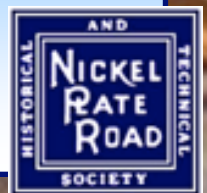


# NICKEL PLATE ROAD *Modeler's Notebook*™

Volume 40, May 2022



**Modeling South Whitley Indiana  
Kitbash a NKP TOFC Flat Car  
Upgrading NKP Highway Trailer Models**



## MODELER'S NOTEBOOK STAFF

MODELER'S NOTEBOOK EDITOR  
COMPANY STORE MANAGER

Raymond T. Breyer  
Dan L. Merkel

The Nickel Plate was an industry leader of TOFC 'piggyback' freight traffic, and was justifiably proud of its role in creating a new and profitable traffic source. This issue of the Notebook includes two simple yet effective articles on how to add NKP trailer traffic to your model railroad.



1961



annual  
report

Happy Nickel Plate Modeling,

*RAY*

*(ON THE COVER: The "City of Lima" trails a Lackawanna passenger train on its way to New York City, on Bill Botkin's home layout. Photo by Bill Botkin.)*

## Nickel Plate Road Modeler's Notebook Volume 40, May 2022

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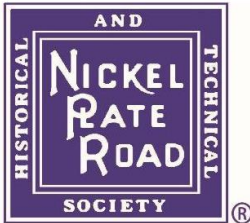
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# NICKEL PLATE ROAD Company Store

**"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&L 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&L.



### W&L 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.



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

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

# NEW NICKEL PLATE PRODUCTS

## 2022 NKP RELEASES FROM BACHMANN

**Bachmann Trains** continues to be the friend of Nickel Plate Road modelers, as seen in their newly released 2022 full product line catalog. Offerings in HO, N and three rail O will be available this year, including all-new NKP paint on quad hoppers in HO and twin hoppers in N. For passenger trains they'll be releasing an all-new model of a NYC express reefer that was also used by the REA.



NICKEL PLATE #765 - RAILFAN VERSION  
Item No. 52401



NICKEL PLATE #759  
Item No. 52404



NICKEL PLATE #611 with  
MEDIUM TENDER  
Item No. 54307



NICKEL PLATE #8100  
Item No. 20434



WHEELING & LAKE ERIE #606  
Item No. 18746



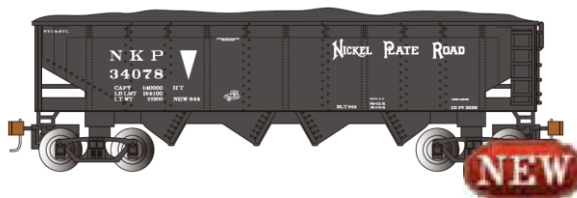
NICKEL PLATE ROAD #13163  
Item No. 15012



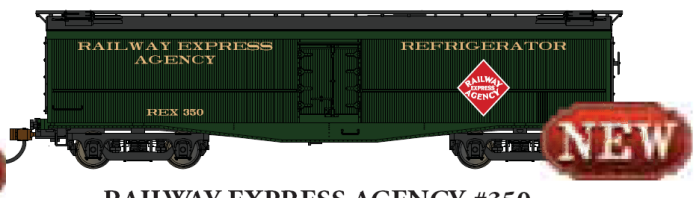
NICKEL PLATE ROAD  
(High Speed Service)  
Item No. 73202



NICKEL PLATE ROAD  
Item No. 48206



NICKEL PLATE ROAD #34078  
(illustration shown)  
Item No. 17623



RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY #350  
(illustration shown)  
Item No. 75704



## MOW CRANE AND BOOM CAR FROM ATLAS O



[Atlas O](#) has announced a NKP-lettered wrecking crane (#[3001239](#)) and accompanying boom car (#[3001245](#)). While not necessarily prototypical, they'd still make a nice addition to any three rail O scale layout.

## HO SCALE NKP PA-1 BY RAPIDO

[Rapido Trains](#) sent us production sample photos of their upcoming NKP [PA-1](#).



By any measure, these models will prove to be the most accurate PA-1 models ever produced (with help from the NKPHTS). No firm release date has been set, but "second quarter 2022" is expected.

# Arcadia Tower Model Now in Stock

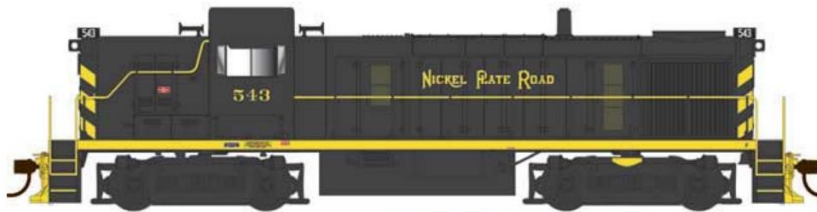


Originally built by the in the early 1910s, this wooden tower stood guard for both the diamond and interchange crossing of the LE&W and Nickel Plate Road in Arcadia, Ohio. It became NKP property when the line acquired the LE&W in 1923. Sometime after the merger, in the later 1920's, the outside stairs were added. The tower continued in service until the tracks in Arcadia were realigned, and was replaced with a brick tower by the new crossing.

This is a completely new model available only from the NKPHTS. As close to a standard tower as the NKP would get, this model can easily be used at any yard, crossing, or interchange on your layout.



## BOWSER ANNOUNCES A SECOND NKP RS-3



Nickel Plate Road simplified scheme  
#25215 Cab #543  
#25216 Cab #553  
#25217 Cab #543 with DCC & Sound  
#25218 Cab #553 with DCC & Sound

**Bowser** has announced a new run of their [RS-3 diesels](#) in HO scale, including two with the Nickel Plate's later diesel paint scheme.



# 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.

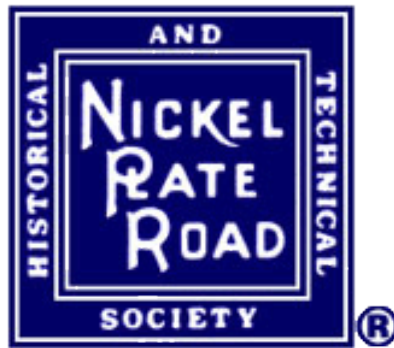
The Society publishes a quarterly magazine, maintains an award-winning website at [NKPHTS.org](http://NKPHTS.org), provides stewardship of a major archive of historical material at the [Western New York Railway Historical Society](#), and offers numerous member programs and projects, including an annual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

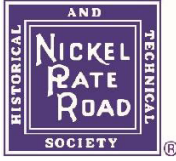
magazine.

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](http://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](#).



# Nickel Plate Historical & Technical Society New Member / Renewal Application



**CHECK ONE**

- New Member
- Renewing Member - Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year Born (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( ) - E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a modeler? (Check One) NO \_\_\_ N Scale \_\_\_ HO Scale \_\_\_ O Scale \_\_\_

Are you interested in volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP

**Basic Membership** (US & Canada) \$ 40.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**International Members** (Includes First Class Mail) \$ 60.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributing Membership** (Includes annual calendar) \$ 70.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Patron Membership** (Includes Calendar/First Class Mail) \$ 140.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Associate Membership** (Spouse, Children, Grandchildren under 18)

Associate Name 1: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 5.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Name 2: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 5.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**First Class Mail** (Basic and Contributing Members) \$ 10.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## DONATIONS (Tax Deductible)

**Founders Fund - General Fund**, used for magazine, newsletter, internet Funding, internet archives funding, and administrative expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Preservation/Research** - Archives preservation & maintenance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**McCaleb Rehor Fund** - Funding for preservation of existing NKP structures, Rolling Stock and Locomotives \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Modeling Fund** - Development of new models in all scales \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Publications Fund** - Acquisition of photographic & copyrighted material \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership year is October 17 thru October 16 of each year

**PRIVACY POLICY:** The Nickel Plate Historical & Technical Society does not sell or offer any membership information to any commercial or other historical associations. Information on this form is used strictly by the society for Magazine, Newsletter and company store mailings and e-mails.

