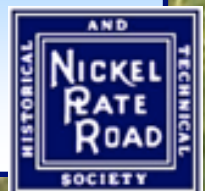


NICKEL PLATE ROAD *Modeler's Notebook*™

Volume 38, October 2020



**Bellevue in N Scale
Making an Old Refrigerator Car New
The Pickle Industry on the Nickel Plate**



MODELER'S NOTEBOOK STAFF

MODELER'S NOTEBOOK EDITOR
MODELING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
MODELING SERVICES DIRECTOR
COMPANY STORE MANAGER

Raymond T. Breyer
J. Anthony Koester
John D. Colombo
Dan L. Merkel

2020 has been an "interesting" year, and here's hoping that this volume of the *Notebook* finds everyone healthy, happy, and ready to model the Nickel Plate Road!

To that end, this volume is crammed with NKP modeling tips and inspiration. Brian Smith gives us a first look at his very nicely done Ntrak modules depicting Bellevue OH in the mid-1950s, Bud Brueggemann and Steve Grigg show us how to model refrigerator cars in two different scales, Dan Merkel gives us a paper tower model to add to our layout, and I examine one of the more unusual, but highly modelable, industries that was served by the Nickel Plate.



Personally, I haven't had a whole lot of time to model this summer, since I'm considered an "essential" worker and have been racking up extra hours, but I have been making slow & steady progress on my own version of the Nickel Plate. Here's NKP 601 making a test run through my almost-complete version of Ambia IN.

Happy Nickel Plate Modeling,

RAY

(ON THE COVER: NKP 181 rounds the bend heading towards Bellevue, and eventually Buffalo. Brian Smith photo)

Nickel Plate Road Modeler's Notebook Volume 38, October 2020

CONTENTS THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 3
NKPHTS COMPANY STORE

PAGE 5
New Nickel Plate Products

PAGE 9
Bellevue in N Scale
By Brian Smith

Page 16
Something New from Some Things Old
By Steve Grigg

PAGE 20
MODELER'S REFERENCE -
Findlay Tower in Papercraft

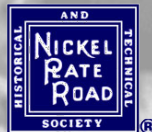
PAGE 21
Pickles on the Plate
By Ray Breyer

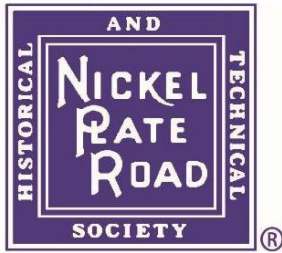
PAGE 30
ALONG THE LINE

PAGE 32
Modeling an ERDX Insulated Boxcar in HO
By Bud Brueggemann

The NKPHTS Logo and the name NICKEL PLATE ROAD are registered trademarks of the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society, Inc.

The Nickel Plate Road Modeler's Notebook is published by the Nickel Plate Road Historical and Technical Society, Inc. for its members and modelers interested in the former New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad, and its predecessor companies. Articles, manuscripts, photographs, and other modeling material relating to the Nickel Plate Road are solicited for publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced for distribution, either electronically or in print, without permission of the Publications Director and the contributor of the material involved. Please email contact@nkphts.org for more information.





NICKEL PLATE ROAD Company Store

"Your one stop Nickel Plate Shop"

Nickel Plate Tower

*N - HO - O Scales
Now Available*

One of the few Nickel Plate owned towers, it can be used anywhere along the line, along your layout. This laser-cut kit comes complete with windows, roofing, mailbox... all of the details shown in the picture are included. Moderately easy to assemble, it will become the highlight at any interchange or crossing along your layout.

Limited O and N scale quantities, HO still available.



New Model Selection Now in Stock



40 FOOT STEEL BOXCAR

The 40-foot steel boxcar was the mainstay of the Nickel Plate car fleet. You'll never have too many boxcars. This easy-to-assemble boxcar kit will make a nice addition to any layout. Limited quantities.



50 FOOT PLUG DOOR BOXCAR

As traffic increased and car-building advanced, bigger cars made their way throughout the Nickel Plate. Easy-to-assemble Accurail HO scale model features authentic Nickel Plate Road markings.



40 FOOT DOUBLE DOOR BOXCAR

This easy-to-assemble Accurail HO model features authentic NKP markings. Although designed primarily for traffic in the auto industry, these cars were versatile NKP workhorses.



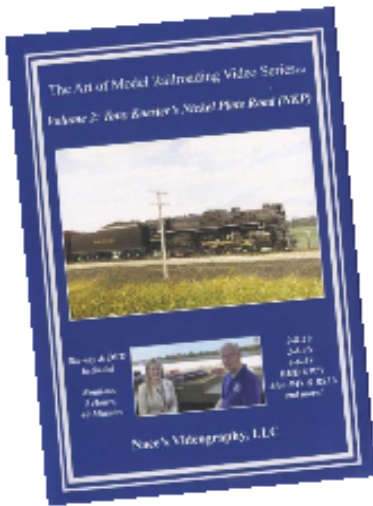
70 TON THREE BAY W&LE HOPPER

Easy-to-assemble Accurail HO scale model features authentic later Wheeling & Lake Erie markings. Added to their roster in the 1940s, many of these hoppers saw service for the NKP as well after the leasing of the W&LE.



W&LE USRA TWO BAY HOPPER

Accurail HO model features authentic later Wheeling & Lake Erie markings. Primarily in the Eastern Ohio coal fields, these hoppers could be seen all over the greater NKP system. Three different numbers available for this car.



TONY KOESTER'S NICKEL PLATE ROAD and THE ART OF MODEL RAILROADING

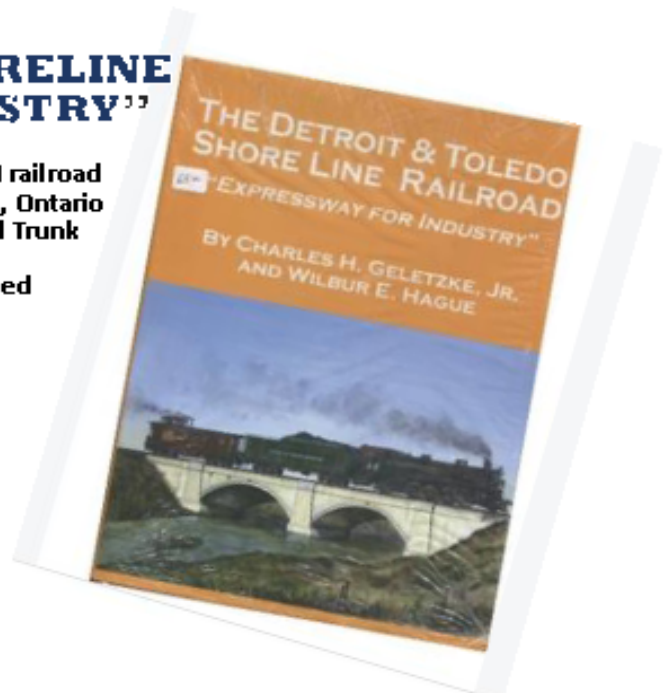
This DVD of Tony Koester's layout is now available at the Company Store, filmed by Nace's Video. Over two and one-half hours of 1950's era steam to diesel Nickel Plate Road trains, running thru a authentically detailed towns along the third subdivision of the Clover Leaf branch. Fully narrated. In addition, there is a special section of modeling tips from the master himself.

Purchase this DVD today for only \$34.95.

DETROIT and TOLEDO SHORELINE "EXPRESSWAY FOR INDUSTRY"

The Detroit and Toledo Shoreline was a short Class I railroad that connected Toledo to points in southeast Michigan, Ontario and Detroit. The line, jointly owned by both the Grand Trunk and the Nickel Plate, provided a vital link for the automotive industry to the multiple railroads that served Toledo.

This 264-page book written by Charles Geletzke, Jr. and Wilbur E. Hague and printed by Kutztown Printing Company covers the complete history of the line from its humble beginnings to its final inclusion into the Greater Grand Trunk system. The book is amply illustrated with photos & drawings and will make a great addition to your railroad library.



NOTICE

**Due to storms in the Midwest,
NKPHTS CALENDARS
will be delayed for several weeks**



**To purchase from the company store
Click on "Store" at NKPHTS.ORG**

Head to the [Company Store](#) today!

NEW NICKEL PLATE PRODUCTS

N SCALE NKP H-6 MIKADOS FROM BLI



[Broadway Limited Imports](#) has recently released two new NKP H-6 class Mikes in N scale. Including dual mode DCC decoders and factory installed sound, these models represent the engines in their as-built configurations of the early 1920s.

BLI #[5974](#) is lettered as NKP 620, and BLI #[5975](#) is lettered as NKP 627. MSRP is \$359.99.

