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INTRODUCTION

The genesis for this project is the long-running feature in *Classic Trains* magazine, What's in a Photo, put together by Jerry Pinkepank. These photos are a treasure trove of information about classic railroading.

Photography has always been an important part of model railroading. We use it to share our modeling with others, and we use it to inspire us.

This book is about the photos that inspire us. Sometimes, there's a scene we just have to see in three dimensions, so we go all out to re-create everything in the image. Other times, an image is a spark—to learn more, to head off in a new direction, to improve our modeling. Photographs are also reference materials, allowing us to see how things used to be, to see places and machines that no longer exist.

We've gathered some of model railroading's most talented builders to share their models and the images that inspired them. In some cases, it was a published scene that inspired a

project. But some of these projects are based on photos taken by the authors, either because they knew they were seeing something they might want to model some day, or perhaps because they wanted to be sure to preserve a scene on film or as digital data for future reference. One project was inspired by Google Maps.

And of course, where one photo might have been the inspiration, often there were other photos that filled in the gaps—the far side of a building, parts that were in shadow, details that were different in the inspirational photo from what the modeler wanted to depict in his chosen era.

Perhaps some of these photos will inspire you to model these same scenes, but more importantly, the projects in this book may inspire you to find your own projects, sparked by photos you've found or taken yourself. We hope you'll be inspired either way.

