked.



Many of the paper items that we treasure today were never intended to last more than a brief period. Unfortunately, paper deteriorates over time due to environmental factors such as temperature, moisture levels, lighting. Foxing, small brown spots, forms with high moisture and may be mold or fungus related. High acid content can accelerate discoloration and brittleness.

Careful handling and storage can minimize much of the deterioration. The use of archive quality-acid free polyester sleeves or bags plus archival backer boards are recommended for many paper items. Also storage at temperatures between 65°F and 72°F and relative humidity between 40% and 50% is recommended.



This catalog was misaligned when assembled with the cover not fitted fully to the pages and the spine improperly creased. Items that have printing that is offset, smeared, double images, odd cut pages, and/or etc. are considered errors not affecting grade and shall be noted as such.

This 1955 series of miniature billboards produced for Lionel in cooperation with Standard Outdoor Advertising, Inc. * Use these authentic outdoor posters for scenic effects on your Lionel model railroad in Billboard Set No. 310.

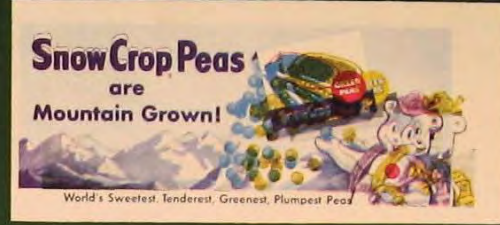
All designs are copyrighted. Reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without advertiser's written consent. Outside trim may be used for back braces.



Standard



Standard



Standard



Standard



Standard

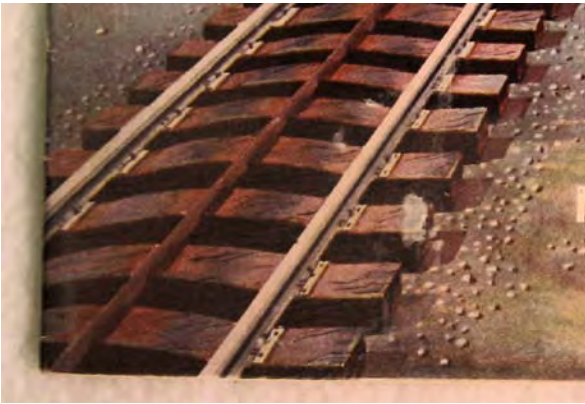


Standard



The offset, double images do not negatively affect the grade.

Is the white area on the tie part of the printing or a flaw?
To grade properly, one must be very familiar with what is being graded.



It's a flaw – Grade P-6 at best!

**P-10 Mint – Brand new,
complete and all original as
manufactured and unused.**

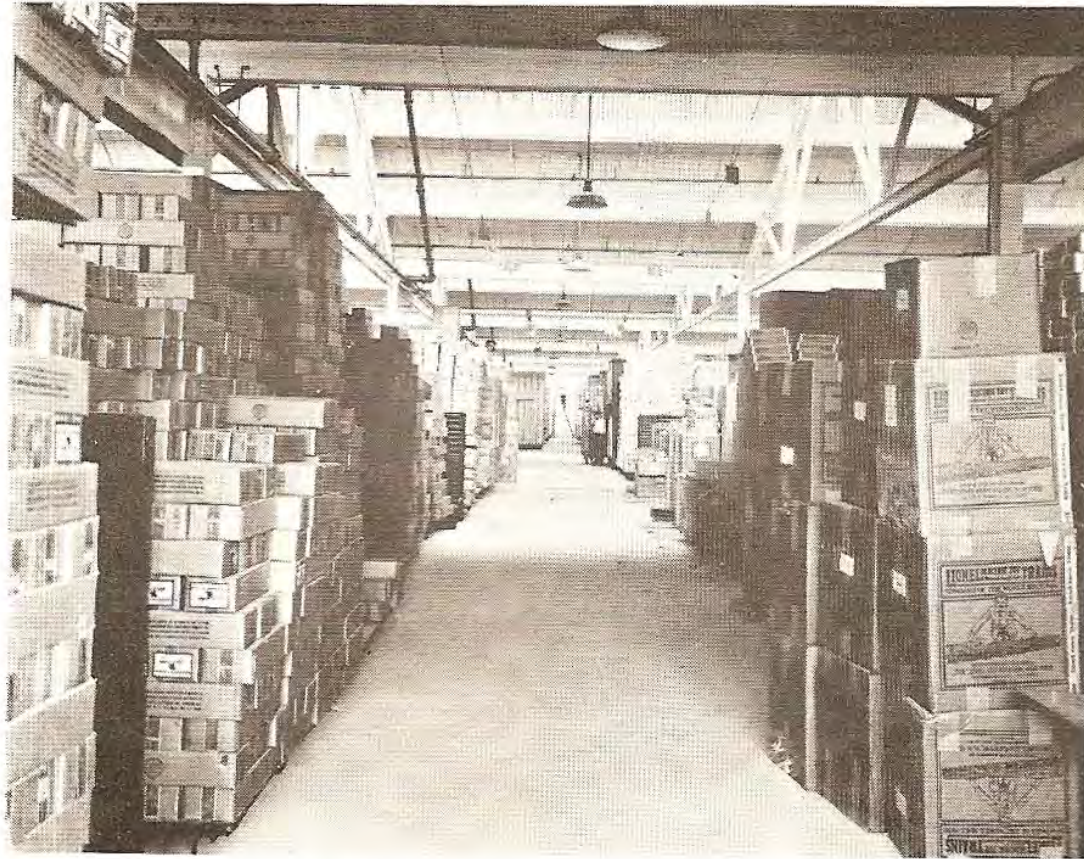
Paper items and boxes meeting this standard are among the rarest and most sought after. The item must be perfect in every manner. This grade could be compared to “proof” coins which are specially made and handled. Most manufacturers of prewar trains did not include such practices in their manufacturing processes.

Individual pages and box flaps never appear to have been opened. All edges are crisp and the item is free of all flaws. Original folds are crisp with no signs of damage. No rusty staples, creases, tears, fading and/or wear marks are present. The item is totally and absolutely “unflawed”.

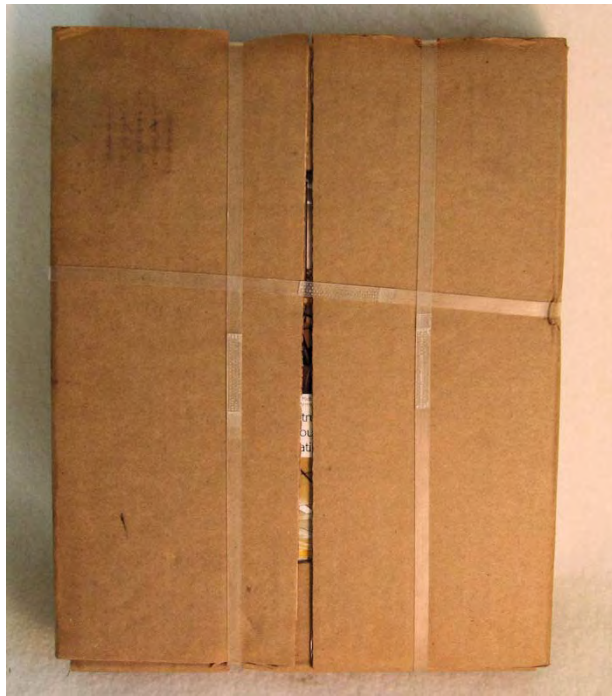
Boxes would be expected to be sealed, never opened with contents undisturbed. All sealing tape, wrap and /or staples are present and undisturbed. But be careful; not all sealed boxes will rate P-10. All other aspects of the boxes condition must be flawless.



The grade of this factory sealed box can easily be determined – P-8 due to evidence of light use and aging. But the condition of the contents can only be estimated.



The stuff that dreams are made of. Lionel warehouse, Hillside NJ. Summer 1931. Should everything shown be graded P-10? Doubtful. Notice crushed box in the lower right corner.



The box on the left is a factory (printer) sealed box of 1976 Lionel catalogs and box on the right shows the opened box with Armstrong tile ad used for protection. P-10? Doubtful.

