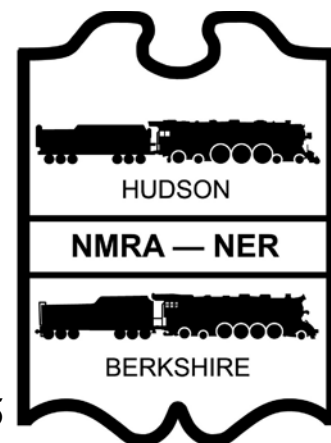


# FORM 19

**The Official Newsletter of the  
Hudson-Berkshire Division  
of the NER-NMRA**



Order Number 309

March 2015

Next Meeting Friday March 20 at 7:00

**Bill McChesney**

Railfan, Modeler and Collector

## **My Experiences Visiting the D&H Colonie Shops in the 1970s**

Saratoga National Bank, 386 Clifton Park Center Road, Clifton Park, NY

This month's presentation is both interesting and at a new location for the Hudson-Berkshire Division

The 1970s were a 'different time' as many of you most likely remember. Engineers and brakemen waved to you and perhaps gave an extra blast of the horn as you waved to them. And, as we heard from Bob Mohowski last month, you could write to a railroad and receive permission to visit one or more of their locations and perhaps even have a company escort to show you around and tell you about what you were seeing. And, believe it or not, you could even visit a railroad company's shops and 'wander around' taking pictures and talking to the workers – who were happy to talk to you.

So it was that Bill McChesney often visited the Colonie shops of the D&H in Watervliet, NY talking pictures of cars being repaired, Alco RS locomotives being serviced, and even the distinctive Alco PA and Baldwin Shark engines. Come and hear Bill's presentation and see his pictures and relive something that most of us actually missed.

And come to a new location. See the map and instructions on page 9 to see how to get to the Clifton Park Branch of the Saratoga National Bank right next to Exit 9 of the Northway behind the JC Penney store. The bank has made their meeting room available to us. Come and see.

map and instructions on page 9

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## Form19

The **Form19** is published eight times per year for members of the Hudson Berkshire Division and for newsletter subscribers (at \$12.00 per year).

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Division. Products and publications mentioned in **Form19** in no way constitute an endorsement by the Division.

### Contributing to the **Form19**

The **Form19** staff welcomes all contributions. Letters, articles, photos, and other items may be mailed or e-mailed to the editor. Please include a note if you would like materials returned. Suggestions also welcome.

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## The Ready Line By Paul Hoffman

No treatise about the weather to open this month's article. Take a look out the window, not much has changed from our last chat.

Planning for the 2016 Convention is ramping up. Please reach out to Kevin Surman or I with any ideas or, more importantly, volunteering offers. If you have an idea for an activity, clinic or contacts that we can leverage, please get that information to us. In order to facilitate this information exchange we have set up a new email address for the convention. [questions@hbdpacemaker.org](mailto:questions@hbdpacemaker.org). In addition the website for the convention is starting to take shape, [www.hbdpacemaker.org](http://www.hbdpacemaker.org) For the next couple of weeks please send your ideas directly to [trains@hudson-berkshire.org](mailto:trains@hudson-berkshire.org) AND [questions@hbdpacemaker.org](mailto:questions@hbdpacemaker.org) email address, that way we won't miss any of the Divisions marvelous ideas!

If you have offered to volunteer for the convention in the past or if you'd like to, please send an email to the two addresses above so we can compile a comprehensive list. While I'm on the subject of the convention I'd like to request another thing; pictures, pictures of your layout, pictures of local train watching spots, pictures of you and your buddies enjoying a train related activity, pictures of your models. We are putting together marketing materials and we would love to have a collection of photos to draw from showing perspective visitors the best of our Division- the people, places and things that make the HBD great. Emphasis on the people! Help us to promote the Division and our activities to a wider audience. Send me stories or statements about how you see our Division. Pithy quotes or simple heart-felt sentiments, "I like the HBD because..." or "I remember this one time..."

