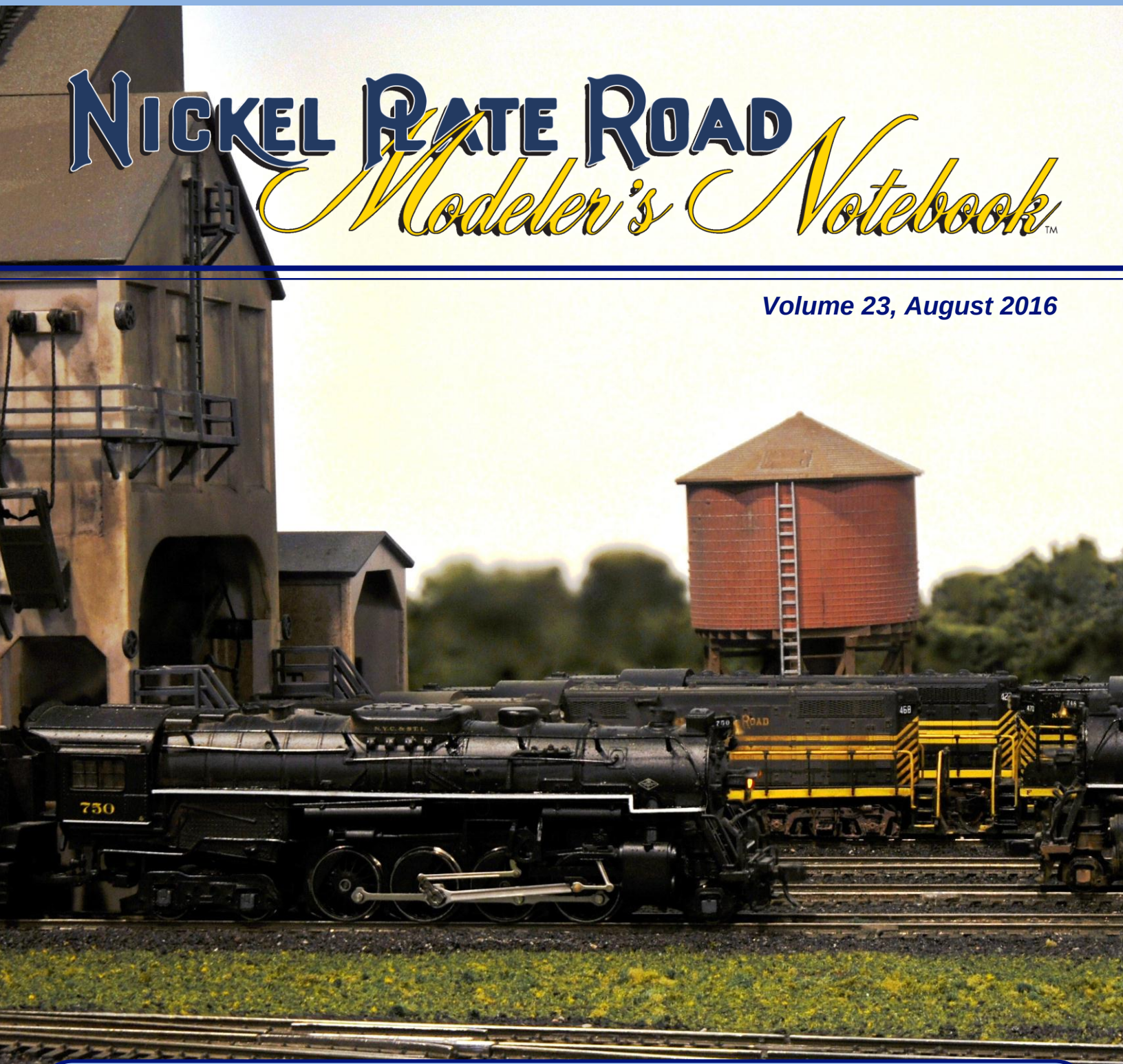
Nickel Plate Road Modeler's Notebook™

Volume 23, August 2016



Bellevue Reborn
Scratch Building Arcadia Tower in O Scale
Modeling NKP 587 in HO Scale, Part Two

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. *Please email contact@nkphts.org for more information.*

Nickel Plate Road Historical and Technical Society ®

Model railroading is all about sharing. We modelers share photos of our accomplishments, share videos, and share tips, techniques, and critiques. Arguably, the entire hobby of modeling, railfanning, and railroad history authorship is all about sharing what we all have a shared passion for.

This online magazine is a part of that passion. The fraternity of Nickel Plate aficionados has always been small, boisterous, friendly, and above all, sharing. Almost none of us can claim to be 'professional' historians or modelers ('sharing' what we know for profit), but NKP authors and modelers are among the cream of the crop when it comes to what we do.

This issue features some of that passion of sharing. John Colombo is a relative newcomer to the NKP family, but his Bellevue-themed layout should be an inspiration to us all. And regular contributor Dan Merkel's efforts in scratchbuilding in a new-to-him scale should convince all of us to dive right in and try something new.

RAY

(Ray and Alex Breyer share a visit to the Chicago History Museum's 1837-built Pioneer. Ray had better watch out: his entire family has recently 'shared' that they all prefer the look and feel of really old-time, pre-1900s railroading!)

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NKPHTS COMPANY STORE
MODELS FOR SALE

HO Models

HO-Tri-level Auto Rack (Accurail plastic kit) $29.95

HO-40' Double Door Boxcar (Accurail plastic kit) $14.00

HO-Panel Side 2 Bay Hopper (Accurail plastic kit) $13.50

HO-W&LE Twin Hopper (Accurail plastic kit) $15.00

HO-NKP-L Wood Refrigerator (Accurail plastic kit) $15.75

HO-Rider: 1300-series rider car (resin 'craftsman' kit) $50.00

(kit includes decals, modeler must provide trucks & couplers)

TCS Models

All TCS models kits are composed of resin castings.
While easy to build they are not shake-the-box models. Al l models HO scale.

CP875: 826-Series Wood Caboose kit, NKP Decals $55.00
CP911: 826-Series Wood Caboose kit, W&LE Decals $55.00

CPTWR: NKP Elevated Gate Tower kit, based on Knox, IN. $18.00

CPVER: NKP Combination Station kit, based on Vermilion OH. $32.00

CPROC: NKP Passenger Station kit, based on Rocky River OH. $40.00

Model prices do not include shipping & handling
To order, please visit the **NKPHTS Company Store** website!

NKPHTS COMPANY STORE
PROTOTYPE REFERENCE BOOKS FOR SALE

BK003	NKP Color Photography, Vol. 3: Railfan Perspective, Morning Sun (hardback)	$43.00
BK004	NKP Publicity Photos (B&W), 1943-1952, Vol. 1., John B. Corns, TLC Publishing (hardback)	$30.00
BK011	Reflections Series #1, "Nickel Plate District"	$10.00
BK013	Reflections Series #3, "Clover Leaf District" TStL&W	$10.00
BK014	The Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway, Vol. 2., John B. Corns, TLC Publishing (hardback)	$30.00
BK015	Nickel Plate Road Diesel Locomotives, Kevin J. Holland, TLC Publishing (hardback)	$25.00
BK018	Nickel Plate Road In Color Volume 1: 1946 - 1959, Morning Sun (hardback)	$48.00
BK019	Nickel Plate Road In Color Volume 2: 1960-1985, Morning Sun (hardback)	$48.00
BK020	NKP Diagram Book, Passenger & Head End Cars, 1938	$16.00
BK021	NKP Diagram Book, Passenger & Head End Cars, 1950	$16.00
BK022	NKP Diagram Book, Freight Equipment, Piggyback, and Cabooses, 1962	$20.00
BK024	"Nickel Plate Steam 1957-1958" by Robert P. Olmsted (hardback)	$22.00
BK025	The Detroit & Toledo Shore Line Railroad - Expressway For Industry by Charles H. Geletzke, Jr. and Wilbur E. Hague (hardback)	$65.00
BK026	"TRRA Annual NKP in St Louis"	$40.00
BK044	Depots of the Nickel Plate Road, Willard Harvey, Silver Brook Publishing	$20.00
TDCLOE	Clover Leaf District Track Diagrams, Revised to 1/1/1942	$20.00
TCCLOL	Clover Leaf District Track Diagrams, Revised to 1/1/1964	$20.00
TDNKPE	Nickel Plate District Track Diagrams, Revised to 12/31/1948	$20.00
TDNKPL	Nickel Plate District Track Diagrams, Revised to 1/1/1963	$20.00
TDWLEC	Wheeling & Lake Erie Cleveland Division Track Diagrams, Not dated, Compiled from NKP & N&W records	$20.00
TDWLET	Wheeling & Lake Erie, Toledo District Track Diagrams, Revised to 1/1/1964	$20.00
TDLEWE	Lake Erie & Western District Track Diagrams, Revised to 12/31/1935	$20.00
TDLEWL	Lake Erie & Western District Track Diagrams, Revised to 1/1/1963	$20.00

Prices do not include shipping & handling
To order, please visit the **NKPHTS Company Store** website!

RIDER CAR KIT RE-ORDER

Due to popular demand the first run of the HO scale rider cars kits have SOLD OUT. The NKPHTS has contracted with the casters for a second run of the model which should be available for sale by the first week of May.

If you are interested in purchasing one of these car kits, contact the NKPHTS General Store TODAY. Quantities are limited, and future orders for these cars will be based on demand.

SUGGEST A MODEL!

The NKPHTS is dedicated to preserving the history and memory of the Nickel Plate Road. Part of that effort is offering for sale select models that reflect the NKP's proud heritage.

Model suggestion. Photo courtesy AMB

The Company Store needs your input! If you'd like to suggest a commercially available model for the store to carry, please contact Company Store manager Bud Brueggeman at **nkpinal@aol.com**.

If you have a suggestion for a candidate for the NKPHTS Model of the Year program, please contact Modeling Services Director Tony Koester at **nkpfan@ptd.net**.

The NKPHTS Out and About!

Dan Merkel photo

The National Model Railroad Association held their annual convention in Indianapolis this year. As part of their convention they held a "National Train Show" featuring sales tables, modular display layouts in several scales, and display booths from various hobby manufacturers and historical societies. With an anticipated eight to ten thousand attendees, the NTS is one of the largest hobby-oriented shows of the year.

And the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society was there in force! Ten members worked the Society's display booth during the three day long show and sale, and about 30 members of the Society checked in to say hi. Several hundred attendees stopped by the booth, and more than a few walked away with new NKP models, reference materials, and even new memberships! All in all, the show proved to be a very successful way to promote the NKPHTS and the legacy of railroading on the Nickel Plate Road.

Nickel Plate Road Tri-Level Auto Racks Now Available!

Tony Koester photo

The Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society has launched a 'Model of the Year' program. The first offering in this series is an HO scale plastic kit for the NKP's ten tri-level auto racks.

The Accurail kit is priced at $29.95 plus $8.00 shipping for one kit, or $12 shipping for two or all three kits. Three car numbers are offered: ETTX 500706, 500720, and 500813. Decals are included to model any of the other cars, which are numbered ETTX 500729, 500735, 500736, 500741, 500768, 500798, and 500805. An illustrated assembly guide is available on the Modeler's Corner page of the NKPHTS website.

To order, visit the NKPHTS Company Store.

O Scale W&LE Wood Cabooses

Photo courtesy Stockyard Express,LLC

Stockyard Express has announced a custom run of W&LE wood caboose models in O scale. Made exclusively for Stockyard Express by MTH, these models feature working marker lights and 'high rail' couplers and wheelsets. Two road numbers, 0807and 0911, are available. Price is $65, Visit the Stockyard Express website for more details.

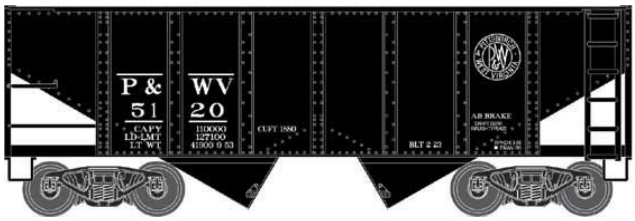
New MOW Truck from Athearn

ATH96831 HO RTR Ford F-850 Boom Truck, NKP

Athearn has announced a new HO scale maintenance of way boom truck lettered for the Nickel Plate. This model of a Ford F-850 medium truck will come decorated in the NKP's circa 1960 vehicle scheme of medium blue with white lettering. MSRP is $24.98. See the Athearn website for details, or order from your favorite retailer.

Two New Models from Bowser

Bowser Manufacturing Co. has announced two new HO scale models suitable for the NKP.



The first are covered hoppers lettered for the NKP, and the second release are P&WV open hoppers. All models come ready to run, and are due to be released in late summer 2016. MSRP for the covered hoppers is $25.95, while the open cars are $23.95. Each model comes in three different road numbers.

Two New NKP Hi-Rail Models from MTH

From MTH's Volume 2 Catalog (which isn't yet on MTH's website).

30-74858, Nickel Plate Road - 40' Double Door Box Car, $54.95
30-73489, Nickel Plate Road - 3-Dome Tank Car, $59.95

New GP30 in Z Scale

American Z Line has just announced a new release of their popular GP30 model, including a Nickel Plate version. Details are still pending at this time, but there should be multiple road numbers for this release, and the MSRP should be in the $160-$180 range. Keep checking the AZL website for updates!

(AZL also produces a companion NKP bay window caboose)

Sunset Models Announces Two NKP Diesels

Sunset Models, Inc. has announced two Nickel Plate diesels in O scale: an SD9 in the as-delivered multi-stripe scheme, and a PA-1.

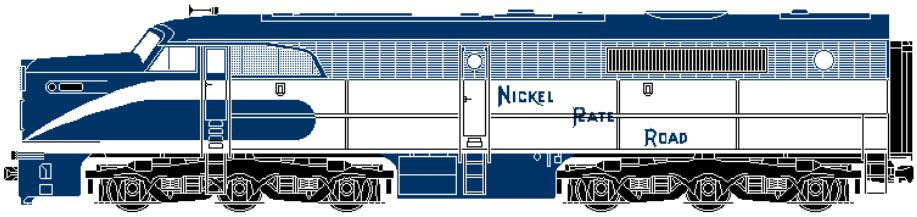


Image Copyright 2003 by R. Ruesch, Engine Shop

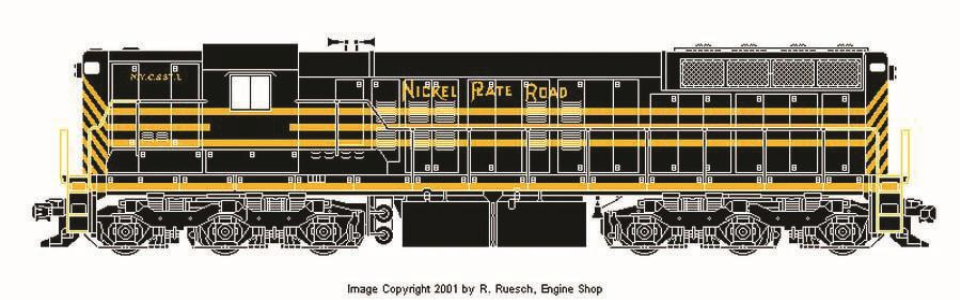


Image Copyright 2001 by R. Ruesch, Engine Shop

Each model will come with the following features: ABS body, fixed pilots, ball bearing axle journals, horizontal mount Canon motor, extreme detail cab interior (lighted), all wheels powered. The three rail versions feature ERR Cruise, TMCC, and Railsounds, while the two rail versions will come with QSI "Titan" DC/DCC.

The SD9s are scheduled for delivery in September 2016, while the PA-1s are coming mid-2017.

MSRP for the SD9 is $669.95, and $699.95 for the PA. Reservations for both are now being accepted.

HO Scale Trailer from Walthers

Walthers has announced the release of a Nickel Plate highway trailer in HO scale. Item #949-2410 comes ready to run, and decorated to represent some of the railroad's last trailers purchsed. MSRP is $24.98 for a two pack, and delivery is estimated for July 28, 2016.

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**.

THIS FORM IS FOR NEW MEMBERSHIPS ONLY AND SHOULD NOT TO BE USED FOR RENEWALS OR REINSTATEMENTS

NKPHTS M-08.15

Date Rec'd _____ Membership Number _____ Authorized By _____

2016 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NKPHTS MEMBERSHIP SERVICES
PO BOX 138 • BUCKLIN, MO 64631-0138

MEMBERSHIP TYPE Check One	2016 ANNUAL DUES
☐ CONTRIBUTING *Includes Annual Calendar*	$ 60.00
☐ BASIC *US & Canada*	$ 35.00
☐ PATRON *Includes calendar and First Class Mailing*	$125.00
☐ INTERNATIONAL *Includes International First Class Mailing*	$ 60.00

Optional First Class Mail Delivery Add:
$10.00 US or $14.00 Canada

Send Check Or Money Order, Payable To:
NKPHTS

Organized: 1966 Incorporated: 1972

• PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT IN INK •

A separate form must be submitted for each individual applying for membership. **Please answer all questions** and remit the necessary dues with the application form. Incomplete forms and/or incorrect dues will necessitate the return of the application form to the applicant and will cause a delay in processing of the membership.

NAME _____ **DATE OF BIRTH** _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last)

ADDRESS _____ **CITY** _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP CODE** _____

TELEPHONE ( ) - _____ **EMAIL** _____ **OCCUPATION** _____
(Area Code First) Physician, artist, mechanic, salesperson, retired, etc.

RECOMENDED BY _____ **WHERE DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE NKPHTS?** _____

PLEASE RATE YOUR INTEREST IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS ON A SCALE OF ONE TO TEN
(One Being The Lowest Level Of Interest And Ten Being The Highest)

_____ NICKEL PLATE HISTORY _____ NKP PROTOTYPE PRESERVATION/RESTORATION

_____ NICKEL PLATE MODELING _____ COLLECTING & PRESERVATION OF NKP MEMORABILIA

IF YOU ARE A MODELER OR TRAIN COLLECTOR, WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY SCALE/GAUGE OF INTEREST? _____

OTHER RAIL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH YOU BELONG: _____

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 31st 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. Member benefits for the membership new year become available on October 17th, except for the *Nickel Plate Road Magazine*, the first issue of which is delivered in early January.