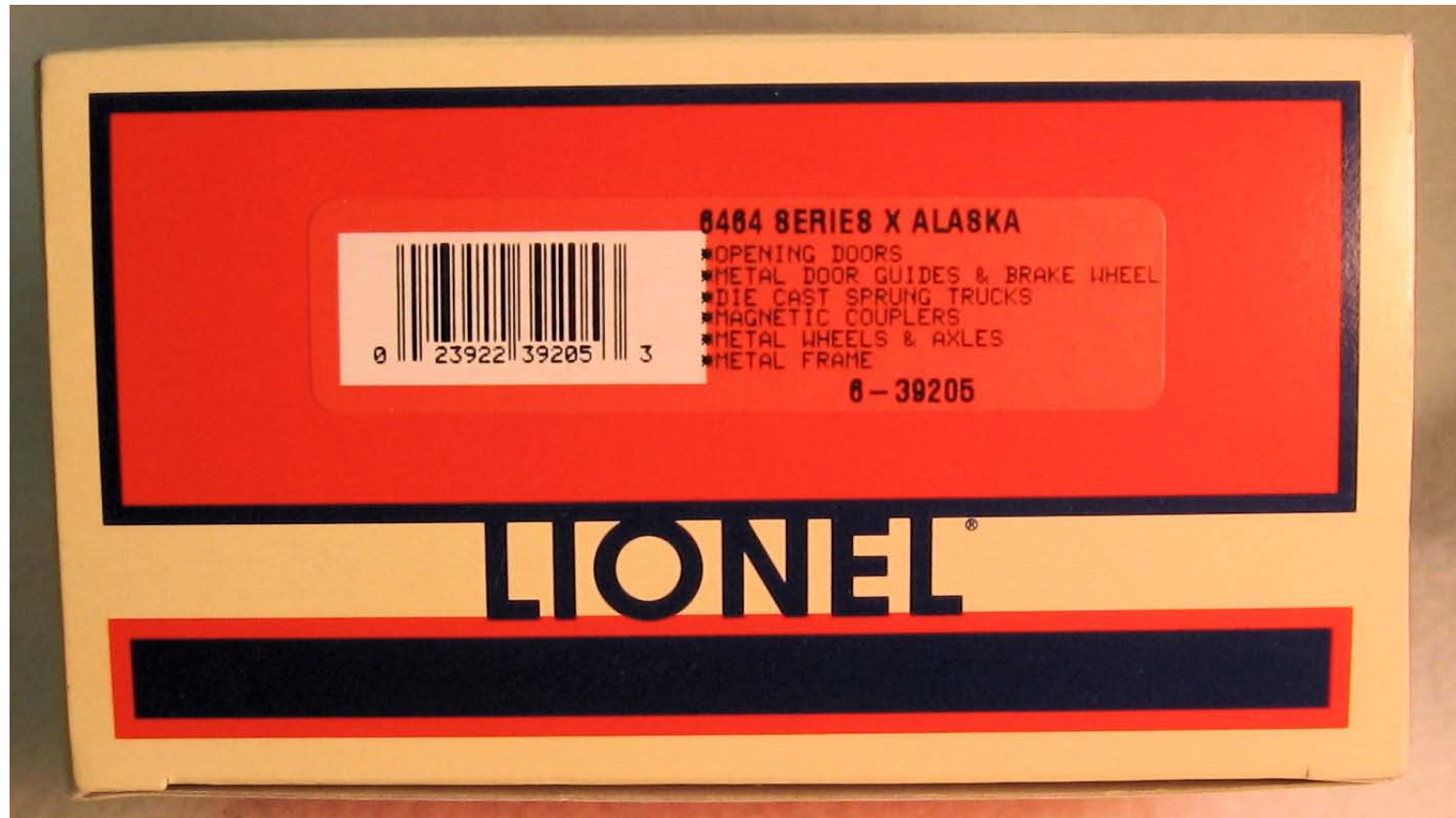


Freshly opened box of 1976 Lionel catalogs showing damage to corners of catalogs. P-7 due to minute edge wear.

P-9 Store New – Complete and all original and unused. Have merchant additions such as store stamps, price tags, et al. Boxes must have inner liner/s, if appropriate.

Grade P-9 is applicable to the vast majority of “new” items. Catalog may have been handled since leaving the original factory and individual pages may have been opened. Original paper folds are crisp with no signs of wear or damage.

Boxes must be crisp and clean in every respect. They may have added dealer stamp, affixed price tags indicating the original price. But any added notes or tags must be from the same time period of the box and not a modern addition.



Boxes must be clean and crisp in every respect. Boxes like the one shown have flaps that can be very difficult to open without damage. Look closely at areas where flaps interlock. P-9

Boxes may have been opened neatly preserving original sealing tape and labels. Tuck flap boxes with no sealing tape may have been opened but show absolutely no signs of wear to flaps or inner liners or wrappings.



The merchant store details are preprinted on the catalog and do not affect grade.



The white price sticker was added after printing and limits the grade to P-9 or below.



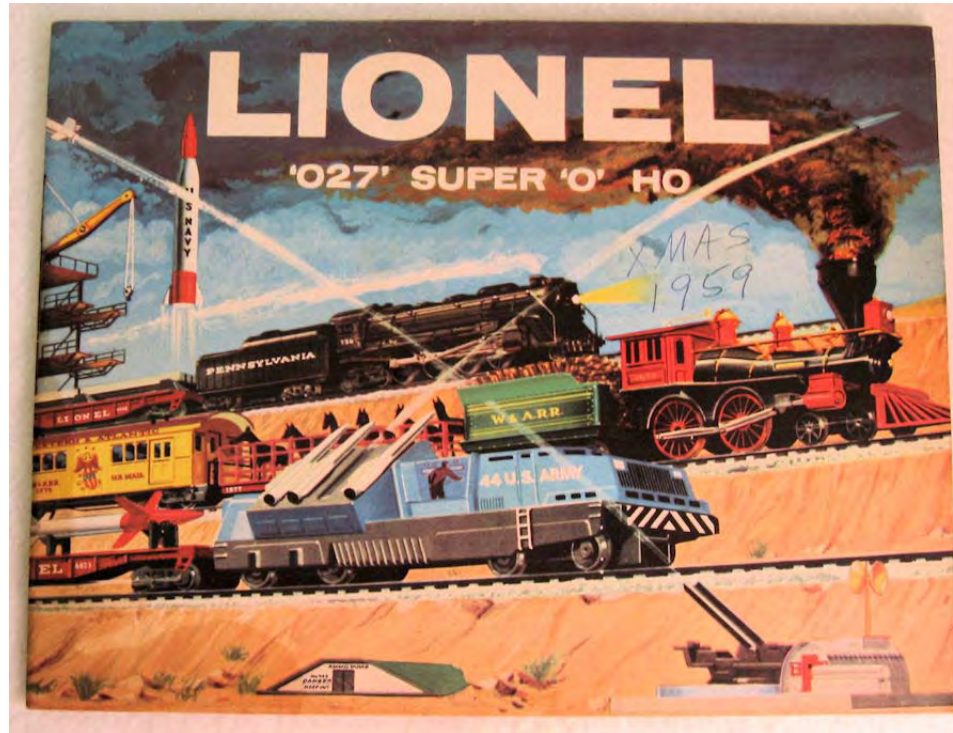
Items with merchant-added store stamps may be graded as P-9 or below.



The catalog on the right has a merchant added store stamp.
Both catalogs could be graded P-9

P-8 Like New - Complete and all original. Evidence of light use and aging, additional notations since leaving publisher or manufacturer. Contents (inner liners) of box may be missing.

Discrete additional notations or markings of the period may be present on catalog covers and inner pages. However, if the markings are not discrete, the grade can be significantly lowered.



The additional notation on the front cover of this high quality catalog limits its grade to P-8 or below.



A dealer affixed price sticker is allowed in grade P-9. But crease to the lower left corner of flap would reduce grade to P-8.

Grading paper items at the highest grades of P-10, P-9 and P-8 requires some caution. Even the gentlest handling of the item may result in “light use” and of course time itself results in appearance changes due to aging. Some collectible paper items like comics are graded then sealed against environmental and human effects. Without this level of protection, the grade of an item will deteriorate.

**P-7 Excellent – Complete
and all original. Handling
indentations, minute edge
wear, small creases.**

Item can show signs of moderate usage and wear but is still 100% intact. Original paper folds can show minute signs of damage including some evidence of bending, folding and unfolding. All pages must be present. Items may have rusty staples which have not affected the paper itself.

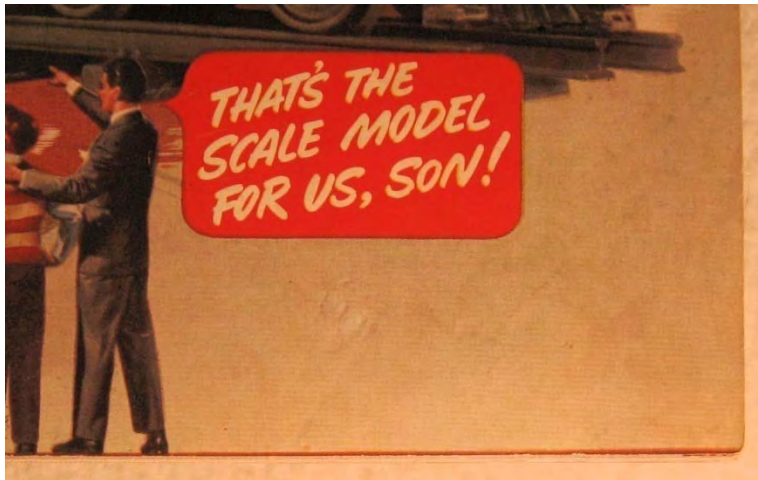
Boxes show moderate signs of being opened and closed. But all flaps must be intact.



This car has never been out of the box and never unwrapped and may be graded C-9 or C-10. But the box shows minute edge wear grading it as P-7. The wrapping papers shows tears and can be graded separately as P-5.



This high quality catalog shows many small flaws limiting grade to P-7



Handling indentations and minute edge wear grades to P-7



Date reference added – Additional notations since leaving publisher or manufacturer. P-8



Minute edge wear and small creases along spine. P-7



This box shows minute edge and corner wear likely from rough handling while opening. Grade P-7



This catalog shows minute edge wear as abrasions of the spine below the upper staple. Grade P-7.



THE LIONEL MAGAZINE

THE MODEL RAILROAD MAGAZINE FOR EVERY BOY



MARCH-APRIL

Is the fold down the middle of this Lionel magazine “original”?



Lionel magazines mailed to subscribers were folded in half and mailed in a sleeve.

P-6 Very Good – Complete and all original. Minor abrasions, creases and/or folds. Small tears, slight color changes, minor soiling. Box may have inner liner/s missing.

Items show obvious signs of usage but not abuse. Must be 100% intact.

Edges of paper items may show moderate wear and damage. Original paper folds are worn and damaged. All printing is legible, however, the item may have some wear marks such as weathering, slight fading, non-original or non-period pencil or ink marks and/or soiling from rust, grease, oil, finger smudges, etc. Paper items may have additional, non-original folds or dog-eared pages. Pages may have tears and tears may have been properly repaired with archival tissue.