**MAIL TO: NKPHTS MEMBER SERVICES  
PO BOX 138  
BUCKLIN, MO 64631-0138**

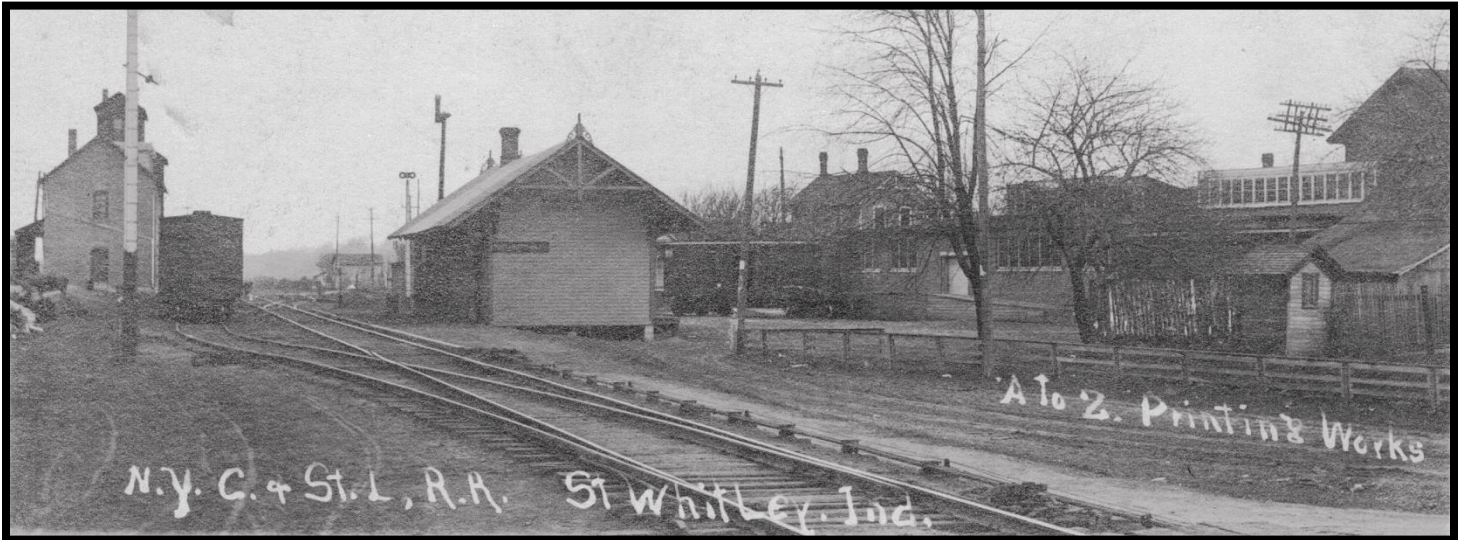
or Renew by PayPal at [NKPHTS.ORG/JOIN](http://NKPHTS.ORG/JOIN)



# A NICKEL PLATE TOWN YOU CAN MODEL

## South Whitley, Indiana

By Ray Breyer



An overall view of the depot area in South Whitley, looking east towards the Grady Elevator. Small towns with interesting track arrangements can add lots of operational interest to a mainline-focused layout.

The Nickel Plate was built to do one thing: compete with the Vanderbilt railroad empire in moving freight quickly from Chicago to New York. The railroad eventually did other things, and did move fast freight very well, but the railroad's core mission poses a challenge to the NKP modelers who want to replicate the Chicago to Buffalo main line in miniature.

Simply, it's a little boring. Berkshires zooming across the prairies at 70 miles per hour is impressive, but those trains quickly lap a normal-sized layout (most of us don't have the room that Tony Koester does!) and don't provide much else to do with our trains. Running fast freights is fun, but so is easy paced town switching. But finding towns that support both fast mainline action and slow town work is a challenge. Most of us don't have room for a big city like Conneaut or Kokomo, and small towns like Knox or Fairview have too little to do.

LOCATION	TRACK LENGTH									
	LAI D	TAKEN UP	BY R.O.W.	OFF R.O.W.	CLEAR	CO. INDUS.	PRIV. INDUS.	SIDING	YARD	TOTAL
<b>SOUTH WHITLEY</b>										
PASSING SIDING 1-2			7400		6789			7400		7400
PASSING SIDING N°2 13-14			2149		1742			2149		2149
LOCAL 3-4			1067		879			1067		1067
VANDALIA "Y" 5-6			884		670			884		884
VANDALIA CONN. 9-10			652		610			652		652
WEST LOCAL 7-8			950		520			950		950
A to Z SPUR 11-12			806		674	446	375			821

Thankfully, there are a few decent towns along the NKP main line that will fit into a normal sized layout space, and can support both fast mainline action and slower-paced switching. South Whitley Indiana is one of them. Situated 115 miles east of Stony Island Yard on the Chicago Division, little South Whitley doesn't seem like it would have a whole lot to offer give a population of only 1,200 souls. But good things can come in small packages!

South Whitley is an old town in Indiana, incorporated in 1837. While small, the town soon became the industrial hub of Whitley County, drawing several robust mid-sized industries. The Eel River Railroad came to town in 1874, and the NKP in 1881. The Eel River became part of the Vandalia RR in 1905, and part of the Pennsylvania RR proper in 1922.

From a modeling perspective, South Whitley has a little of everything for everyone. In terms of traffic the town saw seven passenger trains and 15 scheduled freights in 1922, and four passenger and 14 scheduled freights in 1950. A 1958 dispatcher's sheet for the Chicago Division shows six scheduled passenger trains, 17 scheduled freights, 5 extras, and one work extra. All in all, more traffic that you can shake a stick at.

