

*Official Newsletter Of The Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society, Inc.*

*The*  **ONTARIO**  
*Express*



*Winter*  
*2025*

*President's Message*

*Greetings everyone! Wow, 2024 was a fantastic year for our Society in many different ways. Our membership has grown steadily, donations are continuing to pour in, and we established PayPal for new members, membership renewals and donations. The return of Middletown Railroad Day was our biggest one to date, and our convention was absolutely fantastic. I can go on and on but once again we want to thank all our active members, especially those who work so hard behind the scenes to keep this great organization rolling down the right track.*

*2025 will be no different, with more great events and programs plus a possible steam excursion with an actual steam whistle from a NYO&W steam locomotive, on loan from the collection of Dan Myers. Vice President Alan Held and myself are hosting a driving tour of the right of way Saturday March 29th for the 68th anniversary of the abandonment of the O&W. We will pick up where the 2024 driving tour left off at Liberty with a quick view of the Liberty Model Railroad Club's NYO&W layout. We will then continue all the way to Cadosia Station with a stop at the Roscoe O&W museum. I am very excited about this trip and will be bringing along my NYO&W steam locomotive bell and ringing it in different locations along the right of way. For more information please contact [AutoTour@OntarioExpress.org](mailto:AutoTour@OntarioExpress.org).*

*Society member John Taibi is once again writing an Observer for the Society. This time John takes us along the Port Jervis & Monticello Branch and the predecessor lines. There are plenty of new photos, some never seen before (a few from my own personal collection) and much more information that has come out since Gerald Best's and Peter Brill's books. John has brought it all out in this new book which we are very excited to see. At a robust 224 pages, rather than split this into two volumes, this will be the membership publication for 2024-2025.*

*As we enter the new year may I remind everyone that we are always looking for volunteers. Without their help we would not be able to function. Sadly, we lost one of our most active members of the organization this past December. Our dear friend and member Mike Noble unexpectedly passed away just before Christmas. Mike was heavily involved in the Society as our Northern Division Representative. This has been a tremendous loss for us and the railroad community in general. We miss him dearly. If you would like to assist in any of our positions or departments, such as the Archives, Sales Table, 105 Project or other positions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We look forward to another fun and successful year, and with a lot of hard work we will make it happen.*

*Joseph Senese*

**Modeling the O&W  
Fish Car "Adirondack" in HO Scale  
No. 56 in a Series**

Further on to "Modeling the O&W No. 55", the final paragraph of that narrative promised an additional part; -- Building a model of the Gilbert Car Company built New York Conservation Fish Car "Adirondack" as constructed in 1890. This project was a "Scratch Build" in the strictest use of the term; -- not only was the model built from scratch, but so also was much of the information assembled from "scratch;" -- a bit from here there and everywhere.

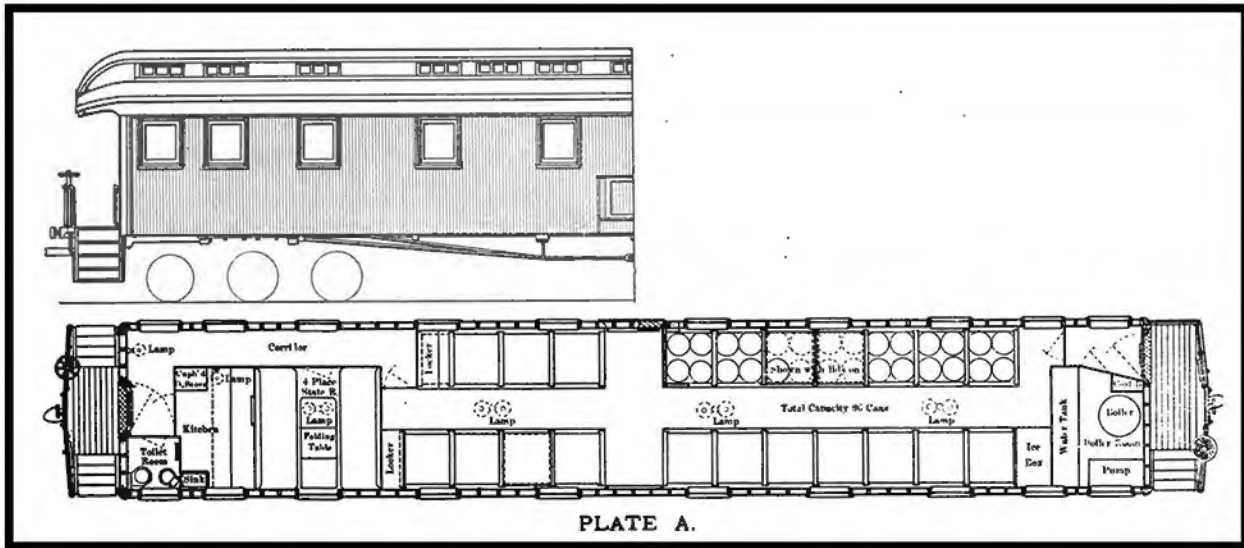
Some primary sources were several scans sent to me by well-known freight car historian Raymond L. Breyer, who was pointed to me by freight car modeler / photo collector and pre-Depression modeling guru Eric Hansmann.