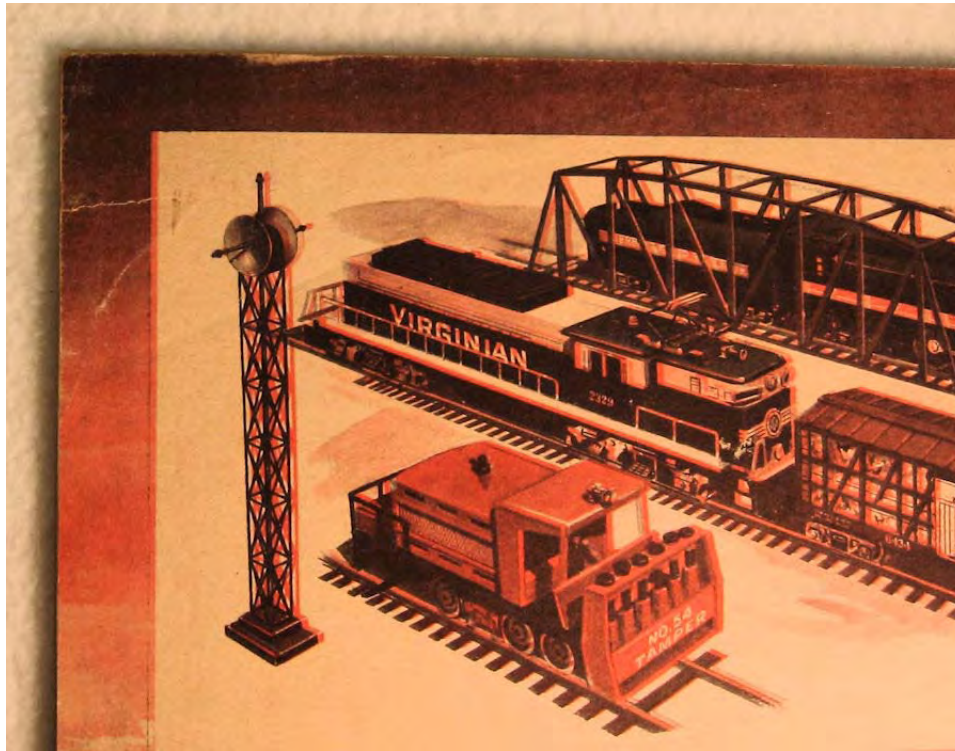
Boxes must have all inner liners and all flaps are present and intact. But the inner flaps may be weak and need strengthening with archival tissues. But the box is still strong enough to safely store the original contents.



Tough Question- P-10 or P-6? Is the fold down the center of this catalog original?



Sometimes it can be very difficult to determine which folds are original. Multiple examples with identical folds gives support to their originality.



Tears and abrasions to the edges of the upper corner of the back cover of this catalog limit its grade to no more than P-6.

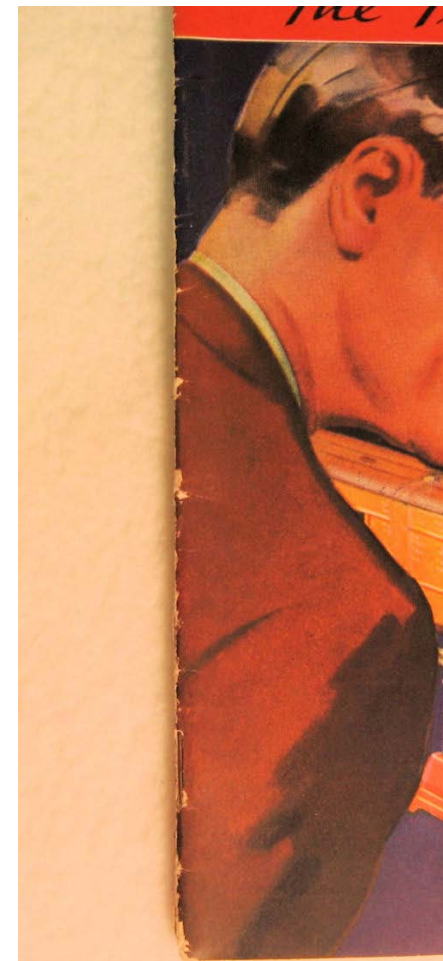
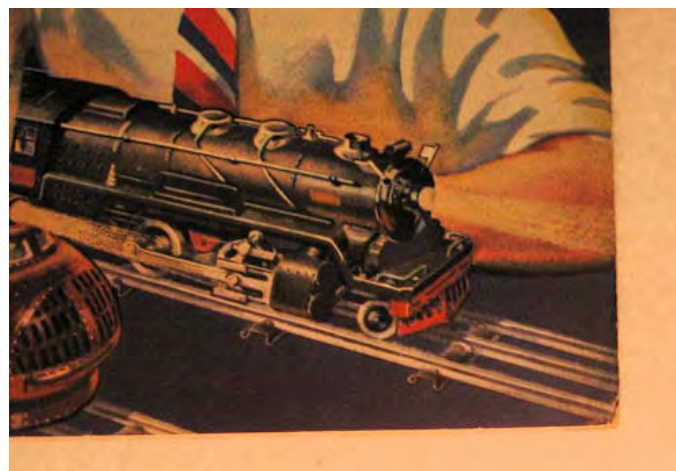
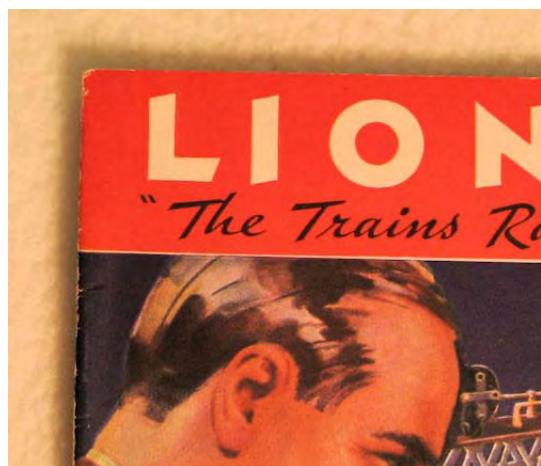
LIONEL TRAINS

"The Trains Railroad Men Buy for their Boys"



This catalog shows minor wear graded at P-6.

Abrasions are areas of wear to the paper surface that show loss of print but the paper itself is generally intact.

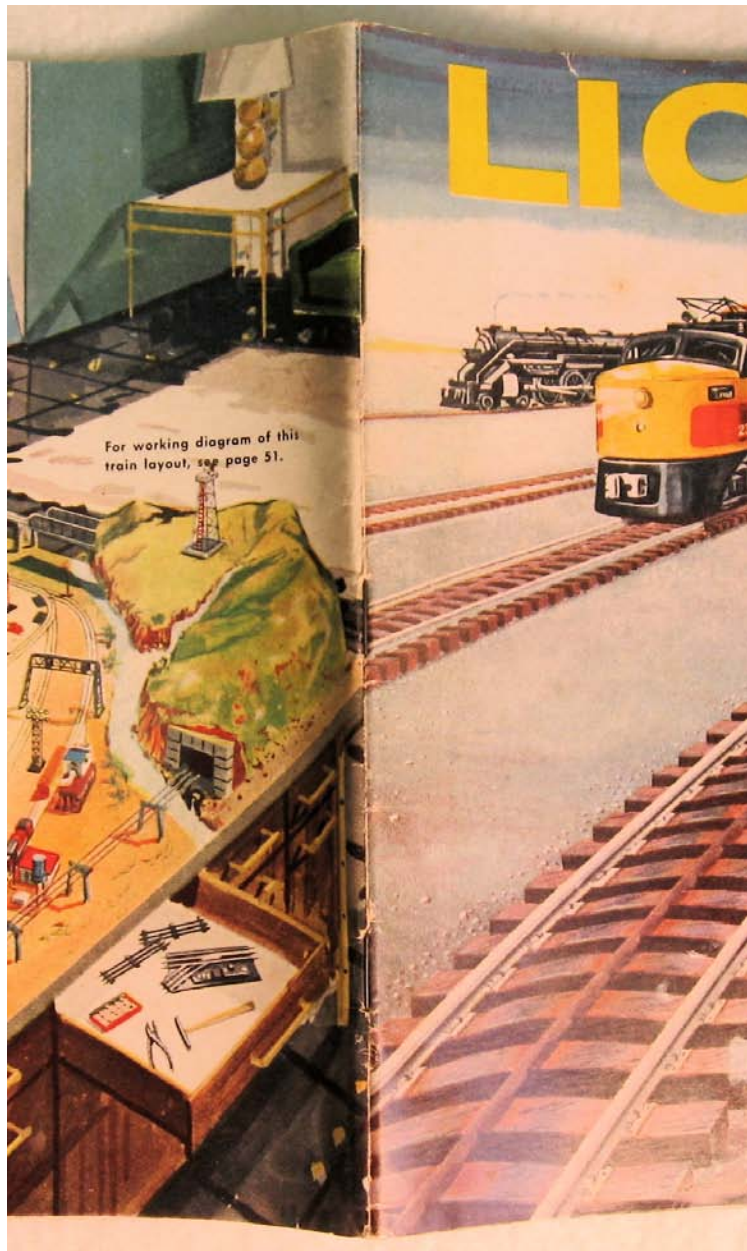


Minor abrasions to corners and along the spine grades this catalog P-6.

