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(ISSN 0033-877X) 47803

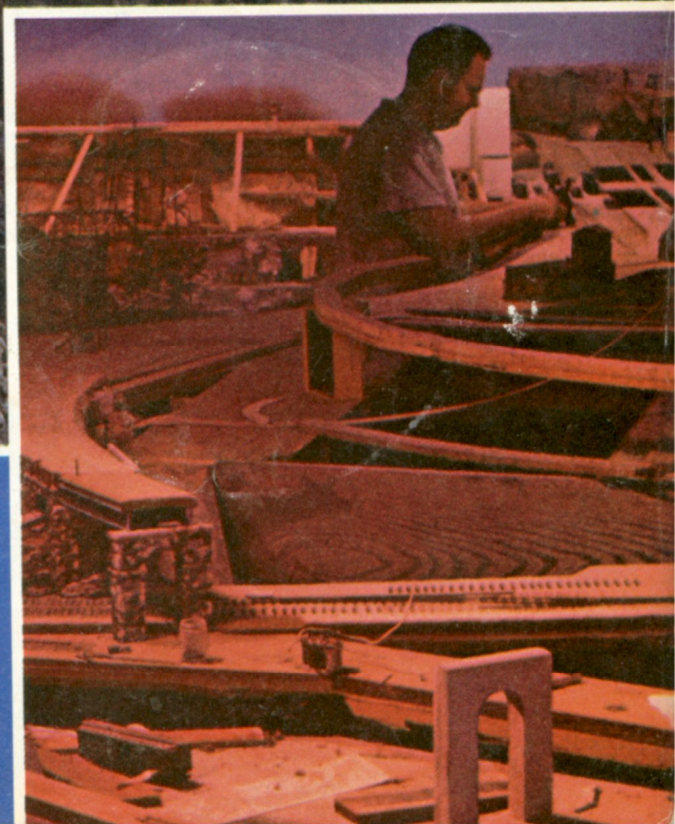
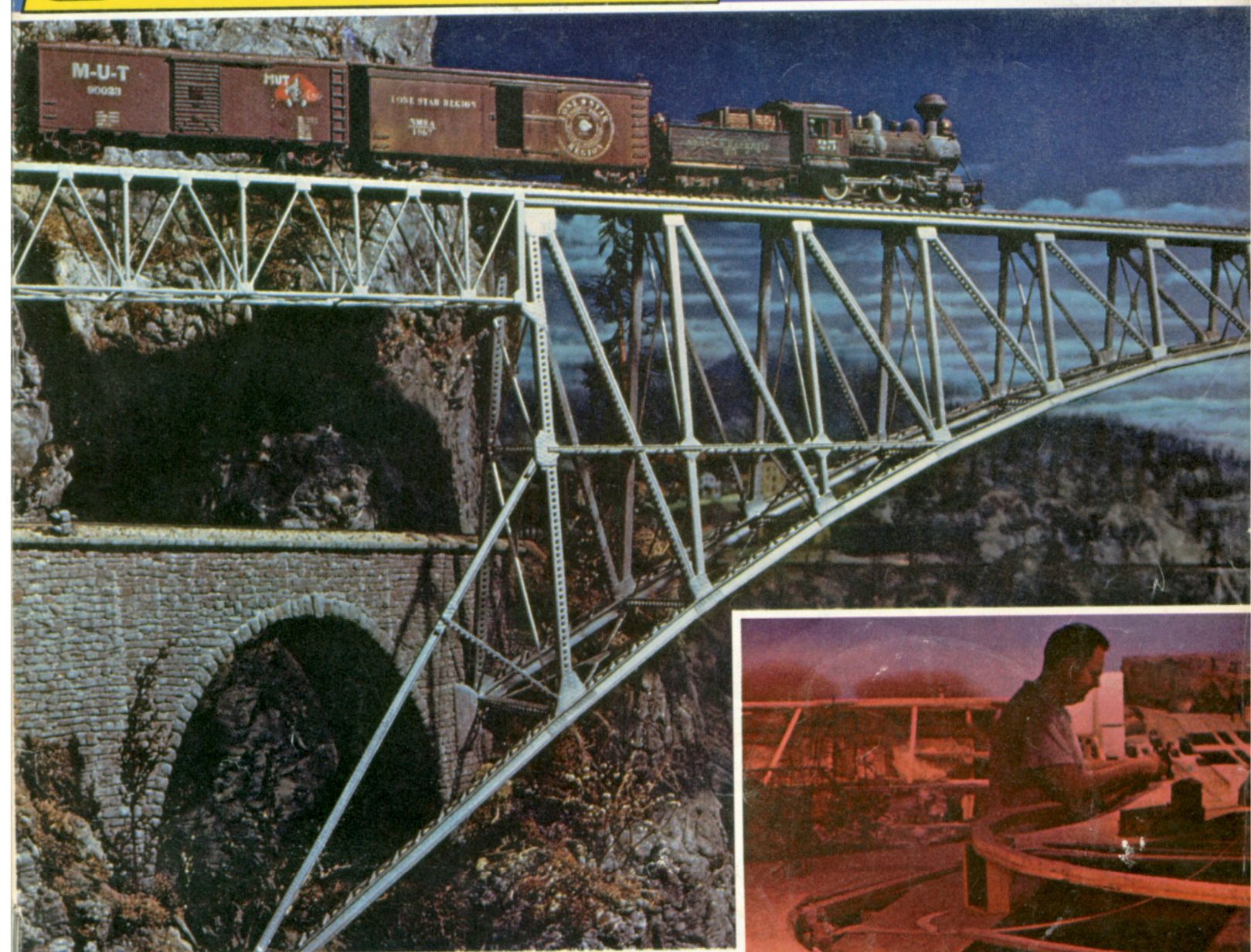
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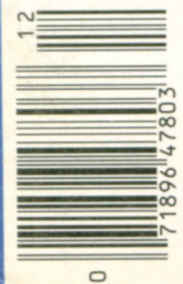


BEGINNING THIS MONTH:

Jim Findley
recalls ...



John Allen
and his world-famous
**GORRE &
DAPHETID**





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RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN (ISSN 0033877X) is published monthly by Carstens Publications, Inc., Fredon Springdale Road, Fredon Township, P. O. Box 700, Newton, New Jersey 07860. Phone: 201/383-3355. Harold H. Carstens, President; Marie L. Merkle, Vice President; Phyllis M. Carstens, Secretary-Treasurer. Controlled circulation postage paid at Sparta, Illinois 62286 and Newton, New Jersey 07860. Copyright © 1980 by Carstens Publications, Inc. Printed in the United States of America.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN, P. O. Box 700, Newton, NJ 07860.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S.A. and possessions: \$14.00 per year, \$26.00 for two years, \$35.00 for three years. Single copies \$1.50. Postage outside U.S.A. \$2.00 extra per year. All communications regarding subscriptions and changes of address should be sent to: Circulation Manager, RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN, P. O. Box 700, Newton, NJ 07860. Please allow six weeks for change of address.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Articles and photographs are welcome. Contributors are advised to keep a copy of their manuscripts and illustrations. When requested we will endeavor to return all material in good condition if accompanied by return postage. RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. Payment is normally made upon publication. The contents of this magazine must not be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

ADVERTISING: Main advertising offices: P.O. Box 700, Newton, New Jersey 07860. Phone: 201/383-3355. West Coast Advertising Representatives: Joseph Mervish Associates, 12512 Chandler Blvd., Suite 202, North Hollywood, CA 91607. Phone: 213/877-7556



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cover

GORRE & DAPHETID: The better part of a decade has elapsed since John Allen died, but many modelers still look back at his railroad as the best ever built by an individual or club. Without doubt, it was a dramatic example of the potential of our hobby, one worthy of Jim Findley's multi-part tribute which begins on page 70 of this issue.

Notes on an old timetable

editorial/HAROLD H. CARSTENS

John Allen

It was 1954 and at the NMRA's national convention the 722 members and guests were doing their thing at the venerable Palmer House in Chicago. I'd come in by train, as had most of the other long-distance conventioners. Among the clinics being given was one on the visual aging of equipment, then a relatively new art, and one which had already brought acclaim to its leading proponent: John Allen of Monterey, California.

It was the first time I'd met John face to face, although we had corresponded by mail and phone regarding various articles he did for RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN. In those

days, John was relatively young, cherubic, and sported a crew cut. "Hal," he said after chatting for some time, "I know a great restaurant right near here. What are you doing for dinner?" Not long afterwards we were seated in Chicago landmark Burghoff's, where I listened with rapt pleasure. John's Gorre & Daphetid was the focal point of our conversation, and I mentioned that "gory and defeated" wasn't my personal idea of the world's greatest name for a model railroad. John agreed, admitting that the herald was stolen from a California wine label. Curiously, with the passage of time, the cuteness of the name became obscure, and Gorre & Daphetid became a name synonymous with the finest in scale model railroading.


The G&D started as a small (considerably less than 4x8 feet in size) HO railroad, the first photos of which appeared in RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN in 1948. This small pike was later incorporated into two enlargements of the G&D but remained intact until the end. John Allen was an artist: one of the first to make model railroading into an art form. His work was often almost a caricature or an illusion, but so skillfully was the subterfuge accomplished that viewers were unaware of the tricks he employed.

Elsewhere in these pages is the first in a series of largely unpublished photos of the Gorre & Daphetid, a railroad which died in flames only a few short weeks after the untimely passing of its builder. With text by John's close friend, noted modeler Jim Findley, this series will reintroduce one of the all-time greatest railroads in miniature to both an audience which knew the G&D and to a new audience as well. For both groups, the Gorre & Daphetid still sets a very

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Steam locomotives had life

As I walked by the Pacific Fast Mail booth at the Orlando NMRA convention, I heard the PFM crew putting their steam sound unit through its paces. I've found the electronic sounds by PFM and several other makers all worthy of note as they all add a new dimension to model railroading—a far cry from the chug-chug and groans of the 1930 tinplate era. Some modelers have criticized electronically-simulated bell sounds as being somewhat less than 100% realistic, but I have considered them more than acceptable. Yet, imagine my surprise in hearing a crystal clear bell, instantly transporting me back to the days when soft coal smoke covered White River Junction and steam switchers' bells were constantly making identical noises. What has PFM done? They've come up with a new tape cassette sound system using actual recorded railroad sounds.

The above came to mind as I spent an evening looking at three reels of steam locomotive movies featuring mostly Reading and Lehigh Valley steam power dating to about 1938 and recently copied on Super 8mm sound film (which will require dubbing in the sound). In many ways the comparison of silent and sound movies is akin to locomotive models which are or are not equipped with sound. It does make the difference.