Thank you in advance for what I'm sure will be a deluge of material!!!!!!

Speaking of opinions, here is another way to let our Regional leadership know what makes you happy about the NER and our Division or what "grinds your gears" about the same. Please take a moment to click on the following link and fill out the satisfaction survey setup by the NER. It is easy to do and the results will have a direct impact on how things are done. Just fill this survey out and click submit. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BFY95Q5>

One last thought before I let you get into this month's great issue. I'm not a big fan of turning this into a medical malady or obituary page but I feel that the membership should be aware that we have several members who are going through some significant health challenges or who have lost friends or relatives recently. Please say a prayer for those you know who are having a tough go of it and for those you may not know personally. Reach out to fellow members to offer comfort wherever you can, a kind word or a receptive ear is all it takes. You'll feel good and the afflicted member will feel a little less lonely in their struggle. We are, after all, a community.

As President of this organization, the buck stops with me. If you have a problem or an issue, please contact me directly and I will do all that I can to help solve the problem. My address and email are on the inside cover of the **Form 19**, my "inbox" and telephone are always open to comments, both pro and con. Please remember to renew your membership in the NMRA and to encourage anyone interested in trains to climb aboard.





Jack Cutler and family enjoying a great time at the ALS in September of 2009. Picture by Paul Hoffman

The above picture and caption was included with Pres. Hoffman's Ready Line column submission. I believe he is trying to trick us into believing that Winter may actually end before the scheduled meeting at the ALS in June. - Editor



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## Welcome Aboard New Member

**Debbie O'Hare, Schenectady NY**

All members are encourage to give a friendly greeting to new an old members and make everyone feel welcome at Hudson Berkshire functions. Model railroading is indeed a social hobby. Thanks

## Looks like end of the line for Dunham's Railroads on Parade

by David Cederstrom, Chronicle Staff Writer

Barring a miracle, the Railroads on Parade model railroad exhibition in Pottersville is closing for good, and its six huge layouts will never again be displayed all together again, say proprietors Clarke and Barbara Dunham, contacted by The Chronicle on Feb. 24 for an update.

Faced with financial challenges beyond their abilities, "we've decided to give it up," Mr. Dunham said. "And we've had no local help, which was really the basis on which we decided to drop it all."

The Dunhams opened the display in 2011. Their major financial backer, John Couri of Richfield, Conn., forced an auction of the layouts last fall after the attraction had not become profitable.

The Dunhams were able to buy back two layouts, The Station and Hell Gate, at the auction for \$27,300 each, Mr. Dunham said. "They will go into storage and wait for better times."

However, he said, they were unable to raise another \$27,500 to buy back the Park Avenue and New York City Subways exhibit and the World's Fair exhibit, which were forfeited to Mr. Couri.

"I'm sorry to see them go, especially the World's Fair. We spent a lot of time on that one," Mr. Dunham said.

Asked if any of the layouts will be publicly displayed again, Mr. Dunham said, "Anything is possible... There's and active fundraising going on in New York City to bring The Station back to New York as an annual Christmas event."

As of Feb. 24, the layouts were still in place at Railroads on Parade at 7903 State Route 9 in Pottersville, Mr. Dunham said, adding, "If some miraculous savior came along we wouldn't say no."

He said his studio "is actually experiencing a resurgence, so that we are beyond quite busy." He said that tour bus operators are saying they are "booked beyond all expectations" after nearly dying last year.

"This is the ironical and sad part," Mr. Dunham said, "... I always thought that 2015 would be a breakthrough year" for Railroads on Parade.

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## Almost Hidden Treasure

By the Form19 staff

This month's visit is to Jim Rothe's layout with both the HO standard gauge Blue Water Central RR and the North Lake Rwy, a 3' narrow gauge. Some of you may have visited Jim and his layout during one of the past 'Open Layout' tours in the Plattsburgh area. If you haven't, you have missed a real work of art, and so we will try to convey that to you here.

