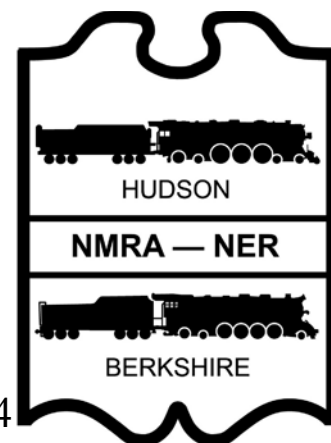


FORM 19

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



Order Number 305

September 2014

Next Meeting Friday
September 26, 2014 at 7:00 PM

Artie Krass
presenting
JMRI Operations
See below and page 9

Saturday October 11, 2014 at 12:30 PM

Saratoga Springs Public Library
Community Room
Presentation by
Norm Barrett
See Page 8 for Details

Hudson-Berkshire Division Vice-President Artie Krass will present a discussion and demonstration on using Java Model Railroad Interface (JMRI) Operations software for generating switch lists, train manifests and schedules, and train movement. Artie plans on using JMRI Operations on his RTK layout, which is a point-to-point railroad currently under construction.

JMRI Operations is one of the many alternative for operations planning - just like time table & train order, manually generated switch lists, cards and waybills, etc. It will create train manifests that detail the work your train crews will perform during an operations session. The manifests list car pick up and set outs, show where the cars are located, and provide the cars' destinations. Additionally, JMRI Operations is part of a suite of integrated software packages being developed in open source format by model railroad and computer enthusiasts as part of the 'JMRI Project.' And JMRI programs are free and easily downloaded.

The JMRI project is building tools for model railroad computer control. The creators want it to be usable to as many people as possible, so they are building it in the Java computer language to run anywhere, and are trying to make it independent of specific hardware systems. JMRI is intended as a jumping-off point for hobbyists who want to control their layouts with a computer without having to create an entire system from scratch. Each module can be used as a stand alone entity which is why JMRI Operations may well be of interest to modelers in the Hudson-Berkshire Division who have no interest in using a computer to actively control their layout.

Other modules that have been created allow you can manage your locomotive rosters and easily program your decoders using DecoderPro®. You can build control panels, set up signaling, configure operations and control your layout using PanelPro. Going beyond the basics, you can use Logix to automate your layout's behavior, interface with X10 and Insteon systems to control your layout room's lights and write scripts to extend the capabilities of the system. And, as stated, JMRI Operations lets you create manifests that route cars across your railroad from shipper to receiver, and provide train crews with operating instructions.

In addition there will be other Division news - Pacemaker Convention updates, GTE 2014 updates, Springfield bus trip updates and a raffle.

Map and directions 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.

Hudson Berkshire Division
PO Box 83
Clifton Park, NY 12065-0083
trains@hudson-berkshire.org

President
Paul Hoffman
128 Woodfield Blvd.
Mechanicville, NY 12118
518 899-7515
trains@hudson-berkshire.org

Vice President
Artie Krass
4 Burton Drive
Ballston Lake, NY 12019
518 229-6080
ajkwings@yahoo.com

Treasurer
Jack Cutler
8 Bluestone Ridge
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518 383-5684
cutlerjm@nycap.rr.com

Form19 Editor
Bert Pflagl
19 Lea Ave
Waterford, NY 12188
(518) 235-8496
gpflegl@nycap.rr.com

GTE Manager
Rich Smith
15 Friar Tuck Way
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518 581-0535
rsmith1@nycap.rr.com

The Ready Line By Paul Hoffman

Welcome back! I trust your summer was filled with fun and exciting activities and that at least some of them were train related. Feel free to drop our hard working editor, Bert Pflagl, a line at gpflegl@nycap.rr.com with tales of your summer adventures. I feel like a grade school teacher assigning those dreaded "What did you do this summer" essays. But seriously, all content is welcome and we would truly love to hear about your cool summer trips.