CHICAGO DIVISION--WESTBOUND														
Capacity of Sidings in Cars	Distance from Buffalo	Distance between Stations	STATIONS AND SIDINGS	Hours between which Train Operations are Open.	FIRST CLASS TRAINS		THIRD CLASS TRAINS							
					5	7	39	25	27	35	55	37	51	
					Daily	Daily	Through Freight	Switch Run	Switch Run	Through Freight	Fast Freight	Through Freight	Fast Freight	
						Daily	Daily Ex. Sunday	Daily Ex. Sunday	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily		
.....	370.7		..... FT. WAYNE....L	DN		2.35AM	11.04AM							
.....	371.9	1.2	WEST WAYNE YD.. L	DN		2.38	11.06	2.30AM	3.00AM	7.01AM	8.30AM	3.45PM	8.15PM	9.50PM
.....	376.7	4.8	..... Hadley.... B			2.45	11.12	2.50	3.20	7.16	8.49	4.02	8.35	10.09
144	381.1	4.4	West End W. H. Double }			2.49	11.18							
.....	386.2	5.1	..... Dunfee.... B											
.....	389.1	2.9	..... Raber.... B											
143	389.1	3.0	..... Peabody.... B			2.56	11.23							
.....	392.1	4.3	..... Arnolds... BW											
144	396.4	6.2	..... South Whitley.. B	DN		s 3.04	11.32							
155	402.6	9.0	..... Sidney.... B			3.13	11.42							

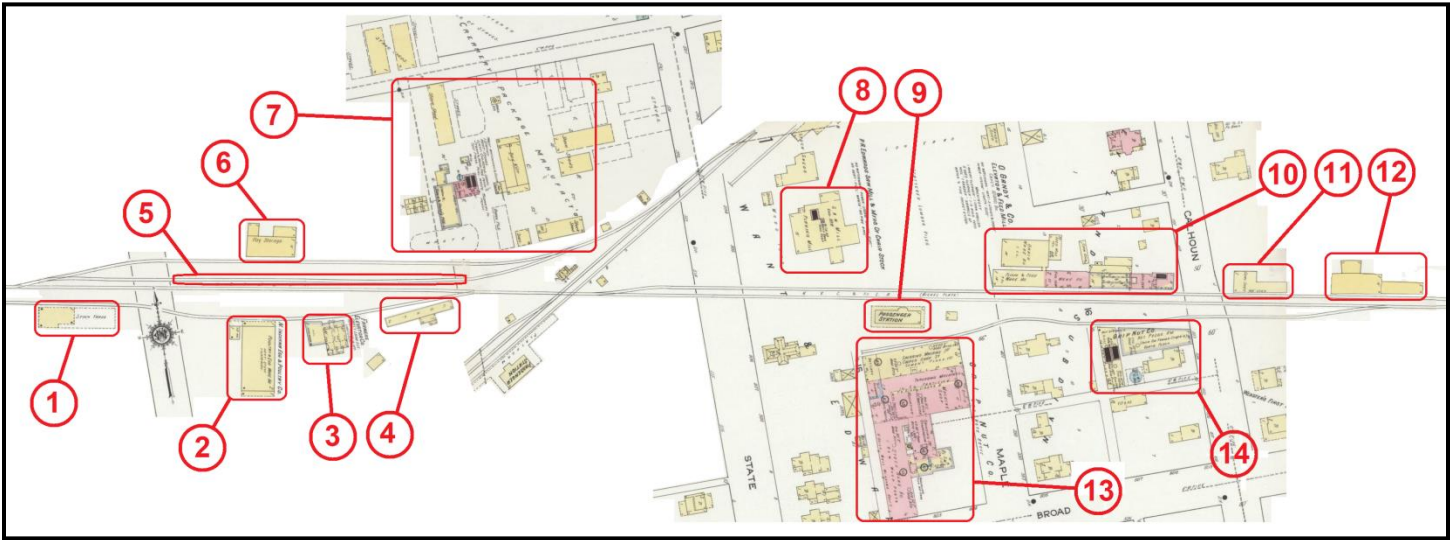
The industrial mix in South Whitley was also large and varied. Foundries and sawmills stood next to grain elevators and printing companies, along with stockyards, egg wholesalers, and fuel companies. The industrial mix was rounded off with an interchange with the Pennsy, which saw the exchange of a few cars every working day.



NKP 749 is shown working the town local in 1957, dragging a stock car past the Grady Elevator & Mill to the stockyard at the other side of town. NKPHTS collection.



Thanks to the Indiana Historical Society's great online digital image **database**, we have a unique opportunity to view almost every industry in town in the pre-WWII years, giving us a unique opportunity to see what a modeled town would have looked like.



I stitched together several of the South Whitley Sanborn maps found on the Library of Congress' website to come up with a single image map of the NKP mainline area through town, as it would have looked in the 1920s and 1930s. The above version shows the 14 different industries directly served by the Nickel Plate. From this map I was able to cross-reference industries and images from the Indiana website. Below is a tour of the interesting and varied industries South Whitley has to offer a model railroad.



#1 is the town's stockyards. While not large (two chutes) it served as the retail center for several livestock dealers in town. This image shows a yearling horse auction around 1905.



#2. Next to the stockyards was the Northern Indiana Egg & Poultry Co. Mainly dealing in fresh eggs for the Chicago market, the company also sold dressed and frozen chickens. This photo shows the “street side” of the building; at the far right distance is a NKP boxcar waiting to be loaded with crates of eggs.



#3 is the Farmer's Co-Op Elevator Co. The building was constructed around 1900, and served the town for almost 100 years. These two photos show what the elevator looked like in 1910 and 1958.





#4 was the Caskey Coal Co. Small coal dealers like these were very common along pre-WWII railroads, and most looked something like this one. Coal would have been hand shoveled out of gondolas into the storage building, and would have been shoveled into wagons or trucks for delivery. The office, while tiny, has all of the essentials needed for the company.



#5 was the NKP-PRR (Vandalia Line) interchange. This image was taken facing the northeast, with the PRR interchange tracks second from the left. The NKP didn't exchange a huge number of cars with the Pennsy (600 loaded cars in 1954), but there were usually one or two cars to work every time the local came through town.

I wasn't able to find a photo of #6, the hay dealer, but it might have been the falling over shed to the far left of the above image.



As the senior road, the tower reflected early PRR Lines West building practices; the NKP paid a percentage of the towermen's wages and building maintenance. Derailments were relatively common at this interlocking; the above photo shows one such wreck from 1910.



#7 started off as a local creamery, but seems to have focused on producing packaging for creameries by 1920. This is the original creamery building seen in 1905.





#8. Some industries look more impressive on paper than they do in real life. Edward's sawmill focused on turning trees into barrel staves and wall lath, two essential but definitely not glamorous construction materials that are almost never modeled.



#9. The Nickel Plate depot in South Whitley was a completely common "Class Three" combination depot, built around 1884 and found all over the NKP mainline.



One of the most impressive industries in town was #10, the O. Gandy & Co. elevator and mill. The company received assorted grains and supplements, and shipped out bagged and bulk flour, animal feed, and seed oils. The above photos from 1910, while the lower is from 1957.







#11 is marked on the Sanborn maps as a coal shed, but several photos show it to be another flour mill.



#12 is another mill, this time the Collamer's South Whitley Milling Co. The Collamer family was the most important in town, owning several industries including this mill, a furniture store, a grocery, and a hardware store. They also had a bridge over the Eel River named after them.



The NKP passing siding through town ended next to Collamer's, and the east end was CTC controlled immediately after WWII.

