

THE BRASS POUNDER



Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Division 12, Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

Volume 20 Number 9

September 2020

Division Coming Events

(See [CSD Website](#) for
further details)

**IN KEEPING WITH
COMMUNITY
EFFORTS AGAINST
THE CORONA VIRUS,
ALL DIVISION
ACTIVITIES FOR THE
MONTH OF
SEPTEMBER HAVE
BEEN CANCELLED.**

Superintendent's Corner

By Alan Hardee

Well, we finally made it to September. Normally we would be ready for the annual picnic at Jack Parkers. Unfortunately, nothing has changed from last month. We are still in Phase 2 of restrictions so still no meeting this month. I hope everyone has been using the free time to work on your layout. I have recently completed the helix that connects the lower and upper levels to complete the loop on my Carolina Central Railway.



I have recently installed 20 feet of backdrop from [Trackside Scenery](#) on the upper level. It worked out really well as the windows on the backdrop building line up perfectly with the windows of my building kits. Please check them out for your background needs.



Now on to a few other projects such as more building kits, static grass with my new Woodland Scenics applicator, and for Neal, finally some ballast. Hopefully we can get together soon to see everyone's "COVID PROJECTS." Keep modeling and remember, Model Railroading is FUN.

UPCOMING AREA TRAIN EVENTS

**SCHEDULES FOR AREA
TRAIN EVENTS ARE NOT
CLEARLY DEFINED.**

**MEMBERS WILL BE
NOTIFIED OF
SCHEDULED EVENTS OF
INTEREST WHEN NEW
INFORMATION IS
RECEIVED.**

**IN THE MEANTIME, STAY
SAFE AND HEALTHY.**

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

I'm not going to say very much from my point of view as editor this month. I hope everyone is staying safe. I know we're all looking forward to the return of normal activities. As Alan noted above, at least it presents some opportunity for getting some projects done.

PLEASE read Gil Brauch's brief note on the next page about a service opportunity.

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition. I welcome your feedback and recommendations. Of course I'm always looking for new authors as well. Let me see what you've been doing so we can share your experience throughout the Division.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

I target the 1st of each month for publication. Please submit articles for publication by the 27th of each month.

The preferred format is MS Word, but I can convert most other formats.

For questions and help, email me at editor@carolinasouthern.org

Service Opportunity

by Gil Brauch, MMR

The position of Webmaster for the Carolina Southern Division is available as of January 2021. This is an opportunity for anyone who is interested in working toward their Association Volunteer Achievement Program certificate to build up points very quickly. Since announcing my 'retirement' from the position last month, I have had no response from anyone interested. It would be a shame for our primary means of digital communication to fall into dormancy next year. Especially in these uncertain times, we need to have every means possible to communicate available to us.

There are no really special requirements for the position. It mainly involves making monthly updates to activities and information available via the internet. Please contact me at webmaster@carolinasouthern.org and I will be glad to discuss it with you. I will also work with whomever wishes to volunteer to make a smooth transition.



DIVISION AND REGIONAL NEWS

By Ed Gumphrey

The Division continues having to cancel any activities during August. As our Superintendent noted in his monthly comments, hopefully things will be better soon.

Social media postings by Division members continued to decline last month with one notable exception. Following up on his opening post in late July, Seth Gartner made several posts as he continued installing scenery in a section of his railroad. His captions explain what he's doing. In addition to showing his scenery work, Seth took a couple of "sidings" to discuss ballasting and photo backdrops. Check out this series of posts on Seth's NYC Piney Fork Branch page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2475018066088907>

Speaking of Seth, his personal Facebook page taught me something new about him. It's not railroad related, but I'll sneak it in anyway....

It turns out Seth is the proud owner of a 1924 Packard. From his posted comments, Seth got the car from his father, who had gotten a promise of "first dibs" from the original owner. Seth is the third owner of this beautiful car. Too cool for words.



Seth Gartner's 1924 Packard. Photo frame from Facebook Video posting.