HO SCALE RS-11s FROM RAPIDO



Rapido Trains has just released its second run of Alco RS-11s, including four NKP models. Rapido worked closely with the NKPHTS to create these VERY accurate models of NKP engines, including prototype-specific details, paint, and sound.

Four road numbers are offered: [558](#), [559](#), [560](#), and [562](#), and each engine is available with either DCC and sound or silent DC. MSRP for the DCC engines is \$335, and \$225 for DC.

HO SCALE PA-1 FROM WALTHERS



Walthers has announced the upcoming release of more PA-1 models (formerly Life Like Proto 2000). Four NKP models will be released; two each DCC and sound (#183 and #189), and DCC no sound (#181 and #186).

Preorders are due to Walthers by 10/31/2020, with an expected delivery of late November 2020. MSRP for the DCC & sound models is \$229.98, and \$169.98 for DC.

JOIN THE NICKEL PLATE ROAD HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL SOCIETY TODAY!

Founded in 1966, the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society is America's only rail-history organization dedicated solely to preserving the history and legacy of the Nickel Plate Road and its predecessors.

The Society publishes a quarterly magazine, maintains an award-winning website at NKPHTS.org, provides stewardship of a major archive of historical material at the [Western New York Railway Historical Society](#), and offers numerous member programs and projects, including an annual convention

As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, financial donations and contributions of historical photos, documents, and ephemera are tax-deductible and always appreciated.

The Purpose of the NKPHTS is to maintain an association of persons interested in the former New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad (Nickel Plate Road), and to obtain, preserve, and distribute information and material related to the former Nickel Plate Road, its predecessors, and lessees. It shall be the intent of the corporation to promote, support, and preserve the historic legacy of the Nickel Plate Road through the creation of programs designed to be of benefit and service to its members, as well as to assist qualified, non-profit museums, libraries, rail groups, and historical organizations, either financially or technically, in the preservation, conservation, and/or collection of material, equipment, and memorabilia relating to the railroad and its predecessors.

The original Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society was formed in Lafayette, Indiana in 1966. The NKPHTS was incorporated in the state of Ohio in 1972 as a non-profit, non-stock corporation organized for educational purposes. We are recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service, so all contributions of material and money are tax deductible. Information on donating money and materials to the NKPHTS may be found on our website.

The NKPHTS publishes a quarterly [magazine](#) devoted to the history of the Nickel Plate Road, Lake Erie & western, Wheeling & Lake Erie, and the Toledo, St. Louis & Western (Clover Leaf) railroads. Included from time to time are articles on modeling the Nickel Plate, current status of Nickel Plate facilities and rolling



stock, and other railroads' joint operation with the Nickel Plate. The magazine is printed in color, on high-quality gloss paper and is generously illustrated with photos and maps. Occasional [newsletters](#) are provided to keep members informed of current Society events and news, along with timely updates and/or supplements to the magazine.

For over twenty-five years the NKPHTS has published an annual [calendar](#) with fourteen high-quality photographs of the NKP, TStL&W, LE&W and W&LE railroads.

From time to time the Society has embarked on a limited run offering of a special project. These have included timetable reprints, lithographs, books and scale models.

The staff of the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society is all-volunteer and its business is conducted largely by mail and email. The membership has an opportunity to meet each year at our annual [convention](#), which is held in a Nickel Plate city. These meetings include displays, model railroad tours, swap and sale tables, slide, movie and video sessions, and tours of rail facilities. A general business meeting and banquet are the highlights of these weekends, where the Society's officers are elected and important business is handled.

Our Society also offers numerous internet and online-based activities free of charge to all of its members. We have an extensive website at NKPHTS.org which displays information, photos, documents, and Society news. We have a "[Members Area](#)" which can only be accessed by current members of the Society and which contains many items of interest, including Howard W. Ameling's collection of 5,000-plus Nickel Plate Road photos. Members with an email address receive a monthly [E-List Newsletter](#) with the latest Society information and various articles of interest to NKP fans. A new initiative is the online publication of a quarterly magazine devoted to modeling the NKP, the Nickel Plate Road [Modeler's Notebook](#). The Society also hosts an online discussion forum on [Yahoo Groups](#). You will also find us on [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).



NKPHTS OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received _____ Membership Number _____ Authorized By _____

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP INFO (check one)

- New Member
Renewing Member (Membership # _____)
Reinstated Member (Membership # _____)

(applies only to members who renew after more than one year of lapsed membership)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TYPE (check one)

- Basic US & Canada \$ 40.00
International includes int'l First Class Mail \$ 60.00
Contributing includes annual calendar \$ 70.00
Patron includes calendar and First Class Mail \$140.00

First Class Mailing Option available add-on for Basic, Contributing, and Life memberships \$10.00 US / \$14.00 Canada

Name (first) (middle initial) (last)

Address

City State ZIP

Phone Occupation (mechanic, sales, retired, etc.)

Email

Additional Associate Members

Available for spouse or child/grandchild under 18

No. of Associates @ \$5.00 ea.

Associate Name(s)

(For Associate Members not living in the same household, please fill out a separate membership form.)

Where did you hear about the NKPHTS?

Date of Birth / /

Rate your interest in the following areas on a scale of one to ten: (one being the lowest level of interest and ten being the highest)

NKP History NKP Prototype Preservation/Restoration
NKP Modeling NKP Memorabilia Collecting/Preservation

If you are a modeler/collector, what scale?

Other rail organizations to which you belong:

Are you a former NKP employee? Would you be interested in being a candidate for elected office?

Are you interested in volunteering? Would you consider an appointment to an active society position?

Do you have historic NKP or predecessor material? If yes, would you be willing to share with the society?

PRIVACY POLICY: The Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society maintains a general policy whereby it does not sell or offer membership information to any other group or individual for any purpose. However, information from this application form and subsequent renewal forms may be used for internal purposes by the Society. If you wish to NOT have your name or information about you used for NKPHTS business or internal communications, please check this box:

The NKPHTS Membership Year is from October 17th thru October 16th. The membership fee payable with this application is for the standard membership year beginning October 17th and will not be pro-rated. All applications received after August 15th will be processed for the next membership year unless specific instructions to the contrary are given by the applicant. Please do not send dues for more than one year. We will accept payment for only the current year's membership. By signing below, you hereby apply for membership in the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society, and you agree to subscribe to the purposes and principles of the Society and comply with the Society's policies and regulations.

Date Signature

Total Enclosed: \$

NKPHTS Membership Services
P.O. Box 138
Bucklin, MO 64631-0138

Please remit this form with check or money order (made out to "NKPHTS") to:

You can also join or renew your membership online via PayPal at www.NKPHTS.org/join

An Apartment-Sized Bellevue Yard

By Brian J. Smith



Bellevue, Ohio. Mentioning this small Ohio town to any lover of the Nickle Plate Road conjures up strong visions of yellow and red refer cars being iced on their way east, or the mighty Berkshires passing the baton of a hot manifest freight to another roundhouse stablemate in waiting, and railroad diamonds singing their clattering song as coal drags, petite locals, fast streamliners, and mile a minute freights clanged over them.

But how to squeeze all this action in the size of a spare bedroom of an apartment? That was the question I asked myself when I set out to design my N scale layout that encapsulate all these sights. Being a young journalist, life isn't always guaranteed on where you'll hang your hat next, so I had to come up with a layout that could easily be moved as well as displayed at train shows.



An 0-8-0 switches out reefers from the Bellevue ice dock.

I decided on modeling Bellevue yard for two reasons, first I spent many of happy summer days as a kid at the Mad River & NKP railroad museum. Looking at the exhibits, playing in the cabooses or locomotive cabs got me hooked on the railroad. The Norfolk Southern traffic outside of the fence clued me in on how heavy the action must have been back in the days of steam.



A late-running Train Number 7 with a pair of ALCO PAs round the curve just west of Kimball and make their first brake application into Bellevue yard and a crew change.

Second, I have an accidental love of 1940s and 1950s boxcars, I say accidental since I had a two by four-foot layout based on Tony Koester's Wingate, Ind. layout in the 1995 Model Railroad Planning in high school. I kept going to train shows each winter, and I'd come back with several cars after each one, soon I had a pretty good fleet. All the different railroads with colorful slogans on brown boxcars could spell out a variety of far flung places that today's boxcars just don't show.



Train Number 7 recedes into the horizon as the small hamlet of Kimball goes about its business.

Speaking of Tony Koester, I'm a big fan of his writings and philosophy of Layout Design Elements (LDE). Reading his books helped me focus on what important areas I wanted to featured, which would give me great operational opportunities, but also give a sense of place in the small area I had to model within. Bellevue is a very complicated place full of many interchanges, spurs, industries, and locations to model. Given that I only had 10' 7" by 6' 3" of space to model, a lot of selective compression had to be done to give an operational flavor of the yard, and easy way for viewers at train shows to recognize landmarks. I could have crammed more into the yard, but I wanted a few visual blocks of rolling grass or structures to break up scenes in the tiny space allotted.