To initially jump onto and into this build was first an image of "Adirondack" parked for loading hatchery fish "fry" at a hatchery on Long Island. Due to the oblique angle and point-of-view of this image some "corrective" manipulation was done via use of the "free transform" features of Photoshop Elements, allowing for some verification of proportions. Although presenting a different perspective the platform details at far end of the car in this image and the "transformed" image were unclear; -- all leading to a "mistake" in early construction and some backtracking later along.



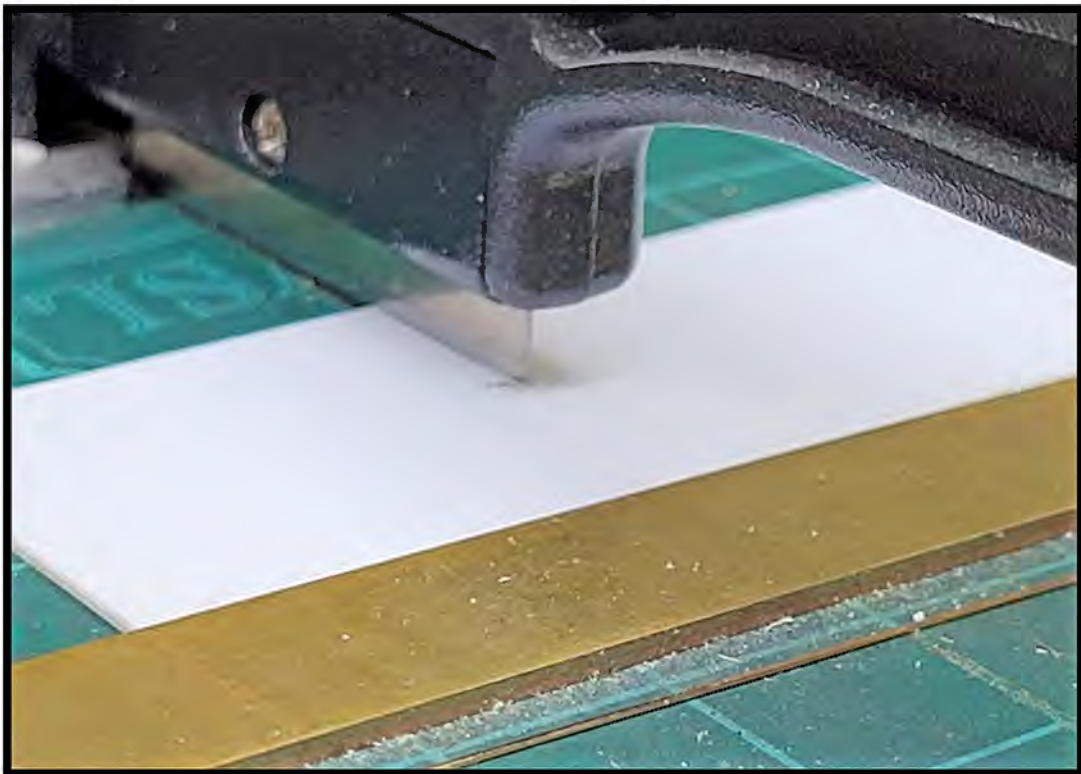
A further Ray Breyer scan was a diagram that allowed for some basic measurements and proportions to be laid out. While not scaled a few possibly "known" measurements were assumed; overall width of 10' more or less (as being a common dimension used in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century design and build of wooden passenger cars types) and a six-wheel truck wheelbase of 10' 6" to 10' 8" (not so very much difference in HO Scale).

