

Chicagoland Lionel Railroad Club Product Review: 6-18322 Lackawanna FM Train Master

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August 10, 2015

In 2008 my Dad passed away. He was 86. I was 55. While he was in hospice we were reminiscing about old times. His memory would come and go. One day out of the blue he said remembered when I was in grade school and I asked to use the Lionel Lackawanna engine for the schools science fair? Our school held an annual science fair in the spring that always included a large Lionel train display. During a dress rehearsal for the train layout the teachers were worried because they didn't have an engine powerful enough to pull all the cars that year.

The Christmas before my brothers and I received Lionel Trains. We were overjoyed. We didn't expect it with the tight economy. The engine we received was a Lionel Lackawanna FM Trainmaster. The original #2321 with the gray roof which I thought it was a "beast." And it was. It could haul all of our cars. When I brought it to the Science Fair my feelings were confirmed. At the science fair it hauled over 20 cars with ease. My pride was busting at the seams.



After my Dad's passing and thinking about our conversation, I had a yearning to go back to my childhood days. I joined the Chicagoland Lionel Railroad Club and found others who had memories, but lost their old equipment. It was then I decided to rebuild, or I should say, build my Lionel trains collection. You see like most kids back then we didn't take of our trains. The same was true for the Smolinski brothers. I was starting from scratch.

The original Lackawanna was made from 1954 through 1956. It came in two different roof colors, gray and maroon. The maroon roof was only produced in 1954 while the gray roof version was made in 1955 and 1956. It had two powerful Pullmor motors to pull many cars.

The first piece I wanted to acquire was another Lionel Lackawanna Train Master. At first I was disheartened because the only ones I saw on EBay skyrocketed beyond my means. Then I discovered that Lionel started to reproduce a number of their early and more popular engines and train sets. The reproductions are called the "Celebration Series". These remakes look exactly like the original version but in many cases are even better. For example, in 1999 the Lionel Trainmaster Lackawanna (No 6-18322) with the maroon roof was made available. This version includes "command control" which the originals did not have. Other features include:

- Electro couplers
- Towercom
- Crewtalk
- Railsounds



No 6-18322 New Lackawanna 2321 from Lionel with great paint!

It still has powerful dual Pullmor Motors and Magne-Traction. These features give it the tremendous pulling power. I am glad that they kept the realistic wire railing around the gangway. I always liked that feature on the one I had before. The paint is laid down cleanly with no bleeding over from one color to the next. The other great thing about this new engine is that they are in my price range. So if you're a runner of trains, like me, but want those trains we grew up with check out more of the "Celebration Series". Lionel makes more available every year.