We'll probably never experience in model railroading the acrid smell of soft coal smoke, the drifting down of coal particulates as a train passes, nor will we be able to accurately add the drifting trail of white condensed steam on a speeding train (no, it *ain't* white smoke!), or the sudden blast of a black smoke cloud as a steam locomotive suddenly loses traction on a steep grade. However, a good sound system can help us imagine these other traits more easily, as many of you have have already discovered on your model railroads.

Handwritten signature: Hal

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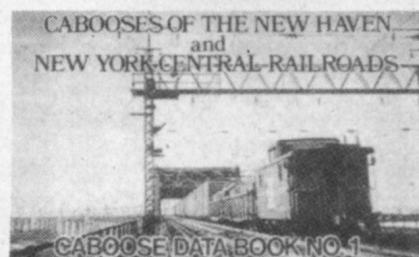
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Sharing the Gorre & Daphetid

Back in 1954 when I first started reading RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN and *Model Railroader* on a regular basis, Gordon Varney was one of the best-known model railroad manufacturers. The Varney ads often featured photographs of his HO locomotives and cars that looked almost unbelievably realistic, especially when I compared the scenery and trackwork with my own Lionel O-27 pike. The photos and modeling were credited to one "John Allen," but I somehow missed the point—as Gordon hoped I would—and simply figured that Varney sure made fine equipment.

As time went by and more of John Allen's modeling was featured editorially in the two magazines, I came to understand that something exceptional was afoot. That fellow Allen certainly knew what he was doing, and I joined the throngs of other modelers who admired John and his Gorre & Daphetid as few if any modelers and model railroads have been before or since. All of us sooner or later "discovered" that the railroad's name was pronounced "gory and defeated" and—somewhat later—that John himself grew a bit tired of the implied joke. We knew that he was a professional photographer and a bachelor, and naively assumed that *that* gave him the time to build such superb models and take dramatic photos thereof (to a point, we were right, but the true dimensions of the G&D and John himself were only then beginning to be clearly understood—at least by the likes of me).

Then came big news: John was building a new and larger Gorre & Daphetid. As the new G&D—which included portions of the first two pikes—progressed, we'd see photos of it in print and again marvel at the magic wrought in Monterey, California. Years later, I joined the RMC staff and thus had the wonderful opportunity to get to know John personally and work with him professionally. One day while thinking about the G&D, it dawned on me that the railroad's 25th anniversary must be near at hand. Correspondence with John confirmed this fact, and the January 1972 issue's tribute to John and the Gorre & Daphetid resulted. We had also run a "fantrip" over the G&D, as reported in March and April 1971 issues (all three issues are long out of print).

The double-barreled shocker in early 1973 that John had died and that his house had shortly thereafter burned will never be forgotten. I never really got to know John as a close friend, but that news had all the impact of losing two of one's closest colleagues. In fact, the railroad and its builder had meant so much to me personally as I had seriously gotten into the hobby that I wondered what newcomers would use for inspiration in their place.

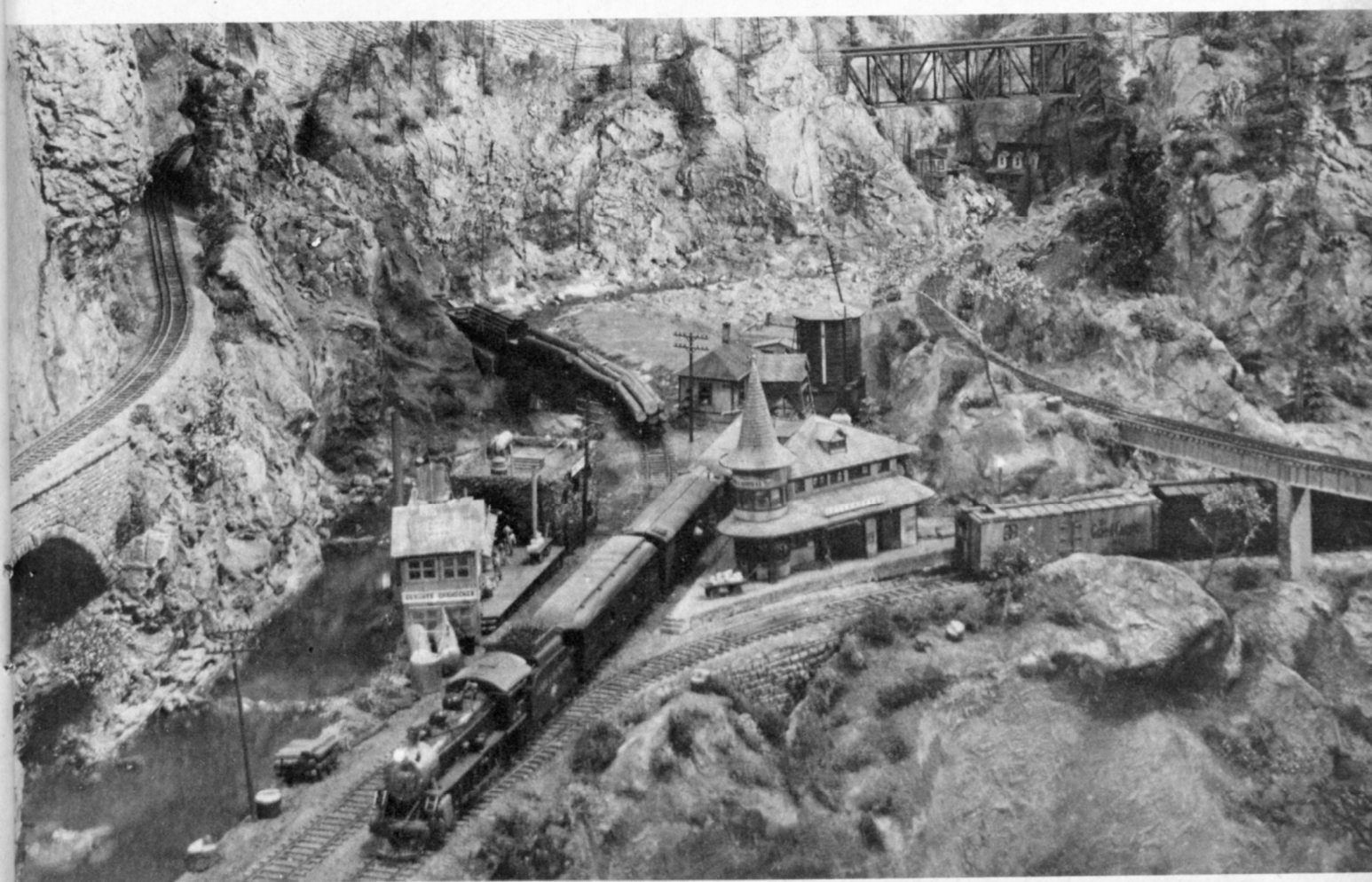
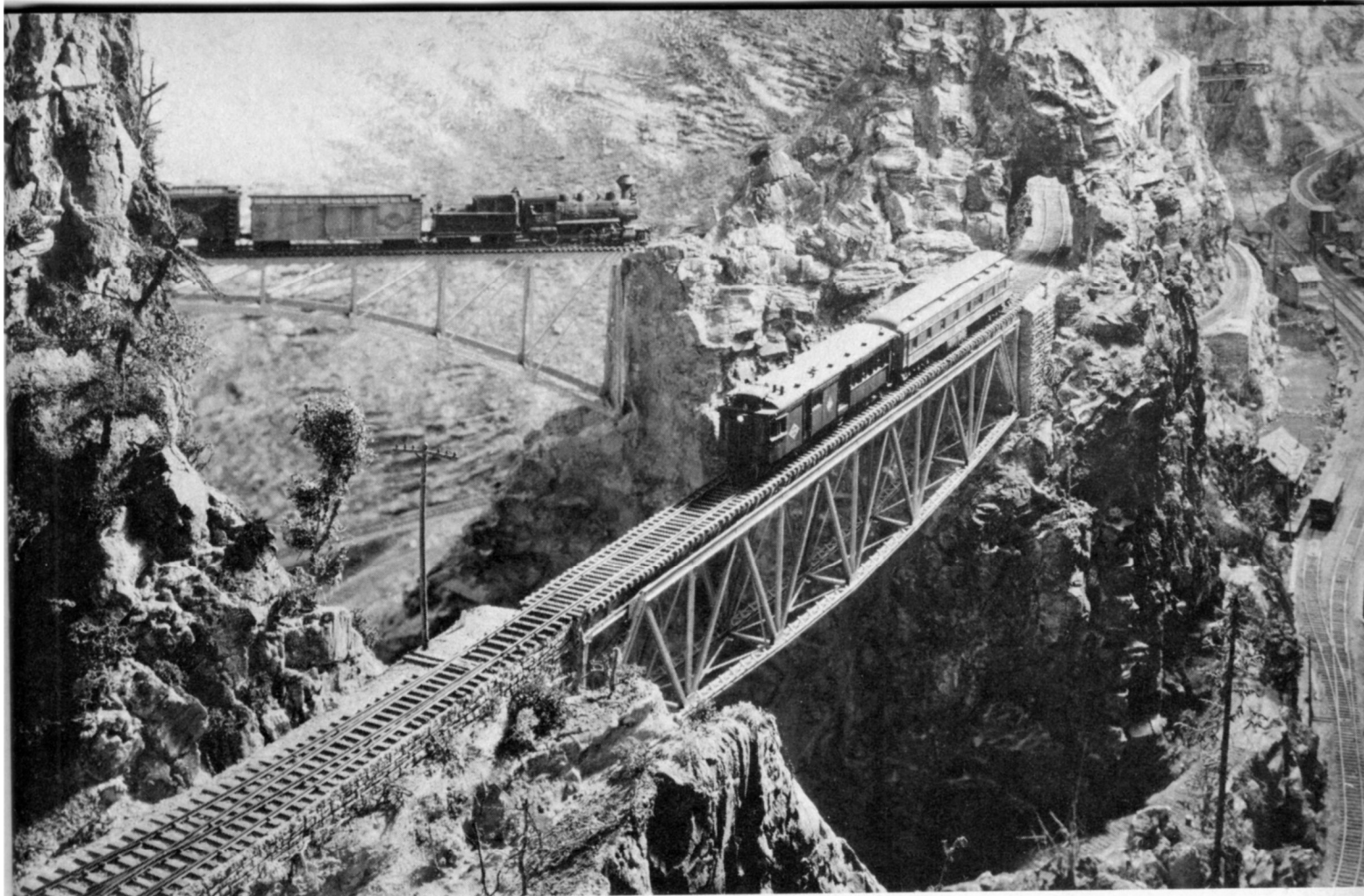
A year or so ago, Jim Findley called with some heart-warming news. A neighbor of John's, Paul Beard, had bought John's house and in the rubble discovered a box of slides and quite a few black-and-white photos. I contacted Paul and made arrangements to obtain the material for publication in RMC. Jim Findley was obviously the man to spin the yarn which would accompany those photos, and he quickly agreed to do just that. The better slides and most important prints were selected after hours of sorting, and the first of Jim's multi-part review of the man and his railroad begins in this issue. It will appear in alternate months throughout most of 1981. Some of the slides are a bit dark or have an odd coloration, but we felt they were worthy of publication nonetheless.