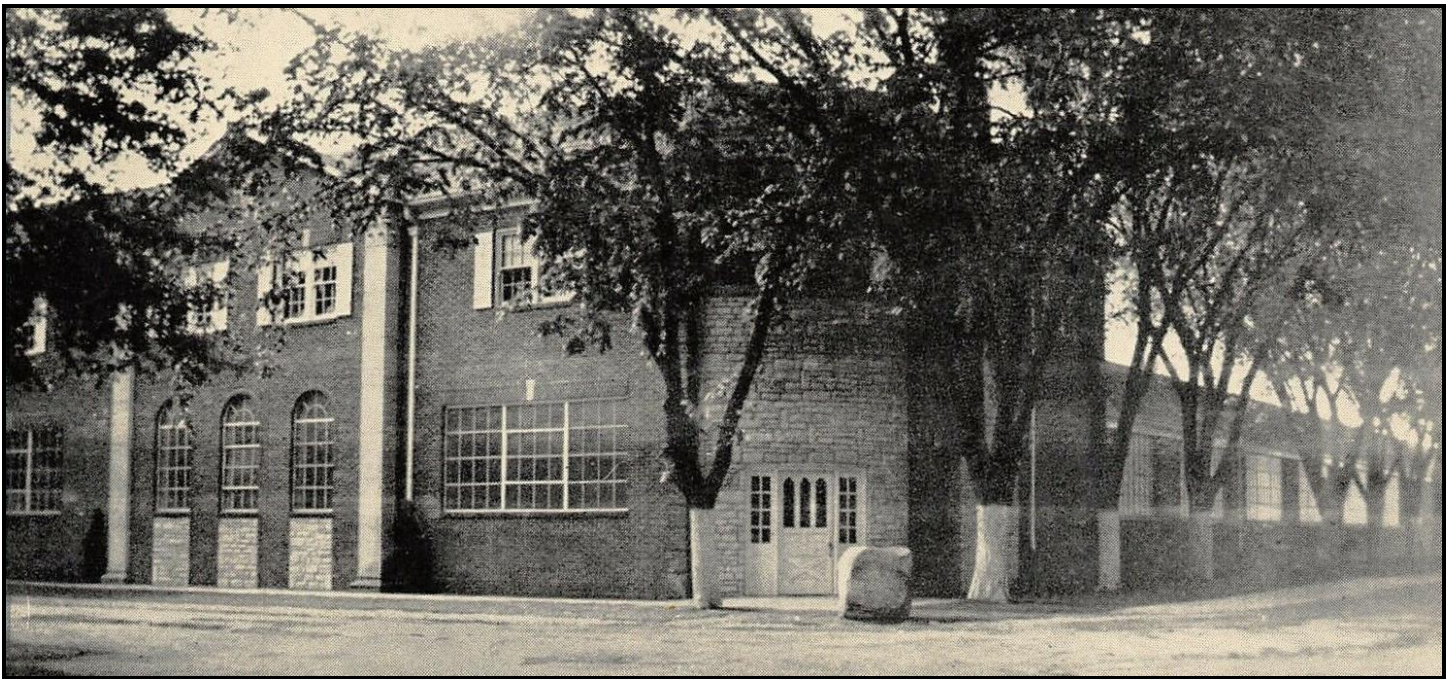




#13 was originally the A to Z Printing Co., located behind the depot. A large facility, it was taken over by the Grip Nut Co. at some point in the 1920s.







#14 The Grip Nut Company was the best known industry in town, making assorted lock nuts and specialty fasteners well into the 1980s, when the company was bought by Stanley and moved out of town.

Semi-Finished Hexagon Nuts.

**NUT SIZE**  $\frac{3}{16}$

**DIMENSION INDICATOR**

20 NAT'L. FINE THREADS PER INCH  
14 NAT'L. COARSE

<b>HEAVY</b>	THICKNESS FULL - In.	27/64
	NO. IN KEG	3,600
	*WEIGHT PER 1000 - Lbs.	47.0
	THICKNESS JAM - In.	17/64
<b>REGULAR</b>	NO. IN KEG	5,100
	*WEIGHT PER 1000 - Lbs.	30.7
	THICKNESS FULL - In.	23/64
	NO. IN KEG	4,500
<b>LIGHT</b>	*WEIGHT PER 1000 - Lbs.	34.0
	THICKNESS JAM - In.	15/64
	NO. IN KEG	6,000
	*WEIGHT PER 1000 - Lbs.	25.0
	WIDTH ACROSS FLATS	3/4

\*Weights are for steel nuts.

**GRIPCO LOCK NUT**

*Here's Why it Locks*

This simple deflection of the thread does the trick... provides a controlled friction lock!