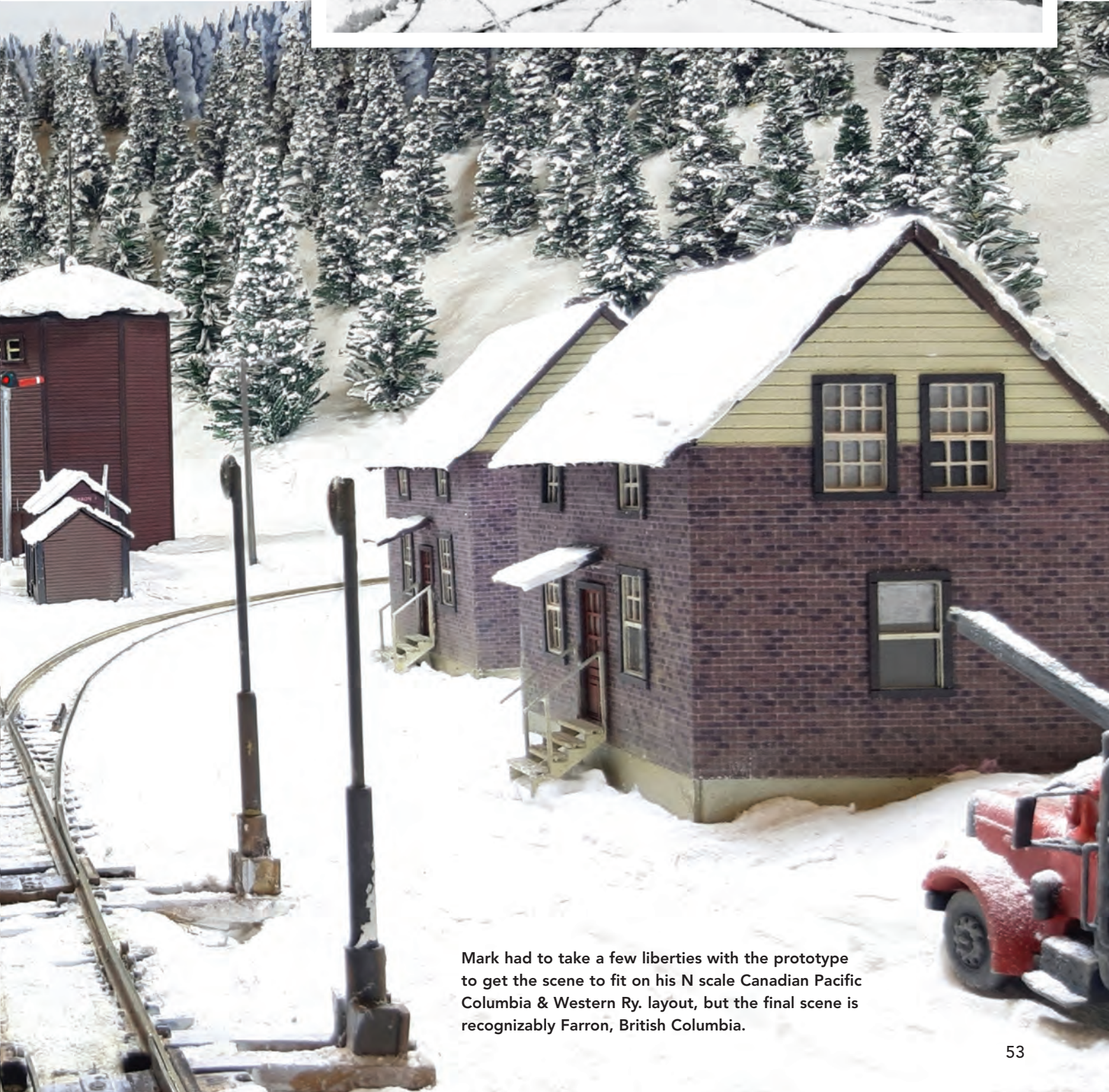
Backdrops bring a snowy scene to life

Mark Dance // Photos by the author

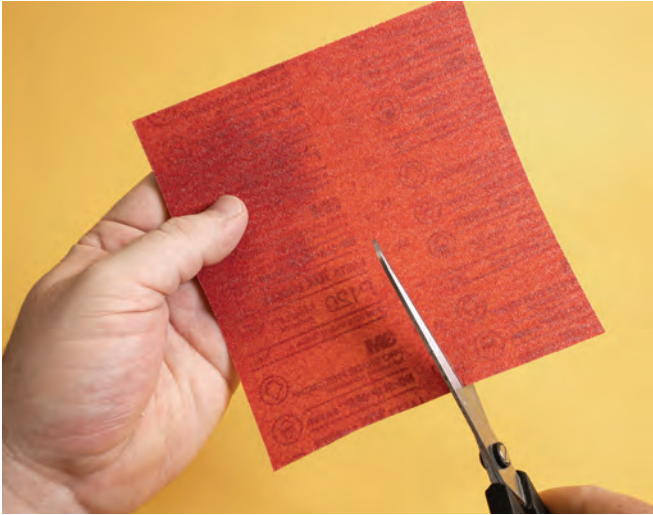


This photo by Theresa Smith shows Farron, B.C., in the early 1950s, when her father worked for the Canadian Pacific. It and articles by Mike Dannemann inspired Mark Dance to add a snow scene to his model railroad.

Theresa Smith



Mark had to take a few liberties with the prototype to get the scene to fit on his N scale Canadian Pacific Columbia & Western Ry. layout, but the final scene is recognizably Farron, British Columbia.



To help simulate the tar paper and gravel roof, I used a sheet of 120 grit sandpaper cut to size. I've come to prefer this material for modeling flat roofs, since it gives me more control and a better appearance than trying to use real rock or ballast. The sandpaper was painted with a dark gray spray paint primer, and glued to the top of the core with CA.

Gathering the grain

Hills Grain and Feed features a motley collection of grain bins in various heights and diameters. To replicate the variety present, I turned to a similarly-assorted selection of commercial products.

