

# Destinations unlimited: a compact layout

By Michael R. Welch

**T**HE major problem facing a modeler with minimum space for a model railroad is: what kind of a track plan will fit the space and also provide maximum operating interest? Two alternatives might be the belt line of minimum radius versus the shelf layout with parallel tracks interconnected by complicated switchwork, but both of these ideas suffer from the same complaint: after completion, the

train doesn't go anywhere; whether round and round or back and forth, it remains in the same locale.

This is not realistic. Railroads exist, for the most part, to move goods and passengers from one place to another. To represent this in model form, the train at least must *seem* to travel from Here to There, even if there is only a few actual feet from Here. Two basic operations are involved in prototype railroading: yard switching (making up and breaking up trains) and along-the-route switching, and through train movements. The first offers the most detailed maneuvering; the second, the most colorful action. Faced with the compromises demanded by limited space, complex operation seems to me the preferred choice; yet there is always the thought that occasionally it would be nice to see a heavy mainline coal drag fighting its way up a mountain grade, or a red ball reefer hotshot flashing across the plains.

This combination of both industrial switching and mainline operation is the idea that guided the development of the Greenbrier Central. It is a coal road that connects the coalfields of West Virginia with the steel mills and generating plants of the Midwest via a wharf on Lake Erie. Despite having a main line of about half a scale mile, the impression that the road traverses some 500 miles is created.

Station names help create this effect. The Blue Ridge mine area has a name representative of the mining country. Cumberland logically represents the interchange point with the Baltimore & Ohio. The main line continues through western Pennsylvania to northeastern Ohio, to the second major town of North Euclid (located outside of Cleveland) and to the coal-unloading pier at Port Erie.

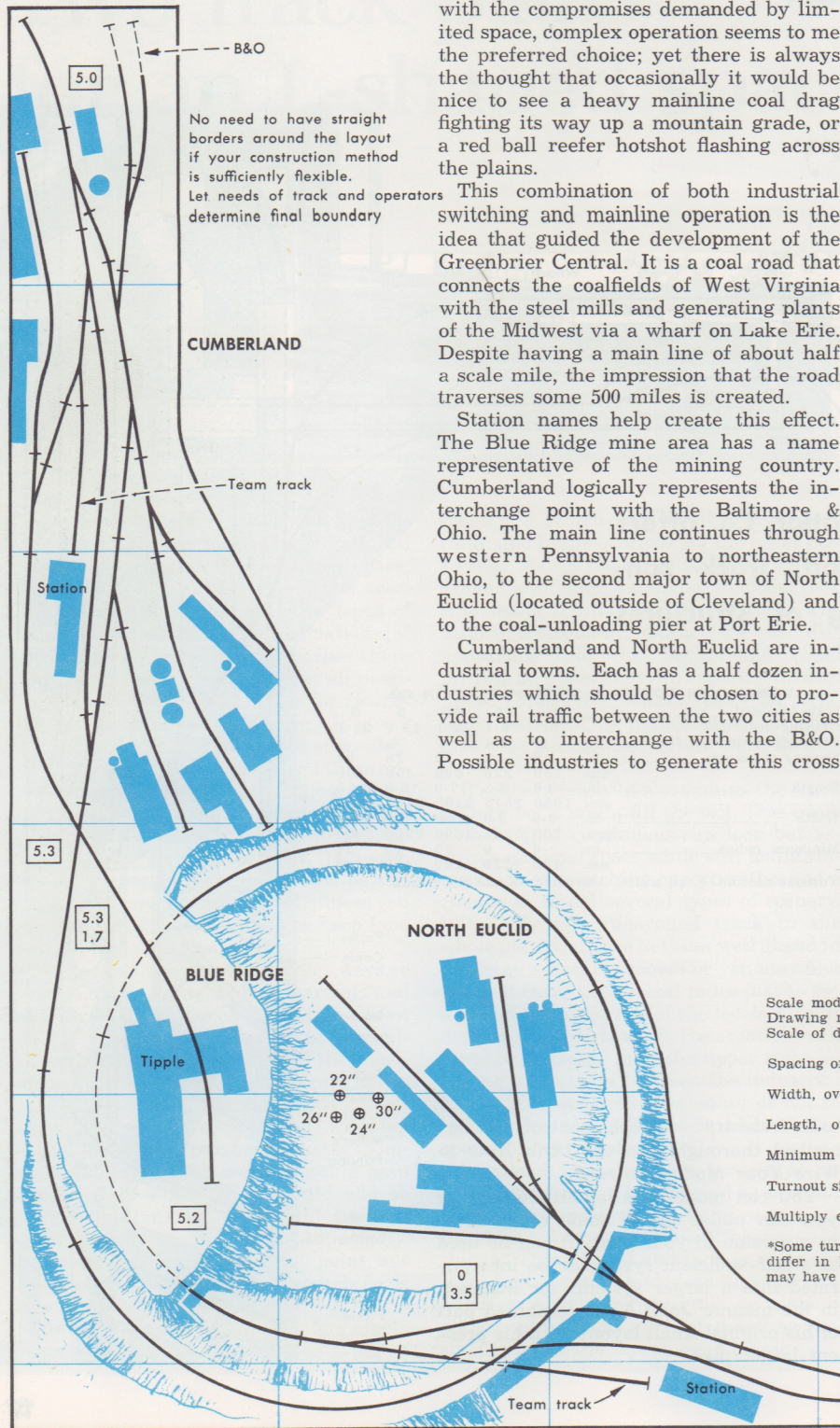
Cumberland and North Euclid are industrial towns. Each has a half dozen industries which should be chosen to provide rail traffic between the two cities as well as to interchange with the B&O. Possible industries to generate this cross