With those, and either of those assumed dimensions the scan from Ray Breyer was manipulated in Photoshop Elements® to print in HO Scale.



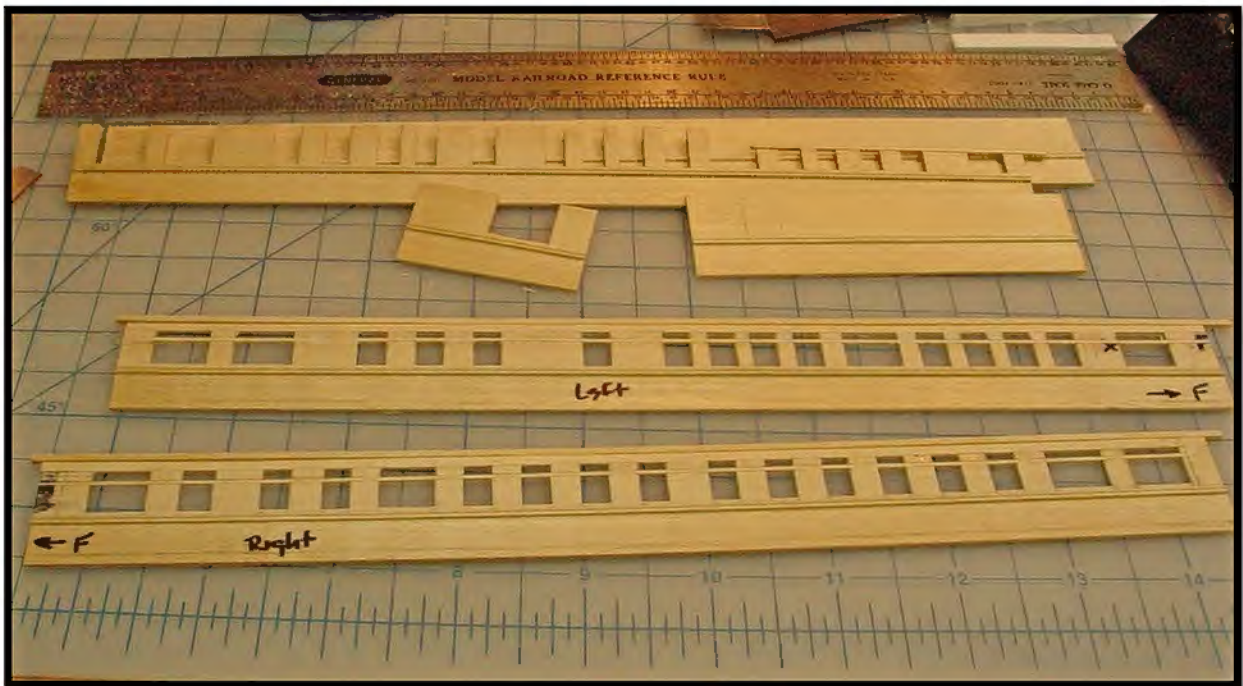
A first order-of-business to be undertaken if much was to be made of a car with twenty small windows to be evenly and uniformly cut into the sides. I opted to use Tichy 18" "Work Car Windows" and Evergreen scribed Passenger Car Siding. While I have built many HO Scale rolling stock passenger car models not remarkably different from the basic design and proportion of "Adirondack" my preferred building material had been wood and milled wood shapes made by Northeastern Models. For a number of reasons (explained later herein) I decided to proceed with styrene construction.

Long ago in the construction of O&W Parlor Car Rondout and Car 30 "Warwick" I'd made a modification to my NWSL "Chopper" so that cuts to car sides would be a uniform depth from the top edge of (car side) stock, and using a bottom-edge fence with the depth of cut being determined by the width of the cutter; this technique and feature is more clearly shown in the following image.



