

STRETCHING THE SMALL RAILROAD

BEN BROWN

I have enough time and energy to build one railroad in my lifetime and I have essentially completed my plan. The railroad represents a minor New York State shortline. The track plan was shown in *OST* #36.

Normally equipment, industries, and operations are set in the early 1950s. Industries are typical of that era with perhaps a couple of holdovers from an earlier time. Locomotives range from steam to first generation Diesels. Most rolling stock is of the forty-foot variety. The theme of the railroad was settled during my time of working in the Southern Tier of New York around 1965. We lived right next to the Erie Lackawanna mainline and given the date and what was rolling by the house every day, I soon acquired a yen to scratchbuild some of the more modern rolling stock. Scratchbuilding was a requirement as there were no kits, and to top it off, there was no Evergreen Scale Models Co. with its precut strips of styrene. When we moved back to New England, the modern rolling stock came along and was stored for the future. Over time I rounded out the collection with tank cars, Center-flow hoppers, and bulkhead flat cars, plus a few appropriate locomotives. All of this stayed in storage because I dislike mixing eras.

Recently, I changed the railroad's era to 1970 as a surprise to my regular operating crew. Out came the modern Diesels and rolling stock, and the 1950's equipment was stored away. Then the fun began. Diesels, with their second generation sounds, and

fifty-foot cars took to the rails. The coal mine of the '50s was a busy two track loading facility. In the later era, business has fallen off from the peak of 4 to 6 hoppers per day to only a single large capacity hopper every other day. A new lumber loading facility was added to take advantage of the available mine trackage. The photos will show how a shelf was added to the edge of the fascia to facilitate the change. The creamery became a small ice cream plant and the grain and cement business picked up. Grape products were supplemented with apple juice. The large cooperage became a door and window factory, and the glue company ventured into chemical manufacturing. Industries such as shoes and paper increased their capacity requiring more tonnage to be shipped. The harbor still provides plenty of seafood traffic and the steambot *Mary Ellen* still plies the outer islands on a regular schedule. The big change in the harbor is the mackerel schooner *Kimberly Ann* being refurbished for the tourist trade.

Last, but not least, during the 20 year span the Chemung Northern acquired two other short lines in the region: the Keuka Southern and the Tioga and Lake Erie. By 1970 the locomotive fleet was supplemented by some newer leased power to provide more reliable service to our customers. Certainly a lot can happen in twenty years, even on a shortline.

The photographs will show the changes as before and after comparisons.



1A - The creamery at Alpine.



1B - The creamery conversion to packaged ice cream.



2A - Tioga Falls Paper Company with its fleet of dedicated boxcars in the '50s.



2B - The paper mill being serviced by larger newsprint boxcars and kaolin tank cars



3A - Chemung Milling Company with 40' cars.



3B - Chemung Milling with high capacity covered hoppers.



4A - Cotnoir Grape Products before.



4B - Cotnoir with apple juice business added.



5A - Keuka Mine in 1950.



5B - Keuka Lumber Loading in 1970.



6A - Milk off the Elmira Branch becomes...



6B - Lumber.



7A - The Gas Electric of 1950.



7B - RDC service in 1970.



8 - Carr Shoes in 1970



9 - Russell Cooperage sold to E. R. Lewin for the manufacture of doors and windows in 1970.