*Ex-W&LE mike 678 switches out the Central Erie Supply Elevator in Kimball while working the Cleveland local, No. 91. This scene is a tribute to a John Rehor photo found in his book, *The Berkshire Era*.*

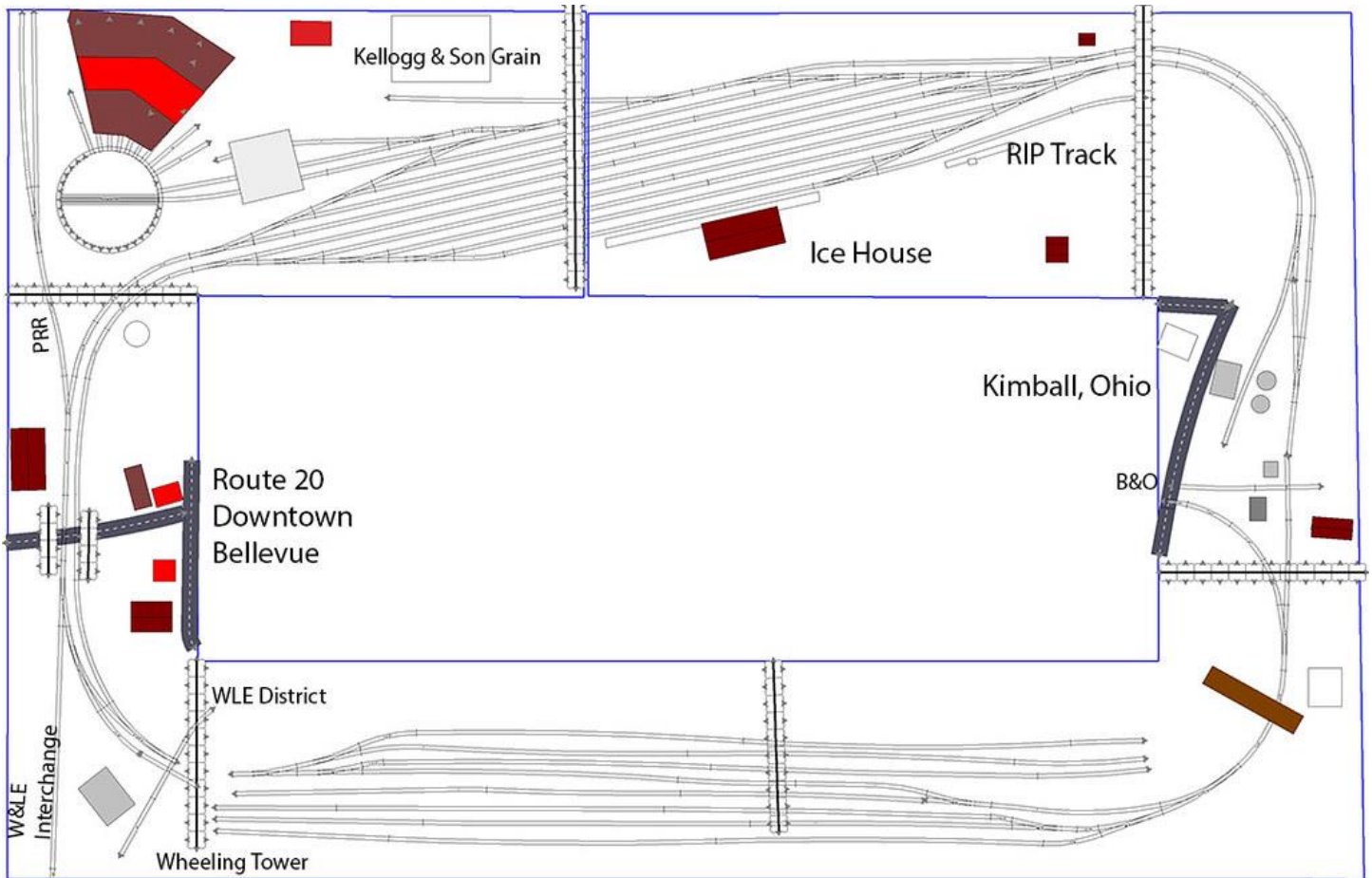


A pair of geeps bound for the LE&W district makes their way westbound past Wheeling tower in Bellevue.



The passenger and freight depot at Kimball during a lull in the action enjoy the slow pace of country life, before a thundering Berkshire disrupts the calm. The passenger depot is scratch built from Evergreen board and batten siding with Tichy Trains windows and doors. The freight depot is kitbashed from RSLaser Linden, Indiana freight depot. Putting together the passenger depot was tough when it came to research, but John Fuller found a few images in his archives that greatly helped with window and door placements.

Currently the whole layout is 95% done. The six modules, legs, and containers for buildings and rolling stock can all fit inside of a Kia Soul. And when stored to make space in an apartment, can take up the total area of a small dresser. The benchwork is framed with one by three lumber with a birch plywood top. The legs are copied from the N scale Modutrak group's design. Track is Atlas code 55 with switches controlled by Fast Tracks Bullfrog manual turnout controls, but I'm finding out that these wood controls mechanisms can easily be damaged in transport, so I'm slowly converting over to plastic Blue Points. PC board ties superglued to the benchwork help anchor the rails at the end of the modules.



The layout is powered by the NCE DCC system. At home and at train shows, I operate the layout inside of the 33" gap in the center. The buildings are a combination of kits, bashes, and scratch building. Oddly, doing research on the structures and building some of the custom ones like the Kimball depot or Bellevue roundhouse, proved to be one of the most enjoyable experiences of layout construction.

Scenery is a combination of static grasses and foam. I've found that Silfour 2mm SilfloreTTes in a variety of colors help give a little wildflower punch to the prairie grasses that surrounds the yard. Scenic Express Supertrees with their trunks dipped into latex rubber, to give additional durability when traveling, dot the landscape as well.



Berkshire 757 glides over the subway carrying U.S. Route 20 through Bellevue.

All in all, I'm pretty satisfied with the layout. There's always more to do like any model railroad, but it proves to be a great escape in the depths of winter to the warm sights of summer, or inspire those at train shows to build their own little empire.



An H-12-44, or beetle as they were sometimes called by crews, helps with the switching chores on the west end of Bellevue yard. A scratch-built war emergency caboose has just been tacked on to the rear of an eastbound local.



One of the reasons for a modular layout was to display it at train shows. Here is the layout on its first display at the 2019 Ohio N Scale convention.



Here is an overview of one of the six modules that make the layout. The average size of the modules is roughly 20 inches wide by 51 inches long. Buildings are removable, so two modules can be sandwiched together with end boards during transport or storage.



Berkshire 757 trundles past the station in Bellevue. Soon trucks like the Kroger one below the train, will cut into the reefer traffic that was the bread and butter for the Nickel Plate for many years.

SOMETHING NEW FROM SOME-THINGS OLD

BY STEVEN L. GRIGG

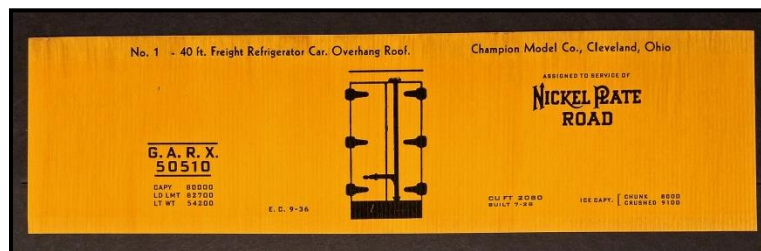
(all photos by the author)



This is the finished model seen on the Baton Rouge O Scalpers' modular layout. The Nickel Plate Road has a heavy presence here and this layout is now 26 years old. It looks right at home as an NKP 0-6-0 switcher is about to move the car for loading at the Clover Leaf Produce Co. This was a fun build and I encourage others to try their hand at one of these old wood kits.

