



THE MAIL CAR

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LAWRENCE DIVISION - NMRA

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The cover:

An Ottawa Central train crosses a bridge on Bill Meek's Ontario L'Orignal layout.

Cover photo and the photo of Bill on this page and page 6 were provided by Mike Hamer.



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January Issue - December 15

March Issue - February 15

May Issue – April 15



Superintendent's Report

Normand Levert

This is my first report as your Division Superintendent. I am sure I speak for everyone when thanking our “COVID Cohort” who dealt with the pandemic challenges for longer than their normal tour of duties. Malcom Vant, Bill Meek, Geoff Chase and Tom Badenoch adroitly kept the St. Lawrence Division virtually active through Zoom, a Division Facebook page, and a YouTube channel. Grant Knowles and Michael Rozeboom who remain as our Inspector and The Mail Car editor, contributed very much to our success during the pandemic.

As everyone in SLD, I was shaken when we lost Bill Meek in a fortnight. I last saw Bill when we went to the TD bank to change the Treasurer. Then Bill was not well enough to join us at the January 21 meeting. He passed away on Saturday, February 4 2023. Bill had over the years taken on one role after another; he opened the church, made the coffee, got the biscuits, collected the money, maintained our treasury as Paymaster. Bill became proficient in Zoom in his involvement with the church. He became our Zoom Master. His many talents and his quiet efficiency were great gifts to the SLD. Please read Stan Conley's eulogy of Bill in this issue of the Mail Car.

We have new team members. Lloyd Peters is our new Assistant Superintendent. Chris Ellens is our Dispatcher and Clerk and Zoom Master.

We are missing a Paymaster. Those I contacted had good reasons to decline the position. We have reduced the duties of Paymaster to “just money.” We need a person to take admission fees and maintain the Division bank account. Please come forward to assist the Division.

Our Arduino Kitbusters theme is going strong, though I must confess I am lagging behind the leaders. Arduino programming can be discussed online, Grant Knowles has led us on Monday evenings Zoom Arduino clinics midway between our monthly Saturday meetings. It is a great way to figure out challenges and neat tricks.

At the January meet, Malcom shared with us discoveries from long hours of historical research. It was quite fascinating to see how much industry there was in Ottawa. He shared his sources of information and a wealth of photographs of small businesses using rail service. Lloyd Peters explained how he used Arduino and servo motors to animate track doors on his brewery. This animation is interesting for operators who now act as loading dock foremen and engine crews,

We welcome all “analog” Kitbusters. Whatever projects you are working on, there will be tables for everyone. Bring your project and share knowledge with other SLD members. There is always something to learn or to teach. Looking forward, our remaining scheduled for Meets, Kit Buster Work Shops and ZOOM calls.

- Feb 25 - Kit Busters Workshop (bring anything you work on)
- Mar 13 - Arduino ZOOM Workshop
- March 25 – St Lawrence Division Meet
- April 10 – Arduino ZOOM Workshop
- April 29 - Kit Busters Workshop
- May 8 – Arduino ZOOM Workshop
- May 27 – St Lawrence Division Meet

Thanks again to all who contributed to our collective success and a round of applause for the former SLD executive, well done gentlemen.

At the November 2023 SLD meeting, a new executive was elected by acclamation.

The new executive is as follows:

Lloyd Henchey - Assistant Superintendent

Chris Ellens - Dispatcher/Clerk

Norm Levert - Superintendent

The transfer of responsibilities is underway and should be completed by the January meeting.

Next Division Meet

St. Lawrence Division - NMRA



Saturday March 25th 2023
Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road Ottawa Ontario
Doors Open at 9:00 AM Admission: \$7.00