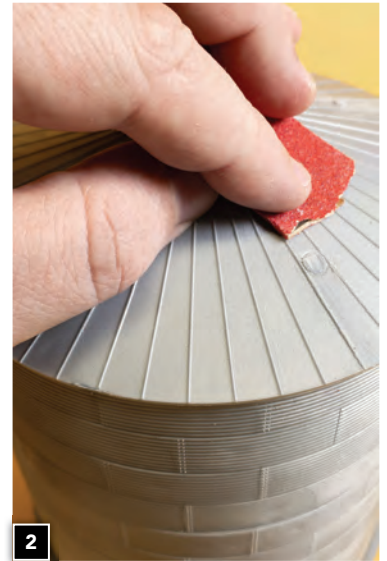
The two large bins on the south end of the complex were made from Walthers Big Grain Storage Bins, **1** and **2**. Since the prototype features a different vent style than the one provided in the kit, I needed to fill the included holes in the roof since I wouldn't be using them. I attached the included vent pieces to the top of the bin, then cut them flush with the roof to plug the holes. Tamiya Putty was used to fill the seams, then sanded smooth when dry.

Rix Products oft-used grain bins made up the bulk of the complex, **3**. The four shorter units were built following the included directions, including adding the appropriate detail parts. The kits allowed me to customize the height to fit my needs, but were otherwise built as designed. I made sure to line up the seams, alternating between bands as I assembled each layer. Be sure to take your time and line up the individual corrugations as well while gluing them together.

For the lone bin at the north end of the industry, I wanted to try something different, since it would stand out more than the rest of the bins. My friends at Iowa Scaled Engineering released a version of the prototype in HO scale under their Grain Belt Models line, **4**. Their products have the advantage of being built as complete rings instead of separate pieces, which makes assembly considerably quicker. Grain Belt Models markets this 18-foot version as the Hills bin.



1



2



3



4

The custom wet-dry bin



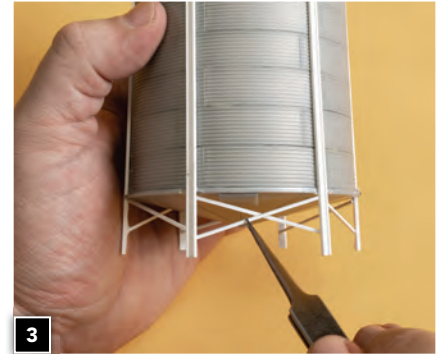
1 The remaining bin, a large wet-dry storage version, offered a unique challenge. The prototype is smaller than a lot of commercially-available options, so much so that kitbashing the bin from those products would ultimately not offer as accurate of a representation. I assembled my own version using a variety of scratchbuilding supplies.

Since the wet-dry bin matched the other, smaller bins in the complex, I used another Rix Products version as the start for my custom arrangement. One of their 15 degree tank tops was applied to the bottom of the completed structure to seal up the bin, **1**.



2 I then applied Plastruct styrene C-channel pieces to the sides to model the legs, **2**. Six separate strips were attached evenly around the entire bin, and extended 2 inches below the bottom of the bin.

Separate .040" strips from Evergreen Scale Models between the legs serve as cross braces to stabilize the entire structure, **3**. However, I did not add footings, since they would be covered by grass, weeds, and other underbrush once installed on the layout.



Details galore



A plethora of smaller detail parts were then added to the entire complex. While none of the grain bins are connected to each other, as often happens in larger setups, each bin does include the typical set of accessories such as chutes, dryers, and access doors.

Rix Products' Grain Bin Parts accessory kits were used on all the



bins in the complex, based on prototype placement.

Following prototype practice, roof access supports were added using Evergreen styrene strips. They were attached to the bin top with Tamiya Extra Thin cement.



One of the key details is the large roof auger that sits atop the grain bin at the southern end of the scene. Despite searching for a suitable product, I was never able to locate an appropriate version in HO scale. I finally lucked out when I discovered an auger kit from Bossen Implement, a farm toy dealer located in eastern Iowa. While the kit is scaled at 1/64th of full size (S scale), I was able to cut down the main tube to better fit my 1/87th scale needs. The supports for the auger atop the bin were shaped from .025" piano wire.



The remaining items came from my ever-growing collection of scrap and detail parts. I referenced prototype photos for the style and placement of all the parts, knowing I can always come back later and add or remove as information becomes available.



