

# Rochester Model Rails

*Dedicated to Quality Model Railroading*

VOL. 4, NO. 31

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

JULY 2005



Eastbound freight # 302 behind Consolidation # 428 passes through Ludlow, Vermont on the Danby, Ludlow and Springfield HO scale model railroad of Ned Spiller of Dallas, Texas.

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*Rochester Model Rails*

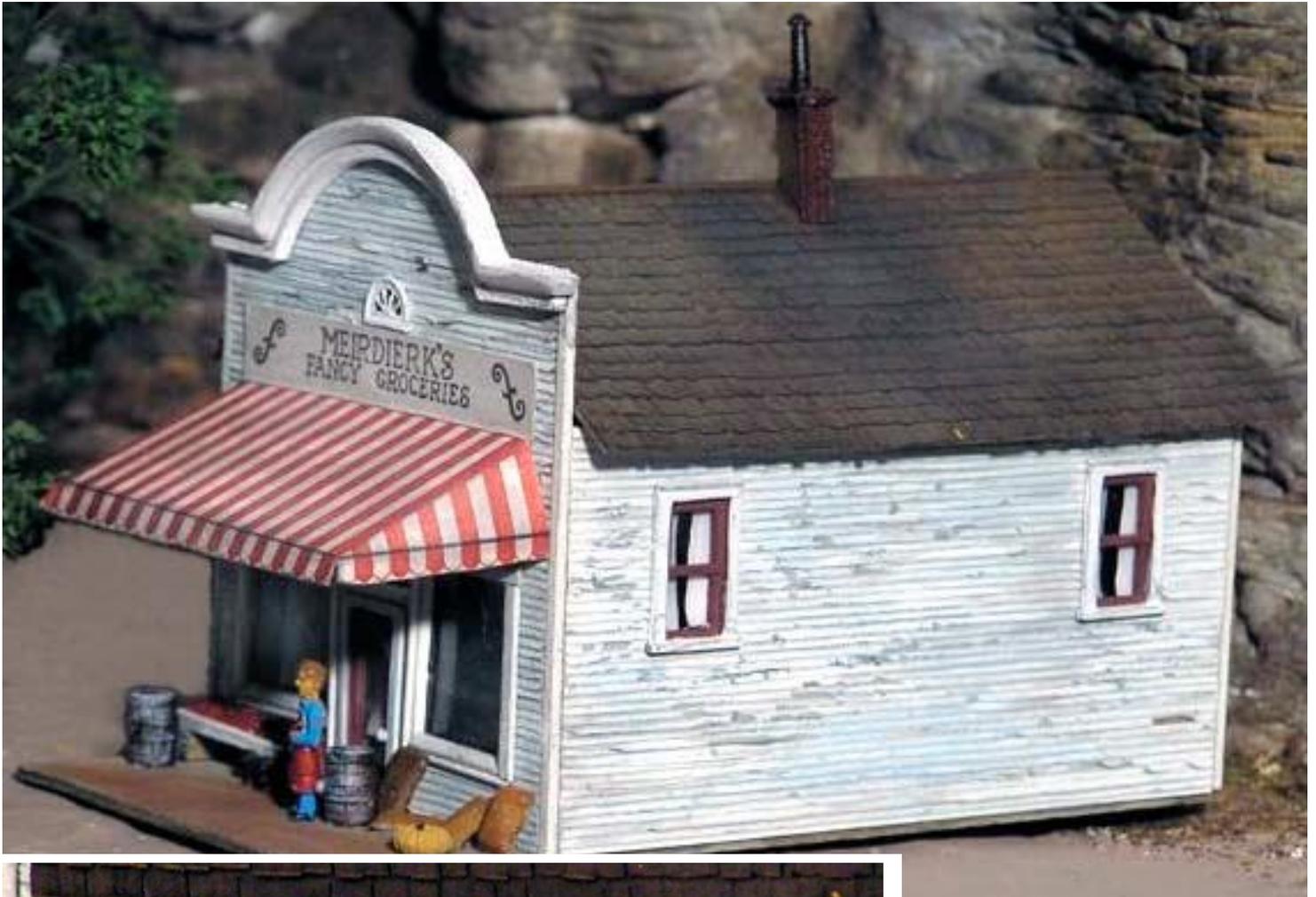
[www.trainweb.org/rmr](http://www.trainweb.org/rmr)

# Aging Wood Siding

by *Matt Kovacic*

The building I am modeling has been around for a long time so I wanted to show the age of the neglected and weathered siding. The image on the next page illustrates the result of the weathering techniques described below.

