



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
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LOCATION

ETSU Campus
George L. Carter
Railroad Museum

HOURS

Business Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 6:30 PM in:

Brown Hall, Room 223,
ETSU Campus,
Johnson City, TN.,

Open House for viewing every Saturday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

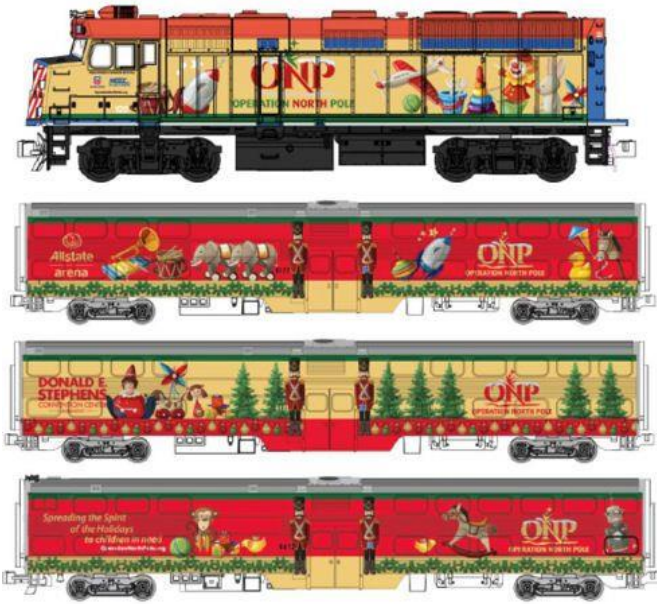
Work Nights are held each Thursday from 4:00 pm until ??

SPECIAL FOCUS THIS ISSUE

CATCHING UP WITH SPECIAL PAINT UNITS

PART 3 - CHICAGO'S METRA "OPERATION NORTH POLE" UNITS





METRA #125 F40PH – OPERATION NORTH POLE - 2015



METRA #166 F40PH – OPERATION NORTH POLE - 2016

We are fortunate to live in a region that has a long history of community support for running annual Santa Trains. The this tradition we've added Polar Express and other holiday themed specials offered by museums, shortlines, and even class 1 railroads. The Chicago metropolitan area has its own holiday traditions with the regional transportation system (METRA including the elevated lines) supporting their version of the Santa Train: **OPERATION NORTH POLE**. The popularity and notoriety is evidenced by KATO's and Lionel's release of holiday collector sets in N and Three-rail-O gauge



METRA #131 F40PH - OPERATION NORTH POLE - 2013



METRA #166 F40PH – OPERATION NORTH POLE – 2017



METRA #125 F40PH – OPERATION NORTH POLE - 2014



METRA #133 F40PH – OPERATION NORTH POLE - 2018



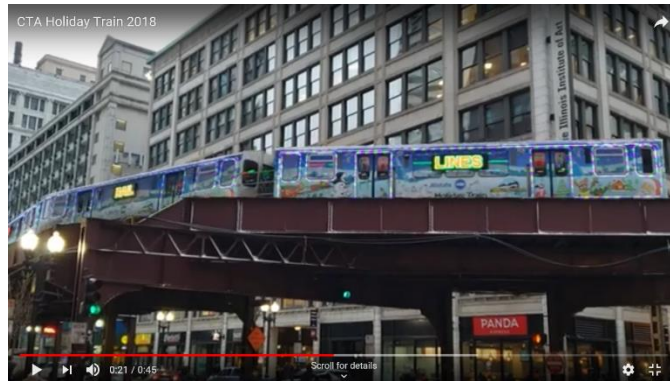
COACH WRAPED FOR THE 2015 SEASON



COACHES WRAPED FOR THE 2017 SEASON



COACH WRAPED FOR THE 2015 SEASON



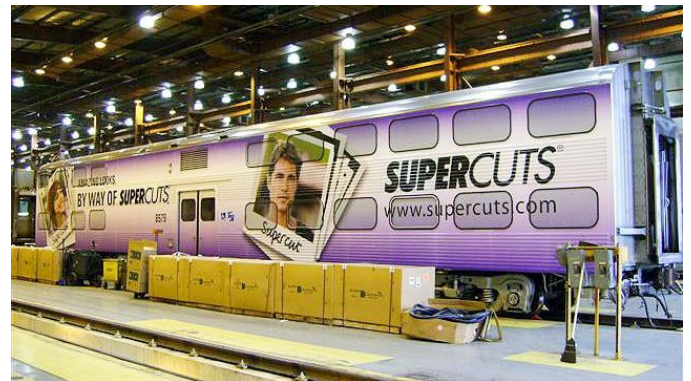
EVEN THE "EL" GETS INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