Harvey's HO scale model included some changes to the prototype arrangement to better fit his modeling space. For example, the model streetcars enter and exit the scene in the opposite direction of the prototype. On Harvey's model, the parking lots serve as "breathing space" as green landscapes would in a rural layout.

Building Fisherman's Wharf

By Harvey Simon // Photos by the author unless otherwise noted

After seven years building a 35-square-foot layout depicting San Francisco's F-line trolley system, the finish line was in sight. It's been a wonderful ride, and with the completion of Fisherman's Wharf, I could finally watch the trolleys make a complete run on a fully scenicked layout—starting in the Castro District, moving through the downtown area and arriving and turning around at Fisherman's Wharf (see *Great Model Railroads 2022* for more on the F-line).

Fisherman's Wharf is one of San Francisco's most famous areas and has many interesting attractions for tourists and residents. Millions of people visit Fisherman's Wharf annually, an area rich in sights and seafood. As I thought about capturing the area's flavor, I quickly discovered the tricky part in composing the scene was determining what buildings and other scenic elements would make the cut. So the goal became creating a convincing scene in which the various elements could be scaled down to the available space yet still look like everything belonged.

Google maps was a key research tool. Being able to take a virtual tour of the area, snapping street level screenshots along the way, helped me choose structures, while the satellite views provided the orientation. Like the other structures on my layout, each building represents a prototype. Many are rather ordinary, and ordinary is good, particularly those against the backdrop or layout edge.

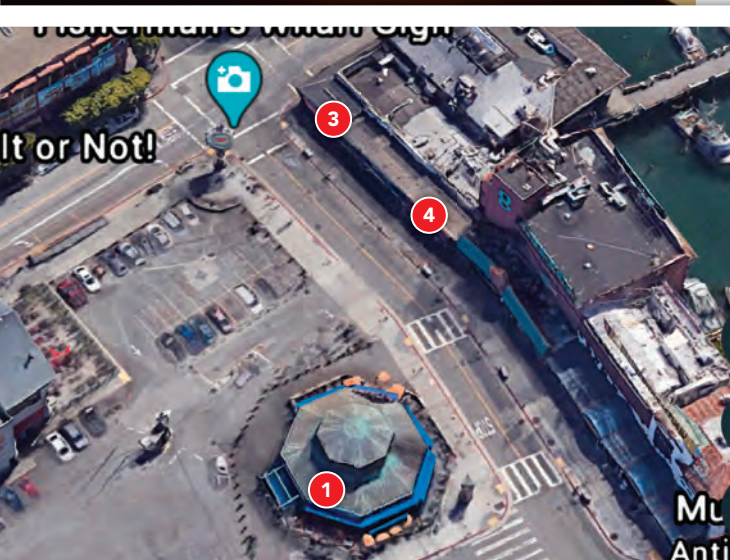
These include the Holiday Inn and Denny's (a kitbash using Design Preservation Models modular wall parts), strip center (a Summit CustomCuts backdrop flat kitbash), a block of three adjacent businesses—Latte Express, Aroma Tea, and bike rental shop (scratchbuilt using Magnuson wall remainders from other projects), and Crab Station and Gram's Lighthouse (scratchbuilt, also using old Magnuson parts). The other structures in the scene include Supreme Crab (scratchbuilt), Chowder Hut (3D printed) and the large Fisherman's Wharf sign (3D printed) that is a landmark in itself. To capture the waterfront, I scaled down an oldie-but-goodie—Campbell Scale Models wharf, no. 307.

WHAT'S IN THE PHOTO

1. Chowder Hut
2. Supreme Crab
3. Crab Station and
4. Gram's Lighthouse



Sometimes your inspiration can come from Google Maps. Harvey Simon knew he wanted to complete his HO scale San Francisco F-line layout with a Fisherman's Wharf scene. Looking at the area on Google Maps helped Harvey decide how to lay out the scene. *Google Maps*



It or Not!

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