

RAILROADING ALONG THE WATERFRONT WITH WALTHERS  
SOME PROTOTYPE IDEAS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS  
by John Teichmoeller

**OBJECTIVES** of this clinic:

- The material included in this program is designed with several objectives:
- To discuss the **prototypes**, as best identified, for the Walthers products
- To discuss possible **changes** to models to enhance fidelity
- To discuss other prototype variations amenable to **kitbashing** with Walthers products
- To give you additional **informational resources**

**BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

When the Milwaukee firm of Wm. K. Walthers announced their “Railroading Along the Waterfront” project, many modelers, especially prototype modelers apprehensively waited to see what, if any, prototypes would be followed, because the subject itself is a broad one and there are many non-complementary choices that could be made. Some of us suspected that they would end up closer to their Great Lakes roots and follow prototypes found in that part of the country. That they would come out with an integrated theme project such as this would have been surprising indeed, had it not been for the previous issuance of the--in my opinion at least--“steel” and “wood” projects. I think most of us were surprised and pleased at what resulted. The following text supports the roughly one hundred slides presented in this clinic and provides hard copy of the background information and references cited in the clinic.

**THE BOOK**

The first installment in the project was the book *Railroading Along the Waterfront*. This book provided an overview of the subject, organized regionally. This is a logical way to do it, as the physical aspects of rail-marine operations tended to vary by region. There were a number of non-critical reviews in several of the enthusiast magazines (*Railroad Model Craftsman*, 12/98, pp. 29-34, *Model Railroading* 1/99, p. 19) amounting to little more than new product releases. A more comprehensive commentary including addenda and errata was published in *Transfer*, issues No. 28 and No. 29. (*Transfer* is the publication of the Rail-Marine Information Group--see note at the end of this write-up for more information.) As one of the contributors to the book (my section covers a very cursory look at Baltimore Harbor’s rail-marine operations), I was very pleased with the way my material was published in its full length (twice what I was originally asked to do) and essentially unedited instead of being chopped up. At the same time, it was frustrating to be limited to such little space, and I’m sure other contributors felt the same. I suggested some illustrations that were not used due to space; these illustrations were later published in *Transfer* No. 35, sort of an “addendum” to my section in the book. I contributed a bibliography to my material. While there was no bibliography in each section, many or all of my suggested items were included in a general reference list in the book, which also pleased me. Overall, because of its survey nature, the book may serve to frustrate a modeler who wishes to execute a scene or operation; at the same time, it is an excellent overview and probably served to get a lot of people interested in the field who would not have otherwise. In all reality, Walthers could have published a book five times as big and still left a lot of folks unhappy (including the many who would not have been able to afford it!)

**PIER AND CRANE**

The first actual plastic kit issued as part of the project was a pier and traveling crane. There is a similar crane currently operating in the Port of Milwaukee—which could be the prototype. However, Walthers seems to have been inspired by some photos and material from the Philadelphia area, and it can be seen that this crane is also similar to some Reading cranes that operated at Reading’s Port Richmond terminal in Philadelphia, shown in the slides. Detail oriented modelers can note all the accessories lying around (magnet, different size buckets, hooks). These Reading cranes were located on a finger pier, as with the Walthers kit. Also, something I didn’t realize until reading an article by Thomas Flagg on the Brooklyn Navy Yard in *Transfer* No. 43, these cranes had wheels with double flanges. This can be seen in the photos of the Milwaukee crane. Walthers has replicated this in their model, and the track in the pier apron has the correct and necessary double flangeways.

The pier structure is also interesting. Of course the prototype exhibits a tremendous variety of pier structures. Mr. Plaster and other vendors over the years have sold solid wooden piling style bulkheads. Walther's execution is of what appears to be concrete piles. Note, however, there are no wooden fenders provided along the pier; the pier if built without modifications, would be deadly damaging to anything tied up alongside it. Also, many piers are faced with steel sheet piling. I believe the Mr. Plaster line now includes a representation of HO sheet piling. Another approach is to use the corrugated cardboard that is about 3" wide and comes in rolls, sold in party shops for use to twist and string across the auditorium for your prom.