Like many of you readers, Jim had early experience with trains and model trains. Jim grew up in Fond du Lac, WI that had the Soo Line, C&NW, and the Milwaukee Road running through it. He's been told that he used to stand in his crib and watch trains go by. When he was older and could just look over the top of the kitchen table, he would watch his dad working on HO scale rolling stock and steam engines. And his dad would take him to the Soo Line yard to watch the trains. (Why couldn't I have had a childhood like that? Editor)

As a teenager he had his own layout and continued to help his dad with his. After graduation and getting a job, he started scratch building cars, waiting for the day he would have a basement for a layout. Well, marriage, a house and that basement came along. But which of the three railroads to model? What was best for steam engines, wooden cars and lots of creativity? Jim went for a free lanced layout set in the 1930's – a point-to-point design for short trains and lots of switching. And a short line is the perfect place for older stuff and re-purposed equipment sold off by other roads. Again, opportunity for creativity and artistic expression. The layout was a walk in design going around the walls of the room and in a brilliant flash of foresight, Jim designed the layout to come apart into manageable sections.

In 1980 Jim moved east to the Plattsburgh area (Perhaps to escape the cold Wisconsin winters?; Editor) and brought those sections with him. The layout was expanded into a "U" shape standard gauge line on the lower level and a narrow gauge (3') on the upper level. A staging yard was neatly tucked away in a closet. In 2003 Jim and his wife moved into their present location, brought the layout with them and Jim has again expanded it. The room is 18' by 14' with a hallway along one side for access. One of the towns on the narrow gauge line face the hallway. The room is also decorated with railroad collectibles such as lanterns and locks and keys.

The layout is "L-girder" construction with plywood and Homasote base; the rocks are mostly foam covered with plaster. The layout is based on hills with mining & timber operations. The upper level line was originally conceived as a standard gauge logging line but a trip to Colorado caused it to become the narrow gauge. (Colorado seems to have had that effect on several H-B Division members., Editor) All track and turnouts of both gauges (except the hidden track) are hand laid. Turnouts are all power routing and use manual control with home made switch stands. The majority of the structures are all scratch built; mostly of wood but some plastic and some are plaster, like the stone engine house.

Jim converted the entire layout to Digitrax with sound several years ago. He has tried car cards and switch lists for operating sessions. He's had a problem with the card system, however, as the grandchildren visit and move the cars all around but not the cards. Three operators can comfortably run on the layout if the narrow gauge line is not used. Action on that second level requires reaching over and around the operators on the lower level when in use. You'll see some signals in the pictures but the only one that works is the one for hidden storage. You may notice signalmen working of several of the others.

The standard gauge trains start from the staging area and run to the first town, South Park. From there a branch goes up to Morgan and interchange with the narrow gauge. Another branch goes up to Summit, another interchange and hidden storage. The line from South Park continues to the town of Port and the docks. From Port the main continues into a one-track hidden storage. The North Lake Rwy starts at a 3-track staging and then runs through Jerome, Morgan, Rust and ends in Ophir.