By signing this form, a new member applicant agrees to subscribe to the purposes and principles of the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society and further agrees to comply with the policies and regulations of the Society.

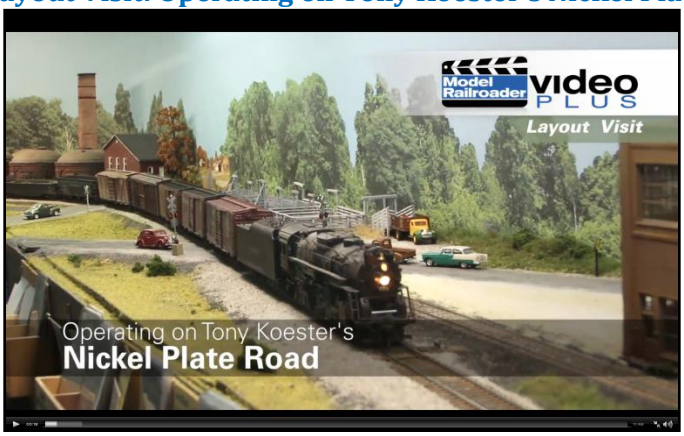
I hereby apply for admission into the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society.

DATE _____ SIGNATURE ➡ _____

Nickel Plate Road Modeling Videos

Recently, while wandering around aimlessly through the internet, we've run across several videos featuring great Nickel Plate Road modeling action. Here's a few of our favorites!

MRVP Layout Visit: Operating on Tony Koester's Nickel Plate Road



Model Railroader Magazine has posted a 'free for everyone' **video** featuring the Third Sub. This 12 minute video tours Tony's layout during a train's run across the division, and highlights how his operations work.

N Scale Nickel Plate Action

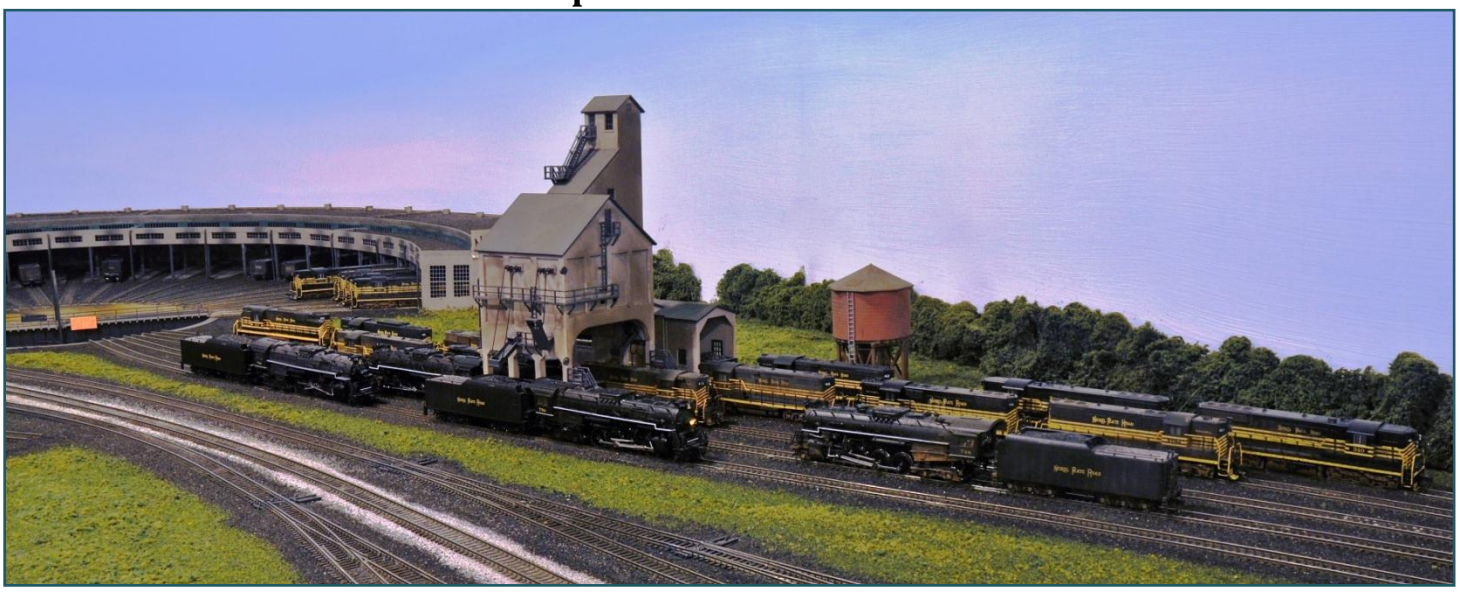
John Colombo's N scale version of the Bellevue area in the late 1950s is this month's cover story. John has also shared his model railroad with all of us on YouTube, and he has **40 videos** posted featuring great N scale NKP modeling. Be careful though: you can blow a lot of time there!

Doubleheaded Mikados!

Heading back to the St. Louis District, Fourth Sub modeler Art Shale shares a **video** of his two newest NKP engines, NKP 587 and NKP 612, as they lug a freight through New Douglas, IL.

Bellevue Reborn

An NKP-inspired N Scale Model Railroad



By John Colombo

As a professor at the University of Illinois, I am fond of telling students "you can't plan your life." A great example of this is how I came to build an N scale layout inspired by the Nickel Plate Road in northern Ohio in 1957.

I did not grow up anywhere near the NKP. As a child, I lived across the street from an Illinois Central branch line in deep southern Illinois and, as far back as I can remember, was fascinated by trains. In grade school, I did a little HO scale modeling of the Illinois Central but lost interest in high school.

Then in 1990, after graduating from law school, working at a law firm in Georgia for several years, and then returning to Champaign, Ill., as a professor, I decided to return to the hobby. One of my law students introduced me to her husband, who was a member of the local Ntrak club, the Midwest Central Railroad Club. The long trains and amount of layout possible in a small space with N scale was a big draw for me, so I joined the club and built a module for the club layout.

Needing some N scale equipment to run on that layout, I asked the club members what to buy, and they unanimously recommended that I start with an engine from a company called "Kato" and rolling stock from Micro-Trains. So one day I drove to a hobby shop in Indianapolis that had a good stock of N scale equipment. While browsing the shelves, I came across an engine with "NICKEL PLATE ROAD" and the barely visible letters "N.Y.C. & St.L." on the side of the hood. I had never heard of the Nickel Plate, and based upon the initials on the hood, I thought the railroad must have been a subsidiary of the New York Central. But the engine was made by Kato (I later learned it was an Alco RSD-12 made by Kato for Atlas), and it was on sale. So I bought it along with a few boxcars and headed home.

An overview of Bellevue Yard on John's layout shows just how little compression he was able to maintain for the scene, and how much operation potential N scale gives a modeler. The roundhouse in the distance is almost three quarters of an N scale mile away!

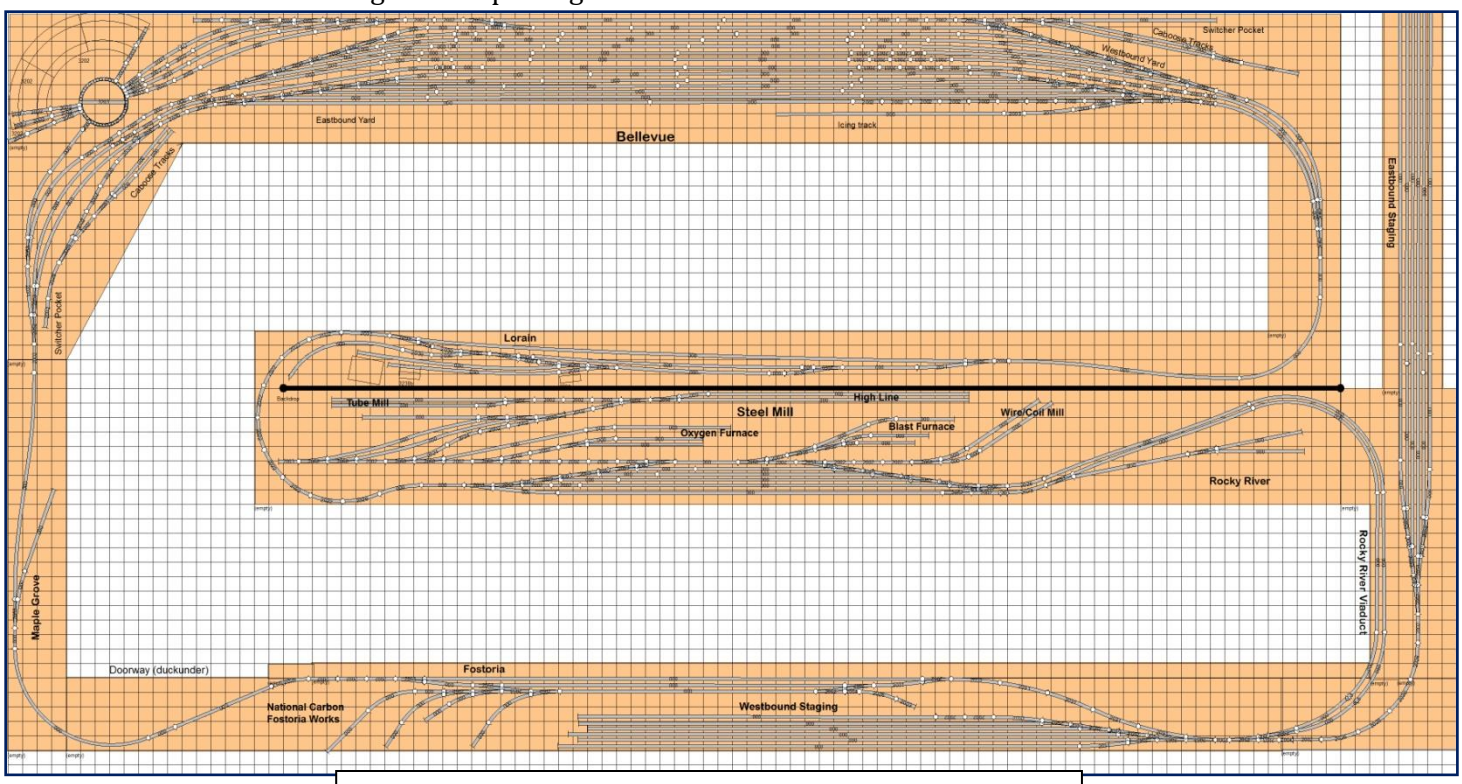
Not quite Neoga: Lorain represents that 'small town feel' on John's layout that was so common along the Nickel Plate mainline. John's version is a highly fictionalized version of this real piece of the NKP, deliberately made busier to keep his road crews on their toes!

After arriving home, I showed my new acquisitions to my wife, Tina. When she saw the engine, she remarked that she recalled engines lettered NICKEL PLATE ROAD in her hometown of Neoga, Ill. I was sure she was wrong; Neoga was on the main line of the Illinois Central, the only railroad (I thought) associated with the town. But her dad confirmed that the Nickel Plate indeed had run through Neoga and told stories of the "huge steam locomotives" that blew through town spewing cinders everywhere.

Intrigued by all this, I went to the university library looking for any material on the Nickel Plate. The library had a pristine copy of John Rehor's *The Nickel Plate Story*, which I checked out and read cover-to-cover. It confirmed that the NKP did indeed run through Neoga on its Clover Leaf line that it had purchased in the early 1920s, and the book hooked me on the Nickel Plate. I joined the Nickel Plate Historical & Technical Society to take advantage of the wealth of information amassed by that organization, as well as to get its quarterly magazine and special publications. A couple of Green Frog videos of the NKP's Berkshires heading freight trains in the 1950s cemented the love affair, and I decided to build a layout based on the Nickel Plate.

The layout

My current layout is my third effort. In the early 1990s, after buying and reading John Armstrong's classic book, *Track Planning for Realistic Operation*, I built a layout similar to the current one in an unfinished basement room but set in 1964, just before the merger with the N&W.



John's track plan shows that N scale doesn't have to mean 'small'. Overall, John's layout is 13'x25', giving him just over four scale miles of mainline on a single level. Bellevue Yard dominates the railroad, but there's plenty of room for switching, and space to allow Berkshires to stretch their legs.

This timeframe allowed me to take advantage of the latest N scale diesels from Atlas and Kato, which were exceptionally good-running units. I learned a great deal from this project, including early adoption of Digital Command Control for my engines, but I never came close to finishing the layout. I realized early on that the aisles were too narrow for operators to comfortably move around, and the layout lacked a consistent theme: It included parts of both the NKP's Chicago–Buffalo main line and the Clover Leaf around my wife's home town of Neoga.

Over time, my enthusiasm for this layout waned, and when our two sons grew into their teens, my wife and I decided to clear out the unfinished basement where the layout was, finish it into separate rooms, and make the largest of the rooms into a home theater. To keep my hand in the hobby,

however, I built a much smaller second layout around the walls of a spare bedroom. This one got very close to "finished" in the sense of the entire layout having at least basic scenery. Nevertheless, the thought of a larger layout that "fixed" the major errors of my first one was always in my mind. So when the kids went off to college, I reclaimed the large (now finished) basement room for the current layout.

The elevators in Maple Grove reflect John's philosophy towards most of his layout scenes. Although this industry isn't much like the real thing, it certainly 'looks right'.

A "look-and-feel" approach

This time, I did a bit more planning. In the time between tearing down my first layout and starting this one, Life-Like (now Walthers) had released its excellent-running Berkshire, and Kato had released its superb USRA heavy Mikado, including a version in NKP paint. I knew from the

One key 'must have' scene for John was the massive Rocky River Bridge. Built based on prototype photos and using Micro Engineering bridge components, the resulting (compressed) structure would be a centerpiece on anyone's layout.

beginning of this effort that I wanted to model both a time period and a section of the railroad that would let me legitimately run Berks and Mikes alongside first-generation hood units from EMD and Alco. That meant the Chicago-Buffalo main line and 1957 – the last full year of regular mainline steam operations on the NKP.

John reused several steel mill buildings from a former modular layout to create US Steel/Lorain Works. This massive industrial complex occupies nearly fifteen feet of layout space, and features a tube mill, wire coil mill, blast furnace and oxygen furnace.

I also realized, however, that I wasn't interested in trying to recreate historically accurate towns; doing scenery and building structures just aren't my favorite parts of model railroading. Moreover, while learning the history of places like Fostoria and Lorain would have been fun, I knew that actually building historically accurate buildings for these towns would just never get done.

Instead, I decided to adopt a "look-and-feel" approach – I would use prototypically accurate motive power and try to model a few "iconic" NKP structures as close to the prototype as I could, but I would freelance the rest. One of those iconic structures I already had: a pretty accurate rendition of the NKP roundhouse at Bellevue, O., mostly scratchbuilt for my first layout by Steve Hankel, one of the Midwest Central club members. I also had a second iconic structure that I had built myself: a highly compressed version of the Rocky River Viaduct that I had seen in so many photographs of the NKP. And I had several steel mill structures from my first layout, and steel operations would provide not only a major switching area but also a destination for all sorts of rolling stock.

Putting all this together gave me a map of the part of the NKP I would use for my layout: Fostoria to Rocky River, OH. Bellevue Yard would be the centerpiece, and the Rocky River Viaduct would grace the far east end. I would freelance the track layout and industries at the towns and use the steel mill structures on a large steel mill scene between Lorain and Rocky River. And this time, the aisles would be wider!

Putting it together

Construction began in the summer of 2010. The layout runs around the walls of the room with a center peninsula and a

duckunder for entry/exit. It employs L-girder construction with ½" plywood as a base. Layout height is 54", which places the scenes just below eye level for most people (and makes the duckunder more manageable).

The fascia and backdrop are made from 1/8" Masonite hardboard. There are no grades. The track is all Atlas code 55 flex track and nos. 5 and 7 turnouts, with a few handlaid no. 4 and 6 turnouts in switching areas. Control is DCC using a Digitrax Chief command station and two DB150 boosters, with the layout segmented into four separate power districts. I use a mix of Digitrax UT4 simplex radio throttles, UT1 wired throttles, and cell phones running Wi-Throttle connected to the layout via JMRI's Decoder Pro software running on a laptop computer through a Digitrax PR3 computer interface.

Switch points are thrown by Circuitron Tortoise switch motors; the fascia has a track diagram running its entire length, with DPDT toggle switches and LED indicator lights to operate the motors.

The stuff that moves

I have fitted all of the steam locomotives (see box: Motive power) with ESU LokSound Select Micro sound decoders; one has a Soundtraxx Econami. About half the diesels also have ESU LokSound decoders. The non-sound units use a mix of ESU LokPilot and Lenz Sliver Mini decoders.

Rolling stock is from a variety of manufacturers, including Atlas, Bluford Shops, Kato, Intermountain, and Micro-Trains. All the rolling stock has body-mounted couplers: about 90% of the cars are equipped with Micro Trains 1015 couplers; the remainder are Atlas Accumate couplers (which I will eventually replace with MT 1015s). Trucks are all Micro-Trains with lo-profile wheelsets; I am gradually converting the wheels to Fox Valley Models brass wheelsets, however.

The two passenger trains are powered by Broadway Alco PA-1s and comprise a mix of Con-Cor and Centralia Shops passenger equipment and some Con-Cor Railway Express reefers at the head end of the eastbound train.

Cabooses include four bay-window cabooses that I custom painted and decaled using the old Model Power bay window caboose, four Atlas "NE" type cabooses that came painted for the NKP, and ten 1000-series cabooses. The 1000-series cabooses were the result of a project that I commissioned from Matthew Meyers, the owner of South Boulder Modelworks, and are 3-D prints from Shapeways. Alas, these are no longer available, because Shapeways changed its print specifications and the 1000-series caboose files did not meet the new specifications. I custom-painted and decaled all the 1000-series cabooses.

Motive power

Steam:
8 Walthers/Life-Like Berkshires
2 Bachmann Berkshires
4 Kato USRA heavy Mikados
1 MRC/Model Power USRA light Mikado
2 Bachmann Consolidations

Diesel:
4 BLI PA-1's
15 Atlas GP7/9s
7 Atlas RS-11s
4 Atlas RS-3s
5 Atlas SD9s
4 Life-Like SW8s
1 Atlas VO1000 switcher (for the steel mill)

Operations

A full operating session involves eight operators and lasts about three hours. We run four mainline freights and one passenger train in each direction. One operator runs the eastbound trains, and one runs the westbounds.

