

The YVRR – Not just Prototype Freight Cars

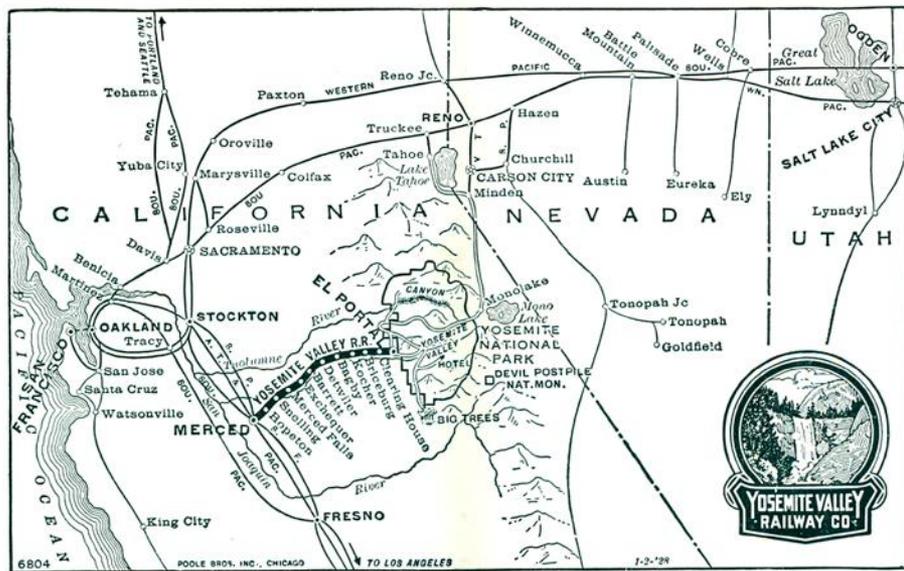
Modeling and Photography by Jack Burgess



By way of an introduction, I model the Yosemite Valley Railroad circa August 1939...



My layout was finished in June 2011...



The Yosemite Valley Railway Makes Direct Connection at Merced, California, with both the Southern Pacific and Atclson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroads.

THROUGH PULLMAN SERVICE TO YOSEMITE From SAN FRANCISCO and LOS ANGELES

REDUCED
ROUND TRIP
FARES TO
YOSEMITE

Good for 21 days
From

Merced . . . \$10.25
San Francisco . \$15.80
Los Angeles . . \$23.55

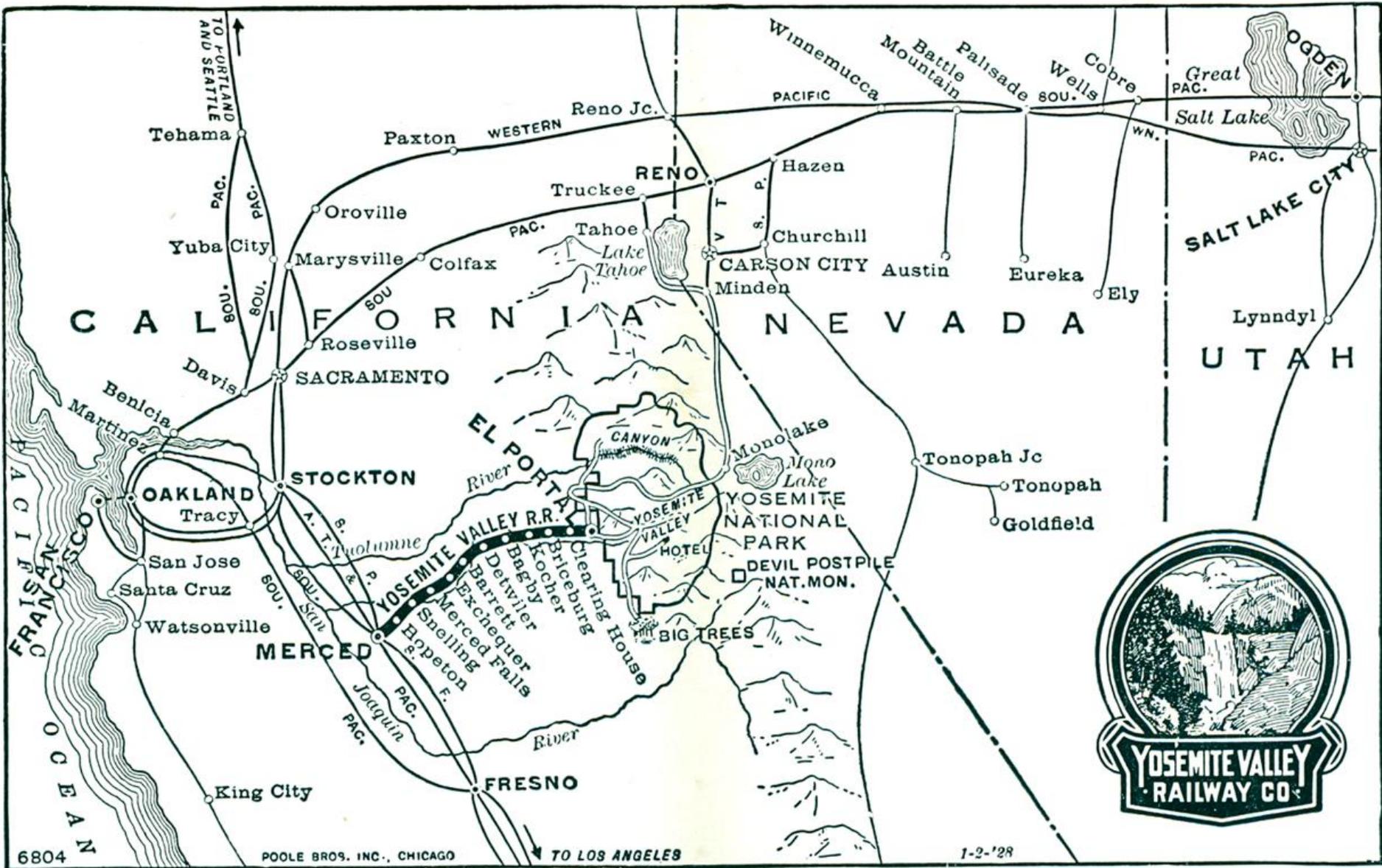
| *2 | May 30, 1937 | *3 |
|------------|---|------------|
| | (SOUTHERN PACIFIC) | |
| 11:00 P.M. | Lv. San Francisco Ar. | 8:12 A.M. |
| | (SOUTHERN PACIFIC) | |
| 7:45 P.M. | Lv. Los Angeles Ar. | 8:50 A.M. |
| | (YOSEMITE VALLEY RY.) | |
| 5:55 A.M. | Lv. Merced (So. Pac. Depot) Ar. | 10:55 P.M. |
| 6:00 A.M. | Lv. Merced (Y. V. Depot) Ar. | |
| 9:20 A.M. | Ar. El Portal Lv. | 7:15 P.M. |
| 9:30 A.M. | Lv. El Portal (Motor Stage) Ar. | 7:00 P.M. |
| 10:00 A.M. | Ar. Yosemite Lv. | 6:25 P.M. |

Trains marked * run daily. Light type A. M. Dark type P. M. Standard Pacific time.
Train No. 2 carries Standard Pullman cars from both San Francisco and Los Angeles via Southern Pacific Company to El Portal and dining car serving breakfast.
Train No. 3 carries Standard Pullman car from El Portal to San Francisco and Los Angeles and dining car serving dinner.
All trains carry observation parlor car between Merced and El Portal.

Schedule subject to change without notice

YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILWAY
Merced, California

SHIP BY RAILWAY EXPRESS
Wherever principal railways go, Railway Express goes too. Nation-wide. 23,000 offices. Fast. Dependable. Rates are low.



**The YVRR – Not just Prototype
Freight Cars**

Freight Cars

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

Empty Cars on Hand as of Specific Date

| | ATSF Box | GN Box | SP Box | UP Box | WP Box | Other Box | ATSF Auto | GN Auto | SP Auto | UP Auto | WP Auto | Other Auto | ATSF Open Top | SP Open Top | Other* | Total |
|-----------|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------------|-------------|--------|-------|
| 31-Dec-36 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 7 |
| 15-Jan-37 | 3 | | 3 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 9 |
| 31-Jan-37 | 1 | | 4 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 8 |
| 15-Feb-37 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | 6 | 2 | | 1 | 13 |
| 28-Feb-37 | 2 | | 4 | | | | | | | | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | 14 |
| 15-Mar-37 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | 2 | | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 19 |
| 31-Mar-37 | 3 | 2 | | | | 4 | | | 1 | | | | 7 | | 2 | 19 |
| 15-Apr-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 24 |
| 30-Apr-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 31-May-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 18 |
| 15-Jun-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 30-Jun-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 15-Jul-37 | <i>Includes 2 refrigerator cars</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 18 |
| 31-Jul-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 18 |
| 15-Aug-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 31-Aug-37 | <i>Includes 1 refrigerator car</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 16 |
| | <i>* Other (Not box, auto, refrig, or open top)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 14 | 4 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 14 | 14 | 3 | 13 | |

This is a spreadsheet built from a historical summary. The YV had interchanges with both the SP and ATSF. Not surprisingly most of the empties were SP and ATSF cars...

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

Empty Cars on Hand as of Specific Date

| | ATSF Box | GN Box | SP Box | UP Box | WP Box | Other Box | ATSF Auto | GN Auto | SP Auto | UP Auto | WP Auto | Other Auto | ATSF Open Top | SP Open Top | Other* | Total |
|-----------|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------------|-------------|--------|-------|
| 31-Dec-36 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 7 |
| 15-Jan-37 | 3 | | 3 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 9 |
| 31-Jan-37 | 1 | | 4 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 8 |
| 15-Feb-37 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | 6 | 2 | | 1 | 13 |
| 28-Feb-37 | 2 | | 4 | | | | | | | | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | 14 |
| 15-Mar-37 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | 2 | | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 19 |
| 31-Mar-37 | 3 | 2 | | | | 4 | | | 1 | | | | 7 | | 2 | 19 |
| 15-Apr-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 24 |
| 30-Apr-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 31-May-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 18 |
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| 30-Jun-37 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 14 |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 14 | 4 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 14 | 14 | 3 | 13 | |

As shown nearly all of the empty box cars were from western railroads. That suggests that freight cars on my layout should also from western railroads...



I started building resin freight cars in the early 1980s but 25 years later I found that empties report...



And began selling unbuilt kits on eBay in 2007 for cars which were too new or too far from home...



SOLD – Too new



SOLD – Only PFE and ATSF reefers were typically on the YV



SOLD – Too far from home



SOLD – Too many



SOLD – Wrong lettering

Some built kits also had to go on eBay...



Todd Pederson Coll



Based on this prototype photo, I built a couple gondola resin kits. But those cars in the photo were headed to a truck dump for a mine which started up in 1945. Sold on eBay...



My current fleet of 30 or so freight cars is 90% from western roads. My stash of 40 resin kits is 100% from western roads...



One exception...

Rarely can you duplicate a specific foreign car which appeared on the railroad in your modeling year.

In this case, PRR F30A flat car No. 474489...

Jim Law photo



Built using the Bowser undecorated kit. Like the prototype photo, the car is at Incline. One of only four styrene kits on the layout...



**Typical cars on the layout:
Log car 958 at Incline...**

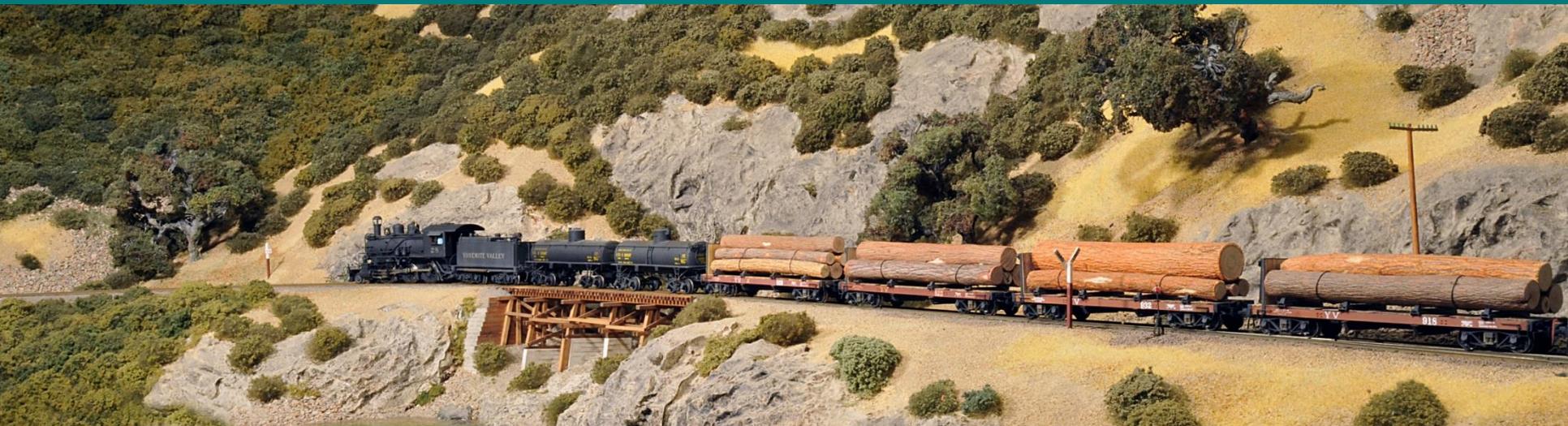
Fred Stoes



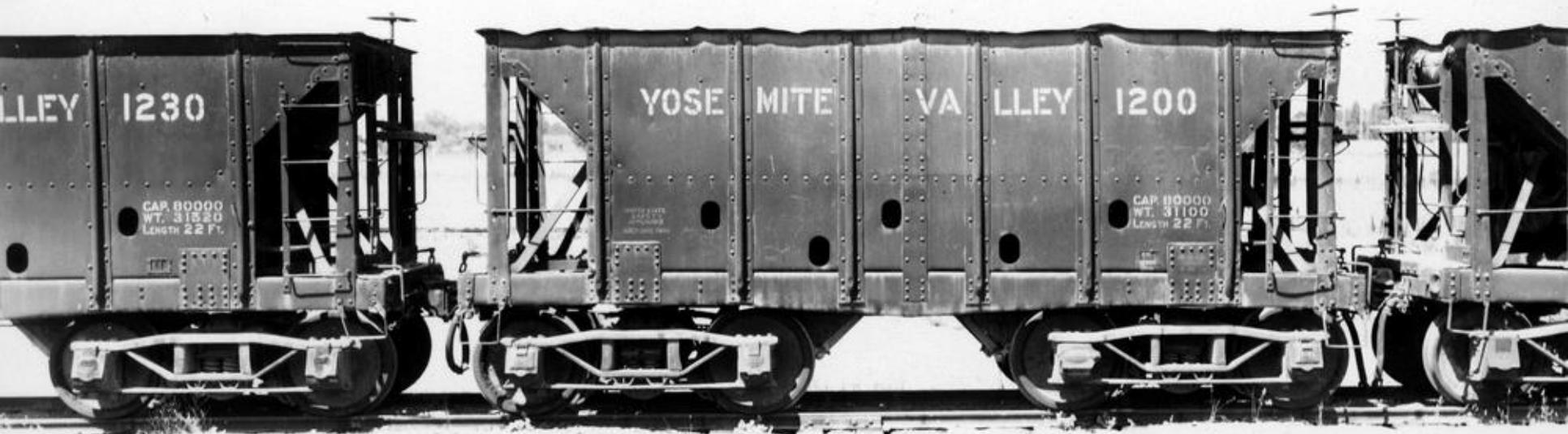
No. 876 at Incline...