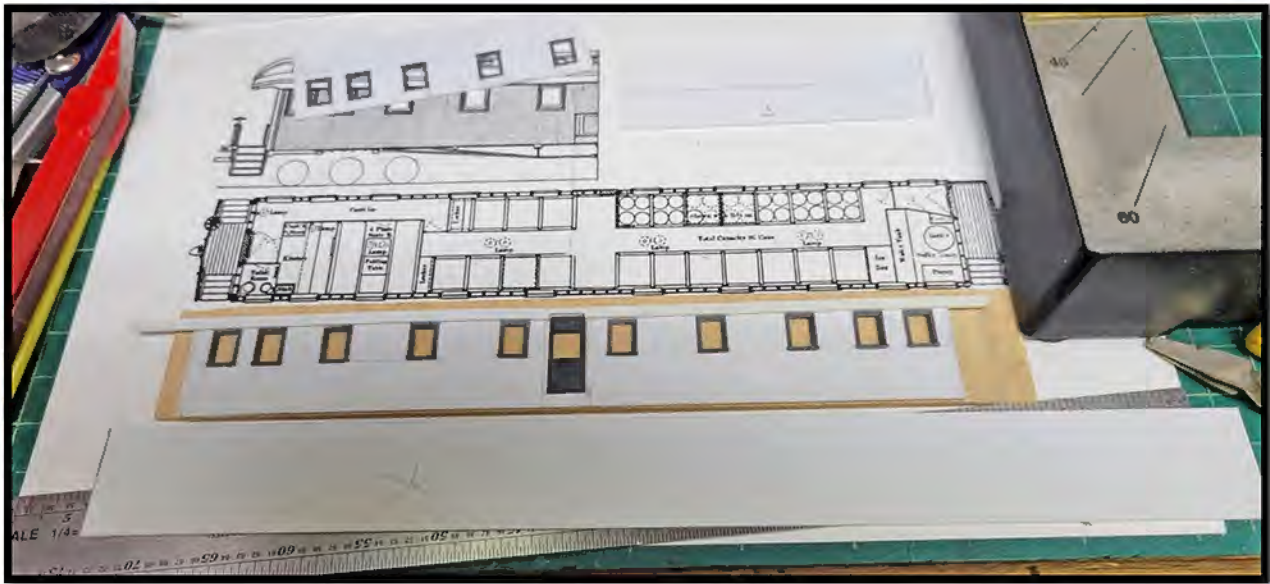


Blanks for sides are “chopped” to the width of the Tichy windows with the modified and bottom-edge-fenced, and then with the opening chopped out using a 6mm woodworker’s chisel. The Tichy window slides into place and is bonded with MEK, the chopped-out remnant of siding is slipped back to fill the void from window top to top-of-siding, bonded in place and sliced away even with the top of the siding. While this workbench “ballet” sounds complicated and more involved (?) than it really is - it only takes a couple of minutes to do each window!).



This image is of side blanks for PC “Warwick” using Northeastern wood milled “Coach siding” stock.....but the modified Chopper could only make an effect “voids for the windows; -- thereafter requiring some very fussy and exacting cutting for the upper window sash and then gluing and re-gluing additions in place. Recalling that build, was the influence for this build to be made using styrene. I had done other builds of structures, milk cars (all closed) and freight cars, using some of the methods described in Model Railroader Magazine narratives decades ago by Alan Armitage who used MEK as a bonding agent / “glue” as I have for decades. I use the term “bonding” as the descriptor for “gluing” styrene using MEK, since it is more of a weld than

glue joint, and the joint is fused almost instantaneously as with a welded steel / ferrous metal joint!