Mainline trains leave from their respective staging yards and stop at Bellevue, where cars are switched out for the local trains and the steel mill and cars added for off-line destinations (Cleveland and Buffalo to the east; Chicago, Peoria and St. Louis to the west). Power and cabooses are also changed out at Bellevue. The mainline trains then depart Bellevue

and terminate at the opposite staging yard. Two local trains, each with its own operator, run out of Bellevue and serve Lorain/Rocky River and Maple Grove/Fostoria, respectively.

Whichever local operator finishes his job first also runs the "steel mill turn" to deliver and pick up cars from the steel mill at the end of the session. One operator switches the steel mill, and two operators run Bellevue: one EB yardmaster and one WB yardmaster. If I have enough participants, I also use a hostler to move power around at the engine terminal. Car routing is accomplished via a highly simplified car-card/waybill system, and dispatching is done via the dispatcher (me) yelling orders across the room. This is one aspect of the layout that I hope to soon replace with a more dignified, if not prototypical, system!

The two staging yards are hidden by backdrops; the eastbound staging yard actually is mostly in a closet. The layout can be operated as a continuous loop when visitors come over and just want to see trains run; when I host an operating session, we run it point-to-point, with trains leaving one staging yard and terminating at the other.

The future

About three-fourths of the layout has basic scenery in place. By "basic," I mean that buildings, roads, and some ground cover are all in place, and the track is ballasted. The areas that still need scenery work are around the Rocky River Viaduct and Fostoria, particularly the National Carbon scene. Scenery details, including vehicles and figures, are needed just about everywhere, although I consider the farm scene pretty much finished.

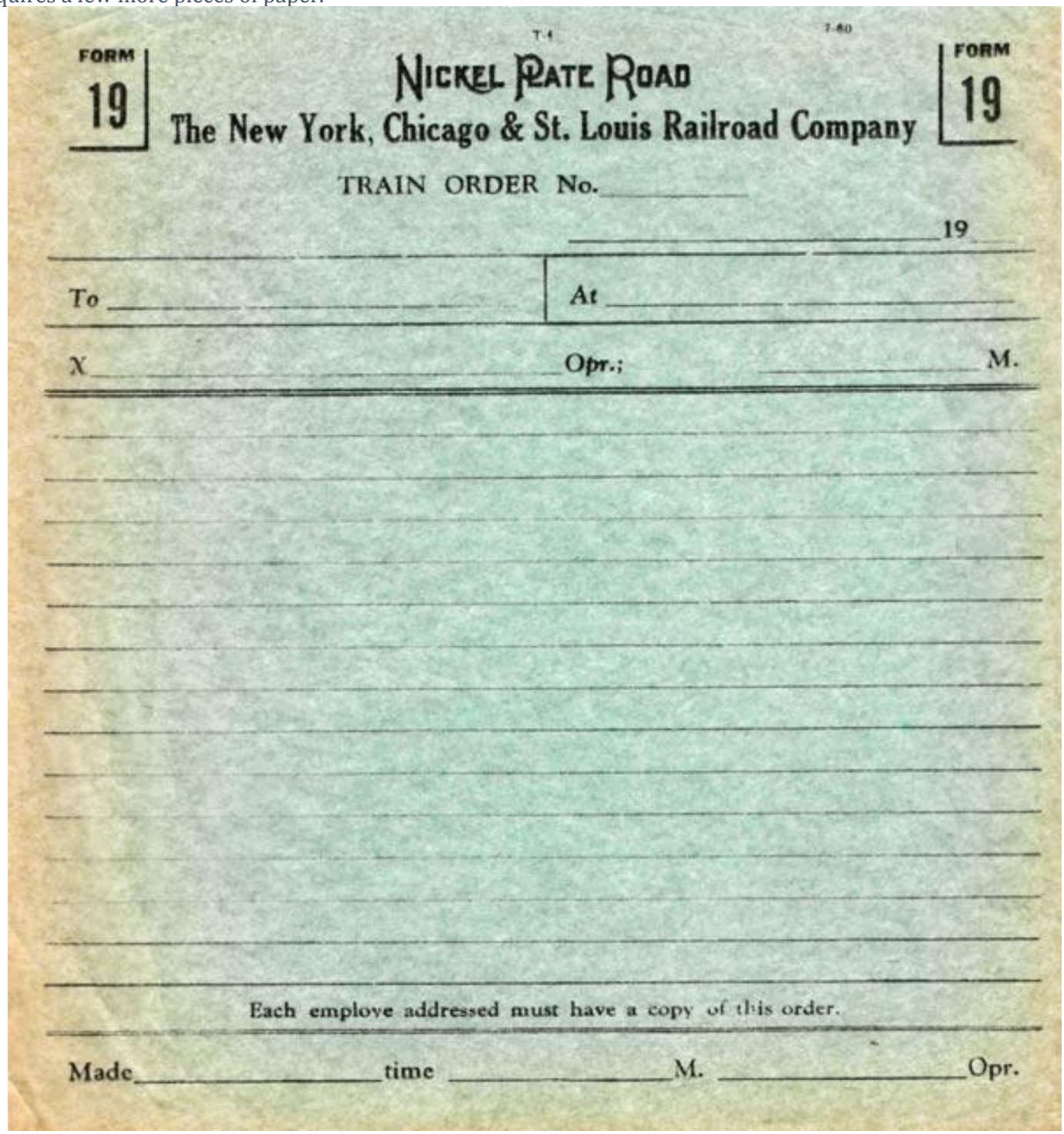
Eventually, I hope to add signals with mainline routes controlled by a dispatcher in another room, but that is a long-term project. I also need to weather a lot of my rolling stock, but I am making steady progress on this front, using pastel chalks as the weathering agent.

My somewhat unusual journey to the ranks of NKP modelers has been both a great learning experience and tremendous fun. Along the way I have met wonderful people associated with N scale and with the NKPHTS, all of whom have had a profound effect on my modeling efforts. The NKPHTS is simply a treasure of information; were it not for our organization, I probably never would have reached my goals in modeling the NKP. The combination of prototype modeling with freelancing the trackwork and industries at various towns has been a perfect choice for me, one that has resulted in an operating railroad that I think well-represents the essence of the real Nickel Plate Road.

MODELER'S REFERENCE

Common Nickel Plate Train Paperwork

Railroads run on paperwork. Timetables, train orders, freight waybills, passenger tickets, and 1,001 other forms, slips and charts are the life's blood of railroading. Without them nothing moves, nobody gets paid, and nothing happens. And while model railroading is a hobby, and paperwork seems to be the opposite of 'fun', any good model railroad should at least appear to work like the real thing, even on a very basic level. Adding a timetable to your operations is a good first step, since they tell everyone which trains should be running when, and in which sequence. But to explain what trains CAN be running, and to show what they're supposed to be doing while running requires a few more pieces of paper.



T-4 7-60

FORM 19

NICKEL PLATE ROAD

The New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad Company

FORM 19

TRAIN ORDER No. _____

_____ 19 ___

To _____ | At _____

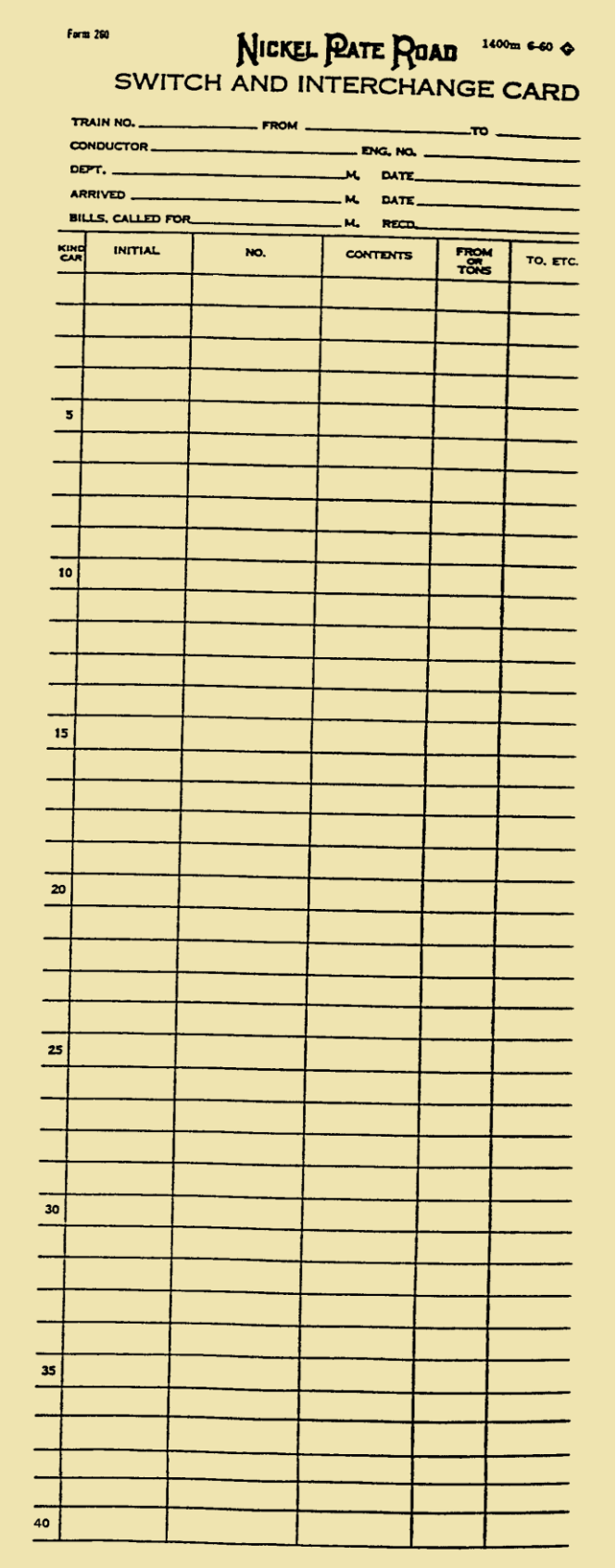
X _____ Opr.; _____ M.

Each employe addressed must have a copy of this order.

Made _____ time _____ M. _____ Opr.

These three NKP forms are examples of some of the most basic pieces of paper a freight train crew should be paying attention to during their run. A Clearance Form A gives a train authority to actually occupy a part of the mainline, a Form 19 gives directions to the crew concerning meets and other special instructions, and a Switch List is a handy notepad for a crew explaining what's in each car in their train and where it's going.

These forms are all copies of original NKP paper (I did have to 'fix' the color on the switch list). Print them out, start using them even in a semi-casual way during your operating sessions, and you'll quickly find that even 'work' can be fun!



Form 280 NICKEL PLATE ROAD 1400m 6-60

SWITCH AND INTERCHANGE CARD

TRAIN NO. _____ FROM _____ TO _____

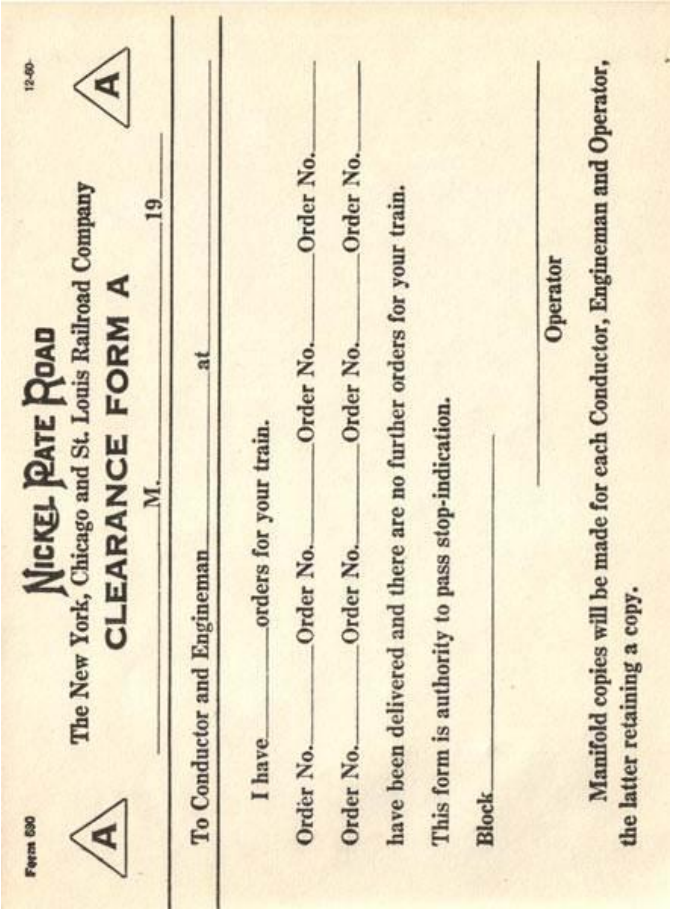
CONDUCTOR _____ ENG. NO. _____

DEPT. _____ M. DATE _____

ARRIVED _____ M. DATE _____

BILLS, CALLED FOR _____ M. RECD. _____

KIND CAR	INITIAL	NO.	CONTENTS	FROM OR TONS	TO, ETC.
5					
10					
15					
20					
25					
30					
35					
40					



Form 630 A NICKEL PLATE ROAD A 12-60

The New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad Company

CLEARANCE FORM A

_____ M. _____ 19____

To Conductor and Engineman _____ at _____

I have _____ orders for your train.

Order No. _____ Order No. _____ Order No. _____

Order No. _____ Order No. _____ Order No. _____

have been delivered and there are no further orders for your train.

This form is authority to pass stop-indication.

Block _____

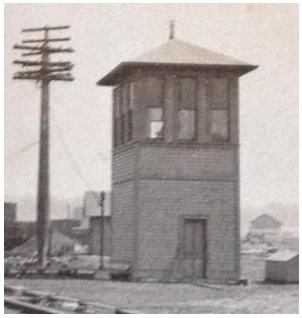
_____ Operator

Manifold copies will be made for each Conductor, Engineman and Operator, the latter retaining a copy.

Arcadia Ohio's DA Tower in O Scale

By Dan L. Merkel

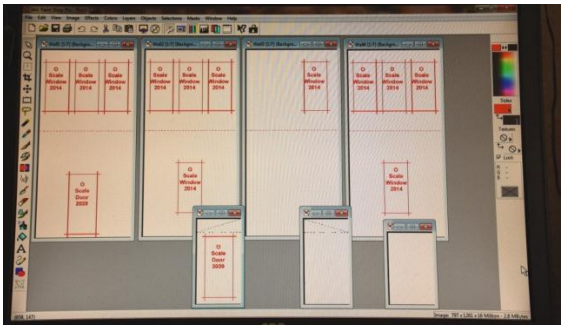
Several months ago, I started planning on building a model of Arcadia, Ohio's DA Tower. There were actually two different towers there; the original wooden structure, and a newer brick one. The brick one was removed sometime in the late 1970s. Since I wanted to scratchbuild this model I focused on the wooden version, since it seemed to be a simpler build.



I didn't have much information to go on given that the above images were the only two that I could find of the tower and the one on the right is in the background of a friend's family photo. To complicate matters, the tower appears to have undergone some remodeling between the two photos as the one on the left shows no signs of the "porch" which is clearly visible on the right.

There's no sign of the outside stairs either. But one mustn't let small things like having no idea what he/she is doing get in the way of a good time, so away I went.

Using the door on the photo on the left, I guesstimated both the height and width of the building. Since both visible sides had three windows at the top, I surmised that the tower base was square. I got busy using my guess dimensions and drew up some plans for it using my PaintShop Pro software. It is NOT CAD software but is really pretty easy to use, especially when things are all squares/rectangles like this building. I printed the drawn sides with window placement onto Avery label paper and stuck that to the clapboard siding I planned to use for the walls.



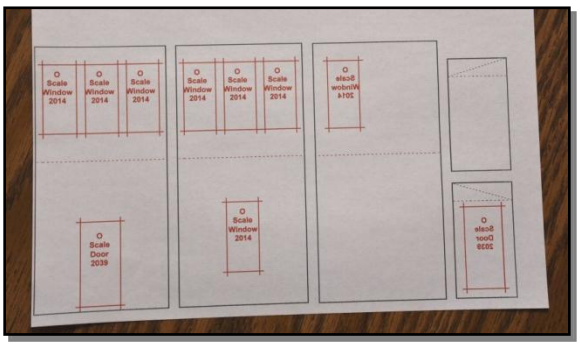
HOLD THE PHONE!!!

At about this point, I decided to build my model in O scale so that I could write about my toils for the Nickel Plate Society's Modelers' Notebook. About 90% of the articles in the magazine are for us HO guys so I thought that the O scalers would like some recognition as well. So I rescaled the drawings, got some O scale clapboard siding and went to work.

DA Tower List of Materials

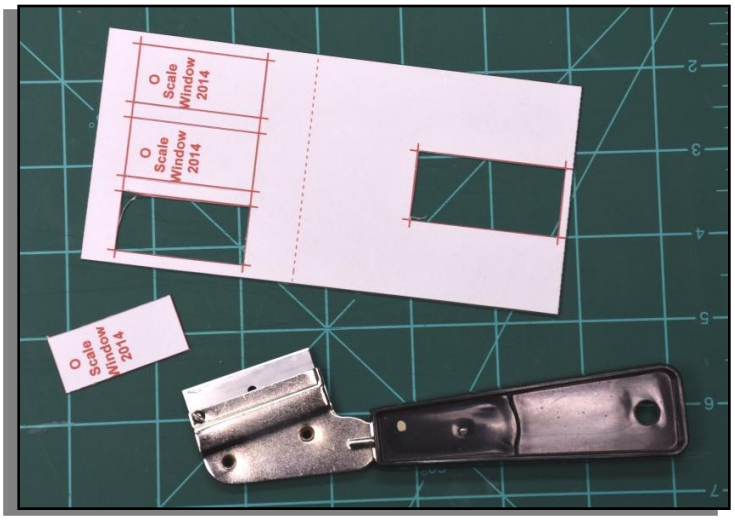
Evergreen Styrene .080 Clapboard Siding #4081
Evergreen Styrene .080 "L" stock #292
Evergreen Styrene .080 x .020 Strip #124
Evergreen Styrene .100 x .100 Strip #175
Evergreen Styrene .125 x .125 Strip #186
Evergreen Styrene .100 x .040 Strip #145
Evergreen Styrene .100 Rod #213
Evergreen Styrene .040 Plain Sheet #9040
Tichy Windows #2014
Tichy Doors #2039
Plastruct Styrene Stairs #90664
Plastruct Styrene Stair Railing #90693
Plastruct Styrene Railing #90683
Plastruct O Scale Shingle Sheet #91655

The first compromise with my model came when I had to change the style of the windows. The windows on the prototype look to be a little taller & narrower than what was available from Tichy Train Group. I could have stretched them but felt that a little deviation from the original wouldn't be that big of a deal and that the end product would still look OK. I went back to my drawing, adjusted the window openings and wall height, and printed out new, now much larger, plans to apply to new siding sheets.



