

B&O Locomotive (& Other) Font

The B&O Railroad Historical Society archives contain several drawings for lettering steam locomotives. A few of these have been scanned and converted into a type font for use on personal computers. This font, combined with some lettering from the B&O font (available from the Society), provides the lettering for late steam locomotives.

The following are required:

1. Lettering "Baltimore and Ohio" across the tender – 5" letters.
2. Locomotive number on the cab side – 5" letters.
3. The words "SAVE COAL" on both sides of the cab back – 2" letters.
4. Tender capacity (gallons water and tons coal) on back of tender – 3" letters (B & O font).
5. Tender capacity (gallons water and tons coal) on right front leg of tender – 1 _" letters (B & O font).
6. Locomotive class on cab side bottom – 1 _" letters (B & O font).
7. Locomotive subclass on cab side bottom – 1" letters (B & O font).

The publication "Steam Locomotives of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad" by Howard N. Barr, (available from the Society) describes the usage of these (and earlier fonts) for locomotive lettering. It also describes variations and exceptions to the general case, listed above.

Tracings Scanned and Converted

The following lettering schemes are included in this font:

1. The stencil for lettering locomotive tenders with "Baltimore and Ohio," 12' _" long, tracing Y69113, dated 7/22/1942. This stencil also indicates that it can be used for passenger cars.
2. The stencil for lettering locomotive tenders with "Baltimore and Ohio," 18' 4 _" long, tracing Y69141, dated 7/31/42, reissued 5/16/1956 and 1/16/1957. This stencil also indicates that it can be used for passenger cars. Note that actual measurement of the stencil reveals that the lettering is actually slightly less than 18' 4 _" long. Since the stencil was scanned for conversion into the font, using the font results in lettering that is slightly short (about 2").
3. The words "SAVE COAL," tracing 39885, dated 1921.
4. A set of numerals 0 to 9, scanned from a blueprint whose tracing number is unreadable. Note: This tracing is for 7" numbers, scaled here to 5".
5. A stencil for "B&O," tracing T-4556, dated 4/26/1926. This is a freight car stencil for 4" letters as found on freight car end lettering. It doesn't have anything to do with locomotive lettering. It is included in this font simply to have a place to put it.

Tracing U-70421 defines tender lettering to use the 12_ stencil for tenders where the space for the lettering is 15_ to 20_ long. The 18' stencil is to be used when the space is over 20_ and up to 25_ long. A 22' 4 _" stencil is to be used on tenders where the space is over 25' long. This lettering and the locomotive number (on the cab side) are to be in 5" high lettering. The words "SAVE COAL" are to be painted on the cab back, on the left and right sides of the cab back in 2" high lettering. According to the Barr book, this was discontinued about 1952. However, it would still be there until the locomotive was repainted. Except for the numerals, each of the stencils defines the spacing between the letters, as well as the letters themselves. This spacing has been preserved in the scanning and conversion to a font.

Usage of the Font

This font is primarily intended for lettering late (post 1942) steam locomotives. The "B&O" stencil's usage is not defined on the tracing, but is the proper size for end lettering on freight cars. The usage of the 12' and 18' stencils for passenger cars is unknown – possibly on passenger equipment with similar letterboard length.

In order to preserve the spacing of the letters, some relatively strange assignments of printed letters to the keyboard keys were required. For example: there are 4 different 'A's in the font: the 'A' in the 12' stencil, the 'A' in the 18' stencil, the 'A' in "COAL", and the 'A' in "SAVE". They can't all be assigned to the 'A' key on the keyboard. Similarly there are 3 different 'B's. Since the letters UVWXYZ were not used, these keys are assigned to generate the "SAVE COAL" and "B&O" lettering. In addition, the '<' and '>' keys are assigned to generate spaces, where the space generated by the '>' is twice as wide as the '<'. The '<' can be used to space out the 18' stencil to 21' 4 _" long.

The lettering must be printed at the appropriate font size for your scale:

Scale	5" Lettering	SAVE COAL (2" lettering)	B&O (4" lettering)
	Font Size	Font Size	Font Size
1:1	566.15	180.04	452.92
O (1:48)	11.79	3.75	4.44
S (1:64)	8.85	2.81	7.08
HO (1:87.1)	6.5	2.07	5.2
N (1:160)	3.54	1.12	2.83

Other scale sizes can be calculated from the 1:1 size. For example, for 1:32 scale, divide the 1:1 numbers by 32.

Step by Step Examples

1. Install the B&O Loco font on your computer.
2. Start a document, e.g., Microsoft Word or Paint.
3. Select the font. Note: Word 2000 (and later versions) identifies the font by using characters from the font. Since the font is called "B&O Loco" but there is no 'C' in the font, the 'C' will not show up correctly. On my machine, the font shows up looking like "B 0 L ()". I have no idea why.
4. Select the font size for your scale. Note: Word only allows increments of _ point, so you will have to select the nearest value.
5. For the 12' "BALTIMORE AND OHIO", type `baltimore and ohio` (all lowercase)
6. For the 18' "BALTIMORE AND OHIO", type `BALTIMORE AND OHIO` (all uppercase)
7. For a 21' "BALTIMORE AND OHIO", type `B<A<L<T<I<M<O<R<E< <A<N<D< <O<H<I<O,` spacing out the 18' lettering to 21' 4 1/2". Since we haven't found a tracing for the 21' 4 _" stencil, this is an approximation for the longer lettering.
8. For locomotive cabside numbers, use '<', '>', or `space` to space the digits as desired.
9. For "SAVE COAL", select the font size and type `UVW carriage return, then XYZ`. The tracing shows "SAVE" above "COAL" on the back of the cab, with _" between them. The font replicates that spacing. For those cabs where there is enough space to place both words on one line, you can use '<', '>', or `space` to separate the words.
10. For 4" high "B&O," select the correct font size and type `xyz` (lower case). Other sizes (such as the 33" 'B' and 'O' with the 23" '&' or the billboard "B&O") can be scaled up from these characters, but we have no evidence that a simple rescaling is accurate. Note that you can also get a "B&O" from the B&O font.

Samples

If you have installed the font on your computer, the following examples should print and display properly. If not, your computer will probably select some other font (or possibly give an error) for them. The samples are printed at 2X HO scale.

1. 12' **BALTI0E AND OHIO**
2. 18' **BALTIMORE AND OHIO**
3. 21' **BALTIMORE AND OHIO**
4. Numbers: **4523**; with '<'s: **4<5<2<3**; with '>'s: **4>5>2>3**
5. "SAVE COAL" (UVW XYZ)
6. 4" "B&O" **B & o** (xyz)