A little less than a year from now, The Southeastern Region (SER) will be holding their 2021 Convention very close to our Division. Hosted by our neighboring Palmetto Division, the event will be held in Greenville, SC June 10-13, 2021.

A CALL FOR CLINICIANS

Dave Winans, Co-Chairman for the SER 2021 Convention is looking for any CSD members who would be interested in presenting clinics at the convention in June 2021. For those of you who present clinics at RMU and/or had planned on giving clinics during the cancelled 2020 convention, SER would be a great opportunity for you to spread your expertise event further. Contact by e-mail to clinics@SwampRabbitExpress.org

Their website at www.swamprabbitexpress.org is already populated with some interesting information. I'll publish more information about this event as we get closer.



Greenville, SC
June 10-13, 2021

Information at:

www.swamprabbitexpress.org

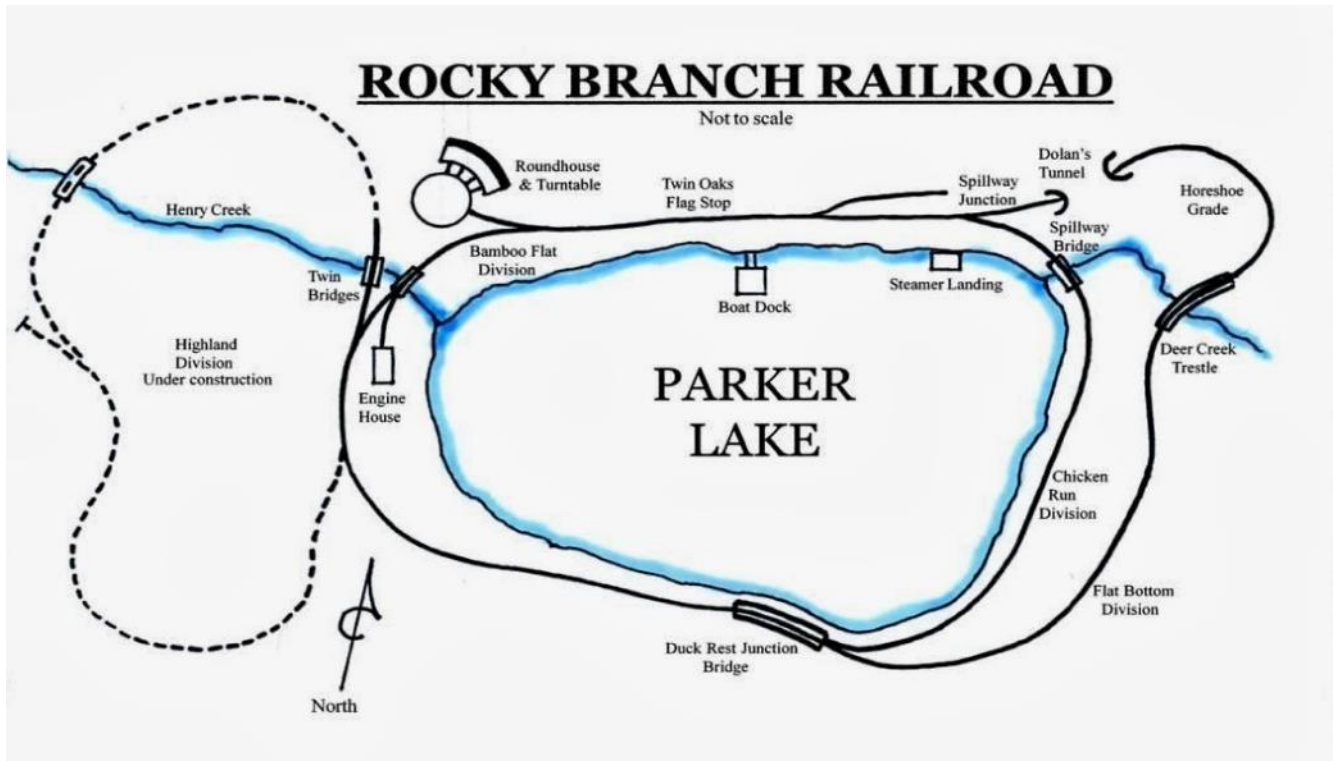


A TALE OF THREE LOCOS & A FALLEN FLAG

Part 2

By Duncan Parker

A PLACE TO RUN



With the Shay complete, I needed a place to run it. With no local club tracks available to run on, at that time, I decided to build my own Railroad.

