

Easements for the Learning Curve

Brian Scace

O Scale Influences

A New Feature, and You Are There!

As Scace awoke from his peaceful slumber with a roar, the population of a small New England town bustled about in its normal purposeful way, not realizing that, after the sun went down this day, life would never be the same. Whoops! Wrong magazine!

This issue's column is purposefully short, because we are going to introduce a new feature in *OST*. We call it, "O Scale Influences". Now, the name is not original with me, but was coined by a friend of mine, Stan Harper. That is, after all, what the feature is about: friends who have been influential. We'll start this off with three examples. Ron Morse's piece on his mentor, Willard Jones, fits the mold of "O Scale Influences" quite nicely. The Wednesday Night Railroaders from the Cleveland area have also submitted a fine piece on Gil Stovicek. I've had the pleasure of visiting Gil several times during the New York Central System Historical Society meets, even sitting down with one of his famous cigars for an afternoon of relaxing talk and railroad running.

Appropriately, though, we'll start with John Armstrong as "O Scale Influence #1", and dedicate this feature to him. He has influenced all of us with his writings, clinics, and wit. After this, we'll settle down to perhaps one per issue. This means that you, gentle reader, have the opportunity (nay, duty) to pen a short piece about the individual who has been a positive influence and mentor in your O Scale world.

Scace's Snappy Patter will be in full cry in the next issue; meanwhile, here's John.

O Scale Influences...

John Armstrong

Oh, I could fill the entire issue talking about John. By now, most of you have heard of his passing, just after the O Scale National in Washington. We all

know of his prolific pen, having written several books on track planning, from the little green Atlas Snap-Track books to that planner's bible, *Track Planning for Realistic*

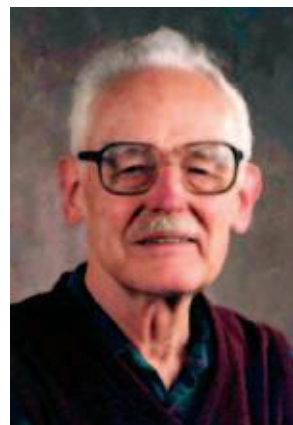



Photo by Doug Jones

Operation. A quick search also yields reference to some 100 articles over the years in such august journals as *Railway Age*, *Model Railroader*, and *Trains*. I had the great fortune of being a family friend and (for a time) John's neighbor, as well as being able to count him among my friends in the Capital Area O Scalars.

The Capital Area O Scalars was originally personified by folks like John, Ted Stepek (who did lots of artwork for Max Gray and Atlas Tool), Jim Moser, and Ray Jury. To be thrown in the deep end of the pool with these guys really motivated me (Was it self-preservation?) to learn new skills I never would have tried if I had continued to be a "lone wolf". One of my favorite stories about this crew happened one Friday when I brought over a boxcar conversion I had just finished. John studied it long and hard. He patiently went over it top-to-bottom. Meanwhile Ted was getting a little impatient for his turn at it. Finally, Ted said, "John, get out of the light! I want to criticize it!". John never let Ted forget about that line, and it became a staple. By the way, I still have the car, now a treasured memento of both of these fine gentlemen.

For any of you who had the fortune to attend one of John's clinics, you got a taste of what we enjoyed every Friday night. He, in his uniquely gentle witty way, probably taught me one of the most important lessons a model-builder can learn. He always used the term "sincere" to describe an accurate and well built model (be it a single piece, like a boxcar, or an entire railroad). He also coined a term that I shamelessly use in these pages. There was many a time when he thought I was being a little "neurotic". The difference between "sincere" and "neurotic" is simple enough. I could become so neurotic that I would never get around to building something that I was too balled up in researching to death. His wisdom? "Stop researching just before you start learning something you didn't want to know!" John's shared

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For the Government and Harassment
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Waiting power stands by at the Cattaraugus engine terminal.

wisdom, dealt with a modicum of gentle wit, will always stand as his legacy.

Having the great fortune to know John, and the rest of the old guard in the DC area did more to improve my modeling than any other single factor in my O Scale career. Now, it's time for the current DC Area O Scalars to pass that wisdom on to a new generation, who show great promise.

Meanwhile, with the kind permission of the Armstrong family, we reproduce his own artwork describing the features of his monumental Canandaigua Southern, along with some quick



The East End Interlocking controls access to the passenger station tracks and the freight yard lead.

shots of some of the more famous landmarks along the mainline, taken just before the layout tours during the 2004 O National. We hope you enjoy them.

Many folks have asked about particulars of John's Canandaigua Southern, so here are a few notes. The railroad is, of course, O Scale. Started in the late 1940s, it retains the outside third rail of that period to this day. Two industrial sections, the Irondale Mine and the Ynysybwll (Like all Welsh names, the

pronunciation is debatable. You're pretty close pronouncing it as "in-is-a-bull") Branch run off a center stud system, much like the Maerklin HO system. The railroad occupies an area of 25 x 36 feet, with 226 feet of mainline and a little over 1000 feet of total trackage. There are 82 turnouts and 6 crossings, all hand-laid. Ruling grades on the Mountain Division are 3.5 percent on the Old Line, and just under 3 percent on the New Line.

The operating scheme features through passenger service with several connecting roads. There is a Boston, Syracuse, and Pittsburgh service with NYC and B&A, and a Binghamton, Elmira, and Pittsburgh service with Erie Lackawanna. The CS Pittsburgh legs of both services are combined into a single CS passenger train at Cattaraugus, for operating interest.

Trackage rights are granted to B&O, EL, and PRR at various points along the CS, and B&O, NYC, and EL pool power with the Canandaigua Southern.