Our convention planning is going strong, the first general meeting was held this summer and was well attended. We will be having another meeting in the very near future, at the Desmond, to really start nailing down events, activities and chair people to be responsible for same. We are very excited!! Below is our save the date card for the convention, feel free to copy it and spread it around. There will be a larger version in the Form19.

- 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...

We have an election coming up in November. My term as President is drawing to a close. It was originally my intention to step down, I feel that many of the things I wanted to accomplish have been achieved and new, fresh leadership was warranted. The BOD prevailed upon me to stay on for one last term. So, I consulted with my family, and many of my closest railroad friends and decided to stay on for this final 2 year term. This will carry the Division through the convention, it will also allow the BOD

Continued next page



Continued from previous page
time to identify and train a successor to take on the role and duties of the office. There will be more on this in coming articles, but for now, rest assured, that I am fully committed to another term of office and continuing the work and pleasure, I might add, of helping to guide this great organization.

There is an awesome operations clinic scheduled for this month and a lot of wonderful activities planned for future meets, including a trip to the southern portion of the Division for a "Making tracks" series of layout visits. VP, Artie Krass is working hard to bring us some great events. If you have ideas of things you'd like to see or do, contact Artie at ajkwings@yahoo.com.

Here's to another wonderful season of comradery and trains, two of the best things I can think of!

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.

Gems of the Division / Almost Hidden Treasures

When the idea of presenting division members and their layouts in the *Form19* was first mentioned last year, some of you readers sent an email or letter to the *Form19* suggesting your layout or that of a friend for presentation. However, somewhat near that time, the *Form19*'s photographer/reporter/editor developed some back problems that prevented him from driving or riding for more than about 40 minutes at a time. Consequently there was no follow up by the *Form19* staff and no visits were made. We apologize and are trying to correct that situation starting with this issue and the visits we have already made.

So, if you responded then and didn't get a follow-up, or you now have a layout or a friend's layout that you think would make an interesting entry in the *Form19*, won't you please contact the *Form19* (contact info on page 2) and we will try to schedule a visit and an article.

And won't you drop a note to the Editor with suggestions for articles, perhaps write up something yourself, or comment on something you have read in the *Form19* – please, and thank you.



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Welcome Aboard New Member

David Lavoie, Troy NY

There will be an October issue of the *Form19* with information on the election, bus trip, upcoming events and more. The October meeting had to be early in October due to other commitments by the speaker, hence the meeting

Please contact the *Form19* with comments on the newsletter and with ideas for upcoming issues. We need your input. Contact information is on preceding page.



Almost Hidden Treasures

By the *Form19* staff

With this issue, the *Form19* staff starts what is hoped to be a long series that will be of interest to our readers by presenting text and pictures of layouts throughout the Hudson-Berkshire Division that most of us will not get to see. Specifically these are intended to be presentations of layouts that are decidedly worth seeing but because of their location or facilities are not amenable to a visit by division members en masse – i.e., a Division Meeting. President Hoffman suggested this idea last year and it was mentioned in the *Form19* (see note on page 3). He even suggested an apt title for the effort - “Gems of the Division.” The dictionary defines both ‘gem’ and ‘treasure’ as “a person or thing considered valuable; highly valued.” So whether we label them ‘Gems’ or ‘Hidden Treasures,’ these are model railroads and their creators that we would like to know more about because it will brighten our day – and perhaps motivate us to enjoy our own layouts, work on them, and share them with others when we can.

To start off this endeavor, the *Form19* sent a photographer/reporter to visit Bob Chase and his layout in Mechanicville, New York. Many of you may have met Bob at various train shows in the Northeast where he often has a table or two of engines, cars, and structures that he has collected and has for sale. Bob has created his ‘treasure’ in an older house with a narrow stairway for access to the basement. The 16' by 40' space, packed with layout, has narrow isles, too. So while Bob is happy to have visitors, this layout has remained a hidden treasure to most of you readers because more than five at once is a crowd.