“Rocky Branch Line”

Note: the Rocky Branch Line is now a fallen flag, abandoned in favor of an N scale empire.

I bought extruded aluminum rail in 10' sections, made ties cut from treated 2x4's and began laying track. When the track was first started I didn't really know where I was going with it, like Topsy it just grew. Over time I developed the plan above and away I went. As the track got longer I was able to run the Shay further and further, but only back and forth, boooooing.

It took a number of years to construct a Round House, Turntable, and the section of track from “Bamboo Flat” via “Flat Bottom” to “Duck Rest Bridge” and finally close the loop at “Bamboo Flat”. I was now able to run trains all the way around our half acre pond (“Lake” in 1/8th scale). Chicken Run was the last division added. The Highland Division was never completed although Twin Bridges was and a portion of the Highland Division ROW was graded and ready for track.

The name Chicken Run came into being one day while I was running a train across the high line on the dam. Our pet chicken, Henrietta, got on the track ahead of me and refused to get off. I slowed to a crawl and tooted the whistle as she trotted a few feet ahead of the

locomotive. She ran the full length of the high line before jumping off just before “Duck Rest bridge”.

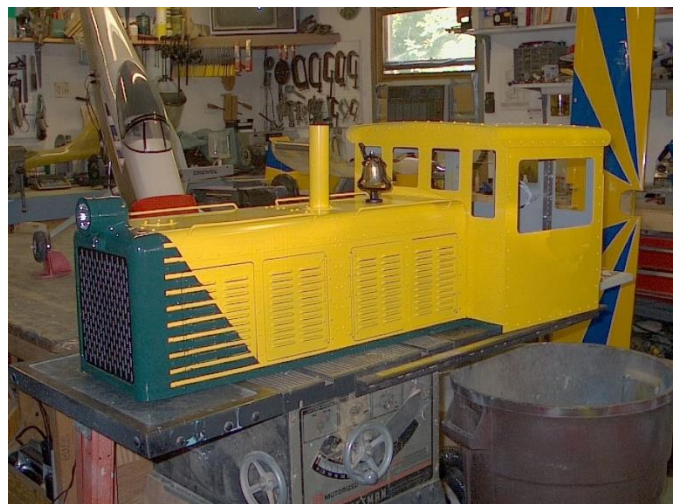
While I was constructing the railroad I realized that I was going to need a locomotive more robust than the little Shay to deliver the rail, ties, ballast and other materials needed for the job at hand.

Enter my second locomotive. **Rocky Branch Line Loco No. 4**

I purchased my second engine, a **RMI Railworks, Transfer Switcher** kit. The engine was a 1/5 scale 7.5” gauge, 24volt, battery operated narrow gauge diesel locomotive. To complete the switcher kit required some parts assembly, painting, installing the batteries, controller, and wiring. As for the kit bashing, I modified the cab windows, added an air compressor, operating air brakes, air horn, electronic flashing ditch lights and a sound system. I also built a riding car for the engineer, a simple flat car with a lawn tractor seat. When I finished building the locomotive it weighed in at 310 lbs.



New Roll Models Transfer Switcher.



The frame and body painted, batteries and wiring installed, ready for the body and trucks to be attached.



Truck with air brake hardware installed.



Truck side frame with air brake air cylinder visible.



Switcher finished and ready to go to work.