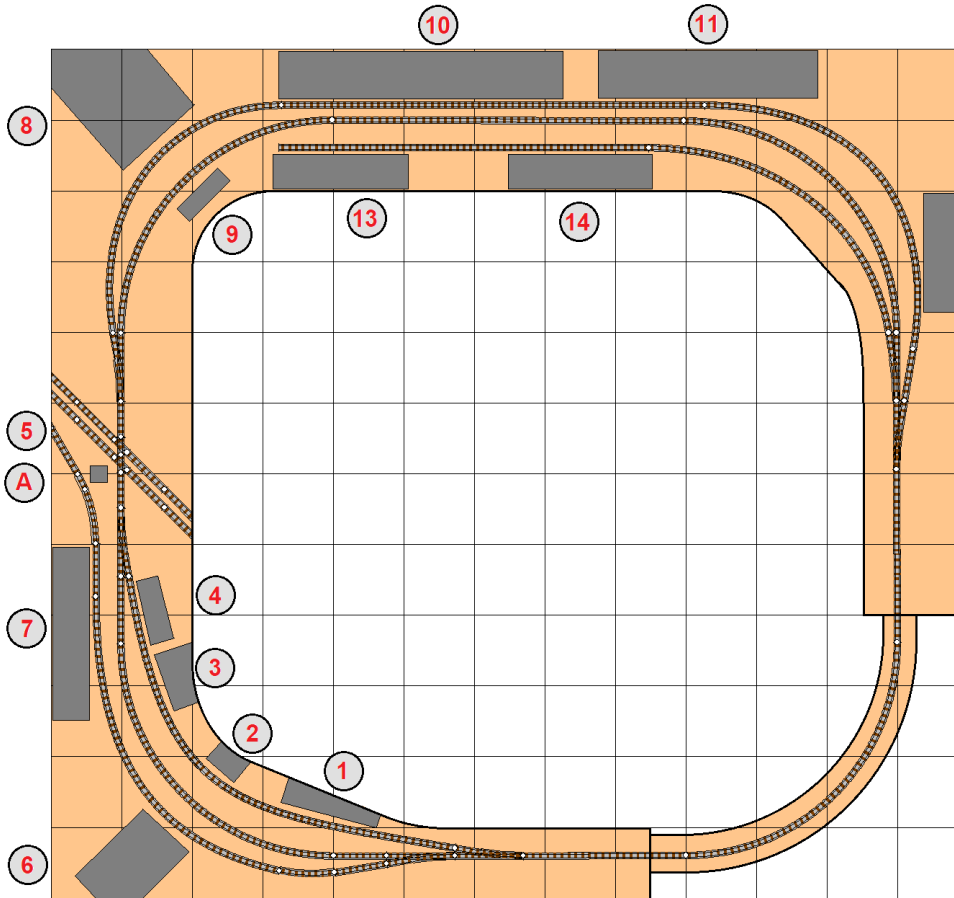
**GRIP NUT COMPANY - Chicago**

DIMENSIONS SAME AS FOR STANDARD HEXAGON NUTS

PULL

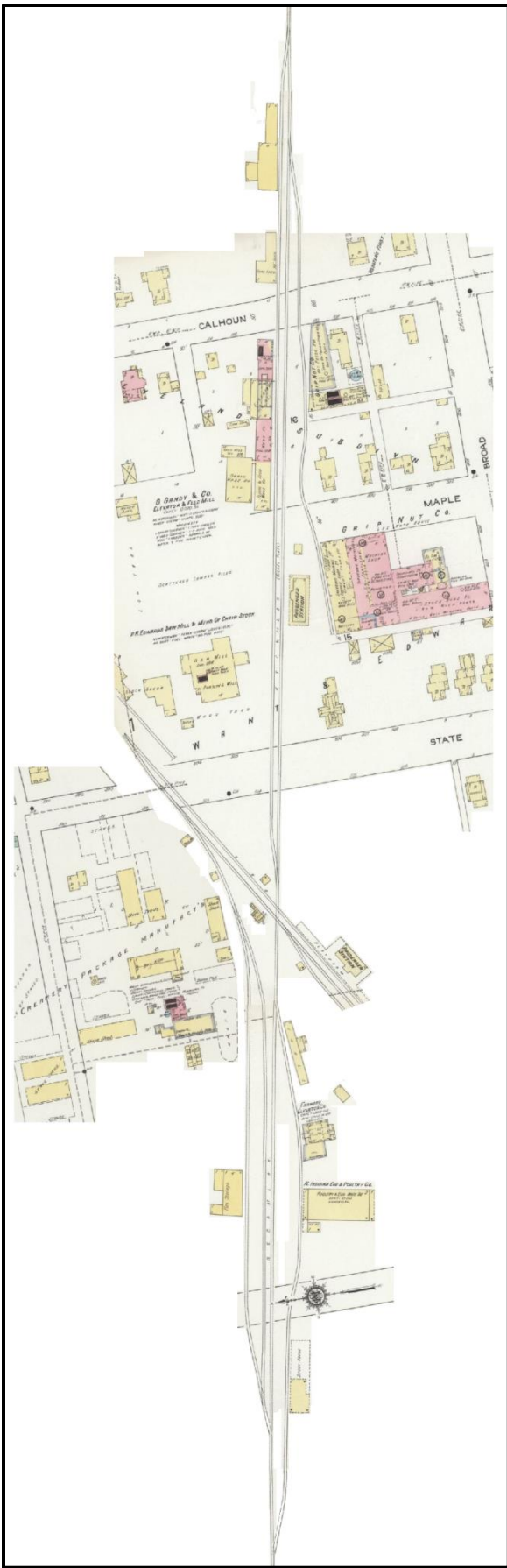


Modeling South Whitley is pretty simple, and its linear arrangement would fit well onto most home layouts. But compression can kill the prototypical feel and operation of most small towns, so I've envisioned a "single town" layout that fits into a common 12'x13' spare bedroom. 12" to 24" wide benchwork keeps the center of the room free, and mounting the benchwork relatively high (50" or so) leaves the entire floor available as living space. A simple lift out corner section allows access to the room without the need for a duckunder. Staging could be added to the layout by shortening the right side of the passing siding and adding more tracks on the lift out.



- 1) L.L. Compton's Stockyards
- 2) Northern Indiana Egg & Poultry Co.
- 3) Farmer's Co-Op Elevator
- 4) Caskey's Coal Co.
- 5) NKP-PRR Interchange
- 6) F.P. Kircher Hay Co.
- 7) Creamery Packaging Co.
- 8) P.A. Edwards Sawmill
- 9) NKP Depot
- 10) O. Gandy & Co. Feed Mill
- 11) Coal & Fuel Dealer
- 12) Collamer Milling Co.
- 13) Grip Nut Co. (or A to Z Printing Co.)
- 14) Grip Nut Co.
- A) NKP-PRR "SY" tower

(all curves are 30" or more on this design, and all turnouts are #6)



All of the Sanborn maps for South Whitley stitched together makes it look like a model railroad. And when building a miniature empire that's exactly what we're looking for!

To be fair, this is actually a "composite" map made from at least three different years' worth of Sanborn maps. Industries came and went quickly, and Sanborn maps never seem to keep up. This is "mostly" the 1914 map with some supplemental information from 1895 and 1900.



# KITBASHING A TOFC FLAT CAR

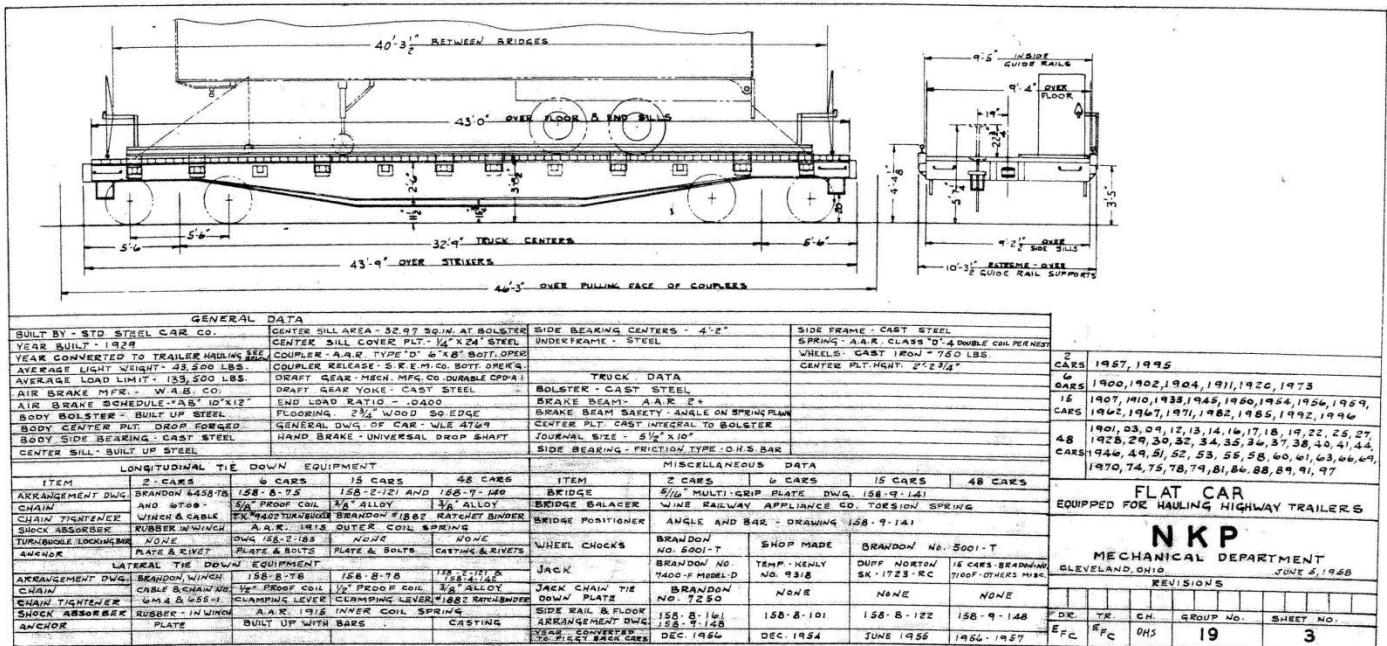
Just like the Prototype Did!

By H. Bruce Blonder



Recently, I discovered that I had a spare Red Caboose (now Intermountain) Nickel Plate flat car in my stash, and wondered what to do with it. Remembering an online discussion about NKP steam hauling piggyback trailers, I soon dug out a photo of an early NKP TOFC car and began planning a new addition to my freight car fleet!

The Nickel Plate was a pioneer of trailer on flat car freight service, and was one of the very few railroads that hauled them with modern steam power. Between 1954 and 1962 the NKP had assembled a respectable fleet of 388 home grown TOFC flat cars and 440 trailers.



The 1962 diagram for the 1900-series cars converted to TOFC service shows 71 cars. Since the cars weren't renumbered when they were converted, it's easy to track a car's service life.