The slides illustrate a number of other variations:

- A similar 40 ton shipyard crane at International Marine in, Savannah, GA, next to a drydock
- a modern cargo crane that is somewhat different from the Walther's crane, located at Locust Pt, Baltimore, MD. This gives you an idea of positioning the crane relative to a modern pier transit shed building.
- A variation is a pair of "two-legged cranes," shown at ex-PRR, Pier One, Clinton St.; Baltimore. One crane rail is located in the "apron" (the paved surface where the tracks are located) while the other one is on the side of the building. This is a nice, space-saving feature.
- Several other cargo cranes are shown on piers and alongside transit sheds in Savannah, GA
- A shipyard crane that is now part of a waterside park in Wilmington, DE is pictured, courtesy of Joe Gotaskie. There are five or six of these cranes, some taller than other, in the former Dravo shipyard on the Christina River.
- Walther's promotional material depicts the pier being used alongside the transfer shed building. However, the pier could also be used by itself as a finger pier. A photo of such an installation at Harsimus Cove, PRR, Jersey City is shown.
- Another interesting variation for modelers is a crane on a barge. This one was in New Orleans; note rails raised at end and buckets and stuff on deck.
- Another variation of a pier is shown with concrete pilings and timber fenders in Savannah
- Yet another variation is a concrete pier parallel to river with curved trestles on both ends bringing track up to the apron, illustrated at the Port of Baton Rouge. This particular pier has some unusual fittings such as the "horned bollards." Also on this pier is the use of heavy duty crawler cranes instead of rail cranes. Modern cranes similar to this are sold by Kibri and Classic Construction Models.
- A modeling application that is pretty much "out of the book" is an illustration on Aaron Dupont's layout in Medina, OH; Dave Marvinney photo.
- Other idea for use of the Walther's pier is to use the Cox/IHC loader on the pier tracks. This machine is similar to another style of heavy duty pier side cargo cranes or ore unloaders that are found in various ports and such was engineered by Wellman. Dean Freytag kitbashed one of these for Ken McCorry's layout (no slide is shown for this idea.)

The pier and crane kit were reviewed in *Railroad Model Craftsman*, 9/98, pp. 96-104

#### **MUNICIPAL PIER BUILDING/TRANSIT SHED**

Walther's "Municipal Pier Building" has a generic appearance that seems to resonate with many modelers who claim it is based exactly on such and such. In fact, it is a selectively compressed hybrid. The above response suggests Walther's was highly successful! In reviewing prototypes, I found it to very closely resemble Pier 40 in Philadelphia—in fact the façade is a dead ringer, simply narrowed by chopping off the outer bays. Something extra found on some full size piers but not on the model are the grid structures on the roof. These are called cargo masts and they were used to load and unload ships using what is called the "married fall" system. View the classic Marlon Brando movie *On the Waterfront* to see how this works. Tom Flagg did a two page article about this in *Transfer* No. 28.

Some other variations of pier transit sheds are illustrated in the slides:

- Pier One, Clinton St., Baltimore; shows the original building plus lower, newer structure plus cargo masts.
- Pier 5, Locust Pt., Baltimore--This is a modern transit shed could be modeled using Pikestuff.

Aaron Dupont has executed several modeling applications:

He combined 2 Municipal Pier buildings, resulting in a substantially larger structure.

He appended a lower building from Pikestuff next to the Municipal Pier building.

He modeled the Bunge Grain building at Galveston by kitbashing using sides and second story ends of Municipal Pier Building.

I'm sure what Aaron has done is what Walthers hoped modelers would do--mix and match.