After completion of the engine it was pressed into service building Chicken Run (see photos below) Building the railroad was much easier with No. 4 added to the roster. It was no longer necessary to use a wheelbarrow to carry ballast. Buckets on the flatcar worked very well.



Tons of gravel were used to ballast the track.



Engine No 4, hauling ties for the track.



No 4 and a flat car with ballast for Chicken Run.



Work train at tracks end.



Track work for Chicken Run.



Building a new turnout.



Round House and Turntable.



Closeup of Wooden Gallows Turntable.



Deer Creek Trestle.



Two Bridges under construction.



Setting railroad ties for Spillway Bridge.



Laying track on Spillway Bridge.



Over all view of Spillway Bridge construction.



Continuing ballast on down the line.



The above photos show Chicken Run division under construction. It was the last section of track laid on the railroad. On this section I used a new method of laying track using 3/8"x1" steel bar in 20' lengths instead of aluminum rail screwed down. The bars were set in gauged slots in each tie. No need for fasteners, just gravity and a tight slot holds the rails in place. The method turned out to be very successful, and made track laying very simple. I modified a small hydraulic jack to press the bars in to the tie slots which made the job very easy for one person to do. Laying 20' at a time makes the track laying process go fast.

Building a new Turnout at Duck Rest bridge at the South end of Chicken Run.

Lets take a ride on the **“Rocky Branch Line”** with family and friends.



A mixed train on the new high line, Chicken Run, with the Transfer Switcher on the head end.



Headed west past Twin Oaks.



Speeder No. 1 and Switcher No. 4 leaving Bamboo Flat.



Headed down the 3.5 % grade toward the Deer Creek Trestle on the Flat Bottom division.



About to cross the Deer Creek trestle



Leaving yard on a turnaround towards Twin Oaks.



Speeder No. 1, Grand Daughter at the controls.



Heading out of the tunnel, turned snow shed.





That's me, coming around the bend at Speeder No. 1 Ready to head out from the yard. Bamboo Flat, with passengers in tow.

That's it for now, hope you enjoyed this installment. The next and final installment will cover building the third locomotive, my **live steam Mogul No. 2**.



The Nolix is done. (Wait ... what?)

By Tim Rumph



The nolix in Newton

If you aren't a member of the Layout Design Special Interest Group ([LD SIG](#)) you may not have heard of the term nolix. Simply put, take a helix and unwind it. Start at the lower left. The track rises at a 2.5% grade and crosses under so it's in the back. The turnback curve, which does exist in Newton, is level. Then the grade goes back up to 2.5% again and crosses from front to back before leveling out. The elevation at the start is 48 inches. At the end it's 56 inches. The result is eight inches of elevation change with no hidden track, eight industrial spurs to switch, and a junction with a branch line. Not all layouts have enough room for this, but if there is room it's worth considering.



Newton Spreader Section on the Workbench

Like the rest of the layout, the newton spreader section started out on the workbench in my garage. There it is assembled, the track laid, wiring completed, everything tested, and the track is painted before installing it.



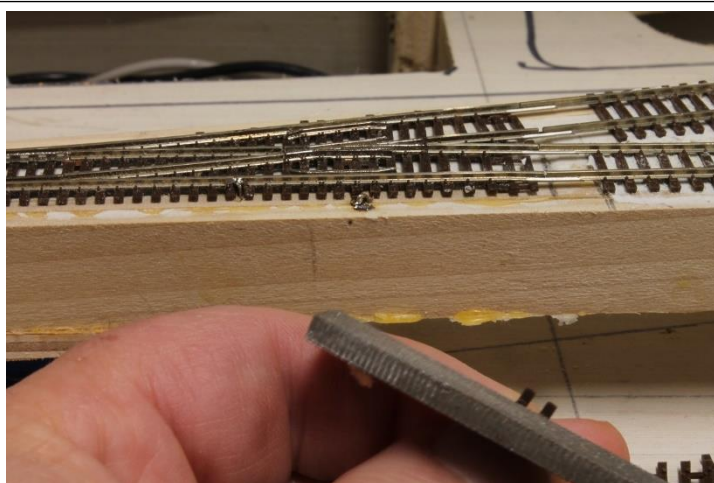
Newton Spreader Section on the Workbench