Morning Program

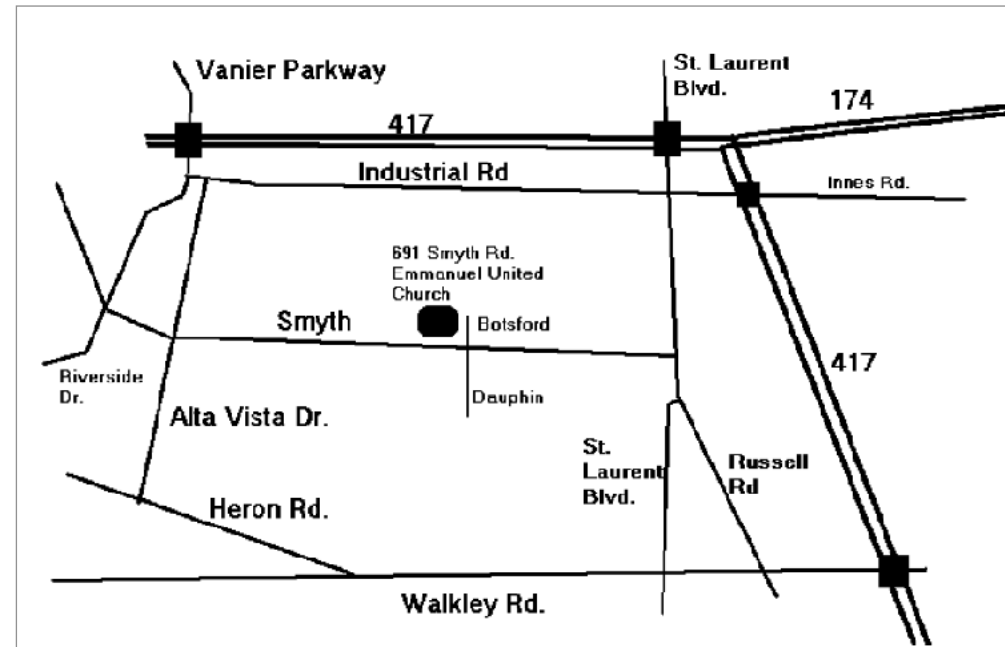
To Be Announced

Display Table:

Snow Fighting Equipment

Afternoon

Kitbusters Session





In Memoriam:
William Alexander
“Bill” Meek
January 2, 1951 - February 4,
2023

The Executive and members of the St. Lawrence Division of the National Model Railroad Association would like to express their condolences to the family of Bill Meek. A long time active member Bill recently served as the Paymaster for the Division for an extended term due to COVID. Bill also served in a broader role over the years as many of our meetings are held at Emmanuel United Church in Ottawa, a congregation and facility close to Bill’s heart where he served

for many years on the building and maintenance committees, and so was our host, so to speak. Bill also served on the Executive of Ottawa Valley Associated Railroaders as Membership Chair from October 2005 to December 2006.



Bill provided timely leadership and assistance with technology during hybrid meetings for both associations. Without Bill's efforts, many members would have missed the opportunity to participate over the past "pandemic" years. A humble man, Bill was content to remain behind the scenes with his many and varied contributions to the hobby.

Bill's family obituary can be found on the [Arbor Memorial web site](#)

Along with his friends Stan Conley, Marty Phillips, Trevor Marshall and Mike Hamer, Bill was a founding member of the Friday Night Group of train operators. His model railroad, the Ontario L'Orignal, depicting the environs around Glen Robertson, Hawksbury and L'Orignal, showcased his creativity, housing many scratchbuilt and craftsman style structures with landmark scenes easily identifiable in this area of Eastern Ontario. Bill, ever the gentle host, welcomed all visitors to his train operations. Bill enjoyed traveling on railfan excursions to the area he modelled.

On one such trip, along with his mates, the group was

pleasantly surprised to be offered a cab ride over the entire line for the full day of operations! The train crew was very impressed with Bill's knowledge of their operations. In a case of role reversal, the engineer and brakeman took great delight in having Bill spell out their next moves in proper order! Bill and his railfan friends were later invited to tour the large IVACO coil making facility in L'Orignal located 11 kms west of Hawksbury after Bill wrote a letter of request. Indeed, Bill was in "seventh heaven." Bill's highly detailed model of the mill resides on a large peninsula and makes a landmark scene at the entrance to his model railroad room.



You can view a series of three video interviews and layout tours on Chris Lyon's YouTube channel CNLVN, the first video is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D3FgBPpyWY>.

In the late fall, Bill and Mike were going over to a 91 year old neighbour's home to help spruce up the railroad that had been dormant for the past 20 years. The pair were truly enjoying their Tuesday mornings at the reverend's home (Bill's former minister from his church) watching his eyes light up as they got his railroad "up and running" and scenicked to a level he had never seen before. The reverend, Bill and Mike were like three little kids playing in a sandbox!

Ever the outdoors people, Bill and his wife, Debbie, relished their canoe or kayak trips on the Canadian east and west coasts, spending time in the remote wilderness of Algonquin Park, or simply cross country skiing or snow shoeing in the "closer to home" areas of the Gatineau Hills.