Extra 28 pulling into Incline with some empty log cars and passing an empty UTLX "Van Dyke" tank car...



A typical log train...the tank cars are empty UTLX tank cars. The YV had 175 log cars. I have 14...

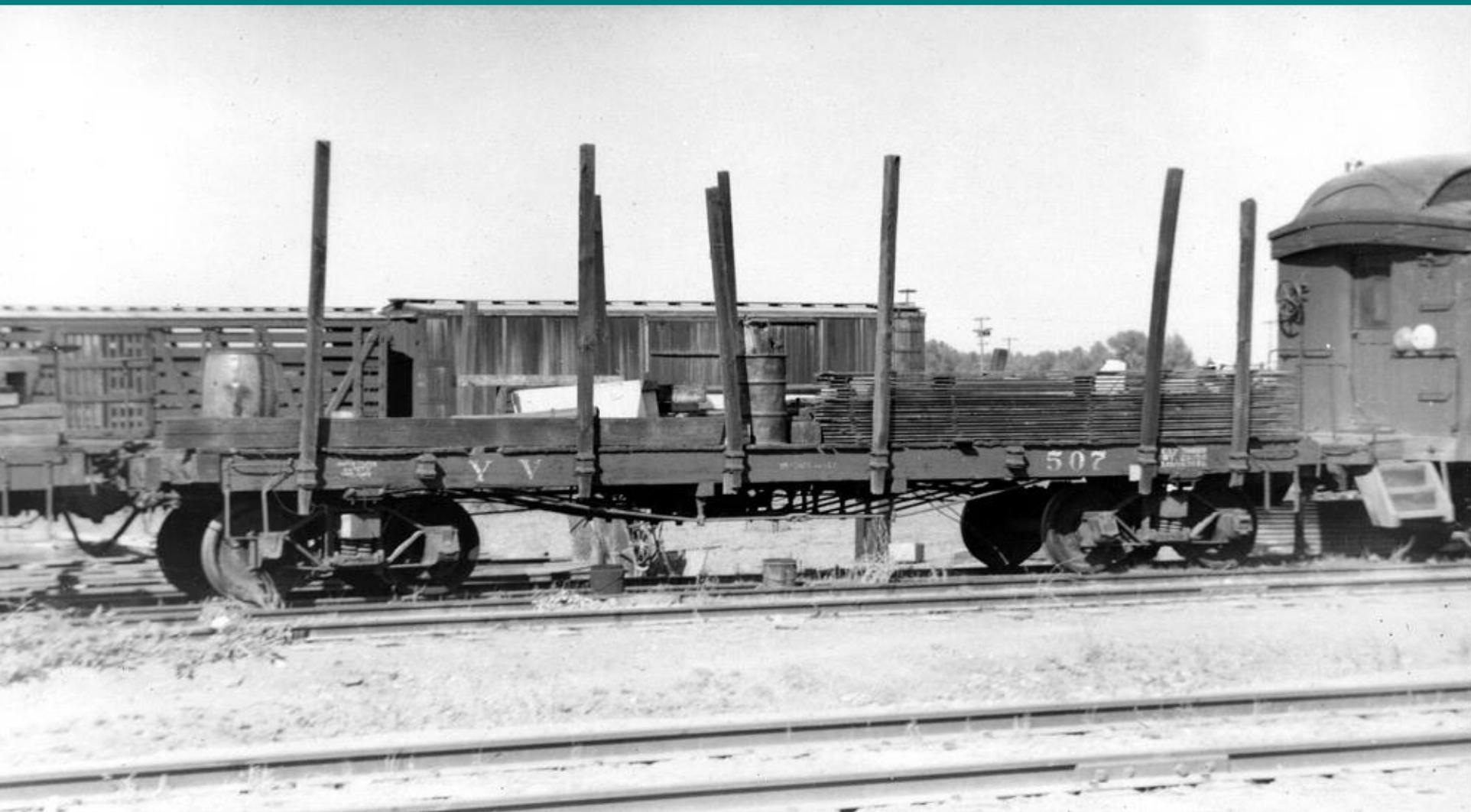


Fred Stoes

There were 51 of these hopper cars, called “rock cars”, on the YV. I purchased 51 Westerfield kits after providing plans and photos of the prototype. I have only built 11 of them so far, all that are needed for operations...



Some empty YV rock cars to be set out at Emory...



One of the 9 YV flat cars there in 1939...

Fred Stoes



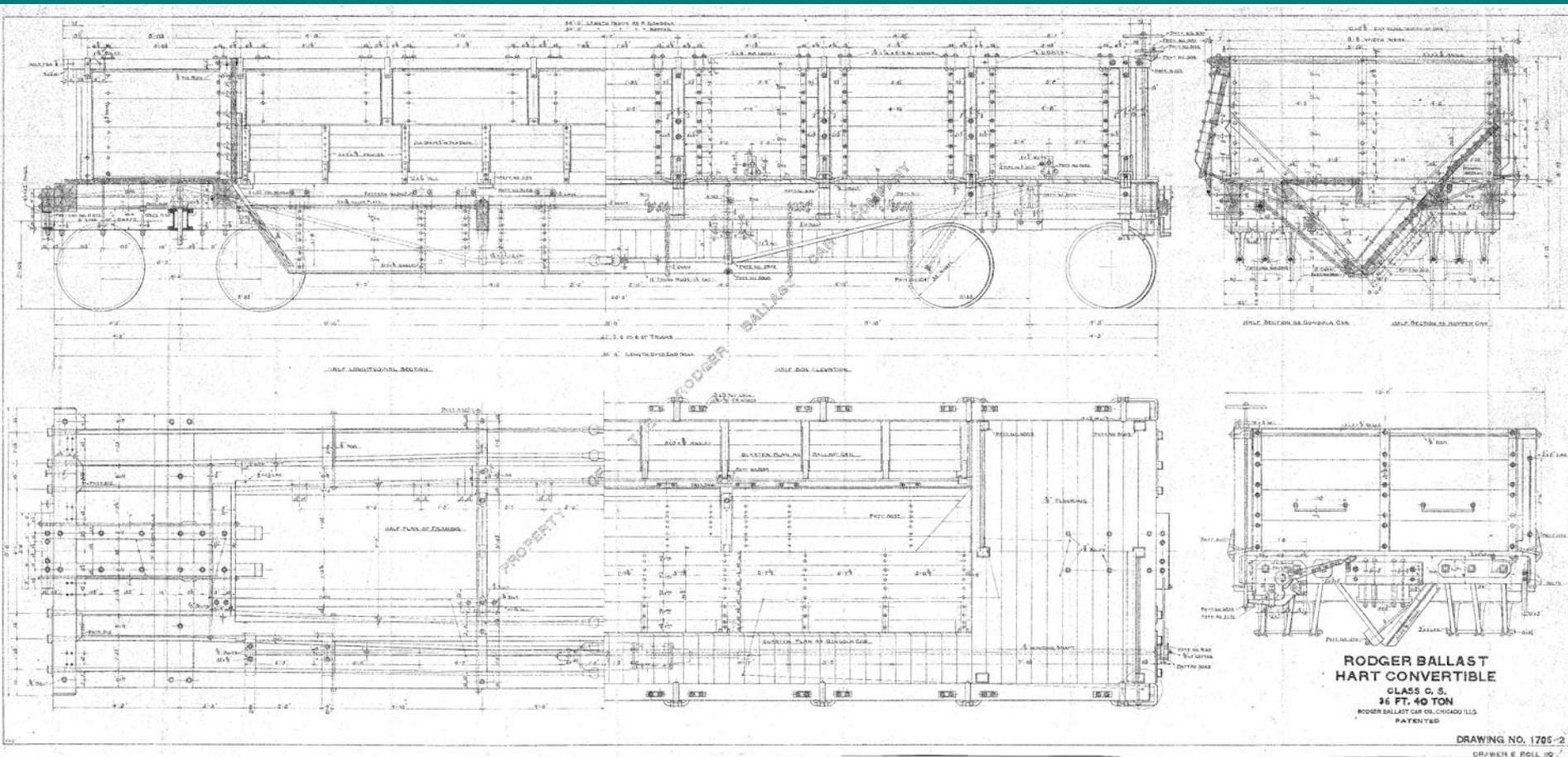
The scratchbuilt model...



Another scratchbuilt YV flat car...



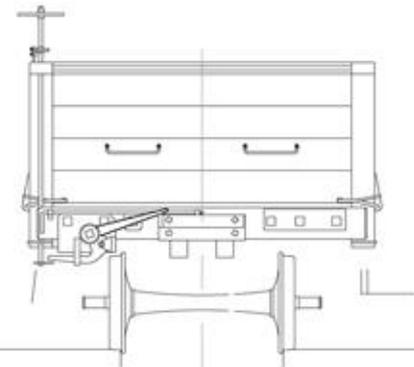
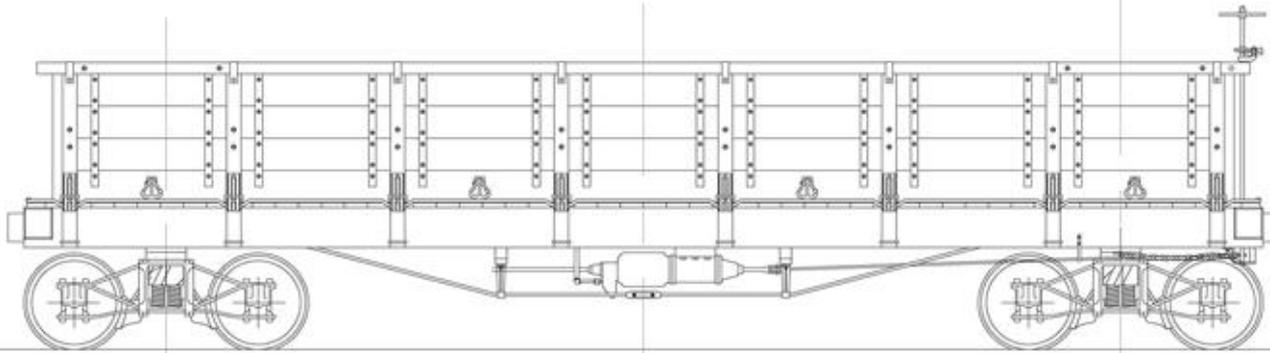
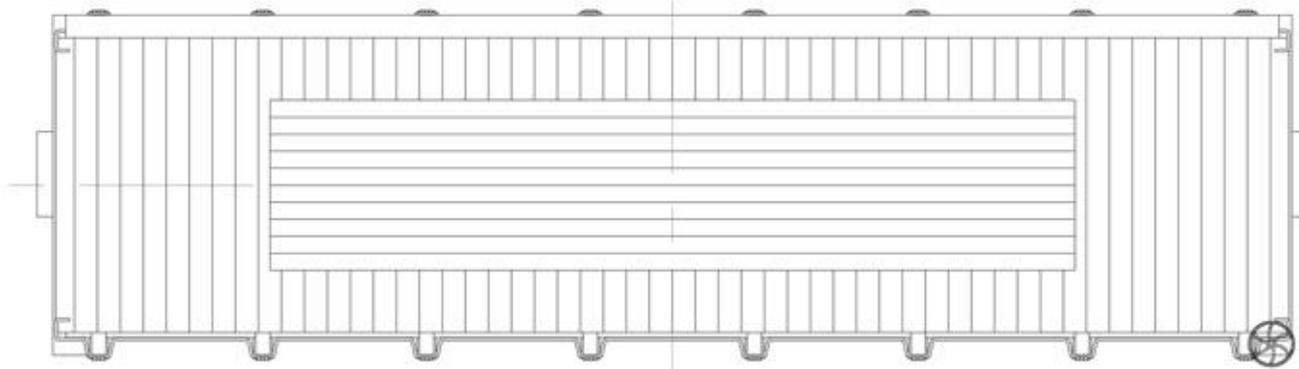
The YV had 6 Hart Ballast Cars which I needed...