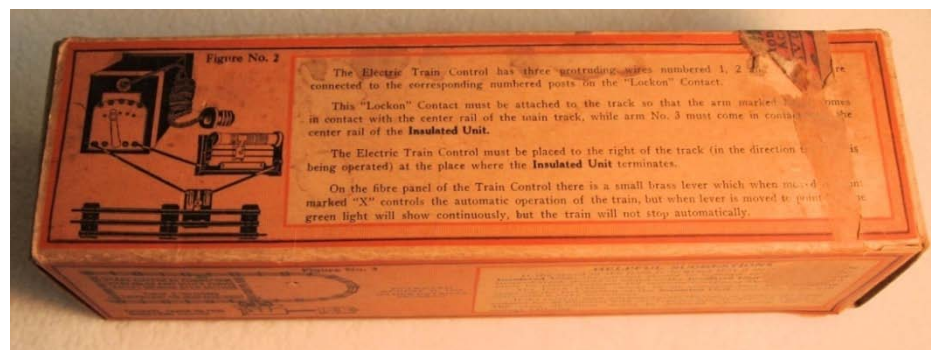
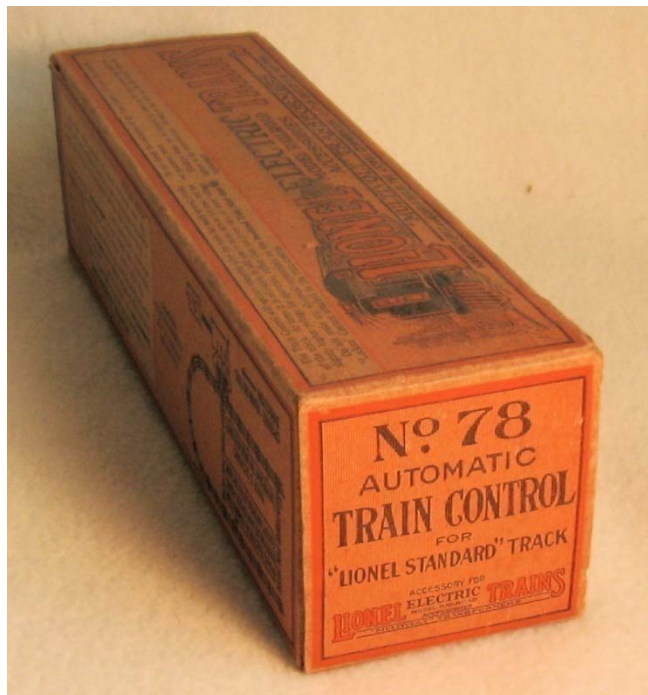


This box shows minor abrasions, slight color changes, minor soiling. P-6





Minor abrasions to the spine.
Wear is not along the entire
spine. Grade P-6



This box is very solid, all flaps intact, showing some minor abrasions and soiling. But tape loss makes box incomplete limiting grade to P-4 "otherwise P-6".

P-5 Good – Items show substantial wear. Moderate abrasions, creases and/or folds, moderate tears and losses. Moderate color changes; staples may be rusty or replaced. May have been repaired with archival tissue and adhesive.

Paper items show substantial damage to edges, corners and original folds.

All existing printed material is legible, however, item is heavily worn with severe wear marks extending well onto the original printed material. There may be extensive areas of color change or fading.

All exterior box flaps are present, however, their connection to the box may be weak or heavily worn requiring some level of repair. Inner liners and flaps may be missing or inner flaps may be properly reattached.

Repairs to catalogs and boxes are becoming more common as values and repair skills increase. TCA rules regarding the identification and marking of such altered items applies to paper items and boxes.



Archival tissues are Japanese tissue papers used for paper conservation. Archival adhesives include starch pastes, methyl cellulose pastes and archival heat set tissues such as Crompton coated tissues. Pressure sensitive “archival” tapes have been shown to be problematic (causing staining, yellowing and other adverse reactions).

Proper archival repairs are made to stabilize the specimen and to reduce the potential for further damage due to storage and handling. All repairs are to be reversible without adversely affecting the specimen.



The notations on the side of this box are modern additions and lower grade to no P-5 or below.

Moderate tear in very prominent location limits grade to P-5



Moderate abrasions along spine with creases, moderate tears and losses. P-5



BASIC HO TRACK PLANS



TRACK LAYOUT: 43" x 43" for installation on 4' x 6" board.

TRACK REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- 13—No. 0929 Curved Track
- 1—No. 0973 Curved Terminal Track
- 1—No. 0923 Left Hand Switch
- 8—No. 0909 Straight Track
- 1—No. 0919 Uncoupler-Re-Roller Track
- 1—No. 0960 Bumper Track



TRACK LAYOUT: 37" x 55" for installation on 4' x 8" board.

TRACK REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- 18—No. 0989 Curved Track
- 6—No. 0909 Straight Track
- 1—No. 0919 Uncoupler-Re-Roller Track
- 1—No. 0925 Straight Terminal Track
- 1—No. 0990 90° Crossing
- 1—No. 0110 Trestle Set



TRACK LAYOUT: 53" x 45" for installation on 4' x 6" board.

TRACK REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- 13—No. 0989 Curved Track
- 1—No. 0973 Curved Terminal Track
- 1—No. 0923 Right Hand Switch
- 1—No. 0919 Uncoupler-Re-Roller Track
- 1—No. 0923 Left Hand Switch
- 11—No. 0909 Straight Track
- 3—No. 0960 Bumper Track



TRACK LAYOUT: 60" x 74" for installation on 5 1/2' x 6 1/2" board.

TRACK REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- 25—No. 0989 Curved Track
- 9—No. 0909 Straight Track
- 1—No. 0919 Uncoupler-Re-Roller Track
- 1—No. 0925 Straight Terminal Track
- 1—No. 0990 90° Crossing
- 1—No. 0145 200' Contactor Track

TWO TRAIN OPERATION



TRACK LAYOUT: 94" x 46" for installation on 4' x 8" board.

TRACK REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- 20—No. 0909 Straight Track
- 20—No. 0989 Curved Track
- 2—No. 0919 Uncoupler-Re-Roller Track
- 3—No. 0925 Straight Terminal Track
- 1—No. 0923 1 1/2" Straight Track
- 2—No. 0923 Left Hand Switches
- 3—No. 0925 Straight Terminal Track
- 3—No. 0960 Bumper Track
- 2—No. 0973 Curved Terminal Track

The accessories shown in the track layouts can also be seen on page 11

Stains, rub marks and overall discolorations grade this catalog as P-5.

This catalog shows substantial wear to the spine including moderate abrasions (paper loss), creases, and tears. This limits the grade to P-5.



TRANSFORMERS



TYPE RW 110 WATT, 115
VOLTS, A. C., 60 CYCLES

The RW transformer will operate any "O" train, plus a number of accessories. It has two variable voltage ranges which are controlled by the speed throttle. Buttons on the face of the case control whistle and train direction. Built-in circuit breaker and red warning light to guard against "shorts." It has four fixed voltage combinations for accessories. Listed as "Standard" by Underwriters Laboratories.