To cut the walls, I simply used the scribe & snap technique. Lay a steel straightedge along the cut line and using the back side of the point of an Xacto #11 knife, make a few quick scribes. Then simply bend the piece away from the scribed line and it will snap cleanly. There is no need to cut completely through it but if you find that it is a little stubborn, on the next piece, make a few more scribes before trying to snap it.

After the walls were cut, it was time for the window & door openings. For this, I use a slightly different technique that has worked well for me. First, I use the same scribing technique as mentioned above. But you can't snap the parts with the window opening in the middle of a wall so instead, I carefully place a single edge razor blade in the scribe and firmly press down. I do this on a piece of Homasote which I find works better than the self-healing cutting mats offered by Xacto. I do each corner, eight cuts in all and in about 80% or more of the openings, the window or door fits w/o any further modification. If it is a little tight, a few passes with an emery board or a square sided file fixes things right away.

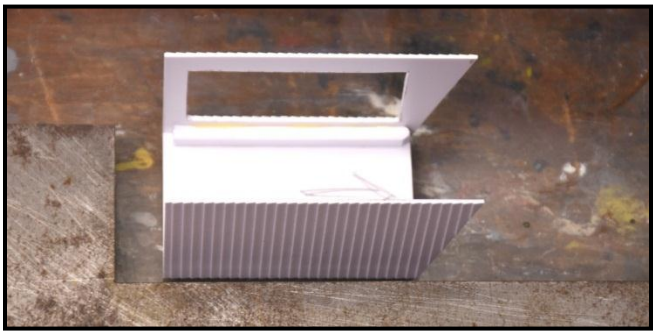


I can't stress how nicely that works "for me..." as the saying goes, your mileage may vary. But now it's on to assembling walls and adding glazing to the windows.

In order to provide as much gluing surface as possible, I added .125 strip styrene at each corner joint and also at the point where I thought the floor would be. Since this is in O scale, I thought I had better at least put in some minimal interior details. I pressed the sides against a thick square that I have to make sure that the joints were as square as possible then let them sit

to dry for a day.

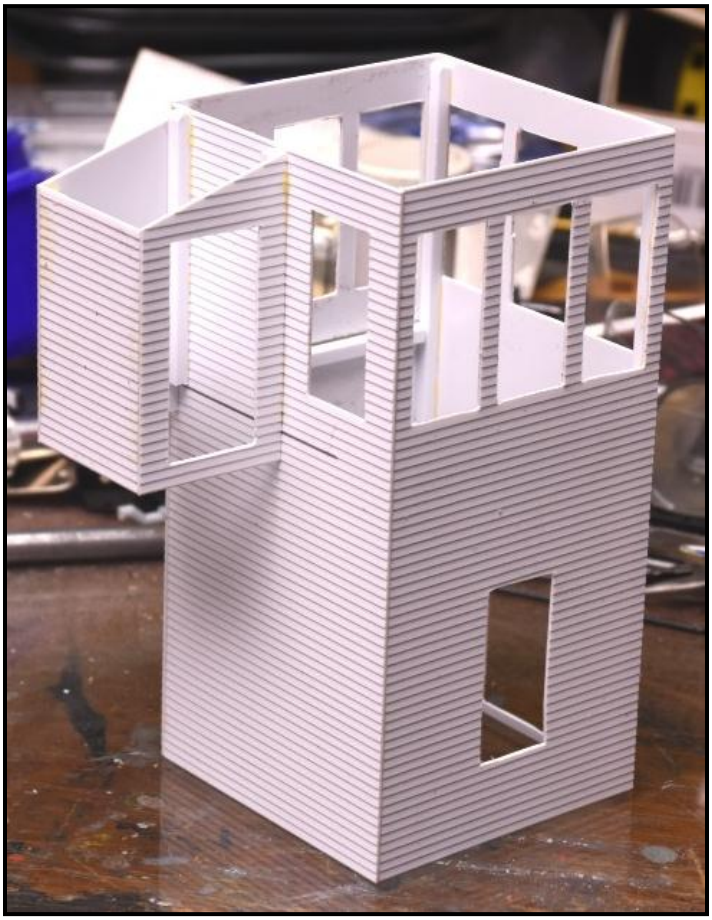
I also completed the porch using the same basic technique. I added strips on the outside wall where the porch would be located, again to provide as much gluing surface as possible.



I wanted to let everything dry very well so I decided to go to work on the windows & doors. Originally, I had planned to leave them the gray color that they were cast in but decided that they were too much like the outside wall color I planned to use. So I hit them with a coat of dark gray to get a nicer contrast. After they had dried, I fitted the window glazing into them for a more finished look.

This is the first time I used Tichy's glazing and I must say that it worked out quite nicely. The sheet appears to be laser cut with just a couple of very small spaces not cut to allow the parts to stay in place on the styrene sheet. After cutting them loose, a quick pass with my trusty emery board and they fit in very nicely. So I carefully added liquid styrene cement along the inside of the window frames then put the glazing into place. I was careful to not use too much or else it would bleed onto the middle of the glazing and fog up the window.

After the walls had set, I took a look at what I had so far...

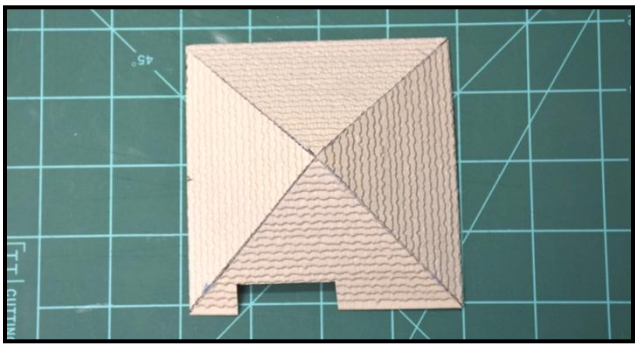


The next step was a visit to the paint booth to add that light gray wall color that I wanted to use. After it was thoroughly dry, I added some .080 corner stock and strip stock to serve as additional trim. I left it white just to give the piece a little more "show."

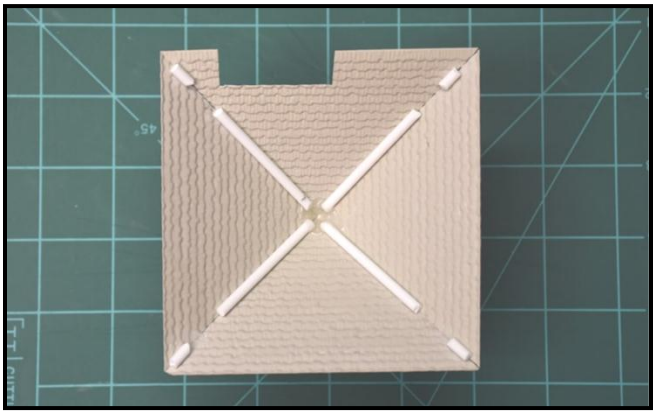
As you can see, I also added the support posts for the porch. I left them white as well.

Up to this point, things went reasonably well and were relatively easy to complete. But then came the roof...

When I was in high school, geometry was something that I literally killed. I did very well, in part, because I could "see" how things fit together. But when it came to figuring out how to do this roof, I fussed & fumed, doodled and sketched but could NOT come up with a way to get it to be done via my trusty PaintShop Pro software. So I reverted to the old fashioned way... I got out some paper, a pencil and a straightedge and went to work to create a paper pattern/template. It took about three tries and maybe ten feet of Scotch tape (just kidding) but I finally got a workable solution. From that, it was pretty easy to redraw my pattern onto the shingle material that I planned to use.

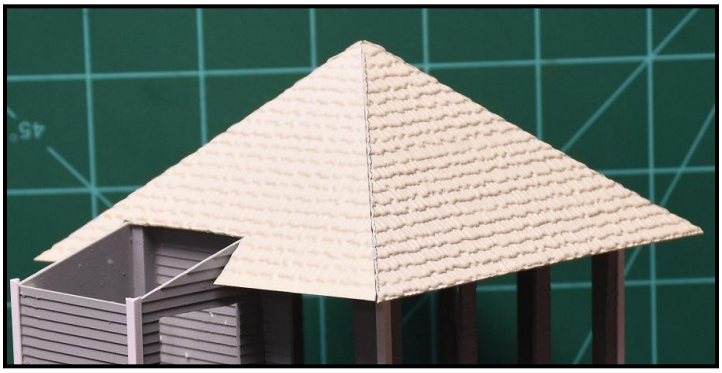


I cut out the pieces then taped them together using masking tape. Next, I turned the piece over and dropped in some round stock to reinforce the joints. I used an ample supply of solvent cement and was lucky that it didn't bother the shingle stock. After the glue had a day to set, I removed the tape and this is what I ended up with.



I pulled the ends together and added some shorter round stock to reinforce them as well. I did cut out a space for the porch since the roofline went below the top of that section. After wrestling for the better part of the evening to get the pointed roof looking right, adding the small flat porch section was very easy. The cut in the main roof was right at a shingle line so it easy to just put the porch roof section in place and actually hold it with some more masking tape from the inside. The roof will remain removable so I made no effort to permanently attach the porch roof to the main roof structure.

I'm a firm believer in checking progress as things move along so I placed the roof onto the main structure and called it a night...



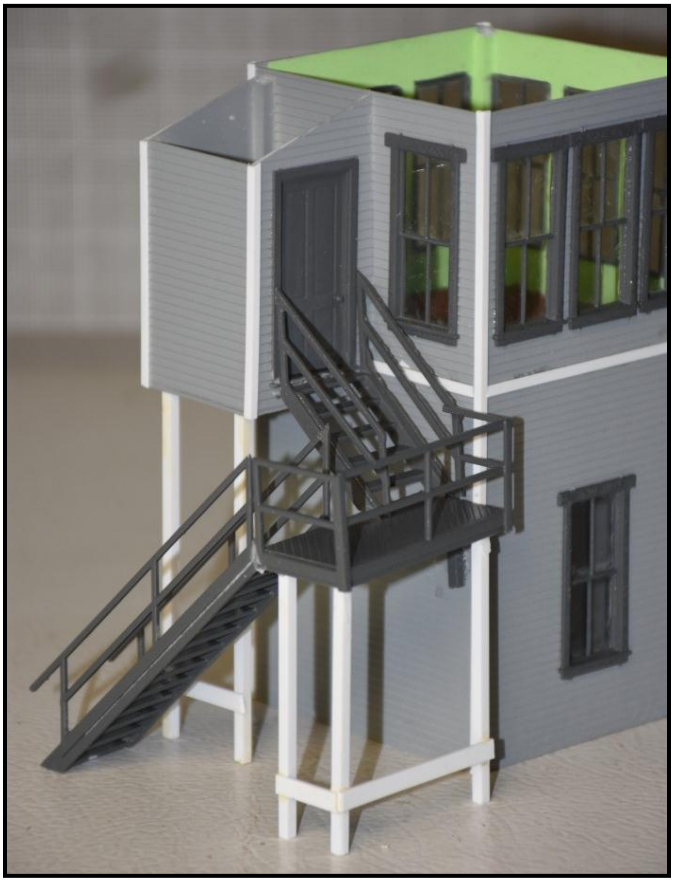
Ok, it's time for some odds & ends here to keep moving forward. The picture below doesn't show

it well but I made a brief trip to the paint shop to paint the interior of the tower a kind of light, industrial-looking green. I had no idea what the original tower colors were but since I'd seen some NKP cabooses with a similar color green, I thought that would be good enough for my purposes. I also painted the floor brown but that got covered up. More on that in a moment.

By painting the interior before installing the windows, it was a lot easier than trying to paint around them. I'm pretty sloppy with a paint brush anyway so I do need all of the help I can get. While I was in the painting mood, I hit the roof with a darker green color to simulate the green shingles that the Nickel Plate used. I set everything aside for a while to let the paint dry before I tackled the installation of the windows & doors.

Because of the technique I mentioned earlier to cut window & door openings, I had little difficulty in getting them in place, properly seated and cemented. One did give me a bit of an issue but I found out it was because of the corner posts I used for reinforcement of the corner joints; one stuck out a little and caused a bit of an issue. A few quick passes with an emery board solved the problem and I finished the two doors and twelve windows. One note on the door that was a bit new to me... the O scale doors are bigger and have a little more detail. And the door frame is a separate casting from the door itself. This allowed me to have the door swing either way which was helpful since the porch door really should swing in from the left. One typically doesn't have that option with the smaller scale parts.

I really couldn't believe this but by far, the hardest part of the project was the installation of the stairs & landing. I was using pre-cast Plastruct steps, stair railings and platform railings; it should have been a piece of cake... but it wasn't.



The logical way to attack the problem seemed to be from the top down so I worked on that short section of steps first. As it turned out, my porch was probably bigger than it should have been and

it extended about half way across the back of the tower. This meant that there would only be a few steps then the stairs would make a 180° turn and go down to the ground. It was easy to fit the stairs under the door sill but there wasn't anything on the other end to support them. I realized that I'd have to do the landing first so that there would be a place to rest the stairs on the lower end. Once I figured out where the landing would sit, I built it from some scrap scribed siding so that it would look like wood and added some strip stock underneath it to both brace it a little and have a place to attach the straight railings. I also added some angle pieces to simulate corner posts and to have a place to glue the ends of the railings to.

The railings spacing never works out correctly so I centered one post on the platform and cut the other ends to fit into the angles that I used for the corner posts. The ends of the platforms were done in a similar manner; I used one cast on post and cut the railing sections to fit into the angle pieces. This may sound confusing but the pictures speak volumes here. Since the platform needed to be firmly attached to the side of the building, I made a bracket with a triangle brace to keep everything in line. Unfortunately, after I glued the bracket in place on the landing, it moved a little and my whole landing was a little crooked. It was too late to go back when I realized this so I'll just blame it on age of the tower and things have moved a bit.

Next came the long supports and getting them glued into their proper position. When one scratch builds like this, you don't realize how much you miss those friendly alignment holes & pins on stock models. I first added a cross brace at the bottom of the two outside posts then another one to hold the third post in place. I let this all dry then carefully trimmed them to the proper length and cemented them into place. After the cement set, I turned the whole thing over and added a few small bits of plastic to reinforce what was a pretty fragile joint then let all of this dry as well. The addition of the long stairway was almost anti-climactic as it was relatively easy to simply lean the steps into place and cut them accordingly. Again, I added the angled railings to either side of the stairs and things were FINALLY finished! What a challenge! To balance the look, I also added a cross brace on the two longer posts that supported the porch section at the same height as the braces on the landing posts.

One caveat that I omitted... I did paint all of the pieces before I glued them together. As I was recapping how I completed the stairs, I realized that I forgot to mention that.

Believe it or not but we are pretty much ready to finish things up.

It's time to wrap this project up so let's take a quick look at where we are at right now. We built the main structure, the porch, added the windows and doors, struggled with the roof and added the stairs & landing. The building and the roof have been painted, and in the case of the building, it was painted on the inside as well.

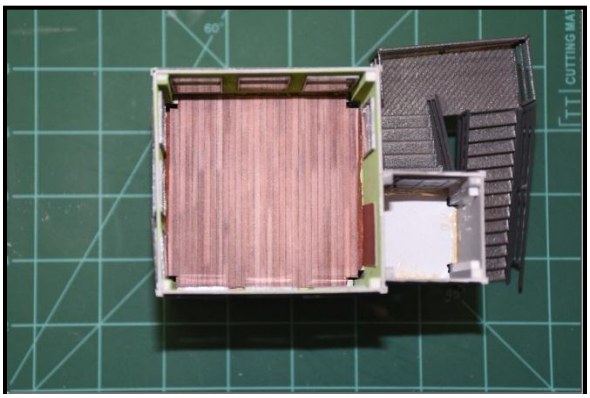
The smoke jack for the tower should pretty much complete the project. I had to do it again after the above photo was taken because as you can see, it was pretty crooked. Installing it wasn't all that hard but holding it in place while the glue dried was a different story.

I cut a length of plastic rod to length then cemented a piece of stock across the bottom of it perpendicular to the round shaft. Once this dried, I carefully bored a hole in the roof and installed it from the inside. The first try, I just left it alone but as I mentioned, it dried out of alignment so I had to re-do it. The second time, I was able to use the same smoke jack piece but this time, I held it in place with some masking tape to keep it "relatively" straight. Since I wasn't concerned about a slightly rustic look, I wasn't too worried about it being off a little.

Once the glue set, I reinforced the joint with a few more scraps of plastic strip stock just in case someone happened to bump it or use it as a handle to remove the roof. To finish the look, I used a paper punch to make a small plastic disc to place on top of the smoke jack as a cover. Once everything dried, I painted it flat black. I also carefully added a little black paint at the base of the smoke jack to simulate some tar that may have been applied there for sealing purposes. Once that was done, I declared the project done.

Oops! One more thing... the tower needed a name and I had planned on it being DA Tower since it was modeled after the tower in Arcadia. But I felt that the finished model wasn't close enough to DA Tower to bear its name so I compromised a little and decided on DM Tower. About thirty seconds at the computer produced two DM name tags that were applied to small blocks of plastic sheet stock and then glued to the sides of the tower so that it could easily be identified. NOW, it's done.