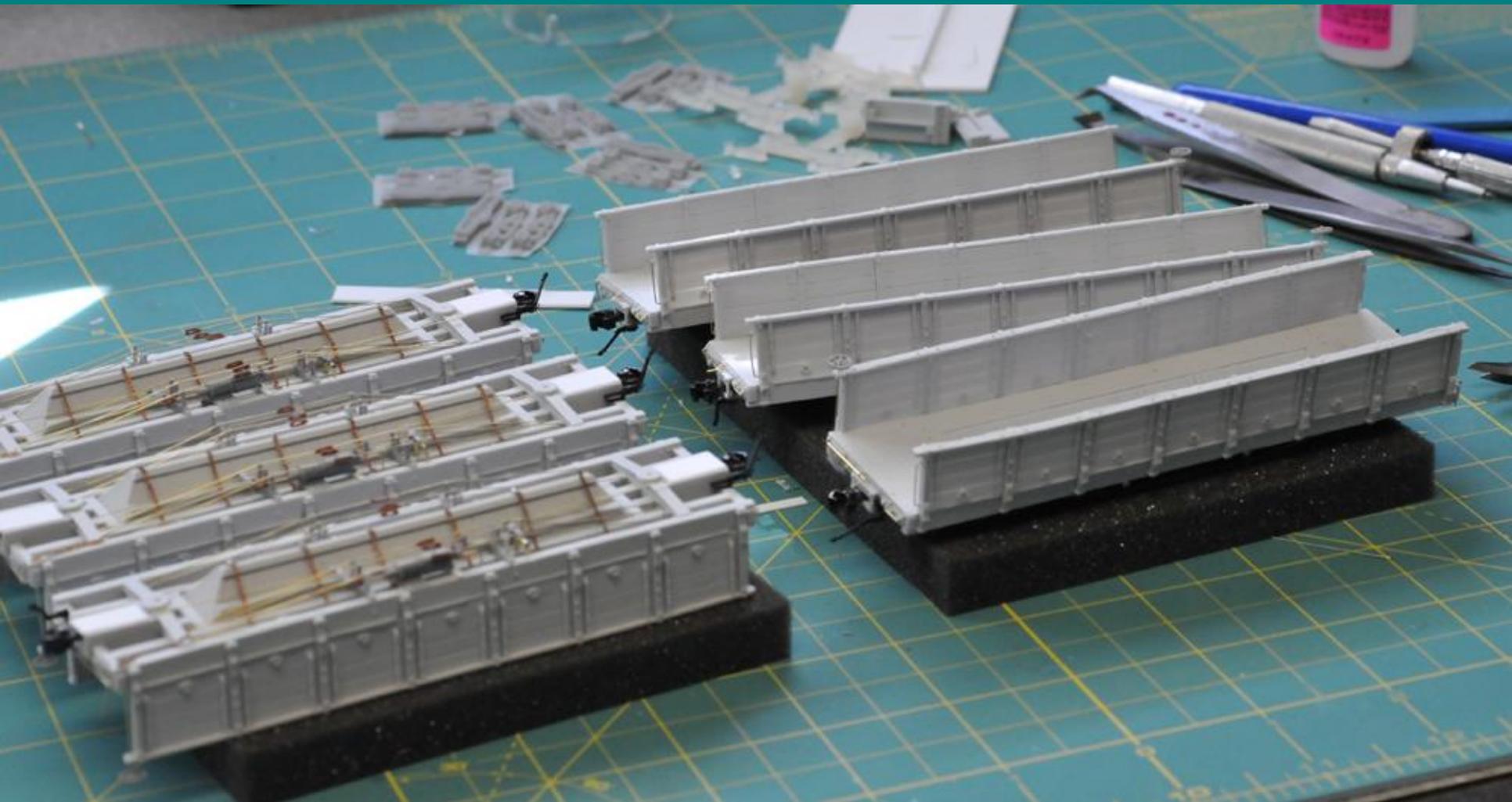
**RODGER BALLAST
 HART CONVERTIBLE**
 CLASS C. S.
 36 FT. 40 TON
 RODGER BALLAST CAR CO. CHICAGO ILL.
 PATENTED

DRAWING NO. 1705-2
 GRAPHIC & ROLL CO.

**Chicago & North Western Historical
 Society has original plans for the cars...**



...which let me prepare scale drawings of the YV cars...



Drawings were sent to Protowest Models who released resin kits for the cars in 2011...



...which let me build all six of the cars...

**The YVRR – Not just Prototype
Freight Cars**

Track Plans

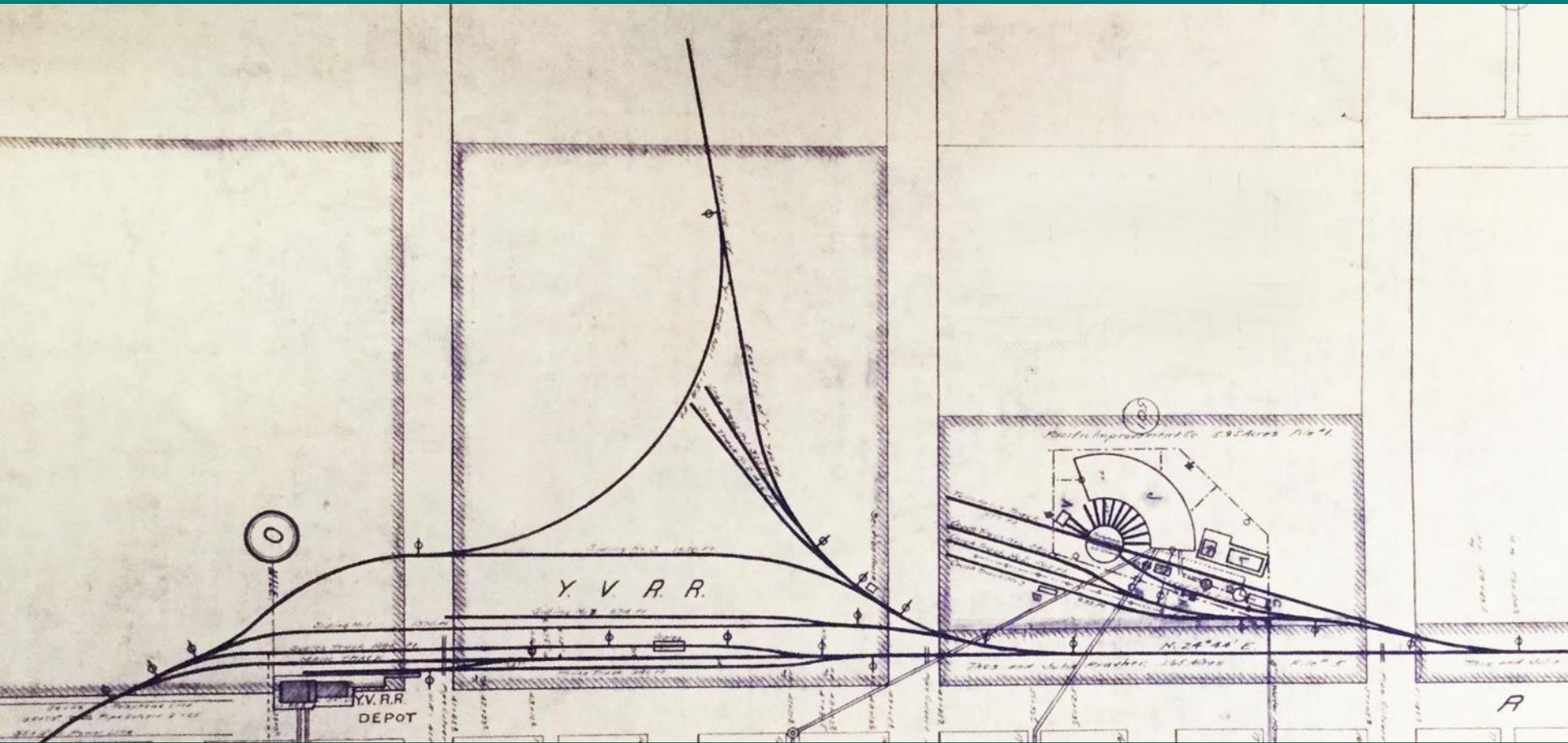


Al Rose

**This prototype view is from the second floor
of a building west of the Merced yards...**



A similar view on the layout...



A portion of the railroad drawing of the Merced yards dated 1912...



My version of the Merced yards circa 1939...