SPECIAL PAINT



METRA #147 F40PH - OPERATON LIFESAVER

PUBLICITY/ADVERTISING WRAPS



NORTH BOUND

RIDING AMTRAK BETWEEN JACKSONVILLE AND ROANOKE

ROBERT SULLIVAN

This is the trip that moved me... well... let's just say it moved Ted and Mary. As most of you know by now, our club museum member, Ted relocated for the winter to the sunny State of Florida recently. He requested my help, for moving his stuff. A simple U-Haul trip, and the history trip began.

It took a full day driving to Fernandina Beach, FL with no real surprises along the I-95 corridor, but it was nice weather albeit a tad cold for Florida in early December. The U-Haul truck slowed the trip a bit but we arrived safe and sound.



The second day of the trip was the unload phase which was accomplish shortly after noon. This gave us the chance to tour the island. Our first stop was Fort Clinch, The Fort was an anti-bellum brick structure built to defend the Ports of Fernandina and Kings Bay/St. Marys. It was allowed to deteriorate following the close of the war, was restored as a CCC work project in the 1930s , a turned knot a state park in the 1950s.



Next day was the beach, and the return trip on Amtrak, from Jacksonville Florida to Roanoke VA.



The first leg of the trip was totally dark, so the photos were worthless. But when daylight appeared, I had plenty of time to get many photos.



Twenty-plus hours on Amtrak, and plenty of coffee, and talking with Amtrak official, made the trip exciting.



With any long distance trip, time ticks away, but the clickity clack of the Amtrak cars gave me the adventure that I will never forget. If you are planning a future trip, consider Amtrak, it's cheapth3er than you might expect.



SPECIAL MODEL RAILROAD CLINIC TO BE HOSTED BY THE GEORGE L. CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM AND THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS **MODEL MAKER SCALE TRAINS TO PRESENT**

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum at East Tennessee State University will co-host, with the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, a special clinic that will be of interest to all area model railroaders. Shane Wilson, President of Scale Trains, Inc., located in Benton, TN will be presenting a clinic that will take us into the production side of the scale-

model locomotives and train cars that our hobby is based on. We will go behind the scenes at ScaleTrains.com for an inside look at creating a model train company from scratch as well as how model trains are made. You'll experience the research phase and creation of engineering drawings plus take a behind-the-scenes video tour of the tool shop

and production facility in China. During the clinic, feel free to ask anything you've always wanted to know about manufacturing model trains. Scale Trains, Inc. will also bring an assortment of models to display as well as handout literature about their company and the railroad scale models they produce.

The clinic was free and open to the public and will be held at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 18, in room 223, Brown Hall on the campus of ETSU.

POST-EVENT REPORT

By Robert Sullivan

We recently had the honor of having a representative from SCALE TRAINS.COM, INC. to make a presentation about the business and manufacturing end of the hobby. The presentation was informative and interesting. A few of those present were already owners of SCALE TRAINS products or at least familiar with the company's product line

through advertising in the hobby press or reviews of their release.

Those attending became all the more familiar when they received a complementary HO plug-door box car in company colors and logo.

CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM JOINS JOHNSON CITY ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

A MONTH OF HERITAGE-RELATED EVENTS STARTS ON JANUARY 5TH



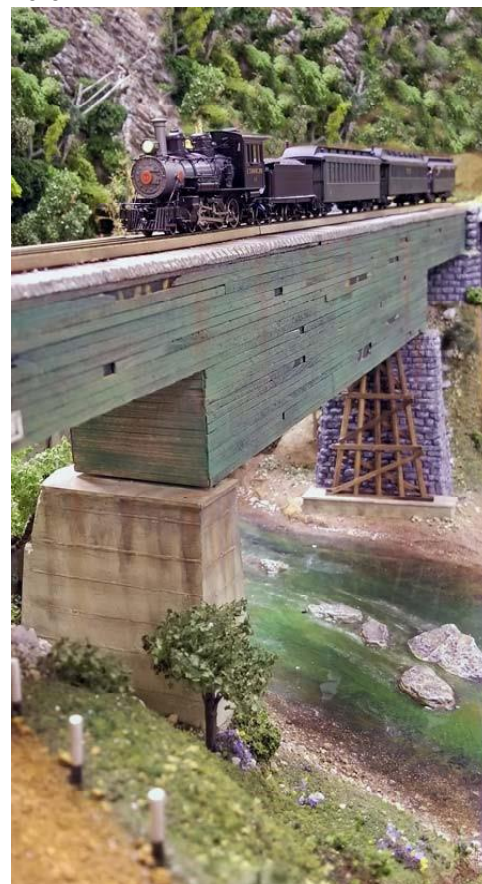
Locally-focused showcase of Saturday activities will highlight ET&WNC and other facets of railroading