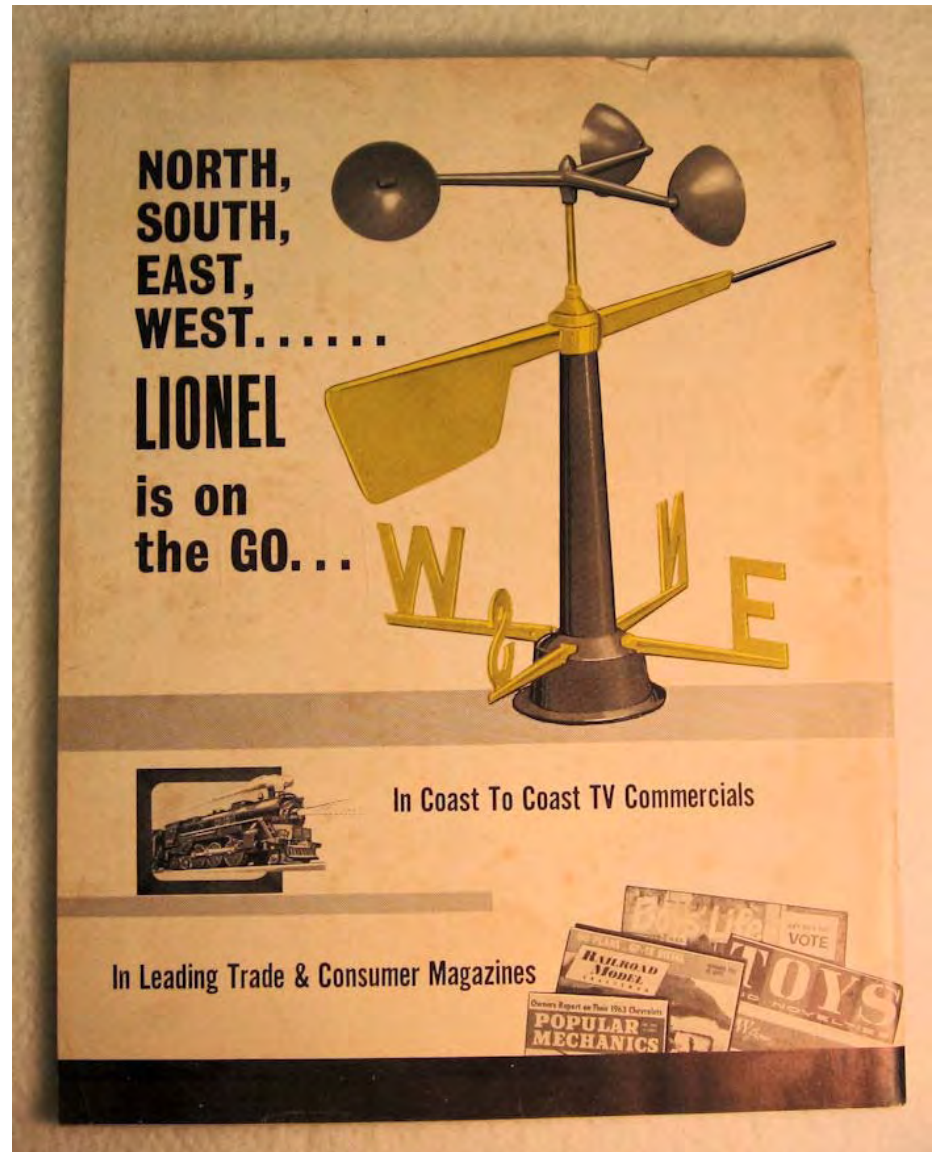
\$15⁵⁰

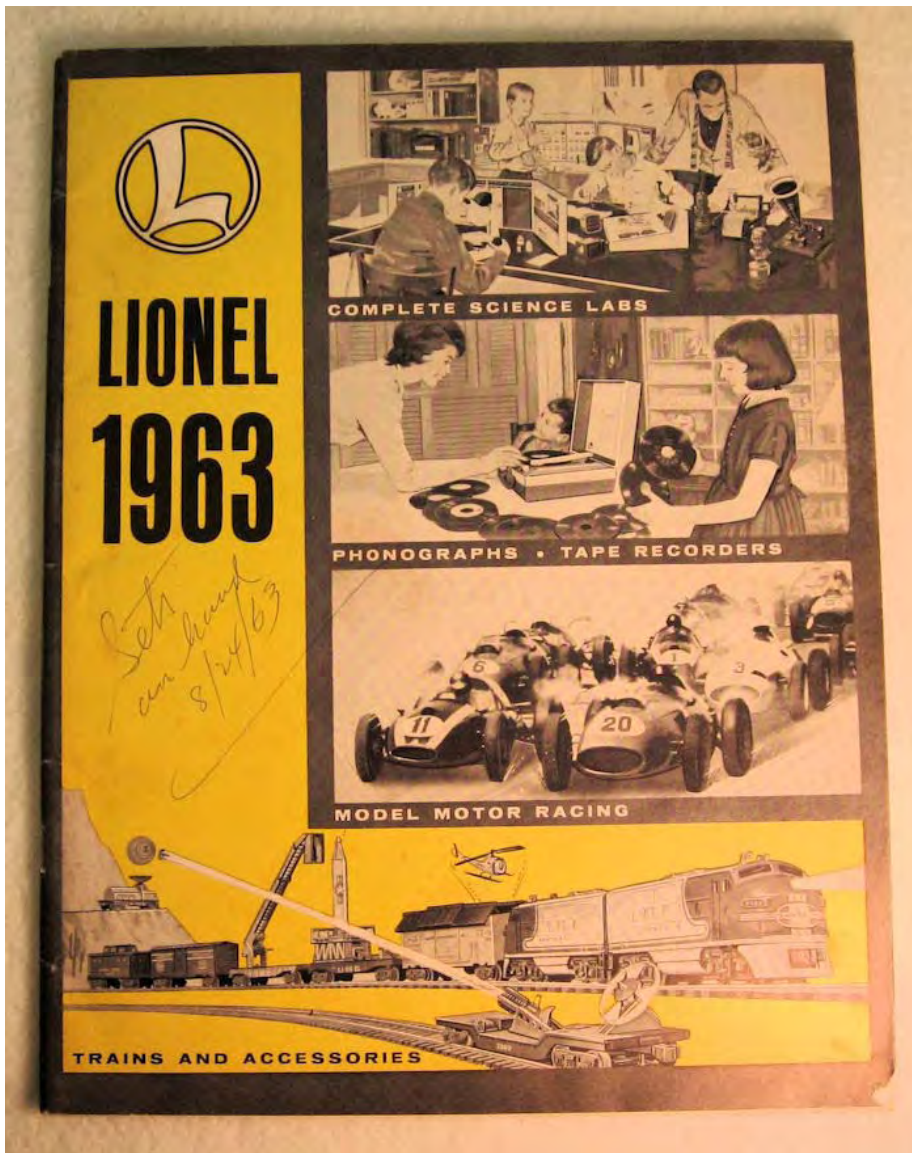
IONEL Trains!—



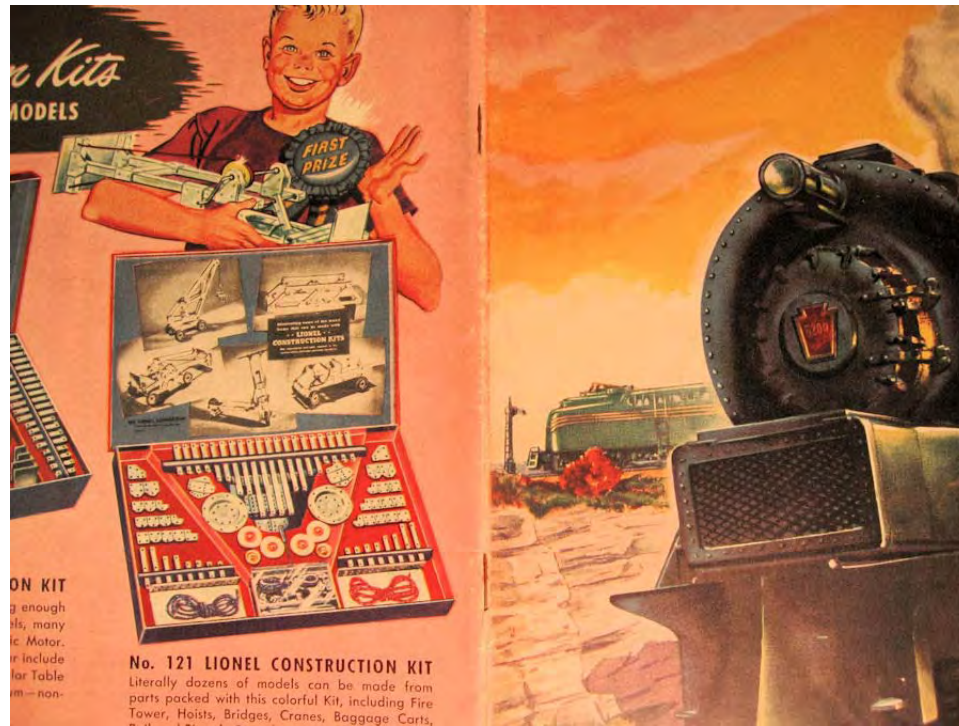
Moderate abrasions and creases to the spine plus along the bottom edge limits the grade to P-5

Overall color changes, stains, creases, folds and tears grade this catalog as P-5.





This catalog shows only minor wear but extensive notations added to cover and inner pages limit its grade to P-5.



ON KIT
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No. 121 LIONEL CONSTRUCTION KIT
Literally dozens of models can be made from parts packed with this colorful Kit, including Fire Tower, Hoists, Bridges, Cranes, Baggage Carts.



Rusty staples can stain pages, reducing grade. This catalog shows slight staining to inner pages but not to the covers. Rusty staples grades this catalog to P-5 or below.

Rusty staples staining inner pages reducing grade to P-5 or lower

TOP SELLERS

each **57⁵⁰**



TEL
NE
CTION

Diesel has two powerful worm drive motors



Diesel Masterpieces

Freight Cars, only **57⁵⁰**
each

the entire model train field.

consists of:

- No. 6457 Illuminated Caboose
- UCS Remote Control Track Set
- 8 Sections Curved Track
- 7 Sections Straight Track
- Locks, Lubricant, Track Clips, and Instruction Booklet

It's Electro

All Elec
in this



ECU-1 ELECTRONIC CONTROL UNIT included with this set. The brightly colored electronic transmitter buttons correspond with similar color tabs on loco, tender, and cars.

Moderate spine wear showing white areas of ink loss. P-5





This catalog shows numerous flaws typical of grade P-5.