There are some electrical items on the section shown above. These include a Signal LCC node with a BOD4 block detector. These are the same ones from my July column about signals. There's also a connection for another pair of block signals, S461 and S460. The LCC Repeater, from [RR-Cirkits](#), is something new. The LCC bus needs to split here to go along the upper and lower levels beyond this. The Signal LCC and BOD4 are mounted on a panel that is hinged. It can be folded down for access to these components. It's held in the raised position with a cabinet door magnetic latch.



Tools used for filling in tie gaps

When I lay the track there are gaps at the ends where I remove ties to make room for the rail joiners. Here are the tools I use to fill in those gaps. The Alex Fast Dry acrylic caulk is the same stuff I use to glue the track to the roadbed. The diagonal cutters are used to cut the connecting nubs off of the pieces of ties. The file is used to remove the spikes from the ties and the spatula end of the glue brush is used to put the glue on the ties.



Filing off spikes on ties to fit under the rail joiners

I keep the ties that I cut off and use them to fill the gaps. I trim the connecting nubs, if needed, and use the edge of file to remove the spikes so the ties will slide under the rails. I used to use a knife for doing this, but a file does it quicker and it's also safer. I put a dab of caulk on a piece of wax paper and use the spatula to put some on the bottom of the ties and slide them into the gap.

When everything is finished; I mask off the turnout points and the ends of the track and paint the track with Krylon® Camouflage Earth Brown paint. A quick scrub with an abrasive block to clean off the railhead and this section is ready to install.

It's a little less than eight feet from the end of this section to the east wall of the room, so the next section will wrap around the corner. From here on I'll use separate benchwork for the upper and lower levels. Eight inches of separation is a little tight, so the bottom level will drop a little more as it goes into Claremont.

Tim Rumph



Paint for track



WOOD CHEMICAL PLANT **A SCRATCH BUILD** **PART II**

By Ed Smith

Last month I built the basic structures that represent four of seven main buildings of my Wood Chemical complex. They are the warehouse/office, two distilleries, and the retort process (oven) room. The first three have basically the same dimensions (pic 1). This month I will describe what I did to complete these structures. I will try not to dig too deep into technique, but highlight the main procedures. I have not accomplished as much as I had planned on last month, but by taking my time I've got my desired results.

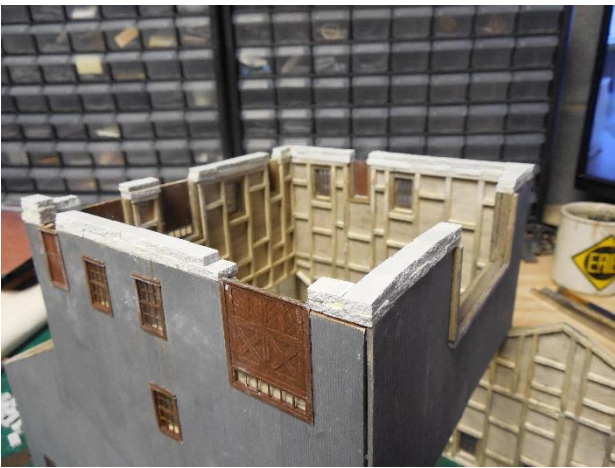
First, the foundations. I have used several techniques to install foundations. First, there is the actual way by laying the block and building on top of the footprint. This time, I decided to add the foundation after the building was assembled. Using Dr. Ben's Baby Building Blocks, I glued two tiers of blocks to the bottom of the buildings (pic 2, 3, 4). I used wood glue for the adhesive. After letting the foundations dry, I weathered the stone with Micro Mark Age It Easy Gray.