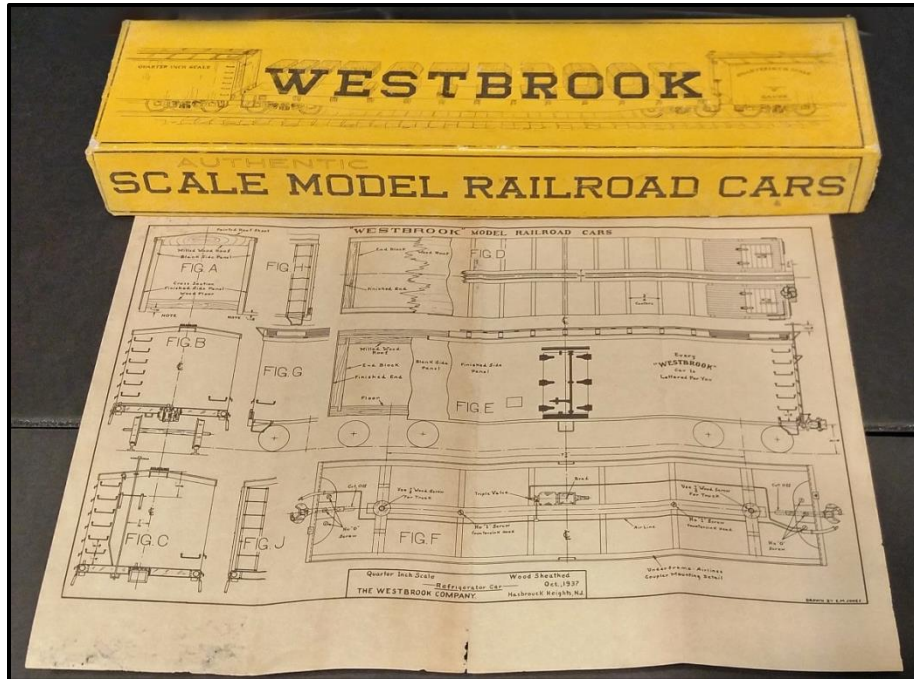
Modeling the Nickel Plate comes in a wide array of motivations. For me, I love restoring models that others have given up on or lack the desire to spend the necessary time involved. Many of the current models of today are super detailed and ready to take out of the box and put on the layout. It wasn't always so with scale models. Many craftsman kits were offered in the 1940s and 1950s. These usually involved real wood shapes for the sub-structure and pre-lettered sides of metal, wood, or cardstock. The model car kits of this type had many offerings in HO and O scales. The level of detail depended on how far the model builder wanted to go before calling it "done". These kits are still out there in the market, especially on eBay. It is nice to deviate from "plastic" now and then and try something new.

This project started with the purchase of some very old, pre-decorated car sides from the Champion Model Company of Cleveland, Ohio. They were made of heavy cardstock that was scribed to represent vertical wooden car siding. These O scale sides were yellow and printed with G.A.R.X. reporting marks for service with the Nickel Plate Road. The lettering was clean & crisp. I saw the potential for a nice model here. I could not find any information on-line about the Champion Model Co. as I really wanted to see just how old these car sides could be. Maybe in the future, information will surface.



This photo shows the original car sides as purchased. This is what motivated me to start the whole project. The sides were produced by Champion Model Company of Cleveland, Ohio. The lettering was very clean & crisp, the scribed siding texture was nice and deep for the heavy cardstock material, and the finish had a slight sheen to it.

The NKP reefer cars sides did not come with a complete kit and were sold used, by themselves. That meant I had to find a candidate to replace the original body. I searched for several months for a vintage 40 foot reefer kit that would fill the need. I settled on a kit that became available from the long-defunct Westbrook Model Co. While not a complete kit, all the wooden sub-structure components were there and I could get going on the build. I was shocked to see the instruction sheet in the Westbrook kit was dated 1937!



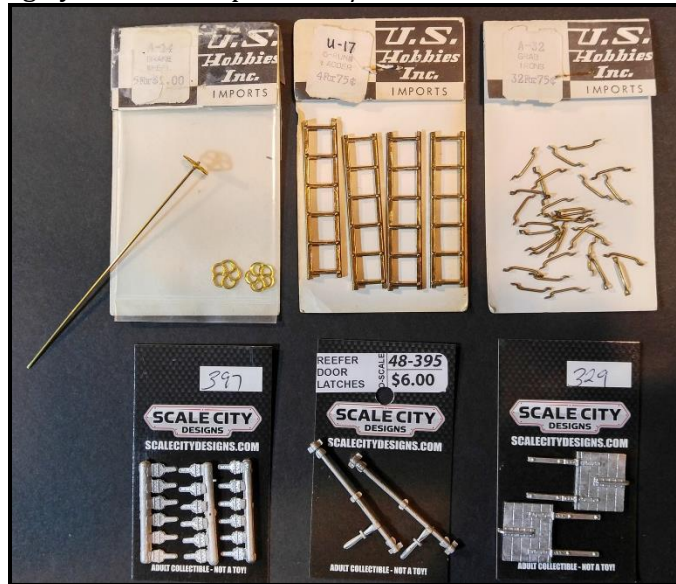
This photo shows the original vintage box & paperwork from the Westbrook 40 foot reefer kit. The body only needed to be slightly shortened for the car sides to fit properly. As I scanned the paperwork over to see how everything fit, I was shocked to see this kit was dated 1937! The actual prototype for the reefer model was probably still in service at that time!

By just removing a 1/4 inch off of the Westbrook frame length, the Champion car sides fit beautifully. On the wood floor section I attached about 1 ounce of lead weight to each end of the car. Once the body is all together, you won't have that option. All the wooden sub-structure components were assembled with Titebond Brand yellow glue. When ready, I used this same glue to attach the cardstock sides to the wood model. Now on to the details.



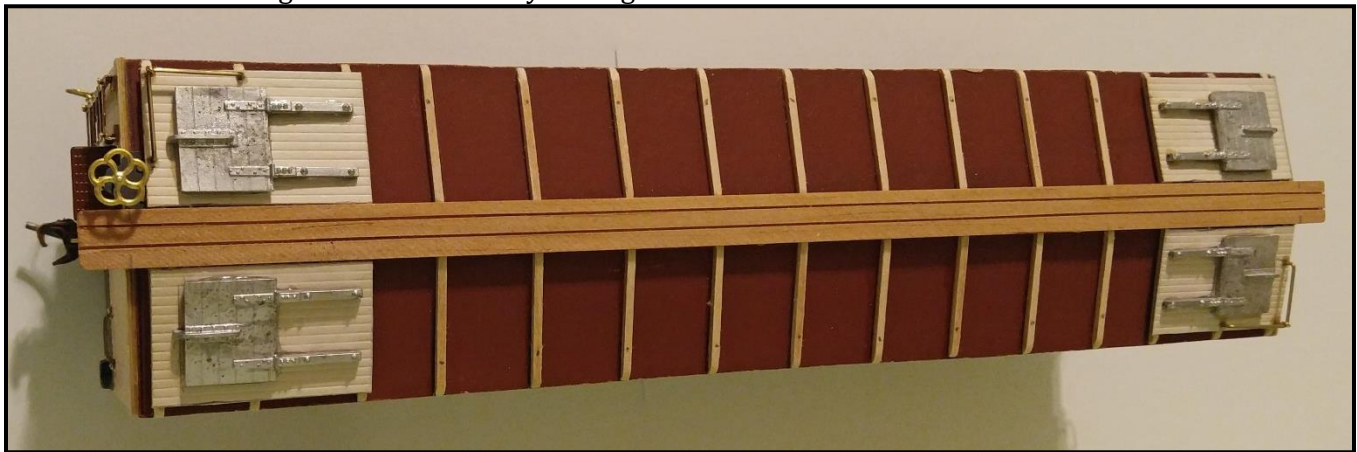
This side view of the model shows the construction prior to the pre-lettered sides being glued on. The roof and ends will get a good coat of rust colored paint first. After the sides are glued on, the brass ladders and grab irons will be added. After being painted flat black, the white metal door latches and hinges will also be added. The underframe details were used from an old Atlas brand boxcar found in my "spare parts bin".

Even though the pre-printed sides had door latches & hinges printed on them, that just wouldn't cut it for an O Scale model. I found nice offerings in white metal castings by a company called Scale City Designs. I pre-painted them flat black and glued them to the cars sides with 5-minute epoxy. The same company had ice hatch castings for the roof detail. I had some very old brass ladder and grab irons that were made by KTM in my "parts box". The brake wheel was also an offering by KTM with a piece of 1/32 inch brass wire for the staff.



This photo shows some of the parts used to finish the NKP reefer model. The Scale City Designs components were purchased from a seller on eBay. The old KTM parts were in my supply bin from years ago. These things can still be found at train shows & hobby shops. After pre-drilling small holes, the grab irons and ladders were attached using 1/2 inch straight pins.

I used the same size wire for the corner grabs on the roof as well as the cut levers. For eyelets, I like to use those found on the ends of #10 gold fish hooks. They work great!



In this view the roof detail can be seen prior to getting painted. The roof walk was one piece and included in the Westbrook kit dated 1937. The ribs were all individually cut from wood stock and the metal hatch castings were produced by Scale City Designs. The hand grabs on the roof were formed out of 1/32 inch brass wire.