Frankly, I'm ecstatic. A way has been found to share some of the splendor of the Gorre & Daphetid not only with you veterans who grew up with the railroad but those of you who haven't even heard of it before as well. Even by 1980 standards of modeling, the railroad is exceptional and offers unequalled educational and inspirational opportunities. One can find things to nitpick if he is so inclined, but no one can argue about the magnificence of the creation. (I always wondered what Walt Disney's reaction would have been upon visiting John's basement. Both gentlemen seemed to be able to create whole new worlds and to present them in such a manner as to delight their contemporaries.)

Enjoy.

J. ANTHONY KOESTER
editor

photography and modeling/JOHN ALLEN





Remembering the Gorre & Daphetid

Part 1: A friend who actually helped John Allen build the world-famous Gorre & Daphetid recalls the magnificent HO railroad and its creator in a series of articles based around photographs and 35mm slides recently salvaged from the G&D's fire-ravaged former home/**Jim Findley**

Down through the years, as model railroading developed into the great hobby it is today, there have always been those who in one way or another contributed an extra measure towards improving the hobby for all of us: basement tinkerers who generously shared their expertise with those of us less gifted; journalists who early established high standards of integrity by giving first

priority to their readership; selfless people who gave freely of their time and energy in the largely thankless organizational work of the NMRA. And there have been those who by the very high quality of their modeling led the way and added immeasurably to our enjoyment of the hobby. Unique in the long list of these special people is the name of John Allen and his railroad, the Gorre & Daphetid

The grandeur of the Gorre & Daphetid is reflected in these three views of the last of John Allen's three G&D railroads. (Color variations are a result of various film and light combinations John used over the years.) The first small pike (see Fig. 1.8) was included in the later railroads and is almost entirely visible in Fig. 1.2 as the peninsula on the final layout (Fig. 1.13). The railroad became famous for floor-to-ceiling scenery (Fig. 1.3) and the many spectacular bridges (Fig. 1.1).

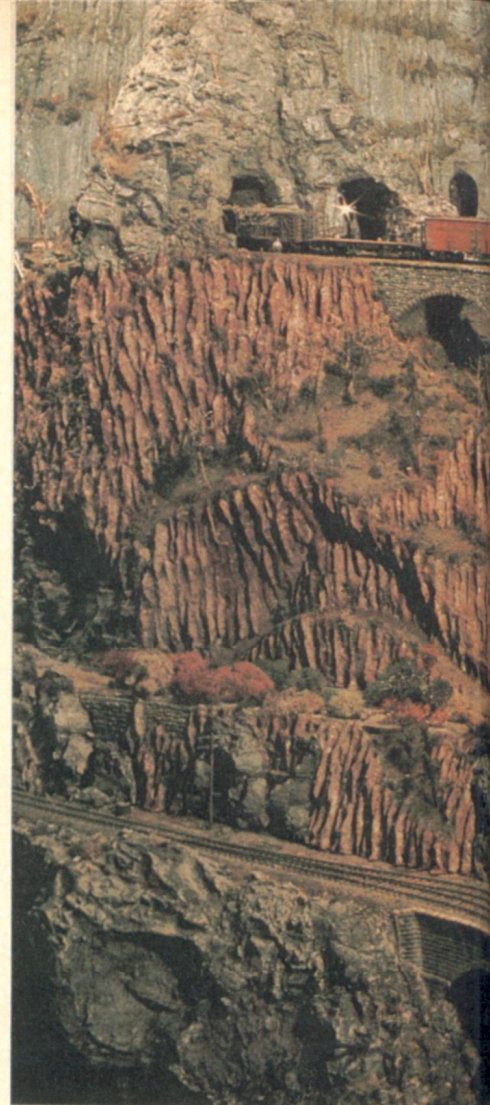


Fig. 1.1 ▲

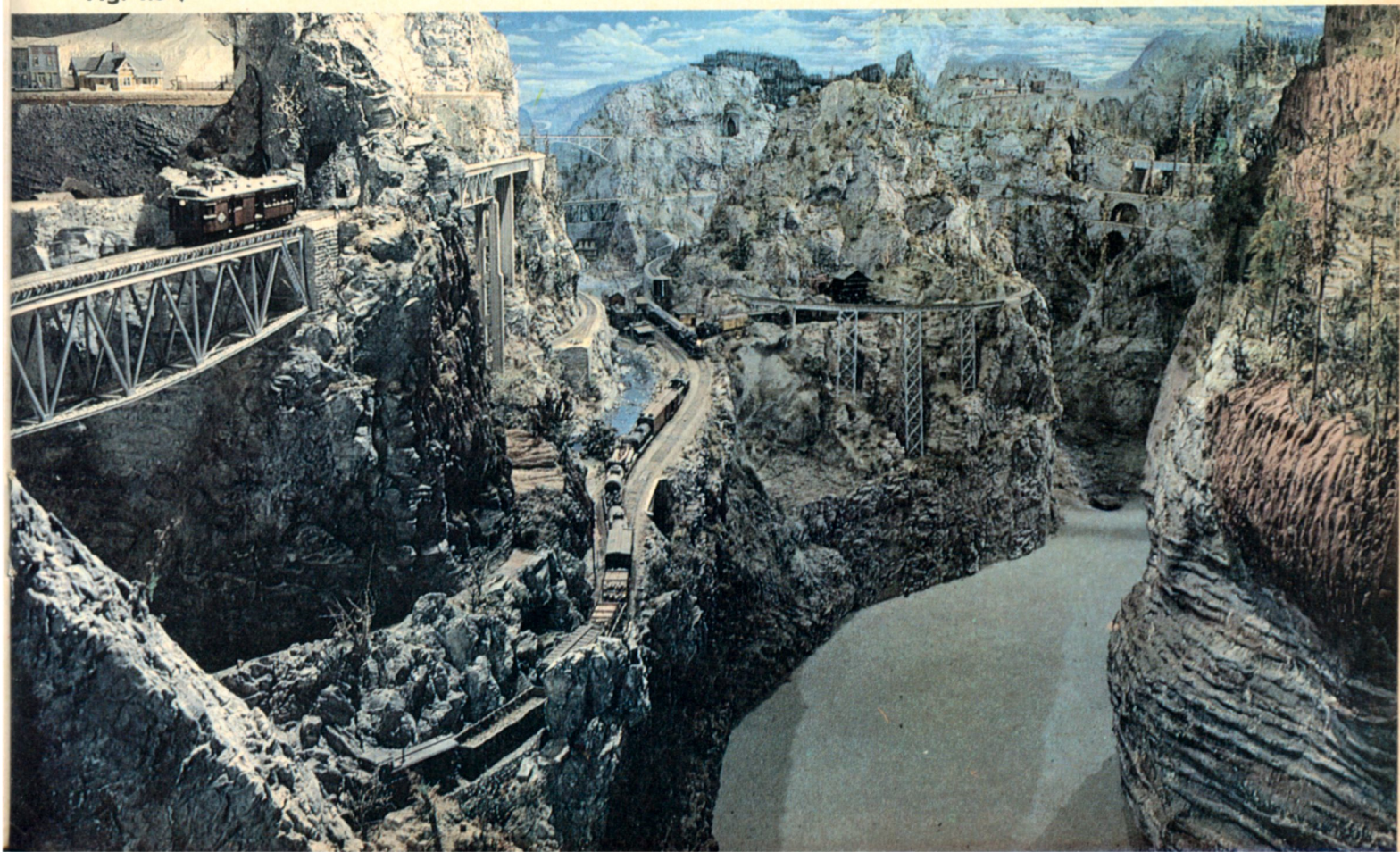
▼ Fig. 1.2





Fig. 1.3 ▼

photography/JOHN ALLEN





The author

Jim Findley first met John Allen around 1951 when Jim was still in the service stationed near San Francisco. An interest in model railroading kindled in Europe blossomed into an avid interest in scale modeling, and a friendship with John resulted. Jim lost touch with John until Findley wrote an article on a small water tank; John saw the piece and contacted Jim through then-*Model Railroader* editor Linn Westcott. Jim had retired from the army by this time and thus could stay with John "for various periods of time from overnight up to six weeks, depending on what project we got into and how long we could stand each other without mayhem breaking out."

John was also responsible for getting Jim into writing for the model press. John reasoned that they could turn out articles and collect the price of a brass engine (then about \$50) a lot easier than they could scratchbuild one.

Jim was John's guest the night John had his fatal coronary. "Needless to say," Jim recalls, "I got all of my experience and what little knowledge about the hobby I have today from my association with him—a school of some demanding rules, I assure you."

To know Jim Findley is to admire him for his never-ending sense of humor—and hence perspective on the hobby. I first met Jim during a visit to Bill McClanahan's to shoot a cover for RMC's 25th anniversary tribute to Bill's Texas & Rio Grande Western. His innate modesty is coupled to a fierce pride in what his friends have accomplished, and his friends number among the hobby's best known pioneers—John, Bill, Cliff Robinson, Whit Towers; the list goes on.

It is thus proper that Jim narrate this multi-part, every-other-month tribute to the Gorre & Daphetid and, as a summary, John Allen himself. It is a pleasure to publish Jim's "tour" of the last and largest layout, plus brief glimpses back at the first two railroads known as the Gorre & Daphetid—T.K.

(pronounced "gory and defeated"). For 25 years and more until his death in 1973, John's work was the envy and the joy of most model rails, practicing or armchairing. Now, as a tribute to the man and his superb layout, *RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN'S* editors and I have put together a series of articles that will allow all of us to re-visit what is generally considered to be just about the finest model railroad to ever brighten our horizon. Many of the accompanying photos (all were taken by John himself) have never been published and were salvaged from John's fire-ravaged house by its new owner, Paul Beard—an acquaintance of John. Our special thanks are thus due Paul.