This kit was reviewed in *Model Railroader* 12/98, p. 21

#### **TERMINAL WAREHOUSE**

This structure I found to be a bit strange, at least for the ports with which I am familiar. It seems to resemble more of a factory building. Indeed, Vince Altieri performed such a kitbash transformation in an article in the October 2003 *Railroad Model Craftsman*. At one of the presentations of this clinic, someone in the audience spoke up and most decisively told me this structure was a replica of the "old Customs House" in Milwaukee. This certainly sounded plausible! However, in 2005, I attended the Railroad Industry Special Interest Group's meet in Milwaukee. I asked one of the meet's organizers, a chap who was intimately familiar with the port (and who showed us several hundred slides taken over many years) and he had no knowledge of such a structure. Nor did we see anything like this in driving around the area. Nevertheless, I found a photo of a pierside warehouse with some similarity that was operated by the Canton Co. of Baltimore (also note ore unloader crane.)

Aaron Dupont again has performed a modeling adaptation using pieces of this structure to represent a Cotton Compress.

#### **DIESEL TUG**

There were roughly 49 postwar diesel tugs built for East Coast US railroads. There were three similar designs with some recognizable architectural differences, and each design represented about 1/3 of the total fleet. Many of them are still in the service of commercial towing/docking companies or marine contractors, although in the last couple years three or more have been sunk for fish reefs, and many more are now laid up and for sale or being used for spare parts. The prototype for Walthers tugs was the Lehigh Valley's Wilkes Barre class, one of the three designs built by the Jakobson shipyard of Oyster Bay, Long Island. Illustrated is a photo of the prototype *Capmoore*, renamed *Hawkins Point* by Moran. Unfortunately, since this picture was taken she has been sold by Moran and is now in Boston reportedly being used for spare parts. The slides illustrate some of the variations of the "Modern Diesel Tugs."

A photo of *Bethlehem* represents the Walthers model nicely finished and decorated by John Koenig

A bow view of another Jakobson prototype showing heavy bow plating; in this case New Haven's *Cordelia*

Erie's *Marion* and *Elmira* are shown tied up at Hoboken; these were also variant Jakobson designs

Another Walthers model modified slightly as Erie's *Akron*, decorated by John Koenig

The Walthers model is NOT correct for the second design, namely those tugs designed by the Philadelphia firm of Bowes.

The B&O's *Howard E. Simpson* was an example of one of the other designs by the firm of Bowes design (she had about 10 other sisters)

CNJ's *Sandy Hook* was another Bowes design, sister to the B&O tug except for height of pilothouse and stack, lowered to enable these tugs to service the CNJ's landlocked yard in the Bronx without having to wait for drawbridges on the Harlem River to open.

C&O's *M.I. Dunn* is shown in ship docking service at Newport News. She was originally CNJ's *Liberty*, (also one of the lower stack and pilothouse units) then B&O's *J.W. Phipps*, then *M.I. Dunn*, then *James Witte*, now *Theresa Krause*.

B&O's *Lehigh*, ex Reading tug; was another Bowes design, and a smaller version of the tugs above.

The third design, also different in some important ways from the Walthers kit was the “Consolidation,” “General Managers Association” or “Standardization” design. There were 16 true GMA tugs and several other “precursors” which had features carried forward into the true class.

An example was the New York Dock *Brooklyn* ; note the “slab” sides.

*Brooklyn* was nicely kitbashed from the Walthers tug by John Koenig

The bow view of *Eric McAllister* (originally DL&W’s *Hoboken*) in drydock dramatically shows the hull side configuration.

As a final modeling idea for the tug, convert it to ship docking service and model the tug headquarters, e.g. a Life-Like residence, such as one shown in Savannah.

The kit was reviewed in the May 1999 *Model Railroader* and in the October 1999 *Railroad Model Craftsman*. In addition, there was an article elaborating on the architectural differences among the three “classes” in the January 1999 *Railmodel Journal*. Finally there was an excellent article on upgrading article plus some tips on building the kit by George Barrett *Transfer* No. 35. George Barrett, through his Sheepscot Models, offers an excellent etched brass railing and detail kit for this tug.