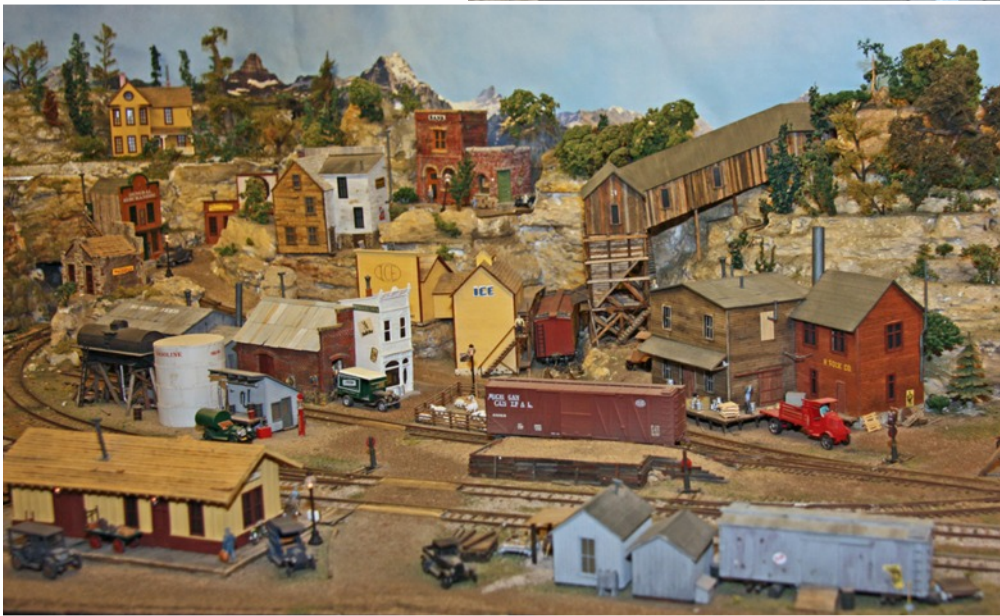
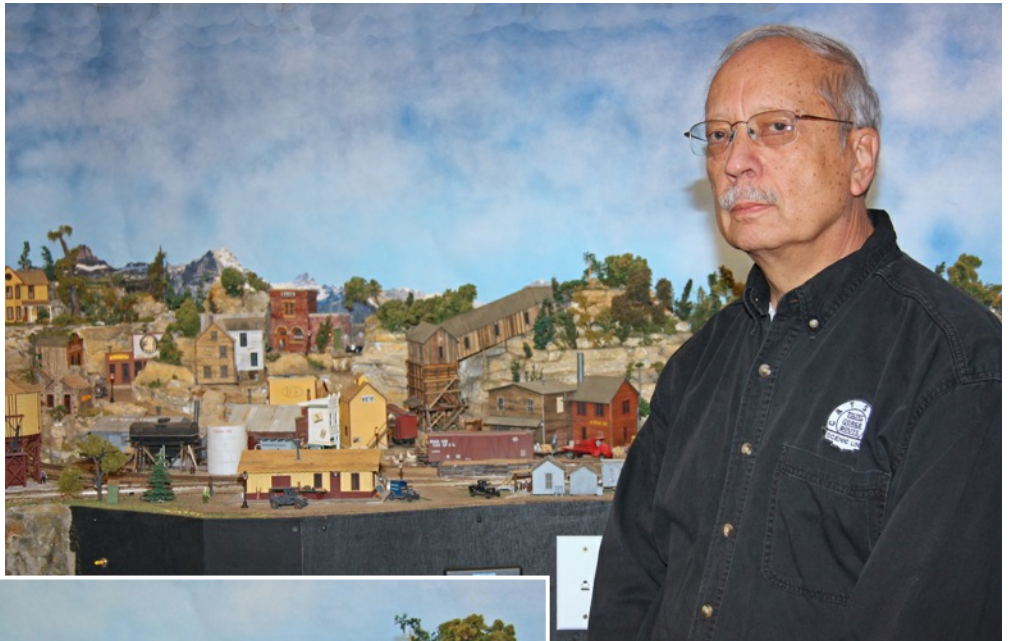
In the last few years, Jim has been installing lighting. He has made street lamps, installed interior lighting necessitating interior detailing, lamps on buildings and even made a few hand held railroad lanterns. He continues to change trees and details and replace buildings. He has put a drive system, DCC sound and an interior in a Jordan Mack rail bus. As you can tell from the text and the pictures, Jim likes detail and especially scratch building everything; and artist and an artisan. He is also proof that if your friends think your layout is done, you can still find a lot more to do.

The Form19 thanks Jim for being a wonderful host and giving us this chance to share his almost hidden treasure.





The creator of this month's hidden treasure is James Rothe of Plattsburgh, NY. His layout contains both a standard gauge HO and an HOn3 railroad. Because he REALLY likes to build things, almost everything you see in these pictures is scratch built. The track and switches are all hand laid. He even built the switch stands that really control the switches. The photographer did his best but these photos can not convey the true amazing nature of this layout. A true treasure.