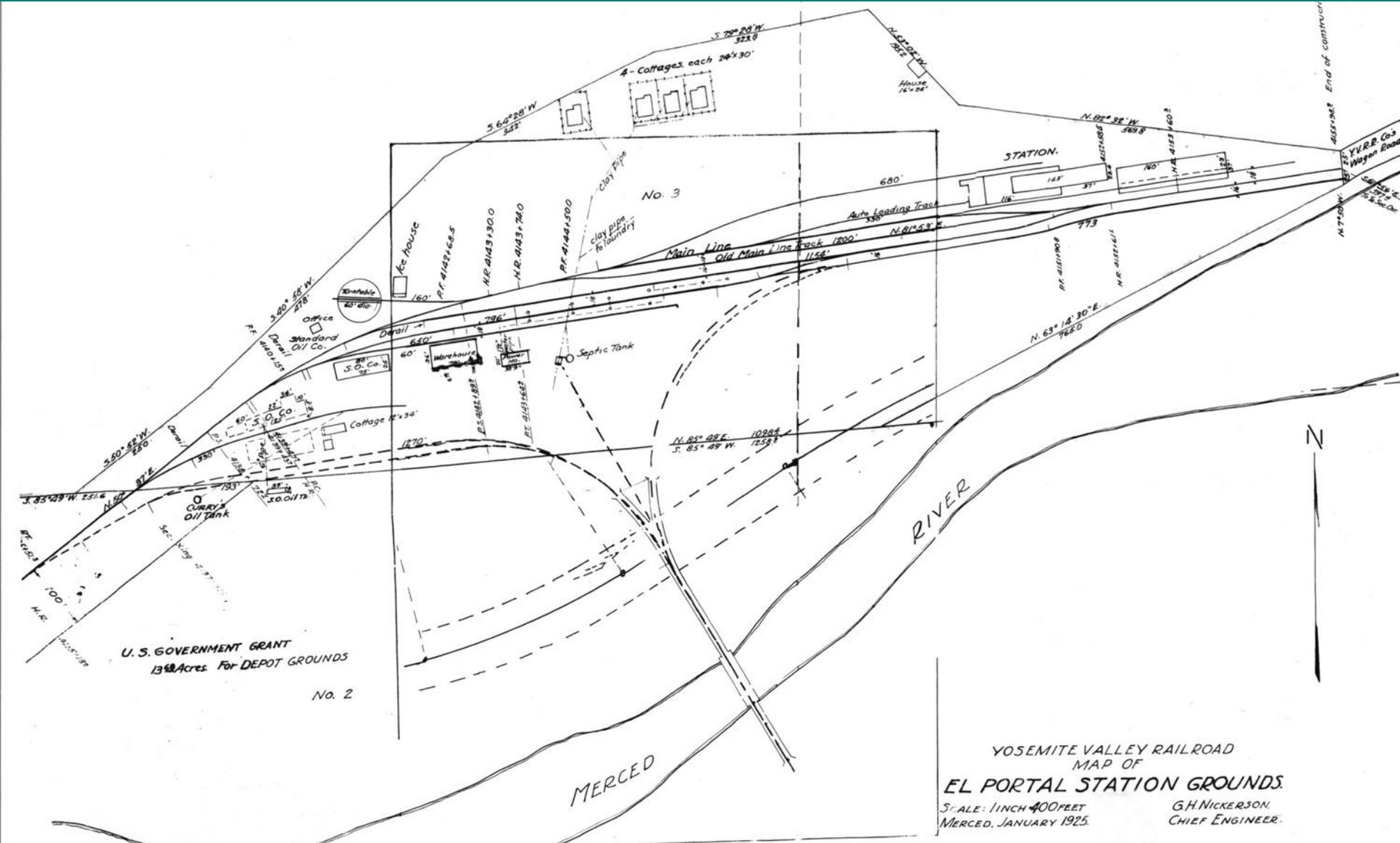


Merced
Population 10,128
Elevation 103

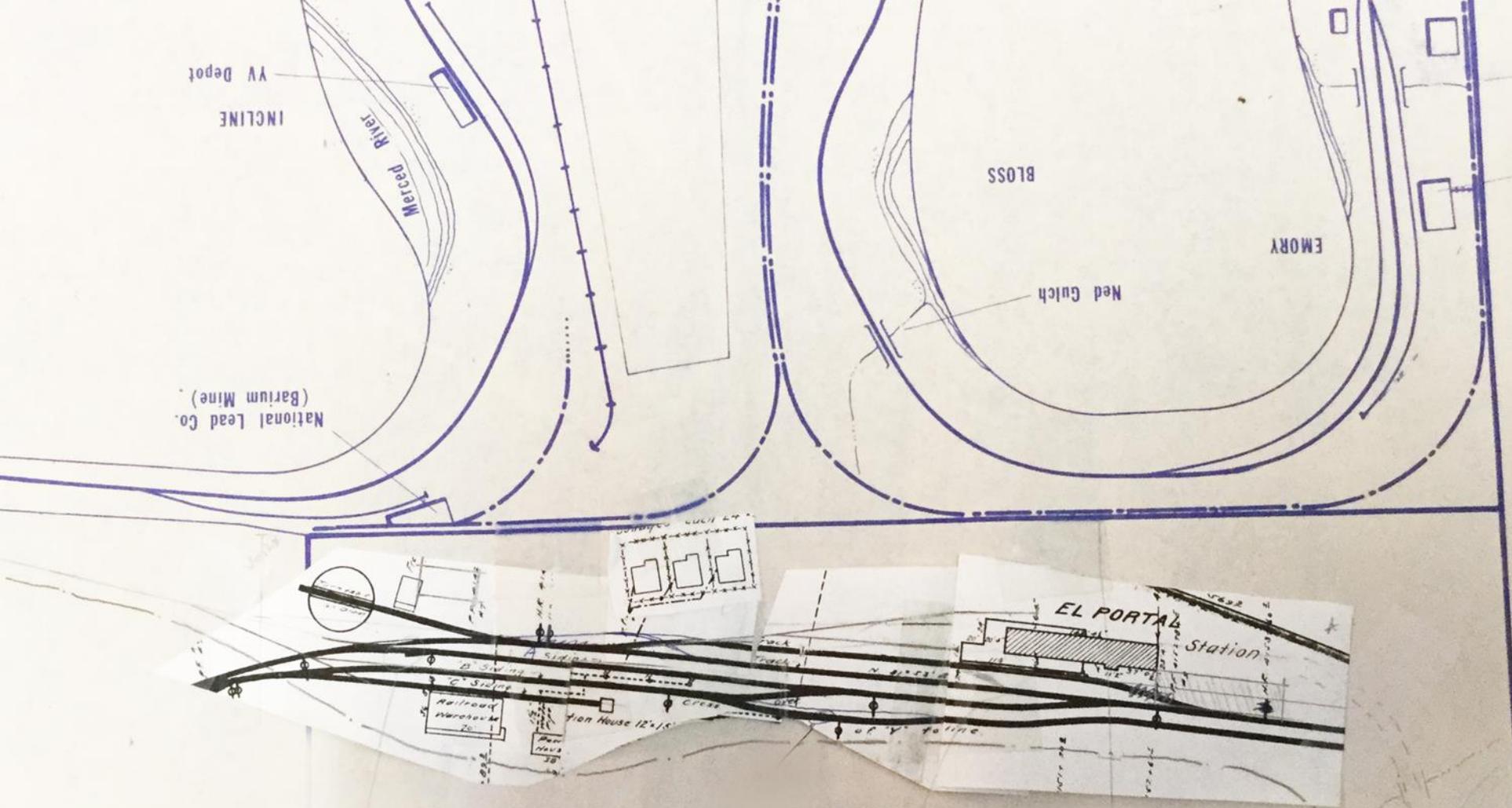
SystemDiner

SystemDiner Pro
Digital Command Control

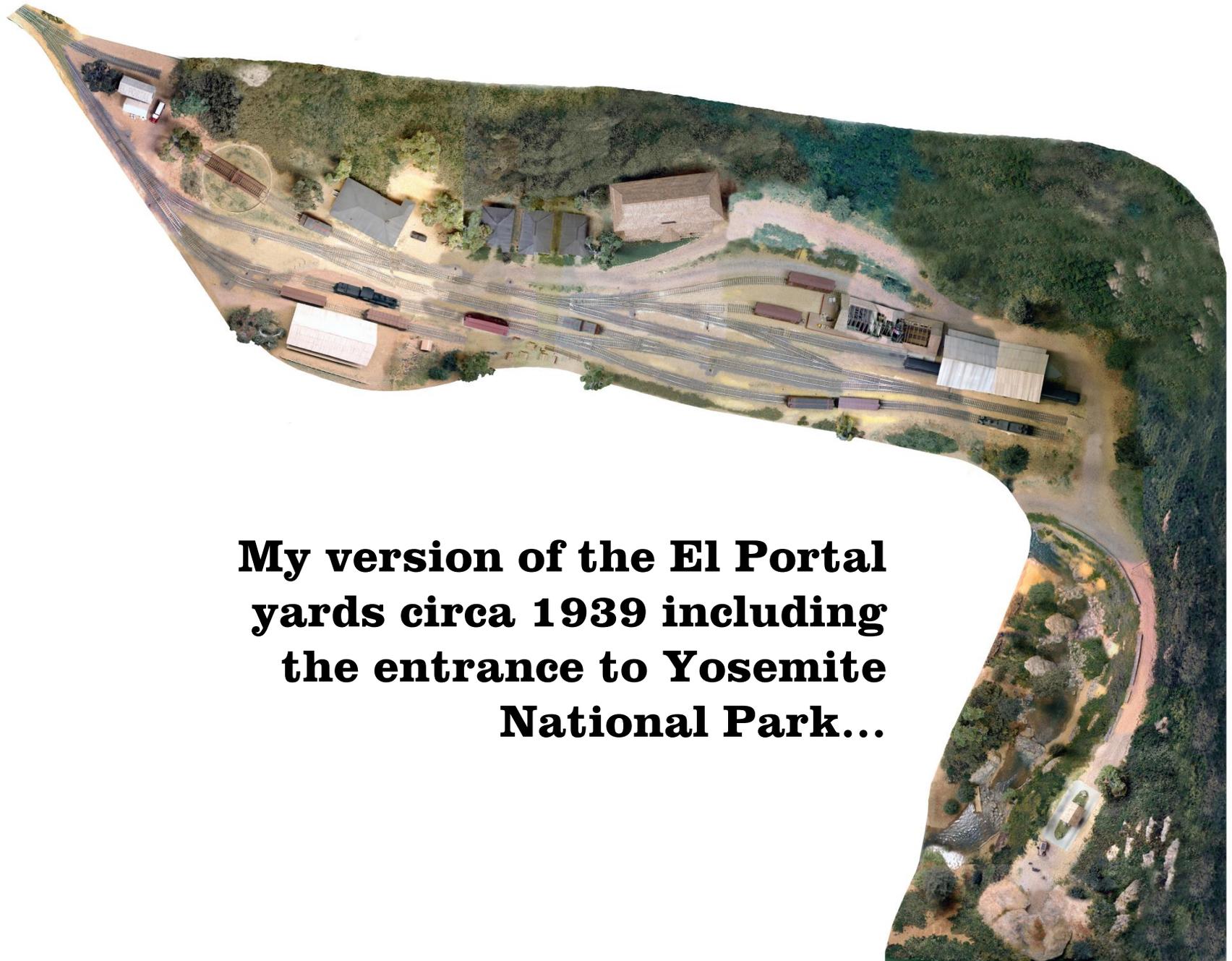




A railroad drawing of the El Portal yards dated 1925...



I used that drawing of the El Portal yards and scaled it to match my layout plan. By shortening the tangent sections, the size of the yard was reduced to fit the space available...



**My version of the El Portal
yards circa 1939 including
the entrance to Yosemite
National Park...**



Looking east over the El Portal yard...



Guy Dunscomb

Looking east toward Yosemite National Park...



A similar view on the layout...

**The YVRR – Not just Prototype
Freight Cars**

Structures



David L. Joslyn

The Merced station from 16th Street...



The same general view...



Fred Stoes

YV 2-6-0 No. 28 switching in front of the station...



YV 2-6-0 No. 25 with a summer passenger train pulling up in front of the station...

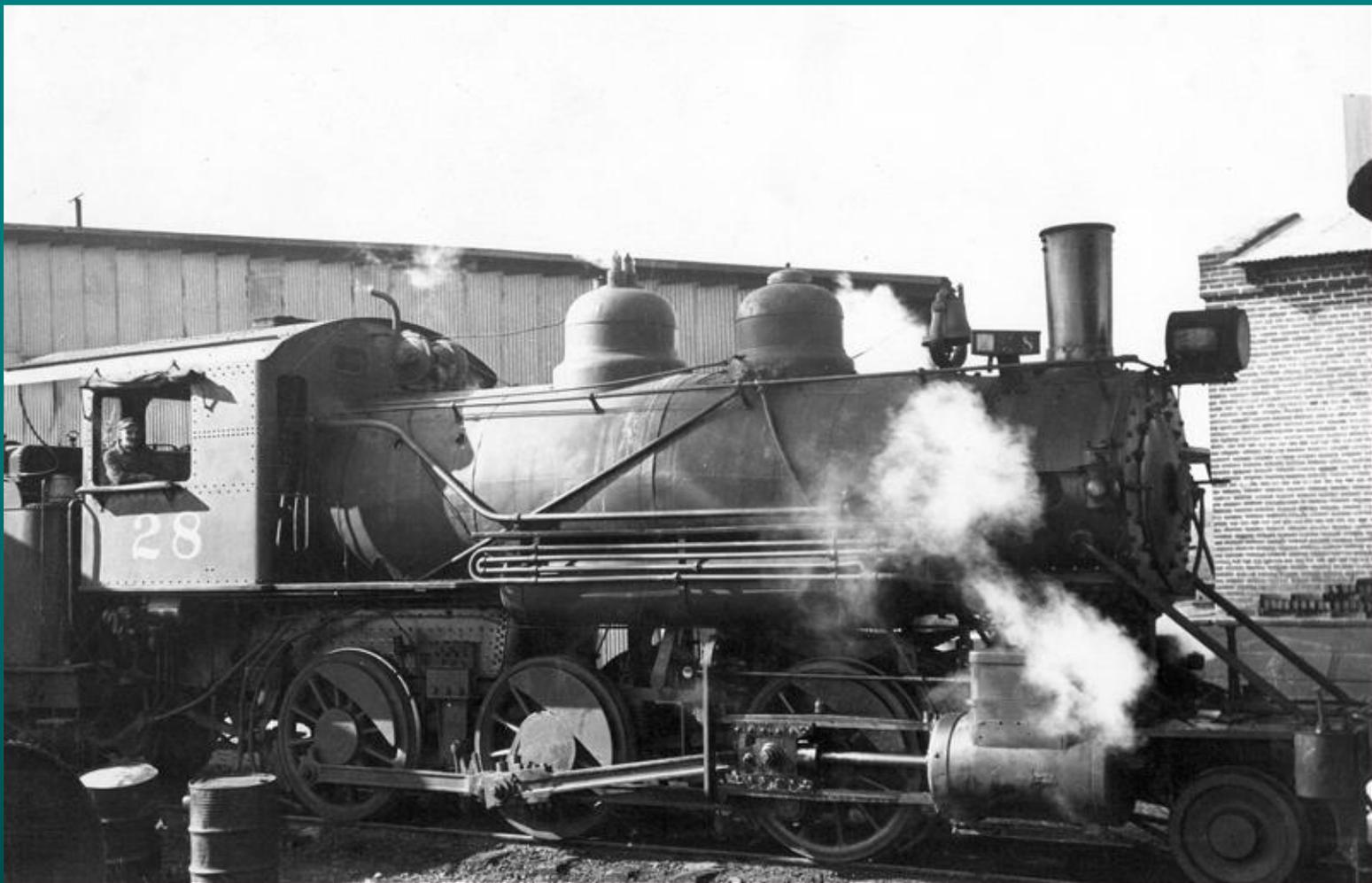


Wilbur C. Whittaker

Looking into the 9-stall roundhouse...



My version of the roundhouse...



Ted Wurm

OIL HOUSE

19'x25' Brick; Equipment

The 1945 YV Liquidation Notice listed an Oil House...this was the first photo I found of it...



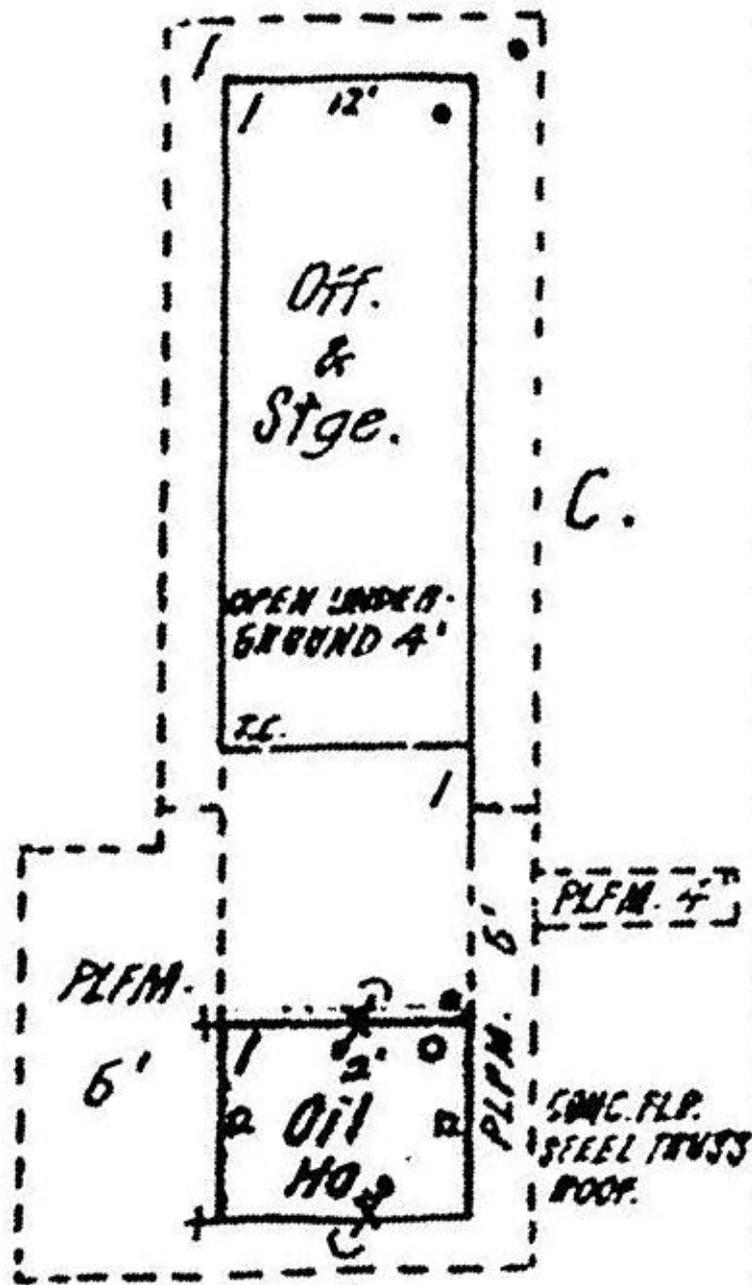
Based on that photo and the building size, I built this model back in the late 1970s...



A decade later I obtained this photo...that is a window, not a door, on this end of the building...



So I built this one with the door on the left side...



This Sanborn map shows that the door was on the side toward the Office.

But note that the peaked sides are on the long 25' sides not the short 19' sides.

That resulted in building a third version of the same building...

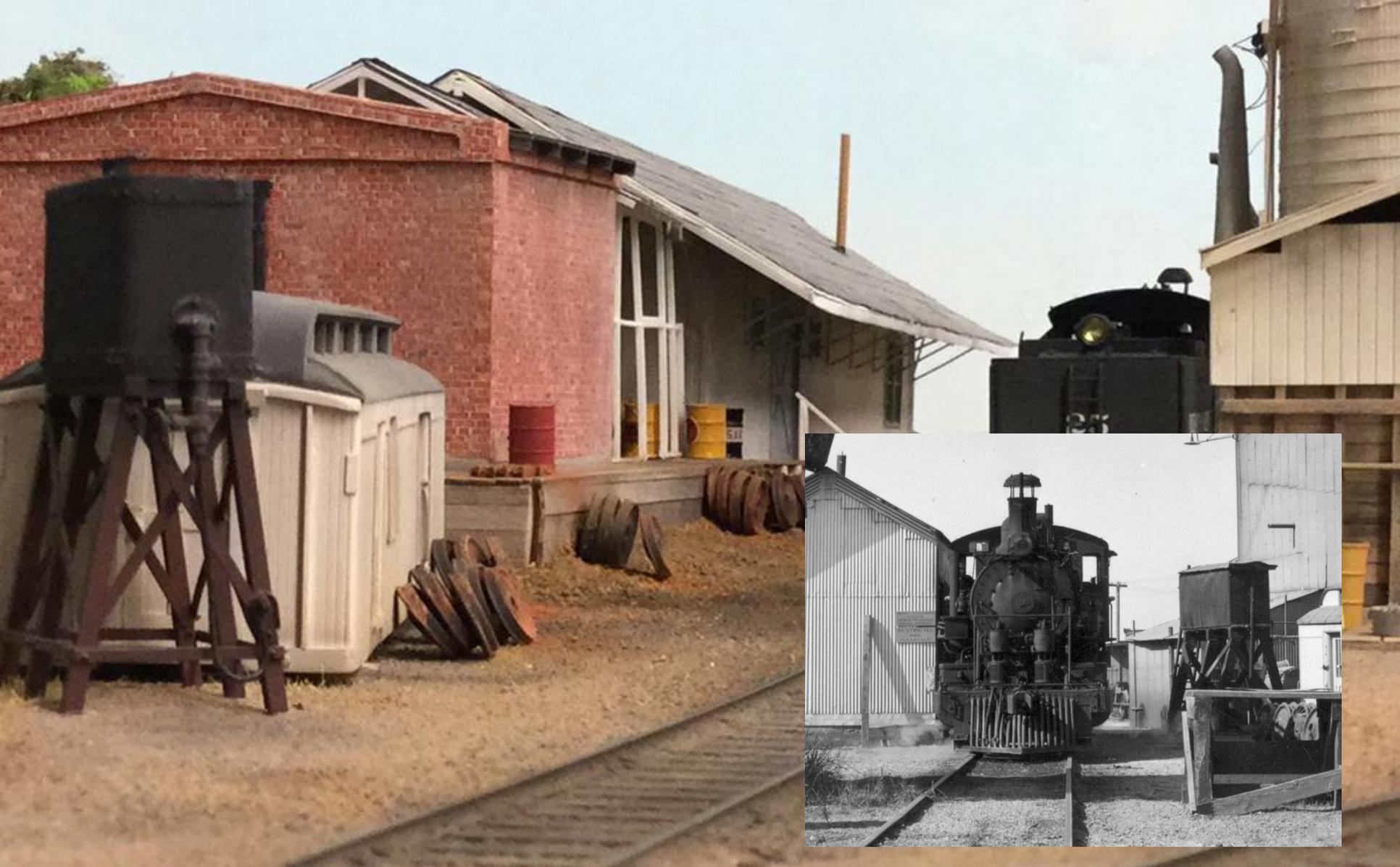




Al Rose

**Looking down the turntable lead...note the
Tool Shed built from Combine 105 beyond the
brick Oil House...**





The tank on the left shows up in this B/W photo but I don't know what it was used for...