1. Spray the siding with a coat of automotive gray primer. Let it dry overnight.
2. You need to decide what tint you would like for the building. For this building, I thought a light blue tint would be nice. So with that decided, I brushed on a light coat of light blue acrylic paint on the siding. Let dry overnight.
3. Next, hand brush a coat of white *Scale Coat* paint onto the surface. Let dry overnight.
4. Using a #11 *Exacto* knife, scrape parallel with the siding in a random fashion. You can also use a small wire brush rubbing parallel exposing the different color layers.
5. Once this rubbing process is complete, use the #11 blade to start undercutting the siding. This undercutting will give the impression of siding lifting up and in need of repair. Also the undercutting should be done randomly.
6. Now that these processes are complete, turn the siding upside down and give the surface a light wash of India ink and alcohol. Allow this mixture to flow over the surface.
7. Let the siding dry. Once dried, spray on a coat of *Dull Coat* if desired. Now you are ready to place in the windows and assemble the building.



*Model and  
Digital Image  
by  
Matt Kovacic*

## Oil Derricks on the HO scale *Oil Creek Rail Road* of Dick Senges



Image Credit: Dick Senges. Image Info: Canon EOS Digital Rebel camera, 6.3MP, 18-55 EFS lens, 1.6 sec. at F/29, ASA100, focal length 41mm, exposure compensation -0.3 step, width 3072 pixels, height 2048 pixels, parameter 1, tungsten 3200K light, and tripod. Manual focus point on the "Thompson Well" sign on the left oil derrick.

Typical wood oil derrick of the 1860s in western PA. The boiler is shown to the far right connected to the steam engine. The boiler was fed water and wood or coal. A belt connects the steam engine to the bandwheel, which drives the walking beam up and down through a pitman.

The walking beam sits on top of a samson post. The walking beam is connected to the temper screw, which is fastened to the drilling rope. The rope is connected to a rope socket, which is attached to the drilling tools: jars, augur stem, and center bit.

Wood oil derricks varied in height. The early ones were shorter and less substantial than the ones later in the 1870s and beyond. The base was about ten to fourteen feet square and height forty to fifty feet.

"The early samson posts were usually 8 – 10 feet high. The center of the walking beam balances in a saddle on the post and moves freely due to a center pivot. Thus the up and down motion of the walking beam can be achieved as soon as the pitman, bandwheel and power are hooked up. The early walking beams were 16 to 20 feet long and about one foot thick in the middle." \*

\* Pees, Samuel T., *Oil History Web Site*, Cable Tool Drilling, Walking Beam, 1999

# *Sociology of Model Railroading*

(Abridged Edition)

by John Bruce



## Swap Meets

Swap meets are the most primitive of formal model railroad social events. In Southern California, with good weather for much of the year, they are almost always outside, on parking lots roped off for the purpose. They are organized by clubs, museums, and hobby shops, primarily as fund raisers or as part of a business promotion. They are formal insofar as they take place at a particular date and time announced by the organizer; often vendors pay a fee to participate, and sometimes the customers must also pay an admission fee. However, they are informal insofar as efforts are seldom made to enforce state sales tax laws, and there is no warranty offered on merchandise by vendors. Indeed, buyers can't be fully assured that some merchandise on offer is not stolen, and conversely, vendors have no way to assure themselves that checks from buyers are good.

A Weberian, rationalistic approach to swap meets would assume that they are meant to be efficient local markets for second-hand merchandise. They would, for example, be a means for hobbyists or those leaving the hobby to liquidate unneeded supplies in a fast, informal way, without the potential heavily discounted effect they would see by trying to sell them back to a hobby shop. Some swap meet vendors are able to negotiate with heirs to purchase the model railroad assets of estates and then sell these assets at swap meets. The rationalistic assumption would be that the consumer goes to a swap meet expecting to find a lower price for merchandise that she may find acceptable, though it may be outdated or in imperfect condition. One might also assume that a seller, finding price resistance to goods at a particular level, would be prepared to negotiate in order not to have to carry the goods back from a swap meet unsold.

