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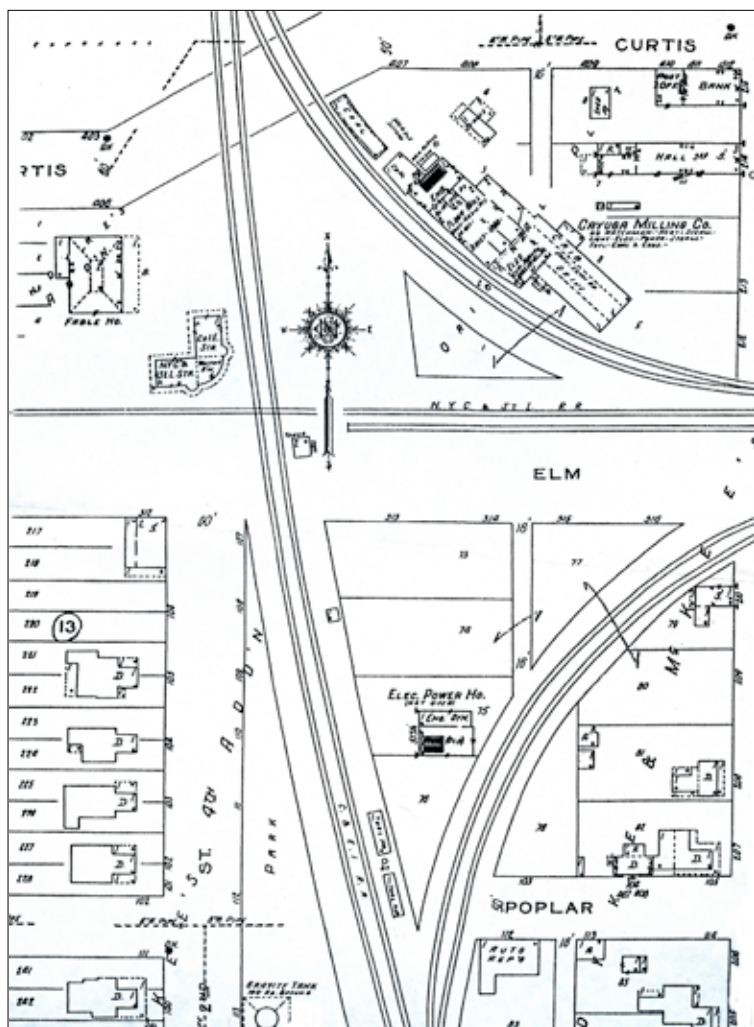
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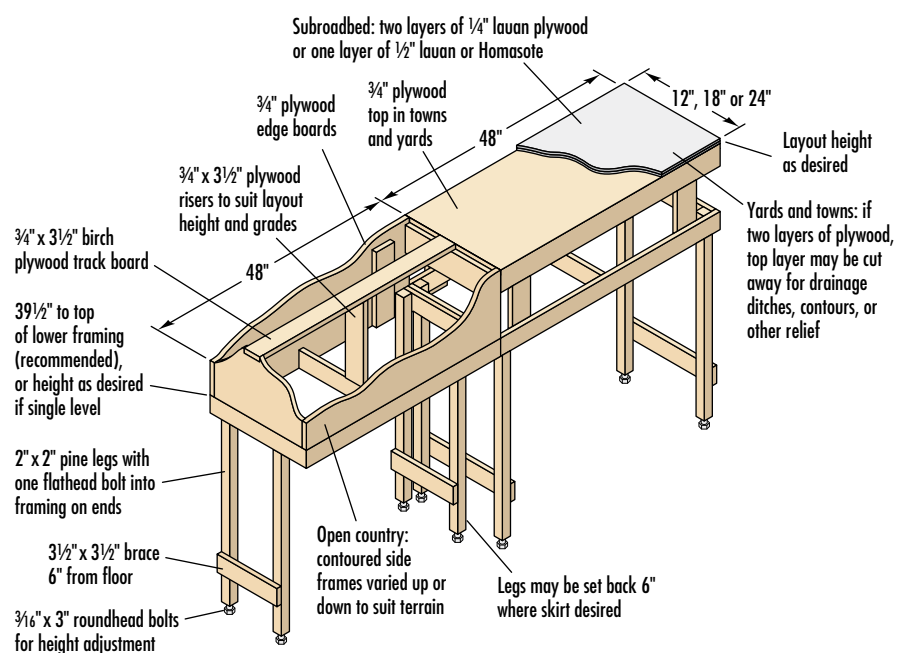


I modeled a favorite scene I clearly recalled from my hometown—Cayuga, Ind.—in the 1950s: the wood interlocking tower guarding the Nickel Plate–Chicago & Eastern Illinois crossing, the joint depot, and the Fable House hotel. The tower was an easy kitbash using a Walthers plastic kit (6-2), the depot is scratchbuilt (1-8), and the hotel uses walls made from photos I shot and backdated using Photoshop Elements that were glued to a styrene core, 6-14, the latter a relatively quick way to scratchbuild structures. At left, a Sanborn fire-insurance map from 1913 shows the same structures and illustrates why these maps are excellent reference tools.