Bob says that like many baby boomers, his dad bought him (them) a Lionel train set – for his third Christmas, no less, and he spent his youth with Lionel and stamp collecting. He started looking into HO in the mid-'70's and started his current layout in 1978. The configuration of the layout started with a sketch on the back of a restaurant's paper place mat by his friend Armand Choinere while they were discussing the ideas for the design in 1977. Bob proudly still has that sketch. It is obvious that he has put a lot of effort into creating the details not shown on that drawing.

Bob describes his HO scale railroad as being freelanced but based on the Boston & Albany and its parent company, the New York Central. The time period is spread from 1940 to 1964 – depending on which area you look at. The

location is non-specific but with the area representative of that between Albany and Boston; i.e., flat areas with hills and some steep mountains. The configuration is a walk-in around-the-walls dog bone with a center peninsula. The construction is a modified L-girder design with Homasote over 7-ply plywood and foam with a hard shell over coat used as the basis for the scenery. The back drop is painted drywall and tempered hardboard. The track is Shinohara and Atlas (code 100) with a maximum grade of 1.75%. Power and control is by Digitrax using DCS100, DB200, and DB150 units.

Bob's layout has a community at one end and an industrial and rail shop and yard at the other. And the entire layout is heavily detailed (as you can see in the pictures), like the women hanging clothes to dry at a home near the mainline. That attention to detail is found not just in the readily visible areas, but also in the harder to see areas, such as between buildings and behind them. As you are looking at the layout, it begins to dawn on you that this is an artwork as well as a model railroad. Bob has used the spaces along the backdrops and behind structures to add depth and detail (like the bridge and houses behind Majestic Hardware & Feed) that makes the layout seem even larger than it is.

Bob is now retired. His career was as a funeral director which required work at unscheduled hours with open time in between that was suitable for modeling. As Bob says, “I didn't smoke or drink, so no time in bars, and my wife wouldn't let me chase women, therefore I was in my man-cave before that became a common term.” Today his cave is fitted with temperature and humidity control, a small TV, a railroad scanner (Did we say that Bob lives just a few hundred yards from the D&H (now CP) line from Albany to Saratoga?), and a loop of track that brings trains right through a section of his layout just above his workbench.

Because of the irregular hours, Bob was a ‘semi-lone wolf’ as far as trains go, being a part of a small group of modelers in the Mechanicville area. After joining the Hudson-Berkshire Division, he is more active in the hobby and can often be found at train show, selling and talking with his many railroad buddies. Retirement has given him more available time for such activities. Since his layout is “97% finished,” he now focuses on constructing, weathering, and detailing craftsman structures. His workbench area has many of these on the surrounding shelves, each being its own diorama with detailed surroundings.



Continued from previous page

The great welcome the *Form19* photographer received during his visit with Bob reinforces the belief that model railroading is a social experience as well as one of art, craft and electronics. Indeed, Bob expressed his appreciation for the Hudson Berkshire Division, NMRA and the leaders who have worked to arrange the many interesting programs and speakers. There is always something to be learned and taken home to use. The social contacts show that “everyone is knowledgeable about something.” Discussions are a rich part of the hobby.

Wrapping up, Bob would like to express his thanks to the 'original Thursday night group' of Armand Choinere, Rob Dennis, John Camerota, Frank Adamec, Bill Hickey, and the late Dave Akin. And we at the *Form19* would like to express our thanks to Bob for his hospitality and cooperation. He made the first 'Hidden Treasures' visit a pleasant experience.

And Bob concluded our visit by saying, “For the armchair or dedicated modelers or the curious, just drop me an email (at Brassking2000@yahoo.com) and come and see my layout.