A major factor that contradicts these rationalistic assumptions is the fact that many hobby goods of the type that are offered at swap meets have simply lost all economic value -- while hobbyists are fond of calling swap meet merchandise "junk", much -- probably a lot more than half -- of what appears at swap meets can't realistically be sold at any price. It is literally trash, kept from the landfill by the expectations of the putative sellers. Often it's dusty, broken remnants of merchandise that was already schlock when it was new in the 1970s or earlier. The effort to restore it to operation, if it's practical at all, is greater than the still-low cost of new, better-quality merchandise, and the original junk hasn't even got sentimental value.

Another problem is the non-model railroad merchandise on sale, equivalent 30 year old military toys, toy racing cars, broken model airplanes, and the like. For those not

involved in collecting or restoring such material, it's hard to estimate its value, but at a model railroad swap meet, the stuff is essentially not sellable. If the aim of such vendors is to sell the merchandise, they are simply not acting rationally.

Unrealistic expectations by the sellers clearly inhibit the efficient operation of a market at swap meets. The conventional wisdom that old toy trains are somehow always worth a lot of money probably operates here. Another factor is probably the need for the seller to counteract the "feckless" stereotype of the hobby. He may feel he has to show in his own, his peers' or his family's eyes, for instance, that he is "making money" off the hobby rather than simply pursuing it as an idle interest.

But a major obstacle to efficient swap meet transactions is in fact the low cost of new goods. The quality of hobby items has increased enormously in the last 30 years, with only an incremental increase in cost (especially factoring in inflation), assisted both by technology and by production in Korea and China. If I can go to a hobby shop or mail-order discounter and buy a new item, in a shrink-wrapped box with a warranty, at a lower cost than an equivalent, dusty, used, and imperfect item at a swap meet, there's simply no contest, *as long as I, as an informed consumer, know this.*

In an efficient or rational market, sellers would quickly receive the price-resistant message once their prices went above something close to the cost of a new item. This doesn't appear to happen at swap meets. A bubble or first-stage Ponzi-scheme psychology appears to account for this.

Certainly some swap meet consumers aren't well informed, and will simply buy second-hand items at a price higher than what they'd pay for a new item in a hobby shop. They assume, I guess, that if they're buying at a swap meet, it must be cheaper. Many vendors seem to hope for this customer, but giving human nature some credit, not all people are this poorly informed.

And many of the transactions at a swap meet take place, not between vendors and customers, but among vendors. A vendor will show up on the parking lot at some time early in the morning (most swap meets advertise a start time of 7:00 AM, but "unofficial" transactions can take place among those who show up earlier), and if other vendors think his goods are cheap enough, they'll buy them from him and put them on sale at a higher price themselves, either at the same swap meet, at a train show, or on eBay.

The problem is that the margin between what one vendor will sell an item for and what a customer down the line is willing to pay is, realistically, quite small. An efficient market can't tolerate infinite markups, but swap meet dealers don't recognize this. The problem isn't much different from the mathematics that make a Ponzi scheme impossible: there are only so many suckers, and then you run out of people. One swap meet vendor, however, described the early-morning activity of other vendors buying his low-priced merchandise to me as a "feeding frenzy", words again highly suggestive of bubble psychology.

The conventional wisdom of swap meets has become, "you have to get there early before the good stuff is gone." However, the "good stuff" may not actually leave the swap meet;

it's simply resold to the point that its price reaches a sales resistance level. The vendor who bids the merchandise up to the price at which no one will buy it is the primary victim here, and it's hard to sympathize, since he's largely the victim of his unrealistic expectations. Those expectations, however, appear in practice to keep him from deciding to cut his losses and cash out of his acquisition by lowering his price.