A short historical synopsis and a few photographs will serve to inaugurate the material that will be appearing in these pages during the next year. For some of us, this will be a pure nostalgia trip; for others, it may well be their first acquaintance with the man and his marvelous work. But for all of us, John and his G&D will hopefully again work the old magic that delighted and inspired us in years gone by.

John lived and did his railroading in Monterey, California, where between 1948 and the end of 1972 he put together three HO scale layouts. Each succeeding layout was larger than the last and incorporated into the planning and construction much of the previous layouts. The final railroad actually included both earlier versions of the G&D—you just needed to know where to look for them. Expanding empires are common to model railroads (and to their prototypes) as more space becomes available and as interest and involvement in the hobby deepens. Like many before him, John recognized that including work already completed into the new layout had the advantage of saving a lot of time and effort, and it also allowed for getting trains running fairly quickly during the transition.

Those first two layouts were built in a small frame house near Cannery Row, while the last layout occupied the basement of a house John bought and moved into in 1954. Fig. 1.13 is a trackplan of the final railroad with the first small (3'-7"x6'-8") and part of the second (which included the first) layouts identified where they were grafted onto the final G&D. Keep the trackplan handy to simplify orienting yourself as we go along.

A word about how John got into model railroading in the first place is in order. As a professional photographer, he was doing some table-top picture-taking to hone his skills in that field and used models he had built for the purpose. Finding that he liked building in miniature led to his first railroad and, ultimately, to a lifelong love for model railroading. The challenge of improving his model building to make his photographs more interesting and authentic was irresistible to his inventive nature, and the final result of his adopting the hobby is the priceless legacy of his work in both photography and model railroading. Indeed, one almost had to complement the other for us to share in his work.

To appreciate the long process of evolution, study Fig. 1.4, an example of his early table-top photography where a painted backdrop and low camera angle effectively disguised the lack of any model railroad. Fig.

1.1 is a color photo of just one area on the layout that directly resulted many years later! Hopefully, I'll be able to touch on some of the high points in the long saga of the Gorre & Daphetid and to discuss some of his techniques—as well as his attitude and approach to the hobby as a whole.

Getting back to the railroad itself: When John selected his new home, it was with the idea of an extensive model railroad in mind. The house was on the side of a hill and had no basement when he moved in, but he soon remedied this oversight on the part of the original contractor. After selective excavation, a concrete floor was poured from the east wall (behind Great Divide and Port on the trackplan) about three-quarters of the way to the west wall. The rest of the area was left sloping irregularly up to the west foundation wall, and this earth received several wheelbarrows of cement to provide a base for that part of the railroad and a firm footing for the work to be done there. The first layouts constituted the peninsula in the center of the new railroad, and this section was moved in straightaway. Since this was where John started on his last railroad, it is as good a place as any to start our tour of his handiwork.

By the time he got to his third layout, John had been in the hobby for a half dozen or so years and had developed an overwhelming interest in prototypical operation. This interest is reflected in the final trackplan, and a study of the plan reveals just how much careful thought went into the planning. A footnote on this indispensable phase of model railroading: It was never necessary for John to make more than minor modifications in the original concept during the life of the railroad. The original layout became a branch line, and much of the second layout was judiciously tailored to provide the connecting trackage between this branch and the rest of the new railroad, circling the peninsula in the process.

As to the trackwork on the G&D, 98% of it was handlaid on individual ties. On the branch (first layout), rails were code 100 brass—the only thing available at the time it was built. The rest of the track was code 100 nickel-silver for the most part, with only a few places such as spurs and sidings using code 83 rail of English origin and, much later, some code 55. There was one short section of steel rail on a grade up near Akin used to test the conductivity and adhesion characteristics of that breed; there was evidently not enough improvement to merit extensive use, since that yard-long section of track was as far as the exploration went. The remaining 2% of track was storebought flexible code 100 nickel-silver which was put down in tunnels where it wasn't visible. It was used to speed up getting the main line in operation. John reasoned that code 100 pre-fab track would minimize derailments in those tunnels where they least needed to be. This flexible track was put on 1/4" balsa cross ties at approximately 4" intervals to deaden the sound of trains in tunnels. It worked marvelously well, too—when a train entered a tunnel, it went almost dead silent with not even the wheelclicks being audible. The operator's gauges at the panel were his only indication

(text continues on page 76)

Fig. 1.4

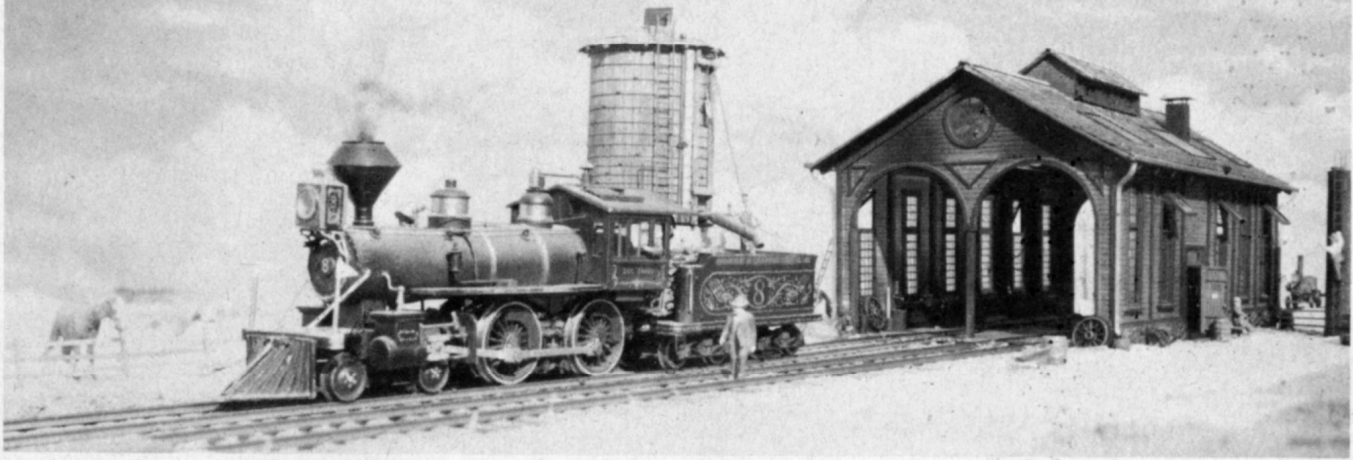
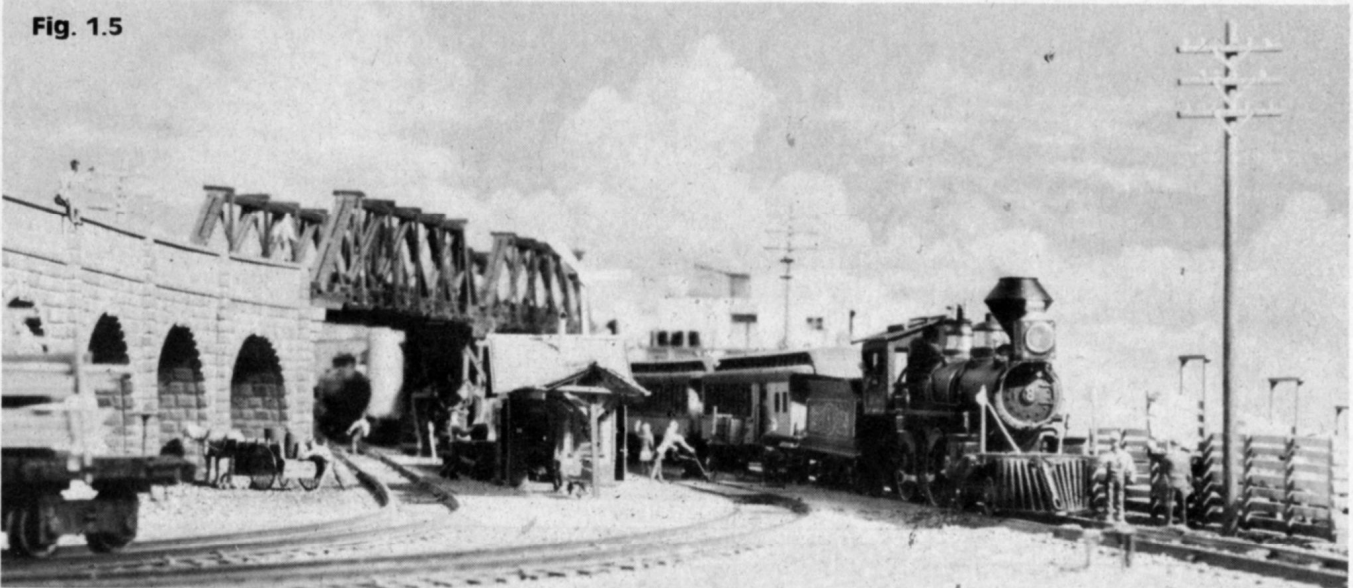
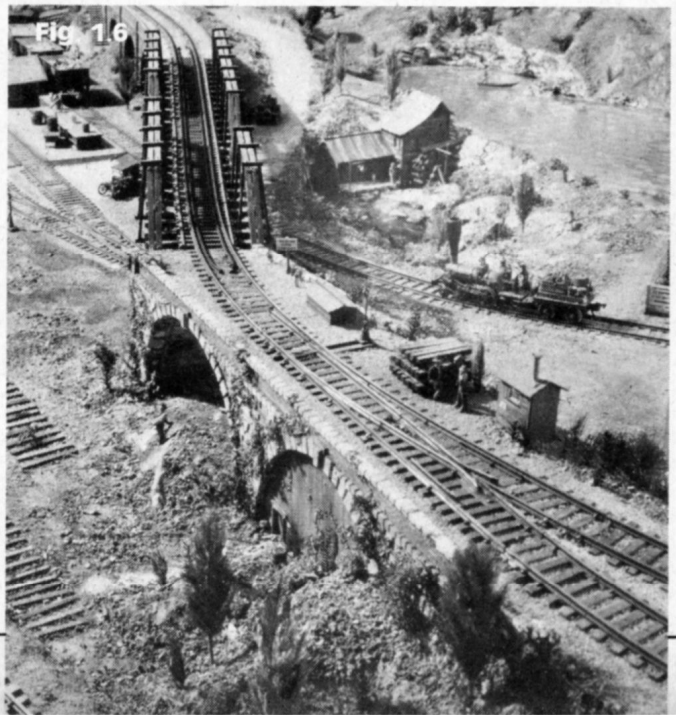


Fig. 1.5



The roots of the Gorre & Daphetid are readily traced back to John's interest in photography. His famous enginehouse served at first as a table-top prop for photos (Fig. 1.4), even though it later assumed a more functional role on the three G&D railroads. A sky backdrop, one of John's first two HO locomotives, a water tower and a diorama on which to place them was initially an exciting prospect, but its static nature soon led John to design and build an actual HO layout (Fig. 1.5). No. 8 was still the star when John photographed the 4-4-0 at Gorre, but the dry "texture" for which he became famous was not yet clearly in evidence. Weathering, or aging as it was then more commonly called, was required for John's models to look realistic in photographs, as was the varied texture of vines growing up the arches of a bridge (Fig. 1.6), weeds along the right-of-way, streaks on structure roofs, toned-down rail sides, and—perhaps most important—the lack of unrealistic shiny surfaces that would have instantly given away the scene as being merely a model. Those techniques were obviously developed on the first railroad, as a comparison of the early (Fig. 1.5) and later (Fig. 1.6) views shows. Note, too, how John was careful to simulate sunlight by placing a key light to create one main shadow. In Fig. 1.5, the light is cleverly off to the far right, adding form to the photograph by making 4-4-0 stand out boldly against the sky.