Bob Chase in the center of his layout



Shops and yard to the left

Then
to the
Right,
industry
and
city
and
housing
behind





At the far right is the 'typical' New England community somewhere between Albany & Boston



And in between the old barn has become 'Majestic Hardware and Feed' with considerable detail behind. The grain mill and other small industry in the front are served by the railroad - as many were in the 1940's and '50's



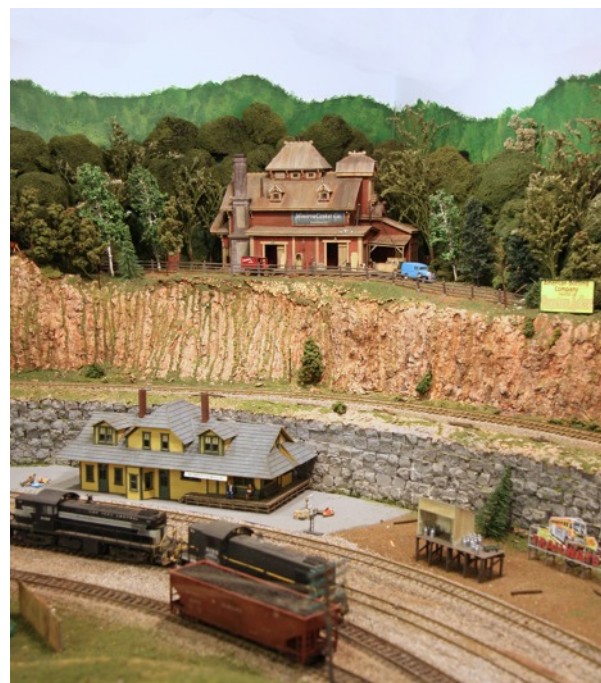
To the left and right of the hardware & feed there is a house and bridge in the narrow space before the backdrop.



The community has a retail district and out at the other end, a warehouse



The women are hanging the wash and in the little yard they have a bench with a bit of fence for a shield. That fence is in the lower left of the picture at right. That's the Minerva Casket Co at top.



More pictures in the online edition of *Form19*



October Division Meeting October 11th, 12:30 to 3:30
at the Community Room of
the Saratoga Springs Public Library
Norm Barrett
The D&H and O&W in the Scranton Area

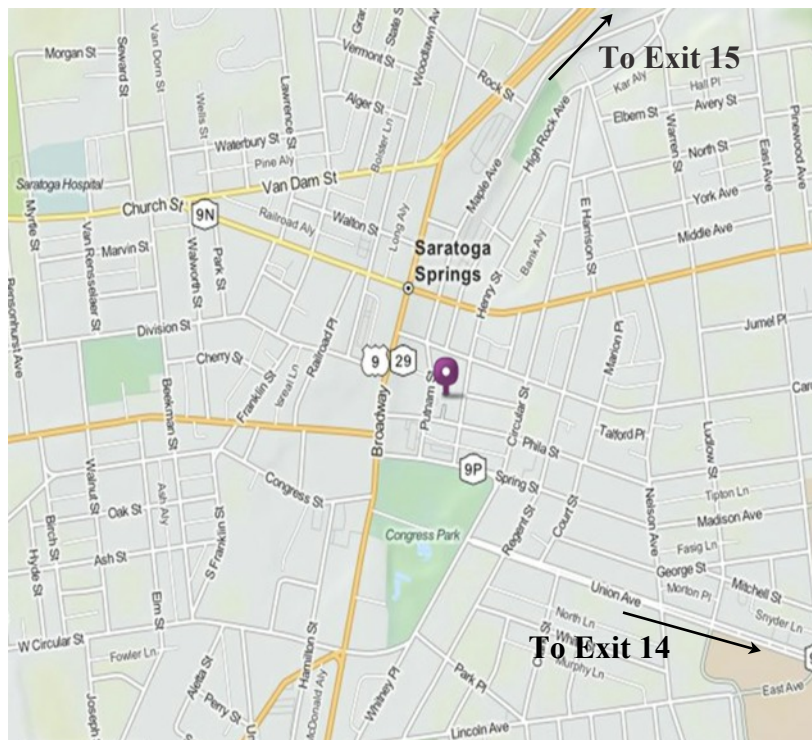
Norm Barrett of Dickson City, PA will talk about the D&H and the O&W at the southernmost end of the D&H. Indeed, Dickson City is at the base of 'the gravity railroad' and the beginning of the D&H canal and later the Railroad. Mr. Barrett has lived in the Dickson City/Scranton area all his life, surrounded by the D&H and O&W tracks near his home. He started working for the D&H in 1979 as a trainman. He rose through the ranks to become an engineer and then the Road Foreman of Engines and Trainmaster. He was also Regional Director for CP. He retired in 2010