A quick check of the model railroad listings on eBay shows economic activity that is what would be predicted by these observations. One finds 30-year-old, low-quality Tyco, Bachmann, or Athearn cars, for which no bids are received at the \$2-3 reserve range -- this equipment has economic value now only for parts in certain cases, and might sell at the 25 to 50 cent range, but the sellers won't acknowledge this. More recently discontinued items, such as from the former E&C Shops, are offered at the \$7-10 reserve range, with no bids. (I was at a swap meet where I observed an individual purchase a number of E&C Stops items at \$5 each from a seller; these items on eBay may in fact be the ones I observed.)

The hobby at large also suffers from swap meets as they're currently run. The bubble psychology inhibits the operation of an efficient market in realistically priced second-hand items. The dealers who buy equipment reasonably priced at \$5 and mark it up to the sales-resistance level are keeping these items from productive use, just as the treasures buried in tombs by the ancient Egyptians kept those from productive use. The enormous profusion of unsellable trash -- both model railroad items and unrelated toys -- creates a depressing atmosphere and puts model railroaders in a bad light. The occasional use of swap meets as venues for selling stolen merchandise also needs consideration. Most participants in swap meets resist calling law enforcement under such circumstances, since few vendors observe sales tax laws, and they do not wish to draw attention to themselves.

While I still enjoy swap meets, I've found that locating true bargains is an increasing challenge. Unrealistic expectations have made sellers less willing to haggle. However, the herd mentality on what constitutes "good stuff" can result in finding bargains if the vendors aren't fully informed on what they have. In addition, some vendors clearly continue to focus on providing worthwhile second-hand material at realistic prices. Fixing what's currently wrong with swap meets while preserving an efficient market in second-hand items will be a challenge to hobby leaders in the future.

On the other hand, if a public-spirited hobbyist determined that for the benefit of the hobby, swap meets should be put out of their misery, such a person could probably do it single-handed in his area by simply reporting the date and time of each swap meet to the appropriate state sales tax authorities.

### **Next Issue – Part III – Train Shows**

**John Bruce's  
Model Railroad**

*Los Feliz and  
North Western Railroad*

[www.trainweb.org/lnfwfan](http://www.trainweb.org/lnfwfan)



# National Railway Historical Society

*by Harold Russell*

June 16, July 21 and August 19, 2005, NRHS will be running our diesel locomotives and cabooses originating from the Industry, NY Depot. Action usually starts at 6:30 PM and lasts till dark.

All railroad enthusiasts are welcome as the guests of the Rochester Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. The Industry Depot is located at the intersection of NY State Rt 251 (Scottsville Rush Road) and the LA&L Railroad. (old Erie) and is east of Scottsville. Or about 2 miles west of the intersection of Rt. 251 and I-390, exit 11.

Our regular monthly meetings will resume at the *Forty and Eight Club*, 933 University Ave., Rochester, NY in September.

## *The schedule is as follows:*

September 15 – Surprise

October 13, New York's Bridges - Jim Stewart.

November 17, Rochester Transportation - Donovan Shilling

December 15, Williamsport, PA in the Late Steam Era - Bill Bigler.

Meetings start at 7:30 PM and all are welcome as our guests.

Also .....



Track Car Rides originating from the New York Museum of Transportation (NYMT) will be operating each Sunday through October 30. In addition, the rides will also operate on the Saturday's of July and August. The rides start at this museum at 6393 East River Road, Rush, NY. They are a joint effort with the Rochester and Genesee Valley RR Museum (NRHS). The two museums are connected with about 1.5 miles of track. Hours on Sunday are from 11 AM to 5 PM; Saturdays, 12 PM to 5 PM.

A small admission fee is charged. You will be able to view the displays of both museums plus an operating HO model railroad. Picnic facilities are available at NYMT.

In 2005 three major events at the museums are worthy of note.

June 19th. "Caboose Day" Ride the rails and live the life of a railroader for a day with rides aboard several of the cabooses from the collection of the R&GV Railroad Museum. Rides originate at NYMT.

July 17th. "The Return of Casey Jones" For this special day, the completely restored former Rochester Subway "Casey Jones" track car will be operated for the public on the museum's demonstration railroad.