### **CARFLOAT**

Walthers’ carfloat model is an excellent representation of a three-track “transfer” float, a carfloat that was used to interchange cars from one railroad to another. There were some prototypes on the East Coast that were longer and some that were shorter, but Walthers has chosen a common length. Given the size of this vessel, many modelers have experienced challenges in getting the parts to fit. Ron Parisi wrote an article on coping with these challenges as well as applying further details (such as railings and letterboards), painting and weathering it in the April 1999 *Railmodel Journal*. If you intend to build this kit, this is a must-have article.

The possibilities for variation are endless. First, you can remove the center track and add a loading platform in its place like the prototypes that were designed for loading and unloading boxcars and refrigerator cars at Pier Stations. Crow River Models offered a kit of pewter castings for bents to build such a center platform; this kit is now being sold by Seaport Models. You can also shorten or lengthen the carfloat by removing the center section or splicing another one in, as Aaron Dupont’s two carfloats illustrate.

In addition to the above reference in the enthusiast literature on the model, *Transfer* issues No 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 38, 39, 40 and 41 had material on carfloats. The kit was reviewed in the May 1999 issue of *Model Railroader*.

### **FLOATBRIDGE**

The Walthers floatbridge kit has been subject to numerous valid and not so valid criticisms. When the Walthers project was announced, a lot of us half expected that they would be inspired by the Great Lakes version of rail-marine technology as is shown by the slide of the C&O’s derelict floatbridge on Jones Island, Milwaukee, (photographed in April of 2005, supposedly shortly before it was to be demolished). They took a different route, of course, choosing to represent a floatbridge with an overhead “gantry” structure. This is common on the East Coast and West Coast. The main misconception and invalid criticism is the fact that it is “missing” some of the important features seen on other common New York Harbor floatbridges such as the ones at Long Island City as well as ones operated by the Lehigh Valley in Jersey City. This is true--you need to redo the suspension arrangement and the bridge itself to correctly represent such examples as the “French” design with heavy jackscrews protruding out the top of the machinery housing. Numerous articles in *Transfer* (see below) have described the various and deceptively similar architectures. In truth, Walthers’ floatbridge represents a much simpler design that was used by the Reading on the Delaware River. Units similar to this type were at Bulson St. in Camden and at Pigeon Point Delaware, and Deepwater, New Jersey. (In fact, at this writing, the one at Pigeon Point is still extant and can be seen when traveling in the westbound lanes of the Delaware Memorial Bridge.) We could spend--and Tom Flagg has done just this--several hours in a clinic discussing these floatbridges, but suffice it to say, this style of Reading footbridge actually had a pontoon supporting the “live” load, as the slides of Ed Birch’s black and white photos show. (The Walthers book reproduced some of these photos, although almost as thumbnails.) The cables were just used to raise the bridge for pontoon maintenance--they were not in tension when a live load was traveling over the bridge. Walthers did, as a matter of record, do a nice job of rendering the floatbridge tower footings as sheet piling.

Having said that, the Walthers floatbridge can be the kitbashing basis for other designs simpler than the later, heavy duty New York “electric” floatbridges. The easiest example is one operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad in Canton Hollow, Baltimore. This is, I believe, based on the Andrew Mallery patent (the late Paul’s father) which was used until it failed under heavy conditions in New York. Another kitbashing candidate, illustrated in the slides, would be the B&O’s Locust Pt., Canton and Curtis Bay floatbridges in Baltimore that had twin towers on each side, the latter one supporting a set of “pickup” counterweights that served similar functions as the threaded suspension rods of the heavy duty New York units. This was a design that I believe was unique to Baltimore, at least in the US. Further variations include replacing the through girder truss bridge with twin through girder trusses to create two independent spans, and moreover, replacing the steel truss bridges with wooden Howe truss bridges. Wooden Howe trusses were used into the final years in New York and Philadelphia. Two are still extant (one restored in Manhattan, one rotting in place in Philadelphia.)

Several modeling executions using what appear pretty much to be “out of the box” Walthers kits include Barbara Brunette’s Whatsup Dock Ry. and Aaron Dupont’s Galveston Wharves.