Another view...



The Store Room, water tank, and oil tank...

Al Rose



The models...

SEMITE VALLEY
RAILROAD CO.





Lucius Beebe/Charles Clegg

The ATSF/YV crossing in 1945...



The ATSF tower in 1947 with the same paint scheme as shown in 8 other B/W photos...

Al Rose



My first model of the ATSF/YV tower...



Wilbur C. Whittaker

But this 1940 view shows a different color scheme...



As shown in this photo of a restored station, the ATSF originally had a red and green paint scheme...







Which resulted in this model...



In color...



An eastbound YV Local waiting for clearance...



Note the open derail and linkage...



First the derail closes and then the semaphore arm drops...



The levers also move...

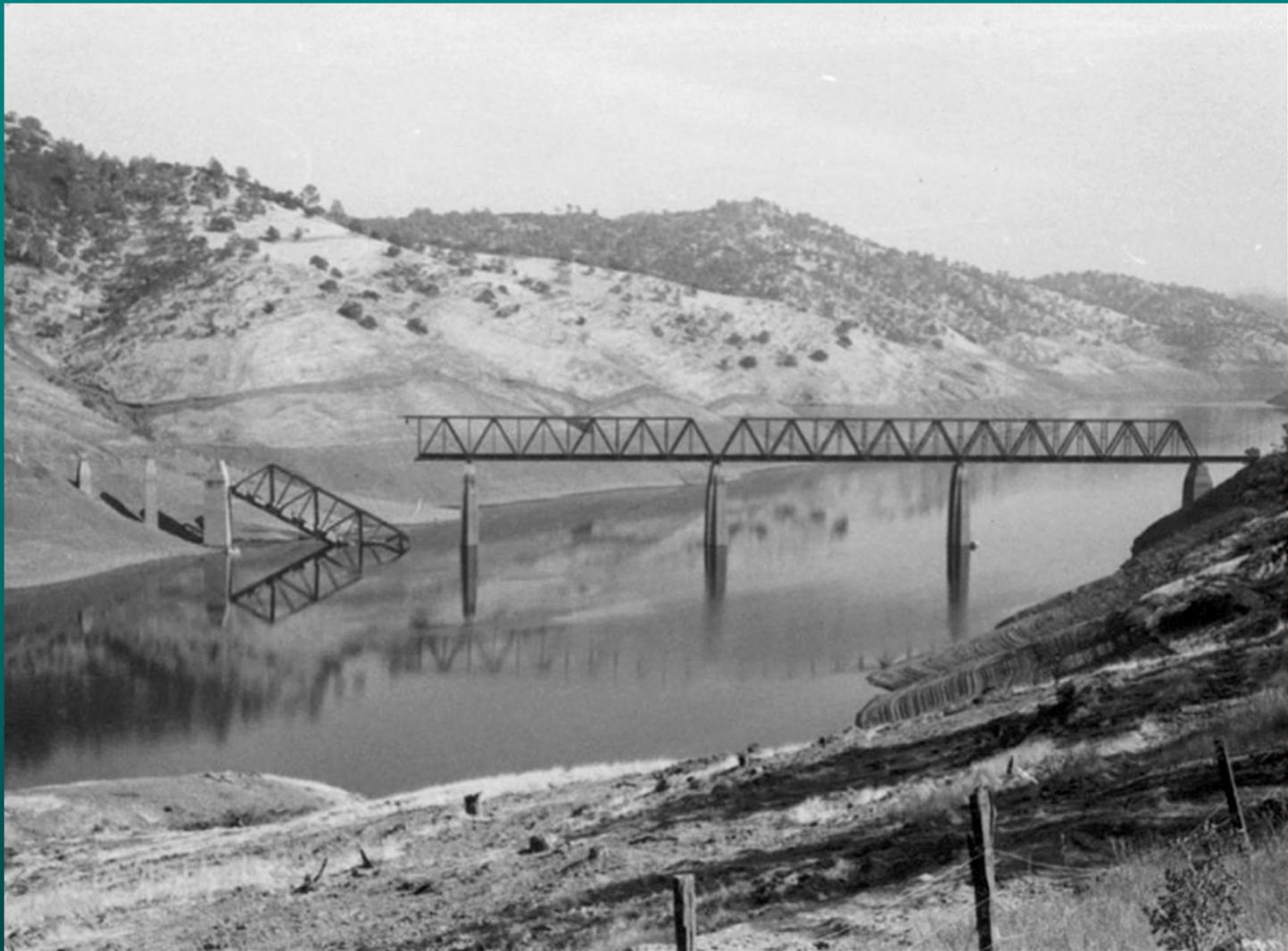




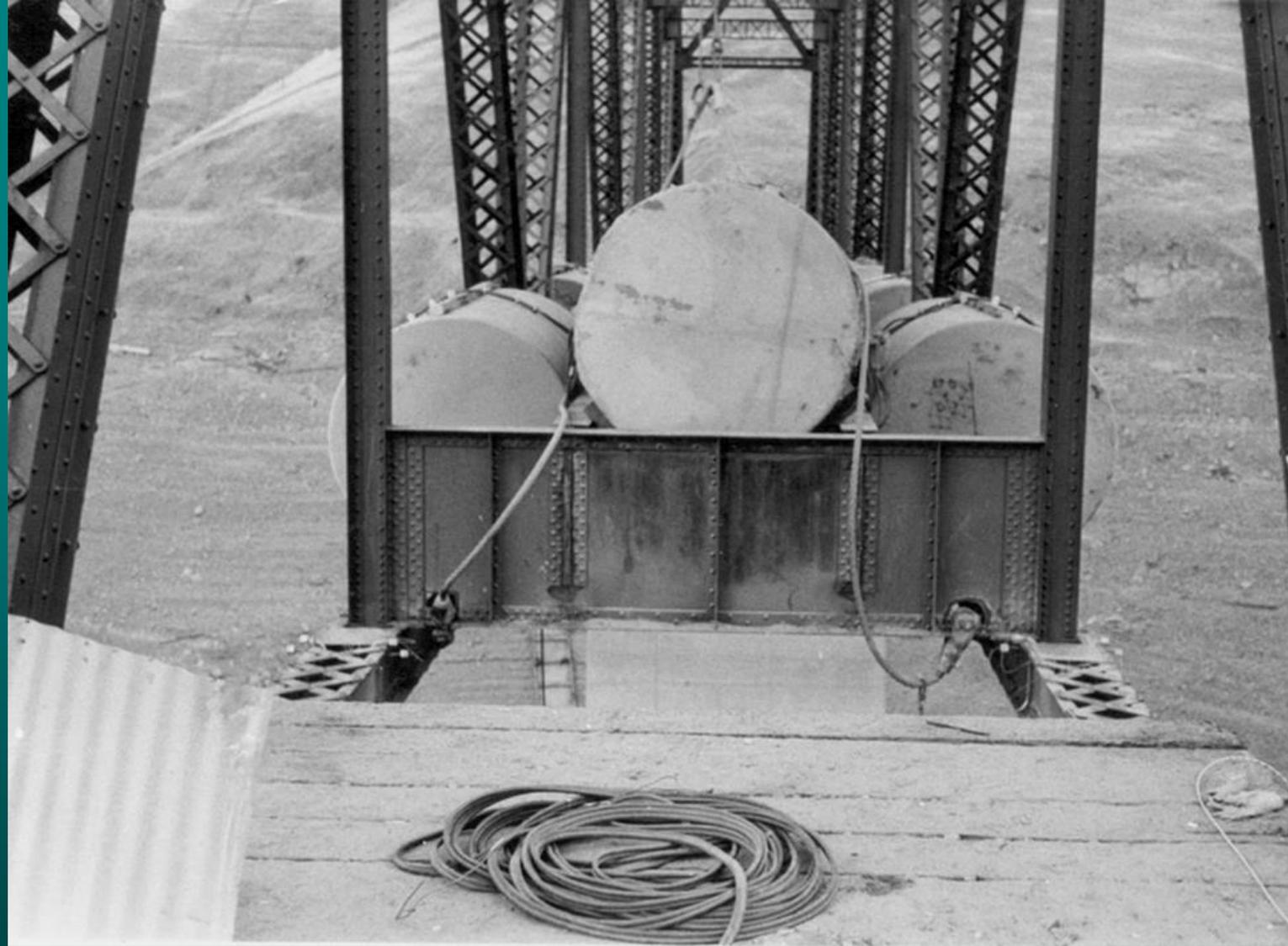
The 1,600-foot-long Exchequer bridge...

Al Rose

Late 1966...MID, the irrigation district which constructed the original dam, wants to build a taller dam. But they had to first remove the old Exchequer bridge. The contractor retained by MID planned to salvage the bridge and sell it as scrape.



The contractor first “severed” the section closest to shore and salvaged it...



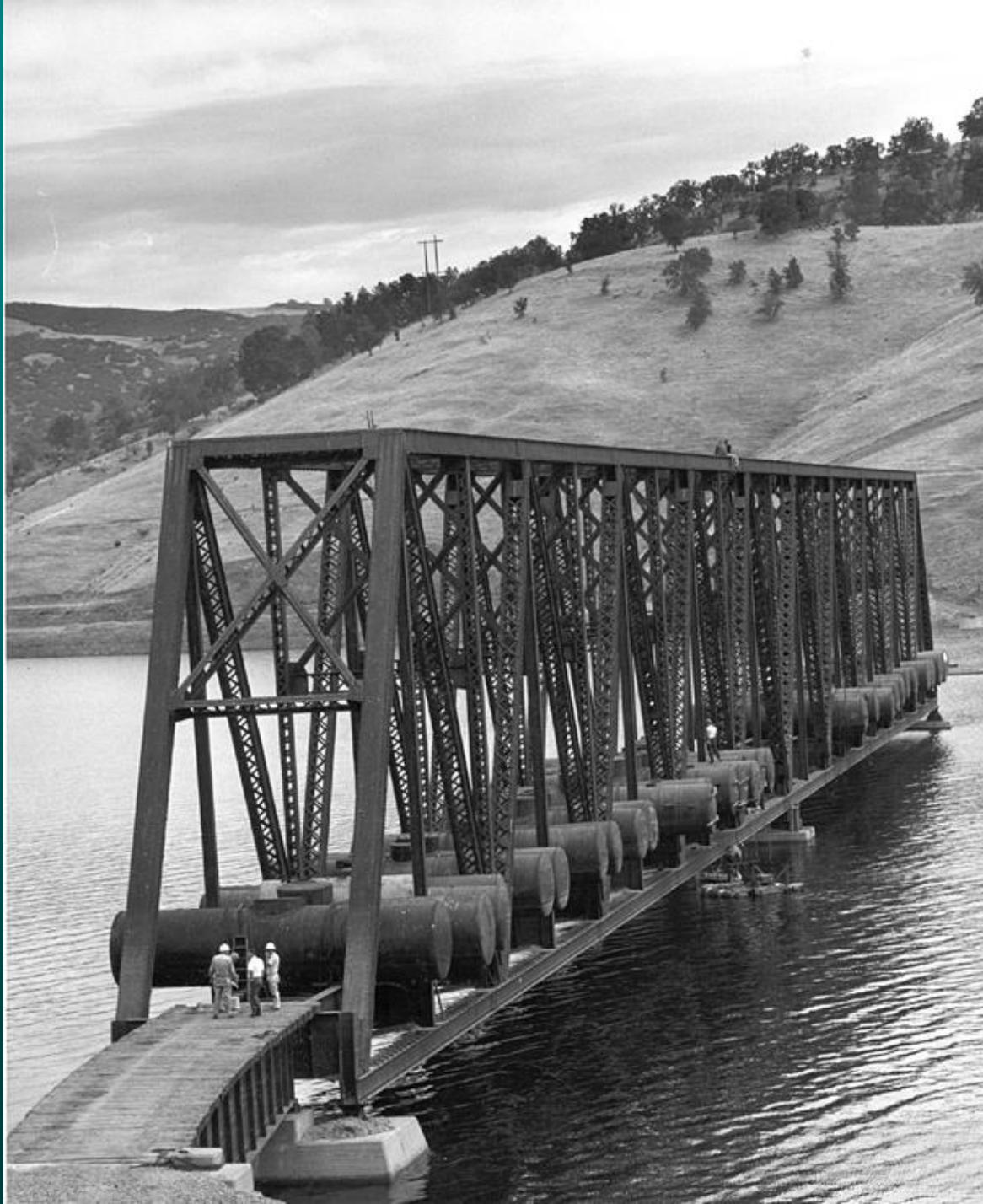
His plan was then to float the rest of the sections and drag them onto the shore. The flotation tanks on the next section of bridge...