With the 150th Anniversary of Johnson City being honored in 2019, the Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University has teamed up to host a series of January events in conjunction with the celebration. While one Saturday each month is devoted to a specific subject, known as Heritage Days, it will be four consecutive events on January 5, 12, 19 and 26 to help remember the extensive role that railroads played in the area's economic growth. The legendary "Tweetsie," formally named the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railway but given its nickname by people along the line, will be highlight on the first day of these events. There will be special media programs showing vintage films on the 12th and 19th, and on January 26, the annual Tri-Cities Rails

Remembrance Heritage Day will focus attention on the museum's multiple model railroad exhibits.

"This location where the city now exists began as a small outpost named Johnson's Depot," says Heritage Days

coordinator Geoff Stunkard. "It was the location of an early water tank for steam engines, and frankly Johnson City was always a railroad town. The ET&WNC terminated here and had its headquarters in town, while the Southern and the Clinchfield lines, both predecessors of today Norfolk Southern and CSX, respectively, maintained operations here."



With the passing of the original narrow-gauge ET&WNC, a short distance was still operating into Elizabethton as a standard gauge line into the 21st century, and this right-of-way has since been converted into the popular Tweetsie Trail in recent years. However, thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, the ETSU-based museum now plays host to one of the largest scale models ever attempted of this railroad line, which fills the majority of one exhibit hall. Operating in HO_n3 scale, its realistic mountain scenery and exclusive hand-built structures have been featured in national magazines annually, and it is considered a world-class example of scale detailing. Also on display in this room are original artifacts from this railroad, including the cast bronze sign removed from the original office building.

The same hall as the HO_n3 features a very accurate model of the long-gone Carnegie Iron Works steel operation that

once resided in Johnson City, north of Broadway Ave. It is in a larger Sn3 scale and accurately depicts this type of industrial operation. The original mill was torn down during the Great Depression.

Both of these are recent additions to the museum's displays. In the museum's original exhibit hall, a larger HO scale layout features generic details similar to those founding the Southern Appalachian region. A child-friendly logging exhibit in G gauge large scale depicts facets and equipment once used in those operations, while an N Scale layout rounds it out, with display cases showing off additional items of interest.

THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB THE MEMR PRESIDENT'S MONTHLY COLUMN

Happy New Year!! It's 2019 already and most of the winter is still ahead of us. The short days and sometimes dreary days of winter are great times to engage in our hobby of model railroading and some of us probably got Santa to bring us some new locomotives or rolling stock, or a structure kit or two, that demand some attention to get them on the tracks or by the right-of-way. I did a little break in the red rocks of Sedona, AZ and rode the Verde Valley Railroad in a first class coach pulled by two F7Ps with eagle heads painted on their noses followed by a ride on the Grand Canyon Railway in a luxury vista dome care from Williams, AZ to the South Rim of the Canyon. Trains, snow, mountains and canyons plus a little birding was most enjoyable!

and there were lots of well-deserved compliments from them on the quality of the exhibits and the friendly and professional folks who were operating the trains and visiting with our guests. Well done everyone! The first Saturday in January we had more than 120 visitors to our little train museum.



Lots of Visitors: I wish to thank all of you who kept the Carter Railroad Museum operating on its regular schedule on the Saturday I was away. And what a Saturday it was as on the December 29th Heritage Day we set a record for a regular single day attendance of 216 visitors counted in the 5 hours the museum was open! Talking with the members who were there they all said people just kept coming through the doors and often in groups of 5, or 7 or more for the entire time we were open. Many were first-time visitors

Christmas Party: Our Annual Christmas Party was a big success with more than 40 members and spouses/significant-others in attendance. Our appreciation is extended to **Jim** and **Charlotte Pahrts** for making the arrangements once more for our party venue at the Jonesborough First Presbyterian Church and for everyone who came early to set up the tables, chairs and to decorate the room. The food was outstanding and there was more than enough to give everyone who wanted them, second helpings. Dirty Santa (**Roger Teinert**) and his elf helper (**Barbara Beagen**) did a great job of handling the bestowing of gifts to those in attendance and this year we had special door prizes of gift cards for a couple of lucky participants. Everyone had a great time and it was a wonderful social occasion to end a very productive year at the Carter RR Museum with.