August 20 and 21. "Diesel Days" The museums will highlight the diesel locomotive during this two day celebration. Several of the diesel locomotives from the R&GV Railroad Museum's collection of six will be operating. The locomotives range from a small 45 ton switch engine to the large 1200 hp road-switcher engines. Locomotive and caboose rides are planned. Special hours of operation will be from 10 AM to 6 PM. Special ticket prices will be in effect that will enable you to ride and stay all day. Rides originate at NYMT.

For more information consult the web sites:  
[www.nymtmuseum.org](http://www.nymtmuseum.org) and [www.rochnrhs.org](http://www.rochnrhs.org)  
 Phone 585-533-1113 585-533-1431

# ***INTERNATIONAL CAR EXCHANGE***

*by Leo Adamski*

The International Car Exchange (ICE) consists of a group of model railroaders who exchange cars on a monthly basis. I'm not sure when it started but I joined last fall in response to an announcement in *SCALE RAILS*, the NMRA monthly publication. Ed Neale, the ICE coordinator wanted ten members to loan a car out for about a year. The car would make a journey to each of the other member's layouts before being returned to its owner. In return, the member is loaned a different car each month.

The exchange is called a "train" and each modeler is identified by a number and his (or her) first name. For example, I am #65, Leo (Ed Neale is #2, Ed). Each train follows a different theme. This year's theme is a chemical industry called WADE Chemical, served by train WC. It has a conductor #40, Lyle. All cars in the train should somehow relate to the theme. In the case of train WC, a chemical tank car would be an obvious choice, but almost any type of car could be justified, such as a coal hopper or boxcar.

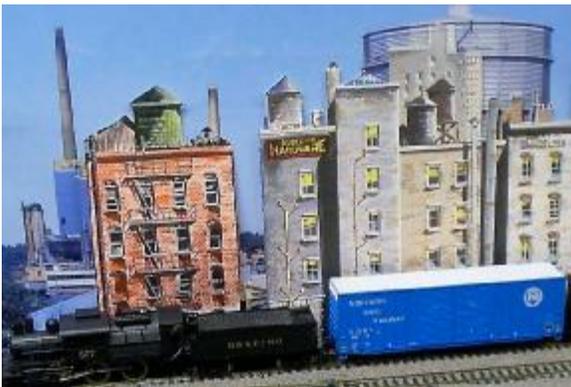
At the start of the train I was provided with a card (form SI) with shipping instructions to tell where the car was to be sent. The card goes with the car so that each member knows where the car goes next. A second card, a monthly report, is used to inform the coordinator and conductor when cars are shipped and received. This way they know where cars are at all times. Cars are shipped at the end of each month, so they arrive at the next destination by the fifth of the next month. Normally it takes only a couple of days to arrive, with the exception of #14, Hans, who lives in the Netherlands. It takes seven to ten days for a car to reach him by regular mail. Also, no cars are shipped at the end of November because of the heavy Christmas rush.

To date, (March, 05) I have received four cars; two chemical tank cars, a flat car with a load of beams or supports and a high cube box. The high cube looks a little strange being pulled by my camelback consolidation. I'll bet my two bay 70-ton coal hopper looks just as strange in a string of 60 to 80 foot high cubes or modern hoppers.

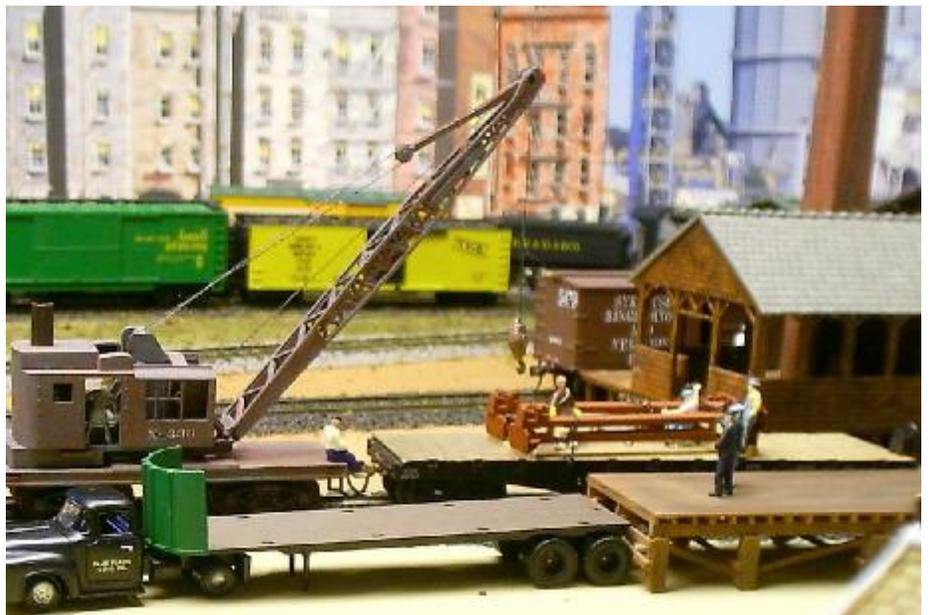
Although it's not required, I send pictures to the owner of each car on my layout. I also received by email, a photo from #14, Hans of my hopper on the Hobbiton and Middle Earth RR in the Netherlands.