Just prior to the last SLD meet on January 21st, Bill called and asked if I (Stan) could take care of setting up the church, doing the door and tidying up as he was in the grips of a cold or something and didn't feel up to doing the job or exposing anyone to whatever he had. That was the last time I spoke to him, a week later he was admitted to hospital with acute pneumonia, and it was discovered that he had an underlying issue, namely an aggressive form of acute myeloid leukemia. Unfortunately the doctors were unable to control the pneumonia and Bill passed away with his family by his side.

A service to celebrate the life of Bill Meek will be held on Saturday, March 4 at 1:30pm at Emmanuel United Church, 691 Smyth Rd., Ottawa. A reception will follow. Memorial donations may be made to Emmanuel United Church or a charity of your choice.

Bill will be deeply missed by so many. Please keep Bill's wife Deborah and his two adult children, Shannon and Christopher and their families, in your thoughts and prayers at this time.

By Stanley Conley with many words from Mike Hamer



September 2019 Display Table Review

By Grant Knowles MMR

I always look forward to the January Display Table as you never know what people received for Christmas! The Display Table theme was “What Santa brought you”.



Let's start off the review with a couple of excellent models from Lorne Munro. Lorne is scratch building four structure for his farm scene diorama where he presented the first two structures at the November meet. This month Lorne had the corn silo and implement/grain storage buildings on

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display. The corn silo is comprised a a wood core with a hydrocal outer layer that Lorne scribed to resemble cinder block construction. The roof is made by adhering Strathmore Gray Paper to a wood frame. The outside ladder is scratch built. The shed is built board by board and sits on a custom hydrocal foundation. The roof is made from K&S roofing weathered with Bragdon powders.

Stan brought out the cutest smallest train set I've ever seen. I grant you it was small enough to fit in Stan's stocking so once assembled it had a very tight track loop and had a simple 4 wheel battery powered loco. Scale is unknown.

Mike Hamer brought out a AMB Pickle Car kit that he had assembled and installed on a flat car. This consisted of four vertical wood stave tanks that are covered with a wood roof with access hatches. Of course, all models displayed by Mike will include a structure, in this case Mike used his McCready's Pickle Packers and Condiments factory as a backdrop.



Mike also has a second structure to share with us – the Opansky's Organ Works, which was manufactured by the Steam Era Structures Co. a number of decades ago. Though the kit is advertised as a Craftsman Kit, Mike felt a true description would be a Craftsman "Scratch Built" Kit based on the amount of detail parts, i.e. doors, the modeller has to build unlike current day kits which incorporate injection/3D parts. The finished model is comprised of three individual structures which are connected together with a full length loading dock.



The final Display Table model was my HOn3 D&RGW C16 locomotive. This model has a long history as I first purchased it back in the early 80's in San Francisco on a summer holiday, it was my first brass engine. Over time it was upgraded with a can motor and received track sliders to improve electrical pick up all while operating in it's bare brass livery. Eventually it received the Bumble Bee paint scheme which brought it to life! Soon there after I migrated from DC to DCC at which point this engine was relegated to the engine house as the current day receivers were too large to fit into this tiny loco. Then Santa (a.k.a. David Steer) decided technology has progressed to the point where a sound decoder, sugar cube speaker and (get this) a current keeper would fit inside the tender! So now, the #268 is back in service on my railroad. Though the prototype never ran on the C&S, I'm willing to bend history slightly as it's a pretty little engine!

So, that's the January Display Table Review. Thank you to all who brought out their models today. The March Display Table theme is posted elsewhere in this Mail Car issue and on the SLD Web Site.



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Pickle Car Conversion Kit, American Model Builders LASERkit. HO Scale
Mike Hamer

This American Model Builders Pickle Car conversion kit has been designed to compliment the HO Scale McReady's LTD "Pickle Packers and Condiments" structure brought out by the same company. I had previously built the structure for my good friend, Professor David Gardner. The completed car makes for a rather unique piece of rolling stock to add to your collection. The car would have been spotted trackside any time during the steam era and up into the 1960's. The modeller who purchases this kit must provide their own 40 foot flatcar. Athearn and Tichy models work best for the conversion. David had an old Athearn flatcar which required the removal of the existing brake stand. The kit includes a laser cut deck, brake gear, the above-deck superstructure and four pickle vats. I painted the vats to match those I had built previously when I constructed the main building. This is easily a one day project or one that can be done quite comfortably over two days!