Reference: The October/November 1999 issue of *Model Railroading* elaborated on the prototype background of this kit with black and white photos of the Bulson St. floatbridge. *Transfer* Nos. 12,13,14, and 15 covered the architecture of New York floatbridges. *Transfer* No. 42 contained a compilation of the variety of floatbridges in service after WWII along the New Jersey side of New York Harbor. The kit itself was reviewed in the May 1999 issue of *Model Railroader*.

#### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER--**

It is nice to see a marine scene with many of the elements executed in a reasonably prototypical fashion. The Port of Mobile Project by Mike Broadway and Bob Beatty of the Birmingham metro area made extensive use of the Walthers products. It was covered in 7 installments as articles in *Model Railroading* starting in November 1998. I am told that there were at least three more chapters that have not been published as articles, including a very worthwhile article on how to make the Walthers bascule bridge operate properly. It’s a pity that apparently we will never see the rest of this material in print.

#### **AFTER THE WALTHERS PROJECT**

Several other books were published on the subject after the Walthers book. *Where Rails Meet the Sea* by Mike Krieger, was published in 1998 by Metrobooks, 1998, at a list price of \$22.95. Then in 2000 and 2002 respectively, Morning Sun published Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 of Tom Flagg’s *New York Harbor Railroads in Color*. These contain the kind of great color images we have come to expect from Morning Sun, plus Tom’s extensively detailed caption information. In 2005, Frenchman River Modelworks came out with an accurate kit of the B&O platform carfloats No. 199-200, based on the drawings reproduced on the cover of *Transfer* No. 14 (and launching photos in *Transfer* No. 38). This kit was reviewed in the January-February 2006 issue of the on-line *B&O Modeler*, and hopefully will be reviewed later in 2006 in a printed publication. Also in 2005, American Model Builders rolled out the first two in a planned series of laser kits of wooden barges. They also plan to produce a stick lighter in the same line. The Crow River line of pewter fittings, discontinued for some years, is available again from Seaport Models, along with the “Steam Tug *Exeter*,” which is a caricature of a railroad steam tug, as is a resin kit for a steam tug offered by Sylvan Scale Models. And how can we forget the Lionel tug—with working lights, whistle and smoke!? More and more of the main line enthusiast publications as well as railroad historical society publications are finding a good reception among their readership for articles on rail-marine subjects.

#### **WHAT'S NEXT? (WISHFUL THINKING?)**

I have concluded this clinic in recent years by noting that Walthers had provided the rail-marine modeler with a huge resource of basic modeling material. Walthers surprised some of us with their ore bridge, sort-of a rail-marine item. I jokingly suggest that all we need now are a High Lift McMyler-style car dumper (such as those used at Port Reading in Arthur Kill and Jersey City) and a Hulett Unloader such as used on the lower Great Lakes. I must be careful about these jokes, however. In the January and February 2003 issues of *Railroad Model Craftsman*, Don Spiro published an article on scratch building a New York Central covered lighter barge for which plans had been run in *Transfer* No.22. I sent Don an e-mail telling him I’d heard a rumor that Walthers was coming out with this in injection molded form. The joke was partly on me, however. The day

after my e-mail, I received an e-mail from John Hitzeman of American Model Buildings with images attached showing AMB's new Laserkit of this very barge—which, as noted above, came on the market in 2005. Several manufacturers have expressed an interest in producing accurate kits of a railroad steam tug and one of the other designs of railroad diesel tugs besides the Jacobson design.

#### **A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

And if you can't get enough of rail-marine, there is a Special Interest Group--the Rail-Marine Information Group. RMIG publishes *Transfer* several times a year. For membership and back issue information, write John Teichmoeller, 12107 Mt. Albert Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21042. The above plus a comprehensive index of back issues is on our Website: **[www.trainweb.org/rmig](http://www.trainweb.org/rmig)**. (The website also contains other worthwhile information such as a detailed list of addenda and errata for Tom Flagg's book and a comprehensive index of *Transfer*.)