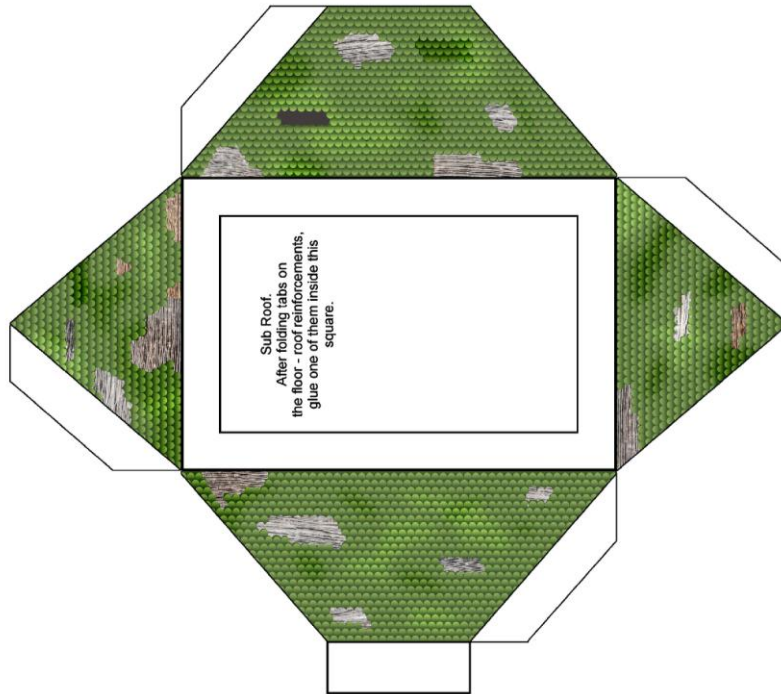
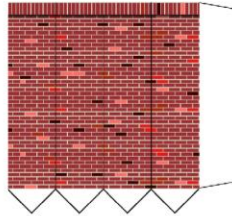
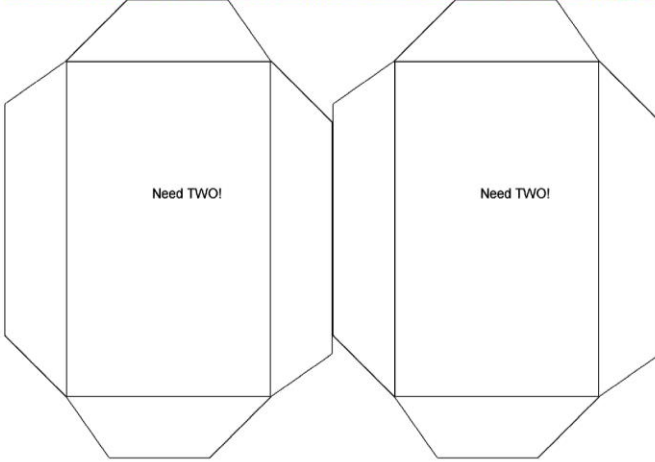
Once all the detail work was done, I painted the roof and ends with Testors flat rust-color paint. The entire underframe got a good coat of flat black. I actually glued the car sides on as a "last step" to prevent getting the rust paint on them. For trucks I used Intermountain metal wheel sets in Athearn plastic frames. This is one of the smoothest rolling combinations you will ever see in 2-rail O Scale. Kadee #805 couplers finished out the model and it was ready for "High Speed Service". A "new" model rolled out of the shops made almost entirely of antique components. Modeling the NKP is fun in any scale...



The finished model sits in front of the Nickel Plate Road Freight House. The building flat sports a covered loading/unloading track where all manner of freight is handled. The 2-Rail O Scale layout is owned by the Baton Rouge O Scalers and has traveled to St. Louis, Dallas, and all around Louisiana. The layout is now on permanent display at The Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders' club facilities in Jackson, Louisiana. Reefers are serviced with an ice house on this layout.

MODELER'S REFERENCE

The abandoned tower at Mortimer (North Findlay) as a Paper Model By Dan Merkel



PICKLES ON THE PLATE

A Guide to the Fermented Food Industry Along the NKP

By Ray Breyer



A LE&W American leads a short local towards St. Marys OH, in the years leading up to WWI. The first car in the train is an enclosed Heinz pickle vat car, nicknamed a "coffin car" by railfans.

Next to drying, pickling foods is one of the oldest methods of preserving foods for long term storage. Likely invented by the Sumerians over 4,500 years ago, pickled foods quickly became a staple across Europe, the Near East, and Asia. Northern and North-Eastern Europe inherited their pickled food tradition, mainly pickled cucumbers and sauerkraut, from exposure to the Romans nearly 2,000 years ago.

Traditionally, pickling was done in small batches, locally. Farmers would pickle their own vegetables for home use and town general stores would process slightly larger batches for sale. Beginning during the Civil War larger pickle and kraut plants were opened to serve large cities and the U.S. military, but these were still only mid-sized regional affairs. Beginning in the 1880s larger, national chains began to operate, especially H.J. Heinz and Squire Dingee, which tapped into the national market and a demand for more readily available, and more consistent, food products. By 1905 pickles were being traded on the Chicago Commodities Exchange, and the business boomed.

The Nickel Plate Road had a part in this industry, since it had three things going for it: it passed through prime cucumber growing areas along the Great Lakes; it was an important bridge line between major urban areas; and the area it served was populated by ethnic Germans and Poles who consumed the most pickles and sauerkraut.

While Michigan and Wisconsin soon came to dominate the cucumber growing industry, any place with sandy, well-drained soil and moderate growing temperatures was suitable for growing cucumbers and cabbages. Along the NKP, that meant areas in northern Indiana, Ohio, and New York close to the Great Lakes. Ohio especially had a large cucumber growing industry, as they were the most popular table vegetable during the Victorian period.

Three items are needed to create pickles or sauerkraut: produce, salt, and vinegar. The produce was all grown locally by truck farmers, the salt came from nearby deep shaft mines (there are salt mines 1,000 feet below both Detroit and Cleveland), and vinegar came from the apple growing regions of New York and Indiana. To make sauerkraut all of these ingredients were shipped raw by rail to processing factories,

usually in large terminal cities. Pickles, however, needed an intermediate “brining” step, where the fresh fruit (biologically, cucumbers are a fruit, not a vegetable) was brought to a salting station and immediately added into a salt-heavy brine solution and allowed to “brine” until the natural sugars have been replaced with salt. Once that process has been completed (2-6 weeks) the cucumbers are ready to be transported to a pickle factory for final processing.



A typical salting station consisted of a fenced off area, 10 to 30 giant wooden brining tanks with a raised walkway around them, a pump house and water tower for a ready supply of fresh water, and a storage building to hold tools, office space, and a huge amount of salt. This Heinz salting station in Wisconsin was typical of the ten similar plants along the NKP. Marquette County Historical Museum collection.



Loading and unloading was always done by hand, to not bruise the cucumbers. The fruit was fished out of the brining vats with handheld fishing nets, and transferred to waiting vat cars.

Although the Nickel Plate didn't have a single rail in Michigan or Wisconsin, and didn't get anywhere near the huge Heinz main plant in Pittsburgh, the railroad did still serve every part of the industry. Every

major city along the NKP supported at least two pickle companies, small towns near orchards supported the vinegar industry, and rural areas supported produce loading stations and cucumber salting stations. And finished products moved in both directions along all of the NKP's main lines.