McReady's LTD Pickle Packers and Condiments, American Model Builders LASERkit
HO Scale Kit No. 728
Mike Hamer

McReady's is based on a pickle factory located in Saint John, New Brunswick. Established in 1883, the company originally packaged pickle products along with the production of vinegar. The small company later diversified its line of offerings with a number of bottled table sauces and fruits sold at grocers across Canada. While the structure is no longer in existence, the modeller can re-create history in building the model and placing it on their model railroad or on a diorama. The original wood frame structure with its outdoor brine vats continued to employ local residents up into the 1960's. The model itself makes use of "tab and slot" design which went together beautifully, like putting puzzle pieces together. To achieve the colours David desired I combined "bright red" acrylic paint with "orange" and David was more than pleased with the result. The external elevator assembly with its drive chain is an eye-catching aspect of this model. A small interior will be created for the open door when it comes time to plant the structure on David's layout. Along with the newly built pickle car located on the siding spur, this will make for a glorious scene!





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Opansky's Organ Works
Steam Era Structures Co.
HO Scale
Mike Hamer

Opansky's Organ Works is a delightful facility made up of four separate components married together. The Organ Works contains the larger ASSEMBLY building, a small CONNECTOR building, a WORK SHED and a LUMBER STORAGE shed. This Steam Era Structures craftsman style kit was purchased some thirty or so years ago by my friend, Professor David Gardner. It comes with a list of 134 detailed instructions. In reality, the work involved in assembling the kit is more "Scratch" building than "Kit" building! All window and door openings had to be determined and cut out. The large doors on both buildings that lead out to the loading dock are made from scratch. I chose to create a slightly smaller dock area due to space concerns on David's layout. To achieve the heavily weather-beaten look I used a variety of furniture stains and paint washes with an olive coloured tone coming through. I modified the kit somewhat, turning the largest assembly building around so that all freight doors face the loading dock. The original kit only has the freight doors leading out to the loading dock from the smaller work shed while the larger structure has three windows along the large wall facing out front. With its various chimneys and changing roof planes, this structure offers up a lot of character. Professor David Gardner used to play a pump organ like the one standing on the loading dock outside the facility so this model is near and dear to his heart!



Farm Scene Diorama

Text and Photos by Lorne Munro

Background

A lot of railroads run through farmland, which is true of the farm I grew up on, so I thought it only fitting that I should incorporate a farm scene into my layout. I have always liked the character of old barns, so when I came across a likely modelling candidate for such a scene, I decided that this would be my next project.

I took a few pictures, from a distance, but to be able to properly scratch build such a structure, proper measurements of certain features would be required. This meant taking close up and straight on pictures, i.e. not at an angle. This way the measurements of the particular features could be used to extrapolate all the required measurements. This is true for horizontal as well as vertical measurements.

With this in mind, I decided to visit the owner of subject property. What is the worst that could happen? If they said ‘No’, I would have to guess at a lot of measurements or find another barn. If they said ‘Sure’, I could proceed with taking straight on pictures and measuring certain feature items such as windows, doors, board widths, etc. I explained to the family what I wished to do and was pleasantly surprised when they were really ‘All Aboard’ with my project. As an added benefit and connection, at one time a railway



also ran through this farm. They even told me to come back anytime and take all the pictures, etc., that I needed ... which I have done. Upon looking around, I realized that not only would the barn make a nice model but also the implement shed with upstairs grain storage, the house and also a concrete block silo. All buildings are 1930s vintage. This simple barn build had quickly turned into an even more meaningful project.

This article will describe the different methods I have used to scratch build the entire farm scene. I really want to thank the property owners for their input and willingness in sharing their story, family pictures and info with me. The family does not wish me to reveal their name or farm location, so I will absolutely respect their wishes.

Building the Structures:

After taking copious pictures and measurements of all the structures, I drew each to scale (HO). I decided early on that the barn was going to be a post and beam structure with single board exterior. The implement shed/grain storage building would be traditional construction with single board exterior and the house sheet clapboard. The silo would be a cast Hydrocal cylinder scribed to appear as concrete blocks.

