



**SUNSHINE
MODELS**

Preview

GATX Type 30 8K Tank Cars For Food Commodities



Tank cars were specialty rolling stock almost exclusively owned and managed by private companies, not the railroads. During the steam and early diesel era, Union Tank Car Company and General American Transportation Corp. dominated the marketplace. In 1948, Union Tank operated 41,432 cars and General American owned 39,857 cars. Lesser private tank car companies were Shippers' Car Line (an ACF subsidiary) with 9716 cars and North American with 4503 cars.

In the late 1920s, GATC introduced a tank car design that in 1930 became known as the Type 30 for the year. The design featured a 26' 8 1/2" distance over truck centers and 36' 8 1/2" over striker. Various tanks from 8,000 gallons to 12,500 gallons were applied to the underframe, the 8K and 10K capacities being the largest blocks.

The visual characteristic of the Type 30 design was a frame with a more open appearance than competitive designs. There was no side sill from the bolsters to the end sill and only a modest end sill. The frame featured massive bolsters that bore the weight of the tank and included a poling pocket in the end. The tank dome was larger in diameter than the ACF design, but shorter in height.

A variety of companies leased (or purchased) cars from GATX (or other leasing companies with GATC Type 30 cars) for edible food commodities, such as corn oil, cane syrup, cotton oil, fats and liquid sugar. A.E. Staley, the Clinton Co., Penick and Ford, Southern Pacific, Consolidated Rendering, Union Starch and Refining, Corn Products Refining, Anheuser Busch and Crystal Car Line were some of the many companies using the GATC Type 30 8K tank car.

Since these companies were conscious of the advertising potential of the cars, they often had General American paint the cars in bright colors to display the company name and its respective food commodity. Typical of the food companies was A.E. Staley of Decatur Il. Its name and logo were emblazoned in black on an aluminum car. Taking the objective one step further, they had some cars painted in the nearby University of Illinois colors. Tank cars appearing in Illini orange with blue lettering were striking.

The food commodities cars could be ARA Type 103 or 203 cars. The 103 cars had a safety valve (see the Staley car above), while the 203 cars had a frangible membrane on the tank dome (see several other photos).