Pic 1: Three of the structures are roughly the same size. The retort process room is different.



Pic 2: A building with Dr. Ben's Building Blocks added for its foundation, sitting atop 2 others.



Pic 3: A closer view of the foundation blocks in place, glued to the bottom of the structure.



Pic 4: Block foundations have been applied to all four structures.

The next step was completing the roofs on the three buildings with gable roofs. I used Balsa for the roofs. I cut two pieces for each roof, beveled the peak joint edges, and glued the joints while resting on the structure (pic 5). This was done to maintain the basic roof pitch while it dried. I let the glue dry longer than usual because I wanted a tight bond with the fragile balsa. Next, I added the interior roof rafters using, of all things, popsicle sticks. My wife loves popsicles so I have accumulated a quantity of these sticks. The process was tedious and time consuming, so I don't recommend it for everyone, but the results are great. I cut the sticks in half, then cut them to the length of each side roof. I sanded the peak points to an angle that aligns with the peak joint. The opposite ends were sanded to give me a perpendicular surface for my roof trim facias and soffits. Like I said, this was tedious but it produced very strong rafters equivalent to 1" x 6" beams. I weathered them and the interior roof surface with Hunterline Blue Gray mix and

glued the rafters to the roof (pic 6). Next, I added Northeast Scale Lumber weathered dimensional wood collar ties to the rafters for structural support (pic 7). Finally, the roofs were form-fitted on the buildings and exterior trim, Northeast wood, was added (pic 8). To complete the roof proper, I added simulated tar paper roofing using thin white medical tape, available at most drug stores. After priming the roof flat black, I cut strips of tape and worked from the bottom of each roof panel, applied overlapping layers (pic 9). When finished the tape was sealed with flat back paint.



Pic 5: The three structures with gable roofs fitted in place.



Pic 6: Popsicle (craft) stick rafters were added to the underside of the roof panels.



Pic 7: A view of a completed roof structure with rafters and collar ties in place.



Pic 8: The gable ends are trimmed with scale lumber fascias.



Pic 9: Roof panel with overlapping tape applied as tar paper strips.

The final addition to the roofs is the ventilation systems. I used Blair Line Laser Cut Fans to simulate the apparatus and black straws for the duct work. The fans were enclosed in dimensional wood and the straws were split and formed to lay on the underside of the roof peak. These were glued in place and weathered with a dirt and rust wash. Small auxiliary roofs were built to protect the systems (pic 10, 11, 12). The interior ventilation was built using straws glued between the roof supports and tulle was used for mesh coverings. I also used the soft malleable metal that seals corks on wine bottles to form a covering over the fan entrance in the roof. This metal is easy to work with, it's easy to form into anything you need. I use it for flashing on the valleys on roofs on buildings. Since I like wine, I have a collection of this metal (pic 13, 14).



Pic 10: The roof is painted flat black and a ventilation fan installation started.



Pic 11: Small auxiliary roofs are installed over the fans at the top of the ventilation systems.



Pic 12: The three gable roofs are complete, including some weathering.



Pic 13: Ventilation piping, made from straws, is tucked into the roof peak.

To complete these three buildings, I added wood floors. Originally, I was going to have two concrete floors and one wood, but I liked the results of the wood floor, so I decided to make all three the same. The dimensional wood needed, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide for floor joists and $\frac{3}{16}$ " wide for floor planks, was purchased from Hobbytown. I buy a lot of supplies on-line or directly from businesses, so being able to use a local hobby ship was an added plus. Also, to my surprise, it was a great savings. What would have cost over \$50 from Northeast, cost me \$14 at Hobbytown.

