

A Winner for the Winnit Club?

Vintage toy train advertisements have long been recognized for their inestimable value as reference materials. Unfortunately, not unlike those legendary consumer catalogs, ads will often contain as many contradictions as they do viable facts. One which seemed to have more than the usual share of fact and fiction appeared in the January 1933 issue of *Open Road For Boys Magazine* [fig. 1]. No doubt about it, the idea of an uncataloged Ives mixed consist alone would be enough to make this one a “keeper,” but another element of this “Very Special Offer” seemed suspicious enough to warrant a closer look. Here an attempt is made to sort out the puzzling details of this most unusual advertisement.

What, if anything, was so special about the *Open Road* offer? As explained in the copy, the Ives outfit could be earned by selling magazine subscriptions. Down in the fine print readers also learned that the set could be purchased outright [in this instance for \$5.00] or through increments of cash and sold-subscriptions. There was, in fact, nothing new about all this. Subscription premiums, along with their cash-advantage angles, had been a fixture in periodical publishing long before the *Open Road* offer. Given that this particular practice was undergoing revival in the 1930's, our advertisement could only be classified as the latest spin on an old game.

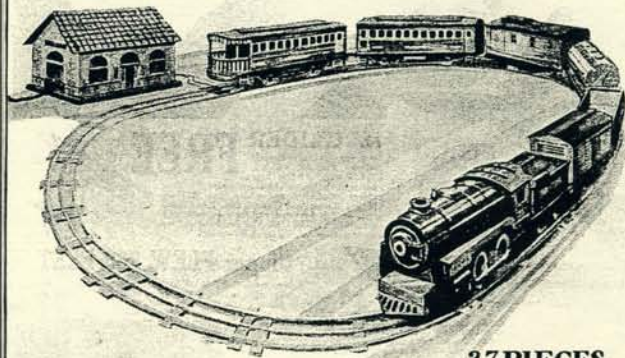
Then there's the timing of the offer to consider. It's easy to surmise that most *Open Road* readers would not have known the last “Ives” Christmas was passing into history as the January 1933 issue was going to press. How then, does our “Very Special Offer” stack up at so late a date? Take that \$5.00 “outright” purchase; it represented a 36 percent savings from the \$7.85 cost of matching components from the 1932 Ives catalog. Doesn't sound bad for an isolated bargain. But was it really? Consumer discount houses such as Lafayette Radio were already offering 31 to 36 percent markdowns on Ives equipment during the 1932 holiday season [fig. 2]. The Lafayette example suggests that the word on Ives may have been out on the street for some time.

Another phrase in the headline, “Genuine Ives,”

also catches our attention. Ives and Lionel historians would be quick to identify the trains depicted as part of Lionel's Winner lineage. Couple that with

Figure 1: Bold promises crowd the headlines in a 1933 publisher's offer. How did they measure up to current events?

VERY SPECIAL OFFER! GENUINE IVES ELECTRIC TRAIN



27PIECES



Haven't you always wanted an electric train of your very own? Well here it is—and you can get it easily. A wonderful train—with lots of equipment, too.

This set is made by Ives, the oldest train manufacturers, whose models this year are the best in their long history. It's a special outfit—made up to suit the needs of *Open Road for Boys* readers—and it's a remarkable bargain.

Special Equipment

Set consists of ten pieces of track forming large oval, one fine, heavy locomotive with tender, a box car, an open freight car, an oil tank, a caboose, a pullman car and an observation car. With this outfit you can make up a freight train or a passenger train, as you wish. Besides all this, the set contains eight accessories such as crossing sign, gate signals, crossing gate, telegraph poles, clock on pole, etc., etc. Also a transformer that looks just like a station house.

You May Get It Free

This is one of the finest, most realistic electric train sets we have ever seen—and it is absolutely guaranteed by *The Open Road for Boys Magazine*. You can have it at no cost whatever, simply by getting subscriptions to *The Open Road for Boys Magazine*. Go around among your friends and acquaintances at school and in church, among the neighbors, get other boys and their parents to subscribe to *The Open Road for Boys*.

GIVEN for 9 yearly subscriptions to *The Open Road for Boys Magazine*. All you have to do to get this complete set absolutely FREE is to get 9 other boys or their parents to subscribe to *The Open Road for Boys* for one year, at \$1 each. Send the \$9 to us with their names and addresses and we'll mail the train to you. If you can not get all 9 subscriptions, we'll send it to you if you send us the following number of yearly subscriptions to *The Open Road for Boys* plus the amount of money indicated:

8 yearly subscriptions...and \$.50	4 yearly subscriptions...and \$2.00
7 yearly subscriptions...and 1.00	3 yearly subscriptions...and 3.00
6 yearly subscriptions...and 1.50	2 yearly subscriptions...and 3.50
5 yearly subscriptions...and 2.00	1 yearly subscription...and 4.00

Or we will send it to you for \$5 in cash

WINNIT CLUB
OPEN ROAD FOR BOYS MAGAZINE
130 Newbury St. Boston, Mass.
No sets shipped outside U.S.A. and Possessions

IVES MECHANICAL TOY TRAINS

23 1/4-INCH FREIGHT No. 1581
An exceedingly realistic Toy Freight Train at an amazingly low price. Part and sturdy. Real example spring motor driven locomotive, gondola car and caboose. Outfit includes four sections of curved track and two sections of straight track for making oval 28 1/2 inches. Train is 2 1/4 inches long. Ship. Wt. 2 lbs. 4oz. **481772—List Price \$1.25**
Year Cost **81¢**

IVES MECHANICAL TRAINS
are "O" gauge and are interchangeable with all other "O" gauge equipment. The locomotives of this line are driven by a strong spring motor and feature amazing speed. Each locomotive is equipped with Double Cog Gear and Brake.