Fig. 1.6



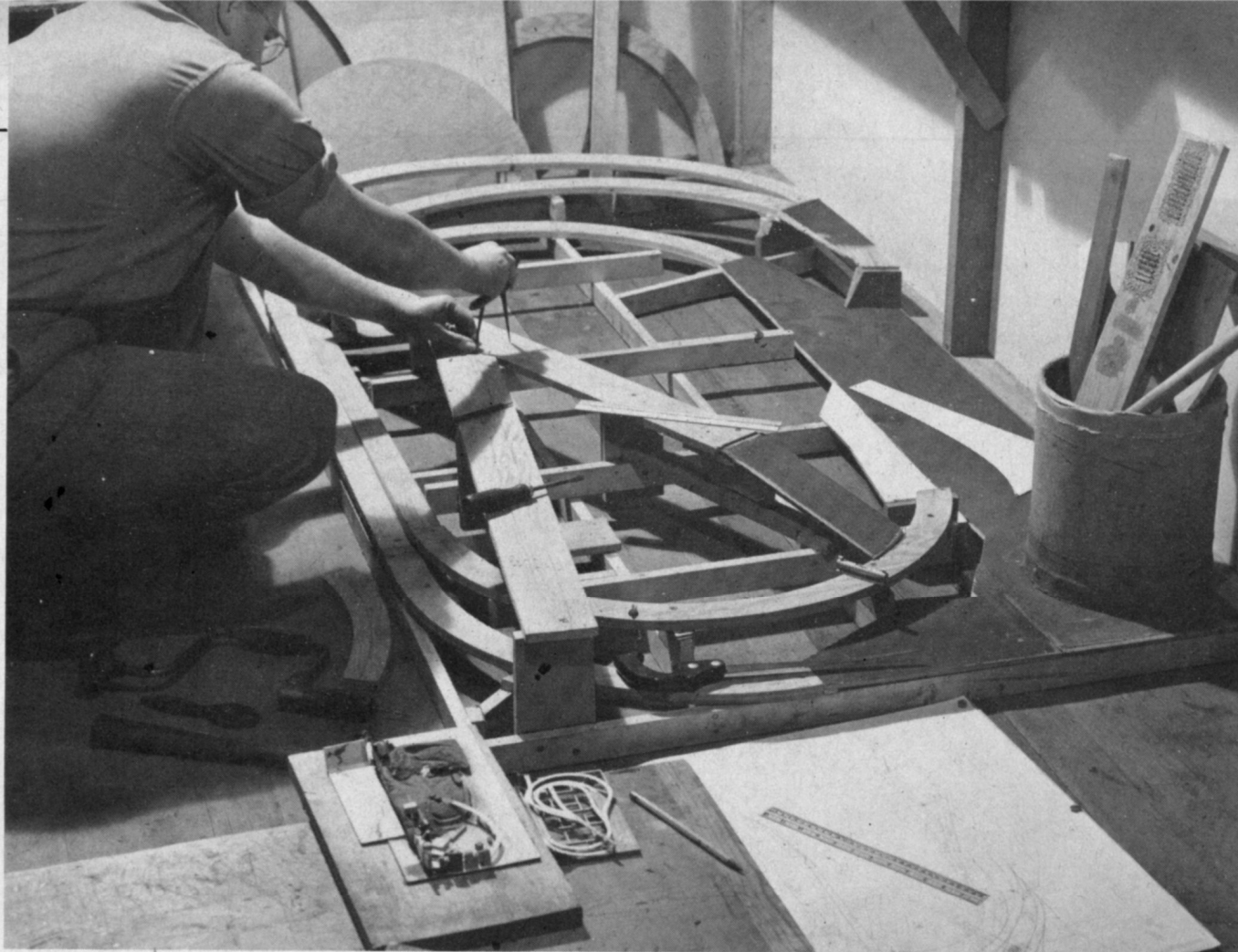
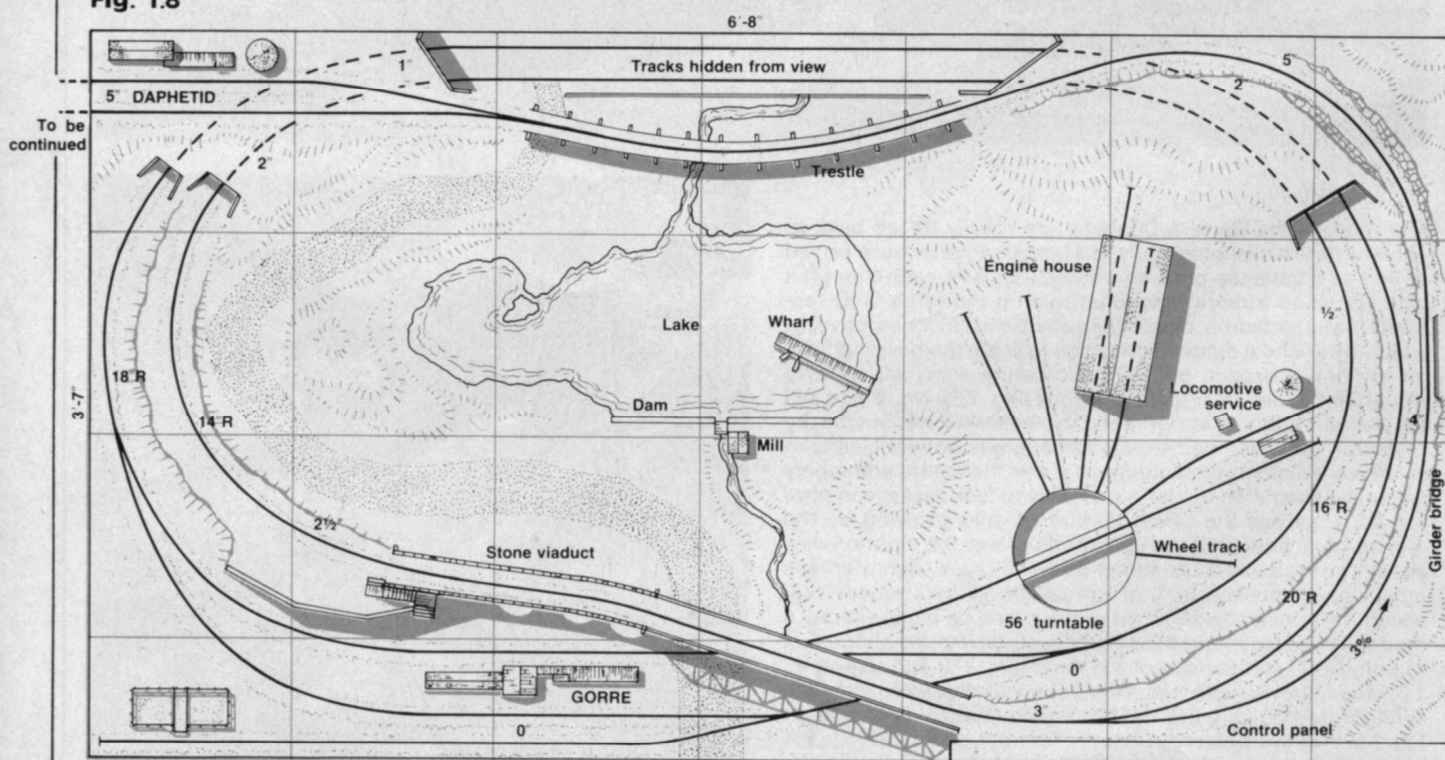


Fig. 1.7

The first Gorre & Daphetid

Fig. 1.8



While it is easy for those who vividly remember John Allen's HO scale Gorre & Daphetid to think of it as a large model railroad, its roots were anything but overpowering. An early interest in model photography—itsself a natural outgrowth of John's profession (see Figs. 1.4 and 1.5)—grew into a wholesale embrace of model railroading to an almost unparalleled degree. Almost as a flood begins with a single drop of rain, the G&D began as photography props and then took form on paper and as small-scale mock-ups, clearly visible in the foreground of Fig. 1.7. The drawings and models were translated into remarkably solid framing and roadbed, factors which undoubtedly contributed to the original Gorre & Daphetid's longevity: It survived to be incorporated as the "branch line" in both the second and last layouts, as is evident from a glance at the peninsula area of the final trackplan (Fig. 1.13; the second layout's plan will appear in the February issue).

These remarkable contact prints from 4x5 negatives show the early stages of development of the original 3'-7"x6'-8" layout. Curves were tight—the inside radius on the left end was but 14"—while grades were held to a reasonable 3% maximum as marked on this plan view. The design itself is a simple classic still copied in basic form on small island-type layouts today. John also included a branch along the right and top edges of the pike, noting in one of the hobby's all-time under-statements that it was "to be continued." While John was even then astute enough to include a run-around track at Gorre, the pike was obviously designed more for running and photography than for operation, an oversight that was quickly corrected on the second and third railroads. A few inches of additional width along the front edge would have accommodated enough additional industry and yard trackage to make even this tiny railroad self-sufficient, however.

John's now-famous enginehouse—honored as a Fine Scale Miniatures kit—grew from photographic prop status into a meaningful part of the G&D on the first layout and nicely complemented the fine scenery that John created even at this early stage of his modeling career. The ripple-glass lake construction is evident in the three views at right; its finished form is visible in Fig. 1.6. The drama of a large wood trestle made itself evident on the original G&D, and John was quick to include a spectacular bridge scene—especially on the third (last) layout—wherever possible. His penchant for bridges gave those seeking a way to criticize the G&D something to question when he stacked several up the steep side of a mountain, but he was careful to make their engineering at least reasonably plausible—and there was no denying that a tiny train creeping across a bottomless chasm was breathtaking drama at its best. (A derailment—did the G&D actually suffer from those, too?—must have meant a furrowed brow.) And it all began here—TONY KOESTER.