That was a great find. I measured the interior perimeter of each building, cut the floor beams, and glued the perimeter together (pic 15). I use Right Way Magnetic Clamps to get perfect right angles. Then I added all the floor joists (pic 16). Finally, I cut the flooring planks, weathered them with Hunterline Raw Sienna, and glued each individually, form fitting the final piece (pic 17, 18). Note: If you're doing a project like this, I suggest you buy a wood chopper. They allow you to cut multiple accurate lengths of wood easily. I have an old NWSL chopper (pic 19). They're still available at various sources, including directly from Northwest Shortline at <https://nwsl.com/products/the-chopper-iii>



Pic 14: Ventilation piping is installed under the peaks of the three gable roofs.



Pic 15: Perimeter of a floor framing system clamped with magnetic clamps to keep square.



Pic 16: Floor framing with perimeter and joists in place.



Pic 17: Floor planking partially completed in this view of work in progress.



Pic 18: One floor completed – three more to build for the other buildings.

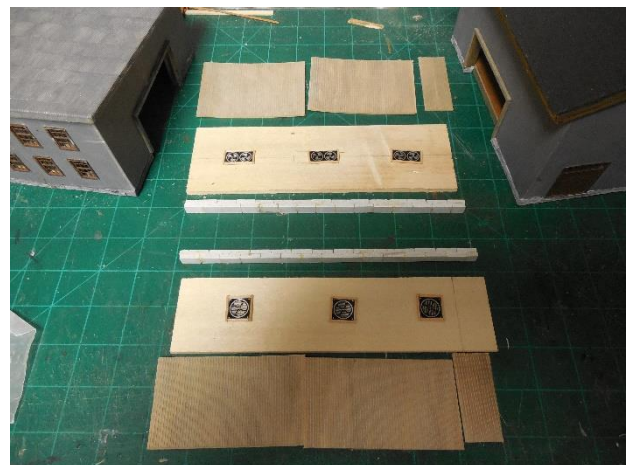


Pic 19: NWSL Chopper III makes it easy to cut repetitive pieces for scratchbuilding.

Now, to the Process room and Cooling room. First, I finished the roof on the Process room by using balsa wood and strips of metal corrugated roofing painted gray. These strips are self-adhesive and were applied over lapping, bottom to top, as with the prototype (pic 20). The Cooling room connects the Process room to the Warehouse. I measured, cut, and laid out the wood balsa, basswood, and foundation blocks (pic 21). These pieces were assembled and glued together. Wood corrugated siding from Northeast was used for exterior siding (pic 22). Notice, once again, Blair Line fans were used for ventilation. The interior floors for both buildings were created from foam core board. It was cut to fit the interiors and primed (pic 23). The colors simulate concrete and dirt and sand. The floors were glued in place (pic 24). The final touch was adding ties and code 55 rail for the service track to the retorts (ovens) (pic 25). The Cooling room corrugated roof was added, fan enclosures finished, and entirely weathered (pic 26).



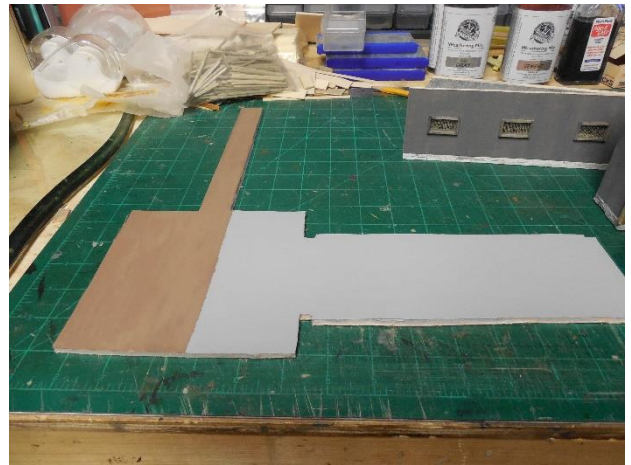
Pic 20: Self-adhesive corrugated roofing applied to the roof for the process room.



Pic 21: Cooling room walls measured and cut, ready for assembly.