So far I enjoyed the experience and I look forward to a new car each month. If anyone else is interested, contact #2, Ed at [eneal@suffolk.lib.ny.us](mailto:eneal@suffolk.lib.ny.us), or watch for an announcement in *SCALE RAILS* Club Car (national announcements) this fall. Also check a new ICE website <http://www.webspawner.com/users/icemodeltrain/>.

The International Car Exchange is an independent, not-for-profit group affiliated with the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). The NMRA is not responsible for publications of ICE. See photos on the next page.



Leo Adamski's "ICE" cars on his MARY – LAND NORTHERN HO scale model railroad.



# The Model Railroad Post Office

*Number 13 in the Series*

*by Norm Wright*

This Nov. 9, 1995 (value 8.75 krone) issue from Denmark, entitled "Toys," depicts two Knud Petersen & Wittrock tinplate model steam locomotives, and freight cars.

The Scott catalogue number is 1039.



## **Plan Before You Build – Part II**

*by Richard C. Roth*

- c) What is the shape of the layout area - square, l-shape, long narrow strip?

The shape of the space allotted for the layout is very important for planning the layout. I really cannot think of a shape that would not lend itself to some sort of layout. Long narrow areas can be used for point-to-point operations. Small close-in areas can also serve a purpose.

A friend of mine from Ontario, Brian Fayle, has a small somewhat circular layout, not more than 4-feet in diameter, on which travels a trolley. This layout in “OO” is very highly detailed. Because of the manner in which he designed the layout, one cannot see everything when looking from only one point. You must walk around it and observe things from 4 or 5 points to take in all that is to be seen. Again, it is a very scenery intense layout in a very small and somewhat unique shape.

A second part of the shape consideration is also the balanced utilization of the space between layout and aisles. People frequently attempt to shoehorn as much as they can into a space without allowing sufficient aisles. No layout section should be farther than an arm’s length from an aisle and no aisle should be narrower than one-and-a-half times the thickness of the largest person to occupy them. Well, that is unless you are willing to endure frequent damage along the sides of the aisles.

One other thing that I like to consider when addressing aisles, is the placement of controls along the sides of the aisles. If controls for switches and other things are to be placed along the aisles, either recess them so they are a couple inches back from the edge of the aisle or double the width of the aisle at these locations. This will provide more safety for the control panels.

- d) Is the layout to model a real-life area or is it to be a fantasy that depicts something that grew from the modeler’s mind?

Some people want to duplicate the area in which they grew up or an area they frequented while railfanning. Others have a favorite scene from a photo they saw and want to duplicate. Still others want their railroad to be one that never existing but is quite real in their mind. Both are equally well suited for modeling. The only thing that needs to be done is to adopt the plan early in the planning stages and stick to it as preparation progresses.

The layout that I envision is a bridge line between the lakeshore lines on the south side of Lake Erie and the east-west lines through southern Pennsylvania, Ohio and

Indiana. This will allow power to be provided by locomotives with my own paint scheme and heralds while also having some power from real railroads included. In this day and age of leased power, almost any railroad's power could be used.

- e) What is the style of the layout to be; switching only, point-to-point with switching, continuous running, or a combination of several of these?