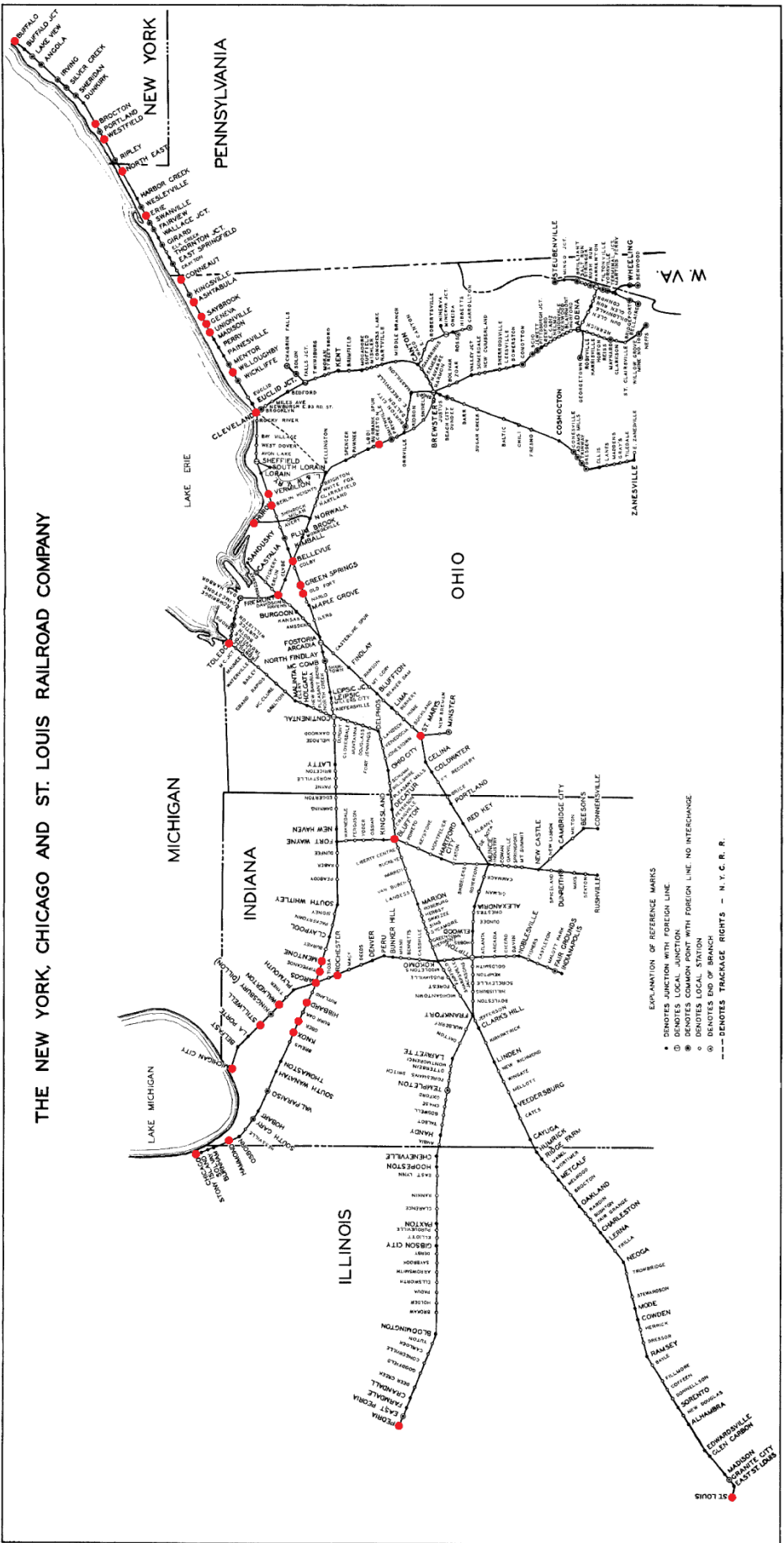


A NKP freight makes its way out of Buffalo in early 1938. The train includes a Heinz vinegar tank car, in its colorful yellow, green, and red paint. Eric Hansmann collection.

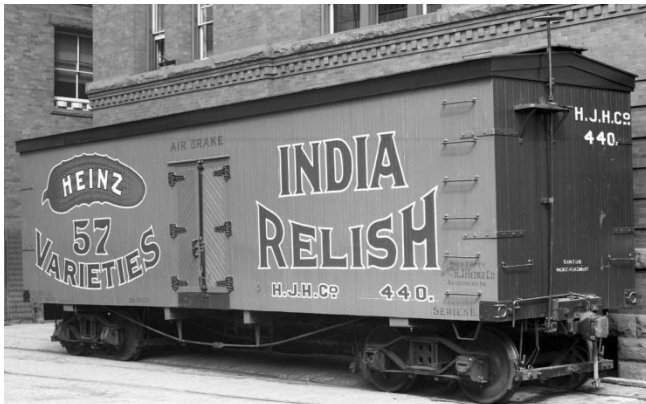
The traffic moved in a variety of freight cars. Heinz had its own fleet of more than 250 colorful freight cars, while other companies usually relied on railroad rolling stock. Vinegar and brined cucumbers had to be moved in wooden tank cars, since their acidic contents would eat right through a steel car. These wood-bodied cars were either owned by a single company, or rented from a car leasing agency. Brokered pickles (processed, but not yet final packed) traveled the country in boxcars full of 30 gallon barrels.



While semi-finished pickles travelled in either vat cars or in barrels in boxcars, raw cabbages would move in any car with a roof. Ventilated boxcars were preferred, but in the east stock cars were more commonly available (after being steam cleaned!)



The accompanying map shows the site of every NKP station with an online plant or loading facility. On-line, there were 12 pickle factories, 5 sauerkraut packers, 15 vinegar works, and 10 salting stations. Additionally, several dozen more pickle and kraut works were found near NKP track, especially in Chicago and Cleveland. Carloads of Claussen, Fleischmann, Heinz, Libby, and Squire Dingee products traveled up and down the NKP every day.

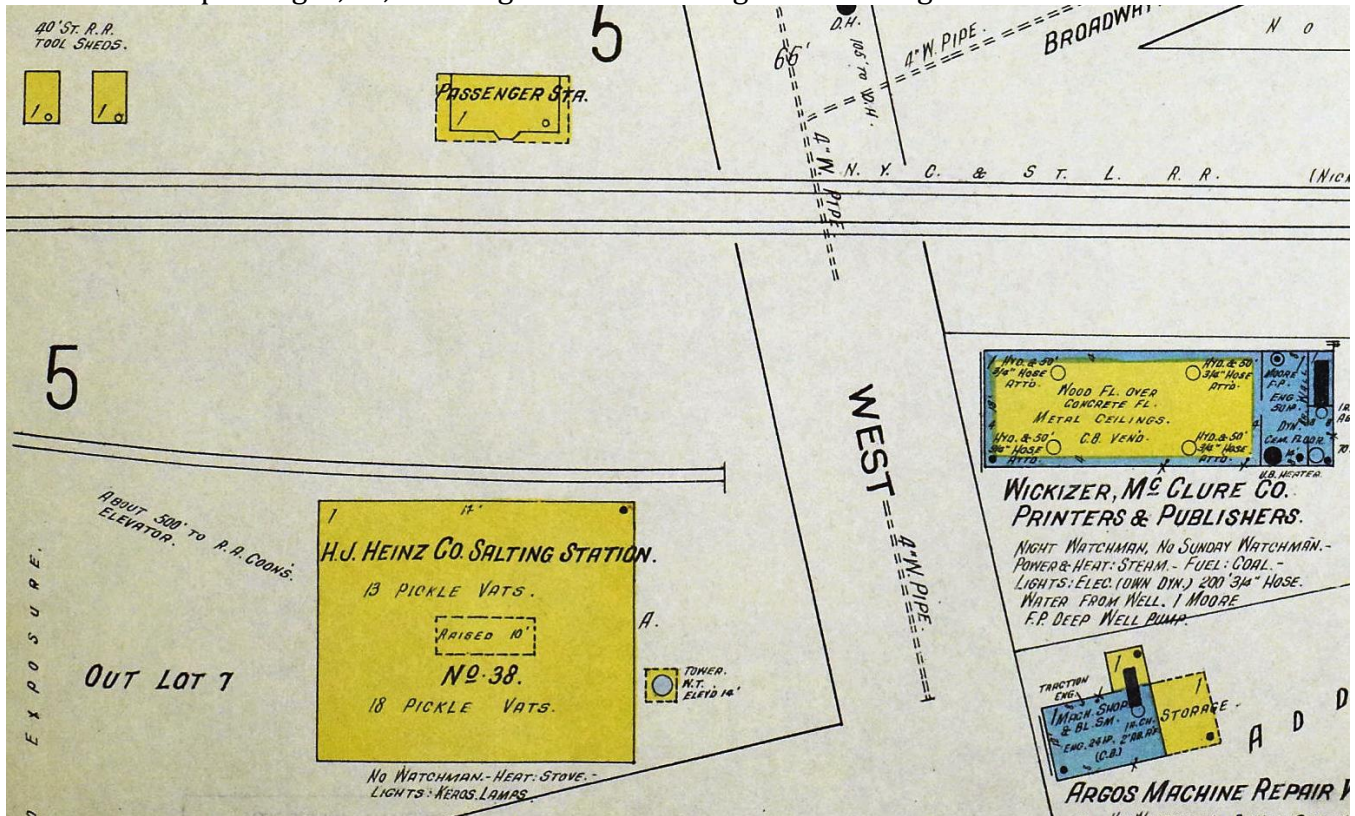


Heinz traditionally painted their fleet of cars in a brilliant combination of yellow, green, brown and red, which made them stand out in a train. By the 1950s the cars had lost their fancy paint schemes, and looked like the rest of the industry's cars, which were generally much plainer.