Barn Construction:

A proper frame is required to support the single board exterior. I used 1/8" sq. basswood for all the posts and beams. I started the build by making a copy of the barn drawing, taping this copy of the end and side walls on a flat surface. I then precisely cut the posts and beams to length to match the perimeter walls and roof structure. I used a North West Sanding fixture to ensure that all pieces were in fact the same length. Make double the pieces so that each subassembly will be exactly identical. I next covered the drawing with waxed paper in preparation for gluing (white glue) the members together. I used perfectly square metal blocks as guides and weights in



order to ensure square corners. This is important, so take the time. Interval posts are added as per the drawings. Also, 1/8" x 1/16" basswood strip material is used horizontally as structure pieces to support the single boards and to frame the rough openings for the windows and doors.

From my window measurements, I was able to select appropriately sized Tichy windows. I modified them to essentially turn them into masonry windows. I then used these modified windows to frame the rough openings.

These end and side subassemblies are now ready for assembly. I glued one end and one side subassembly together making sure the L shape was square in the XYZ direction. I then glued the second corner subassembly and after both these corner units are fully dried, I glued them together to make up the barn walls minus the horizontal roof pieces.

There are five roof support beams: one 1/8" sq. ridge pole, two 1/8" sq. beams at the hip points and two 1/8"x 1/16" beams at the flare points. It is not prototypical for this type of barn construction but I sheathed the roof with 1/32" thick basswood sheet. Score the underside of the roof sheath, at the flare points, to make a smooth transition. I then cut 1/16" sq. material for rafter tails to glue under the roof to support the slight roof flair which is so prevalent on these barns.

Even though the barn did not have a visible foundation, the building probably sank over the years, I decided to pour a combination 'concrete' floor and foundation using Hydrocal. Using the structure as a template, I setup temporary plastic forms to contain the 3/16" thick Hydrocal slurry. After overnight drying, I carved out the sill area to a depth of about 1/16th inch and glued on wood corner brackets to position the building even more. I then scratched and coloured the foundation edge it to give it a concrete appearance.

I was now ready for the exterior board installation. I stained a 1/32" thick sheet of basswood sheet material after roughing it up with a hobby knife, wire brush and pointer. Various grey colours were achieved by using Saman stain mixtures and water dilution. I placed the wood sheets between wax paper sheets and weighted them to prevent curling while drying.

After fully drying, I cut the sheet material into boards of various widths, scale 6 to 10". Before applying the random width boards to the barn frame, I glued the finished windows, (painted, weathered and hazy glass), 1/32" proud into their openings. The complete barn was sheathed board by board, except for the door openings. Each door was fabricated to fit its particular opening, but only one door was fitted

with scratch built operating hinges. The non-operating doors, including the large upper hay entry door, were fitted with Tichy triangular hinges or an imitation bar hinge. The door handles were fabricated by bending small (0.015 to 0.020") diameter wire and cemented in place with ACC. I then glued grey stained 0.020 x 0.0625" basswood strips around each window to form the frame and sill. All hinges and handles were rusty coloured with Floquil weathering paint markers.

Now was time to turn my attention to the roof. I had previously installed and stained the fascia boards on the roof ends as well as the rafter tails under the roof flair. I spray painted K&S Corrugated Copper Sheet with grey primer. I cut, with scissors and hobby knife, roof panels (scale 4 x 10') to be installed with ACC on the lower roof slope.

Be sure to start and maintain the squareness of these lower panels or the panel ridges will not line up at the peak. Continue this installation process with 4'x6' panels, pre-bent in the middle to accommodate the roof hip point. The upper roof panels are also 4'x10'. Repeat the process with the other side of the roof. The roof is capped with 2 x 10' strips, cut from the same copper sheet. At this point, I masked the building leaving only the metal roof exposed. I gave the roof a grey misting in order to hide the exposed cut copper edges. I applied dark rust Weather System powder from Bragdon, rubbing with my finger to activate the adhesive. A light brushing of Rust All finished off the roof.

At this point the barn is pretty well finished except for the all important weathering of the boards. I used the dry brushing technique with white Saman stain which can be applied until the desired effect is achieved.

This picture shows the finished barn with the opened door. A few more details will be added when the barn is finally installed on the farm scene diorama.