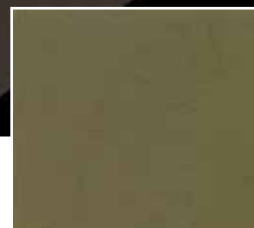
David Barrow has long advocated building model railroads large or small from 2 x 4-foot "dominoes" that ensure a linear approach to layout construction and accommodate changes easily by simply cleaning off or changing the top surface. No room for a layout? Build a domino! Dominoes can be arranged into almost any shape, and as the finished scene shows, once the scenery is added, viewers don't know what kind of benchwork lurks below.

David Barrow





David Barrow recommended painting the fascia and valance a “CTC machine green” color in MRP 1995, and I’ve used it ever since. I also use the color to paint ground cover and plaster-filled waterways. Paint-store formulas keep changing, but a scan of this sample will get you close enough.



apply the grass. I use undiluted glue on banks, hills, etc., as the grass has a tendency to flop over on inclines.

“The important step for success,” Randy continued, “is to vacuum the static grass after 5 to 10 minutes. The suction of the vacuum pulls the fibers upright. If you get too close to the grass and suck up a patch, it’s very easy to apply some hairspray and hit the area again with grass.”

Painting everything green

We discussed painting the fascia and valance using latex paint mixed to resemble the olive-green used by Union Switch & Signal on their CTC panels in Chapter 4. But let’s not stop there.

For those modeling “green country,” which comprises most of North America, using a green hue to blend the fascia in with the scenery can save a lot of time. In the Midwest and large parts of Appalachia, and elsewhere, water—especially river water—is

often a muddy green-brown color, 4. Coincidentally, Union Switch & Signal’s “CTC Machine Green” is very similar. I had a local paint store custom mix a batch based on a scan of a swatch.

So rather than spending time trying to avoid having the fascia color bleed into the adjoining scenery, I paint everything from landforms to watercourses with this satin-finish color. It looks good on the fascia, provides a good base for ground-covering materials such as ground foam and static grass, and is a near perfect hue for many waterways.

I must admit, however, that some scenes made using recent water-making products from Woodland Scenics look very impressive, 5.

Trees and hillsides

When you want a really spectacular tree for a mini scene, such as a kid swinging on a tire tied to a rope in the front yard of a Victorian house, then

taking extra pains to make a really detailed tree is justified. A sagebrush armature is often a good place to start.

Poly-fiber-fill “puffball” trees still have their uses, 6. In most mountain areas, we’re modeling not individual trees but rather forest canopies. In such instances, spending the time and dollars to abut countless foreground-quality trees seems to me to be wasteful. The accompanying photo taken in central Appalachia shows that you can’t see anything but leaves.

But when you need to create a grove of trees along the right-of-way, 7, or a forest lining a mountain stream, you can’t afford the luxury of spending that much time per tree.

Where the trunk and branch structure is likely to be visible, however, SuperTrees from Scenic Express coated with leaf flakes have become a favorite among modelers. But some of us insist on making the process more time-consuming than it needs to be.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Improving engines & rolling stock

I can't get Nickel Plate-prototype Consolidations, and no suitable "donor" locomotives are available. So some running-board stripes and NKP decals applied to stock Bachmann 2-8-0s will have to suffice. At least for now, they look just fine strutting their stuff as they go about their daily toil. Here no. 908 struggles up Cayuga Hill as it crosses the steel viaduct over the Little Vermilion River near Humrick, Ill.

A modeler can contentedly spend a year building and detailing a locomotive. Indeed, building or superdetailing a relatively few stunning models can become the main objective. Many O fine-scale (Proto:48) modelers enjoy scratchbuilding and/or superdetailing locomotives, rolling stock, and track almost to the exclusion of realistically operating railroads. But our objective here is to find ways to populate our railroads with something other than out-of-the-box models without spending a lot of time doing that.