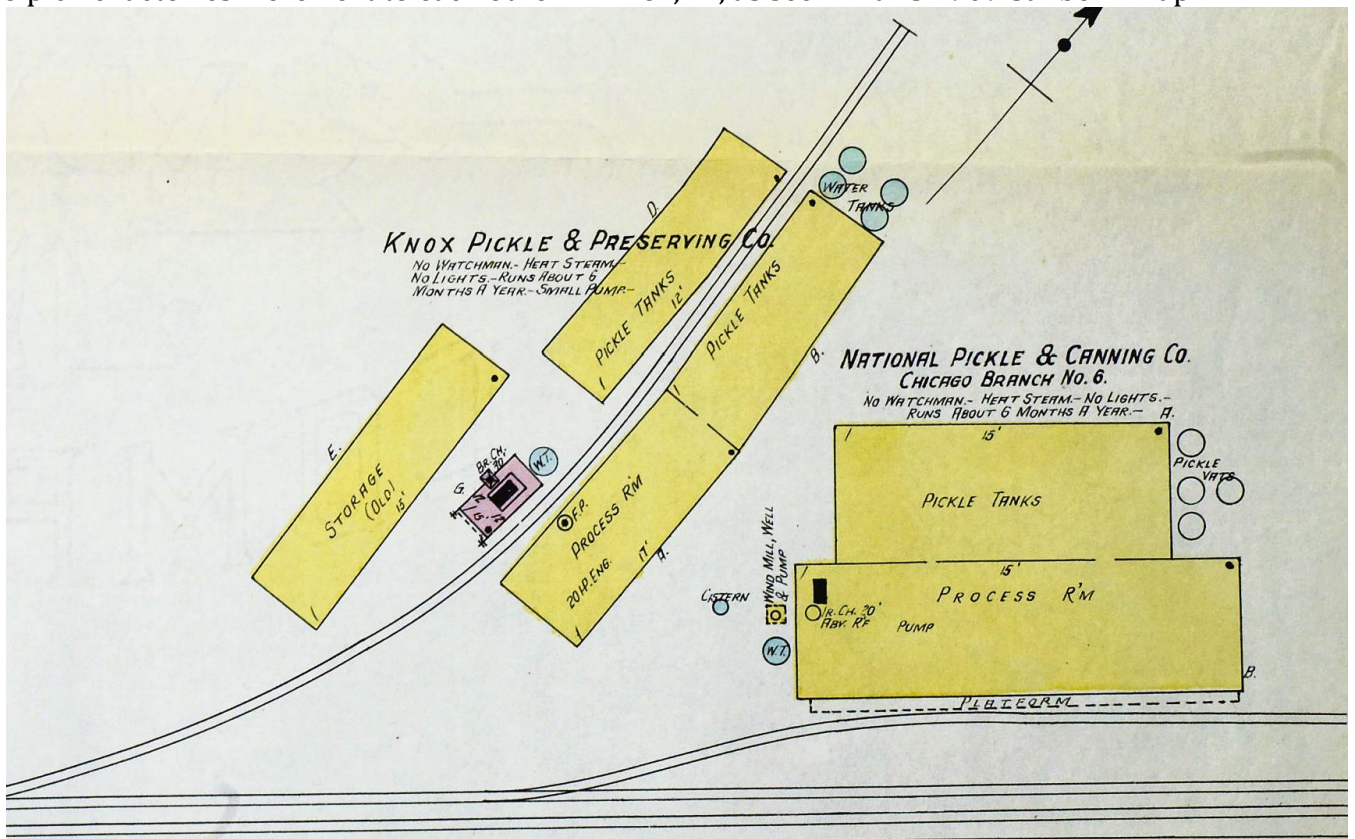


Heinz was by no means the only company transporting pickles across the country, although they are the best known. With three large competitors with as-large fleets as Heinz, and with several smaller processing plants and private lease fleets operating between 1900 and 1960, there's plenty of opportunities to model several of these cars.

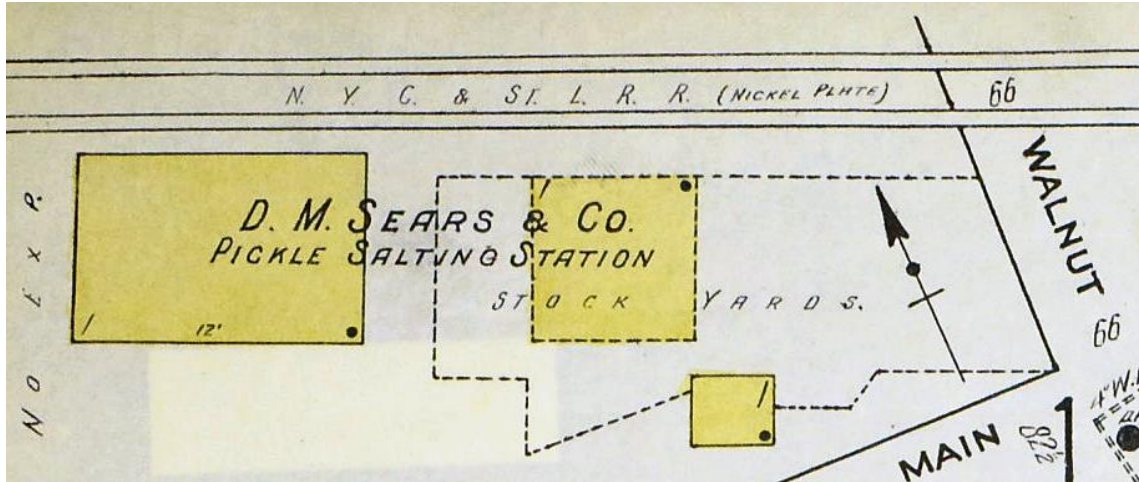
1913 Sanborn map of Argos, IN, showing the Heinz salting station along the NKP.



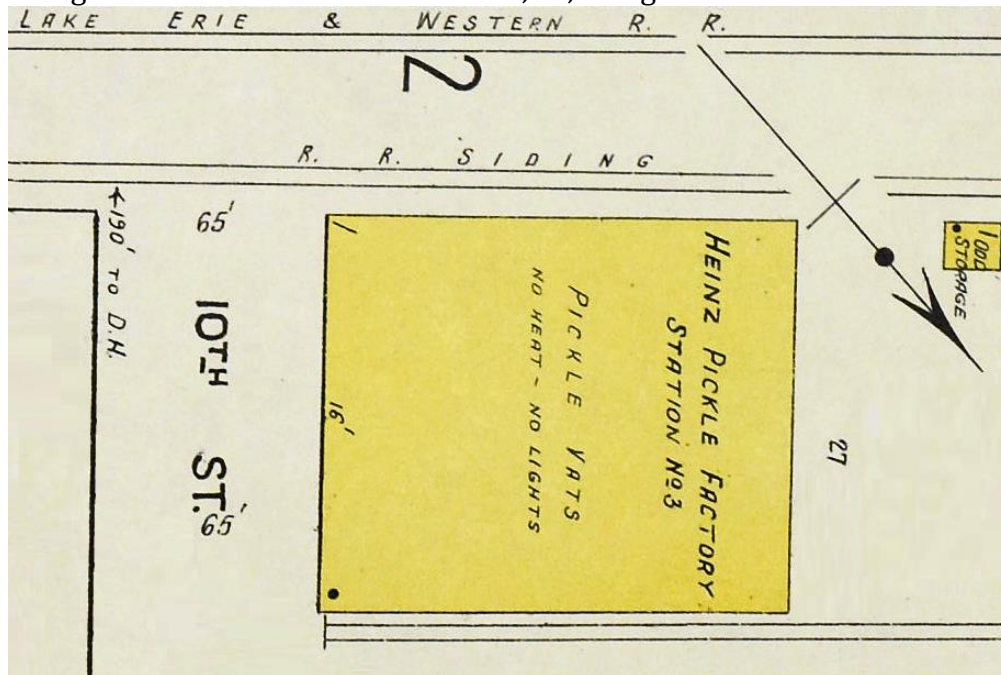
Two pickle factories were next to each other in Knox, IN, as seen in this 1909 Sanborn map.



Mentone, IN was home to D.M. Sears & Co., which operated an independent salting station. These brined and ready to flavor & pack "half sours" would then be sold to the highest bidder, usually through a pickle broker.



Another Heinz salting station was found in Walkerton, IN, along the LE&W.





Half a dozen vat cars wait to be unloaded at the Squire Dingee plant in Chicago. These cars would have come from all over the Midwest and marshalled in one of Chicago's belt railway yards before heading to the factory, so seeing this many cars in the same place was a rare treat.

MODELING THE NKP'S PICKLE INDUSTRY

Surprisingly, modeling the pickle industry is pretty simple, in several scales. In HO, Athearn has two different kinds of pickle cars, Westerfield has a pickle vat car and several Heinz insulated boxcars, Sunshine has produced a vinegar tank car, and even Roco used to make a Heinz vinegar car (which you can still find at swapmeets). In N, Roco made the vinegar tanks and one style of vat car. The molds have been around since the early 1970s and have changed hands several times. And in O, Lionel and others have made vat cars and vinegar tanks.