The tower project was completed but when I looked through those big windows, it looked more than a little bare in there so I decided that I needed some furnishings for the tower operator. A quick search on the Internet turned up a large selection of options... at a large price. So it was time to look for that Proverbial Plan B.

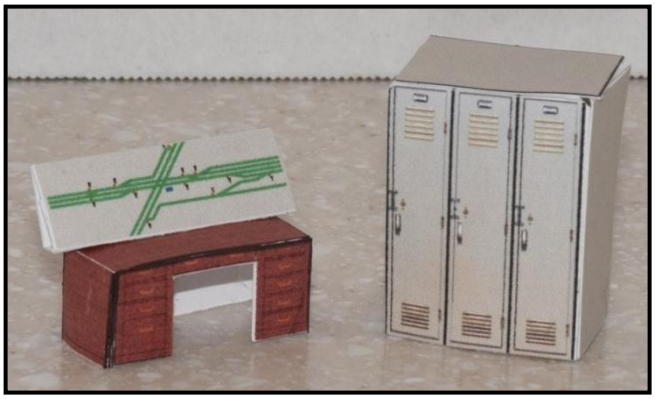


I thought I could scratch build them from some plastic stock. After all, the desk & lockers pictured above would only be some blocks of styrene painted an appropriate color; how hard would that be? But then I was chatting with a friend and he suggested paper models. Cool idea! The models didn't have to be all that fancy and since they were pretty much going to be block-shaped, that would be very easy enough to duplicate.

Another quick Internet search turned up a great image of locker faces. I even found a paper desk pattern ready to use. The only thing I had to do was to scale each one down and print them off on heavier stock paper. I also added backs, sides and a top to the locker image but that took next to nothing to do as well. From there, it was simply a matter of cutting them out and gluing them together. Once the desk was completed and the glue dried, I took a brown marker and touched up the edges where the white paper showed way too clearly.

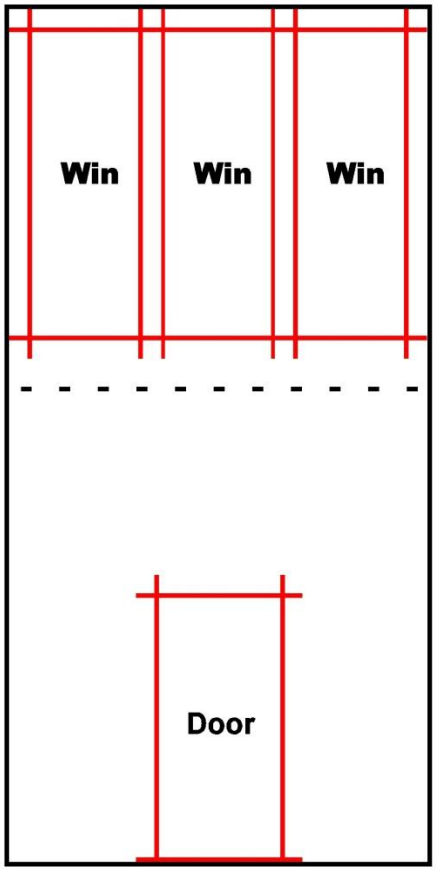
The tower needed something for the operator to do so I decided to create a panel with a track diagram, lights and switches for the operator to

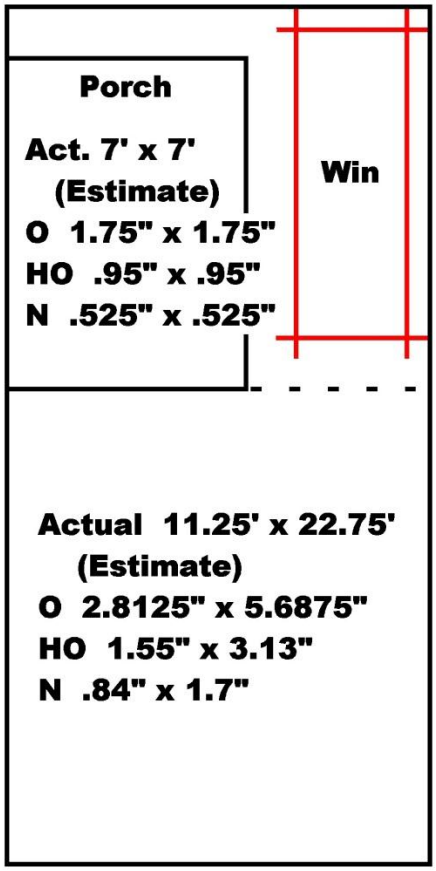
control train movements in the area. All of this was done on the computer in PaintShop and was a lot of fun putting together. Once the drawing was complete, I added a back then printed & folded it to glue it to the desk.

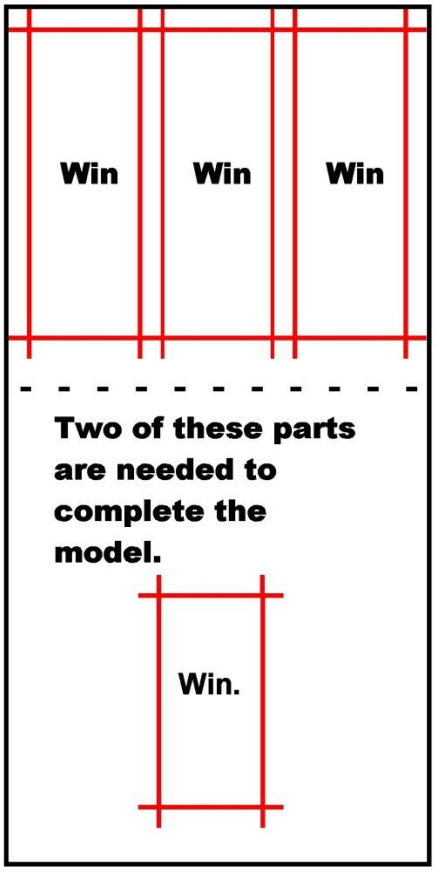


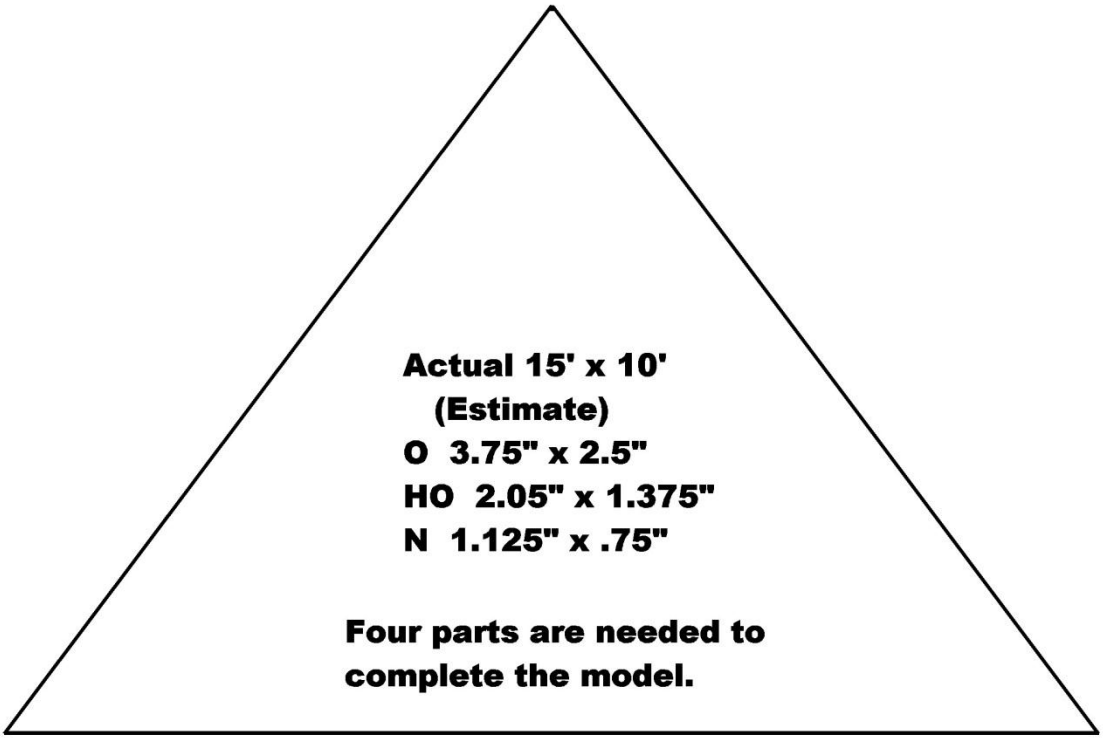
One detail that I never thought of until after I looked things over was the door that would lead to the outside wasn't visible on the inside. Back to the Internet and find a door image... hit PRINT and that job was complete as well. Then I realized that the floor wasn't all that great looking either... same thing. Back to the Internet, find some paper "flooring," scale it to size, print it, cut it out and add it to the model with some Tacky Glue.

Instead of forking over big bucks for plastic or cast metal furnishings, I was able to complete the look in a matter of minutes and it probably cost me about 50¢. Not a bad deal at all.


Win
Win
Win
Door


Porch
Act. 7' x 7'
(Estimate)
O 1.75" x 1.75"
HO .95" x .95"
N .525" x .525"
Win
Actual 11.25' x 22.75'
(Estimate)
O 2.8125" x 5.6875"
HO 1.55" x 3.13"
N .84" x 1.7"


Win
Win
Win
Two of these parts are needed to complete the model.
Win.


Actual 15' x 10'
(Estimate)
O 3.75" x 2.5"
HO 2.05" x 1.375"
N 1.125" x .75"
Four parts are needed to complete the model.

Along The Line

NKP modeler Matt smith is hard at work recreating the Peoria Division in HO scale. Here PB-2 drifts through downtown Bloomington, while "Mighty Ninety" spots a car at the NKP freight house.

Steve Grigg reports: I finished up this model tonight. It is an O Scale 50' flat made by Weaver many years ago. The farm tractors are 1/43 scale Massey Harris 30-K models produced by International Hobbies. The level of detail on these tractors is incredible for their size. The Weaver flat car was factory painted NKP and it is sad that this company closed its doors last year. My small fleet of NKP flats all have loads now. Time to move on to another project!

Bill Bodkin sent us photos of a NKP heavyweight baggage car he recently completed in HO scale. The base model is a Bethlehem Car Works kit #1230, which comes with accurate plain-sided doors. One problem Bill ran into with the project were the road name decals. The Microscale and Champ sets were both far too large to fit onto the letterboard! He solved the issue by using Microscale's N scale passenger car lettering, which while a little too small looked far better overall.

HO scale modeler Jakob Stage sent us a photo showing his progress in building a fleet of NKP Mikados. Starting with Athearn and Broadway Limited models of USRA Light Mikes, he's slowly but surely transforming them into accurate H-6 models.

Dan Merkel's been busy modeling recently, and did a great job scratchbuilding the W&LE depot at Warrenton Ohio. Based solely on photo evidence, the model accurately recreates the prototype, and shows that good modeling can be done fairly easily with almost no 'hard' information at all!

Bill Tuohy shows us that with a little attention to details and finishing, even a 'stand-in' model can look the part. Needing to get some NKP cabooses up and running quickly, Bill took an old Revell HO scale caboose model, changed the trucks and smoke jack, added free-standing grab irons and cupola sway braces, and new lettering to come up with this good-looking prewar caboose (although he has it lettered as a 1000-series cab it looks far more like an ex-Wheeling crummy). Wearing the NKP's prewar dark caboose red paint (Badger Deep Red with a little white added to lighten), for a small investment in time and money Bill now has another 'good enough' caboose to help protect the tails of his trains.

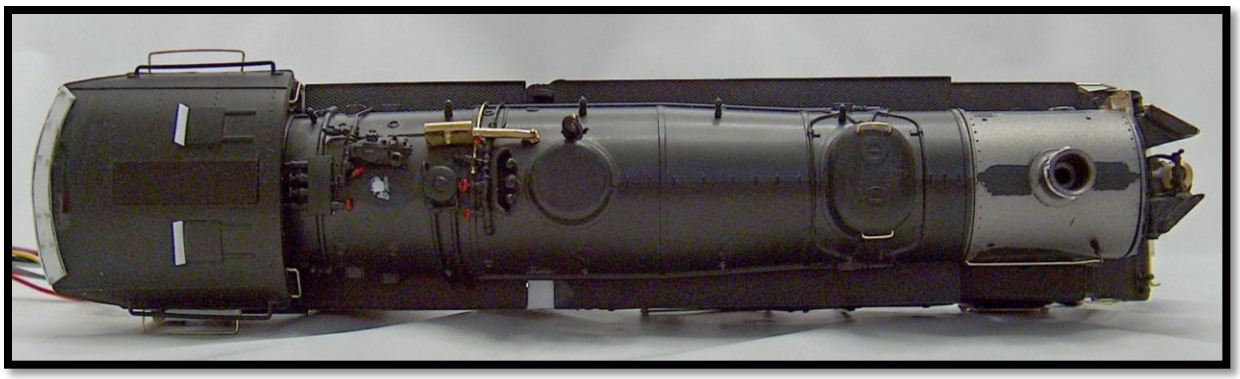
MODEL A MIKE
NKP 587 in the 1948-1952 Period
(part 2 of 2)

By Ray Breyer

In this second half of modeling NKP 587 in HO scale, I'll get into some involved detailing, reworking a stock model to accurately represent a NKP tender, and finishing the project. Modeling steam engines can be fairly involved since there's so much detail on them, but the end results are almost always worth it. In the end you'll have far more than a generic steam model, something that you can be proud to own and run, and something that's usually as good or better looking than brass for a fraction of the cost.

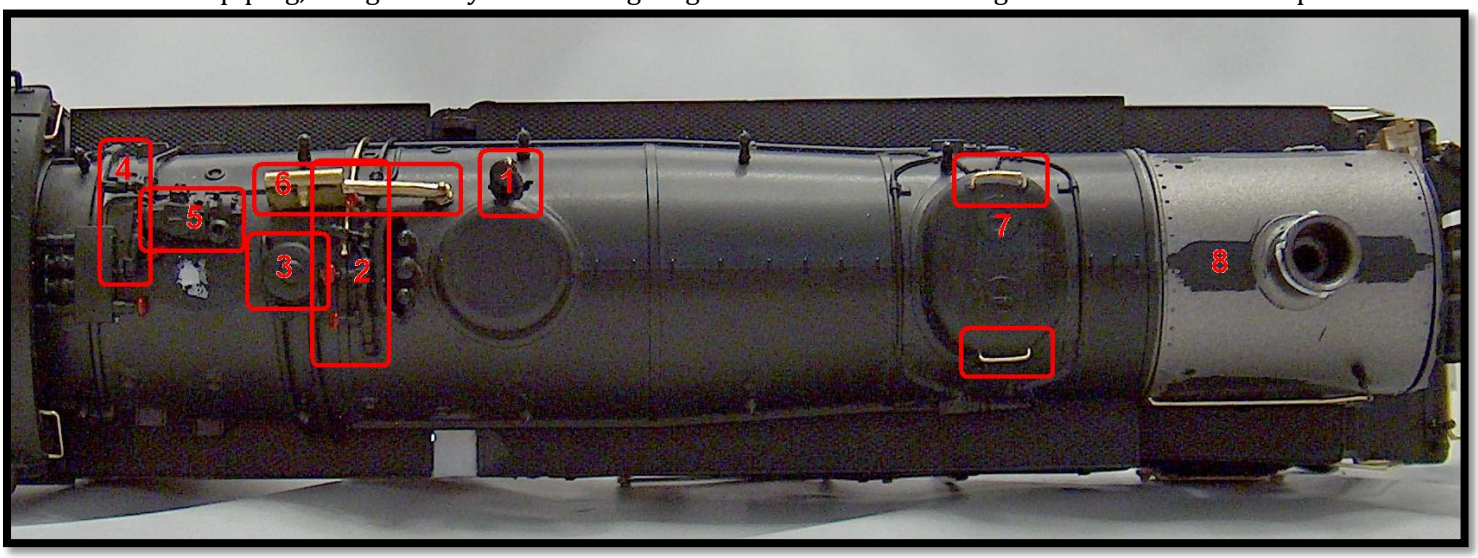
THE TURRET AREA

Let's dive into another complicated, or at least busy part of the model: the area between the steam dome and the cab.

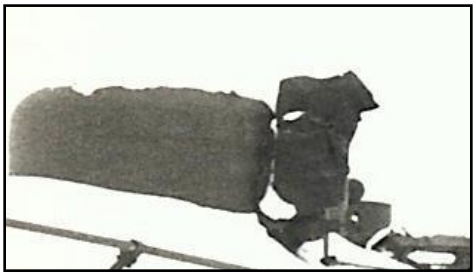


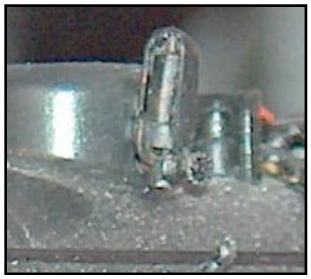
There's a lot going on up here, and you don't HAVE to model it all. In fact, my model isn't quite an accurate depiction of 587's piping. Rather, it's a quick and idealized version based on real piping practices, parts that I had lying around, the fact that most detail parts are actually oversized and hard to fit onto a scale model, and the need for this part of the engine to look "busy", but not be too difficult to model. Adding this much detail will make this otherwise Spartan and generic engine look a bit more like a hardworking member of the NKP freight fleet, and less like a stock, out of the box USRA model, so it's well worth the effort.