The time period is the 1930s and somehow Jim has found HO scale vehicles of that time period. The red boxcar (end view) is receiving ice. Later a hopper car will be moved in and will receive its load from the mine tippie on the right of the track. Yes, those are really two gas lights at the roof eave of the station and the lamp post does have a light. Note the switch stands. The community of Summit has a lot of activity.

The station at Rust on the narrow gauge rwy. It has full interior details and lighting. The facilities are outdoors in 1930. That may be a Stutz. Note the old style milk can. Post light is on. All scratch built.







The large mine complex at left has evolved and become the major employer in Ophir. The town has expanded as you can see below. There is the train station and the Beer Hall, labeled as such and there are 'specialty shops' like the meat market, hat shop and boot store. There are a few gas lights around town - presumably using manufactured gas as was common in the 1930s. That's a bobber caboose to the left but the one below has two axle trucks.

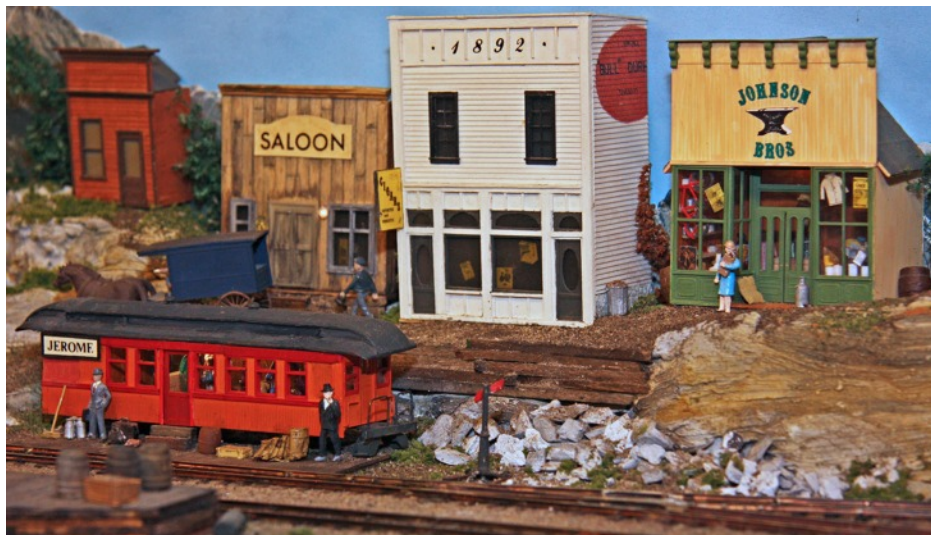
To the right you can see that Ophir is getting itself organized but the streets are still rough and loosely defined - as towns often were at that time. The scratch built switch stands have the standard red direction indicators on the top. It appears that the load of lumber is inbound for some more construction. Most vehicles are Jordan kits but some scratch and other vendors.



The little RR Diner is just that - little. Not much room for many patrons as it is tucked up against the base of the trestle bent but there is a detailed interior with tables and chairs and lighting. You can see the shoulder and arm of the cook at rear window.

There is a working switch stand in front of the Model T. The signal across the track is not lit, but the red arm of the semaphore is sticking into the picture at the middle of the right edge.





The community of Jerome is small and the going is rough whether walking or in a horse & wagon (in front of the saloon).

That isn't a diner made out of the old passenger car - that's the train station complete with a door in the center, wooden steps, and people waiting inside.

Stores display their wares in the windows

From Jerome the North Lake Rwy goes on to Morgan -to the right. It has a proper built station serving passengers and freight. The combine car does the same. These were a common sight on many small railroads and many branches of major railroads, too.