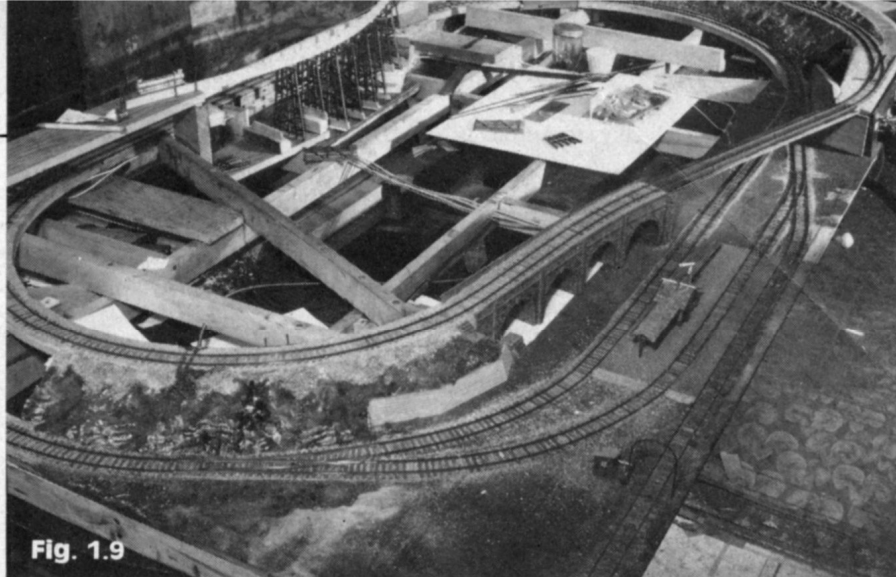


Fig. 1.9

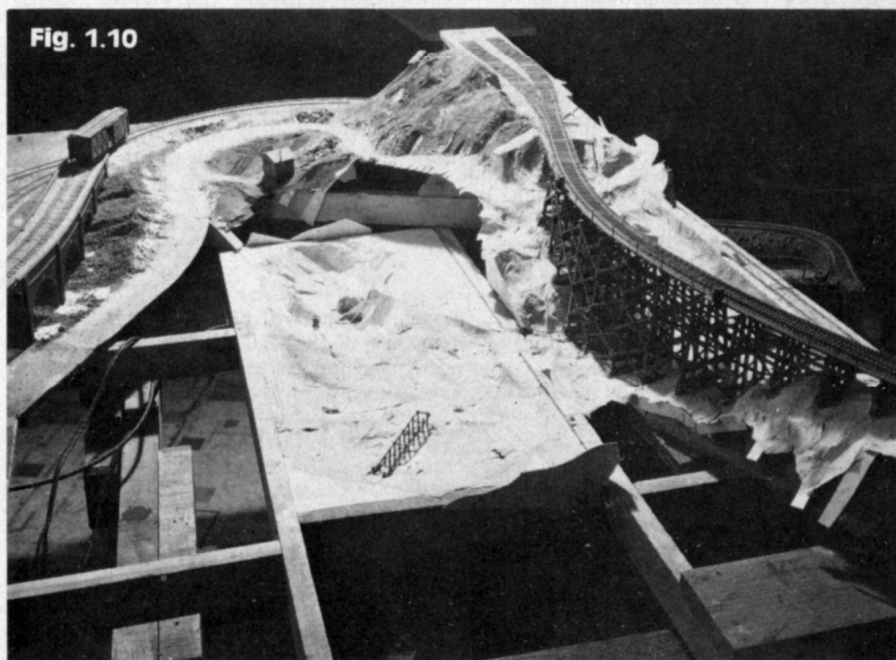


Fig. 1.10



Fig. 1.11

that he was still hogging a heavy consist up the ruling eastbound grade.

The turnouts were all handcrafted to fit the specific location and were, in a number of instances, curved. According to John's logic, handmade turnouts allowed him to have the track configuration he wanted rather than having to make concessions that would fit the limited number of commercial turnouts then available. If he wanted a No. 7 right-hand turnout, he made one; if the need was for a curved turnout with a 35" radius on one leg and a 28" radius on the other, he simply cobbled one up. That is admittedly a lot more cobbling than most of us can muster—or think we can.

Knowing that the human eye is prone to see what it is supposed to see, rather than what is actually there, John devised a system for laying track that minimized this human frailty. By clipping a small mirror to a coffee can and sliding it along the track in front of where he was working, he actually spiked down track while looking at it in the mirror. He contended that, just as a photograph of a model will uncover errors that are overlooked in viewing it directly, so will a mirror image provide a "picture" to disclose kinks, misaligned rail joints, and built-in errors in turnout frogs. Those who have tried this unconventional technique have heartily endorsed the results. They note that it is relatively easy to adapt to moving your hands directly opposite to the direction the mirror indicates.

Although physically located near the center of the railroad, the peninsula was not the centerpoint on the main line—that fate was reserved for Port. Still, Gorre, the principal town on the peninsula, could be a testing assignment in an operating session. Besides being the connecting point for the branch line, it was an exchange point for cars between main line through traffic and one of the two peddlers. When the branch line train and the peddler were both in town and an express passenger train came through on schedule, it made for some interesting activity with two operators trying to clear the main and still keep track of where they were in the regular switching procedures there. Since operation was one of the primary features on the G&D, I'll go into more detail a little further up the track and touch on it in each of the areas we examine.

Gorre was also the terminal for the Devil's Gulch & Helengon, a narrow-gauge subsidiary to the G&D. The trackplan shows that this slim gauge line joined the standard gauge at Sowbelly and ran as dual gauge (visible in Fig. 1.14) for some 30 feet before peeling off for a reversing loop down near Squawbottom. Note that the planning obviated the need for any dual-gauge turnouts along the main.

Till the end of the railroad, the DG&H was never completed to the point where it became operational and could be integrated into the overall operating format. In light of John's extraordinary long-range planning, any conflict in scheduling narrow gauge trains to dovetail with standard gauge traffic must have been resolved at the time the DG&H was originally conceived.

Having established that the first and part of the second version of the G&D became

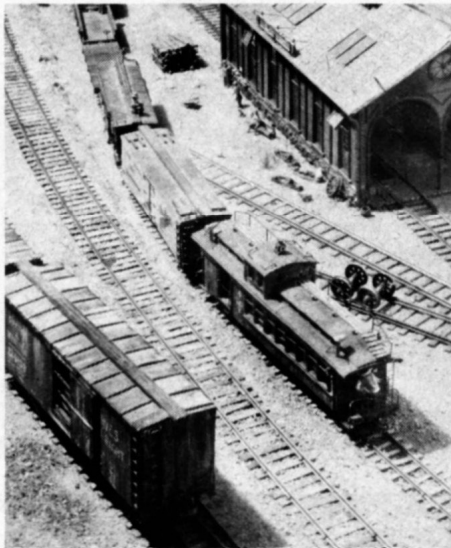


Fig. 1.12: The dramatic visual contrast between narrow- and standard-gauge equipment (compare the slim-gauge drover's caboose with the boxcar) caught John's knowing eye.

the peninsula and branch line, it might help to visualize this with photos. Fig. 1.9 is an overview of the first layout. This area is easily recognized in Fig. 1.2 which is an overall view of the peninsula after the surgery was successfully accomplished.

Buildings on the branch line reflected the changing role from main line to branch as it was incorporated into the final railroad. These were weathered and aged to appear less well maintained, and some of the more "modern" structures were simply moved to more appropriate locations. In addition to the well-known combination through truss/stone arch bridge across the center of this area, there were several memorable buildings. The two-stall enginehouse, built for the first layout and later serving the narrow gauge, won a blue ribbon in a national contest and much later became a great kit by Fine Scale Miniatures. The small brick station at Daphetid was built from photographs of an SP prototype in Spreckels, California, that had been torn down long before. A burned out Teaby Fire Extinguisher Co. (named for the Monterey fire chief who was also a model rail) had a small red bulb buried in the ashes that made it visually an eyecatcher. And there was a small operating oil-pumping rig (called grasshoppers in the Southwest) that moved with such prototypical deliberateness that it was missed entirely by many visitors.

Mt. Alexander dominated the topography of the peninsula while disguising one of the vertical timbers that supported the house. It had a rock quarry called Devil's Postpile that could only be seen by the most inquisitive visitors. Taylor Lake was put in place before the advent of pourable plastic, and the water was simulated with ripple glass (Fig. 1.11). It was complete with an interesting and highly detailed bottom modeled beneath the glass surface. Where the changing context of the area made necessary an abandoned track, there was the boarded-up tunnel portal and

weed-grown right-of-way that had actually seen heavy traffic in the days when it was part of the first layout. This intense and realistic detailing became a trademark of the G&D and extended to all parts of the railroad.

Electrical wiring for the Gorre area was extremely versatile and followed a pattern that was adhered to throughout the layout. A simplistic explanation was that the highest priority train had the lowest electrical priority. This seemingly contradictory arrangement was in reality quite prototypical in practice, since it made it absolutely essential that lower-priority train operators had not only to clear the tracks for through traffic, but they were also responsible for electrically releasing track blocks to the express engineers. Thus, it became painfully evident when a laggard branch line operator caused an express passenger train to wait outside town for lack of electrical control of the track he needed to proceed. It became a conditioned reflex for G&D operators to release a block the instant they left it, no matter how brief the interval before they would need it again.

The Gorre & Daphetid was indisputably a "serious" model railroad—serious in its intent to replicate in miniature all of the features you might find on a full-size railroad in Western mountainous terrain from nature's sometimes spectacular handiwork to the complicated inner workings of a revenue-producing form of transportation. Occasionally, though, there were glimpses of subtle humor, even an infrequent outright joke on the layout—such as the dinosaur hidden in the trees, complete with an engine number decaled on his side and a harness to pull felled trees down a logging lane.

At one time John, in a puckish mood, concealed small magnets in the ends of two boxcars with the intended result of making those cars impossible to uncouple on his automatic uncoupling ramps. In the course of shuffling 160 cars over several hundred feet of track, it was sometimes months between the times when sheer chance placed the cars next to each other in a situation that required uncoupling them. A second effect of these hidden magnets was much more exhilarating to John. When the cars were juxtaposed so the magnets repelled rather than attracted, it became impossible to couple the two cars. It was an unending source of amusement to him when he watched some hapless operator, under the press of time, who found himself inexplicably unable to couple those two cars together. It satisfied his quaint sense of humor to see the frustrated look of disbelief on the face of some poor guy chasing the car down the length of a siding in a vain attempt to make a routine pick-up. "Chase it onto a spur where you can corner it," he would advise.