He has spent many years as a volunteer at the Steamtown National Historic Site with support from both the D&H, later the CP and after his retirement. In December 2013 he was in charge of "the Santa Train," a project of the Lackawana Heritage Valley and State Heritage Area in partnership with Steamtown, the Delaware Lackawana Railroad and the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority. Let's say he is very well connected. And, oh yes, among other

responsibilities, he was in charge of the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train for the last ten years of his tenure.

In February 2014, a retired CP caboose was parked at the old Dickson City train station after considerable effort spearheaded by Mr. Barrett in persuading Canadian Pacific to donate the car, once slated for scrap, to the borough. He is working to get it restored to be used for a history display and public events.

Come and hear someone who has lived in an historical railroad area, been part of that history, and is now working to see that history preserved. The Hudson-Berkshire Division is very pleased and honored to be able to host this speaker who, after a noteworthy career in railroading, is now a volunteer and advisor to a unique national historic site and a much sought after speaker in both the railroad and general communities throughout Pennsylvania and New York. He is here by an amazing set of events and the effort of a unique H-B Division member. Thank you.



Location - Location - Location

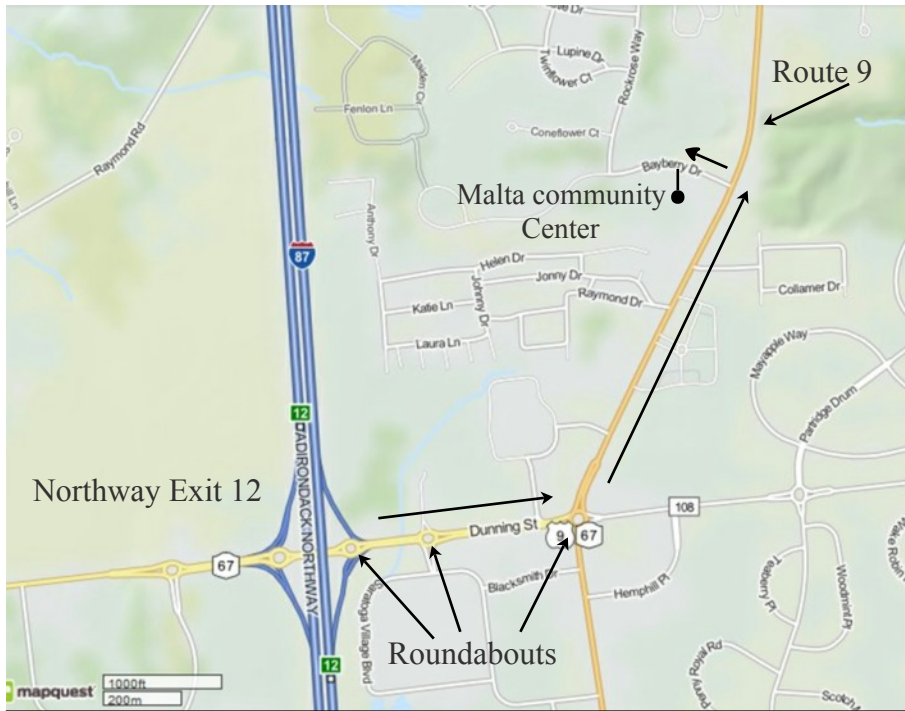
The Saratoga Springs Public Library is at 49 Henry Street in the downtown area.

Access is via Exit 14 or 15 of I-87 (the Northway) or from Route 9.

There is public parking in the area. The area directly behind the library is accessed via Putnam Street. There is another, much larger, area north of the library across Caroline Street accessed from Pavilion Row/High Rock Avenue.

Should you care to arrive in the area a bit earlier, there are many noted eating establishments near the library.