To help the process I've broken everything down into several smaller steps, in the order in which you "should" perform them. As I said, most detail parts are actually a bit too large, so trying to get everything to fit properly is a bit of a challenge. Sometimes, that means that you have to compromise, move things around, eliminate or move some details and piping, and generally weave things together. Here's a location guide for the various steps:



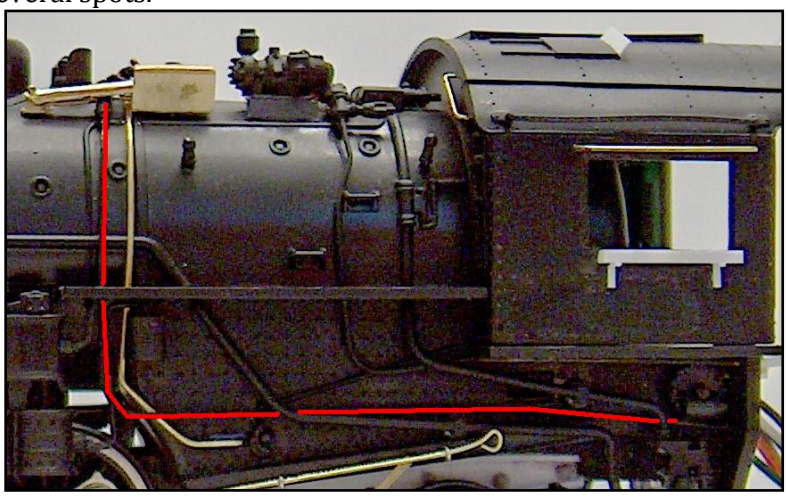
STEP 1: this one's the easiest: add the whistle!





For most of her career 587 had a five chime whistle with a sound shield attached. The closest part available is Cal-Scale 190-6538, which is a NKP Berkshire shielded whistle. I try to add these to all of my NKP steamers, so long as their stock of them holds out!

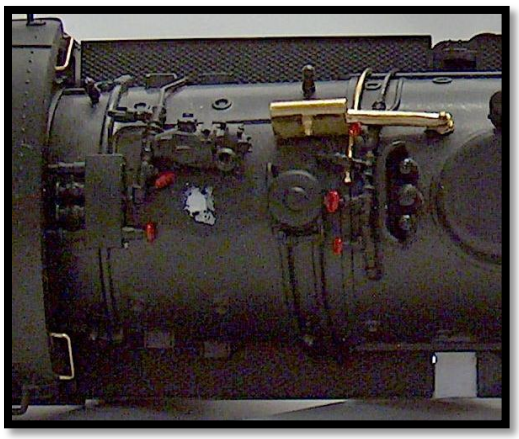
STEP 2: Add "Random Piping #1", Cal-Scale 190-6318. This is another brass detail part intended for Berkshires, and is a handy way of adding "cheap" details to any engine. You'll have to add this part first, since other parts get added above it in several spots.



I added the detail part right behind the pop valves, and added a piece of .020" thick wire to it, running the pipe down the fireman's side as shown, disappearing around the stoker motor under the cab. Use small amounts of ACC to tack it down in various places, and you're done.

STEP 3: Add the muffler. This is the most involved piece of plumbing to add to the model, since it consists of the detail, three pipes, and the exhaust. Break out that safety cone, because you'll need it now!

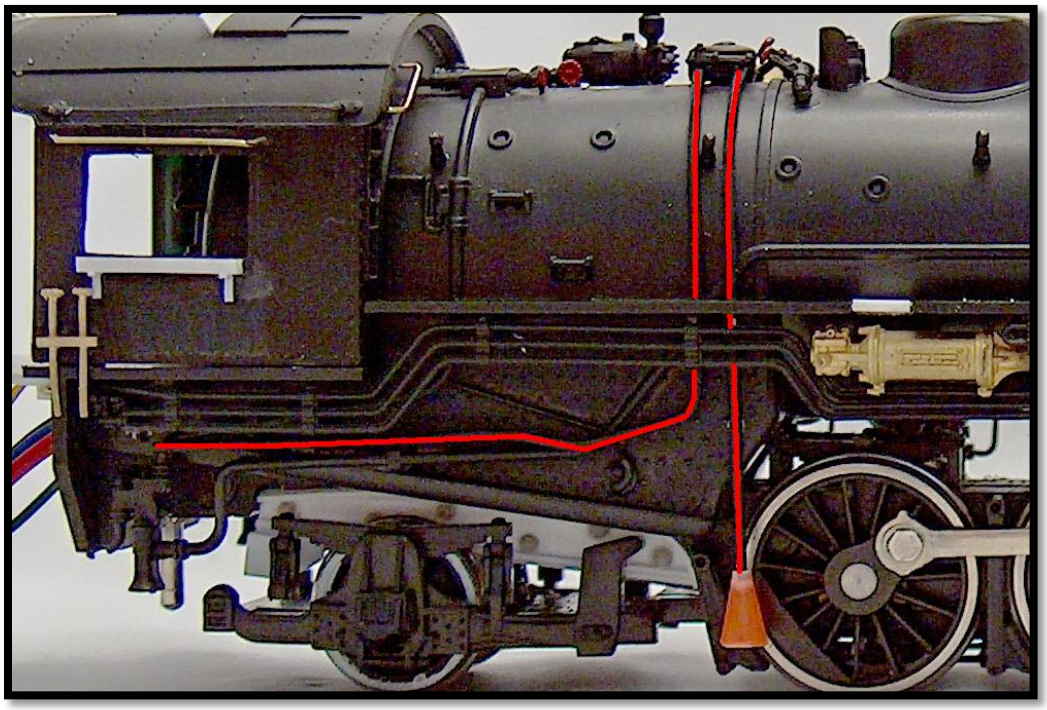
(don't worry, it won't stay orange for long!)



First things first: figure out where to put the muffler. Notice that it's close to the pops, and very close to the boiler band. That's important since the forward pipe on the engineer's side has to go straight down along the boiler and terminate at the back end of the rear driver; that's where the exhaust goes. The other two pipe locations are more forgiving, but this one is semi-critical.

The real 587's muffler has three pipes too, coming out of tidy fittings in the sides of it and running all over the place. This is a great detail to have on a model, and if you want a precise representation of all of that, be sure to use the reference photo above. But if you want a quick & easy representation of the same thing, do what I did and cheat!

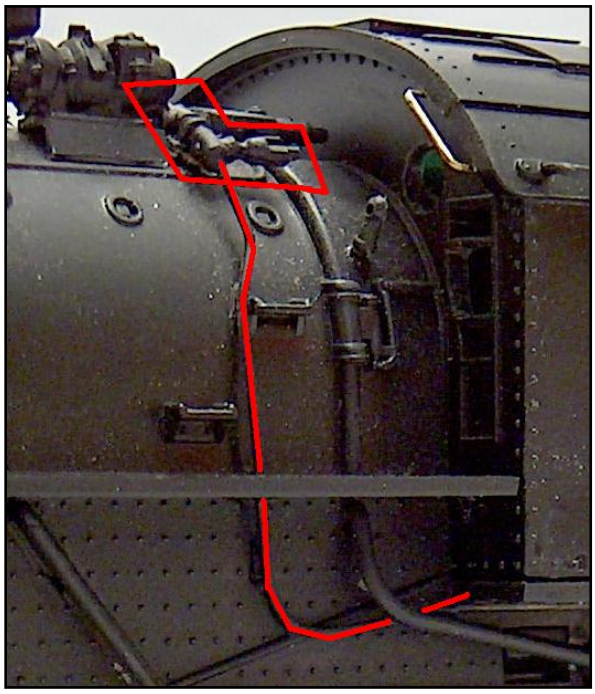
Add the fireman's side pipe first (it's the gold one in the above two photos). Run a .015" diameter wire from UNDER the muffler, down the side of the boiler and behind the running boards, and across to the blow-down controls. Tack it down with a few more strategically-placed drops of ACC, and move on to the next two pipes on the other side.



The next to pipes are pretty basic as well. Run the forward pipe from under the muffler, down the boiler, through the running board (always drill a hole through the board; it's easier to run a solid pipe than trying to line up smaller chunks, and it's more sturdy!), and straight down to the driver. For the exhaust, cut the top half or so off of the safety cone, drill a hole through it, and ACC it to the pipe.

Run the other pipe from under the muffler, down the boiler, through the running board, and across to the injector as shown. The pipe makes a couple of random jogs here and there to avoid cast-on details. Once all three of these pipes have been secured, you're done.

STEP 4: Add "random pipe #2". This one's another NKP-specific Cal-Scale detail (part 190-6319) which is for an H-5. Again, it's a busy part added to the model to simulate some of the large amount of external piping found on businesslike freight engines.



I added this part to the front of the existing turret detail, and ran it along the fireman's side of the boiler, around the side steps, through the running board, and routed it towards the cab.

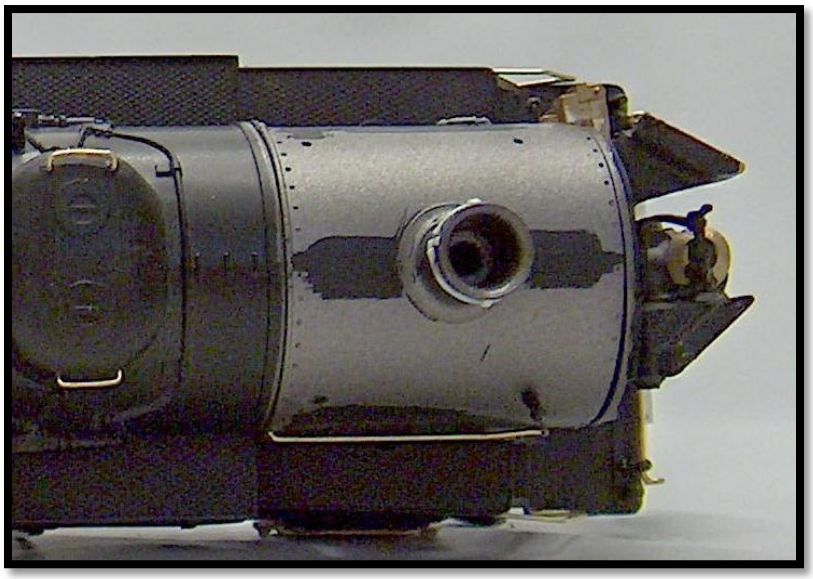
STEP 5: With all of the piping out of the way I could now add the turbo generator. The ones that come with stock USRA light Mike models are always horrible and in the wrong place for a NKP engine. So remove the part, throw it away, fill in the hole left behind, and add the new generator SIDEWAYS on the fireman's side.

The generator was added to the boiler on an L-shaped bracket. If you want you can fabricate this by adding the part to a short piece of .08" L-channel, gluing it to the plastic boiler. I opted for a slightly more secure method: I located where the part was going to go, drilled a hole straight down into the shell for the detail's mounting lug, secured the part with ACC (holding it in place with my finger until the glue set, to make sure that it stayed positioned properly, and then simulated the side of the bracket with a piece of .01"x.06" styrene.

STEP 7: Time to install the low water alarm, which is the last detail for this area. This is a simple part to add: just figure out where the part will fit around and over all of that piping up there, drill two holes, and glue it into place!

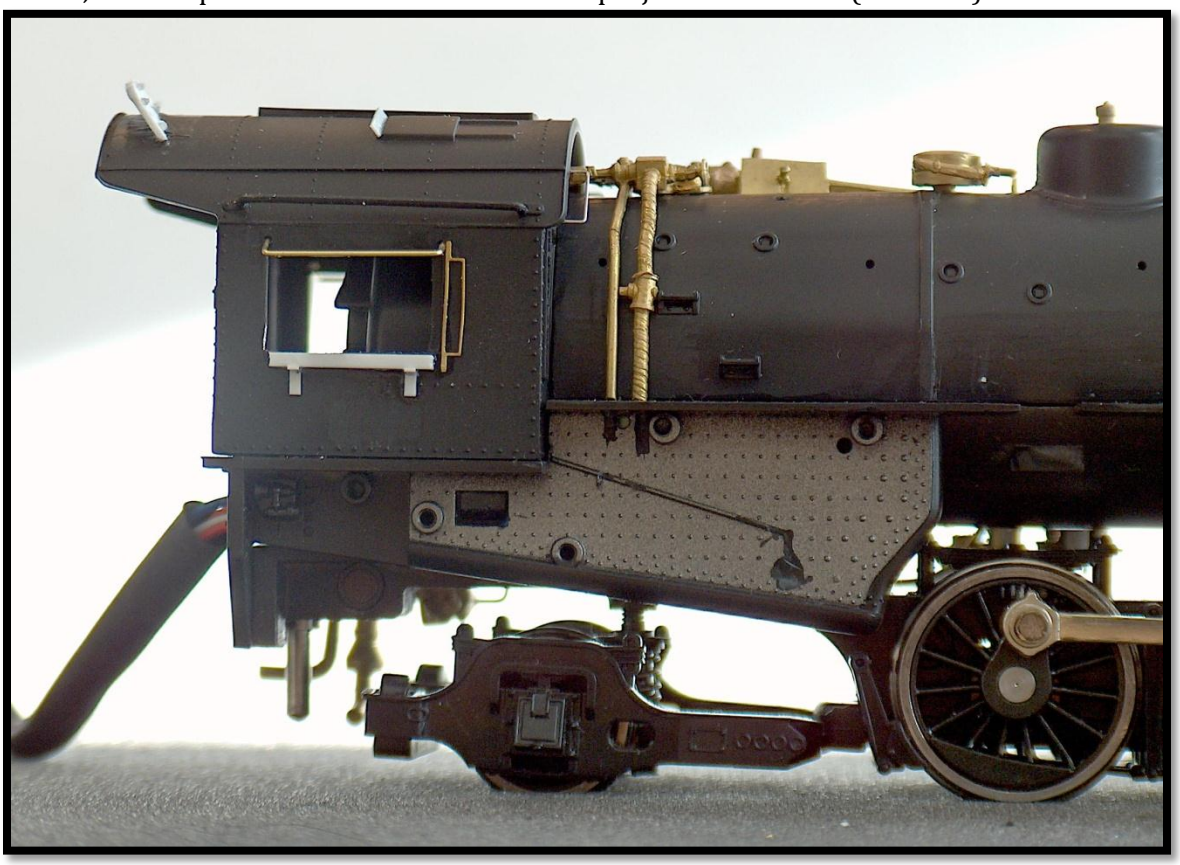
STEP 8: While I was working on the top of this model I decided to add grab irons to the sand dome, replacing the cast on ones. You really don't need to do this to your model, but since more people will be looking at the top of your engine than the bottom, it's not a bad idea. I just sanded off the cast on parts and replaced them with hand-bent new ones made out of .010" diameter brass wire.

STEP 9: and finally, while I was working on the top of the engine, I decided to sand away the mold parting line along the top of the smokebox. The top of the boiler SHOULD have a line across it, since the boiler lagging joins up there, but the smokebox doesn't have any lagging and shouldn't have the line. It's a picky little "non-detail", but is a mandatory thing for ME to do to my engines!



UNDER THE CAB

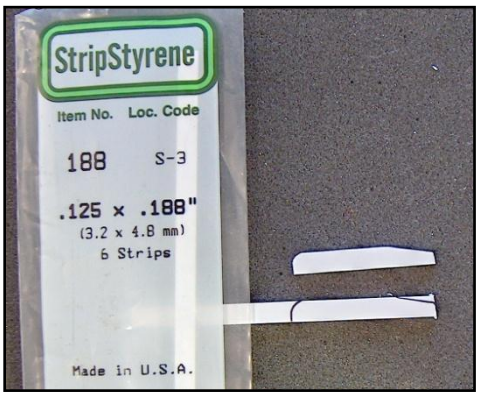
There are three items that we need to add underneath the cab: a frame extension, a cab deck plate, and the injector controls. First off, here's a picture of that area on a similar project I worked on (NKP 624)

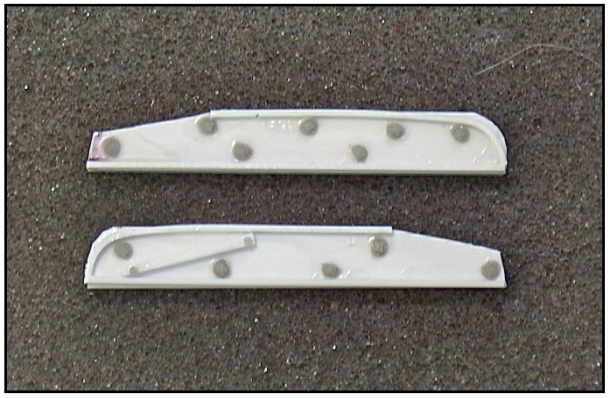


Pretty barren, undetailed, and airy, right?

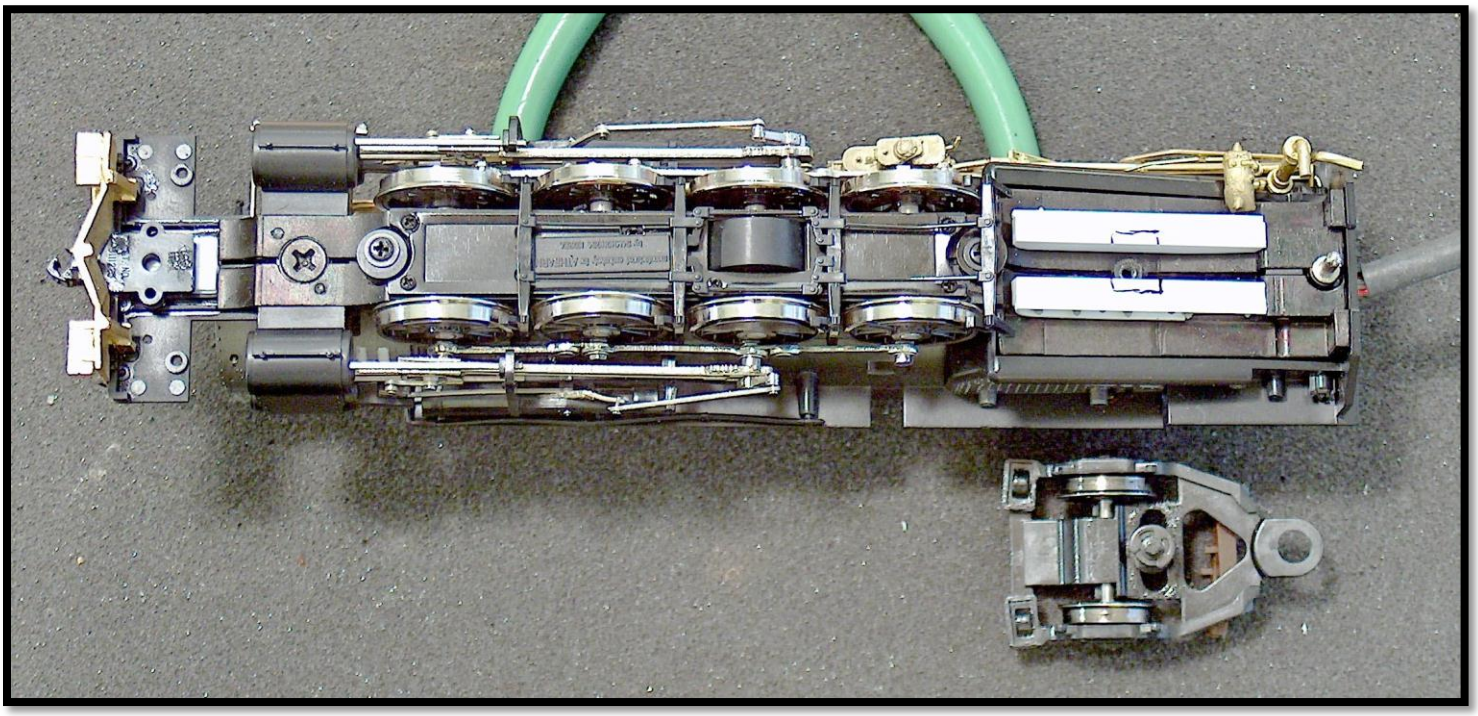
Now, here's what the underside of a real steam engine's cab looks like:

There's a little bit of a difference, isn't there? Besides the mess of pipes that run all around down there, you plain old can't see through the trailing truck area. This is a MAJOR problem with any steam engine model, even most brass ones. That's because we modelers tend to have too-small curves on our miniature empires, so manufacturers generally leave all detail out of that area to allow the engines to run around 15" radius curves. That hollow space under the cab ruins the look of any model steam engine with a trailing truck, but is one that's easy to fix. All you need to do is add some sort of view block down there! It doesn't have to be fancy, it doesn't have to be wide, and it doesn't have to be detailed (especially once it's painted black). But it does need to be there! I developed a quick & easy way to make these view blocks years ago, and add them to any of my steam models that need them.