In the lower left above you can see the sheep in the pens and the ramps for the two level stock cars. Behind the tanks behind the Blue Water Ice Co you can see the standard gauge spur running over to the ore transfer structure - seen in picture to right. The narrow gauge brings ore to the top of the K. Miller Transfer facility. That appears to be an early 1930s red Mack AC model chain drive dump truck above. They could carry 6 to 9 tons. Cable lifts for the truck bed.







Three styles of engine service facilities on Jim Rothe's layout. - All scratch built and detailed. The round house has five active stalls and a section for machine shop and offices. The two engine facility above is made with plaster castings so that it could be a stone faced structure. And the single engine facility to the left has a small machine shop section with tools to make the necessary small parts. Again, detail is inside as well as out.

Thanks to Jim for hosting our visit. More pics in extra pages.

The *Form19* series 'Almost Hidden Treasures' is a way that the *Form19* staff is using to bring you a visit to one of your fellow Hudson-Berkshire Division member's layouts and meet that member. For most of these layouts, this is the only way we can think of that will enable you to have that experience. This is also a good way to show you some of the hidden talents that lurk about expressing their creativity, skill and vision in some far away basement doing what we all like to do – create a virtual world in which trains run.

When the Editor sends the staff photographer out to take picture, he expects to have a selection to choose from. For this month's feature, the photographer took 87 pictures. About a dozen were discarded because of poor focus, bad lighting, etc. That left 75 to sort through, to color correct, crop, and re-size and select for use in the printed and online editions. It also requires remembering something of the details of the pictures and the layout and the man to bring you the written article and picture captions. In doing so, the photographer and the Editor have both looked at these images several times and seen detail that you might not even see or notice if you did visit.

So if we seem excited about these layout visits, we are. And if you have a layout our know someone who has a layout that might be considered for a Hidden Treasures visit, please contact one of the *Form19* staff via email, phone call, snail mail or at the next meeting.

Do you like to watch trains? The full size where someone else maintains the track! Do you have a place or two where you go to watch trains go through? How about letting the *Form19* staff of a spot or two that we might be able to share. No place where we might get in trouble with the railroad police, other police, or property owner, please. We'll try to check out the spots, mention them in the *Form19* and maybe even put the info in the Pacemaker handout. We all like trains.

It's been said in these pages many times but it deserves repeating (until you act on it), The *Form19* staff is always looking for information leading to an article for the newsletter. Do you have an interesting way of installing a ?????, or weathering an \*\*\*\*\*? Have you seen an interesting item that someone else might find interesting, too? Mention it to a *Form19* Staffer, please.

## Upcoming Events

April 17 - Layout visit , Doug Dederick

June 20 - Picnic at ALS





## Directions to the Saratoga National Bank office in Clifton Park.

As you can see, we are trying a new location this month to see what we think of the arrangements. It is a little closer to the Capital District and perhaps more convenient. At least it does not require driving through several roundabouts.

As you can see on the map, the office is on the road that goes around the Clifton Park Mall complex.

The most direct way to get there is to take the Northway to Exit 9.

If you are coming from the South, stay to the left on the ramp as you get off and then stay in the left lane as you turn onto Route 146. As you approach the light to turn towards the mall, be sure you are in the leftmost lane. Once you have completed the turn, remain to the left and take your first left hand turn after the Mobil station. This will take you past a couple of stores and a restaurant and then the bank will be on the left. There is a parking area for the bank.

If you are coming from the North, take Exit 9W before you go over Route 146. The ramp is short, down hill, and at the bottom you have to not only merge into traffic but cross that first lane and get into the second so that you can get into the leftmost turning lane. And all that happens in a relatively short distance. Assuming you made it to the leftmost turning lane, turn left at the light and stay in the left lane. Take your first left turn after the Mobil station. This will take you past a couple of stores and a restaurant and then the bank will be on the left. There is a parking area for the bank.

There will be a short survey during the meeting to see what everyone thinks of this new facility.



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**TRAINS & HOBBIES**



A great presentation this month as Bill McChesney talks about and presents pictures of his visits to the Colonie Shops of the D&H in the 1970s.