That section is dropped...



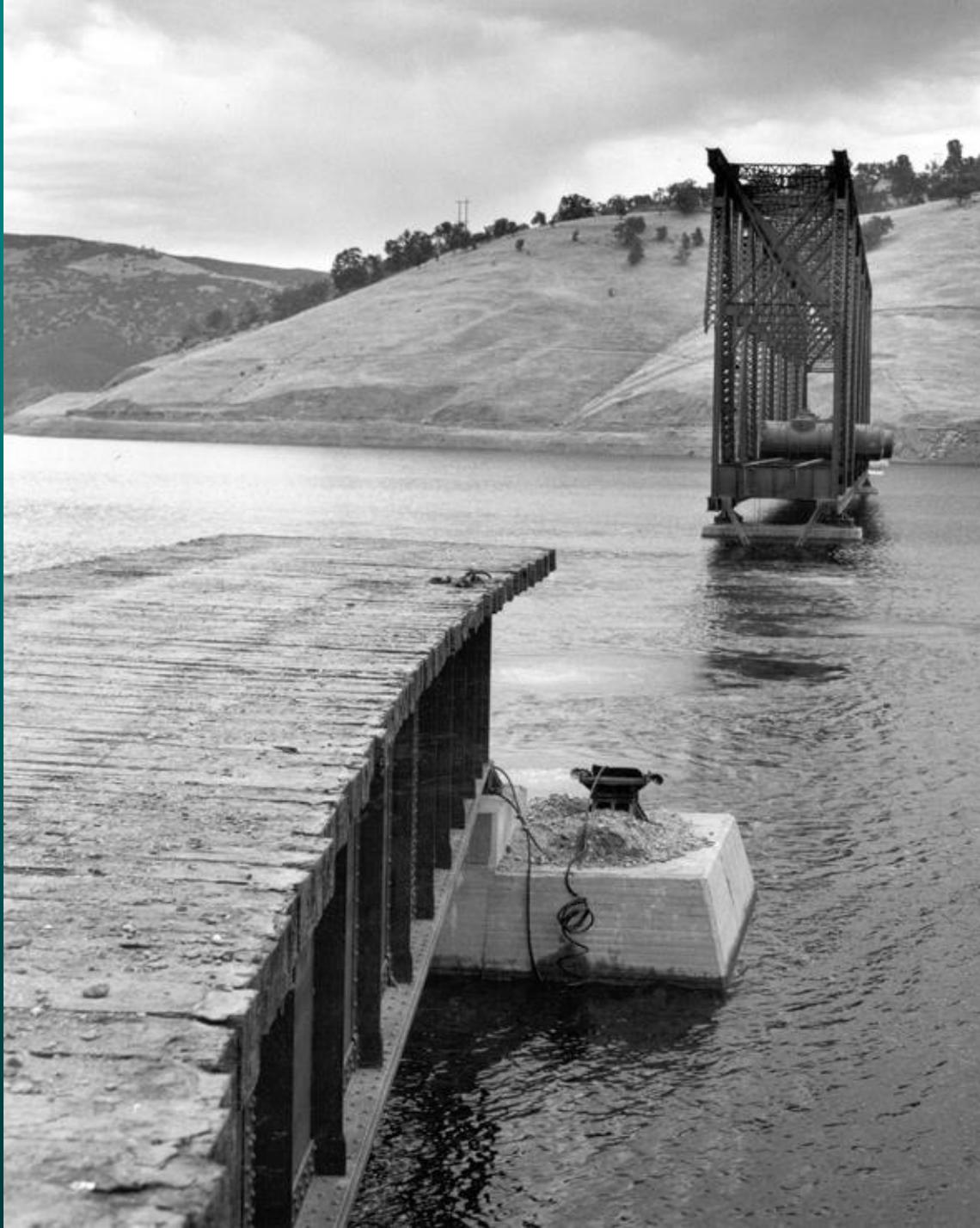
It floats but the contractor is losing money and quits after salvaging it...



Another contractor takes on the job but uses railroad tanks cars instead of flotation tanks...



The contractor knows how much flotation is needed to float that section...but forgets to add the weight of the tank cars...



**And it sinks
under the
water. The last
section was
then just
simply cut off
and sunk...**

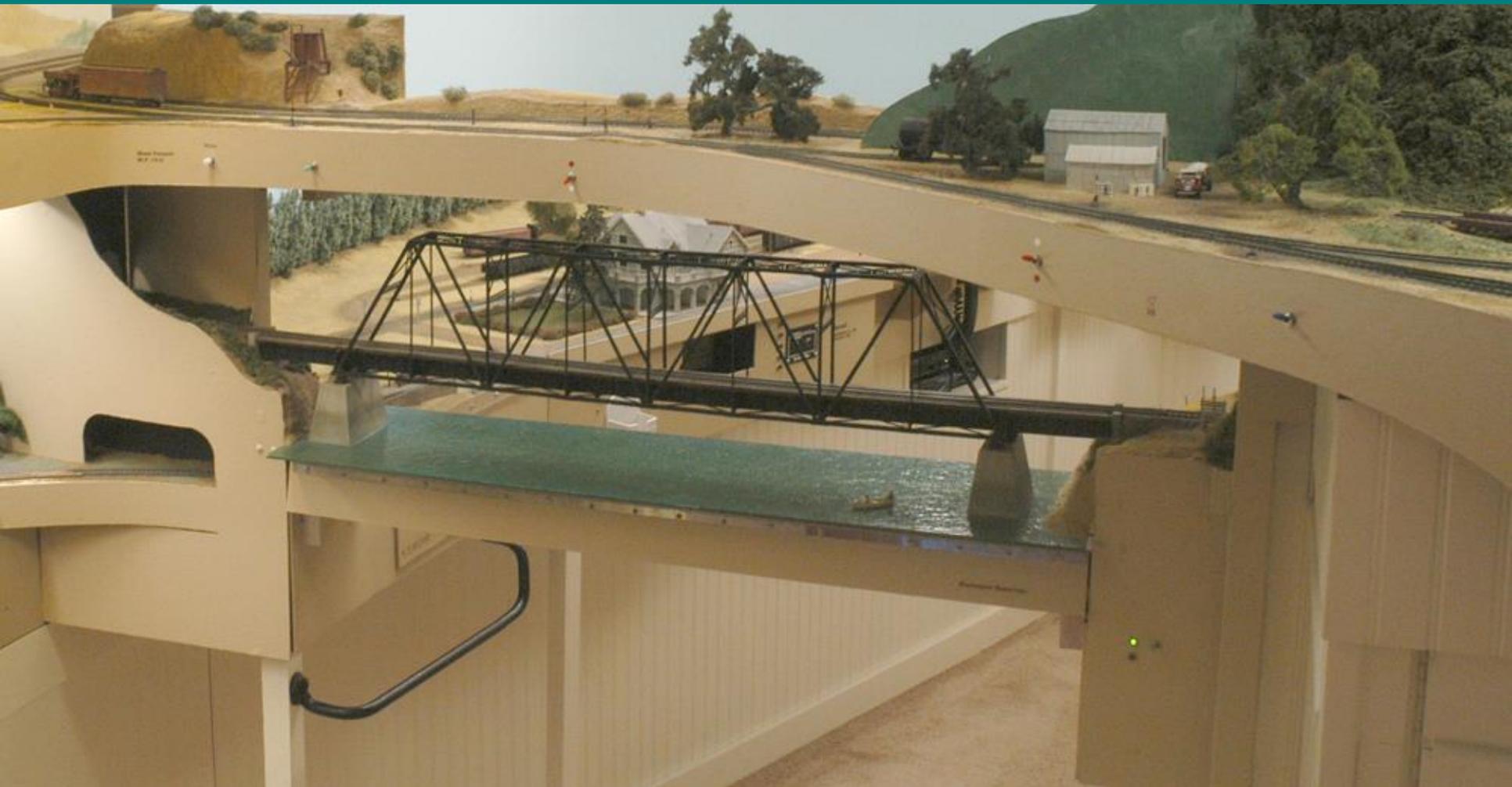


**Today with the reservoir
not completely full...**



At the end of summer...





**My model of a portion of the prototype
Exchequer bridge...**



April 17, 2009...



Bridge 39B...

Fred Stoes



My model of Bridge 39B with 3 of the 4 prototype spans...



The Bagby bridge...



Leon Clontz Col.

Another view with a long westbound log train...



The eastbound log train with empties...

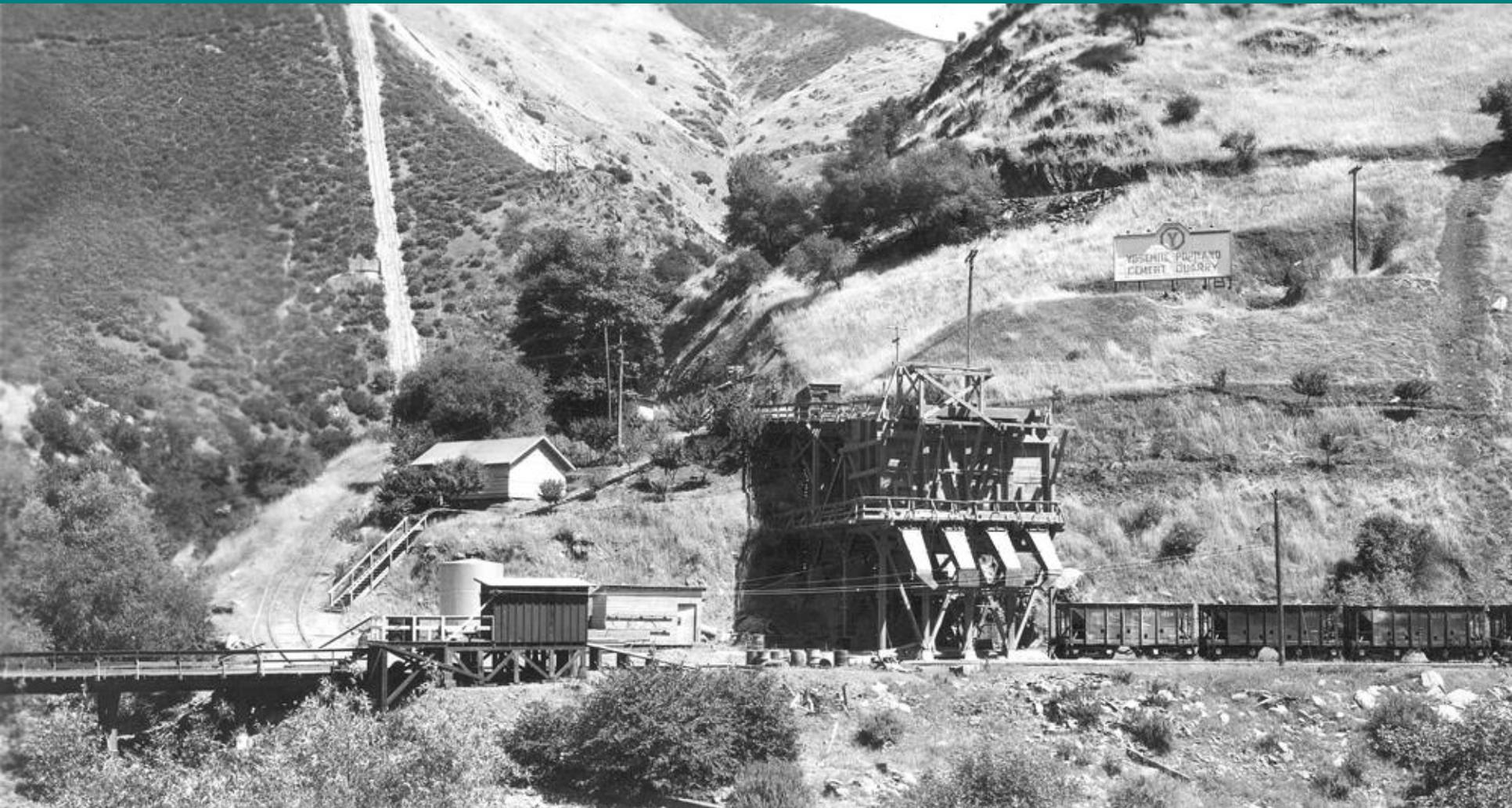


Bagby and the twin water tanks there...

Ken Kidder



My model...



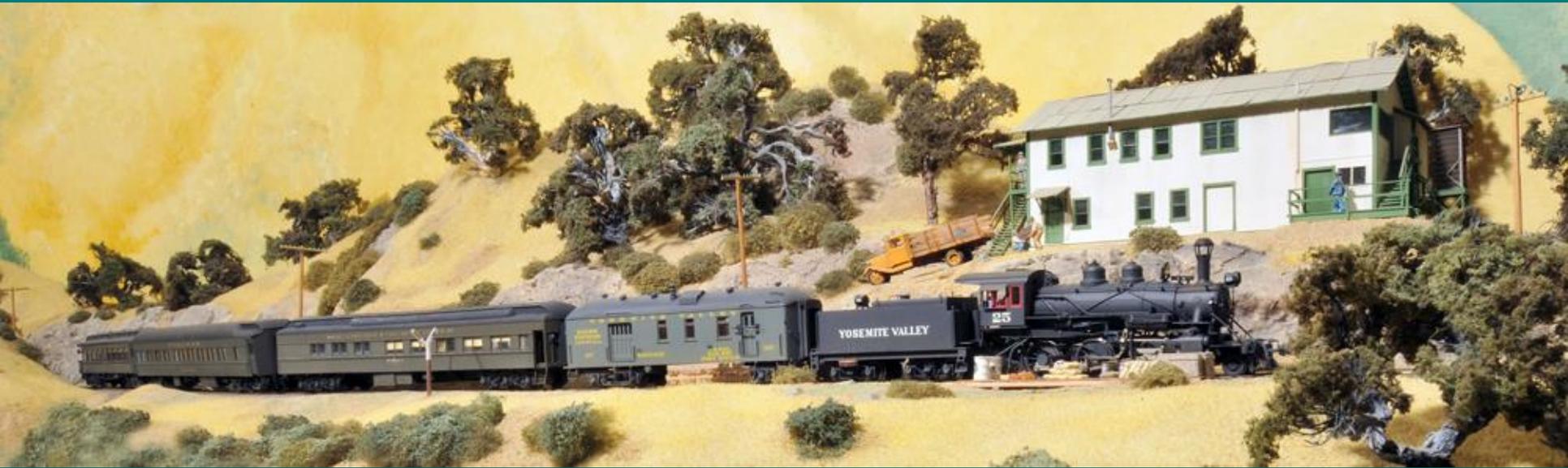
Fred Stoess

Yosemite Portland Cement operations at Emory...