Making the "frame extensions" is simple: I just use two chunks of .125"x.188" Evergreen styrene, cut them to roughly the same length and contour as the area under the cab, and superglue them to the engine. Notice that I've dressed up my frame pieces with an lower edge "lip" of .01"x.02" strip and added a few random NBWs here and there. These non-specific details can show up on a weathered engine, and do add more "cheap details" to the engine, but aren't really necessary.



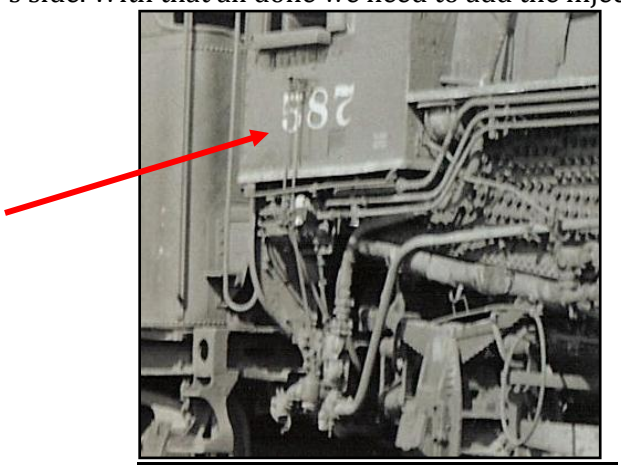
With the parts in place, test fit the trailing truck to make sure that the new frame interferes with it in any way. Notice the rough square I have drawn on my frame: those were there in case I had to remove material from them so the trailing truck screw would clear the parts (I didn't have to!).

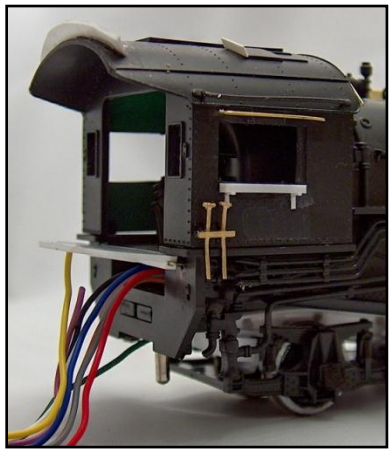
Next, we need to fabricate a cab deck plate. I could have bought the Cal-Scale part, but it's a little small. Besides, they're easy to scratchbuild, and cost pennies.

This is how simple a deck plate is: a trapezoid of .020" styrene, a length of .060" Evergreen U-channel, and a length of .020" brass wire bent into a U. MEK the channel to the plate, bend the wire into an L, thread it through the channel, and bend the other leg of the wire. Mark and drill the holes for the wire into the back plate, and ACC the assembly into place. The deck is now full hinged and ready for use.

Note that I haven't been very specific about this part's dimensions, except for what material to use. That's because the exact shape, length, and corner angles are dependent on your specific circumstances: your choice of tender will affect the part, as will how close you like to couple the tender to the engine. Curves on your layout will also affect the shape of the part, and abrupt vertical changes may as well. Experiment a little by building the part, installing it, and NOT gluing it into place. Then test run the engine on your layout until you're satisfied that the part will behave!

And finally, we get to the LAST detail required for the engine. Reassemble everything, install the cab, and move to the engineer's side. With that all done we need to add the injector controls.



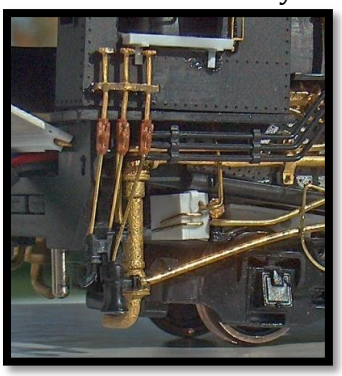


For some reason, the NYC liked to add the injector controls to the outside of their engine cabs, instead of routing everything inside of the cab like most other railroads. Since the NKP's early mechanical engineers were all from the NYC, they brought this practice with them. Many Nickel Plate engines ended up with this feature. It's very rarely modeled since it's sort of a pain to do, but it's a small detail that really stands out.

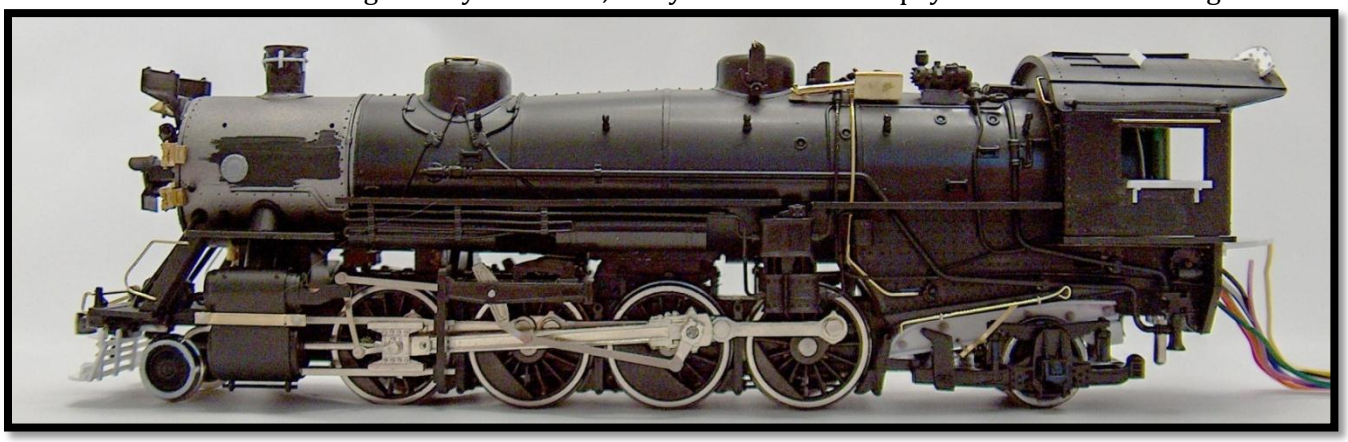
Making this detail is pretty basic once you know the trick. Fir the controls I used half of Precision Scale part 32212. This is a boiler back head control and slightly large, but I wanted something solid to add to the side of the engine, and didn't feel like cobbling something together!

32212
Turret control

I positioned my part slightly behind where the actual controls are, near the back of the cab. I did this so the part wouldn't get in the way of the cab numbers once I painted and decalled the engine. With the valves glued to the cab, add a Tichy turnbuckle to the bottom of each pipe. Next, drill two holes into the top of the injector (you may have to remove it for this step; it's a press fit part along with its cast-on piping, so is easy to remove and re-add). Run a piece of .010" or .012" diameter wire between the turnbuckles and the holes in the injector, and glue them to the turnbuckle side only! That way you can remove the cab if necessary without destroying the detail.



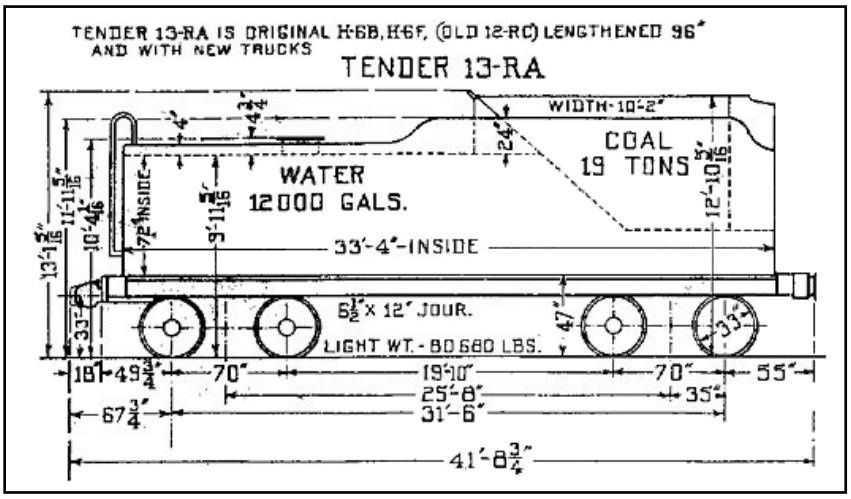
And guess what? The engine's done. If you've done everything according to plan you've now got a good-looking model of an actual NKP steam engine on your hands, and you didn't have to pay for a brass model to get it!

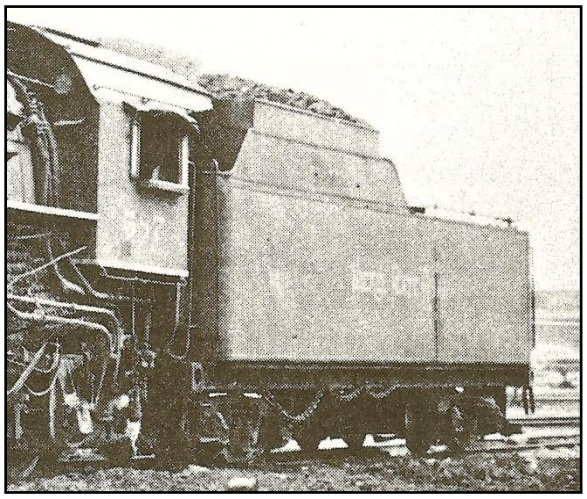


Now it's time to take on the second half of the project: the tender.

THE TENDER

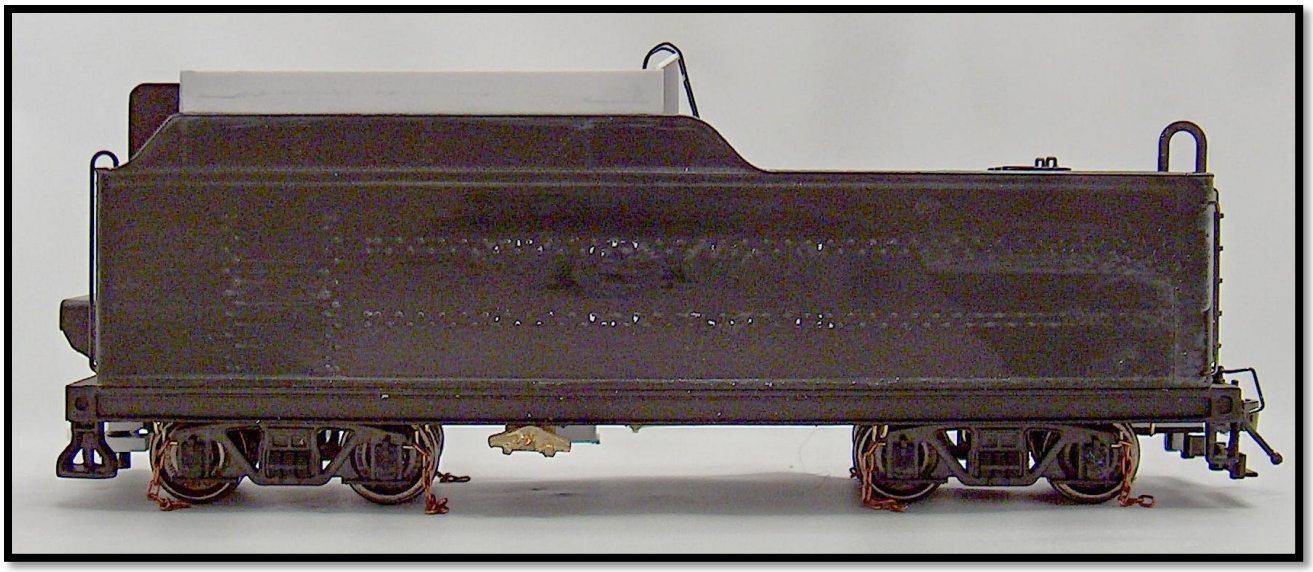
Like I said in the beginning of this article, the Nickel Plate liked to swap tenders around behind their engines, and especially behind the Mikados. Sometimes it was because a tender had sprung a leak and the engine needed something to run with while the original tank was in for repairs. But more usually, they swapped tenders based on the engine's general assignment: mainline through power got large 22-RA or 16-RA tanks, general use road switchers got 16-RA or 13-RA tenders, and engines kept for turns, industrial switching and other short range duties retained their small 10-RA or 10-RC tenders. NKP 587 was all over the railroad performing all sorts of duties, and so seems to have been assigned all of these tenders at one point or another. But she ran most of her service life, including her last year of active service, with small or mid-sized tenders. The photos I was focusing on showed her with a 13-RA tender, so that's what I modeled.



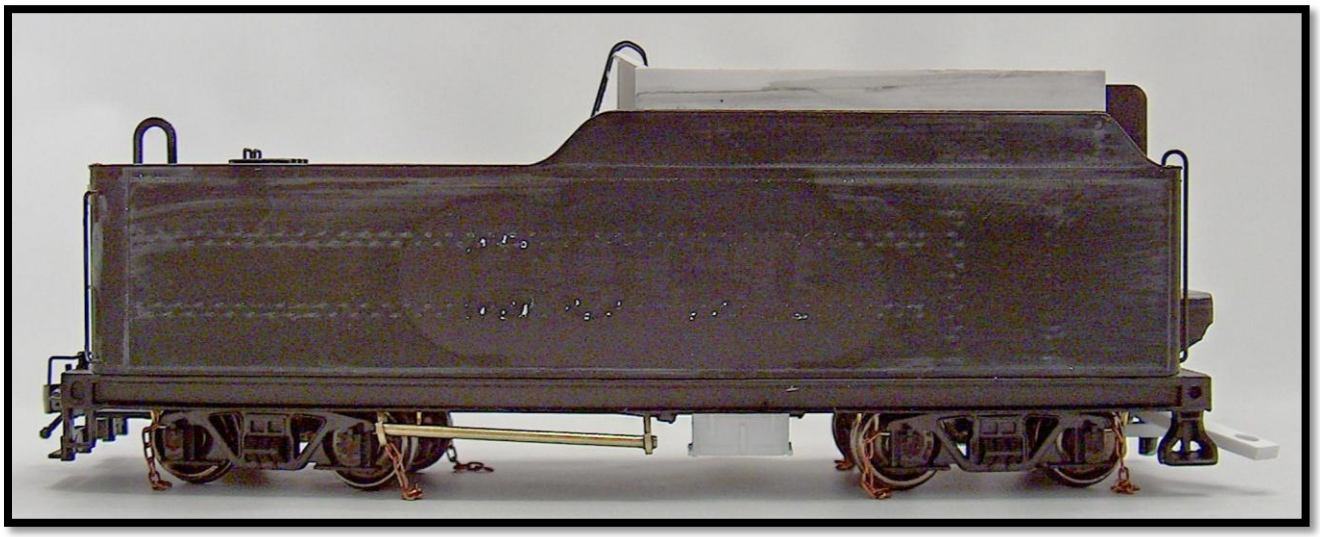


The Bachmann "USRA Long Tender" (the USRA didn't classify them this way, but had three standard tenders each with different capacities) is a very close match for the NKP's 13-RA tenders (I don't know exactly how many of those they had, but in 1942 there were eight of them assigned to H-6 B, D and O class engines). Since they're a good match, this part of the process mostly includes adding a few small details and a coal bunker extension.

I did add safety chains to each of the trucks. This is a neat detail, but they are a bit of a pain to deal with. Installing them consists of making 16 small J-shaped hooks formed out of .010" diameter wire, drilling eight holes into the tender frame and another eight into the trucks, and then gluing everything together. Honestly, unless you really like this detail (which IS on most steam engine tenders), or if you're looking for extra "points", I wouldn't bother.



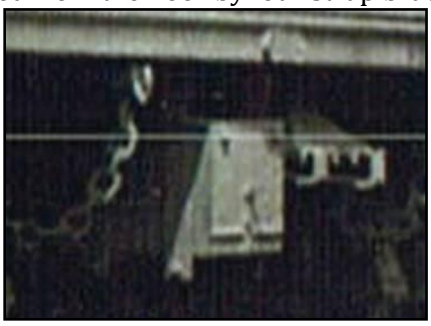
Besides the chains, the only detail that I added to the fireman's side of the tender was a rerailing frog.



The Engineer's side is a little more involved, since I added a poling pole and hangers, and a tool box.