Many modelers regularly host operating sessions where point-to-point operations and switching is done, but they also want to be able to set one or more trains in operation that are continuous running without the need to be turned or have direction reversed at the ends. To do this will require loops of some sort at the ends of the layout. Whether it is a true reversing loop or just the loop at the end of a dog-bone designed layout, the loop must be large enough to accommodate the largest equipment to be operated over it. Larger locomotives frequently require larger radius curves to prevent derailling and longer cars may overhang the inside of the loop to the extent that they make contact with trackside features or structure. Long cars on short radii also look very poor when the center of the car is over the ends of the ties.

- f.) What is the period to be modeled; pre 1900, early 1900's, late steam era, transition time from steam to diesel, early diesel, and modern era?

Early railroading used shorter cars and locomotives. As we move from the early to the modern, the equipment became larger and longer. A logging railroad used short cars and engines and requires much less room than does a modern railroad with cars 89-foot long and mammoth locomotives delivering 4400 to 6000 horsepower. Therefore, modeling modern railroading will require larger spaces both for trouble-free operation and pleasing ascetics.

Logging railroad frequently used switchbacks to climb and descend mountainous terrain. The run-out tracks on the switchbacks were built to a length that accommodated the length of the train that usually traversed the line. Thus an engine of 40-foot pulling 6 cars each about 40-foot long might require run-outs of about 325 feet. This would provide very realistic and pleasant to the eye operations. On the other hand, an engine of 80-foot and cars 70-foot long or longer would require such long run-out tracks as to be inappropriate. The period and thus size of the equipment does form a consideration when planning the layout as far as size.

Another consideration is the length of trains to be operated. Long trains require that towns along the way be spaced such that the train clears one town before entering the next. A train of 20 cars, each about scale 50-foot long, would require about 12-feet of space. That train switching a town would back things up in the previous town visited if the towns were not spaced beyond 12 feet. They also require longer sidings for passing and longer yards for parking the trains at the end of their runs.

**Next Month – Part III**

For past issues of the

*Rochester  
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go to

[www.trainweb.org/rmr](http://www.trainweb.org/rmr)

Future 2005 Articles

*Lehigh Valley Shanty, Fish Creek, NY*

*Modeling an Interlocking Panel,  
CP – SK (Selkirk, NY)*

*Ned Speller's D L & S RR*

*Leo Adamski's MARY – LAND RR*

*Bath and Hammondsport RR –  
Modeling Keuka Lake*

*You Can Take It With You – Designing and Building  
a Transportable Model Railroad*

*Modeling a Civil War Battle Scene and Railroad*

***Don't Forget to Visit***

[www.railroadmuseum.net](http://www.railroadmuseum.net)



***Coming Next Month....***

*Sociology of Model Railroading*

*- Train Shows*

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***B R & P Crew Shanty***

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***Model Railroad Post Office***

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***Ask Doctor Dick –the Scenery Doctor  
My Favorite Model RR Tools***

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***Plan Before Your Build – Part III***

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***Rochester Model Rails***

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## Recommended Train Events for 2005

**Updated 5-25-05**

- May 28-29**                      **Midland, Ontario, Canada** - Model Railroad Show, Midland District Railroad Club
  
- August 13**                      **Gananoque, Ontario, Canada** – Thousand Islands Model Railroad Show
  
- August 31**  
**September 3**                      **Dearborn, MI – 25<sup>th</sup> National Narrow Gauge Convention – Silver Anniversary**



*Oil Creek Rail Road on Miller Farm, Circa 1866.*

- September 15**                      **Rochester NY** – NRHS meeting "American Orient Ltd."
  
- October 15 – 16**                      **Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada** – Model Railroad Show, Bowmanville High School
  
- October 16**                      **Rochester, NY** – RIT Model RR Club Fall Train Show
  
- November 5-6**                      **Syracuse, NY** - Train Show at NY Fairgrounds
  
- November 13**                      **Batavia, NY** – Batavia Train Show/Sale



*Oil Creek Logging and Mining Company, circa 1900.*



Civil War Diorama (Union Soldiers) at the Medina RR Museum, Medina, NY. Built by Dick Senges of Victor, NY.