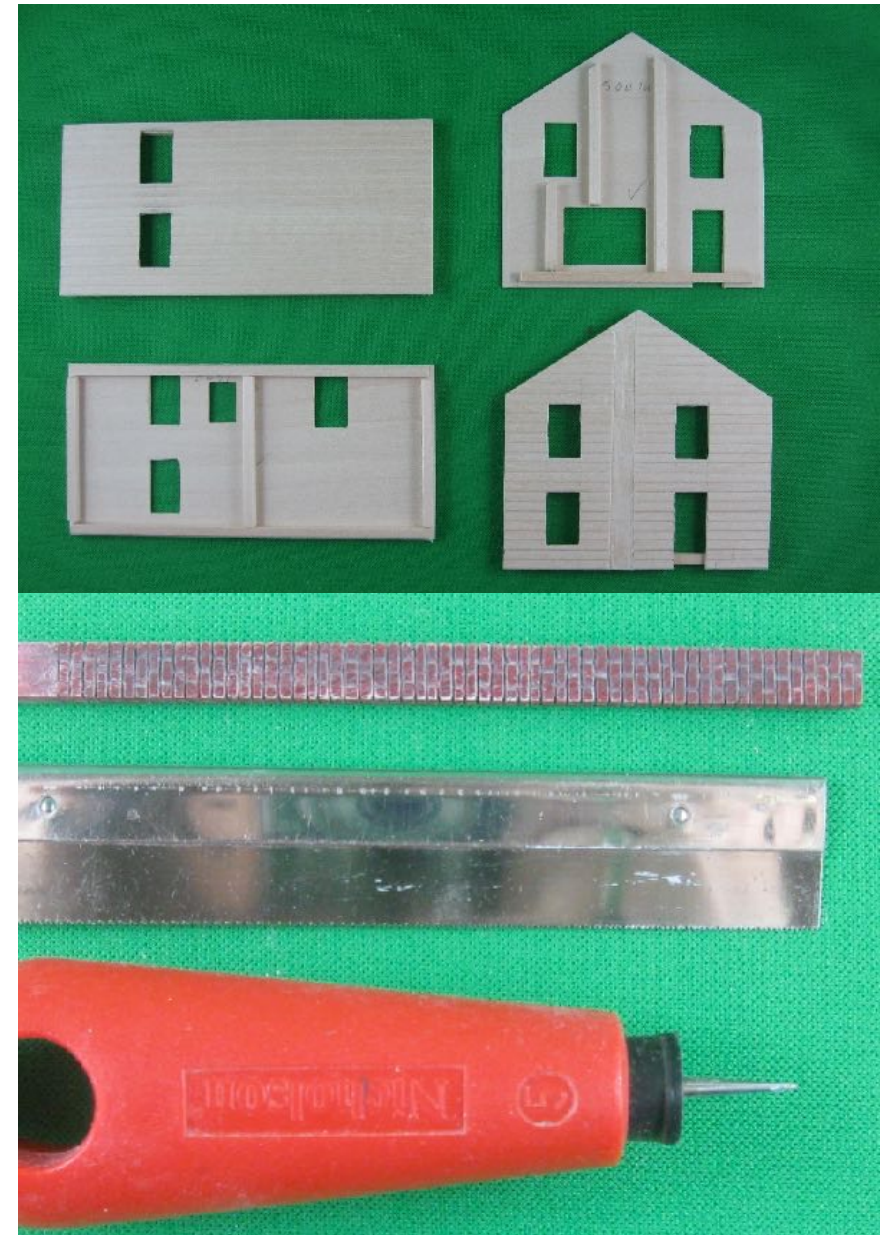
Farm House Construction:

My first task was to select window and door sizes based on the actual house. Thankfully, I had all the required elements in stock and I did not have to deal with Covid supply chain issues. I would have to perform a few modifications such as grille changes and combining different window styles in order to reproduce the large front window of the house. After these details were dealt with I proceeded to layout the four walls according to my drawings.

I had previously stated I was going to use sheet material (1/32" thick) as the house exterior and as luck would have it the metal siding (10.75") on the existing house was almost the exact dimension of 1/8" clapboard sheet (HO scale 10.88"). This made the window positioning very easy as I could simply refer to my pictures to determine their vertical placement. I used my easily obtained measurements to determine their horizontal position.

I then proceeded to cut out all the openings in the sheet siding using the actual windows and doors. I mitred each corner, so I would not have to deal with the exposed sheet edge. At this time, I was ready for staining, but before proceeding with this step it is important to glue bracing on the inside to prevent the sheet material from warping due to the stain's moisture. The bottom wall brace is 1/16" up from the base of each wall to allow for the floor insert after the walls are assembled.

The picture shows some of the bracing as staining revealed a few more areas where additional 1/8" sq. bracing was required. I gave the exterior walls three coats of Saman white stain. I much prefer the use of this stain as various base colors can be used right out of the bottle or mixed to obtain the desired colour. The stain is water soluble (easy



cleanup of brushes) and can be thinned with water to obtain a wash.