When the branch line/peninsula was initially planned and the track was laid to fit it into the third layout, it included a respectably long passing siding at Gorre. As the railroad grew and additional areas came into the operating format, this siding proved inadequate for handling the increasingly heavy traffic and a third track was added parallel to the siding. This provided the flexibility and car/train holding capacity to meet these new demands. This trackage, so vital to the smooth functioning of the area, was di-

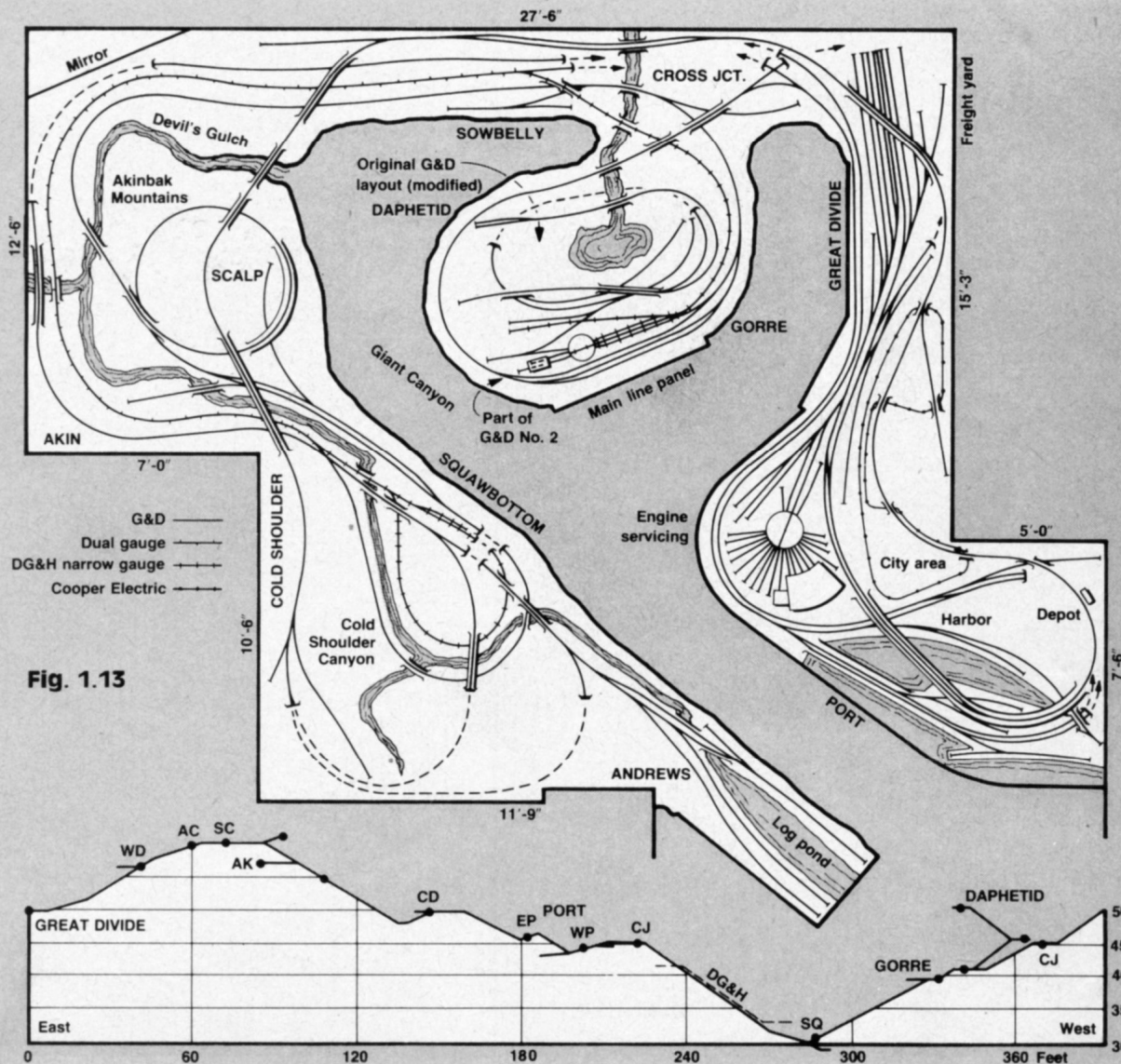


Fig. 1.13

The last Gorre & Daphetid

This was the final form the legendary Gorre & Daphetid assumed. Only a few portions remained unfinished, such as the narrow-gauge bridge to the loop at Squawbottom, when John died in 1973 and the layout was consumed by fire shortly thereafter. The series of articles begins with a tour of the portions salvaged from John's two previous railroads, then continues to the hotspot of activity at Port before concluding with the author's recollections of the human being behind the scenes.

A study of the peninsula shows that the original small G&D was dropped almost without modification into the final plan, just as it had been in the second layout (to be described in part 2). Note that the branch to Daphetid was never continued as John's original drawing had indicated, even though the railroad itself grew far beyond even this far-sighted man's initial expectations. Only a modest part of the second layout's trackage was integrated into the final plan, however, notably the main line passing around the perimeter of the original layout at Gorre.

John's interest in photography caused him to build scenery which could be realistically photographed without revealing the edges of the benchwork, corners of the basement, etc. He thus coved (rounded) the corners with a sky backdrop, carefully used mirrors to lengthen the railroad, and pioneered in the spectacular floor-to-ceiling scenery concept that brought even greater admiration and fame to John and his railroad. Visitors who had known the G&D only through John's spectacular photos were often surprised to discover that much of the main line was so close to the floor, a necessity of the multi-height main lines built in a limited vertical space. Note in Fig. 1.3 that the painted floor, which simulated a river when photographed, was not far below the curved pier-supported bridge looping around Scalp (upper left corner of trackplan), yet in his photos John left viewers with the impression that trains crossing this bridge were high above eye level.

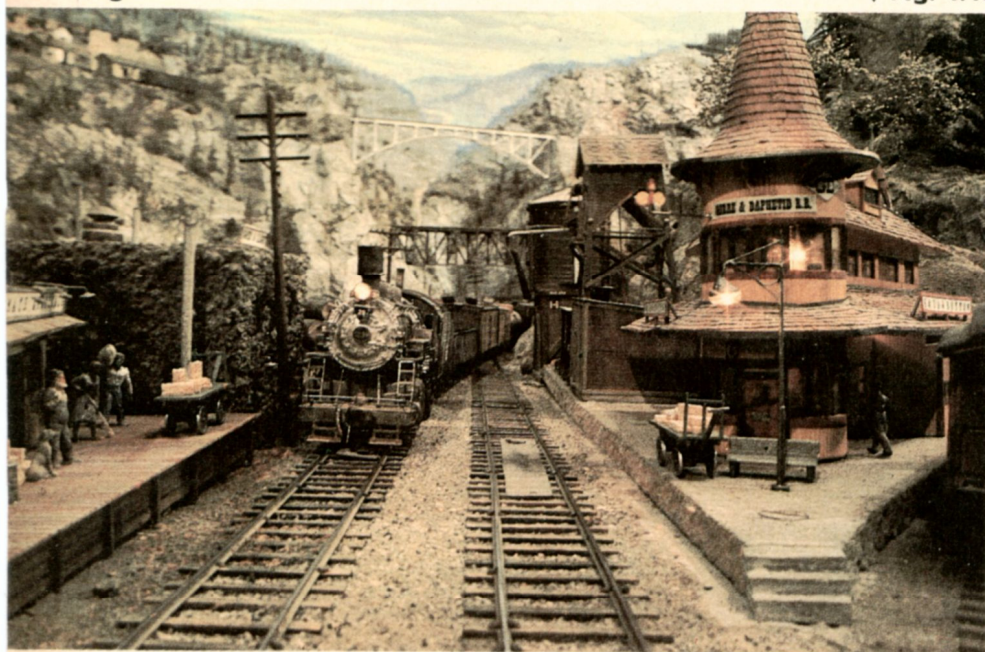
While the G&D was partly illusion, it was also very real, truly a monument to the potential of the hobby—T.K.



Fig. 1.14 ▲

▼ Fig. 1.15

Fig. 1.16 ▼





rectly in front of the main panel located there ... which proved to be prudent planning. That main line panel(s) could comfortably accommodate up to three operators simultaneously who might be running trains on widely separated sections of the layout—or who also might briefly have all three trains right there in Gorre!

With the original layouts positioned satisfactorily and the trackwork tailored to this new arrangement, John's next priority was the main yard at Great Divide. The main line left Gorre and the peninsula on a Pratt truss bridge that had been salvaged intact from the earlier G&D. The bridge appears in Fig. 1.17 crossing both the main (enroute to Sowbelly/Squawbottom eastbound) and the DG&H. The reason the narrow gauge line was still inoperable is evident in Fig. 1.14; the right-of-way at the far end of the line is a return loop and still had no track laid for those few feet necessary to turn the trains around.

Cross Junction lay at the far end of the truss leaving Gorre and was the only spot on the line where the main line crossed itself at grade. One of the outstanding features on the G&D was the almost uncanny ability John had to design structures for a specific location that were both unique in appearance and perfectly plausible in the bargain. Two of the buildings at Cross Junction admirably demonstrate this ability. To solve the problems inherent to the unusual track arrangement and the topography, John designed the two-level depot for the spot that served two station stops at separate locations

on the main line and the office building with a clock in the tower only a few inches away. Separated by the main line, these gave the appearance of being well removed from each other. Both of these structures appear in Fig. 1.16. The clock in the office building was actually the fast clock that regulated operations, and it could be easily seen by all of his operators at their various control panels around the room.

That master clock was a homemade affair that could be stopped (or started) with a switch on the main panel. The switch for the clock was, by tacit understanding, the sole province of John himself. Only a catastrophic delay in the schedule could move him to exercise his prerogative of making time stand still—which in a way reflected his drive for perfection in every aspect of the railroad. Visible in the background of Fig. 1.16 is the end of the main yard at Great Divide.

This briefly covers the G&D in its early years and either recalls or introduces you to one of the more masterfully executed layouts as it appeared when the hobby was rapidly developing and maturing into an art form, rather than the period of just running trains and trying to make them stay on the track that went before. When we come back to the G&D in the February 1981 issue, we'll get into that main yard at Great Divide and engine servicing facilities adjacent to it. We'll also discuss more about operations on the railroad and examine John's consummate skill in the innovative use of mirrors to expand a layout visually.