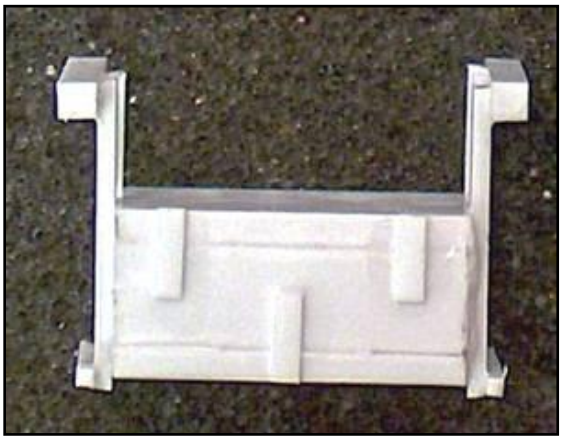
The pole hangers are pieces of brass flat stock that I had lying around which were .010" thick and .030" wide. Just about anything sturdy will do, however. The pole is just a random chunk of brass rod I found; a round toothpick with the ends blunted off will also work well.

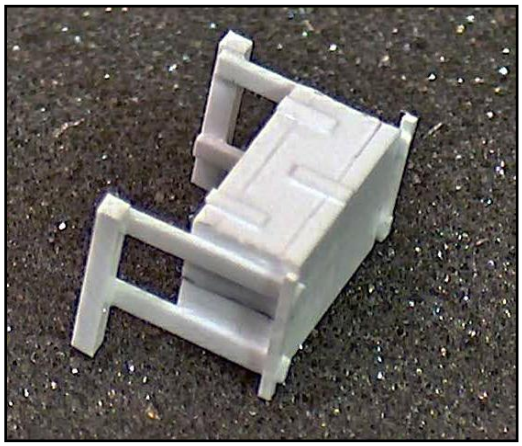
Next, we need to scratchbuild the tender's tool box. Judging by the prototype photos, the tool box was a simple sheet steel box, hinged at the top, and suspended from the floor by four strap braces.



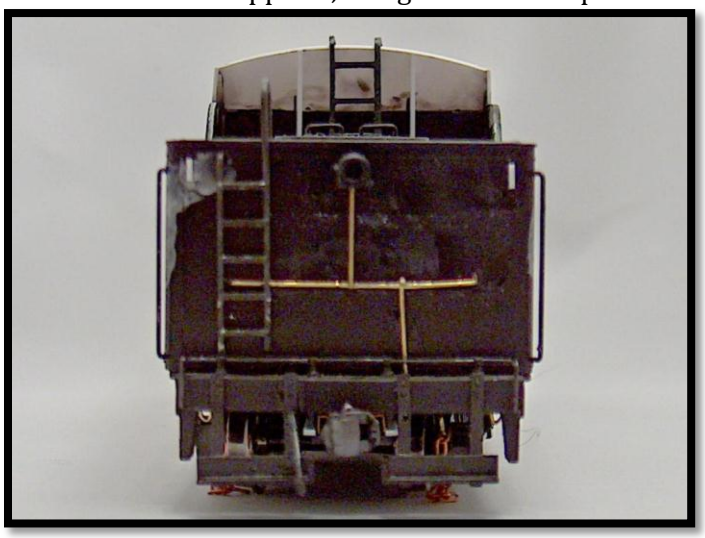
The model is a simple scratchbuilding project: Cut two pieces of .135"x.195" styrene to .410" long. Glue them together back to back to make a nice, solid box. Once the MEK is dry (a couple of minutes), sand the sides smooth, and add a top and bottom score line to the box front, approximately two scale inches from the top and bottom edges, to represent the top and bottom edges of the door.

Next, add three strips of .01"x.02" stock to the front, which will represent the two hinges and the clasp. These parts should be around a scale 9" or so long



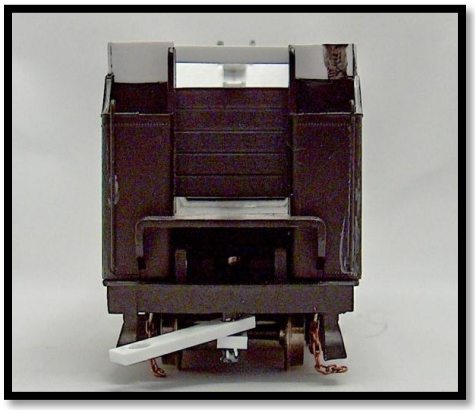


Next, add the four vertical legs using .01"x.04" strip, cut to .35" long. Add one to each corner, offset by a scale inch or two. The large upper leg supports, for the sake of a sturdy connection, are .04"x.04" strip; they're not visible at normal viewing angles, so their size doesn't matter. Their dimensions aren't critical, so long as the front edges of both are even. Finally, add the two bottom end supports, using .02"x.02" strip. Glue this to the bottom of the frame.

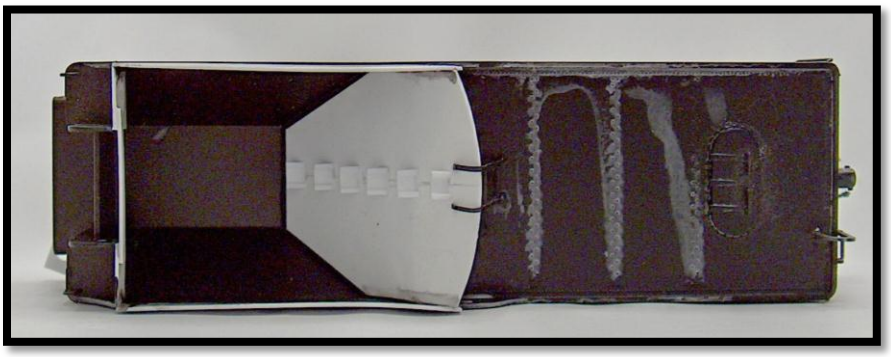


The back of the tender didn't need much work either; just a backup light and its conduits. These tenders usually had a small light attached to the back rather than a large one on a bracket attached to the deck (as on a switcher). I just found a random piece of hollow plastic tube in my parts stash, glued it to the rear, and added some .012" wires as

conduit. Since I don't model a time when headlights being on during the day was mandatory (pre-1952 or thereabouts) I didn't bother making the headlight operational.



The front of the tender only needed a new drawbar. .I made mine out of thick styrene, and added a small spring cut down from a BIC pen to add tension to it.



The coal bunker extensions are a little tricky. The sides and front were easy enough, since they're just .020" thick plain styrene cut to add another 18" of height to the coal bunker. BUT……when you do that you also have to raise the slope sheet as well! So you have to cut a whole new piece for that.

Thankfully, the Bachmann model allows for this. When you remove the molded "coal" load you'll see that underneath is a really nice empty coal bunker. The slope sheet is also a separate piece, and is removable (sort of; it's glued on, so you have to pry it off). If you want a full coal bunker, just slide the existing slope sheet upwards a little and glue it back into the model. Since almost nobody models a tender that's empty or nearly so, I decided to make this one empty, and used the existing slope sheet as a cutting template for a new one. Once the new slope sheet was in place I also added its steps (yes, the inside of some tenders have steps!), using one foot long chunks of .1" U-channel. Finally, I added the small ladder from the tender deck to the top of the slope sheet, using an old metal Athearn caboose ladder. With that done I added two pieces of .01" x .06" strip between the slope sheet and the deck.

With all of that, the engine and tender are done. Time to finish it up!

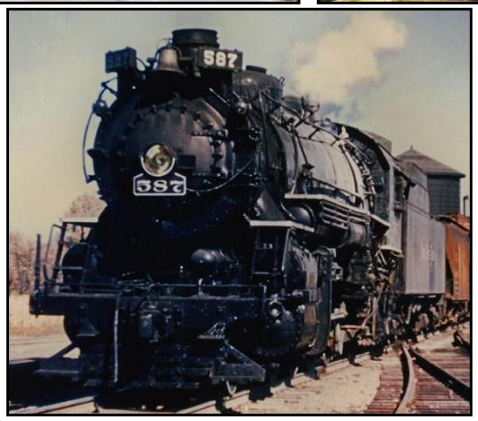
PAINTING & DECALS

Painting a Nickel Plate steam engine for the 1940s and 1950s is pretty simple: they're black. All over, all around, two coats, nothing at all fancy. No oxide roofs, no colored tender decks, and most surprising of all, no "graphite" smokeboxes. How do I know? Photos.

Steam engines are living, breathing, extremely dirty beasts, so do change "color" rather quickly through the application of soot, road grime, mud, calcified water spray, wet water, rust, and 1001 other variables. But the base color overall is a fairly glossy black. Depending on just which engine you're modeling, when you're modeling it, and at what state you want to model it you can add things to "dress up" this very boring all-around black dip job. Some engines had the edges of their running boards and below the cab striped in "nickel" (off white) paint. Later engines had their footboards painted white for better visibility. Near the end, some had their entire pilot wheel painted white too, to check for cracks.

And then there's the smokebox. At one time the Nickel Plate did actually specify a light-toned graphite paint for their steam engines, and did so for their passenger engines through the end of steam. But at some point after WWII they began painting the whole engines plain old black. The paint on the sides of the smokeboxes changed properties pretty quickly once all of that heat was applied to it, so it took on a very gritty appearance. But the FRONT of the smokebox stayed black and shiny.

When I was researching NKP 587's post-WWII era look, I was lucky to find three good color photos of her. All taken by Sandy Goodrick on the same day and with the same train, we know EXACTLY what she looked like for this project.



I painted the engine with Polly Scale "Steam Power Black" overall. It's a bit warmer and slightly lighter than plain old black, and has a slightly satin finish. Sadly, Polly Scale isn't made any more, so pick a black that works for you.

Many people suggest that we paint our miniature engines in colors that are lighter than actual colors to adjust for the generally poorer light on our layouts. If you opt for this technique do be careful with the amount that you lighten the black base. You don't want to end up with a gray engine!

In the early 1950s NKP 587 did have white-lined running boards, but didn't have whitewalled wheels, so I painted my model to match. One tip about wheels: always paint their entire faces, especially the usually-chromed tire sides on engine drivers. You'll wind up with a much more realistic-looking model for very little effort.

Other painted details include a brass-colored bell, rust-colored couplers and rerail frog, and medium green cab interior. I also gave all of the rods a light wash of thinned Polly Scale "Oily Black". I don't know of any other paint anywhere that comes close to this very useful color, which does look like a puddle of dirty motor oil. I hoard my few bottles! Once the engine has been painted, add a layer of Glosscote to give the decals something to grip to.

Decalling is easy. Several years ago a few of us were complaining about the lack of high-quality Nickel Plate steam engine decals, and decided to fix the problem. We created four sets of engine-type specific decals to cover over 31 classes of NKP steamers and all of their lettering. These decals are available from **Resin Car Works**.

Actual decal artwork. Background changed to black for clarity.

Lettering is pretty simple, but is required for all four sides of the model.

The left and right sides need the engine number centered on the cab in 9" tall numerals, the leading corner of the cab needs the class number/tractive effort markings (H-6o, 54700), and each of the air reservoirs needs the air test stenciling added near their centers (this small lettering is pretty apparent on prototype photos, but is almost never

modeled. It's hard to even find this sort of lettering at all for any steam models, which is why we included it in our set!). The tender needs the road name in 7" tall lettering, centered on the tank (only larger Berkshire and Mikado tenders got the 9" tall road name, along with the Hudsons later in life). Center the corporate initials in the coal bunker sides as shown.

The rear of the tender needs 9" tall numbers centered on the back, and the correct capacity data. For the 13-RA tenders, that's 12,000 gallons and 19 tons.

The front of the engine needs three sets of road numbers: two block-style in white for the flying number boards, and the headlight engine number. According to Sandy's photos these were in a "nickel" color, but I prefer duluxe yellow over silver, so added them. What the heck, it's my model!

With painting and lettering done, add an even layer of Dullcote to the engine, and weather it to taste. I actually haven't weathered my model yet, since I'm not sure just how dirty I want it to look. NKP 587 in this guise really shouldn't be all that grubby, since it was generally stationed in Frankfort as backup power, and stayed cleaned and ready to go most of the time.

With the weathering done and couplers installed your new copy of NKP 587 is now ready to go!

NICKEL PLATE ROAD
HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL SOCIETY, INC.
A 501(c)(3) Not-For-Profit Corporation
Founded 1966

2016 CONVENTION
Bellevue, Ohio
October 13 – 15, 2016

NKPHTS 2016 Convention Highlights

Welcome back to Bellevue for the 50th Anniversary of the Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society. We at the Mad River & NKP RR Society are glad you chose us to host such a milestone. It will be a time to reconnect with old friends and make many new ones so the future of the NKPHTS will be sure to last another 50 years.

The festivities begin late Thursday afternoon with the arrival of the Board of Directors. An Early Bird BBQ dinner is scheduled for those who come early and the NKP Diner will stay open for a Hospitality suite during and after the Board meeting.

Friday starts at 8am for vendor set up in the Monument Station and Registration opens at 9am. There is time to allow you to explore the many NKP displays in the museum before lunch. After lunch, there is a photo shoot scheduled from the Route 4 overpass. We will have the southbound lane closed for a short time to safely take photographs of the working hump and engine facilities of Norfolk Southern's Moorman Yard. Upon returning to the museum, we will be having a slide show covering the restoration of our latest NKP piece, Caboose #783 and afterwards take a short ride in it. A dinner of pizza and subs will be served in the NKP Diner at 5pm. After dinner, Picture Night will begin with some never before seen photos by Willis McCaleb from the Jim Semon collection. The Hospitality Suite will be open in the NKP Diner again for those who wish after the slide show.

Saturday begins at 9am with the Annual Membership meeting at St. John's Church. Following the meeting there will be a modeling seminar put on by Dan Merkel in the NYC Freight House. A light lunch will be available in the NKP Diner around 12pm. After lunch, a Ladies Tour is being put on by the local organization called "Shop Bellevue". There will also be a self-guided Model Railroad tour of local layouts by Jim Moore of Castalia, George Keller of Bellevue, and the Model Railroad Club of Monroeville. Upon returning from the tours, it will be time to get ready for the 51st Annual Banquet and Auction. The keynote speaker will be Tom Hillhouse with a history of NKP railroading in Bellevue followed by Society presentations and awards. The annual NKPHTS auction will be another feature of the evening.

The following hotels are within a short driving distance of Bellevue. Please make your own reservations.

Red Roof Inn, Clyde, 419-547-6660 (Host Hotel) Price range from $80.00 to $99.00 a night
Be sure to mention "Mad River Convention" for proper discounts

The Victorian Tudor Inn, Bellevue, 419-483-1949 Quaint Bed and Breakfast, Limited rooms

Bellevue Hotel & Suites, Bellevue, 419-483-5740 Reserve at own risk. Recent reports have NOT been favorable

There are also several hotels in the Fremont, Ohio and the Sandusky/Milan, Ohio area. Both locations are within 20 minutes of Bellevue and are also located close to the Ohio Turnpike.

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NKPHTS 2016 Convention Schedule (Tentative)

All events and Times subject to change

Thursday, Oct. 13th

Registration open (Welcome Center) 4-8 pm

Early Bird BBQ and Hospitality (NKP Diner) 5-7 pm

NKPHTS Board Meeting (NYC Freight House) 6-10 pm

Friday, Oct. 14th

Vender Setup (Monument Station) 8am-5 pm

Registration open (Welcome Center) 9am-8 pm

Lunch on your own (See list of local restaurants)

Photo Shoot on the Route 4 Overpass 1pm-3 pm

Caboose Rehab Slide show and Ride (Freight House) 3pm-5 pm

Pizza and Subs Dinner (NKP Diner) 5-6:30 pm

Willis McCaleb Photography slide show (Location TBD) 7 pm

Hospitality Suite (NKP Diner) 9-11 pm

Saturday, Oct. 15th

Registration open (Welcome Center) 8am-12 pm

Annual Membership Meeting (St. John's Church) 9-11 am

Modeling Seminar w/ Dan Merkel (Freight House) 11am-12 pm

Light lunch (NKP Diner) 12pm-1 pm

Ladies Event (Location TBD) 1 pm

Model Layout Tours (Self Guided-Map provided) 1-5 pm

51ST Annual Banquet and Benefit Auction (St. John's Church) 6:30 pm

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NKPHTS 2016 Convention
Bellevue, Ohio
REGISTRATION FORM

Name (please print) _____ Member #_____

Address _____ City _____ St ____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

Badge Name(s) _____ _____ _____

Please indicate your choice(s) of entree for the Banquet Beef_____ Chicken_____

Registration includes all activities planned, a 2016 commemorative item and the Annual Banquet.

Registration deadline is October 1, 2016. Please indicate number of people attending: _____.

____ Member Registration		$45.00 each	$_____
____ Member Spouse/Associate Registration		$45.00 each	$_____
____ Non-member Registration (includes 1 yr. dues)		$80.00 each	$_____
____ Saturday Banquet only		$25.00 each	$_____
____ Vendors Tables		$20.00 each	$_____
____ Registration postmarked <u>after</u> Oct 1st	<u>Add</u>	$10.00 each	$_____
____ Thursday Early Bird BBQ		$10.00 each	$_____
____ Friday Pizza and Subs Dinner		$10.00 each	$_____
____ Saturday Light Lunch (Sandwiches, etc.)		$10.00 each	$_____
		TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	$_____

To ensure proper room and/or available seating, please indicate which events you would like to attend.

____ Route 4 Photo Shoot ____ Caboose Rehab and Ride ____ Modeling Seminar

____ McCaleb Photo Show ____ Ladies Event ____ Model RR Tours

____Model or Photo Exhibitor ____Providing Auction Items

<u>Please make checks payable to NKPHTS 2016 CONVENTION</u>

Return completed forms to: NKPHTS 2016 Convention, 233 York St., Bellevue, OH 44811

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 issues of the *Modeler's Notebook* mark the rejuvenation of the e-zine, 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 will need YOUR help in adding to its contents!

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 with 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, NKPHTS *Modeler's Notebook*)	rtbsvrr69@yahoo.com
Tony Koester (NKPHTS Modeling Director)	nkpfan@pdt.net
Thomas Gascoigne (NKPHTS Publications Director)	publications@nkphts.org
Adam Matthews (NKPHTS Internet Services Director)	webmaster@nkphts.org

NKP 1145 trails a hotshot on David Vaughn's O scale empire, putting the speed into High Speed Service.
Dan Merkel photo