Passenger Train With Figure 8 Track
Consists of a 2nd numbered spring motor driven Locomotive, and two beautifully finished Pullman Cars. Complete train measure 33 inches long. There are 12 sections of curved track, 4 sections of straight track and one 8 degree crossing; making a "figure eight" layout 27 1/2 inches—an exceptional feature. Ship. Wt. 4 1/2 lbs. List \$2.00. **481781—Year Cost \$1.25**

29 1/2-INCH PASSENGER TRAIN No. 1580
Nothing on the market compares with the quality and detail of this mechanical passenger outfit. Finished in attractive, rich colors. Locomotive and tender are made of steel and are enamelled brilliant red with copper trimmings. The three Pullman Cars are replica with realistic detail and are colored red, yellow and blue. Has four sections of curved track and two sections of straight track to make an oval 37 1/2 inches long. Ship. Wt. 4 lbs. List \$1.25. **481777—Year Cost 81¢**

32-INCH PASSENGER TRAIN No. 1584
This latest Passenger Outfit is headed by the biggest, most powerful Locomotive in the mechanical line. Finished in black enamel and trimmed in copper. Complete with bell, brake, piston rods and di-rail wheels. Pullman Car and Observation Car with brass trimmed interiors. Eight sections of curved track and four 2 1/2 inches long. Ship. Wt. 5 lbs. Year Cost **\$1.25**

38-INCH FREIGHT TRAIN No. 1585
The largest Mechanical Freight Train of them all. Has a powerful Locomotive beautifully finished in black enamel and copper trimmings. Has four very realistic freight cars including Gondola, Box Car with sliding door, aluminum finished Tank or Oil Car and brass trimmed Caboose. Eight sections of curved track and four sections of straight track making an oval 47 1/2 inches. Train is 2 1/2 inches long. Ship. Wt. 4 lbs. List \$2.00. **481774—Year Cost \$1.25**

SWITCH
Has red and green signal discs and hand lever. 5 1/2 inches long. Ratio whether right or left hand is wanted. Ship. Wt. 2 oz. **481780—Year Cost 59¢**

TRACK
MWC—Curved Track. 4 sections make 21-inch oval. List \$0.75. **481778—Year Cost 07¢**
MC—Curved Track. 4 sections make 20-inch oval. **481779—Year Cost 07¢**
MS—Straight Track. Sections 9 Per section **07¢**

COMPLETE MECHANICAL RAILROADS
No. 1590
The leader of the Mechanical Line. A complete outfit including the most realistic equipment. A big Locomotive, Baggage Car, Pullman Car, Observation Car, Tank Engine, 2 sections straight track, a pair of Switches, Double Arm Semaphore, Clock, Warning Signal, 4 Telegraph Posts, 4 sections curved track and 4 sections straight track making oval 32 x 48 inches. The lowest price complete mechanical railroad obtainable. Ship. Wt. 8 lbs. **481775—List \$2.00. Year Cost \$2.25**

TUNNEL
A fine Tunnel for Mechanical Trains. Made of strong composition, hand decorated. Ship. Wt. 1 lb. **481782—List \$0.42**
Year Cost **42¢**

STATION
Metal construction throughout. Beautifully decorated. Suitable for use with all mechanical railroads. Size, 3 1/2 inches long, 4 inches high. Ship. Wt. 1 lb. **481780—List \$0.29**
Year Cost **29¢**

90° Crossing
Mounted on strong metal base. Crossing is 7 inches square. In connection with 4 sections of straight track and 12 sections of MWC curved track this makes a figure 8 track 27 1/2 inches. Ship. Wt. 8 oz. **481784—List \$0.00**
Year Cost **00¢**

Freight Car
A desirable combination of four freight cars: Gondola, Oil Car, Box Car and Caboose. Hand-dormally decorated. Attractive set. Ship. Wt. 1 lb. List \$1.00. **481783—Year Cost 65¢**

Water Tank Tower
A realistic accessory. 9 inches high. Tank mounted on structural steel support. Movable. Ship. Wt. 1 lb. **481782—List \$0.49**
Year Cost **49¢**

WHOLESALE RADIO SERVICE COMPANY, INC., 100 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

IVES ELECTRIC TRAINS

"O" GAUGE
IVES were the first to make miniature trains to run on tracks, the first to make trains to run under their own power and the first to bring out the remarkable remote control system. It can truly be said that Ives parallels the inventive genius of modern railroading for Ives 1922 models are not only replicas of the finest railroads found in the world today but they are marvels of mechanical efficiency.