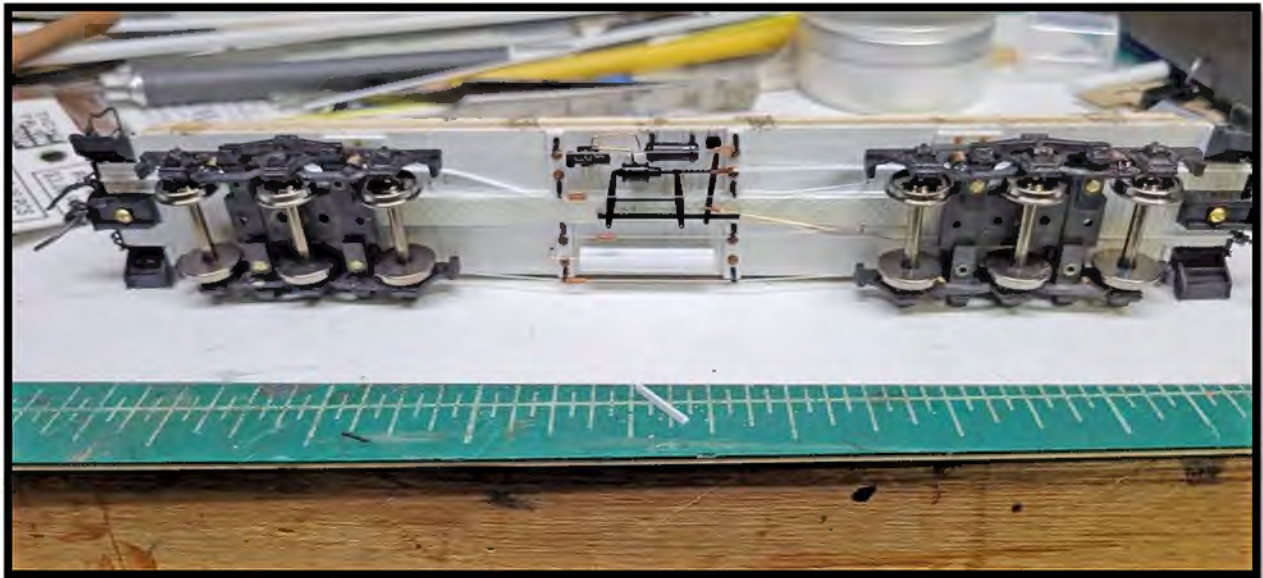


Two simple 5-window panels (each a mirror image) bonded together against the sides of a Grandt Line 30" door, makes one side, and a styrene strip atop the side allows the fragile thin stock butt "welds" to be easily handled. Two pair of mirror image 5-window panels makes up the sides of "Adirondack."

Inasmuch as the "Adirondack" was to have open platforms at both ends I did some experimenting with materials. I felt the platform ends had to be milled to match the thickness dimension of the end beams of the Cal-Scale lost wax casings I intended to use.



After roughing out a floor from Northeastern wood stock I felt the ends and platform too limber to withstand much further handling nor construction beyond. I opted instead to cut the floor from 1/8" model airplane plywood and then laminate scribed styrene stock to the bottom, and then detailing it out from there. The trucks are (historic) Central Valley six-wheel passenger car trucks with ReBoxx double-insulated semi-scale wheelset. I also used some (historic) Central Valley six-wheel truck body bolsters that make use of a finely machined and threaded stud that screws into the center of the CV truck and then makes use (in the bolster) of shimming washers and a dress snap(!)...all to pivot the truck evenly as opposed to mounting the truck via a (wood) screw off-centered!



While quite ignoring the floor diagram, and not really understanding what was going on with respect to platform entry, I'd made both ends of the car as if to use passenger car steps both sides / both ends. Once realizing a stirrup step was required one side / one end, the "well" for the passenger step had to be filled in, and the stirrup step fashioned and crafted.



Stood up and with sides glued in place the "Adirondack" assumes its (nearly) final form with a roof made from a cut / spliced Bethlehem Car Works "Kit-Bits" roof and "Kit-Bits" etched bass clerestory screens.

A technique I use in building-from-scratch, particularly when building from less than complete plans or diagrams, is to periodically "stand-up" and take a critical view of progress to date. This will allow an opportunity to refine a detail before construction proceeds to a point where that detail cannot be refined. On "Adirondack" the single rung step (and even prior the "mistook" passenger car step) was removed and replaced with the "correct" double rung step.

I learned long ago when in the midst of antique Indian Motorcycle restoration that sometimes the quality of an initial chore is less important than how well a mistake is repaired!



Three views to the nearly completed ends of "Adirondack."

Left; -- The platform and stirrup step peculiarity, fashioned on the prototype to accommodate the utility closet (on the opposite side of that end), and necessary offset to the entry door at this end; -- yet another "re-do" since the single rung stirrup didn't seem to work...now with a two-rung stirrup step.