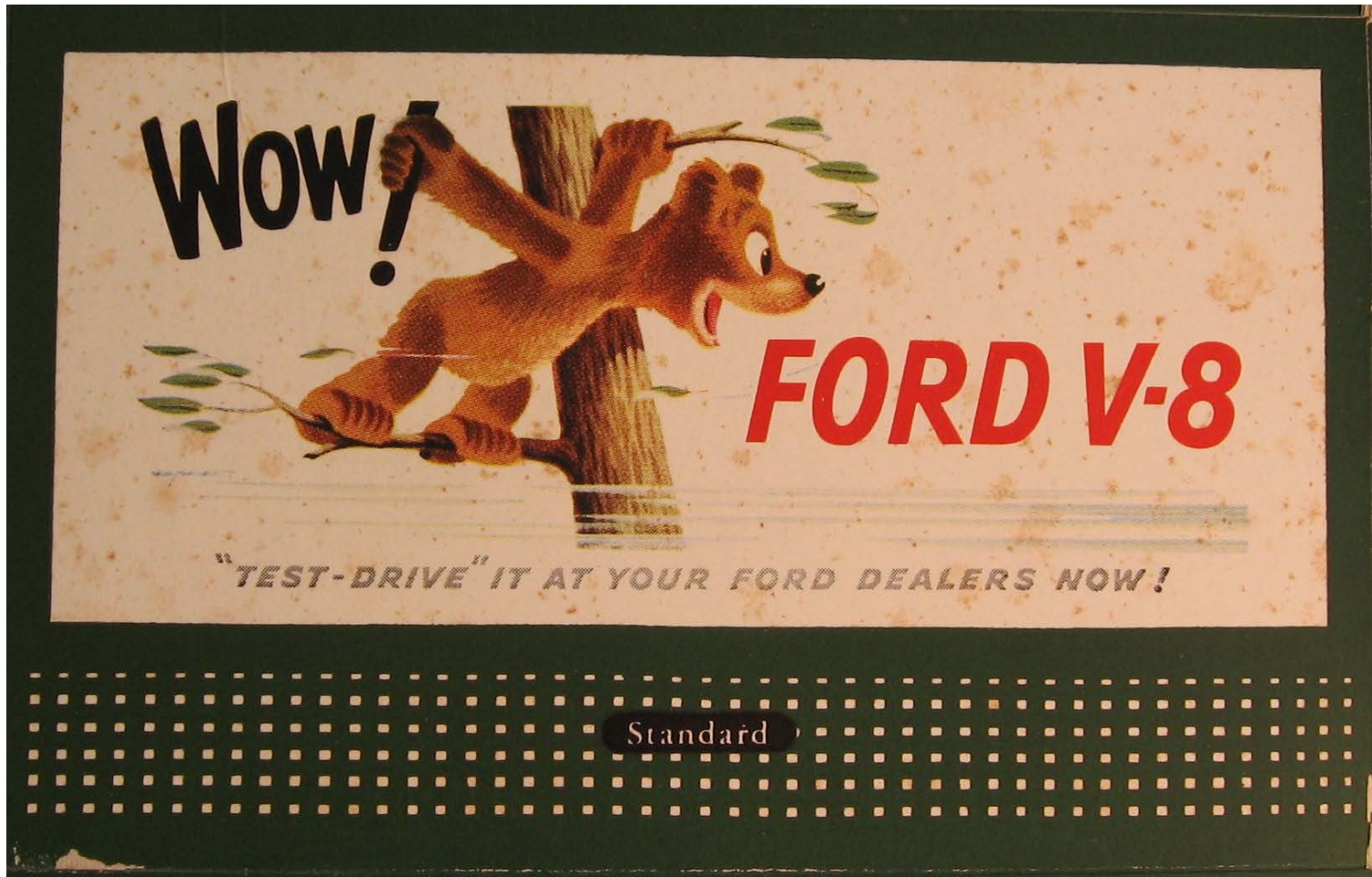


Moderate tears, losses, abrasions, creases, folds. Overall substantial wear. P-5



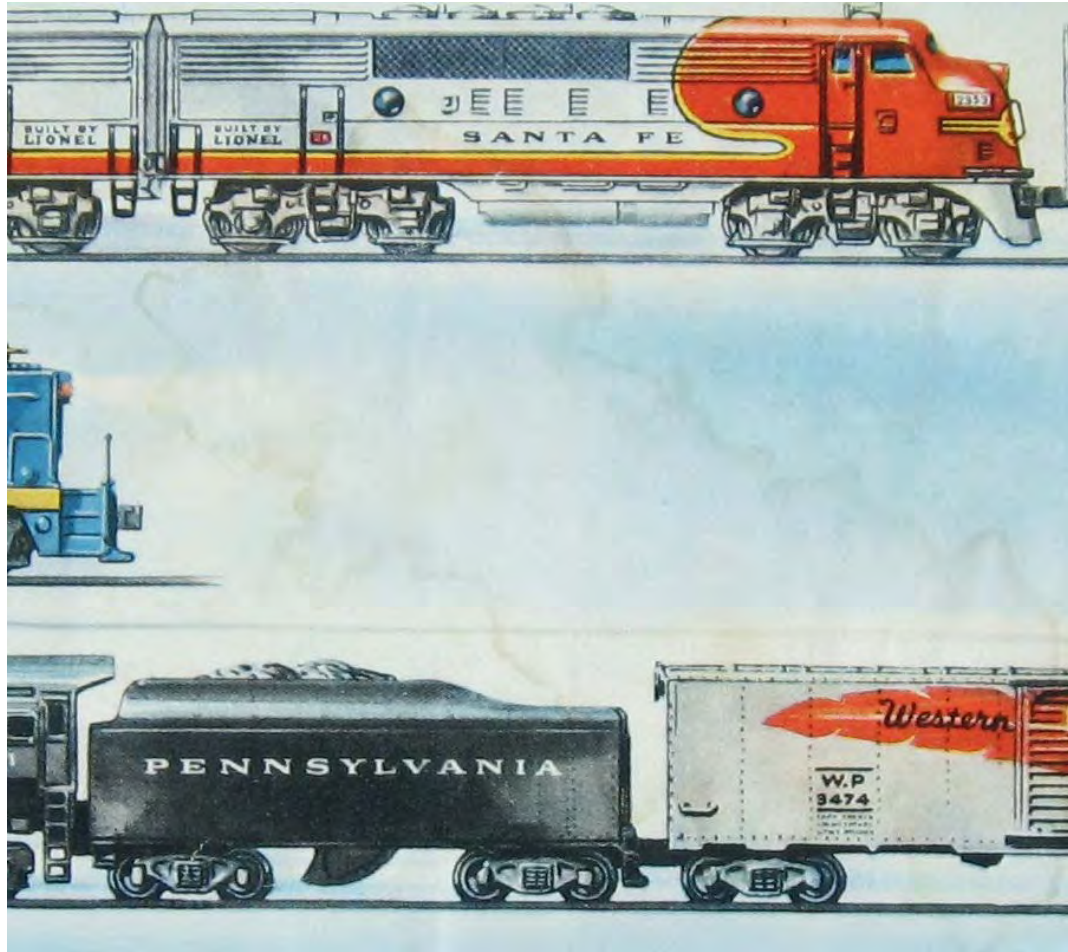


This box shows damage as color change due to water stains limiting its grade to P-5.



The brown spots on the white background areas is foxing and is considered as a moderate color change graded P-5.

Large water stain on front cover of this catalog reduces grade to P-5 or lower.





This box shows moderate color changes due to soiling. P-5





This car might grade to C-9 or C-10 but due to poor handling during storage, the box grade is only P-5.



Moderate abrasions, creases and folds,
and tears. P-5



Miniature Billboards produced for Lionel Corporation—In cooperation with Standard Outdoor Advertising, Inc.

Outside trim on this card may be used for back braces, or these designs may be placed in the permanent plastic miniature poster panels shown in the 1950 Lionel catalog.

Wow!
FORD V-8
"TEST-DRIVE" IT AT YOUR FORD DEALERS NOW!

Standard

Enjoy Chewing Wrigley's
SPEARMINT GUM

Standard

AMERICA'S **BIG THREE!** GRAND CANYON
NIAGARA FALLS
SILVER SPRINGS
"FLORIDA'S UNDERWATER FAIRYLAND"

Standard

GREAT CARS SINCE 1902
NEW *Nash* Rambler

Standard

Use these attractive outdoor posters for scenic a

The separation of a billboard from the set is considered a tear and graded no higher than P-5.

P-4 Fair – Heavy damage but generally legible. May or may not have been repaired. Paper may be brittle. Boxes may have inner flaps missing.

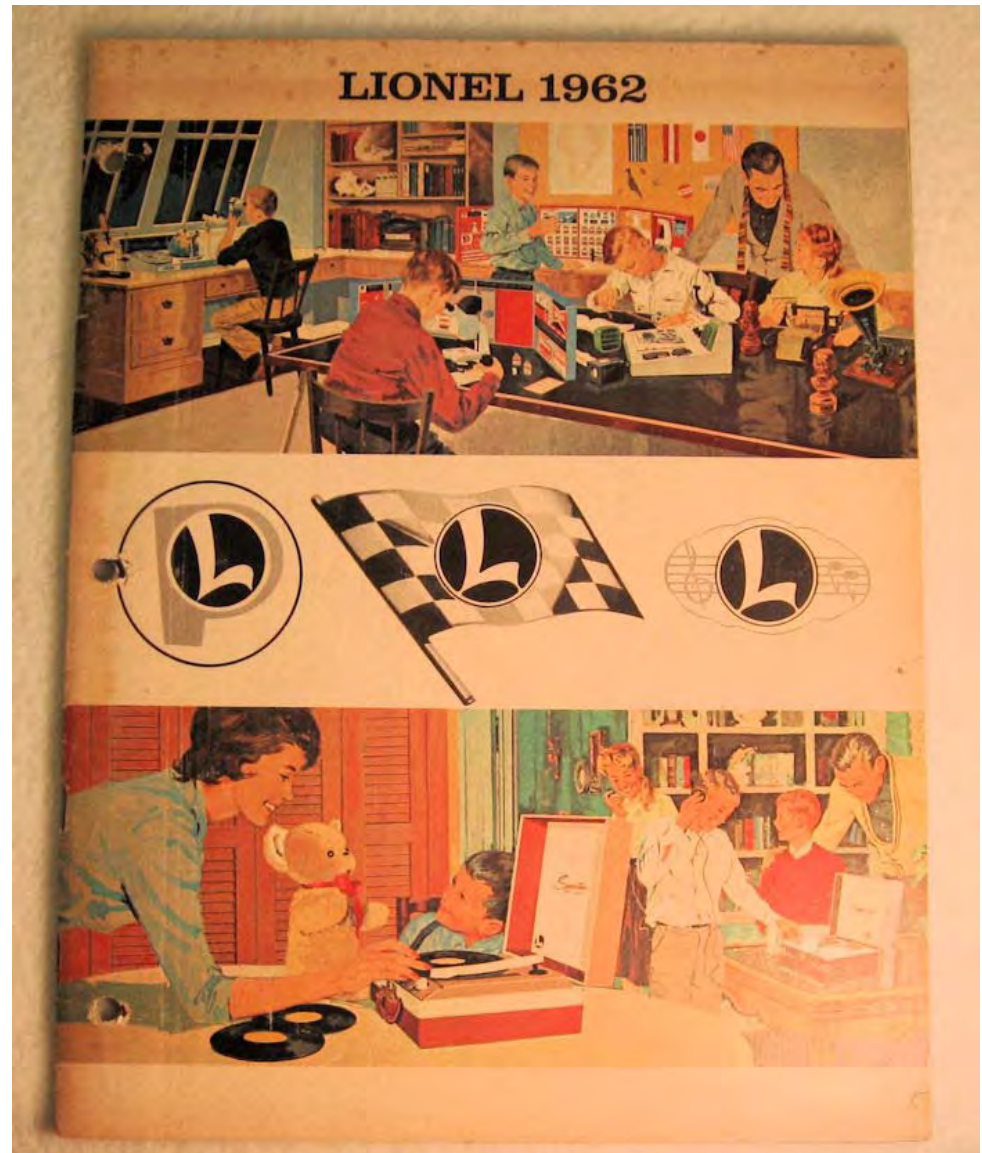
This grade would show obvious signs of wear, dirt, grime, use and abuse.