I spray painted the windows, doors and shutters with Krylon Fusion paint; a few light passes so that the detail is not lost. I then cut clear acetate for glass, (I do not intend to finish the interior, so I felt there was no need for actual glass) and glued the 'glass' into the windows and doors using the Micro Kristal Klear. The main windows are modified Tichy Train Group #8219, the doors are modified Grandt Line #5163, the shutters are TTG #8039, the smaller upper window is a modified Pikestuff #541-2103 and the basement windows are modified TTG #8154.

After the four walls were stained and dry I proceeded to install the windows, doors and shutters. I used white glue as the window and door adhesive and Kristal Klear to adhere the shutters.

While the walls were still separate, I white glued window blinds and curtains to the inside of each window. It is much easier to perform this task while the walls are lying flat on the workbench.

It was now time to connect the four walls using white glue. I made up two L-shaped end and a side wall combinations using my perfectly square metal blocks as guides and weights. It is important that the walls are square and perpendicular in the XYZ directions. After the two wall sub-assemblies glue had dried, I glued them to each other.

I cut and installed a 1/16" thick floor panel, a 1/8" sq. ridge beam and a couple of internal roof rafters to support the roof deck which would be installed later. I also glued 1/32" sheet material to act as visual inside room blocks.

Now that the exact building size was determined, I poured the Hydrocal foundation in a form attached to a plastic baseplate. After allowing the poured foundation to dry overnight, I sanded it to the desired dimensions, cut out the window openings and then freehand scribed the various stone shapes.

I also poured a plaster chimney at the same time. After sanding to the required dimensions, I used a razor saw to form the horizontal mortar lines and freehand scribed the vertical mortar lines on the chimney. Before scribing the foundation and chimney, I applied a wash of light stain making the lines more visible during this process. Hardened Hydrocal is brittle so a bit of water during the scribing process makes this step much easier.



After scribing, I stained the plaster with the desired overall colour, re-scribing if necessary, then applying a mortar wash stain. There again this colouring is very easy to obtain using Saman stains/washes. The house structure was glued to the foundation and the chimney was glued in place.

The 1/32" thick basswood roof was glued in place and Midwest wood products fascia boards added to the roof edges. Trim boards were also added to each corner of the structure.

It was now time to tackle the verandas. I started by building base frames of 1/16" x 1/18" strip wood following the measurements taken on site. The veranda floors were glued to the frames and the appropriate stain applied to both the frame and floor. Using the foundation to determine the floor height, I glued legs to the underside of the frames. I decided to mount the house and verandas on a 1/32" thick basswood sheet so that all the elements would be all tied together. The steps would be added later.

Next, I fabricated the roofs (two different styles) and after staining glued them to the house at the desired heights above the doors/windows and below the upper windows. I was able to determine the exact length of the 3/32" sq. support posts but they were not glued in place because much work was needed to replicate the veranda detail both on the posts as well as the balusters and rails. I used styrene for the spindles on the front veranda. All these detail elements were stained before gluing in place.

The veranda roofs are 600 grit ultrafine wet/dry sandpaper cut into 3/16" wide strips then scored to appear as asphalt shingles. The advantages of this material is that texture is right and no additional colouring is required. Simply white glue it in place, install flashing and rough it up a bit with a sanding stick and the roof is complete.

The main roof had been painted several years ago and that is why it looked pristine. I decided to maintain this appearance as the barn roof was quite rusty, the shed roof was a bit rusty, so the house roof was to be shown as well maintained. I used K&S corrugated Aluminum sheet (#16134), but I first spray painted it grey to remove some of the luster. I did not cut the K&S sheet into single roofing panels but just cut the sheet into 10' and 6' lengths. I adhered these sheets to the roof deck with ACC. The ridge cap is the same material, as well as the chimney flashing and around the vent stack. I gave the roof an overall spray with Testors Dullcote just to dampen it down a bit more. I finished the house build by fabricating front and rear steps. As with the barn, additional detail features will be added upon diorama installation.

The first picture is of the front of the completed house. As was the practice, back in the day, the year of construction is proudly displayed. In this case 1938. The second picture is of the rear view. Note the wood storage box beside the kitchen door. In those days, a wood stove was the cooking source. That was later replaced by an electric stove, but the wood box lives on as a connection to the past.