traffic might be: grain elevator, furniture factory, metal fabrication plant, building supply yard, container factory, hardware maker or supplier. A general merchandise supply house might be located at Cumberland, a farm machinery plant at North Euclid. Each town also has a team track to service industries not on line. And since almost all types of industry can be reached via the B&O interchange, any type of freight car might logically appear on GC tracks.

Some of the major traffic commodity, coal, is shipped from the mine to on-line industries and coalyards. More of it goes to the B&O interchange; trainloads go to Port Erie destined for the Detroit and Gary steel mills, some possibly for trans-lake shipment to Canadian ports. This moves in solid hopper car drags made up in Cumberland. There can also be some shipment of low-grade coal from the B&O interchange to Port Erie. The unloading pier at Port Erie is a steel trestle with undertrack storage bins from which coal is chuted directly into the holds of the lake carriers.

The minimum radius is held to the figures shown for each scale in the track plan data table to allow for a heavy train of hoppers plus an engine of appropriate size. The two passing sidings are approximately six carlengths long. Shortness is an advantage here: the short main line can be kept busy with many train movements of shorter trains rather than longer and fewer trains. Normally cars move directly from the industries of one town to their destination, so no storage yard is provided (primarily due to lack of space), but one of the passing siding tracks can be used for temporary storage when necessary. If there is room to add one more track beside both the Cumberland and North Euclid runaround tracks, car variety can be increased considerably. The lack of space dictates the minimum engine facilities at Cumberland: water tower, sand bin, ashpit, and a conveyor for loading coal into tenders.

Passenger service on the GC would be minimal. A single baggage-coach combine, normally stored on the Cumberland team track, would suffice. It could travel unceremoniously at the rear of a way freight or, with a locomotive of its own, make its way grandly along the line, possibly as the Black Diamond Limited.



## GREENBRIER CENTRAL RY.

Scale modeled	N	TT	HO	S	O
Drawing reduction	8:1	12:1	16:1	24:1	32:1
Scale of drawing per foot, in.	1½"	1"	¾"	½"	⅜"
per meter, mm.	125	83	63	42	31
Spacing of rulings	in. 6	9	12	18	24
	mm. 150	225	300	450	600
Width, over all	ft.-in. 5-3	7-11	10-6	15-9	21
	meters 1.60	2.40	3.20	4.80	6.40
Length, over all	ft.-in. 5-5	8-1	10-10	16-2	21-8
	meters 1.65	2.48	3.30	4.95	6.60
Minimum radius	in. 11	16.5	22	33	44
	mm. 280	420	560	840	1120
Turnout size	No. 4 or no. 4½, all scales. No. 4½ shown.*				
Multiply elevations by for in.	.5	.75	1	1.5	2
for mm.	13	19	25	38	50

\*Some turnouts labeled no. 4 are actually 4½. Commercial turnouts differ in length and diverging angle. Track location adjustments may have to be made accordingly.