Among the first flat cars converted to TOFC cars were the 1900-series, ex-W&LE flats. These cars were built in 1929 and were very rugged, but at only 40 feet long weren't very useful as flat cars any longer. Between 1954 and 1957, 71 of the 100 cars were converted to TOFC carriers in a very simple way. My model was of a 1900-series car, so that was my target to model!

My construction crew is a bit slower than the workers at Conneaut, Brewster or Bellevue, but I managed to finish the conversion pretty quickly. Do keep in mind that this is my first attempt at not building to the instructions that a model came with!

Reviewing the prototype photos, the conversion was simple: two guard rails along the side of the car, a drop-down trailer hitch bolted to the floor, and a couple of hinged bridge plates.



Metal L-brackets were bolted onto the stake pockets, and the rail welded to them. My angles were cut out of Evergreen .080" corner stock; a NWSL "Chopper" makes sure that the cuts are straight and even.

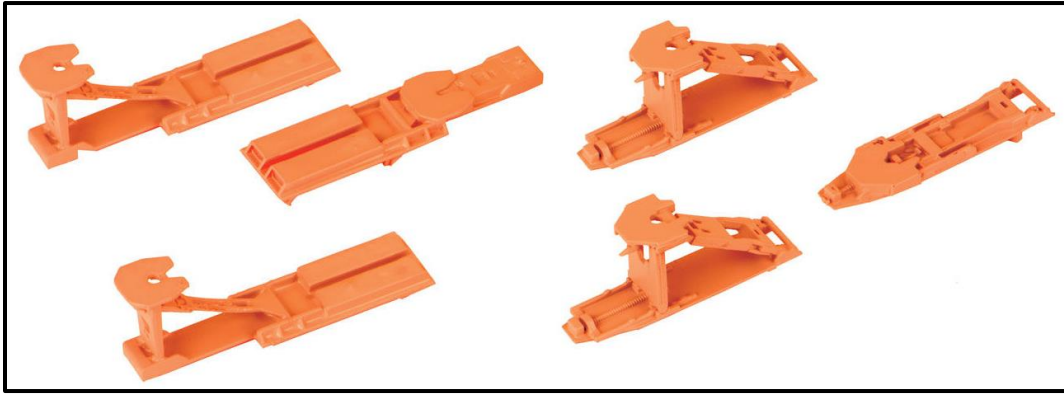


The Nickel Plate used actual scrap rail for the guard rails, so that's what I used too (code 83 rail in my case). The rails were super glued to the angles.





The trailer hitch was a random metal part I had in my parts stash. I have no idea where it came from originally, but Walthers set #920-6060 has six of them that can be used.



The hardest part of the conversion was figuring out where to put the trailer hitch. With a little fiddling and with a handy trailer on hand, I was able to come up with a good position. I didn't bother with the two ramp sections (one on each right hand end of the flat car), since I figured they'd break off when the car was in use. Simple pieces of .020" thick styrene will work in a pinch.

Once the parts were added to the assembled model, I hand painted all of the new parts with simple black paint, added a trailer on top of the flat car, and NKP 1943 was ready to roll!



# Upgrading a Walther's NKP Fruehauf Truck Trailer

By Joe Bliss



Recently, I looked at the Walther's 32-foot NKP Trailer Vans on my layout, and realized that they had omitted some very obvious details. Most noticeable was the lack of tail lights and bumper bars on the rear. They also lacked mud flaps behind the tires.

I have four of the Walther's item number 933-1411 NKP Trailers, and they all looked pretty bare and lifeless without details, so I began searching for photos of the trailers in books and on the web.



The Nickel Plate's trailers were mostly built by Fruehauf, so Walther's models are not true to the NKP prototypes. They do not have enough vertical braces, and the white lettering was on horizontal sheet metal panels attached to the vertical braces. I decided to leave the factory paint and lettering alone, rather than having to repaint & letter them.



I started making new details by cutting some Plastruct 3/32" angle to 9/32" long as vertical supports for the bumper bars, then glued them to the very rear of the frame on each side using Plastruct "Plastic Weld" liquid cement. Then I cut a piece of the same angle stock to 23/32" long for the horizontal bumper and attached it to the uprights at the bottom.

Next, I cut some .020" thick styrene for the mud flaps. These parts were 1/4" tall and the width of both tires. I attached each to a piece of Tichy .015" diameter bronze wire using super glue, and painted them and the bumper bars flat black, and set them aside to dry.



While the new parts were drying, I drilled four holes into the bottom edge of the trailers, using a #73 drill bit in a pin vise, two on each side below the doors. Then I pushed tiny brass brads into each of the holes and painted them with Testor's "signal red" enamel, to represent tail lights. At this point the paint on the mud flaps had dried, so I attached the assemblies to the frame just behind the rear wheels.





On a couple of my trailers, I added refrigeration units from Athearn 40-foot trailers I had cannibalized some years ago, and added the condenser unit and fuel tanks below the frame.



While not strictly prototypically accurate, these minor and easy additions to the trailers really help spruce them up, and bring them closer to reality. And when you have lots of other Nickel Plate models to build for your layout, that's usually good enough!

**MODELER'S REFERENCE**  
**Nickel Plate Road Highway Trailers**













# ALONG THE LINE

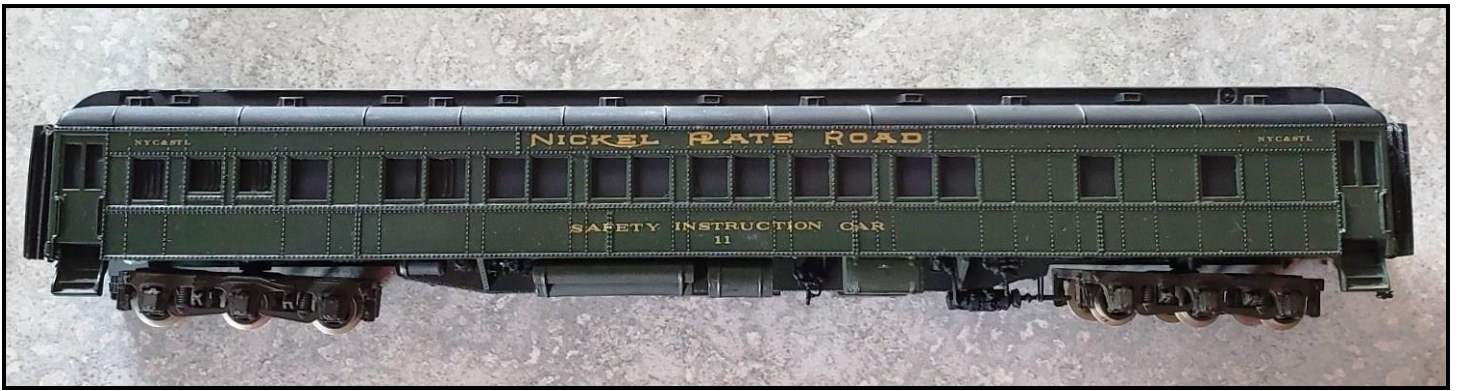


Model railroading isn't just about modeling railroads. Railroads exist to serve people, and we modelers need to sometimes model them. In this case, Tony Koester has done a great job taking a City Classics company house, a 1950s Busch automobile, and a few simple details, to create a typical slice of life.