Gorre & Daphetid freights pass high above the canyon floor (Fig. 1.14) in this view looking back into the corner at Akin; Squawbottom depot is at the lower center, and incomplete narrow-gauge line shows at lower left (note dual-gauge trackage). Squawbottom is also shown in Fig. 1.15. Note how distant the relatively close bridges appear and the effect of the painted backdrop near Akin. Yard at Great Divide and bi-level depot at Cross Jct. are evident in Fig. 1.16; a mirror forms left end of yard. Several levels of G&D and narrow-gauge Devil's Gulch & Helengon occurred where original pikes were connected to third layout (Fig. 1.17).

Fig. 1.17 ▼



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Editors Notebook

commentary/J. ANTHONY KOESTER



Reflections on John

Despite the obvious fact that this hobby is intertwined with rather sophisticated machinery and circuit technology, it is and always will be based on people: what they do, how they do it, even who they are. So it is a measurable loss when one of the handful of model railroaders who really made an impact on the hobby dies. We felt it when John Allen died in 1973; we're feeling it now that Linn Westcott, editor emeritus of *Model Railroader*, is gone (see the obituary in DISPATCHER'S REPORT).

John and Linn are but two shining examples of people who gave much of their adult life to our hobby. To be sure, John was a fine professional photographer, just as Linn was an editor, but we'll remember them more for their hobby than professional skills. To think of John is to recall the Gorre & Daphetid; to think of Linn is to remember L-girder benchwork, Twin-T detection circuits, zip texturing, hardshell scenery. They were also fine gentlemen and deserve to be long remembered for their work, skill and devotion.

I have spent a considerable number of hours reflecting on the Gorre & Daphetid and trying to "quantify" it. Much of what John accomplished must be attributed to artistic skill, which many of us simply don't have. Still, I have sought out those characteristics of the G&D that others could emulate, as much of what John accomplished was a direct result of his powers of observation—and that is a teachable technique.

Amidst the grandeur of the G&D, there has always seemed to be a unifying characteristic, some obvious yet hard to define trait that made the railroad look so good. There were so many distractions that led the researcher down faulty paths in searching for this trait. Perhaps it was the floor-to-ceiling scenery, or the majesty of the Western mountains themselves. Maybe it was the drama of that mid-steam era when small power was still to be found in abundance but the larger locomotives—such as a 2-6-6-2—were coming onto the scene. Wood cars are eye-catchers, and a sagging stock car with exceptional detail (almost to the point that one was careful not to get downwind of it) added mystique to the Gorre & Daphetid. Then there were the "bits", the staged concepts that added to the aura: blacklighting on structures; mirrors; the dinosaur on the locomotive roster; the countless bridges that made one suspect the G&D's chief engineer planned to have one of every known type before he seized up while trying in vain to locate a spare part for one of them; the freight car which contained a ball bearing on tracks (rough handling of said car rolled the ball to one end and completed a circuit that lit a red light to announce a hotbox)—there were many such diversions.

Perhaps it was simply the quality of the modeling; there was no denying that John was an excellent modeler. Too, it could have been the sheer size of the railroad, although it was not huge in comparison with many of today's large home pikes (many visitors remarked about how small it was, in fact).

JOHN ALLEN



A high degree of detail intensity was combined with surface texture—notably the avoidance of unprototypically shiny surfaces—and lighting to enhance it on John Allen's pioneering Gorre & Daphetid.

Even the photos of the tiny original G&D pike that became the branch line on the two subsequent layouts exhibited the magic of John Allen. It would seem that a combination of things might explain it: good modeling, interesting geographic locale being modeled, good choice of era and equipment, and excellent photography.

I have come to believe that all of these facets touch upon but do not explain the central characteristic that made the Gorre & Daphetid so realistic. I propose a test: Carefully review every G&D photo you can locate (such as those published in this issue) and identify in them every *shiny* or "glossy" object. Find the shiny boiler on a steam locomotive. Find the glossy clothing on human figures or shiny hide on cattle. Find the plastic-like sheen on freight or passenger cars. Look for rock or earthen cuts with plaster so smooth that it looks like ceramic. No luck? I thought not. In fact, about the only shiny object you can readily locate, not counting water surfaces, is the golden dome of a key city structure.

Texture was the key to John's modeling. While much of his work was equal to the blue ribbon winners at a model contest, much of it was rather basic; after all, he had a large railroad to build which included a vast number of rather complex structures from towering bridges to a cityscape. One could label this process "weathering," but this isn't exactly what happened on the G&D. Even brightly colored objects, such as clothing on a figure, did not have any trace of shine, yet they were not aged or weathered.

If one stands close to a freshly-painted prototype freight car, it is possible to see the shine of the new paint. Now stand back some distance from the car and you'll likely discover that the shine is hard to see. Certainly there is nothing like the glossy finish of a typical train-set boxcar or diesel. This is what John observed and avoided.

There's an easy test of one's powers of observation. Try it on your own railroad. If you have steam locomotives on the roster, check for three prime offenders in the shine category: handrails, siderods and driver tires. Now look at John's locomotives; you'll find no trace of chrome or nickel-silver plating there. Even diesels can offend the practiced eye by sporting shiny silvery wheels behind glossy black sideframes. Whether or not a locomotive is truly aged, the chrome-plated look is best reserved for late-1950s Detroit products.

Look at the track on the Gorre & Daphetid. Do you see shiny brass or nickel-silver rails catching the light rays and drawing one's attention to them? Like steam locomotive siderods and tires, shiny rail is a major offender when the quest is realism. Note, too, that everything at lineside looks dry—not dirty so much as just plain *dry*. There's no hint of too-smooth plaster, as a gritty texture covers everything. Such effects are easy to achieve with finely-sifted real dirt applied over stained and glue-covered plaster; I suspect John used real dirt, although I never asked him about it.

John also avoided bold colors. This is evident even in the black-and-white photos, for objects generally appear as medium shades of gray. There are no inky black steam locomotives on view, nor structures that are obviously painted a dark, solid color. I'll wager that John "cut" most colors with white or gray paint to soften their impact and avoid areas that soaked up or harshly reflected

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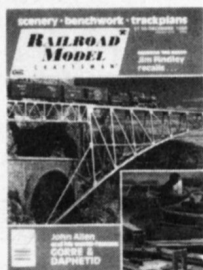
CONTROL PANELS: Everyone needs a control panel, and John Acker describes his attractive and functional panels neatly lettered with dry-transfers.

SANDING FACILITY: The Burlington used an old covered hopper to store sand for use by diesels to increase traction. Eric Brooman tells how he used a plastic kit to emulate the prototype's example for his Utah Belt.

SPECIAL FEATURE: Our annual full-color fold-out wall calendar features steam in the Rockies by Jim Fennell and Charles Buccola's reference charts of basic modeling and tool-size data for the workshop wall.

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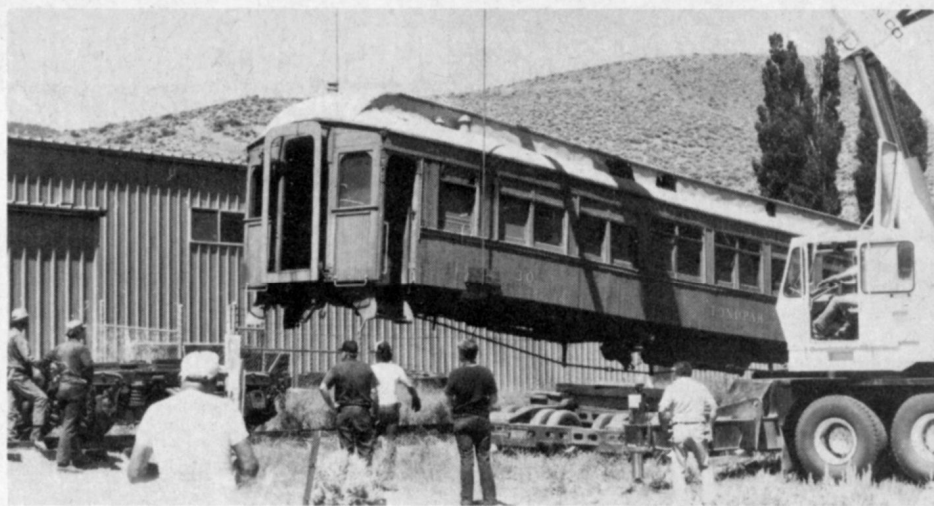
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light. He was too good at photography to fall into that trap. What might at a glance appear to be a freight car painted with boxcar red straight out of the bottle was undoubtedly a slightly lighter shade of that hue, or at least the car was later weathered to bring out details that would otherwise not show on HO equipment unless viewed under strong lighting on the workbench.

Speaking of lighting, one cannot ignore John's mastery of this facet of modeling. While one can merely be an excellent model builder in some hobbies, model railroading requires a working knowledge of far more than the basic model-building skills. Sooner or later, electricity has to be dealt with, whether it's the low-voltage kind used to run the trains or the more dangerous stuff needed to light the railroad. Even the mastery of electrons is not quite enough, since we're trying not simply to light up the place but to make that lighting look like sunlight—highly directional and shadow-creating, in other words. John knew about shadows, as he wasn't about to spend hours on all of that rockwork and then diminish its impact by filling the nooks and crannies with form-killing light.

Nevertheless, even the best lighting effects cannot hide unwanted gloss and shine. Even the most washed and polished steam-

liner in the pre-stainless days had far less gloss than the typical model often exhibits, not only due to road grime from even a single trip between washings but because of the atmosphere between the car and the viewer. John Allen was well aware of this fact, and the Gorre & Daphetid—recognized around the world as one of the finest model railroads ever built—is a testimonial to his skill and his awareness of how things really look when viewed at distances approximating those typical on model railroads.

Virginia & Truckee steam

Recent visitors to the Nevada State Museum's collection of railroad cars and locomotives had the unusual opportunity to view the restoration of a steam locomotive. Former Virginia & Truckee No. 25, a Baldwin Ten Wheeler (4-6-0), was being restored for operation, perhaps by this fall. Some 20 other pieces of V&T rolling stock are also to be restored, and visitors can view the efforts. The museum also acquired a 67-foot Las Vegas & Tonopah R.R. coach which had been used as a clubhouse for the Los Angeles Live Steamers (photo). According to a press release, the museum is open on weekends only from 8:30 to 4:30 and is located on South Carson Street at Fairview Drive in Carson City, Nevada.

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