Calendars & Magazines: A reminder that we have published the first-ever Carter RR Museum Calendar for 2019 and before we get too far into the year you should be getting one or more for yourself. **Geoff Stunkard** has assembled a number of outstanding images from inside the museum and from prototype files into a beautiful calendar that also carries all the important dates for the MEMRR, the Carter Chapter NRHS and the museum for meeting and events for 2019. You really will want to have one for your home, office, den, layout room, etc., when you see it. It is available at a discounted price for members at the Carter Railroad Museum sales table.



As you are aware, we were just published for the 5th consecutive year in the national/internationally distributed **HOn3 Annual**, an outstanding achievement for any model railroad club and/or museum. This year's publication, featuring the ET&WNC RR layout, carries 10 pages of text and photographs as well as the cover shot for the magazine of one of our little Tweetsie locomotives exiting tunnel #5 heading west towards Johnson City. We still have limited numbers of this edition at discounted prices for our members in addition to a few previous editions at our sales table. This supply will not last long so make a special effort to come and get yourself a copy to enjoy and to show to your friends. Being published is a special accomplishment to be proud of and speaks to the quality of the modeling skills that our club and our museum exhibit to all our visitors.



Banners: For several months we have been discussing the desirability of having roll-up banners to advertise the Big Train Show, the Carter Railroad Museum, the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders and the G.L. Carter Chapter of the NRHS. The train show and the railroad museum have had such banners for some time now that are on display at a downtown location and that we take to other train shows to promote our event and the railroad museum. **Geoff Stunkard** worked with me to design a banner for the MEMRR and one for the Carter Chapter NRHS during the Christmas holidays. Those banners are now being printed and I expect to pick them up from the printer this week. We will have two copies for each organization and will display them at the Carter RR Museum to draw additional attention to the club and the chapter and we will take them on the road with us to train shows and other model railroad events to advertise us. We will place one each at the downtown ETSU Professional Associates Building with the other two banners and the small operating layout in their front window to let passers-by know about all of our organizations and how to contact us.



Around the Museum: The MEMRR HO layout continues to be the focus for many of our members as they continue to add turnouts and crossovers to make the operation of the layout more efficient, more complex, more prototypical and more fun; especially for operating sessions. The extension on the club layout at the left of the lift bridge is being worked for passing run-arounds on a couple of industrial stub tracks near the station and additional track is being laid to service the depot with more passenger trains and

sidings for passengers to embark/disembark at the passenger shelters. Planning is also underway for a focus on logging on the club modules recently acquired from **Don Ramey**. This is an important section of the layout as it is the first part of the HO layout seen by visitors as they enter the Alsop Gallery of the museum and we want to make a very favorable first impression. Much of this work is being done with collaborations by **John Carter**, **Frank Fezzie** and **Geoff Stunkard** with plenty of help from other members.



Jonathan Gilliam continues to make progress on redoing the big corner section of the layout that was acquired last year and the same is true of the section that **Logan Heaton** now is the master of. A lot of work is going into this 26-year-old layout and the improvements are most noticeable. If you have now visited the museum in recent months, come see for yourself how much better some of the sections on this layout look with new owners who have their own personal ideas on how their part of the railroad should look and operate.



The ET&WNC RR HO_n3 layout now has all the structures for the town of Roan Mountain completed and in place and the next step on that section will be focused on scenery on the mountain backdrop, the creation of the Doe River and scenery and details in the town itself. I have finished the scale drawings for the 4 buildings that will be on the Crabtree section and will do some of the landscaping mentioned above while **John Edwards** converts my drawings into the cad program that will operate the laser knife allowing him to cut out the pieces I need to create the structures. The buildings are a Methodist church, two houses and a freight station; the latter being used by the

railroad. **Little Engineer's Room:** Station Master **Amy Merritt** and our new member, **Ruth Berry**, are keeping the children happily playing and building little railroad empires in the kid's playroom. Amy has been holding down the sales table in **Jim Pahr's** absence as he tends to **Charlotte's** recovery from a broken ankle.