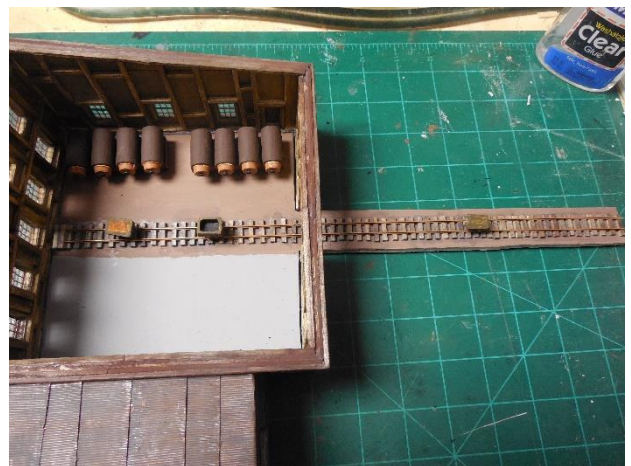
Pic 22: NWSL corrugated siding was used for the walls of the cooling room.



Pic 23: Interior floors for the process and cooling rooms cut out and primed.



Pic 24: Process and cooling room floors in place and the structures joined together.



Pic 25: Service track for the retorts is hand laid with code 55 rail on wood ties.

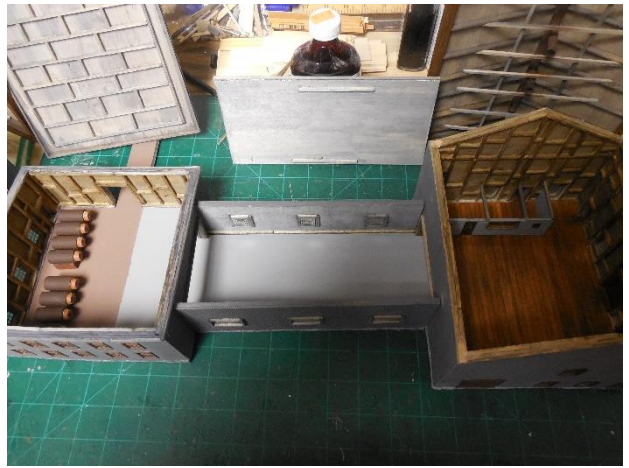


Pic 26: Cooling room assembled, fans installed, painted and weathered.

So here are the completed structures. The five buildings are now ready for interior and exterior detail (pic 27, 28). I placed them on the layout to get an overall idea of the proper location. (pic 30).



Pic 27: Completed structures are ready for installation of interior details.



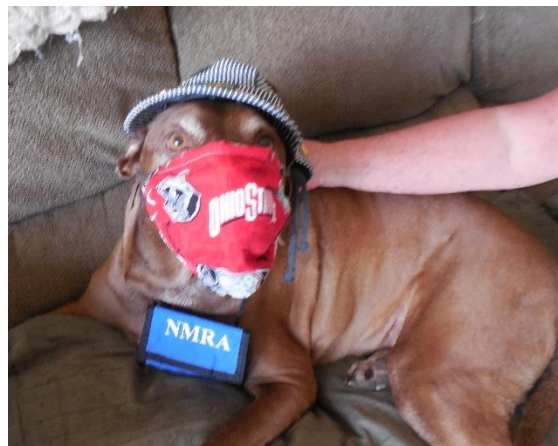
Pic 28: Some interior details have already been installed.



Pic 29: The five structures are placed on the layout to get a feel for how they will look.

That's the update for now. Like I said earlier, I didn't complete as much as I had planned, but the end result is exactly what I was trying to achieve. Don't rush your work. This is a hobby. Next time I plan on having the final two buildings, the Pump House and Boiler Room, done; plus the tank car loading facility and two loading platforms. Notice, I said that's the plan. You never know. Until then, stay safe.

ED



Elway says STAY SAFE!

CLOSING PAGE BONUS (?)



Your editor wishes you all a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend. I have no doubt that you've earned a break.

Division Brass

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