The paper items can be dirty, well worn and show loss in prominent areas but they are complete including all pages or components.

Items may show damage from water.

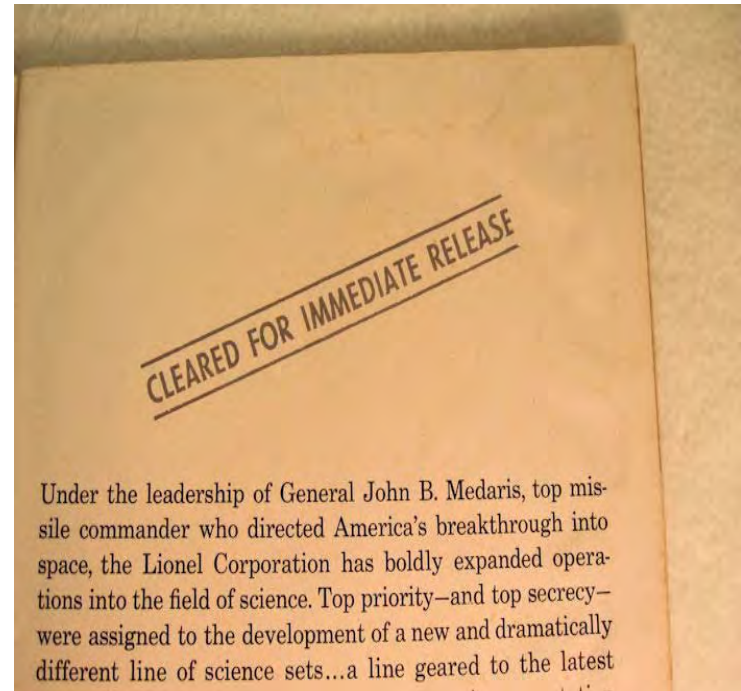
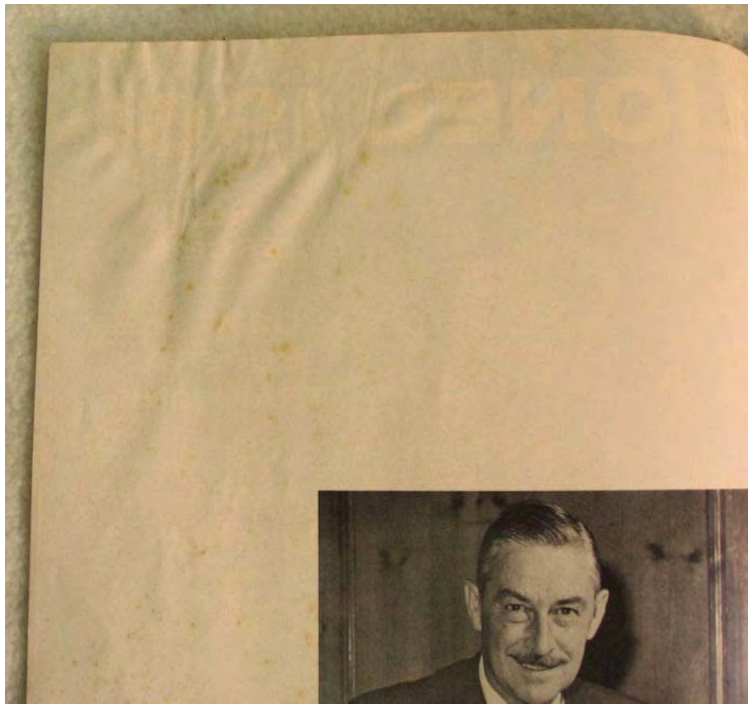
Boxes may have exterior flaps missing.

The combination of significant stains and foxing plus the added holes punched along the spine limit this catalog to P-4.





Old pressure sensitive tape repair of this catalog which has dried and yellowed limits grade to P-4.



The pages of this catalog show damage from moisture. Notice the crinkled appearance of the paper, the foxing (brown spots) and the wavy stain lines. While generally legible, this heavy damage limits grade to P-4.

Directions for Assembling No. 1 Lionel "Bild-A-Motor"

Lionel "Bild-A-Motor" is constructed of parts of great precision. All parts are assembled and tested before shipment. In using them, no special tools are needed that we think are practical other than a small screwdriver. Before using any of the parts, it is necessary to see that they are not greasy or oily. If they are, it means that they are not properly assembled. The following simple instructions will enable the user to assemble them within a few minutes. Always hold the parts in the position shown in the illustrations. Special attention is drawn to the fact that these instructions should be followed.

Fig. 1
Hold this Piece No. 61 in position as shown in illustration.

Fig. 2
Take Field No. 50, place it in position on Side Piece No. 61, so that the studs on the bottom of the field fit into the holes in Side Piece No. 61.

Fig. 3
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 4
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

Fig. 5
Illustration shows Side Piece No. 61.

Fig. 6
To assemble Field No. 50 to Side Piece No. 61, push the field into the side piece. The field will fit into the side piece. The two studs on the bottom of the field will fit into the holes in Side Piece No. 61.

Fig. 7
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

Fig. 8
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 9
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 10
Insert commutator between the two studs of Side Piece No. 61, as described in Fig. 9.

Fig. 11
Insert commutator between the two studs of Side Piece No. 61, as described in Fig. 9.

Fig. 12
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 13
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

Fig. 14
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 15
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 16
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

Fig. 17
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

Fig. 18
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 19
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

Fig. 20
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

Fig. 21
Push Pin No. 51 and Side Piece No. 61 into position on the motor base.

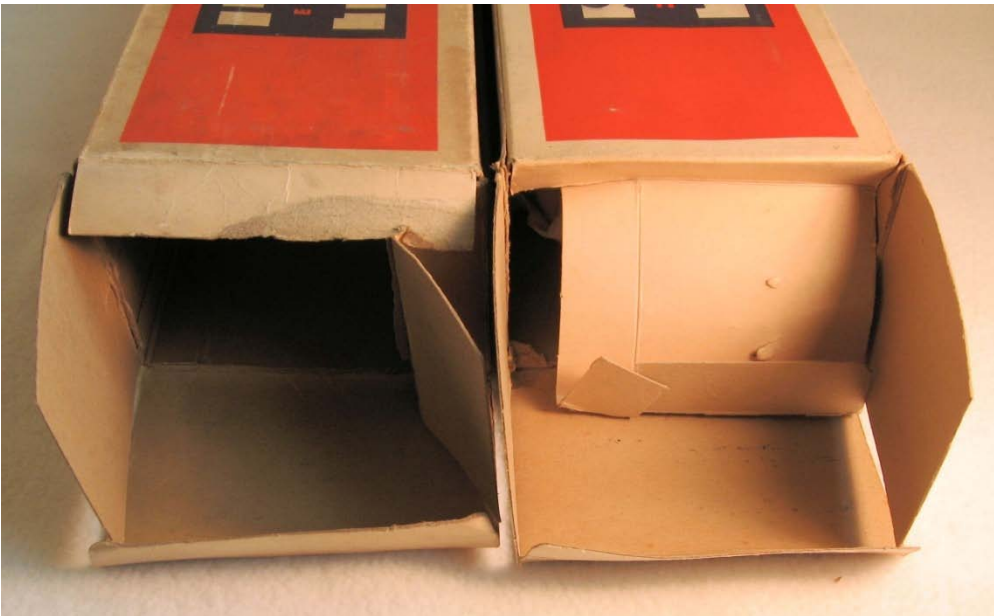
Fig. 22
Illustration shows how to install Pin No. 51.

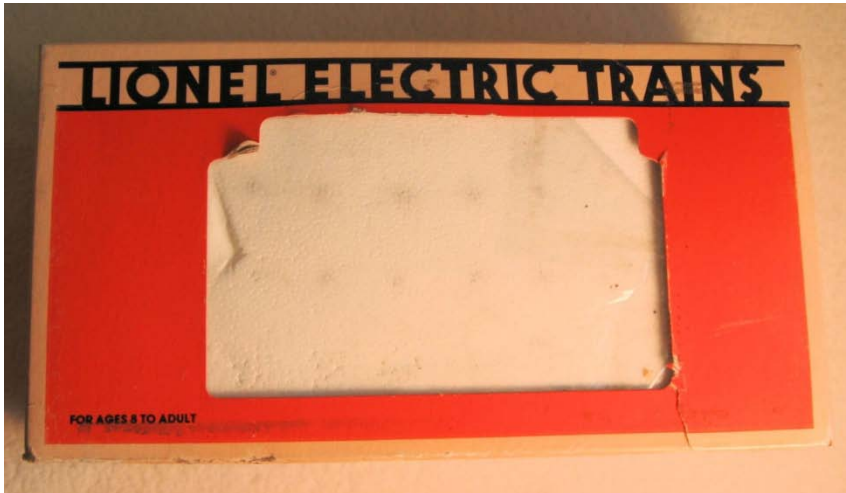
See other side for directions for assembling Lionel "BILD-A-LOCO"

Instruction sheets often show extensive grease and oil damage lowering grades to P-4.