Center; -- Opposite side of the end with the stirrup step, showing the more conventional passenger car step, and then the offset entry door.

Right; -- The more conventionally configured car end; -- equilateral passenger car steps and centered entry door.

Concluding, I have to say that thus far, in revisiting styrene construction after so much recent locomotive construction in cutting / machining / fabricating / soldering brass components has been immensely gratifying, and an impetus to gather up some furloughed and unfinished projects built with styrene and complete them once and for all! *Mal Houck*

### Calendar Of Events

**Saturday, March 29th, 9AM** - Auto Tour Of The NYO&W Ry. From Liberty To Cadosia. Meetup Location 11 Maple Street, Liberty, NY. RSVP: [AutoTour@OntarioExpress.org](mailto:AutoTour@OntarioExpress.org).

**Friday, April 4th, 7PM** - Membership Meeting Followed by a Presentation entitled: The Port Jervis, Monticello & Kingston Branches Part I By Joseph Senese.

**Friday, May 2nd, 7PM** - Membership Meeting Followed by a Presentation entitled: The Port Jervis, Monticello & Kingston Branches Part II By Joseph Senese.

**Friday, June 6th, 7PM** - Program TBA.

**July** - Middletown Railroad Day Date and Time TBA.

**September 5th, 7PM** - Membership Meeting Followed by a Presentation entitled: The Orange County Traction Company, Newburgh/Walden Insterurban, Then & Now By Ray Kelly.

**SUNDAY, September 21st** - Society Convention & Banquet. Otterkill Country Club, Campbell Hall, NY.

**Friday, November 7th, 7PM** - Membership Meeting Followed by a Presentation entitled: Aquaculture, Adirondack, & The O&W By Malcolm H. Houck.



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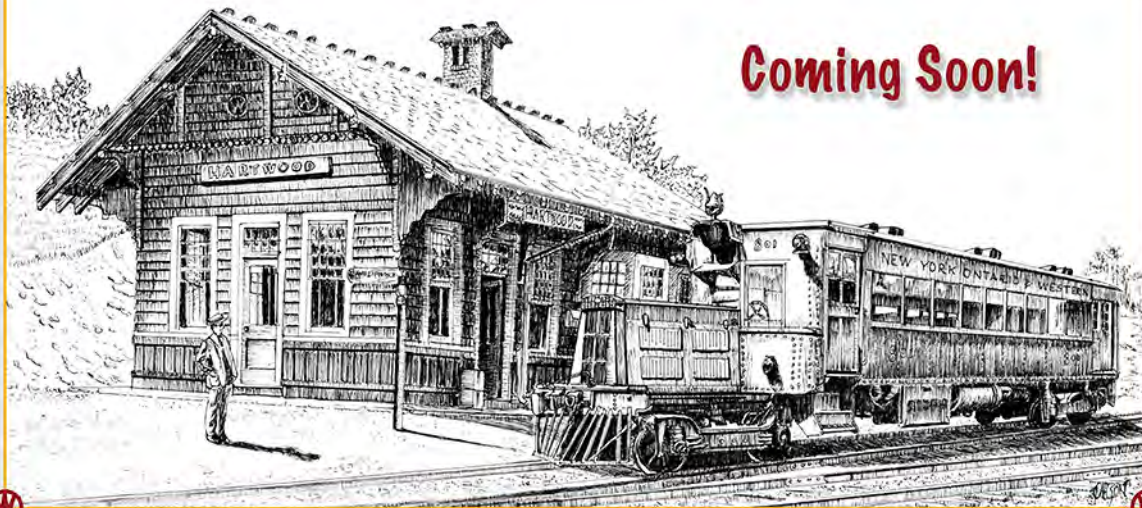
[www.OntarioExpress.org](http://www.OntarioExpress.org) - [Editors@OntarioExpress.org](mailto:Editors@OntarioExpress.org)

O&WRHS, Inc., P.O. Box 713, Middletown, NY 10940-0713

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## *The Monticello*

A Publication of the Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society



**Coming Soon!**

**By John Taibi**

with David F. Mazurek, F. Daniel Myers III, and Joseph Senese