George Chaltas shares this photo of new-to-him NKP cars. "Here's a recently completed project: three Micro-Trains (N scale) wood reefers, decorated as URTX - NKP cars. I used Tru-Color reefer yellow, oxide brown and weathered black paint, and decals from K4S. It's a new company, and their decals are very nice, and are made in several scales. One set does six cars if you don't make any mistakes (I *always* make mistakes).





Dennis Brandal sent us this photo of his new NKP car, Safety Instruction Car #11 (formerly Pullman 12-section sleeper “East Berkshire”). Dennis used a Rivarossi model as the starting point, added Cal-Scale details and A-Line diaphragms, and lettered the car with Champ decals.



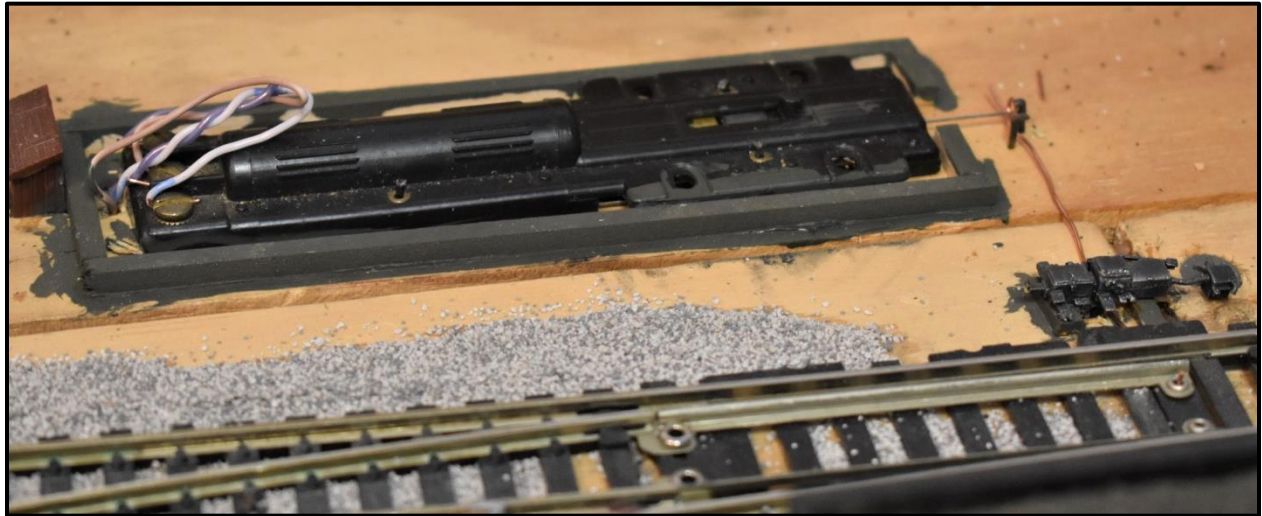
Tom Smith, who's layout was featured in Volume 39, sent us this photo of Extra 475 East, heading towards Payne OH, on a sunny fall day in 1929.



# HIDING SWITCH MACHINES

By Barry Trogu

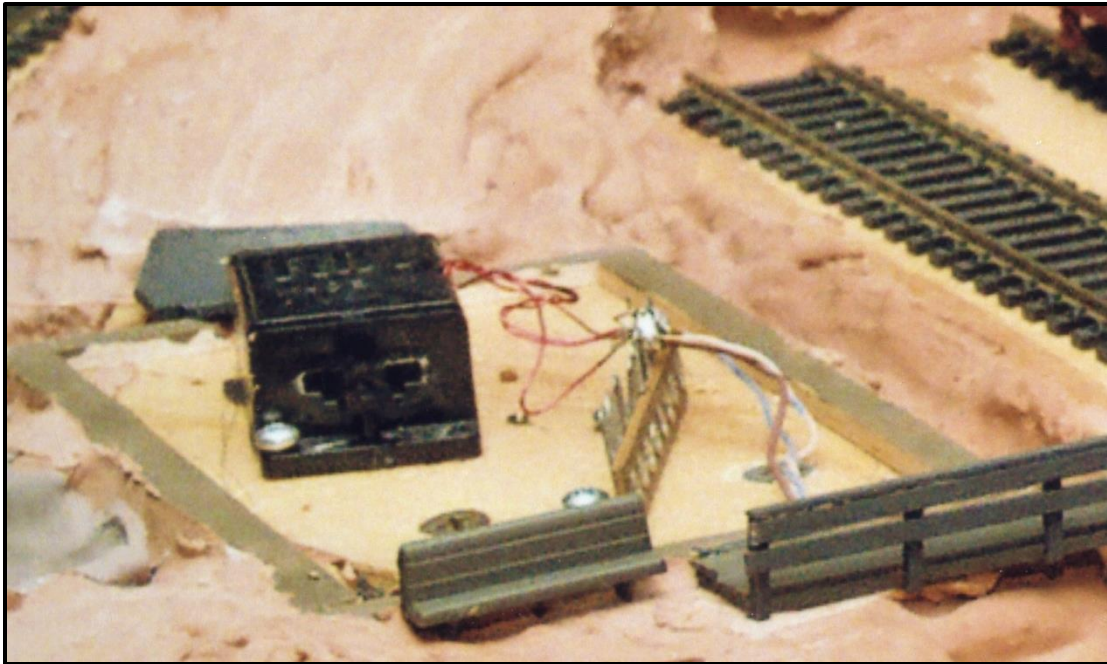
With us older modelers, getting under the benchwork on our layouts starts to be a problem when switch machines need servicing. Sadly, virtually all mechanical devices need some type of servicing during their lifespan. Years ago, when my knees started to act up, I began to use structures to hide switch machines on top of the benchwork, which allowed me to provide quick access to them for occasional servicing.



The tried and true Atlas switch machine is easy to hide, so long as you have a nice, long building to fit over it! Notice that the actuating rod pops out from the building's foundation (just strips of basswood) and is further hidden by a non-functioning switch throw casting. Add a little ground cover and a bush or two, and the rod will completely disappear.

In one application, I used a Rix Products Quonset hut to hide a switch machine. The fairly large building provided easy access for the switch machine and actuating rod. I then positioned the switch machine (also made by Rix) next to the rails and positioned the hut. The long rod was hidden by scenery.





Initially, hiding a switch machine looks like a big mess, with half-formed ground cover and wires everywhere. But the finished product will look great!