Although John had some 80 articles published in the modeling press, there (in typically modest fashion) were only about



The cab track and engine house lead at Cattaraugus.



A CS freight at the signal near Slug Island. The locomotive is the 4-6-6-6 Super-Allegheny, unique to the Canandaigua Southern.



The famous Warm River Station closely follows the architecture of the B&O's station at Point of Rocks, MD.



A CS train blasts through Gasmeterszag, where once the track dipped to get under (of course) the gas meter.

CANANDAIGUA SOUTHERN

19
TRAIN ORDER NO. 7-14
19

TO: CYE *Visitors to*
Cattaraugus Term. Dist AT: Irondale

OPR: JWA 8:01 A.M.

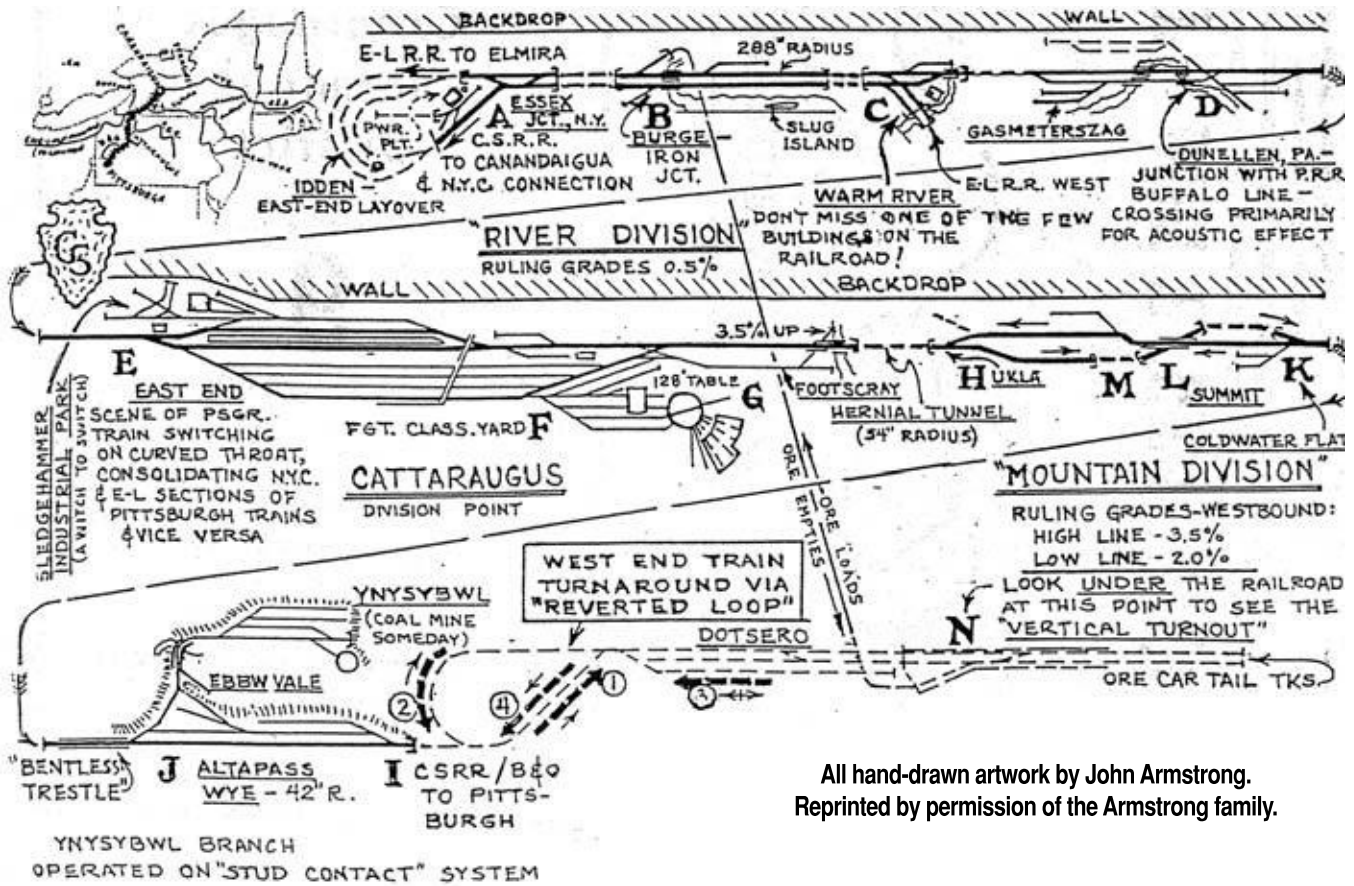
To avoid getting lost and/or trampled

COMPLETE

Employees injured on the job will take two aspirins and wait until Sunday before contacting company surgeons.

10 or so featuring the Canandaigua Southern. So you can find out more about the railroad as it developed over the years, we've listed those we are aware of here. There may be more, but this should get you started. ◆

Canandaigua Southern Bibliography
 "CS Trackplan", *Model Railroader*, Jan 71
 "Control System", *Model Railroader*, Mar 71
 "Freight Car Routing Board", *Model Railroader*, May 77
 "Warm River Station", *Railroad Model Craftsman*, Jul 78
 "'Sure-Footing' the Atlas F9", *Model Railroader*, Jun 76
 "Hopper's 'Nighthawks' Revisited", *Model Railroader*, Jun 89
 "Rotating Head Diesel Engineer", *Model Railroader*, Nov 89
 Canandaigua Southern photos featured in *O Scale News*, Issue #101
 "Canandaigua Southern Update; 25 Years of Limited Progress" (includes the "vertical turnout"), *Model Railroader*, Jul, Aug, Sep 96



All hand-drawn artwork by John Armstrong.
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