However, anyone trying to enter the Community Room licking a Ben&Jerry's cone will not be admitted until they have finished eating it!



Location – Location – Location

Artie Krass' presentation of the JMRI Operations software for operations planning is at the Malta Community Center, One Bayberry Drive, Malta, NY. This is the first building on the left after you enter Bayberry Drive from Route 9.

Route 9 is east of Exit 12 of I-87 (The Northway), through some roundabouts. Then north on Route 9 at the third roundabout. Bayberry Drive is the first left past Allerdice Hardware. If coming south on Route 9, Bayberry is the first right past Cocca's Motel.

Promptness is appreciated as we only have the use of the Community Center room for a limited amount of time.

Software for Model Railroaders

At this month's presentation Artie Krass will discuss the use and benefits of the JMRI Projects JMRI Operations package. This is designed by model railroaders with computer experience to help others with support for operating sessions on their layouts. The JMRI programs/modules are free for the downloading. But there are other programs out there that do similar or associated tasks. Do you own one and have experience with it? How about sharing that information at the meeting or in an email to the *Form19*? NMRA's Operations Special Interest Group (OpSig) has created a database of about 40,000 prototype industries. Some available programs use this information to help modelers figure out what industries might be modeled on their layouts and what might be shipped through their railroads.

If you have any experience with this type of program, please share it with your fellow modelers at the meeting. If you have used other software to enhance your modeling effort, please encourage other readers by sending something for the *Form19* staff to pass on your experience with the program(s) you have used.

Up Coming Elections

As President Hoffman mentioned in his 'Ready Line' column, we will be having an election in November for the President's position and one Board Member. There will be more information and a ballot in the October issue

of the *Form19*. Now some of you may be saying, "Why have an election because it's just an 'old boys' network'." Well, the average age must be about 67 and our constitution requires it. We really would like to have a group of people who are ready to step in to one of the administrative or assisting positions with some fresh ideas and energy to help with the work. If you think you'd like to participate or have some ideas as to how we can enable members of the division who live outside of the greater Capital District, please share your thoughts. Contact information is on page 2.

Bus Trip

Up coming issues of the *Form19* will have information about the Division sponsored bus trip to the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield, MA on January 24, 2015. Pick-up points and times are tentatively the same as in previous years. The Railroad Hobby Show is a great experience and not having to drive, pay for gas, or take that long, cold walk from the parking lot to the building entrance makes it even greater. Why a show volunteer will even come on to the bus to distribute the entrance wristbands and answer any questions about the show. And there is plenty of storage on the bus to pack your many purchases – even if they might be boxes of rocks.

Save the Dates!

The Great Train Extravaganza is coming up on December 7, 2014. This event is important to both the model railroading community and groups in the area and to the general public who enjoy visiting the show. Some families have made it a Christmastime tradition for years.

The Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield will be on January 24th and 25th 2015. The Division bus trip will be on Saturday the 24th

The next NMRA North East Regional Convention will be the one you see advertised to the right - September 2016. There will be no 2015 convention. Instead the NER is invited to participate in the Mid-Eastern Regional Convention in 2015.

This makes it all that more important for the Hudson-Berkshire Division to develop and promote the Pacemaker Convention. So we are asking members to be aware of requests for volunteers for the various efforts needed to make the convention happen - and happen in an exciting way.

Thanks for your continued support - as we try to support you and make your modeling experience better.



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- Fan Trips
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- Spouse Activities
- AP Contest
- Models Showcase
- More...

SAVE THE DATES!

The Pacemaker
2016 North East Regional Convention
Desmond Hotel and Convention Center
Albany, New York

September 15 - 18 2016

A Taste of the Division
A Toast to the Region

Sponsored by the Hudson-Berkshire Division

FORM 19

Hudson Berkshire Division
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First Class Mail



Workbench with layout track coming thru above



Steam still runs under the old covered bridge



More of the community's downtown

Note details between the buildings

Background in picture at right is the shelf portion of the layout extending towards the shop and yard.

The pictures don't show it well, but a lot of the structures have visible yet subtle weathering.