Wilbur C. Whittaker

The two boarding houses...



My model of Emory with just one of the two boarding houses...



Al Rose

Loaded rock cars waiting for the afternoon Local...



Al Rose – April 1942

Passing Emory with ASA 10 color film...



Similar view with the 275-ton storage bunker...



California State Railroad Museum Library

**A passenger train backing into El Portal and
passing the Standard Oil operation...**



Three of the five SO buildings...



Al Rose

The station and train shed at El Portal...



My styrene models of them...



Al Rose

The station was built in 1907 in a “rustic” style...



Although the roof is now glued on, the model has a fully detailed interior...

**The YVRR – Not just Prototype
Freight Cars**

Details from Photos



1937...

Dorothea Lange





The book *The Grapes of Wrath* was released in 1939...



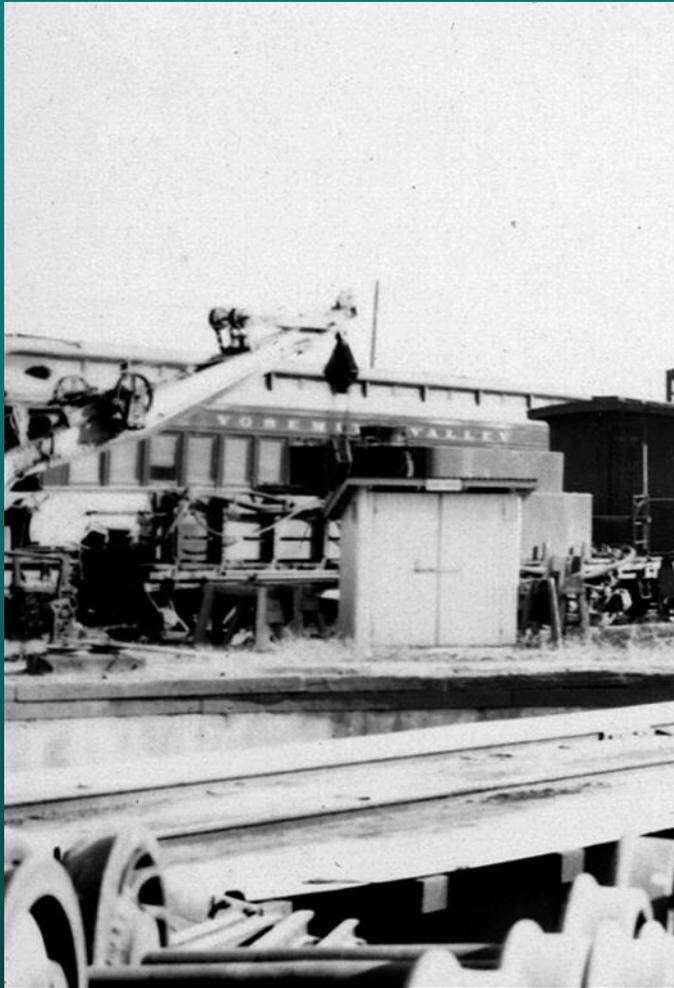
Note the wheelsets on the right...

Stanley Snook



Stanley Snook





The Fire Hose shed in the Merced yards...



Mariposa Museum

It took years to figure out what the “ladders” next to this building were for...





Note the “stuff” on the right...

Stanley Snook



No X2F couplers or oversize wheelsets...



Ted Wurm - 1946

After acquiring this Ted Wurm photo 50 years ago, I faithfully modeled the posts aligned with the track with the speeders...



Fred Stoes

Then I got this photo and realized that they were door stops for the Paint Shop...



My scratchbuilt Paint Shop...



Looking back toward Merced from a caboose...

Al Rose



The sign...



California State Railroad Museum

Note the velocipede next to the station...



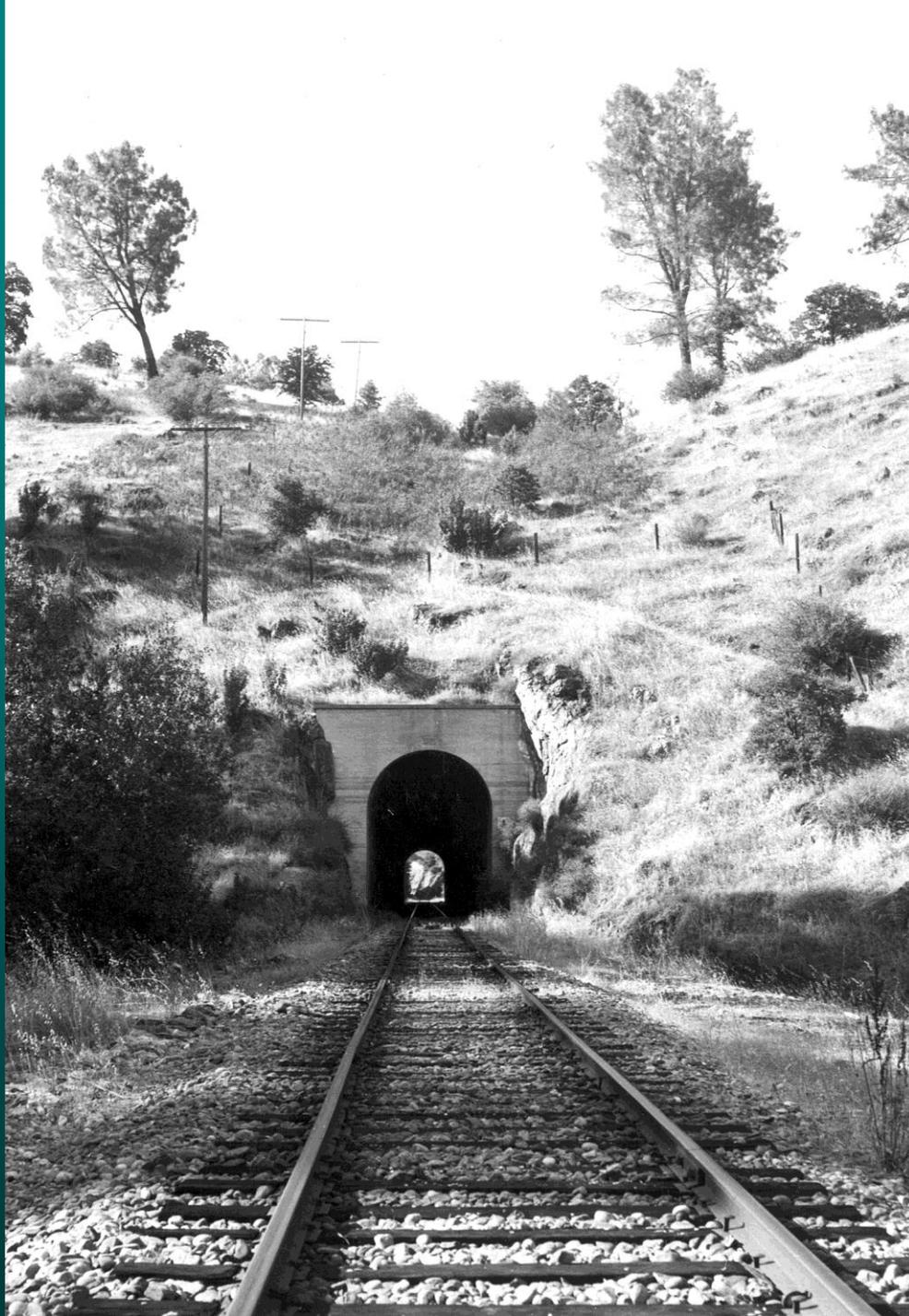
An easy detail and I now own that velocipede...

MERCED FALLS

YOSEMITE VALLEY RY. CO.

| EAST BOUND | | | WEST BOUND | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|
| TRAIN NO. | DUE TO DEPART | ON TIME OR LATE | TRAIN NO. | DUE TO ARRIVE | ON TIME OR LATE |
| 2 | 10:30 | ON | 3 | 10:30 | ON |
| 4 | 12:30 | ON | 1 | 12:30 | ON |
| | May 30 | 1934 | | | |

This is one of the Merced Falls signs plus the Arrival/Departure sign from the Merced station...



**Looking east toward
Tunnel 1...**



Coming out of Tunnel 1 with the 1945 fan trip train...

Al Rose



After noticing the pipe, I added it to my layout...

Al Rose



Another rail fan photo from that trip...

Bill Pennington



Bill Pennington

But notice the rail greaser...



Which I had to also model...



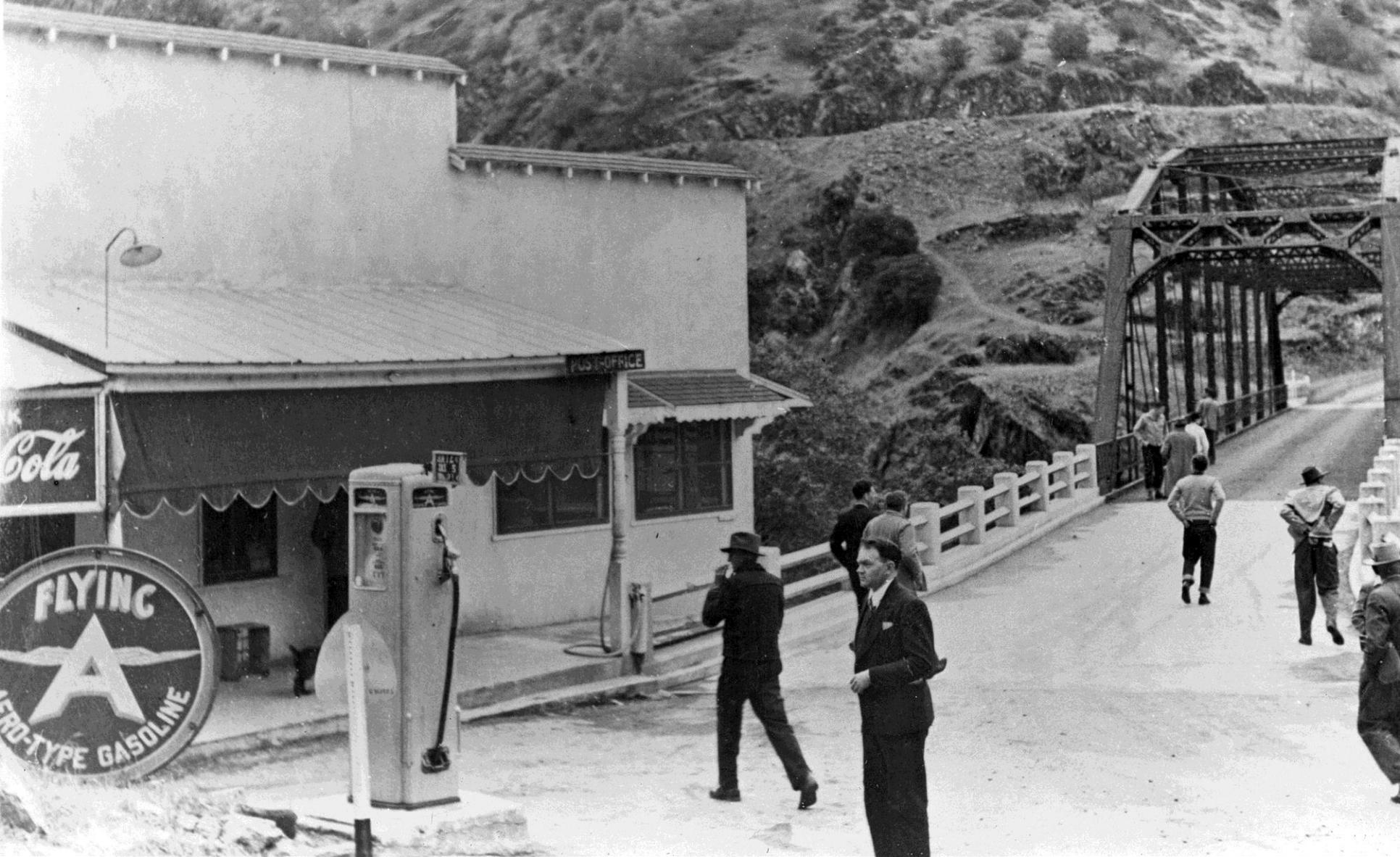
Fred Stoess

The 1944 fan trip train at Bagby. Note the old car along the side of the garage...





Details at the general store at Bagby include a gas pump and a Coca-Cola sign along with a Highway 49 traffic sign...