Johnson City's 150th Anniversary: The town that began with a railroad water tank followed by a depot, is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year with the kickoff of events on Saturday, 5 January, 2019. The Carter Railroad Museum is doing its part to help with this year-long celebration. We are having two Heritage Day Events in January. We focused on the ET&WNC (Tweetsie) Railroad on January 5th with lots of visitors coming to see this 1,300 sq. ft. HO_n3 layout as well as touring the rest of the museum. The following two Saturdays we will be working with the city of Johnson City with the public invited to come to the museum on the 12th and 19th to see our "Tweetsie" layout, followed by dining at the White Duck Taco restaurant (former ET&WNC depot on State of Franklin) and then going to the Senior Center for a viewing of two ET&WNC historic films narrated by **Ken Riddle**, a former employee on that railroad and a walking history encyclopedia on the local railroads in Johnson City. We will follow with a Heritage Day on January 26 focused on all the railroads that ran through Johnson City; the Southern, N&W, ET&WNC, Clinchfield and the modern N&S and CSX. A big month for us and a great railroading heritage beginning to this special 150th anniversary.

2018 was a busy year for us at the museum and in our personal lives as well. Thank you for all you do for your club and for the Carter RR Museum. It would not be a museum without you and your commitment to it and your hobby of model railroading and to the prototype railroads you are linked to. 2019 promises to be another big year for us. We will put on one of the largest train shows in the south in June, host the ET&WNC RR Historical Society, promote the hobby and the Carter Chapter will plan and execute several rail excursions for the public. We will see where our future museum may be as the university continues to grow and we will continue to interact with our fellow members, our friends and the visiting public. We have a green light over

our tracks for 2019 and we will continue to become an important visitor destination for those who also like trains.

Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come!

*Fred J. Alsop III
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU*

**THE MEMRR/GL CARTER CHAPTER-NRHS
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PARTY – PICTURE GALLERY
2018**



**LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT
THE JULIAN PIERCE HOUSE IS ADDED TO THE ROAN MOUNTAIN SCENE**

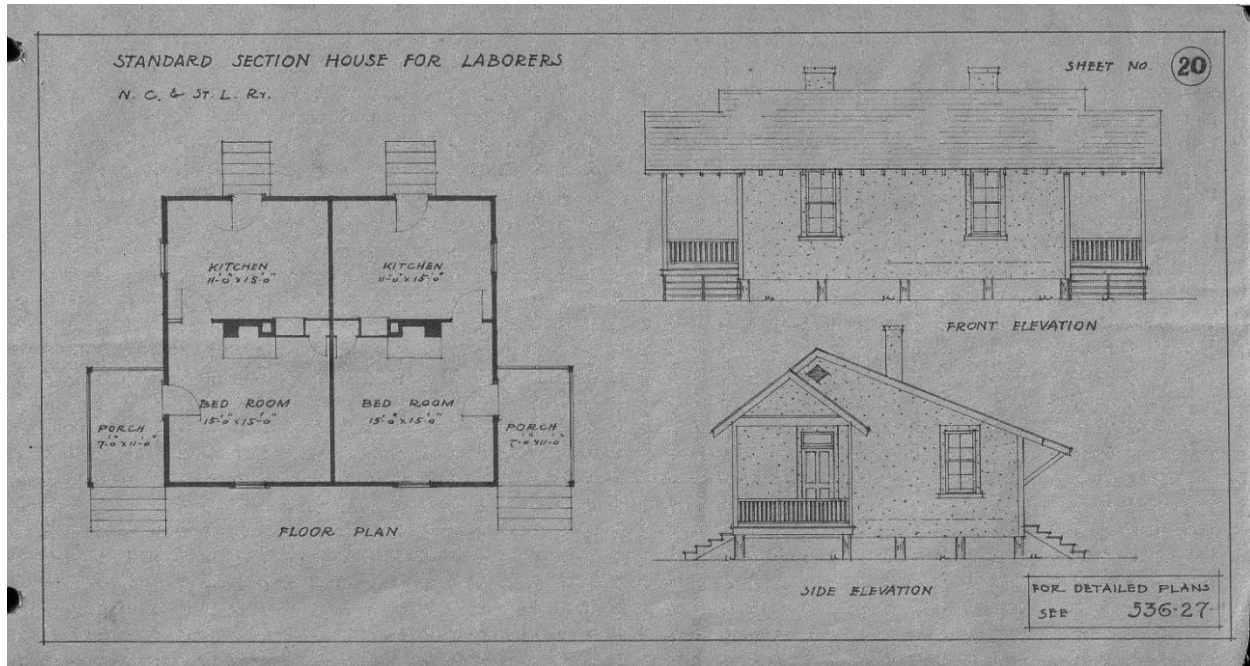


This is one of the latest photos of our Roan Mt. village with the large, white two-story Pierce Julian house in place beside his clothing and shoe store next door store.