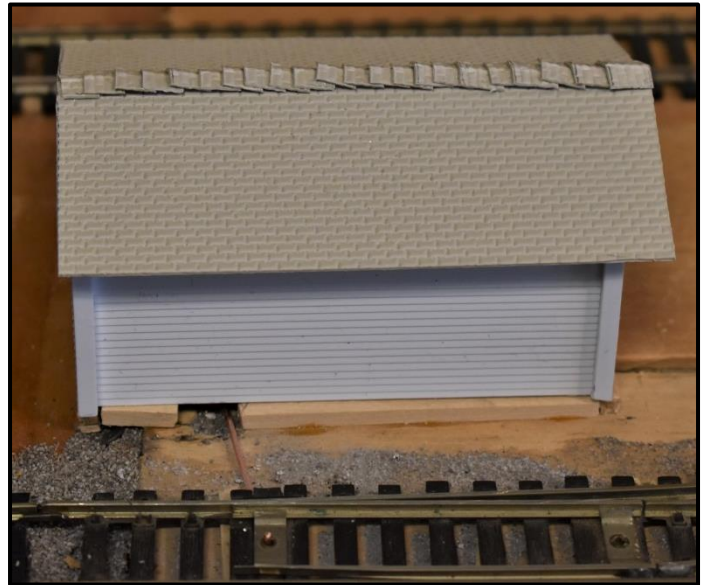
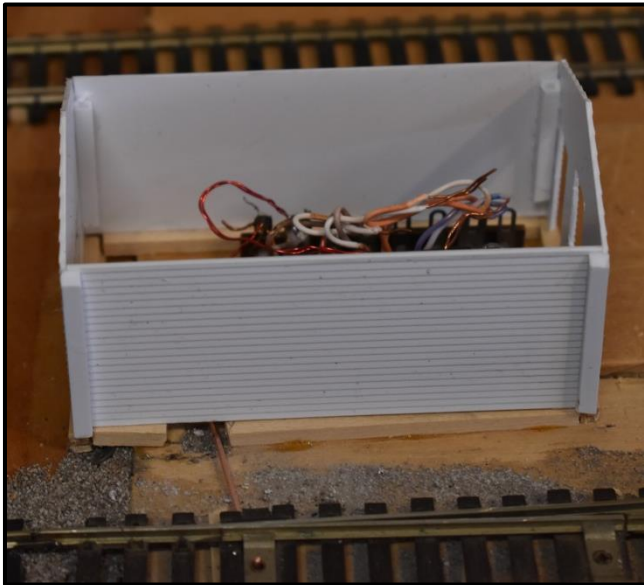
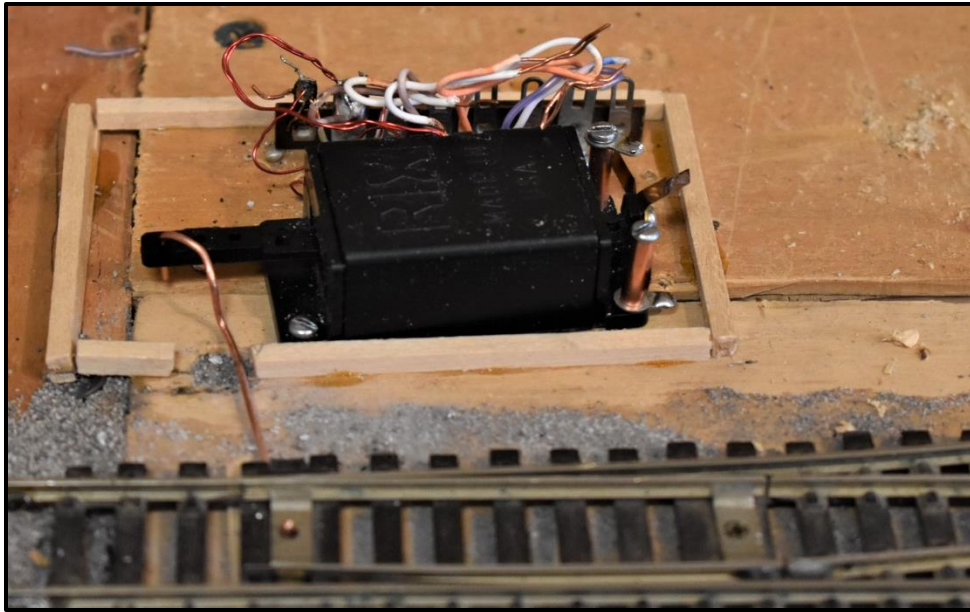


You can use just about any sort of building positioned next to the rails for this type of hidden switch machine. Just be sure that the building will fit over the switch machine.

I sometimes use scenery instead of structures to hide switch machines along my right-of-way. When using lichen “bushes” I do not glue them down, but let them “float” over the switch machine and rods. A little ground cover added to the lichen adds variety and helps the camouflage.

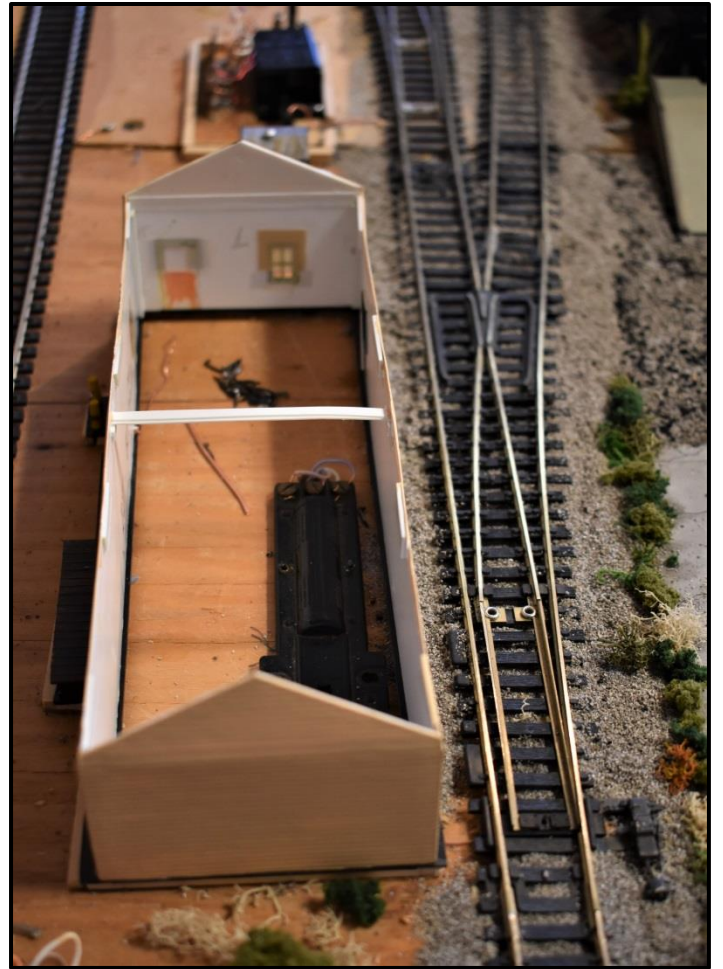
I hid a switch machine near a station siding under a Nickel Plate-appropriate lineside shed, scratchbuilding the shed to fit around the Rix switch machine. As with most of my buildings, I did not glue down the roof, which allows me to easily remove it to make adjustments. Be sure that the switch machine works properly before securing the building, or adding scenery!





Notice that the rod pops out from the shed's foundation here as well. If you're not adding all of your layout's buildings to simple foundations like these, you're missing out on both a realistic and easily-applied scenery element, but are missing out on creative ways to help automate your layout.

Once you start to see the advantages of hiding switch machines on the surface of your layout, you start to get creative with ideas to hide them. And once you add some finished scenery, no one will ever know that the hidden switch machines are there. In one area, I have several small lineside industry buildings hiding multiple switch machines seamlessly. I even have hidden compartments inside some of the structures to store spare rail spikes and tools.



## BE A PART OF PRESERVING NICKEL PLATE HISTORY...



The Restoration of this NKP Bay Window Caboose at the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum in North Judson, Indiana, was Aided with Funds from the NKPHTS.

## JOIN TODAY!





MYSTERY PHOTO! While searching the NKPHTS archives, we ran across several 1980s and 1990s era photos of NKP modeling, including this great shot of three NKP cabooses in the snow (presumably all brass models). Anyone know who's models they are, and who took the photo?

## **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)

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