Possibly the best "one stop shop" for modeling the pickle industry is AMB Laserkit. They have a wood kit to turn any 40-foot flat car into a vat car in HO and N, and also make brining stations in N, HO, and O scales.



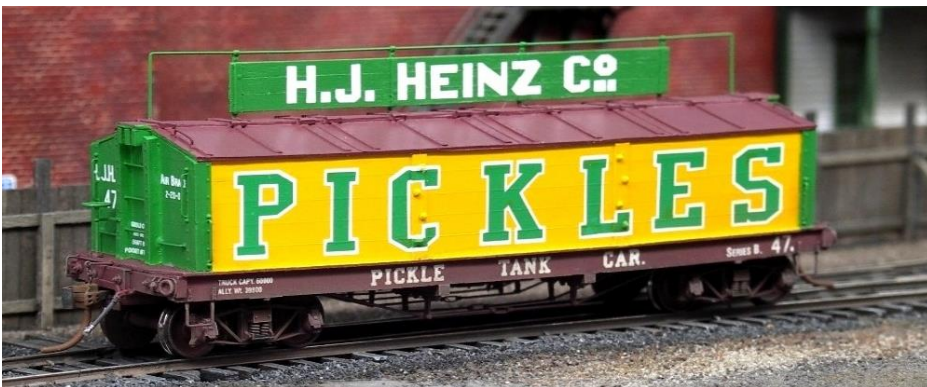
AMB's HO version of a cucumber brining station. They also make this kit in O and N.



AMB's pickle vat car conversion kit.



Athearn's pickle vat car.



Westerfield makes a couple of different versions of shorter, earlier vat cars.



Sunshine's beautiful vinegar tank car kit in HO scale resin (reputed to be the most difficult resin kit ever made!)

ALONG THE LINE



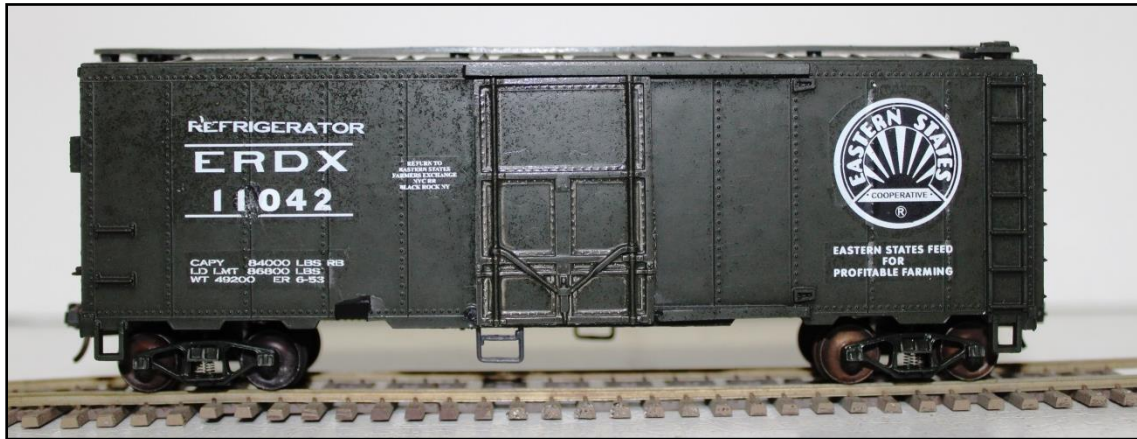
Here's another look at Art Shale's version of Lerna IL, in HO scale. Featured in Volume 37 of the Notebook, NKP 587 is seen here in its "typical" role as a local switcher, equipped with a slightly longer 12-RA tender. Art Shale modeling and photo.



Here are two views of Chuck Conway's O scale/Proto 48 Indianapolis layout. Chuck's layout was featured in Volume 22 of the *Notebook*.

ADDING ERDX INSULATED BOXCARS TO YOUR HO SCALE NICKEL PLATE FLEET

By Bud Brueggemann



ERDX cars were built by the MDT's Despatch Shops and leased to Eastern States Farmer's Co-Op, several of which were scattered along the Nickel Plate Road's mainline. There were 2 series of cars: 10000-10099, similar to the Train-Miniature Plug door 40' boxcar; and 11000-11099, which were similar to the old Lindberg 40' box with plug doors. The T-M models are not as high as the Lindberg cars which helps with added variety. I found these cars in my 1959 Equipment Register under the Merchants Despatch heading.

The cars were painted a dark green in the mid-1950s, and on the NKP were loaded with bulk flour in Huron OH. These cars were very common on Nickel Plate freights, especially KC-44, and show up in many period NKP videos. In 1964 Eastern States was merged with Agway and the cars slowly disappeared.



ERDX 10069 as it appeared in 1967. By this time the cars had lost their fancy heralds, and the reporting marks themselves were being phased out.

When I researched the car and found that the cars were of two heights with different numbers, I decided to make some of each for variety. These cars travelled a lot, both on NKP through freights and on locals making local spots, so you can place them at your local feed mill or food plant. For this project I had in stock a low side T-M plug door boxcar and a Lindberg plain door boxcars. Any 40' high side boxcar can be used for the 11000 series. BTW, Lindberg boxcars are very nice, detailed models with sprung trucks. Kadee wheels and couplers were added to both cars

Depending on your detailing desires, you can remove the molded grabs, steps and ladders to be replaced with those of your choosing. I chose not to remove any, as the details from the manufacturers are fine. For the Lindberg car I modified the door opening by carving away any free-standing details around the door opening, and replaced the door with an 8-foot wide plug door I had lying around in my parts bin (I think they were old Details West parts). I added a double rung step by each door as shown in the photos. These stirrups were leftovers from Intermountain kits.



I painted the cars with Scale Paint Pullman Green, but any dark green will suffice (weathering affects actual color so an exact match is not important). I did not spray any gloss coating as the dried paint was glossy enough and worked fine for seating the decals

After two days to ensure the paint had thoroughly dried, I began the decalling process. I purchased the decals from Highball Graphics (P.O. Box 57, West Ossipee, NH 03890). Each set will do two cars. There is a very good diagram included with the decals, and pictures of the prototype cars are available online by just typing "ERDX railcars" into a Google search box.

I placed the herald first since it is larger and helped me get a feel for how long to soak and slide the decals off the paper. This really helped as the decals are very delicate and must be removed very carefully.



I learned that after a couple of minutes of soaking in warm water, by slowly sliding the decals with a Solvaset-soaked Q-Tip and tweezers holding the edge of the decal, I could get the decals off and into place. I then added more Solvaset to the decal and placed it exactly where I wanted it. This is a sort of trial & error function but I proceed carefully and managed to not break, fold, or ruin any of the decals!

After getting the decals onto both sides of both cars, I let them dry overnight. With careful work, decal placement will be about two hours per car. At this point the cars were done, except for a light spraying of Dullcote over both and a little light weathering on both cars.



THE NKPHTS MODELER'S NOTEBOOK NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Are you a Nickel Plate modeler? Or a modeler of the Wheeling & Lake Erie, the Lake Erie & Western, the Clover Leaf, or any of the predecessor roads that went into creating the Greater Nickel Plate? Do you have a digital camera? Would you like to share what you're doing, or what you know, or your tips and techniques on modeling the NKP? Then have we got the forum for you!

These new issues of the *Modeler's Notebook* mark the rejuvenation of the online magazine, which can become the greatest resource available for modeling and showcasing the work of NKP modelers around the globe. Ultimately, the plan is to issue the virtual magazine quarterly, but that means that the editorial board of the NKPHTS needs YOUR help in adding to its pages!

We're looking for just about any and all submissions for the magazine. Full-length features, small one to three page "mini features" and stand-alone photos are all welcome and desired. So long as the subject matter is NKP-related, it's fair game! You say that you aren't a writer? No problem: the NKPHTS editorial staff is here to help. With good quality cameras coming standard in just about every smart phone these days, taking photos couldn't be simpler! (so long as they're relatively well-lit and in focus, that is) And we'd love to see your work in all scales and skill levels: S, TT, High-Rail and live steam are all as welcome as O, HO and N.

So share your love of Nickel Plate modeling today! To talk to the editorial staff about a submission, or to submit an article, please contact the following:

Ray Breyer (Editor, *Nickel Plate Road Modeler's Notebook*)

Tony Koester (NKPHTS Publications Director)

Ed Kapuscinski (NKPHTS Internet Services Director)

rtbsvrr69@yahoo.com

nkpfan@pdt.net

webmaster@nkphts.org

SHOW US YOUR PAINESVILLE TOWERS!



The NKPHTS recently released a kit for the Painesville OH tower in O, HO, and N. These models have been selling briskly for several months, which is more than enough time to have allowed you to finish the kits and add them to your layouts. We here at the Modeler's Notebook want to see photos of your completed towers!