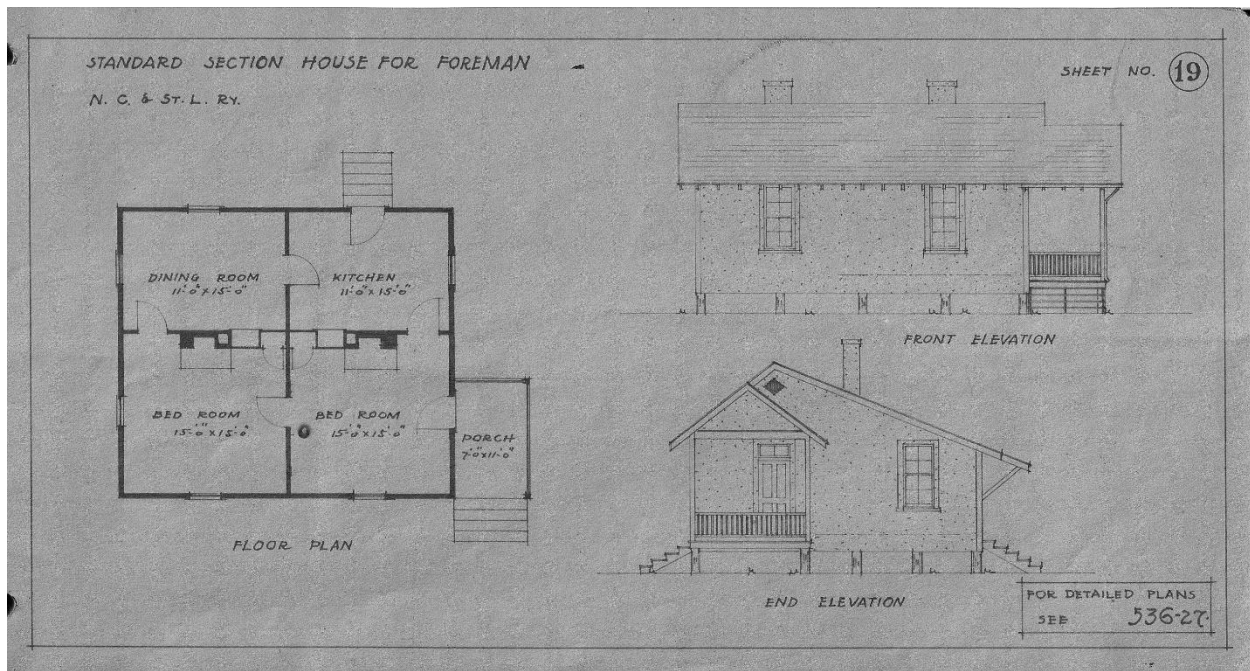
MUSKRAT MOUNTIAN MUSINGS

THOUGHTS OF MODEL RAOUADING WHILE SNOBRIDING IN FLORIDA ANYTHING BUT STANDARD



The NC&StL RY's engineering department issued a Standard Plans guide for several frequently encountered structures used by the railroad. The above picture is of the standard plan for a two family laborers section house while the one below shows the one family section foreman house. The NC&StL RY Preservation Society produced laser cut kit that could be built as either the foreman's or laborer's house. These were fairly crude model by today's laser kit standards, but filled a gap in NC&StL related products.

Recently, David Kelso, a NC&StL RY Society member, posted pictures of several surviving section houses located off route 57 near LaGrange TN. As can be seen these houses were anything but "standard". There was plenty of variation to model several and to created a small company town in the process.





Laborer Section Houses



Left side view



Note the double doors



Right side view



Formans Section House



Right side view



Left side view showing a non-standard "L" addition

David's photos show the houses having been restored and repurposed for residences. How many other roads provided section houses for their employees, and what other standard plans exist or are waiting to be discovered.



IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS IS ABOUT TO EXPIRE



© Eric Bronsky 2018

DON'T WAIT FOR SEASON TO END TO RENEW
SEND YOUR PAYMENT IN TODAY
MAKE YOUR CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

MEMRR
(MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS)
P.O. Box 70697
EAST TENN STATE UNIVERSITY
Johnson City, TN 37614

\$30.00 FULL

\$6.00 PER ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER

\$18.00 STUDENT

\$12.00 YOUTH

\$12.00 DISTANT REMOTE

Annual dues are required by January 31st 2019