This month's meeting is at a new location next to Exit 9 of the Northway. Closer to Albany, Troy and Schenectady and no roundabouts. See page 9 for directions.

The Almost Hidded Treasure series returns with a visit to Jim Rothe's HO and HOn3 layout where just about everything is scratch built. See the article starting on page 4 with more pictures in the extra pages of the online edition.

Members of the Hudson-Berkshire Division are working hard to bring the entire NER a great Pacemaker convention in September 2016. If you have any ideas or suggestions for the convention, please share your idea with one of the Division officers.

Do you have a favorite place that you like to go to watch trains? How about sharing that location so that others can know about it and enjoy it also? We promise you that it won't become overcrowded.

A special thanks to Bob Mohowski for his fine presentation last month and to the 40 to 45 people who packed the room at the Malta Community Center.



- Hands-On Clinics
- Layout Visits
- Operating Sessions
- Prototype Tours
- Fan Trips
- Banquet
- On-Site Modular Layouts
- Raffle in support of Toys for Tots
- Spouse Activities
- AP Contest
- Models Showcase
- More...

# SAVE THE DATES!

**The Pacemaker  
2016 North EastRegional Convention**  
Desmond Hotel and Convention Center  
Albany, New York

**September 15 – 18 2016**

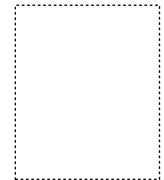
A Taste of the Division  
A Toast to the Region

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## FORM 19

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The picture to the left is of the left hand side of the small community of Morgan. That's the same combine car as in the second picture on page 7. There is a stock car, stock pens, a water tower, an old boxcar being used for storage and a flatcar with three iron-wheeled tractors. Yes, they have the iron spikes on the wheels and look like John Deeres.

That TEXACO tank is strapped to the flatcar.

All structures scratch built.

To the right is part of the service facility that goes with the round table and the two stall engine house. Those are some sort of removable binders holding the sides of the coal car in place. And to think that that entire car of coal would be unloaded by hand through the opening in the wall of the coal storage building.

Note the workman on the ladder of the water tower.



Just a line-side maintenance building tucked against the rock. Note the hand laid track, switch, and scratch built, functional switch stands. And bushes that we don't see around here. Not much ballast under the ties and most of it is rock anyway.





This is the left side of Summit with the track going into the tunnel and the large water tower. There are a couple of gray MoW cars on a stub siding to the left of the water tower. The tall, substantial, red-brick building in the upper right is the bank. The banker has a rather nice looking sporty style car parked around to the right of the bank. Only the front of the car shows and it shows who has money. You can see the lighted lamps and the lights on the eaves clearly in this picture. Those eave lights are tiny..

A small mine operated by a hand full of men. Ore carts are pushed by hand to the tippie and then emptied into the hopper cars when the siding is cleared. The name of the mine – there in yellow – is 'EMILY.'



Another station with the similar paint scheme with those nice lights on the eaves. They are made from a thin 1/8" diameter brass disk with a center hole for the wires of a tiny, grain-of-wheat bulb and thin wires attached to the edge of the disk and brought together under the center of the bulb. Bulb wires cemented to the underside of the eaves.

The boards on the deck around the station have weathered pretty badly and are warped and raised. Even with magnification we can't tell what the make of the pickup is.





Here is a busy section of the layout with track and siding, a rock cut with a bridge just above the tracks - in fact two bridges, and a bridge for the narrow gauge line above those.

In actuality it is busy but there is a mirror right behind the bridge from the lower tracks to the topmost bridge.

The *Form19* photographer did a good job by first picking up on the mirror and then taking the picture without he and his camera showing up in the picture. No flash photography for this. And depth of field and focus must be adjusted so that the viewer of the picture can not quite tell what is back behind the bridge - which is really in front of it.

The gray & white building in Jerome with the little roadster in front of it is the Doctor's office.

The sign proudly announces that he is a "Graduate Doctor" (for) "Animals & People"

The little car steers with a tiller.

Note the drop ramps on the platform to help load the hopper car.