Powered by the famous Ives motor. Two Pullman cars and an Observation Car. **481776 motor and handomely trimmed in brass. Eight sections curved and 2 sections straight "O" gauge track makes an oval 48 x 30 inches. Packed in Tunnel Box. Ship. Wt. 9 lbs. **481777—List \$2.50. Year Cost \$4.25****

ELECTRIC TYPE PASSENGER OUTFIT
Never before has such construction, realism, beauty and color been achieved in an outfit priced so low. A beautiful proper Locomotive—just "rain" in gold. Complete of an electric type Locomotive finished in a rich, cardinal red with brass trimmings. A sturdy metal and realistic Station Locomotive. Has electric headlight, pantograph, flagholders, copper journals and hand rails.

STEAM TYPE FREIGHT OUTFIT
The boy whose privilege it is to own and operate this Ives Train is indeed lucky. With such perfection for his constant operation—with such constructive recreation for his daily play, he is preparing himself for the tasks of the future. The Ives steam type electric Locomotive and Tender with brass trimmings. In addition, a powerful toy. It is mounted in rich black and elaborately decorated with copper exhaust pipes and sand domes. Has a two-wheel pilot truck and four driving wheels with realistic piston action. Very realistic Box Car with sliding door, two four-wheel trucks and copper journal boxes. Followed by blue roofed caboose, copper trimmed. Eight sections curved and two sections straight "O" gauge track which makes a 30 x 40 inch oval. Packed in Tunnel Box. Ship. Wt. 9 lbs. **481778—List \$1.50. Year Cost \$2.45**

50 WATT TRANSFORMER
Runs 110 volts A.C. down to 6 to 12.5 volts in 6 progressive steps for operating any Trains listed on this page. Ship. Wt. 1 lb. **481780—List \$0.24**
Year Cost **24¢**

TUNNEL BOX
The Train on this page is packed in the famous tunnel box. The tunnel box is made of strong metal and is finished in rich black. It is a real masterpiece of engineering. You have a realistic additional accessory.

TRACK
Curved sections. **481778—List \$0.14**
Year Cost **14¢**
Straight Track in 9 1/2 inch sections. **481779—List \$0.07**
Year Cost **07¢**

IVES DELUXE STEAM TYPE FREIGHT OUTFIT
The great railroad systems of tomorrow will look for their leaders to the Ives boys of today. No "O" gauge outfit could more nearly approximate the operation of real running freight trains than this business-like outfit. It is the best construction and most realistic train of its class ever produced and it has the most powerful motor. Steel finished drivers and double pistons with realistic country model. Realistic copper journal boxes and copper journals with copper central boxes. A Cattle Car with sliding door, front and rear leaders of brass. Caboose with copper journal boxes. A Gondola Car and a Box Car finished and decorated like the Cattle Car and big Caboose with front and rear flippers. Eight sections of curved and six sections of "O" gauge straight track makes an oval 60 x 30 inches. Packed in Tunnel Box. Ship. Wt. 10 lbs. **481779—List \$2.50. Year Cost \$4.25**

ACCESSORY SET
Accessory Set. 2 are series that will add a finished touch to any of our Mechanical Railroads. Includes Clock, Warning Signal, 4 Telegraph Posts, 4 sections curved track and 4 sections straight track making oval 32 x 48 inches. Ship. Wt. 8 lbs. **481775—List \$2.00. Year Cost \$2.25**

Figure 2: Lafayette Radio's low-end "Ives" listings were a boon to bargain-hunters in the Fall of 1932. Such drastic reductions may have carried a hidden agenda for Ives of Irvington.

Lionel's simultaneous badge-engineered "Ives" line in 1931 and 1932 and we have a lot of asterisks missing from "Genuine Ives."

Still other noticeable signs can be found in the artwork. A second look reveals its overall crudeness, even by the compromised standards of the so-called "Ives" catalogs of 1931 and 1932. The rendering was perhaps done by a staff artist who was untrained in the fine art of toy train illustration. *Open Roaders* who were versed in that subject would not have missed the eleven, rather than the appropriate ten, windows per side depicted on the passenger and observation cars. In today's litigation-riddled world such a misrepresentation might be the subject of a rebate.

Beyond the questionable novelty of a mixed

consist, the components selected to complete the package were cursory at best. An inexpensive accessory assortment was included from the mechanical line as well as two, count them, two, straight sections to elongate the circle of track that was typically furnished at this level. Graciously, the lockon and wires were depicted but didn't figure in the twenty-seven piece count. Come to think of it, the mixed consist idea might have even worked had it included a simple spur for sorting cars.

Evidently, our low-end special was only a small part of a brand discontinuation sale in progress. It was one more step, though not the last step, in a process that led to the disappearance of the mystical Ives name on new trains forever. Maybe after all, what kids didn't know in January of 1933, didn't hurt them. ■ Ron Antonelli 73-5030