Exterior flaps must be present but inner flaps may be missing. P-4





Heavily damaged when opened, torn and damaged celluloid. P-4



Box crushed due to poor storage. P-4



This catalog shows heavy damage. Notice the tear-out at the upper staple and heavy abrasions of the paper along the spine. Grade P-4

**P-3 Poor – Incomplete, may be
very brittle, significant
deterioration. Extensive
amateur repairs.**

Items meeting this grade are of low collector quality and interest.



This box shows significant deterioration. It has extensive amateur tape repairs. Grade P-3

THE PENNSYLVANIA

"TORPEDO"



No. 238E Scale Model "O" Gauge Distant Control Locomotive and Tender Equipped with Real Railroad Whistle

This year's greatest development and furthest advancement in streamlining. The Torpedo train of the future, made for railroading's latest transportation on the famous Pennsylvania—and scale-modeled exclusively by Lionel for the most modern miniature systems.

Wide-skirted and monumental pilot followed by a streamlined torpedo-shaped boiler front. Equipped with the Lionel railroad whistle and complete remote control. Built-in headlight focused through the boiler front and focused on the track ahead. Depressed smoke stack, snout and coal chutes. Worn-out window, pipes, hand rails and other details are chrome-plated with an eye-catching banana finish.

Four solid pilot wheels, spoked drivers and trailing wheels. In addition to the driving and connecting rods there is an excessive rod adding to the fascination of the locomotive in action.

Engine and streamlined tender are finished in a deep bronze black sparkle. The tender has four-wheel trucks and closed roof. Locomotive and tender measure 19 inches in length. For use with No. 40 Standard passenger and freight cars. Price \$22.50

STANDARD GAUGE ELECTRIC TYPE LOCOMOTIVES

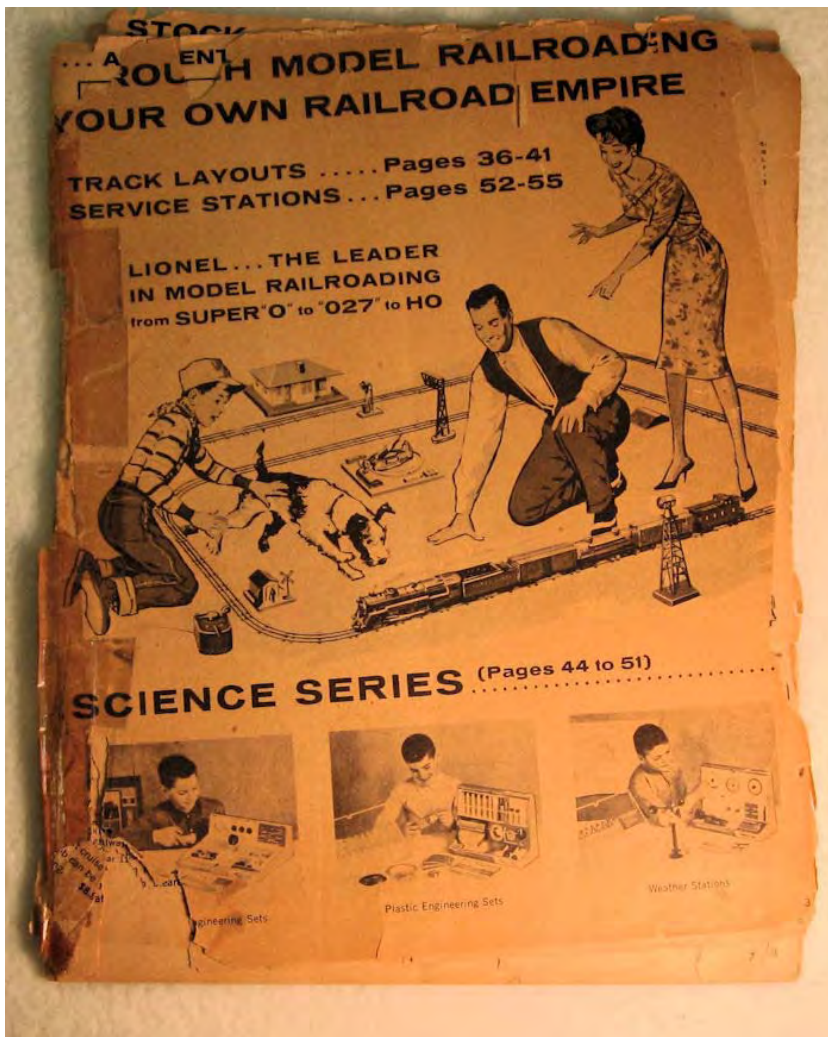


No. 40E Distant Control Locomotive—With two motors. No. 4E Controller included. 17 inches long, 6 1/2 inches high. For use with cars Nos. 412, 413, 414, 416 and 200 series freight cars. Price \$32.50

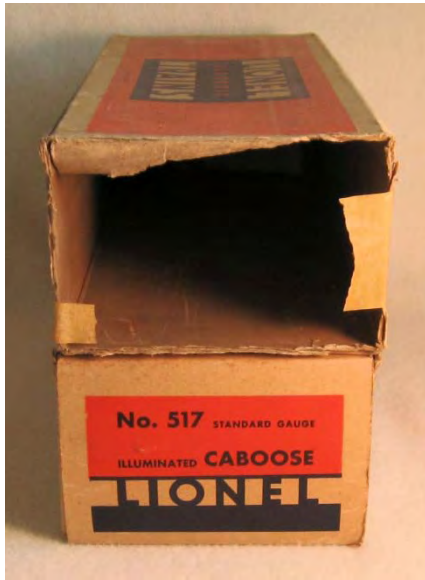
No. 4E Distant Control Locomotive—Gun-metal finish. No. 4E Controller included. 14 1/2 inches long, 6 1/2 inches high. For use with cars Nos. 309, 310, 312, 324, 325, 326 and the 500 series. Price \$18.50

No. 24E Distant Control Locomotive—The Olympian. No. 4E Controller included. 18 inches long, 6 1/2 inches high. For use with cars Nos. 412, 413, 414, 416 and the 200 series. Price \$22.50

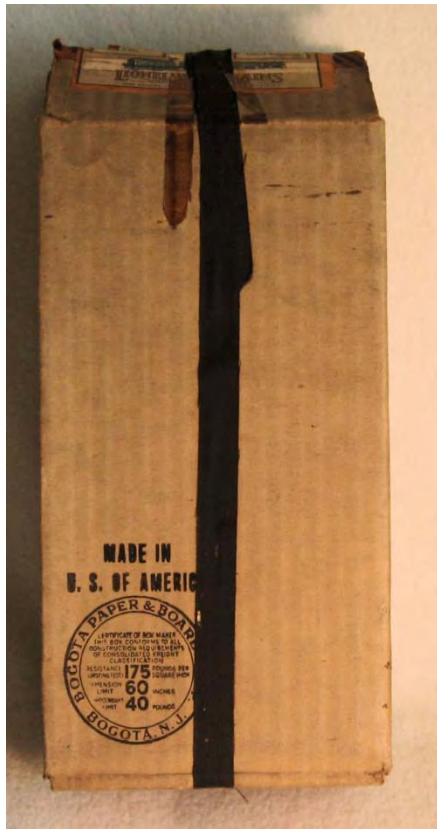
This catalog is missing numerous pages and the covers. Incomplete items are graded P-3.



Pulp paper catalogs often show extensive damage from brittle paper and poor conservation attempts. P-3



Missing outer flaps significantly lowers collector interest and grade. Box is incomplete- Grade P-3



Extensive tape repair using black electrical tape leaves nasty residue. P-3

General Comments and Guidance

Use of the grading standards is subjective at best. It is important and logical that wishful thinking not be allowed to influence the choice of grade. It is the nature of the market for a seller to see an item in a very positive light and to assign the most favorable description while a buyer may see the item in a less favorable light.

When evaluating the significance of any flaw on an item, not only the size of these flaws must be considered but also the location on the item and their size in relation to the item's size.

The proper determination of an item's originality and authenticity is critical to these standards. It can be a very difficult determination to make and requires an experienced and knowledgeable individual. Close examination of the item comparing colors, textures, patina, and other details is necessary. If an item has been repaired its grade cannot be higher than P-5.

Knowledgeable Standards Committee members are available at every TCA-sponsored train meet to assist members on questions of originality, authenticity, and condition by offering relevant opinions.

When considering a non-person-to-person transaction such as through the TCA Interchange or the internet, a written narrative that details the condition of an item and its flaws should be provided. Statements claiming that “Photos describe condition” should be taken with extreme caution.

When a Standards Committee member is asked for an opinion on an item, he/she may need to handle the item in order to properly examine it. It is of utmost importance that the committee member handles the item with extreme care and respect. Remember that your actions represent the TCA. Neither the Association nor an individual committee member can risk liability associated with accidental damage.

Proceed with the same care for a P-3 item as for a P-10 item. If possible, sit down at a table that is covered with a clean, soft towel or blanket. If you need to pick up the item, hold it over the table at a minimum height off the table. Beware of loose pieces that might fall off. Always use both hands to lift an item. Place hands on the items in strategic locations so as to minimize handprints or damage. Handle the item as little as possible and return possession to the owner quickly.

Prepared by the
Train Collectors Association
National Standards Committee
January 2010

Robert C. Robinson, Chairman