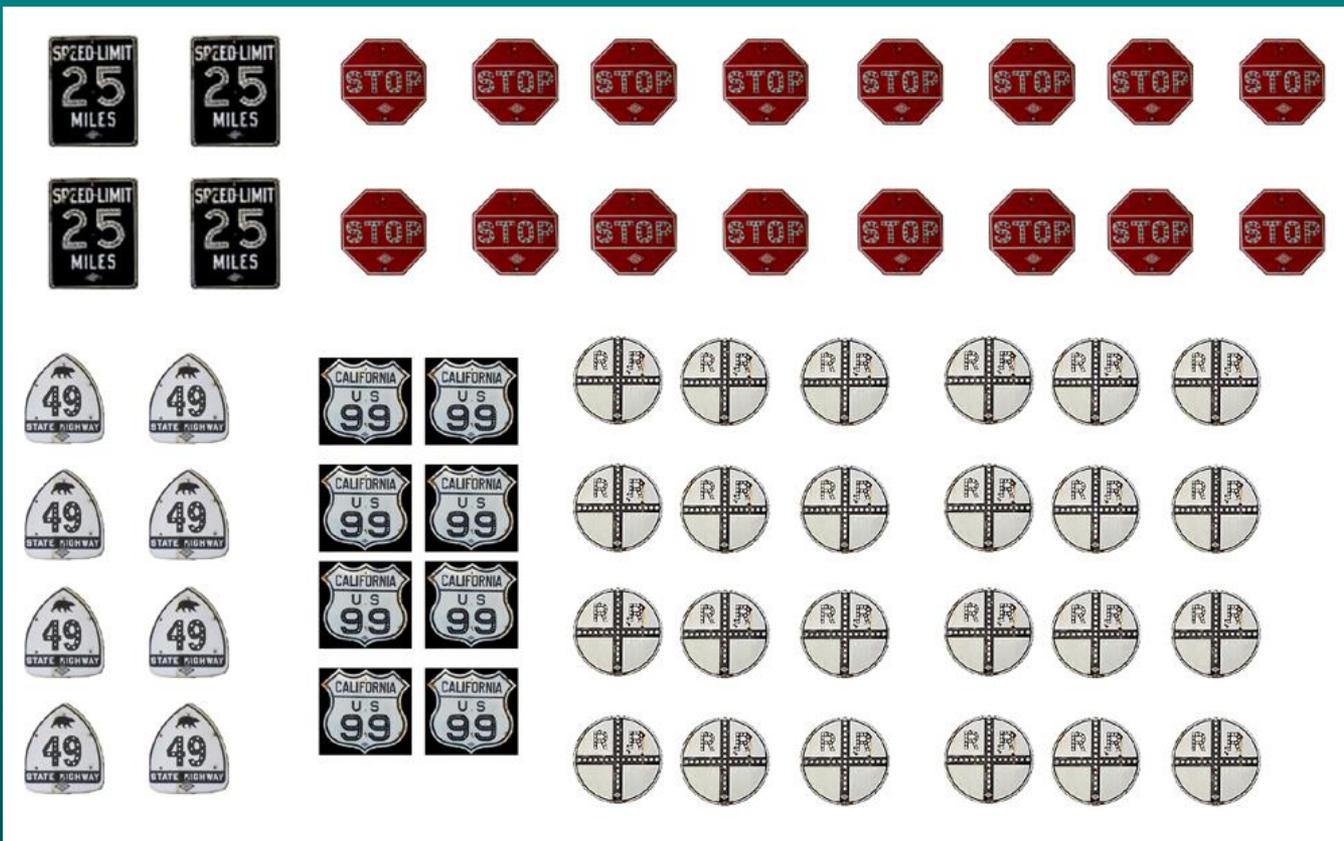


Bill Pennington

Another view taken during the 1945 fan trip...



**The signs were all made
using Photoshop Elements
and images from Google...**



**I have a number of traffic signs on my layout.
These are circa 1930s California traffic signs...**



A typical stop sign (for California) circa 1939. Note too the 1939 license plate...



Bernard Schyns Coll

The siding at Detwiler...there are derails on both ends of the siding as shown by the signs...

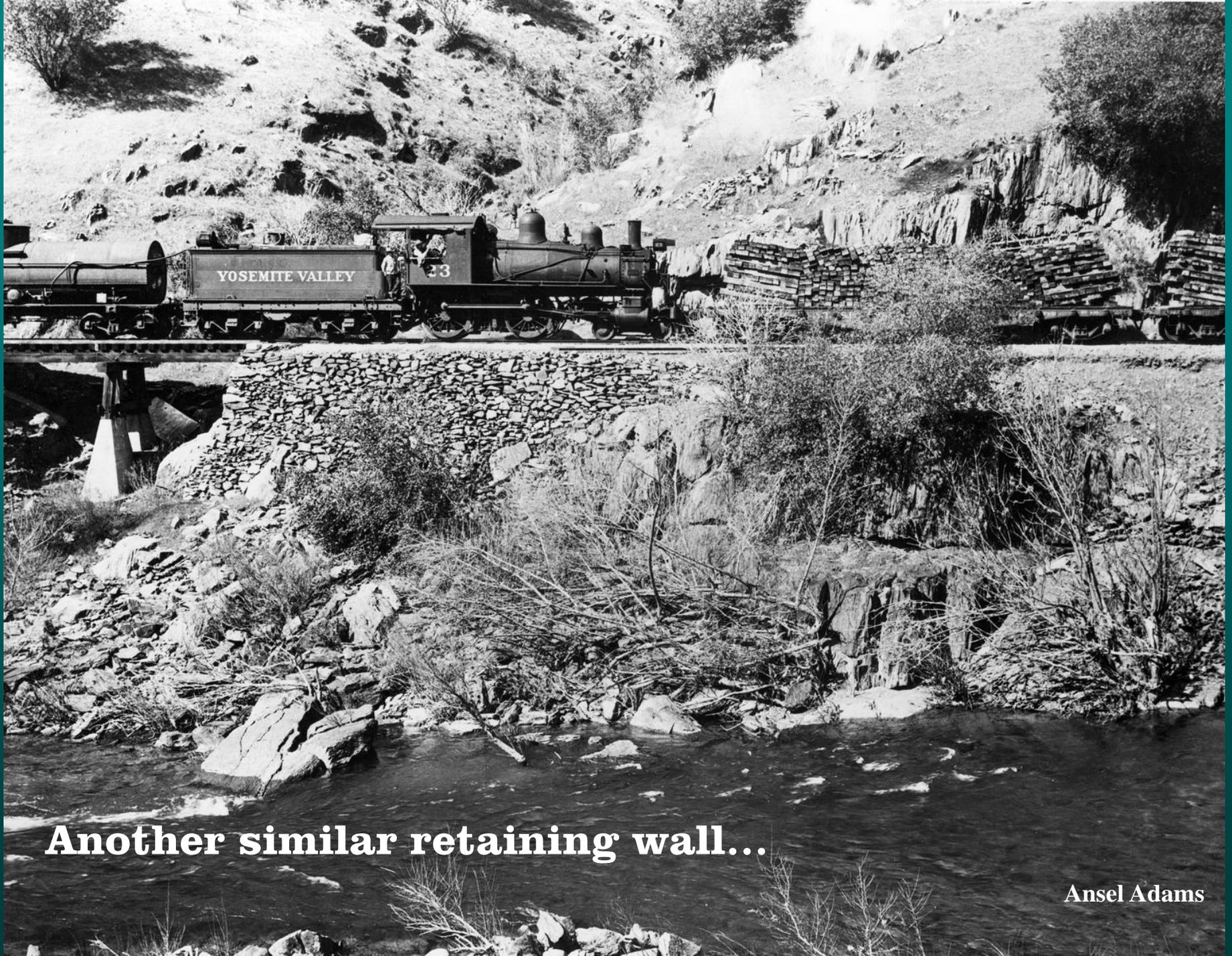


**I did not model Detwiler
but Emory also had a
derail and sign...**



Wilbur C. Whittaker

The 160-foot-long bridge at Fox Creek with a rock retaining wall on this end...



Another similar retaining wall...

Ansel Adams



The retaining wall at my Fox Creek bridge...

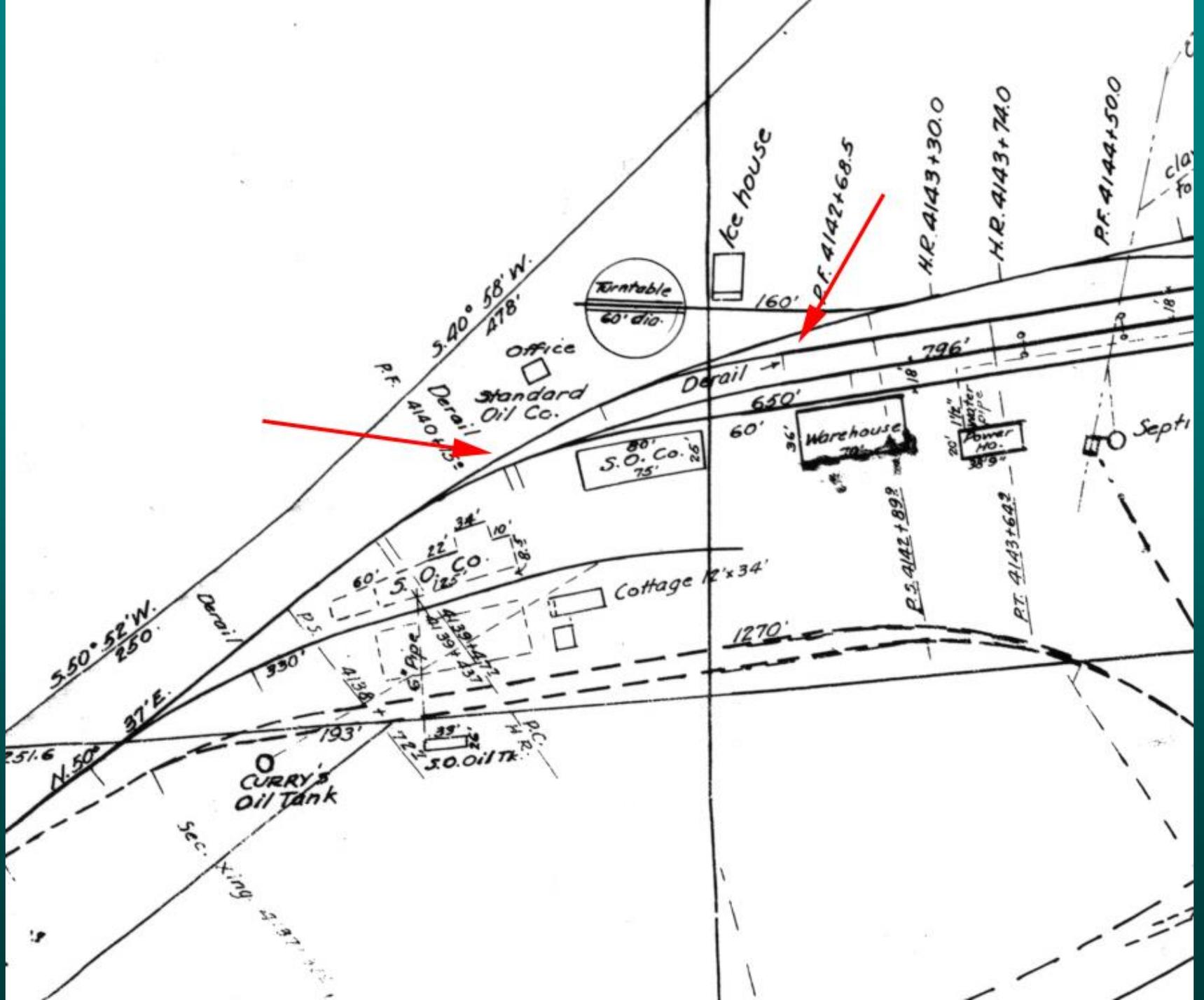


El Portal yards...note the sign for the derail...



Guy Dunscomb

A view of the order derail sign...





Both derails are modeled...



The derails function and the switch stand targets rotate.



Over the years, several operators have forgotten to “attend” to these derails and have derailed equipment...

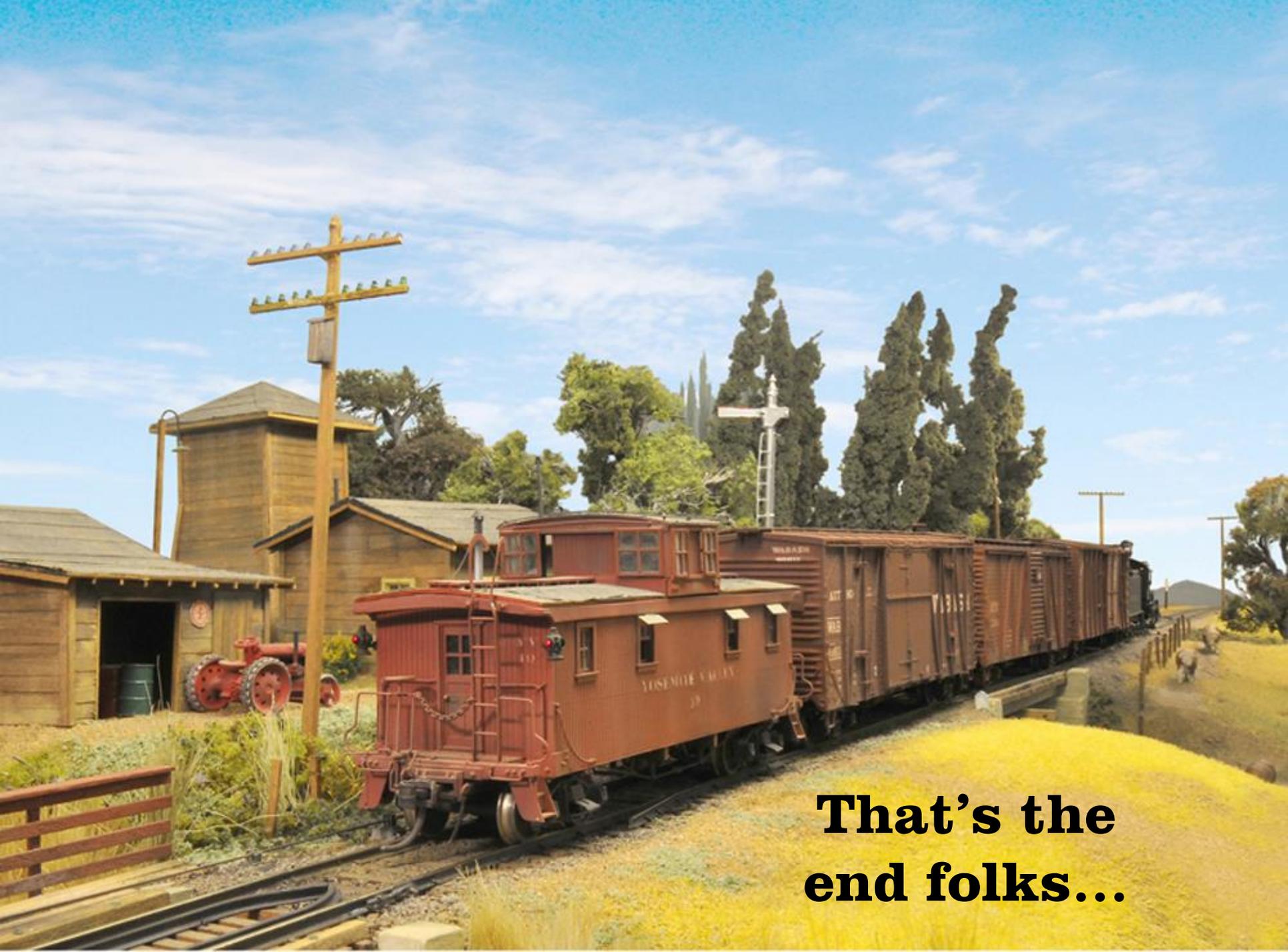


A favorite view of El Portal...

Leon Bartholomew



Same equipment, same view...



**That's the
end folks...**

YouTube videos:

Go to:

www.yosemitevalleyrr.com

**for links to my YV layout video and other
YouTube videos...**